



FIRST VISIONS

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"THE LIFE AND LEGENDS OF ST. PATRICK"

March is filled with important events of Christian faith this year. Elsewhere in this newspaper, your attention is directed to many of the special happenings of Holy Week and Easter. Although it doesn't often fall during Holy Week, this year St. Patrick's Day is the Monday thereof, March 17th. Being of at least partially Irish heritage and having recently (2 ½ years ago) explored the Emerald Isle, I thought I would share with you some of the facts and stories associated with Ireland's most famous Christian, St. Patrick.

Patrick was born in Britain in the year 387 A.D. His real name was Maewyn Succat. When he was 16, he was captured by pagan Irish raiders and sold into slavery to a chieftain named Meliuc in Antrim, Ireland. He spent his later teen and young adult years as a shepherd tending to his master's sheep. During this time, his belief in God awakened and grew strong. He would pray many times daily and experienced many divine visions. After six years of serving in slavery, he had a dream that he would find a ship to take him to freedom. He escaped, traveling on foot about 200 miles before he found a ship returning to England.

Patrick managed to return to his family and home. But although Patrick was born British, he now considered himself Irish because it was in Ireland that he truly discovered God. Patrick entered seminary and became a priest. He stayed in Britain for eighteen years. Eventually, in 432, he returned to Ireland, commissioned by the Pope in Rome as a missionary to the pagan Irish, called Druids. It was Pope Celestine who gave him his new name: Patrick.

He suffered many trials as a missionary in Ireland. And

there are many legends which recount miracles and magical fights between him and the Druids. For example, when he was confronted by a Druid chieftain named Dichu, Dichu drew his sword to kill Patrick but could not do so because his arm became rigid until he declared himself obedient to Christ. Dichu was so overwhelmed by the miracle that he made Patrick the gift of a large sabbhall (barn). This became the first Christian sanctuary in Ireland.

The legend for which Patrick is best known is driving the snakes from Ireland. Some tales tell that he stood on a hill and used a wooden staff to drive the snakes into the sea, banishing them forever from Ireland. Another legend says that the biggest snake resisted. Patrick then tricked it into entering a small box and cast it into the sea. It is true that Ireland has no snakes.

St. Patrick regularly employed the shamrock, a common three-leafed clover plant in Ireland, as a symbol to explain the Christian concept of God as a "Trinity" -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The word "shamrock" comes from the Gaelic word "seamrog." Since the shamrock was already considered a sacred plant among the Druids, this was a very wise choice of entry point for Christian teaching by Patrick.

Over a 28-year period of mission work, Patrick spread the word of God throughout Ireland so effectively that almost the entire population of the island was converted to Christianity. He died at Saul, Downpatrick, Ireland, on March 17th, 461 A.D. at the age of 76.

Praise the Lord for Patrick and all the faithful saints of God -- including you and me!

Dave Ring

Hurrah for the Continuing Efforts and Successes of Our Church

Wow! The people of First United Methodist Church continue to amaze me. Every time a request to help someone is made, you extend your hand. When the church plans an outreach, you are right there taking part as much as your busy schedule allows.

You stepped out and welcomed the Navajo youth both into your church, but also into your homes. You have also reached into your pockets and opened your mouths to make the Mission/Outreach fund raising burrito breakfast a huge success. Almost \$1000 was raised which will be used in the many mission programs that you participate in and make equal successes.

These projects include several already completed or in progress this year, such as, one water well mission to Guatemala, welcoming in to our homes and church the Navajo children, mission movies, and on going Way local outreach.

In the near future we are preparing a construction and education mission to Belize, Central America. Twelve members of our church will be working directly on this mission. Many more of you will be right here praying for our safety and

success in Belize.

Not long after that six members of our UMW will be journeying to Sager Brown in Louisiana to work at the UMCOR warehouse which distributes materials to people in need throughout the world on behalf of Methodists from all over the country. On their last day in Louisiana, they are extending their trek to New Orleans where they will look into how we can set up a mission to help the hurricane victims there who are still in great need of help.

Shortly after that plans are underway to make a return visit to the Navajos who visited us recently (see the article on P. 4 about this).

One of the important purposes of this church is that reaching out to others--to help them, comfort them, and lead them to faith. You do this in so many ways and with such a giving spirit that I see the spirit of Christ moving through this place in you.

God bless and keep each of you as you continue to complete the missions He gives you. May He fill you with joy in this work.

Thank you,
Jan Stong, Missions Chair and Missions/Outreach Comm.



