



# Jacob's Ladder



A NEWSLETTER OF BURNS UNITED METHODIST AND HAMMITT HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES

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## THE HEART OF THE MAN

by Clarence H. Franklin

But the LORD said to him, "Pay no attention to how tall and handsome he is. I have rejected him, because I do not judge as people judge. They look at the outward appearance, but I look at the heart."

1<sup>ST</sup> SAMUEL 16:7

Have you ever heard the story of Alan Swan? I read his story years ago and continue to be moved by it. The hands of Alan Swan were gentle and kind. He was a charitable man. He gave his efforts, his time and his money to many organizations that provided service to mankind. Alan Swan had a lot of money. His heart and soul was filled with beautiful music. That was how he made his money, as a producer, singer, musician, and songwriter of beautiful ballads. At first glance it appeared that Alan Swan was a happy man. Sadly, nothing could have been further from the truth. This wonderful man did not have a friend in the world. Women made excuses not to go out with him. You see, Alan Swan was not a handsome man. His features were somewhat similar to that of an ape. Because of his generosity, he had many people around him but no true friends. "Why? Why? Why did nature make me this ugly gargoyle?" he wondered. "Why, with the billions of people on earth, why is there no one for me to love?"

Listening to the news one night, Alan heard about a science project whose goal was to reach the center of the earth in a machine and radio back the findings. Because this was a one-way trip, a volunteer was needed to pilot the project. Alan reasoned that no one would miss him; perhaps this was what he was created to do. So Alan volunteered. He left the earth's surface and headed to the center of the earth knowing that only his message back to the surface once he reached his goal would be the last anyone would hear of him again. Down, down, he went for days before the machine ultimately came to a stop after reaching its goal. When he climbed out of the machine, to his surprise, he found himself in a dimly lit cavern, and in the distance he could see what looked like a city. Even more surprising he saw a beautiful couple approaching him. "Hello beautiful one" the woman addressed him. Alan did not understand; he had no delusions about his appearance. Seeing his reaction, the woman went on to explain, "because of the low light

down here we have learned to see as much with our hearts as our eyes, and in you we see a heart filled with music and beauty.” And she went on to ask him if he would share the beautiful music they sensed in him with them. So he played for them and they asked him to stay with them and share that beauty with them forever. He was happier than he had ever been before in his life. The point of the story is summed up in his message back to the surface: “This is Alan Swan. I have reached the center of the earth, and I don’t know how it happened, but I have found heaven.” The story concluded with this thought: we will never know the true meaning of heaven on earth until we can see things with our hearts as well as our eyes.

What should our hearts be filled with? What does God want us to have in our hearts? The

answer is simple: LOVE. God wants our hearts to be filled with love. Jesus said in MATTHEW 22: 37-39 the greatest commandment is to love, to love God with all our heart, all our minds and all our soul, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. If we have this God kind of love, it will show, and we will speak it. MATTHEW 12:34 says out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. When our hearts are filled with love it shows, and we can see the love in the hearts of others. That is what open hearts, open minds, and open doors is all about. Alan Swan had money; he had prestige. He had a heart filled with love and beauty, but he only found happiness and peace when he found others that could *see* his heart, not just his outward appearance.

## SOUP FOR SENIORS

Photos by Kenneth J. Franklin

Burns UMC has a new Senior Ministry called “SOUP for SENIORS” on the 1st & 3rd Wednesday in each month, beginning at 11:30 A.M. It includes a study of God's word, fellowship and yummy soup. It is sponsored by Janis Blake and Ann Cancer, pictured at right (from left to right) with Terry Vaughn. The following is a pictorial review of one of the events.





# FREE GED Classes

Burns UMC has free GED Classes on Tuesday and Thursday Nights beginning at 7:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help with the young children. Please contact Barbara Wortham at 662-607-2636 to volunteer or for more information.

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## BURNS UMC BIBLE STUDY



Come out and join us every Wednesday night at 6:00 p.m. for a Spirit-filled Bible study led by Rev. Christopher Diggs and Rev. Marvin Gipson.