



FIRST

VISIONS

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**Barry's
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*Pastor's
Report*



How is this new year of 2006 going for you thus far? Have you taken time to reexamine your life, possibly renewing certain disciplines within your life? Many of us do, frequently with a focus upon correcting our diet, or reestablishing a daily exercise routine.

These are important, but as Christians, there are many spiritual disciplines which we would also do well to consider. For example, how's your prayer life? Dynamic? Just okay? Nearly nonexistent? Although it may seem overly simple, praying is often the cure to an undisciplined prayer life. Let me illustrate.

Dr. Reggie Johnson, professor of spiritual formation at Asbury Theological Seminary, tells of a seminary student who came into his office one day. Reggie wrote:

"The young man felt he wasn't as disciplined in his prayer life as he wanted to be. Since we had not met previously, I asked him to tell me a little about himself. Summarizing years of his life in just a few sentences, he suddenly said, 'My Dad died when I was ten and...' Before he could go any further, I stopped him. 'Talk to me about that time. What was it like to lose your Dad when you were only ten years old?'

"He leaned forward, elbows resting on his knees and spoke slowly and quietly. 'It was devastating.' He said. 'It seemed like every other dad but mine was at the field watching their kids play baseball. But mine had been taken away from me. It seemed so unfair.'

"Did you talk to God about how you felt? Did you tell Him

how angry you were about what happened?' I probed.

"No,' he answered, somewhat puzzled that I should ask such a question. 'No... I never told God anything like that.'

"I could tell that his childhood feelings were still very close to the surface. 'Before we get together in a couple of weeks, why don't you take some time to talk out those old feelings with Him. Tell God in your own words what it was like to be ten and to lose your Dad. Talk to him about how angry you felt toward Him for letting this happen.'

"The next time we met I asked him if he had had such a talk. He had. He described it with emotion in his voice. It had been an important experience. I noticed that over the next few weeks the issue of discipline seemed to fade away. So long as he had been feeling hurt and had anger towards God, it was hard to spend time in God's presence. It was understandable. But when the relationship with God began to heal, his feelings about being with God also changed."

What was true for this young seminary student is true for all of us. If we've tried to develop our prayer life and yet nothing seems to ever become of it, chances are there's something in our life which is inhibiting it. It might be a past traumatic experience or maybe current unresolved sin. In either case, the best way to deal with it is the same way we deal with our daily human relationships. We take the issue(s) back to the relationship and deal with it there. When we spend time with God in frank, open conversation, healing can

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**2006
Children's Project**

by Mada Jones

The children in Children's Church have a new goal for this year, Pound for Pound, Sharing God's Love by the Pound. We will be collecting food to give to LA Cares and Self Help. Our beginning goal is seven hundred pounds of food this year. Aaron Goldman will be distributing

the collected food to the other organizations. Please feel free to bring a can of food, some cereal, or other food product to add to our collections on Sundays.

This project will be done in connection with the Table to Table collections on Communion Sundays (see article below).

Table to Table (T3)

Table to Table (T3)
by Susan Nava

Did you know that New Mexico ranks 4th on the list of most impoverished states? That means that we have more hungry people than 48 other states! If this touches your heart as it does mine, there is something you can do.

The holidays now behind us, its time to start again to turn to our communion Sunday food drive. We began this program in October of

2005 and although we have had a slow start we are hopeful for a wonderful new beginning in 2006.

Please remember to bring your food donations the first Sunday of each month which is Communion Sunday and as we partake our the Lord's Supper we will be helping to put Supper on the tables of our brothers and sisters. The Donation box will be located in the Narthex.

Epiphany Season

The following is taken from Music Musing #84: January 6, 2006: Epiphany—Ordinary Time, Extraordinary Worship by Dean McIntyre

Epiphany's literal meaning is "manifestation" – an indication of the existence or presence of something, especially of a divine being. It means to show, make known, or reveal. It is the third and final observance of the Christmas Cycle (Advent-Christmas-Epiphany); the other cycle is the Easter Cycle (Lent-Easter-Pentecost).

Epiphany is one of the oldest celebrations of the Christian church, even predating Christmas. In the Eastern Church, the main theme for Epiphany Day is the baptism of Jesus; but in the Western Church, we commemorate the visit of the magi. Traditionally, on the first Sunday after

Epiphany, we focus on the baptism of Christ; and on the last Sunday after Epiphany, the Transfiguration.

The date of Epiphany Day is fixed as January 6, following the twelve days of Christmas. The date of Easter Day is not fixed, since the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. decreed Easter to be celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon following the vernal equinox. Thus, Easter may fall anywhere from March 22 to April 25. Since Lent consists of forty days (not counting Sundays) before Easter, its beginning on Ash Wednesday is also variable, resulting in an unspecified number of weeks between Epiphany Day and Lent, including as few as four or as many as nine Sundays.

We Witness

Our Church Vows

We will be loyal to the United Methodist Church and uphold it with our prayers, presence, gifts and service.

Our Prayers

There are many, many prayer needs in our church family and community. The caring board by the church office is filled to overflowing, and there are too many prayer needs to put in this space

without leaving out some other equally important needs. Having the complete prayer list is as simple as sending your email address to the church office and asking to be placed on the email list for prayer needs.

Our Presence

Church attendance on New Year's Day, January 1, totalled 127 in a combined 10:30 service.

