



FIRST

VISIONS

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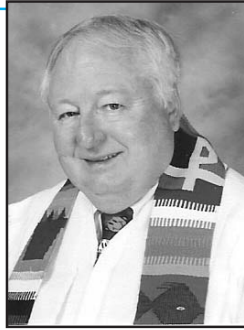
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The Pastor Ponders



"VOTING - GOOD FOR THE NATION, BAD FOR THE CHURCH"

"Voting" is a concept which most Americans regard as a pillar of our society. From the grassroots election of school board members in our county to the national choice of a president to govern the nation, Americans believe in voting (or at least we say we do, though actual voter turnout is dismally low for most elections). Even when we don't formally vote on something, we enjoy being "polled" about any and all issues, trivial or substantive. We delight in quoting the results of a recent survey which tells us, for example, that 75% of Americans enjoy eating peanut butter.

Having lived in one nation where dictatorship was the method of rule, and having visited and/or done mission work in more than a dozen other nations where opportunities to vote are few and far between, I share the American passion for voting embraced by our nation. It's not a perfect method but, for our populace, it's better than many alternatives.

In the Church of Jesus Christ, however, voting is not as effective as it is for our nation. Indeed, voting - more often than not in my opinion - can produce bad rather than good results for the people of God.

There are two instances of formal "voting" to be found in the Bible, one each in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, specifically Numbers 13, Moses sent 12 men to "spy out" the Promised Land before entering it. Ten of those men returned with a negative report: "We can't possibly conquer it." Only two, Joshua and Caleb, said, "With God's help we can do it." Regardless of God's urging them to proceed, this 10 to 2 negative vote was decisive. And over the

next 40 years, two million people needlessly lost their lives while wandering in the wilderness, before God's people finally worked up the courage to actually do what their Lord had long before told them to do.

In the New Testament, Acts 1, the remaining eleven apostles decided to vote on replacing Judas the betrayer. Two candidates were proposed and voted upon. A man named Matthias won. And he was never heard from again in Christian history. The result of this "churchly exercise in voting" was purely and simply nothing.

After three decades as a pastor in eight different congregations, I've been on the "winning" side of most of the votes that I've seen taken in those churches. But even that overall positive personal experience hasn't changed my opinion. Voting, whatever the issue may be, is more often than not bad for the church. For while voting may produce "winners," it simultaneously creates "losers." And no one should ever be made a loser in the Church of Jesus Christ.

There's no particular issue before LA-FUMC at this time to which these thoughts are directed. And that's why I offer them now. For when we come to the next "hot" topic on which we're tempted to demand, "Let's vote on it!" I invite us to think twice. Might there be a better way for the people of God to make right decisions?

Keep the faith, do the work, praise the Lord!

Dave Ring

Senior Appreciation Night

by Don Casperson

We hosted some 220 graduating high school seniors and their guests on that Saturday evening/Sunday morning, as our time slot for this particular Senior Appreciation Night activity was from 11:00pm until 12:30am. United Skates was one of the dozen locations where the seniors got special tickets punched in order to be eligible for the Senior Class prizes, which were awarded at their 4:00am breakfast at the Betty Ehart Senior Center. Most of our visitors did choose to skate, and many thanks go out to

Chris Robertson and Sara Hutto, as well as the SAN volunteers who came over to help us hand out skates and to congratulate the graduates.

The annual Senior Appreciation Night activities are arranged by our local YMCA and sponsored by many Los Alamos businesses and organizations. It has offered an alcohol-free venue for the celebration of Los Alamos High School graduates for more than twenty years.



Kindergarden Graduation



**Highland Valley United Methodist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas
Youth Choir**



Invites you to worship and celebrate

“WHY?”

**Why do we come to church?
Why faith?
WHY GOD?**

Thursday, June 28th
7:00 PM

First United Methodist Church Los Alamos

Hogar Batania Mission to Ecuador

The FUMC Outreach/Mission team is sponsoring a second mission trip to Quito, Ecuador to make repairs at an ecumenical low-income assisted living center just outside of Quito. This facility houses approximately 50 individuals and is supported by the residents and local churches in the area. There are issues with some of the roofs and they probably have additional needs as well.

