



FIRST

VISIONS

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"FAITH: PERSONAL BUT NOT PRIVATE"

In every church I've served, including this one, at least one person - usually two or three - whom I visit for the first time says something of this nature: "Preacher, I want you to know that my great-grandfather on my mother's side was a Methodist circuit rider." Frankly, that's not a particularly surprising statement to me. The circuit-riding preachers of the late 18th, all of the 19th, and the early 20th centuries were so numerous that, if your family heritage in this country goes back more than a few generations, there's likely a circuit rider somewhere therein. I myself was a "circuit rider" for several years - I served two churches 31 miles apart. But I used an automobile, rather than a horse, to ride my circuit.

What I've discovered about those persons who, first thing, want to regale me with tales about their circuit rider forebears is that, more often than not, they're really sending me a "coded" message. That message is this: "I don't have much faith, but my ancestors did."

I'm certainly glad to know that present-day church members have distinguished Christian figures in their family tree, but the unvarnished truth about Christian faith is this: "God has no grandchildren." Christian faith is never directly inherited. Your sainted mother's lifelong devotion to Jesus is a wonderful thing - but it says nothing about your religious dedication or the lack thereof. Similarly, your brother who is a deacon at First Baptist Church in Dallas speaks well for him - but that tells me nothing about your faith. Likewise, if your high school best friend went on

to become a Bishop in the Lutheran Church - praise the Lord! But do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Christian faith, if it be real, is always personal. Certainly, the witness of the faith of others is a very positive thing, for it clearly shows us what can and should happen when one is exposed to the love of Jesus. But until we, one by one, reach out and accept that love which Jesus offers, it's merely external. As a United Methodist, I'm a great proponent of Christian education. I want to know all I can about the Bible, about Jesus, about the Church. But ultimately, all that knowledge is just "facts and figures" until I experience, personally, the love of Christ. Christian faith has to be "caught" rather than taught.

The other side of the "personal Jesus" issue, however, is this: Genuine Christian faith is never private. If you've experienced Jesus' love, then you want, indeed you crave, to share that love with others. Whenever folks say to me, "Yes, I'm a believer, but my faith is private. I don't believe in telling others about Jesus," I immediately assume that person's faith is either very weak or non-existent. If you believe so little in Jesus that you don't care whether or not anyone else ever gets to know Him, are you sure you really believe in Him at all?

Dave Ring

November 19

**Commitment Sunday ~ Pot Luck
Crop Walk ~ Church Council**

COMMITMENT SUNDAY

Pastor Ring will conclude his four sermon 2006 Fall Stewardship Emphasis, "The ABC's and D's of Christian Stewardship," with a unique message, "D is for Donation," on Sunday morning, November 19th. At this time, you will be given opportunity to make your 2007 financial commitment to LA-FUMC. This will be a matchless opportunity to make your faith in Jesus Christ tangible for the coming year.

POT LUCK

The Thanksgiving/November Birthday Potluck will be held immediately following the 10:30 A.M. service. You will have time to eat, share fellowship, and then head out to the Crop Walk.

CROP WALK

The annual Church World Service 2.57 mile CROP walk will be held at 2:00 P.M. at the Sheriff's Posse Shack. CROP is an acronym for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty. These are community fund-raising events that bring together people of all faiths to raise money for international relief and development, as well as local hunger fighting. 25% of the money goes to LA Cares. This walk/run is held in connection with the annual Turkey Trot, and you will be eligible to win one of 30 turkeys or 20 pumpkin pies if you are one of the closest guessers to your actual time. Call Aaron Goldman at 662-5959 for further information.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The monthly church council meeting will be held at 7:00 P.M. in the Friendship Center.

The Youngest Skater



Our Friday night skating program has been a mission of our church to the community since 1962. Georgie Crane, son of Ben Crane, and granddson of Karla and the late Tom Crane may be the youngest "skater" ever to participate in the program.

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 for Sunday, November 5 was 0.

Our Giving

Figures through November 5-- Ministry budget for 2006	\$475,000
Ministry gifts needed each week	9,134
Ministry gifts needed to date	411,030
Ministry gifts received to date	0
Shortfall to date	0
Special gifts received to date for ministries outside our budget	0

Special November Days

Birthdays:

Louise Mendius	11/04
Jeanie Standley	11/11
Miriam Balog	11/12
Val Hundley	11/12
Armond Standley	11/12
Irene Bubernak	11/14
Harriet Zickert	11/17
Margaret Gibson	11/22
Mada Jones	11/25
Bob Kelly	11/26

(Apologies to Walt & Martha Lou Ellis for changing their last name in November 3rd's issue--ed.)