Family Mission Trip Four Corners



We are planning a family mission trip to the Four Corners area to visit our new Navajo friends the first week in June, 2008. The dates are not set in stone yet, but we are thinking about the beginning of June. This will be an easy first mission trip for all ages, no heavy construction involved. There are accommodations for sleeping and cooking. It will be

a very inexpensive trip (probably around \$50/person for the trip).

We need someone to head the music portion of the trip, someone to head the crafts and games portion, and someone to head the crew which does any painting, easy construction and clean-up.

Reserve places for you and your family now by calling

Brass Blast

Especially for Easter . . .

the sound of a brass ensemble is most appropriate. This year, the 11:00 o'clock service will have an abundance of brass music, as accompaniment for Chancel Choir and as special music during the service. Please add this occasion, March 23rd, 11:00 am to your calendar and plan to attend.



Watch and Pray

You are invited to join us to "Watch and Pray? Pray and Watch" (An all-night prayer vigil leading into Holy Week 2008)

When: Friday night, March 14, 6:00 p.m. to Saturday morning, March 15, 6:00 a.m.

Where: First United Methodist Church Sanctuary, 715 Diamond Drive, Los Alamos

Sponsor and Host: City-Wide Worship and Prayer

Facilitator: Gail Diedrich, founder and leader of City-Wide Worship and Prayer

Worship Leader: Gloria Streit, City-Wide Worship and Prayer

Watches: (based on the Biblical day beginning at sunset and early Christian life of continual sacrifice of praise and prayer)

Evening, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Midnight, 9:00 p.m. - 12:00 midnight

Breaking of the Day (cock-crowing), 12:00 midnight-3:00 a.m.

Morning, 3:00-6:00 a.m.

Purpose: To provide an environment to respond to Jesus' exhortation to spend time with Him; watch to see what He is doing; listen to hear what He is saying; and pray His will on earth as it is in heaven.



Anticipated Activities: Fast; worship; watch and pray; praise; repent; seek and encounter the Lord; hear His word; sing; soak; meditate; take communion; be refreshed and empowered through impartation, anointing, increased sensitivity; follow His lead; guard our future, etc.

Who is Invited: Those who want to develop a deeper relationship with Jesus so they can help fulfill His will for their lives. (Please note: No child care provided.)

How to Participate:

- 1) watch, pray, and fast with us the entire night;
- 2) come for as long as you can;
- 3) sign up for a 1-hr. Gatekeeper assignment near the door;
- 4) watch and pray with us from your home;
- 5) intercede for participants (safety and protection; ability to be alert and stay awake; sensitivity to hear what the Holy Spirit says; and power and authority to faithfully pray according to His will).

Helpful Tips: Eat before you come; take a nap before and after the all-night watch; bring a Bible, notebook, pen, pillow, and blanket; dress comfortably; turn off cell phones.

Contact Info for Questions and Gatekeeper Sign-up: Gail Diedrich, 672-9864 or Alice Carter, 672-3584

*Jesus said that to his disciples in the garden just before He was arrested. When He returned and found them asleep, He said, "Could you not watch one hour?" He's still exhorting us to "watch and pray" with Him. (See Matt 26:36-45 and Rev 12:10-11.)

You are cordially invited to a baby shower

for
Tina Varela
And
Debbie DeSimone
March 9th

Following the second service.

Please bring a dish to share.

Questions? Contact Camille Wescott at
662-0905.

**BABY
SHOWER**



Special March Days

Birthdays:	03/13	
Ruby Meaders	Emma Barefield	03/19
03/05	Vicki Ricketts	03/20
Fran Ring	03/09	Charlotte McQuillan
Cleo Byers	03/10	03/21
Don Siebe	03/10	Susan Sasser
Claire Harmon	03/22	
03/12	Rachel Granzow	
Thomas Beery	03/23	

THE CHURCH PARKING LOT Thank You, John Courtright!

The congregation, along with the 2007 Trustees, owe John Courtright a heart felt THANK YOU for his arranging last fall that our needed parking lot overlay paving was contracted. Those of us who have navigated the streets and parking lots of Los Alamos, which

have been ravaged by the snow and ice of a real northern New Mexico winter, are truly grateful for a church parking lot absent the potholes and ravines found elsewhere. Very shortly after joining the Trustees, John assumed responsibility for making the

repaving happen before another winter caused even more problems.

Thank you, John!

Ben Gibson
For the 2007 Trustees



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 17th 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 21.
The deadline for articles is Wednesday, March 12.

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United States
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.

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

UWV 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