

**From the Heart      October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

**Pastor John Hicks**

**First United Methodist Church**

HAVE YOU PRAYED FOR YOUR PASTOR TODAY? October is pastor appreciation month, and there is no better time to lift our pastors up in prayer. As spiritual leaders of God's people, pastors should always be high on our prayer list. Satan knows that if he can strike a shepherd, the sheep will scatter, and Satan loves nothing more than to see an effective spiritual leader get distracted or overwhelmed or thwarted in some way.

As a result, pastors need to be prayed for – not just in times of crisis or church difficulties -- but every day. Pray for God's special anointing and the bold proclamation of the Gospel message in his or her preaching. Pray also for God's blessing in your pastor's personal and spiritual life. Pray for rest and renewal and revival. Pray for effective study and growth in God's word. Pray for your shepherd's protection from dark and worldly forces. Pray for the effective ministry of God's grace. Pray constantly. Pray intentionally. Pray faithfully.

By choosing to pray for our pastors, we are not only choosing to uplift, support, and protect them, we are empowering them in their calling and in their ministry.

You might have a great pastor who is powerful, moving, and inspired. You might have a minister who is gifted in other areas. It doesn't matter. If you unite their current ministry and preaching with a support group praying for eyes to be opened, hearts to be receptive, and lives to be changed, great things will happen in your church and in your worship service! Imagine how much more powerful and inspiring their ministry and preaching might be if combined with prayer support like that!

God works through the prayers of His people. Put prayer to work for your pastor! Put it to work today! You and your church will reap the benefits.

*“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ.” Colossians 4:2-3*