Anniversaries:

November 4	Walt & Martha Lou Ellis
November 23	Ron & Mada Jones
November 24	Stanley & Roberta Yasuda
November 25	Court & Mary Courtright
November 26	Dick & Judy Opsahl
November 27	Larry & Bobi Bryant

Cell Phone Recycling

A box is located in the narthex for you to recycle your old cell phones. Help clean up the environment and support Missions at the same time.

First United Methodist Church
called to:

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

The next edition of Visions will be dated May 19.
The deadline for articles is Friday, May 12.

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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
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

Thanks are due to all those who helped with our Revival last week, especially those who took Evangelist John Barrett for lunch or on local tours, who brought food for his late night dinners, and who contributed light refreshments for the time following the service. We thank John Barrett for coming and sharing his insight with us, and we shall all remember to "take our hands off the cup, and let God fill it up."

Special thanks to Opal Lee and Dennis Gill for sharing their dog Mija and her story with us during the children's sermon on November 12th.

Thanks due to all those who cut Campbell's Labels at McCurdy School this month. Remember that the program is changing, and we will have to start saving UPC codes instead of labels. We thank Vicki from McCurdy for speaking with us on November 12.

Upcoming Events Highlights

Sermon Titles

November 19: Pastor Ring will conclude his four sermon 2006 Fall Stewardship Emphasis, "The ABC's and D's of Christian Stewardship," with a unique message, "D Is for Donation," on Sunday morning, November 19th. At this time, you will be given opportunity to make your 2007 financial commitment to LA-FUMC. This will be a matchless opportunity to make your faith in Jesus Christ tangible for the coming year; Luke 6:20-38.

November 26: Thanksgiving Sunday; "The Value of Knowing God's Word"; Matthew 22:23-33

Christmas Drama Practice



Sundays during Children's Church in the Friendship Center

Parents' Night Out

November 17, 5:30 pm in the nursery, Friendship Center, and Mid-High room

Birthday/Potluck

November 19, 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall

Crop Walk

November 19, 2 pm in the Friendship Center

MF Youth Group

November 19, 4 pm in the Senior High Room

Handbells

November 19, 4:30 pm in the Friendship Center

Church Council

November 19, at 7 pm in the Friendship Center

CAC

November 20, 5:30 pm in the Friendship Center

LA Cares

November 20, 6:30 pm in

the Library

Outreach/Missions

November 20, 6:30 pm in the Friendship Center

God and Science: Origins

November 20, 7 pm in the Mid-High Room

Newspaper Deadline

November 20

Finance

November 21, 6:30 pm in the Library

Offices Closed (Thanksgiving)

November 23-24

Handbells

November 26, 6:30 pm in the Friendship Center

Martha Circle

November 28, 1:15 pm at the home of To Bradley

The Way

December 1, 7 am in the Friendship Center for breakfast, 7:45--go out in service to the community

Even Further Ahead . . .

Holiday Salad Luncheon

December 3, 12:30 pm at the home of Opal Lee Gill for all church women

Advent Service/Soup Supper

December 3, 6 pm in the sanctuary, followed by a Soup Supper at 7 pm

Christmas Cantata

December 10, 10:30 am in Sanctuary

Full Drama Cast Rehearsal

December 10, at 12 noon in the Sanctuary

Full Drama Cast Rehearsal

December 16, at 9 am in the Sanctuary

Christmas Drama Presented

December 17, at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

December 24, two evening services in the Sanctuary

McCurdy School Wish List

McCurdy School in Espanola is a United Methodist Mission church. We support it through gifts and services. A complete wish list is available in the narthex, as well as a box for your donated items. A partial wish list follows.

- lined loose leaf paper
- copy paper, white and colored
- 1 subject spiral notebooks, letter and legal
- pocket folders
- glue/glue sticks
- sharpies

- scotch tape and dispensers
- post-it notes, all sizes
- staplers, regular and heavy duty
- 24-count crayons
- pencils
- erasers
- index cards, all sizes and colors
- markers
- poster paint, tempera paint
- subject dividers