



# FIRST

# VISIONS

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## THE PASTOR PONDER'S



### "ORGANIZED RELIGION"

I've just recently experienced that uniquely "Methodist" way of doing called "Annual Conference." This year's edition thereof, the 134th session of the New Mexico Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, was held in Odessa, Texas, June 3-6, 2009. (For United Methodists a significant portion of west Texas is considered part of New Mexico.) There we worshipped, fellowshiped, heard reports, debated, voted, and otherwise organized ourselves for the mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" during the coming year and beyond.

As a pastor I often hear this statement from those who claim to be Christians but who do nothing for the mission of making disciples for Christ: "I believe in Jesus, but I don't believe in organized religion." Frankly, if you don't believe in organized religion, you probably ought to shun the United Methodist Church. After attending my 40th annual conference, I'm fully convinced that we've elevated the "organized" in religion to capital letter status.

Being part of a deliberately and unapologetically "organized religion" doesn't sound exciting on the surface, but there are many times when it's really a blessing. Let me offer you a couple of illustrations of recent vintage. When the most destructive tsunami in over a century hit south Asia in late December 2004, the United Methodist Church was immediately there, on the scene, with an unprecedented outpouring of relief supplies to those whose lives were devastated. We don't seek publicity about such, but more than once our "UMCOR" personnel were in place long before the highly visible "International Red Cross" made its appearance. Over the course of the next year United Methodists channeled more than \$200 million dollars into tsunami relief efforts in south Asia. Five years later we're still there - still aiding in "long term" recovery efforts. In terms of dollars spent

and personnel provided, our United Methodist denomination has done more than most of the nations of western Europe to help south Asia rebound from unprecedented mass death and destruction. That's not bad for "organized religion."

In a different small town in our region I was scanning their community newspaper. And therein I saw an appeal for financial aid for the wife of a pastor of an "independent" church in that town who was suffering from a serious medical condition and who had no insurance for such. Thus the community-at-large was being solicited for financial help. I trust she received this, and I pray she's now well. As a United Methodist, however, I'm secure in the knowledge that this dilemma couldn't arise for a pastor's wife in our well-organized denomination. Even the smallest United Methodist congregation's pastor and family must be covered by catastrophic health insurance. Yes, the cost is high and both the churches and the pastoral families often complain. But what a blessing this is when expensive health care is really needed. Again, not bad for "organized religion."

When the young adult son of a multi-generational family in one of my prior pastorates moved to New York City, he and his wife found themselves searching for a Bible-believing church. I was asked by his dad to help them locate one. Through contacts with one of our national ministries I was able to help them locate a Manhattan congregation to suit their needs - even though it wasn't a United Methodist Church. Again, score one for "organized religion."

Yes, United Methodists are organized religion. We're very well-organized for the mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Praise the Lord!

*Dave Ring*

## YOUTH UPDATE

It is a pleasure to be back! Elisa and I both thank you all for your wonderfully warm and loving reception of us. We are thankful to be part of this church body. I am thankful to bring good news in an update to you about our youth program. On May 31, we had our first high school Sunday school class of the summer, with seven students in attendance! My wife Elisa was able to sit in, as well, which blessed us with a young woman's contribution to our discussion. Later that afternoon, six youth came to our first MYF of the summer! This kind of attendance much surpasses what we had last summer. And not only are these numbers a positive change and a praise to God, but I am so thankful to declare that I sense that our youth have matured and are ready for greater spiritual stimulation, discussion, and commitment than they were a year ago, too. Please pray for our staff and volunteers as we seek guidance in how to lead our youth by God's good guidance.

We are now preparing to travel to Shiprock, NM, for the Four Corners Youth mission trip from June 13-20. Four adults and three youth are planning to go, making it a journey of seven from our church family to help the Four Corners Navajo ministry. The youth's effort in fundraising for the trip was greatly blessed; we are using that money to pay for our housing.

Thank you very much to everyone who donated to our mission trip in any way. Please pray for a fruitful trip of service to our Lord, spiritual growth for all involved and Christly fellowship with the Navajo youth and community.

God is working in our youth program, and I praise and thank Him for that! We could use your prayer for our program as we continue this summer for sensitivity and responsiveness to His grace and guidance. Thank you for your support and love, and blessings to all!

Eleven from our church family attended the Jubilee Festival on June 5 in Albuquerque at Balloon Fiesta Park. Among the events that graced the festival were bands Ives, Nick Crespo, Jars of Clay, I-Shine Live, and discussions by Josh and Sean McDowell. A good time was had by all, as there were many things available to do. Some of the younger members of our trip enjoyed the blow-up playgrounds at the festival, while others enjoyed the speakers, bands, and food vendors. We left the concert at 10:00 PM and arrived in Los Alamos at approximately 11:45 PM Friday night. A good night's rest was needed after a long trip, as the concert lasted from 4:00 PM - 10:00 PM! We thank the Lord for a safe trip and a good time of fellowship at the event.



## RELAY FOR LIFE

Many thanks to all who came to the Relay for Life Benefit on Sunday, May 31st, and were so generous in donating to this cause. We raised \$1311.14!!! More than last year!

The concert was a real joy to all. Our thanks to all who participated. Such talented people we have.

Special thanks to the kitchen crew who worked tirelessly to cook and serve the food and clean up the kitchen.

We are still accepting registrations from those who want to join our church team and attend the Relay event.

See James Barefield for a registration form.

We just received more luminarias; if you want to purchase (and decorate) one or more. They are \$10 each. See Ann, James or Sarah. You need to fill out an order form for each luminaria as it is too difficult to keep track of them without one.

