



FIRST

VISIONS

an edition of the United Methodist Reporter

Two Sections, Section A | 070665 | Vol. 153 | No. 40 | February 9, 2007

INSIDE  
FIRST VISIONS

The Pastor  
Ponders

Send-off for  
Armstrongs

Pre-  
Confirmation

1<sup>A</sup>

Ark Sunday

4<sup>A</sup>

Special  
February  
Days

Our  
Applause

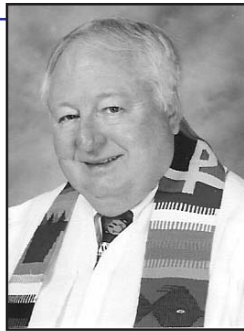
Meet the  
UMW

Upcoming  
Events  
Highlights

Philip  
Yancey,  
Author

5<sup>A</sup>

## The Pastor Ponders



### "Some Pre-Lenten Thoughts"

The shortest verse in the Bible is John 11:35. It's only two words in length: "Jesus wept." Upon learning of the death of his close friend, Lazarus, Jesus wept. But Jesus didn't weep for long over Lazarus. Instead, he raised his friend from the dead, proving his power over even death itself.

There's not a contrasting verse in the scripture which says, "Jesus laughed." But personally, I believe that soon after Lazarus walked out of that tomb at Jesus' command, our Lord hugged him and enjoyed a hearty laugh with his old buddy.

I belong to an informal group of believers in Christ called, "The Fellowship of Merry Christians." This group publishes a monthly newsletter called, "The Joyful Noiseletter." I get a lot of jokes and other humorous anecdotes out of that publication, more than a few of which produce groans when I share them with those in my church congregation. More than once I've been told, "Don't quit your day job!" after telling a Christian joke.

Realistically, I know I'm not cut out to be a comedian. But nonetheless, I remain a firm believer in positive, upbeat Christianity. Strangely enough, though, my happy approach to the Christian faith often raises suspicion among fellow believers in the Lord. Somehow or other, they've been taught that if you're really dedicated to Jesus, you shouldn't be found smiling very often, and certainly not laughing, not ever. As a preacher who cuts up and tells jokes I've been interrogated severely, far more than once:

"Are you sure you're really an ordained minister?"

If I served a God who had lost his battle with sin and evil, wickedness and corruption, I suppose I might be long-faced and somber most of the time. But my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is the victor over all those negatives. And even more: He's conquered death itself. Yes, the Lord Jesus once wept. The Bible says so. But I believe He laughed a lot more - - and I surmise He's still laughing.

To me, it's no accident that "Jesus wept" is the shortest verse in all the Bible.

Lent is coming. It begins this year on February 21st. It's a 40-day period of introspection for Christians. Yes, Lent's a deliberately somber season. But there are 325 other days each year that aren't part of Lent. Mathematically, that tells me Christians should be cheerful around 89% of the time!

People of God - You have good news to share with the world. Smile, giggle, enjoy life. Don't repel others from Jesus by your long face; rather, attract them to Him by your laughter.

*Dave Ring*

## Send-off for the Armstrongs

Denny, Terri, and the rest of the Armstrong family spent their last Sunday in Los Alamos with us at FUMC on January 28th. The Armstrongs are moving to South Carolina where Denny's job is taking them.

As all of you probably know, this family has been very involved in this church throughout their stay in our community. They will be greatly missed.

During the 10:30 am service the congregation prayed over the Armstrongs that the Lord would bless their move and to thank Him for enriching our lives with them while they were here.

Following the service everyone joined the Armstrongs for a very well attended send-off luncheon in the Fellowship Hall.

God's blessings, Armstrongs!



## PRE-CONFIRMATION CLASSES

PLANNED TO BEGIN MARCH 4TH

For youth in grades 5 and up, Pastor Ring is planning to offer another series of pre-Confirmation Classes on four Sunday mornings during the Sunday School time - March 4, 11, 25 and April 1st (which is Palm Sunday.) Traditionally, confirmands in Christian churches are most-often

received on Easter Sunday, which is April 8th this year. For those interested, outlines of the planned classes are available from Pastor Ring. Youth and/or parents, please contact the church office to indicate your/your child's plans to take part in these classes; registration deadline is March 1st.

