



FIRST

VISIONS

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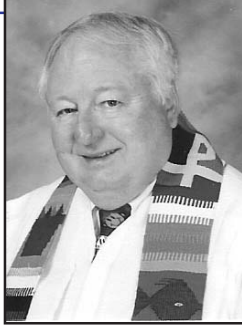
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## The Pastor Ponders



### "Prayer Concerns in Worship"

What is a "prayer concern?" To whom are prayer concerns addressed? How much, or how little, needs to be verbally expressed?

In our 10:30 AM Sunday morning worship services, "prayer concerns" are, frankly, themselves becoming a concern. At present I try to offer opportunity, for those who wish to do so, to spontaneously offer either "praises" or "concerns" during the time of morning prayer. "Praises" aren't a problem - other than the fact that there are so few of them offered, which might be disappointing to God, who has lavishly blessed every one of us and, according to Scripture, delights in the praises of His people.

Prayer concerns, however, have become an "issue" for our congregation. Our Worship Committee has wrestled with this issue more than once since my arrival. As pastor, it's my responsibility to give guidance.

First, let me be very clear that all prayer, be it mine or yours, spontaneous or pre-prepared, is offered directly to God. God, not other human beings, is the audience for real prayer. Christians don't ever "pray" to each other; that would be idolatry.

However, many of the "prayer concerns" I'm hearing in our worship these days aren't really prayer concerns at all. They're thinly disguised public announcements - to me and to the congregation at large - about someone's need for ministry. "Sam Jones has been sick and we need to take food to him during his recovery period" is inappropriate as a "prayer concern." If you want to voice that to me privately, or if you want to make an announcement of that nature during the proper time for announcements, well and good. Be let's be candid - that's not prayer.

A second problematic aspect of "prayer concerns" is "how much needs to be said?" The answer is "less is plenty." When we're really addressing Almighty God, who knows our needs far better than we do, instructing God about what needs to be done is the height of arrogance. "Betty Smith has cancer. Pray that the doctors will find the right treatment for her," is really telling God what to do. God knows Betty's situation and circumstances better than any of us do. Simply naming "Betty Smith," is sufficient information for God. Even, "Betty Smith, who has cancer," is getting to be a little much. Any more than that implies you're either instructing God or really not praying at all, just sharing information with everyone present.

One more aspect of "prayer concerns" is personal privacy. Some folks, actually a significant percentage of folks, really don't want their problems and ailments aired before the entire congregation. When you stand up and say, "Pray for Norma Sanchez, who's going through a really rough divorce right now," Norma Sanchez is more than likely going to be upset with you, me, and the entire church body. I've actually had more than a few folks say to me, "I'm embarrassed by the way some of our folks speak up in our church during prayer time without thinking." Unfortunately, I have to agree.

The awesome responsibility of interceding, in prayer, on behalf of others is a wonderful privilege which God has entrusted to His people. Let's employ it carefully and wisely. May our prayer concerns be channels for the flow of God's grace and blessing to those whom both He and we deeply love.

*Dave Ring*

## 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.



Children's Church was well attended February 4th at the second service as Aaron Goldman shares a lesson told by Blacky the Bear.



The Way participants drove to Espanola on Saturday, February 3rd, to help with clean up and other tasks at McCurdy School, a Christian school project related to the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, for children from Pre-school through High School ages.

## Core Competency Training

### CORE COMPETENCIES FOR CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS LEADER TRAINING

The Special Program on Substance Abuse and Related Violence at Global Ministries/The United Methodist Church and the Rush Center of the Johnson Institute invites you to a unique opportunity for clergy and congregational leaders to receive relevant information and skills to initiate and support prevention, addition recovery and public policy advocacy ministries. In 2004, the General Board of Church and Society endorsed trainings of the Rush Center. The Core Competencies introduces religious leaders to the basic information and skills needed to respond to alcohol and other drug concerns within the congregation.

1.5 credit hours of Continuing Ed Units are available upon completion of training. Registration (includes meals, lodging and materials) is \$100 for UMCers and \$125 for non-UMCers. SCJ training is April 18-19, 2007, at Philander Smith College, Nugent Center Elder's Lecture Hall, Chester Street, Little Rock, AR. Registration deadline is April 11, 2007.

For registration forms and further information for the clergy or team trainings, please contact SPSARV at (212) 870-3699, or <mailto:spsarv@gbgm-umc.org>. (Registration forms may also be obtained from the NM conference office by contacting Diane Lippitt.)