Who: All interested Christians (FUMC members have excellent scholarship opportunities)

When: August 2 - 10th, 2007 (this may shift by one or two days due to ticket prices)

Where: Quito, Ecuador (Elevation approximately 9300 ft)

Lodging: Three to Four nights at a Nazarene Seminary and two (1 or 2) nights in Quito and one (1) night TBD

How much: approximately \$1500.00 (depending on cost of materials). All expenses are covered (room, board, & transportation) with the exception of souvenirs

Skills: Just be willing to get your hands dirty, Also electrical, brick and mortar, or light carpentry skills are desirable. They also have needs with people just spending time with residents of the facility.

Additional Needs: TBD.

Contact: Pastor Dave, Jim Little, or Dennis or Susan (Nava) Trumblee.

Requirements:

US Passport -current U. S. passport, with at least six months left on it beyond August 2nd before the expiration date, if not you should apply for one right away; go to the Los Alamos Post Office for forms and details.

Immunizations - There are no required immunizations (You may wish to consider HEP A, HEP B, Typhoid, and have a current tetanus)

See <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/tropsam.htm>

Elevation - 9300 ft elevation

Translators: Pastor Dave, Susan Nava, and at least one local, it would be a great opportunity to practice your Spanish as well.

Reprint of article from 12/1/06
by Jan Stong

I grew up in a church where missionary work was a good thing, but it wasn't something you did. When I started attending church at First United Methodist Church in Los Alamos, NM, I began to discover another world. I found a place where my Christianity grew into more than just something that I believed in. I found myself wanting to commit in a way I had never done before.

Standing in front of a group of people holds little difficulty for me. Telling people what God has done in my life, how He's seen me through times of trial is a joy filled experience. At least it is when I speak the language. Sitting down with an eighty-year-old woman who has so much to share with me and with whom I understand virtually nothing, is another thing entirely.

I used my few words well. Solo Englese (may not even be Spanish--Spangish?); Beunos Dias; Gracias; no comprende. (Please forgive my spelling--the only thing worse than my Spanish is my spelling of Spanish.) I looked into this genteel lady's eyes and communicated. She and I shared love for one another and our Lord. I caught a word now and then. Jesus was predominant in her vocabulary (hazus not jesus).

That communication and the fact that I cared enough to sit with her and listen was more important than standing in front of this woman and pronouncing a sermon in perfect Spanish. The gift God gave me to give to these gracious people and to receive from them was not the gift of tongues but the gift of love.

The question is asked: "Does it make good sense to spend money to go down to South America to do missions when

there are needy at home in our own state who could use help. Jesus said that the poor are always with us. We help who we can and who we are called to serve. For some that service may be to those in our own backyard with programs such as Christmas boxes, Habitat for Humanity, and Campbell soup labels for McCurdy School. Others are called to give money or goods to causes both here and abroad. Still others are called to venture out onto foreign soil to aid people we have difficulty communicating with, but who understand the love we show in our presence and hard work. They see God's care through our caring enough to come and spend time working with them.

Our presence at Hogar Batania in Quito, Ecuador inspired one group of young adults to come and work on the open garden area at Hogar with us. Together we worked up the

soil, split up plants, and replanted them. They caught our enthusiasm and made it theirs. They are planning on returning on their own to do more with and for the residents here.

I see God's hand in the work of our missionaries who work full time in mission fields, in the hands of those who go out on Volunteers in Missions (VIM), in the acts of kindness in our own communities, and in the support of the congregations at home both in prayer and monetary gifts.

Thank you for enabling me and my mission team to take this opportunity to step outside ourselves and our own needs. You gave us the chance to reach out to another people living in a very different world from ours--to touch them with the love of Christ in service, to their needs, to care, and to share the love of Christ.