# ARK Sunday



We celebrated Ark Sunday on January 28th. Students, parents, staff, and the congregation gathered to take a look at the work of FUMC's Ark mission and to dedicate the staff in their service with the Ark.

The Ark has been a ministry of FUMC since 1978. It was founded as an outreach to the Los Alamos community and reaches beyond Los Alamos to Jemez, Espanola, and Santa Fe. The school accepts children from six weeks old through 6th grade. The total number of children served is 120.

The Ark is accredited and holds a 5 Star license, one of only two in Los Alamos. These are both indicators of quality care. Our small rooms are blessings because they allow for low child/adult ratios and numbers. This is one of the factors that sets the stage for quality care.

Quality care results in cooperation, play, sociability, creativity, ability to solve social conflicts, self-control, language and cognitive development. These are important for all children, regardless of socio-economic status.

The children learn through hands-on experience. Through play they learn many things. They understand textures by playing with shaving cream. They play with puzzles and learn eye/hand coordination, a pre-writing skill. Together they paint a large tree on the floor gaining social skills and enriching their creativity. They gather around the stove to cook and develop pre-math skills, large motor skills, and creativity. They build with blocks devel-

oping problem solving skills, pre-math skills, and social skills. At every turn they learn to take turns and share.

One of the major advantages of our ministry is our ability to express spirituality and faith. We remember Christ's birthday in our celebration of Christmas and Christ's resurrection in Easter. Chapel is held every week. We sing songs which the children then take home. Parents often ask for the words so that they can sing the songs with their kids. Impromptu conversations are often started with teachers after Chapel about what they have heard. Children also get to read from age appropriate Bibles which are in every room.

We thank all of the First United Methodist community for sponsoring and supporting this mission of the church. We thank you for your prayers for children when they are ill, for scholarships for children whose parents cannot afford the Ark. Thank you to all the people who have contributed time--Santa, Ron Jones; Grandmas & Grandpas, Charlotte McQuillan, George Balog, Mary Byers, Jeannie Standley, Rachael Taylor; the Trustees; Don Casperson; and John Courtright--among others to numerable to count. Thank you for all the stuff you think to bring from plastic grocery bags to outgrown toys and books. Thank you, UMW for the mat covers. Thank you, Ark Board for overseeing the operation of the Ark. Thank you, Mid-High Sunday School class for the Ark sign.



## Special February Days

<b>Birthdays:</b>		<i>Sarah Kelly</i>	02/18
<i>Doris Blackstock</i>	02/01	<i>Lance Eaton</i>	02/20
<i>Bob Collom</i>	02/05		
<i>Aaron Goldman</i>	02/08	<b>Anniversaries:</b>	
<i>Stacey Eaton</i>	02/12	February 17	
<i>Frances Naffziger</i>	02/15	<i>Cathy &amp; Darin Westley</i>	

## Meet the UMW

The United Methodist Women are a connectional organization within a connectional church. As such, we operate within the purpose of United Methodist Women:

"The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church."

In our local unit, our participation at district, conference, and division levels, and our support and activity in mission

and fellowship worldwide, we seek to know and serve God as our purpose indicates.

The UMW at First United Methodist Church is broken down into three groups: Martha Circle, which meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 1:15 pm in a member's home; Create & Discover, which meets on the first Thursday of the month at 7:15 pm in a member's home; and Sister to Sister, which meets on the first and third Tuesday of the month at noon in the Friendship Center.

For more information about UMW or to find out where a meeting is being held, call Opal Lee Gill, president of our branch of UMW, at 662-5311.



First United Methodist Church  
called to:

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

The next edition of Visions will be dated February 23.  
The deadline for articles is Wednesday, February 14.

715 Diamond Drive  
Los Alamos, NM 87544  
Phone: 505-662-6277  
Fax: 505-663-0089

E-mail: [lafumc@lafumc.org](mailto:lafumc@lafumc.org)  
Website: [www.lafumc.org](http://www.lafumc.org)  
Pastor ~ Dr. Dave Ring  
Choir Director ~ Sarah Kelly  
First Visions Editor ~ Jan Stong

**Ark Child Development Center**  
Carol Mead, Director  
(505) 662-4822

**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

We would like to thank all the people who on a continuing basis oversee the running of Emmaus Community. An especially large thanks to Denny and

Terri Armstrong, who through all their years here have been a foundational part of both the Emmaus community and First United Methodist Church.