Special January Days



Birthdays:

Betty Terrell
Dennis Gill
Robyn Collom
Craig Siebe
Martha Zumbro
Clayton Pearson
Kyle Cash

01/01
01/05
01/06
01/08
01/08
01/16
01/17

Clara Leschnitzer
Virginia Souder
Al Blackstock
Jim Little
Carolyn Pearson

01/17
01/23
01/25
01/27
01/27

Anniversaries:

January 12

Kemp & Nancee Beebe

MISSION TEAMS TO CONGO AFRICA

The New Mexico Annual Conference will be sending two mission teams this summer to the Congo to be in mission with the United Methodist in the Congo. We have forged an alliance with the South Congo Annual conference, and have committed to send two teams this year.

The first team will be both medical and construction and will be May 1-19. If you know of any doctors, dentists, or other medical professionals that may be interested please encourage them to contact Rev. Skip Hodges as soon as possible. (915) 591-8126 skip@stlukemethodist.org . You

can also contact Dennis or Susan Trumblee to find out what our church will be doing with this.

The team also needs those willing to go and help in continued construction of the church in Kolwesi. The medical aspect of the team will work with the local doctor in the 40 bed hospital there. The approximate cost is \$3500, which will include air fare, food, lodging, basically everything except souvenirs.

The second team will be lead by Rev. John Schwarting and go in August. More details on that team will be coming soon.

The next edition of Visions will be dated January 27.
The deadline for articles is Friday, January 20.
First United Methodist Church

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Sunday Services & Activities
8:00 a.m. Contemporary Worship
9:15 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Traditional Worship

Wednesday Activities
MYF Youth 6 pm
Chancel Choir 7 p.m.

United Skates, Friday evenings
First Session 5:00-6:45 p.m. for children third grade and younger, \$2.00 includes skate rental
Second Session for third grade and up, \$2.50 includes skate rental



Our Applause

We love to see the Christmas decorations up before Christmas. A good part of our joy and anticipation is founded in them. However, their time passes. Many thanks to Doris Jackson, Maureen Beery, Jerry Berry, and a host of last minute volunteers (Isn't it great to be in a church where people jump in when they see a need.) who took down the decorations after Christmas.

A great deal of work was done during the Christmas break by Don Siebe, Mary

Keller, Gene Diedrich, Barefield to replace the flooring Ben Gibson and James in the far left room in the Education Wing. The end result is well-done and much appreciated.

Those of us who were in town on Christmas Day enjoyed a great brunch before church. Thank you to everyone who provided food and helped to set up the feast in the Friendship Center.



Card sent to the Trustees by the Ark

Con't. Barry's Corner from Page 1

occur and the door can be opened to a closer relationship. Most importantly, the closer our relationship, the more God is able to work in our lives and

empower you and me for triumphant Christian living in 2006.

Your Servant,

Barry

Courses of Study

Several new studies are beginning in January. Each is unique and addresses different needs and interests of the congregation. Please peruse the following articles to gain information on these new offerings and attend any or all of the ones that sound good to you.

Continuing classes from last year include: Christian Believers on Monday nights, Celebration of Discipline on Tuesday evenings, and Eleven Foundations on Thursdays.

UMW Study

The Annual Bible Study and Spiritual Growth Study of the United Methodist Women will be held on the three Wednesdays in January beginning January 11th. The theme of this study is "The Children of the Bible". In the three two-hour sessions beginning at 10:00 and ending at 12:00 with a soup luncheon, we will examine some familiar and some not-so-familiar stories of children in the Bible.

For Wednesday, January 18th please read 1) The Baby Moses in Exodus 2:1-10, 2) Elijah and the Widow's Son in I Kings 17:1-24, and 3) Jairus's Daughter in Matthew 9:18-26 and in Mark 5: 22-43.

For Wednesday, January 25th please read 1) The Captive Girl in II Kings 5, 2) Young Jesus in the Temple in Luke 2:41-52 and 3) The Boy who offered what He Had in John 6:1-15, in Matthew 14:13-21, in Mark 6:32-44 and in Luke 9:10-17.

Bring one or more Bibles to class. We think having different translations can be very interesting. Through the writings of a mother and daughter team we will be able to gain insight on how these stories relate to us in this present day.

Outreach and Missions Class

1/11/06 @ 6 pm

Please check out the 2006 Outreach and Mission class, stop in on Wednesday evenings at 6 pm for a light meal and an insight into Outreach and Missions at FUMC.

This year we plan on offering Basic First Aid and CPR classes and explore outreach and mission needs in our local region and other areas. We are offering a short Spanish lesson each week and the prayer needs of specific countries around the world will be examined.

For additional information, see the pamphlet in the kiosk in the entry way of the church or contact Dennis Trumblee at 672-1809 or trumblee@earthlink.net

The Stone Table

Exploring C. S. Lewis's Narnia

A few weeks ago many of us gathered together to watch *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. The movie followed the book almost to the letter and the animatronics were well done. However, the Chronicles of Narnia have much more to

share than that. Many important parallels that C. S. Lewis included can be found in these volumes.

Why study a book of fiction or fantasy? A parable, which is a work of fiction, can show us ourselves in a new light. It doesn't take the place of the truth, merely points us to that truth in another way. This class will be a thought provoking discussion of ourselves as fallen man and Christians through the eyes of C. S. Lewis.

Think about this: Who does Aslan represent? Where does this lion reflect that figure? Where does Aslan not reflect that person? Which character are you most similar to? Why? What does the book tell you about yourself? Why did the Stone Table break? We will be pondering these and other questions in an adult and high school age class, The Stone Table. Jan Stong, who has taught about the allegorical (parallel) nature of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* in other classes, will be guiding this class in its search for Christian meanings, beginning next Sunday, January 15th at 4 pm.

The Chronicles of Narnia (seven volumes in one) is available in the church office for \$14.