We will also accept donations from those unable to attend the Relay Benefit. Please make checks payable to Relay for Life and give them to James Barefield.





## SPECIAL JUNE DAYS

### Birthdays:

Bob Visel	06/01	June 7	George & Miriam Balog
Barbara DeMarsh	06/04	June 12	
Court Courtright	06/07	Bob & Lucy Malone	
Joe Bubernak	06/09	June 15	
Cindy Little	06/13	Tom & Jana Beery	
Gail Little	06/14	June 19	
John Stong	06/14	John & Geniece Courtright	
Judy Opsahl	06/23	John & Jan Stong	
June Pirtle	06/27	June 20	
Lora Bell Cole	06/28	Charles & Emma Jean Mader	

### Anniversaries:

June 3	June 22
Al & Doris Blackstock	Michael & Pam Hundley
June 5	June 24
John & Martha Zumbro	Maurice & Jensina Sheppard
June 6	
Brad & Camille Wescott	



First United Methodist Church  
called to:

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

The next edition of Visions will be dated June 26.  
The deadline for articles is Wednesday, June 17.

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  
Discipleship Coordinator ~  
Ann LePage  
Choir Director ~ Jim Beinke  
First Visions Editor ~ Jan Stong

**Ark Child Development Center**  
Lorri White, Director  
(505) 662-4822

**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.

## RECORDING VOLUNTEER HOURS

### OF LANL EMPLOYEES AND RETIREES

Are you a LANL employee or retiree? Do you volunteer at our church? That is, do you attend committee meetings, choir practice, trustee cleaning days, supervise MYF meetings, supervise Youth events, teach Sunday School, or go on church mission trips? These are all considered volunteer hours by us and by LANL. By recording your hours at <http://lanl.volunteermatch.org>

LANL will send us a check, of at least \$50.00! Last year we received over \$900.00!! This year we received \$450.00, so some of you forgot to register your hours. Unfortunately, the system to do this is complicated, but I have attached directions for your use. You don't have to register the hours every week, you can do it 20 hours at a time. This means additional income for our church so please take a few minutes and register your volunteer hours for us!

- Go to <http://lanl.volunteermatch.org/>
- Click on #2 Login or Register to Track Hours
- Click on Create a new account; complete all information
- Verify email address:
  - Go to your in-box and verify receipt of notification
  - Click on link provided in the verification email
  - This should route you to a screen that says your registration is complete.
- Click on "Continue"
- Personal Volunteering Page appears
  - Look for My Tools: Manage All Volunteer Hours
  - Click on Add or Manage Volunteer Hours
- Manage All Volunteer Hours page appears
  - Click on Add Volunteer Activity
  - Enter name of organization (First United Methodist Church, add Los Alamos, New Mexico)
  - Click on Search

NOTE: Once an organization is added, you won't have to add it again.

BUT if it is not there the first time, you must add it.

- Manually Record Your Volunteer Activity Screen
  - Enter all data requested; 'opportunity' is what you do at the church, i.e., committee meeting, clean-up day, etc.
  - You can add up to twenty hours per month to 'catch up'
  - You MUST click on 'Add Hours for Another Date' to record each day's time, ex. Record 6 hours on 11/20/08, then click on 'Add hours for Another Date' to record another six hours for 11/26/08.
  - Click on Save Your Changes after all dates have been entered (up to 20 hrs.)
- To add additional hours of volunteering, go to Personal Volunteering Page on <http://lanl.volunteermatch.org/>
  - Click on Track Your Volunteer Hours
  - Manage All Volunteer Hours page appears.
  - Click on Action: Add/Edit Hours
  - Click on Add Hours for Another Date
  - Add appropriate data.
  - Click on Save Your Changes.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Sermon Titles

Sunday, June 14, 2009 - Pastor Ring's Sermon: "John's Gospel, Chapter 19"

Sunday, June 21, 2009 - Father's Day Pastor Ring's Sermon: "John's Gospel, Chapter 20"

Sunday, June 28, 2009 - Pastor Ring's Sermon: "John's Gospel, Chapter 21"

### Navajo Mission

June 11-12

### Women's Emmaus Walk

June 11-14

### Youth Mission to 4 Corners

June 13-20, 11:30 am in the Sanctuary

### LAF Crafts

Sunday, June 14, 4 pm in the Friendship Center

### Staff

Tuesday, June 16 10 am in the Library

### Sister to Sister

Tuesday, June 16, Noon in the Friendship Center

### Ark Board

Tuesday, June 16, 4 pm in the Mid-High Room

### Finance

Tuesday, June 16, 4 pm in the Library

### Religion & Science

Wednesday, June 17, 6 pm in the Friendship Center

### Choir

Wednesday, June 17, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

### City-Wide Worship & Prayer

Thursday, June 18, 11:30 am in the Sanctuary

### Ark Staff

Thursday, June 18, 4 pm in the Mid-High Room

### Boy Scouts

Thursday, June 18, 7 pm in the Fellowship Hall

### 1st Light

Thursday, June 18, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

### Parent's Night Out

Friday, June 19, 4 pm

### MF

Sunday, June 21, 4 pm in the Senior High Room

### Staff

Tuesday, June 23, 10 am in the Library

### Religion & Science

Wednesday, June 24, 6 pm in the Friendship Center

### Choir

Wednesday, June 24, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

### City-Wide Worship & Prayer

Thursday, June 25, 11:30 am in the Sanctuary

### Boy Scouts

Thursday, June 25, 7 pm in the Library

### 1st Light

Thursday, June 25, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

### Relay for Life Run

June 26-27, 4 pm in the Senior High Room