Thank you everyone who has bolstered the mission of the Ark. Any list of you would be incomplete. The prayers, words of support, time, and other things are much appreciated.

## Upcoming Events Highlights

### Sermon Titles

February 11: Boy Scout Sunday "What Does It Take?" John 10:22-30

February 18: Transfiguration Sunday "Mountaintop Delights and Dark Valleys" Mark 9:2-9

February 25: First Sunday in Lent "What's Lent?" Matthew 16:21-25

March 4: Second Sunday in Lent--Holy Communion "A Christian Passover" Numbers 28:14-25



### LA Cares Missions Dinner

February 10, 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall

### McCurdy School Gala

February 10, 6 pm in Espanola

### IAF Crafts

February 11, 4 pm in the Friendship Center

### MF

February 11, 4 pm in the Senior High Room

### Handbells

February 11, 6:30 pm in the Friendship Center

### UMW Study

February 12, 10:30 am in the Friendship Center

### Outreach

February 12, 6:30 pm in the Library

### SPRC

February 13, 7 pm in the Asbury Room

### PNO (Parents' Night Out)

February 16, at 6:30 pm

### Offices Closed

February 19 in observance of Presidents' Day

### LA Cares

February 19, 6:30 pm in the Library

### UMW Study

February 20, 10:30 am in the Friendship Center

### Ark Board

February 20, 6 pm in the Mid-High Room

### Finance

Will not meet this month

### Ash Wednesday Service

February 21, 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary (about 40 minutes long)

### Yancey Seminar

February 23-24, at United Church--see display in the narthex for more details

## Philip Yancey, Author

Our congregation has been invited to a series of talks by the noted author Philip Yancey. There will be a lecture on Friday evening, February 23rd, and a workshop/seminar on Saturday, February 24th at the United Church. It is truly a privilege and great opportunity to have Philip Yancey. He accepts few speaking engagements, concentrating primarily on his freelance writing on topics of faith and Biblical understanding.

In Philip Yancey's own words, "My books are a process of exploration and investigation. So I tend to tackle different problems related to faith, things of concern to me, things I wonder about and worry about." Yancey writes with a journalist's eye for detail, irony, and honest skepticism. He is well known for his books, including *The Jesus I Never Knew*, *What's So Amazing about Grace?*, *Where is God When It Hurts?*, (with Dr. Paul Brand) *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, and *In His Image*.

The cost of the Saturday seminars will be \$35.00 per person, which includes lunch and refreshments. The Friday

evening session will be without charge. More information and arrangements will be forthcoming. Registration forms will be made available in December and the United Church asks that responses be made as soon as possible. Please Note February 23rd and 24th, 2007 on your calendar

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Philip Yancey earned graduate degrees in Communications and English from Wheaton College Graduate School and the University of Chicago. He joined the staff of *Campus Life* Magazine in 1971, and worked there as Editor for eight years.

Since 1978 Philip Yancey has primarily concentrated on freelance writing. More than 600 of his articles have appeared in 80 different publications, including *Reader's Digest*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *National Wildlife*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Christian Century*, and *The Reformed Journal*. He writes articles and a monthly column for *Christianity Today* magazine, which he serves as Editor at Large. Also, he serves as Co-Chair of the Editorial Board for

*Books and Culture*, a recent publication of *Christianity Today*.

His sixteen books include *Where Is God When It Hurts?*, *The Student Bible* and *Disappointment with God*. These books have won eleven God Medallion Awards from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association and have sold more than five million copies. (*Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, *In His Image*, and *The Gift of Pain* were co-authored with Dr. Paul Brand.) Christian bookstore managers selected *The Jesus I Never Knew* as the 1996 Book of the Year, and *What's So Amazing about Grace?* won the same award in 1998. His most recent books are *The Bible Jesus Read*, *Reaching for the Invisible God*, *Soul Survivor*, and *Rumors of Another World*.

The Yanceys lived in downtown Chicago for many years before moving to a very different environment in Colorado. They enjoy hiking, wildlife, and all the other delights of the Rocky Mountains.

Reprinted from the August 11, 2006 issue.