



FIRST

VISIONS

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## The Pastor Ponders



### "WHAT ARE YOU ADDING FOR LENT?"

Although United Methodists are Protestant Christians, we are quite close cousins to our Roman Catholic forebears in the Christian faith and, especially in northern New Mexico, often find ourselves copying their practices. In the Christian season of Lent, this means that many of us follow the tradition of "giving something up" for Lent. For example, my wife Fran is giving up her favorite beverage, tea, throughout the 40 days of Lent 2008.

"Forty days" is a Biblical span of time which signifies "preparation." Quite early in the history of the Church, many Christian communities adopted the idea of annually setting aside 40 days prior to Easter to prepare for celebrating this most wonderful event. The word "Lent" used in our present-day English language to denote this 40-day season (actually 46 or 47 days, as the Sundays therein aren't counted) is merely an adoption of an older German root word for "spring."

This concept of "giving something up" for Lent finds its roots prior to the time of Jesus in the ancient Hebrews' practice of removing all leaven from their homes during the days leading up to Passover. Since Passover and Easter are intimately intertwined, early Christians continued to do that which was similar to, but not identical with, Jewish practice. The generalized intent of Lent was to prepare for Easter by giving up sin, a practice known as "shriving," from which the

term "Shrove Tuesday" - our present-day Mardi Gras -- is derived. Outwardly giving up something tangible is a way of showing one's inner desire to avoid sin during the Lenten season.

Because I wasn't raised in the Christian faith but came to know Jesus as a young adult, I'm a bit of a maverick in regard to many Christian traditions. So my personal interpretation of Lent is, rather than to "take something away" during this season, to add something to my faith and practice of Christianity.

In prior years I've added mission projects, Christian causes to which I could contribute, new forms of daily prayer, new persons I've purposed to win to Christ, etc. This year, I'm adding a daily discipline of listening to at least one chapter of the New Testament. This isn't a "new" idea for me, but the refreshment of something I haven't done for about a decade. I regularly read the Bible, yes - but it's been some time since I've "heard" the Scriptures as recommended in Romans 10:17.

Are you observing Lent this year by giving something up? That's not a bad idea, but I'd like to recommend mine to you instead: Add something to your Christian faith and practice this Lenten season. Praise the Lord!



Thoughts  
ON LENT

*Dore Ring*

## COOKIES FOR KAIROS

There are 7 members of this church serving on the team for the KAIROS weekend at the Women's Correctional Facility in Grants on the weekend of March 6-9. One of the blessings we bring to the facility is to give every woman and each officer there a dozen cookies. They look forward to our coming because of that. So, from our congregation we have a need for 210 dozen cookies. You will find a sign-up sheet and instructions for the baking and packing of the cookies on the table in the Narthex. Even if you don't sign up, your cookies will be welcome. We will need them to be put in the freezer in the church kitchen by March 4th. Thanking you in advance for your participation in this ministry.

## Breakfast Burritos

Missions Fund Raiser  
February 24th

After 1st service,  
through Sunday School,  
and before 2nd service

Plan on breakfast at church!



## UMCOR responds to "Super Tuesday" Tornadoes

UMCOR is responding to devastating tornadoes that struck five southern states, Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee on Tuesday Feb. 5. Early response teams are helping in the massive debris cleanup and UMCOR is working with regional church partners to bring relief where it is needed most.

In a release issued by UMCOR on Feb. 7, Bishop Felton E. May, interim general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries that includes UMCOR expressed, "I cannot possibly feel or understand everything that our sisters and brothers in the stricken areas are experiencing. We do want them to know that we care. Ways in which we demonstrate our caring are through our gifts to UMCOR, our presence, and our prayers."

The tornadoes, considered to be the worst outbreak in nearly 25 years, stormed through the southern states on "Super Tuesday", the day of many state presidential primaries. Dozens of people were killed and many more injured or trapped under debris. Thousands of homes were destroyed.