Special June Days

Birthdays:

Bob Visel 06/01
 Barbara DeMarsh 06/04
 Court Courtright 06/07
 Joe Bubernak 06/09
 Cindy Little 06/13
 Gail Little 06/14
 John Stong 06/14
 Isaac Ortiz 06/18
 Judy Opsahl 06/23
 June Pirtle 06/27
 Lora Bell Cole 06/28
 Kimberly Scudder 06/28

Brad & Camille Wescott

June 7
 George & Miriam Balog
 June 9
 Jim & Betty Terrell
 June 12
 Bob & Lucy Malone
 June 15
 Tom & Jana Beery
 June 19
 John & Geniece Courtright
 John & Jan Stong
 June 20
 Charles & Emma Jean

Anniversaries:

June 3
 Al & Doris Blackstock
 June 5
 John & Martha Zumbro
 June 6
 Bob & Sarah Kelly

Mader
 June 22
 Michael & Pam Hundley
 June 24
 Maurice & Jensina
 Sheppard

This Saturday's BOLO TIE EVENT!

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner June 16, 2007 at 6 pm

If you have volunteered your time this past year in support of our mission of reaching God's World, we want you to know just how much you are appreciated. Your time and talents are valued. Are you a Sunday School teacher? A church committee member? Helped with VBS? Substituted for the secretary? Cleaned up after a pot luck? Gone on a mission trip? Given of your time? Given of your gifts? Then this dinner is for you. So don your western shirt, bolo tie, hat, and boots (or not) and join us for a chuck wagon style dinner. No child care will be provided so all of our volunteers may participate.

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner!!

Y a a ' l c o m e !

First United Methodist Church called to:

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

The next edition of Visions will be dated June 15.
 The deadline for articles is Friday, June 8.

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 Carol Mead, Director
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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

Thank you to all the members of our church who worked together to earn a special award at this year's New

Mexico Annual Conference. The Award is the Cinco Estrellas Award presented for outstanding achievement in the Missions to

the the New Mexico Annual Conference.



Upcoming Events Highlights



Sermon Titles

June 17 Father's Day
 Dr. Dave Ring "Father of Our Brand" Old Testament-- Psalm 85
 June 24 VBS Sunday
 Dr. Dave Ring "Let the Children Come Gospel-- Luke 18:15-17
 July 1 Independence Sunday Communion

Parents' Night Out

June 15, 6:30 to 9:30 pm

Volunteer Dinner

June 16, 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall

VBS

June 17-21, 5:30-8 pm

VBS

June 18-22, 9-11:30 am

La Cares

June 18, 7 am in the Friendship Center

Newspaper Articles Due

June 22

Worship Committee

June 26 in the Library

Little Rock Youth Choir

June 28 potluck at 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall followed by a concert at 7 pm in the Sanctuary

Staff Meeting

June 29 at 9 am in the Library

Emmaus Community

July 2, 6 pm potluck in the Fellowship Hall followed by worship at 7 pm in the Friendship Center

The Way

July 7, 7 am in the Friendship Center

Meet Ann LePage

Meet Ann LePage, the new member of our staff who is joining us officially on June 16th as our new Discipleship Coordinator.--

I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, graduated from high school there, got my degree in sociology from Ohio State. I have two brothers, younger, who each have two children, so I have three nephews and a niece. My mother still lives in Cincinnati, close to my younger brother.

I was confirmed in the Methodist Church when I was 12, then like many teenagers, slipped away from the church. I still thought of myself as a Methodist though. When I married, I asked to be married in a Methodist church, and we began attending regularly. Gradually the church became more important in my life, until one day, attending Annual Conference, I picked up a brochure about the Deaconess program. I attended a Discernment Event and had an epiphany there. I felt God was disappointed in me for living my life to my advantage, and not His. I decided to devote the rest of my life to service to God and spent the next three years going through the process to become a Deaconess.

My path as a Deaconess lead me to Bolivia for almost two years, where I served as the Librarian for a large Methodist

school. It was a life of daily challenges and incredible rewards. I finally finished the project to renovate the library and had a sense that God wanted me to do something more. So I moved to New Mexico, hoping He would show me what that something was.

I believe working for the Methodist Church in Los Alamos will be another challenge and

learning experience for me. I am praying that I can assist the church in its mission to be a place where people learn how to serve God and community, be a beacon of spirituality and love, and a center of peace and justice.