## Gabby Gonzales Valentine's Day Bake Sale

May  
God  
Be



with you  
and  
keep you

## HANDY LITTLE CHART

### GOD HAS A POSITIVE ANSWER: YOU SAY/GOD SAYS/BIBLE VERSES

- You say: "It's impossible"  
God says: All things are possible (Luke 18:27)
- You say: "I'm too tired"  
God says: I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28-30)
- You say: "Nobody really loves me"  
God says: I love you (John 3:1 6 & John 3:34 )
- You say: "I can't go on"  
God says: My grace is sufficient (II Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 91:15)
- You say: "I can't figure things out"  
God says: I will direct your steps (Proverbs 3:5- 6)
- You say: "I can't do it"  
God says: You can do all things (Philippians 4:13)
- You say: "I'm not able"  
God says: I am able (II Corinthians 9:8)
- You say: "It's not worth it"  
God says: It will be worth it (Roman 8:28 )
- You say: "I can't forgive myself"  
God says: I forgive you (I John 1:9 & Romans 8:1)
- You say: "I can't manage"  
God says: I will supply all your needs (Philippians 4:19)
- You say: "I'm afraid"  
God says: I have not given you a spirit of fear (II Timothy 1:7)
- You say: "I'm always worried and frustrated"  
God says: Cast all your cares on ME (I Peter 5:7)
- You say: "I'm not smart enough"  
God says: I give you wisdom (I Corinthians 1:30)
- You say: "I feel all alone"  
God says: I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5)



Gabby

If you would like to help the Gonzales family with the staggering costs of Gabby's medical bills, please contact Carol Mead or Christy Gonzales in the Ark Office or phone at 662-4822.

## Special March Days

### Birthdays:

Ruby Meaders	03/05	Susan Sasser	03/22
Larry Bryant	03/09	Rachel Granzow	03/23
Fran Ring	03/09	Harold Kruse	03/25
Cleo Byers	03/10	Martha Lou Ellis	03/26
Don Siebe	03/10	Bob Phillips	03/26
claire Harmon	03/12	Pam Hundley	03/27
Thomas Beery	03/18		
Emma Barefield	03/19	<b>Anniversaries:</b>	
Vicki Ricketts	03/20	March 31	
Charlotte McQuillan	03/21	Don & Kathy Siebe	

Dear FUMC Los Alamos Family,

We would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your many prayers, wishes, gifts, and kind words during these last few weeks that we were in Los Alamos. The reception that you gave us was incredibly special and touched us so! What a blessing you all are to us!

We wish that we would have had the time to sit down with each and everyone of you and share about how you have impacted our lives. We have such fond memories. It has been our pleasure to serve with you these last years!

We will miss you all, and you will be in our prayers. We know God is doing great things in Los Alamos and in South Carolina! He's just that way! Because of Jesus, we are confident that we will meet again!

Thank you again, with much love,

Denny and Terri Armstrong

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Aiken, South Carolina 29803  
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First United Methodist Church  
called to:

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

The next edition of Visions will be dated March 9.  
The deadline for articles is Friday, March 2.

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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 hearty souls who have braved our snow covered walks on more than one occasion this winter to make them safe for the rest of us. Thank you for all

that extra shoveling you have done. Those of us who are less sturdy on our feet, myself included, greatly appreciate that we have been able to get into the church without slipping and falling on the ice and

snow including the following: Dennis Gill, Ben Gibson, and Don Casperson.

Thank you also to John Courtright who has come to the church on several occasions to deal with plumbing issues.

## Upcoming Events Highlights

### Sermon Titles

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

March 4: Communion; Second Sunday in Lent "A Christian Passover" Numbers 28:16-25



### Yancey Seminar

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

### MF

February 25, 4 pm in the Senior High Room

### CAC

February 26, 5:30 pm in the Library

### Mission Movie

February 26, 6:30 pm in the Friendship Center--"The Mission"

### Christian Education

February 26, 7 pm in the Library

### Martha Circle

February 27, 1:15 pm TBA

### Create & Discover

March 1, 7:15 pm TBA

### The Way

March 3, 7 am in the Friendship Center

### Church Council

March 4, 7 pm in the Friendship Center

### Emmaus Community

March 5, 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall

### Sister to Sister

March 6, 12 noon in the Friendship Center

### Trustees

March 6, 7 pm in the Library

### MF Skate Weekend

March 9-10

### Time Change

Night of Saturday, March 10, set your clocks forward one hour

### LAF Crafts

March 11, 4 pm in the Friendship Center

### PNO (Parents' Night Out)

March 16, at 6:30 pm



Welcome!  
to our  
newest  
member,  
Joel Farnham

Please welcome Joel Farnham who officially joined our church on Sunday, February 11th.

He lives at 183 Piedra Loop. His phone number is 672-2756. Be sure and add him to your membership phone lists.

## Calling All Parents!

Join the new Sunday School Group for parents--couples and singles. Bring your ideas!

Discuss our kids antics? Then refer to **How to Get Your Kinds to Mind Without Losing Yours? Make kids activity packets for church service?**

Be sure to invite your friends. Our planning meeting will be **Sunday, February 25th during the Sunday School hour in the Fellowship Hall.**

Call Camille Wescott at 662-0905 or [cls\\_w@hotmail.com](mailto:cls_w@hotmail.com) with questions.