Please pray and give to Domestic Disaster Response, UMCOR Advance #901670 and indicate "Super Tuesday" Tornadoes in your giving.

# NAVAJO YOUTH FROM FOUR CORNERS GO MULTI-CULTURAL

Benson Ndolo, who works with the Navajo youth of the Four Corners as well as pastoring at Tselani UMC, sends the following most interesting update of the wonderful and exciting ongoing ministry with these young people:

mailto:bkkdollo@hotmail.com  
This year started well with the Navajo kids moving from their comfort zones to share the love of Jesus with our brothers and sisters beyond Navajo Reservation. We had the opportunity to be invited at Los Alamos UMC, NM and St John's UMC Albuquerque to share the love of God through songs and handbell choir.

At Los Alamos we had 26 kids and 4 chaperones. We had wonderful experience with some of the kids singing in front of strangers for the first time, but the love extended by the congregation made them comfortable. Two of the kids had a very unique experience of their lifetime by being requested to be acolytes during church service, something they had never seen before in their lifetime. We had a lot of fun with host families, swimming and skating among other interesting activities. Benson had the opportunity to preach at both Sunday worship services while Lori led the handbell choir.

At St John's UMC, we took 31 kids and 4 adults and it was even more experience consid-

ering the large church size. We also sang at all their 3 worship services and had bell choir perform during lucheon, also we had invited some African friends who together with Benson and Lori sang few African praise songs. Benson helped with administering holy communion during worship service. We had good time here for the whole congregation made us feel at home thus extending the love of God to all Nations.

The host families did a wonderful job by allowing these kids to their homes which means a lot to them most of who have never had such an experience staying at somebody else's home. From both these trips these kids learned a lot, and one thing they all have come to learn is 'Christianity preaches love, and is free, where as the medicineman preaches hatred and you have to pay for'. These trips help these Navajos build their esteem and also help them to see and experience true Christian love especially when it comes from people of diverse cultures.

We hope that many churches will invite us to their churches to share God's love through our singing, handbell choir, testimonies etc. Mid this month we have been invited to Gallup United Methodist Church. Please continue keeping us in your prayers.



Many thanks to all of the host families, MF Sponsors and Youth, pizza kitchen help, contributors to Soup/Potato Potluck, Potluck kitchen help and all of the congregation for making the Navajo Youth Weekend such a great success! It truly does take a whole congregation to show its love to thirty strangers and make them feel welcome. We all made some great memories and I hope we can continue our relationship with the Navajos.



It's cool! We are on our way to Los Alamos!



Los Alamos service



Navajo kids singing at Los Alamos

## Special February Days

### Birthdays:

Doris Blackstock 02/01  
 Bob Collom 02/05  
 Aaron Goldman 02/08  
 Stacey Eaton 02/12  
 Francis Naffziger 02/15  
 Sarah Kelly 02/18  
 Lance Eaton 02/20

### Anniversaries:

February 17  
 Cathy & Darin Westley

### HOLY THURSDAY 2008 PASSOVER SEDER RESERVATION MARCH 20TH, 6 PM FELLOWSHIP HALL OF LA-FUMC

Los Alamos First United Methodist Church will observe Passover Seder, the "Last Supper" which Jesus observed with His disciples and the basis for the Christian celebration of Holy Communion, on Holy Thursday, March 20, 2008, beginning at 6 PM in the church Fellowship Hall. In the Jewish tradition Passover Seder is both a worship liturgy and a family meal in which children, in particular, play very important roles. Pastor Ring will attempt to present Passover Seder in both its traditional as well as its Messianic meanings.

If you would like to take part in this combined "potluck dinner" and "worship service," please make a reservation using this form. Everyone attending is asked to bring a main dish and a choice of either vegetable, salad, or dessert. (Please no ham, pork or shrimp.) After filling out the form, please make sure it is returned to the church office. Deadline for reservations is Monday morning, March 24th or the first 96 reservations made, whichever occurs first.

