

# The CrossRoads Connection



A Youth and Young Adult Ministry of  
St. Andrew United Methodist Church

## For the Beauty of the Earth

I have this pet theory that most of us have situations or places in our lives where we MOST strongly feel the presence of God. Do you know what I mean? I know I have such places. Now, I certainly feel God in and moving through you and in this place (and I mean that), but I often feel the presence of God best when I'm knee-deep in Creation someplace.

Some of us no doubt feel God's presence the strongest when the community gathers for worship. I love our times of worship together. Others of us might feel Him strongest in our families or when we serve others who need a hand up. I often hear, "Pastor Pat, when I am teaching or leading people in a faith experience of some kind, it feels like God is in the room!"

I can relate to all these, but have you ever smelled a wild stream (not a polluted, sewer-overflow

chipping in

contaminated stream running through a city)? I know you think you know what water feels like, but do you know what a wild stream smells like? No perfume company on this planet has EVER captured the soft, cool, wild and refreshing smell of a trout stream. Thank God – I'd never get a lick of work done! BUT, I can close my eyes, right now, and recall the smell of every stream I've ever fished. Weird, eh?

Speaking of olfactory senses, I can also tell you what a dew-covered meadow smells like on a warm summer morning. Have you ever smelled the color green? That's what it smells like. And, I can tell you what a forest smells like on a brisk October day. It's a sagey-spicy smell if it's damp; dry-crumby-musty/woody-earthy smell if it's dry – but not garden-earthy, if you know the difference?

And, have you ever pulled up a handful of muck from the bottom of a swampy stream and really smelled, touched, LOOKED at it? Or, the same observations from a handful of creek bottom sand? Very different things, indeed.

Have you ever been so much a part of the environment that a deer has moved out of the sanctuary of the woods and walked/waded within 20 feet of you before noticing that you're even there – so close that you smell her before she smells you ( a

clean livestock/woody smell)—and then, angrily snorting, she stalks away, not afraid, just annoyed that you're in her way?

I don't know how to explain it; I just turn all my senses ON when I'm outside in nature. I am alive outdoors in a way



Pat Sleeth is pastor to the CrossRoads community.

*(Continued on page 2)*

Our MISSION: We seek to encourage youth and young adults to develop a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, encourage them to grow as lifelong disciples, and to equip them to minister to others for the sake of the world.

## Chipping In

(Continued from page 1)

that I'm just not when I'm inside. Perfumes, soaps, deodorants, cleaning products and other man-made smells just don't smell as nice. To each their own, right?

I think it is when we are most alive, the most turned-on or tuned-in, however you want to look at it, that God becomes most alive to us. Now, I'm not saying that anything about God depends on me; I'm just saying that I am more likely to carefully observe the things and even the presence of God when I'm open to all the possibilities of who/what/where/when God IS.

For you it may be in your house or playing a musical instrument or painting that masterpiece that you KNOW is locked inside you just waiting to be freed. And, I guess that is at the heart of what I'm talking about here – where are you the most alive? I'm betting that's where God is the most present to you as well.

God is everywhere. You know that and so do I. I'm not trying to write some deep and mystical piece here, but that's God. He IS both deep and mystical, and He is most alive where we are most alive. Not because He's dead or absent anyplace else; it's just that God is life and where we are most alive, that's where we are open to seeing, feeling, hearing and touching/being touched by Him.

I'm probably just being confusing. Sorry.

This is a long way around Robin Hood's barn to ask you: where are you most alive? Where do you go to recharge the batteries, clear out the cobwebs and to make yourself whole again? I hope you do have such a place. I have a web-friend on one of my fly fishing forums from Italy. In one of our posts, he asked me, "Pat, where is your 'Quisisana'?" When I asked him what in the heck one of those was, he said it didn't translate well, but (he said) it literally meant "a place where one heals one's self" or "the place where one is well." He wanted to know where I went to de-stress, to relax and get my head on straight.

I told him I relax at home and with my family and friends. But, I take my Sabbath somewhere on the water or in the woods, communing with God in HIS office. That's where I feel God's presence most clearly and where God is the most present to me. That's where I find my peace and quiet.

