

Celebrate!

Did you know that God commands us to celebrate?

In Lev. 23 and Deut. 16 the Israelites were instructed to make booths, or temporary dwellings, and to live in them for the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths), known in Hebrew as Sukkoth. This feast occurs after the harvest has come in and is a time of celebration and rejoicing. In fact, both chapters have commandments to rejoice in the Lord!

The booth, or sukkah, by tradition has one side open and someone sleeping in it should be able to catch glimpses of the stars. It's customary to decorate the booth with all sorts of fruits, flowers, vegetables, and anything else to make it special.

Why did God make such a commandment? Of course, we all need to be reminded that we have only a temporary dwelling place on the earth--and we should rejoice in it. But there may be another reason. Most scholars realize that Jesus was not born at Christmas time. There is considerable circumstantial evidence that He was born right around Sukkoth. And if He were born on the first day, His circumcision would have taken place on the eighth day, that great day of the Feast, when later He would say (referring to Isa. 44:3) "If any man thirst, come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38)

In John 1:14 we're told that the Word was made flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us." These days aren't just ancient relics with quaint meaning. In Zech. 14 it tells us that after Jesus' return all the nations will come together to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. What a celebration that will be--Jew and Gentile, worshipping together the King of Kings.

I believe most churches yearn for spiritual revival. We even make elaborate plans to have a week or so of special speakers and music in an effort to refocus our attention on God and our relationship with Him.

But the biblical calendar of festivals that God gave to Israel has a revival built right into it. In fact, the people were commanded to take ten percent of their produce with them to the festival—food to feed families, friends, the poor and those who serve among us. What a wonderful way to picture the truly bountiful, joyful life God intends for us!

Anyone who wishes is welcome to spend time in our congregational sukkah at Addilynn UMC. Pray, meditate, have a picnic, or just enjoy God's beauty. This life is temporary, but there are even better things to come.

****What better time of year to celebrate God's beauty and bounty for us. This life is temporary, with many joyful moments, but there are even better things to come.**