Individual or Family Name \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Adults \_\_\_\_ Number of Children \_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

First United Methodist Church  
 called to:

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

The next edition of Visions will be dated March 7.  
 The deadline for articles is Wednesday, February 27.

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Ark Child Development Center  
 Lorri White, Director  
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United Skates  
 First Session:  
 3rd graders & younger  
 5:30 pm - 6:45 pm  
 Admission \$2.00  
 Second Session:  
 4th graders & older  
 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
 Admission \$2.50

Sunday Services & Activities  
 8:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship  
 9:45 a.m. Sunday School  
 11 a.m. Traditional Worship

Wednesday Activities  
 Chancel Choir 7 p.m.

## PRE-CONFIRMATION CLASSES

TO BEGIN FEB. 24TH

Pre-Confirmation Classes will begin during the Sunday School hour on February 24th for youth in grades 5 through 10. For more information, please contact Pastor Ring at 662-6277. (Older youth and/or adults who are interested in receiving this instruction are welcome to talk with the pastor about one-on-one scheduling.)



## Upcoming Events Highlights

### Sermon Titles

February 24 Third Sunday  
 in Lent Pastor Ring's sermon: "Leaping in Lent" Matthew 16:21-28

March 2 Fourth Sunday in  
 Lent Communion Sunday  
 Pastor Ring's sermon: "Why  
 All the Blood? Hebrews  
 9:15-22

March 9 Fifth Sunday in  
 Lent Pastor Ring's sermon:  
 "Thomas" - A "First Person"  
 Dramatic Monologue based  
 upon John 20:24-28 and  
 other scriptures

### Staff Meeting

February 22, 9 am in the  
 Library

### Parents' Night Out

February 22, 6 pm

### Breakfast Burritos

February 24, after 1st service,  
 through out Sunday  
 School, and before 2nd  
 service

### Pre-Confirmation Begins

February 24, 9:45 am in the

pastor's office

### Mission Movie

February 25, 6 pm "A Man  
 Named Peter" in the  
 Friendship Center

### Martha Circle

February 26, 1:15 pm at the  
 home of Fran Ring--226  
 Venado

### Safe Sanctuaries Training

February 26, 5:30 pm in the  
 Friendship Center

### Create & Discover

February 26, 7 pm at the  
 home of Fran Ring--226  
 Venado

### Newspaper articles due

February 27

### The Way

March 1, 7 am in the  
 Friendship Center

### Church Council

March 2, 7 pm in the  
 Friendship Center

### UMW Exec Board

March 3, 1 pm in the  
 Library

### Emmaus Community

March 3, 6 pm, potluck dinner  
 in Fellowship Hall followed  
 by business meeting  
 and worship in the  
 Friendship Center

### Sister to Sister

March 4, 12 noon in the  
 Friendship Center

### Trustees

March 4, 6 pm in the  
 Library

### Disciple I

March 4, 6:30 pm in the  
 Friendship Center

### Daylight Savings Time

March 8, Saturday night--  
 clocks spring forward one  
 hour

### Create & Discover

March 13, 7 pm in the Mid-  
 High Room

### City-Wide Prayer Vigil

March 14, 6 pm through 6  
 am on March 15 in the  
 Sanctuary

## Mark Your Calendars--Special Events of Holy Week

Palm Sunday Sunday, March 16th Children's Palm Processional at both am Worship Services

Holy Thursday Thursday, March 20th Passover Seder observance begins at 6 pm in Fellowship Hall

Good Friday Friday, March 21st "Tenebrae" Service of Darkness begins at 7 pm in the Sanctuary

Easter Sunday, March 23rd Ecumenical Sunrise Worship begins at 6:30 am at Ashley Pond

Pastor Ring will preach at Normal worship service times at LAFUMC--8:30 and 11 am