I hope you have a "Quisisana." I don't just mean the lazy-boy in your living room in front of the TV – but maybe, for you, that's exactly where it is. Life, at least this stage of the journey, is too precious to waste, to not live it completely and that means both going at full power and accomplishing great things but

**Remember,  
you can always  
access the CR  
calendar on the  
Web at  
thecrossroads-  
umc.org**



also to slow down enough to enjoy and heal. It's hard to appreciate either without both. That is my prayer for you, that if you have such a place, you remember to use it - often. And, if you don't, give it some thought. It's a beautiful place to spend some time with God and recharge.

My family and I are headed for my Quisisana – for 2 weeks. Cathy and I, even as you read this, will be tramping the streams and woods of Idaho and Montana, and Heather, Trent and the girls will join us the next week. I know I'm certainly looking forward to seeing family and friends I don't get to see very often, and, who knows, maybe making a new friend or two.

Regardless, please know that my Sabbath always includes you. So, when I am hiking up some trail around Yellowstone, hoping to avoid CLOSE contact with the grizzly bears, know that you will be in my heart and in my prayers. When next I see you, I hope to have some great stories of the ones that got away and maybe even a couple of dumb ones who didn't.

See you in 2 weeks!

*Pastor Pat*



Three Cheers for CrossRoads!

**See YOU at the CrossRoads**

## Simply People Puppet Troupe

Let me pose a question - how good are you at talking without being able to use your hands? If you are like me (and my wife will back me up on this), my brain is wired so that I have to "talk" with my hands as much as I do with my voice, and this includes while I am on the telephone and know that obviously the person I am talking to can't see me!

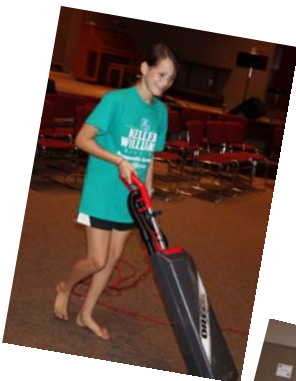
But let me flip that around for a moment - what if you could communicate using only your hands? One option would, of course, be to learn sign language as quickly as possible. But if you didn't have that time, could you make yourself understood?

As puppeteers, this is something we work on regularly, though we don't often think of it that way. The puppets appear to speak through a live performer's voice or from a recording, but much of the communicating to the people watching has to be done through the hands. By controlling one's hands the puppeteer also controls the character's posture, motions, and facial expressions. Words can tell the story, but it is the way a puppet stands and moves (and by proxy what the puppeteer is doing with his hands) that gives the character and his tale emotional weight. Sometimes in silence, the hands do all the talking.

Jesus talked about using our whole selves - heart, hands, mouth, etc. - to worship him and to spread the Good News. He also often told stories and parables to teach and to enlighten, and that is a large part of why the Simply People Puppet ministry exists. If you think you might be interested in giving your hands some new challenges by giving this ministry a try, please feel free to contact me at 765-420-0452. It is open to adults and children 6th grade and up, and we are always ready to train new puppeteers whose fingers are just itching to create the magic. Our team looks forward to hearing from you! - Ted Foster



## Helping at the Palooza....



---

# Junior High Update

## Teens On A Mission (T.O.M)'s ANNUAL CAMP OUT!



T.O.M. junior high youth group is heading out for its annual camping event. This year, we are going to Turkey Run State Park in the youth tent areas. We will be leaving St. Andrew United Methodist Church at noon on Saturday, October 3, and returning on Sunday, October 4 at approximately 4 p.m.

Cost: \$10.00

(There will be a later departure if you have a sporting event or school event that makes it difficult to attend... however, seating is very limited for this vehicle.)

RSVPs are needed by September 20, 2009 to allow the leadership to plan for the event!!

We can't wait to see you there!!! As always, you can reach me at 412-6858 if you have any questions!!!

- Dana

Turkey Run State Park  
8102 East Park Rd.  
Marshall, IN, 47859