



FIRST

VISIONS

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The Pastor Ponders

Pastor's Report



"A MILE CLOSER TO HEAVEN?"

The elevation of Big Spring, Texas is approximately 2,200 feet above sea level. The elevation of Los Alamos, New Mexico is approximately 7,300 feet above sea level. Thus, while I have just moved some 450 miles along the surface of the earth, I've also moved almost a mile "up" in altitude.

That single vertical mile makes far more difference than the 450 longitudinal miles I've traveled. It makes for a completely different geographic panorama - vastly divergent landforms, vegetation, climate. And it further creates a very short-winded preacher, at least thus far. In about one month, once my body adjusts to the manufacture of sufficient hemoglobin for my blood to carry more of the sparse oxygen found at this level, I expect to be fine.

I've actually had five or six of my friends, when I've commented about the noticeably thin air in Los Alamos, to respond thus: "Enjoy it; you're a mile closer to Heaven."

I don't yet know if Los Alamos is a more "heavenly" place than any other where I've lived, but I do know that Jesus, the Lord whom I serve, was deeply concerned with the Kingdom of Heaven. However, the "Heaven" Jesus preached was not "up there" somewhere.

Jesus' primary concern was that the reign of God - which various Bible translations render the "Kingdom of God" and/or the "Kingdom of Heaven" - become a reality here and now, in this world, among those who believed in Him. Jesus' primary message was that, in Him, the reign of God had broken into the world

of humanity. The good news which He and His earliest followers proclaimed is that the Kingdom of Heaven is manifest ("at hand.")

In Luke 17:20-21, the Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the Kingdom of God come?" And Jesus replied, "The Kingdom of God isn't ushered in with visible signs. You won't be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' For the Kingdom of God is among you."

Both then and now this manifest Kingdom, this reign of God impinging upon the earth, was a much harder "Heaven" for humans to deal with than "pie in the sky by and by." It makes major differences in how one lives - today.

Is the Kingdom of God clearly manifest in Los Alamos? Is Los Alamos really a mile closer to Heaven? I'll be discovering the answers to those important questions as I interact with and get to know the precious people who live here. Praise the Lord!

Dave Ring
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Send Off for The Dickens Family

Rev. Barry Dickens and his family have been treasured members of the LAFUMC community for the last eight years. June 4th was their last Sunday with us as our minister and family. Barry led us in a joyful look back over those years and a prayerful consideration of the years to come.

The service was followed by a fabulous picnic at Urban Park. Many people attended to speak one last time with Barry, Susan, and the kids. Of course, the great food and fun activities

contributed to the event's success.

We all thanked the Dickens for their warm enthusiasm in doing God's work here at our church and extended our rich appreciation for all the work they have done while serving here. They have contributed in more ways than I can possibly name.

We thank God for blessing us with their presence and assistance and ask God's blessings upon their new ministry with the Clovis District.



Red balloons decorated the church pews for Pentecost in anticipation of the service's beginning.



Barry and Susan Dickens discuss the upcoming move with church members at the picnic.

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

Attendance for June 11th was 126 for both services combined.

Our Giving

Figures through June 11th--
 Ministry budget for 2006 \$475,000
 Ministry gifts needed each week 9,134
 Ministry gifts needed to date 219,216
 Ministry gifts received to date 223,686

Special gifts received to date for ministries outside our budget 10,250

Special June Days

Birthdays:

Bob Visel 06/01
 Cydne Urbina 06/03
 Barbara DeMarsh 06/04
 Court Courtright 06/07
 Joe Bubernak 06/09
 Cindy Little 06/13
 Gail Little 06/14
 John Stong 06/14
 Terri Armstrong 06/15
 Denny Armstrong 06/27
 June Pirtle 06/27
 Lora Belle Cole 06/28
 Kimberley Scudder 06/28

June 9
 Jim & Betty Terrell
 June 12
 Bob & Lucy Malone
 June 15
 Thomas & Jana Beery
 June 18
 John & Sue Wooten
 June 19
 John & Geniece Courtright
 John & Jan Stong
 June 20
 Charles & Emma Jean Mader
 June 21
 Denny & Terri Armstrong
 June 22
 Michael & Pan Hundley
 June 24
 Maurice & Jensina Sheppard
 June 26
 Craig & Carolyn Pearson

Anniversaries:

June 3
 Al & Doris Blackstock
 June 5
 John & Martha Zumbro
 June 6
 Bob & Sarah Kelly
 June 7
 George & Miriam Balog

First United Methodist Church called to:

Seek God,
 Share Christ's Word,
 Serve His World

The next edition of Visions will be dated June 30.
 The deadline for articles is Friday, June 23.

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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

Many thanks go out to all of you who went up to the parsonage to help the Dickens move. Again thanks to those of you who came or came again to the parsonage to prepare it for the

new minister, Dr. Dave Ring and his family. Once again, thank you to all who came or came again to the parsonage to help with the first load of Ring boxes! Wow! You are all awesome.

Thank you to everyone who participated in preparing the Church Picnic for June 4th. You did a great job which was appreciated by all who attended.

Church Picnic Pictures



GAMES



FOOD



FELLOWSHIP

