



# FIRST VISIONS

an edition of the United Methodist Reporter

Two Sections, Section A | 070665 | Vol. 156 | No. 52 | April 30, 2010

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## THE PASTOR PONDERERS



### "LISTENING FOR GOD"

By no means do I claim expertise in the practice of prayer. I'm first and foremost a "doer," most definitely a classic "type A" personality. So my prayer life has rarely been one of the hallmarks of my walk of faith with Jesus Christ. However, prayer is certainly not completely absent from my life.

For the entire five years that I lived in Odessa, Texas I was privileged to be part of a group of pastors who gathered regularly, once a week, for an hour of prayer. By sheer coincidence or, more likely, by God's design, I happened to arrive in that city the very week that a new, city-wide pastors' prayer movement was holding its first meeting. As a newcomer I wanted to get to know other preachers in town and that prayer group provided an obvious, open opportunity.

Prayer to God was the sole focus and only agenda of that weekly pastors' prayer gathering. For that reason the group was able to attract and include ministers from a wide variety of backgrounds, from fundamental Southern Baptist preachers to socially active Roman Catholic priests, from staid Church of Christ pastors to let-it-all-hang-out "charismatic" worship leaders. Our numbers varied from week to week, sometimes as many as 20, occasionally as few as five, but averaging around 12.

I learned a great deal about prayer from five years of interacting with preachers representing such a wide range of backgrounds. One of the most important learnings I received was the simple fact that prayer includes listening. I'd realized years before that prayer was conversation with God, so I already had no reservations about verbally expressing myself to the Lord, pretty much just the same as I talk with anyone else around me. But that prayer group

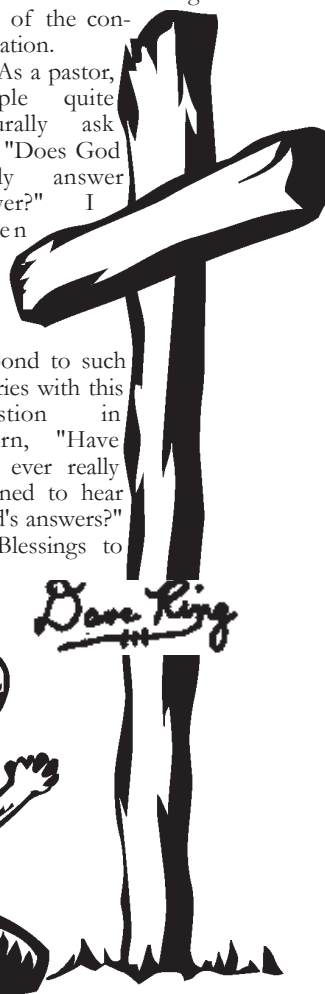
taught me that conversation with God, just like conversation with anyone else, is two way. I didn't need to do all the talking. Listening for God's responses was equally important.

In our contemporary society with the pace of life being both frantic and frenetic for most of us, the vast majority of Christians aren't used to listening. Listening to God requires us to remain silent. A time of silence, if longer than a few seconds, can be uncomfortable. But if we're to hear God's response to our prayers, we must be silent -- to be able hear them. If you really think about it, almost all prayers should include 50% silence from us humans - thus allowing for God's half of the conversation.

As a pastor, people quite naturally ask me, "Does God really answer prayer?" I often

respond to such queries with this question in return, "Have you ever really listened to hear God's answers?"

Blessings to all!



## PARENT'S NIGHT OUT RETURNS!

Put Parent's Night Out on your calendar for May 14th, 6-9PM. This program will be starting up again every 2nd Friday!

Parents,

We will be hosting Parent's Night Out every 2nd Friday at the church. Something a little different than before - we will be asking for a \$10/child donation to cover expenses. While we won't be requiring an RSVP, it always helps if we have an idea of the number of kids coming. Therefore, if you \*know\* you will or will not be coming, please let me know. Also, if you know of some of the other families' email addresses, please forward this message (and copy me). That way we can develop a better email list for this activity.

## PRAYER IS POWERFUL

For a number of years a few of us have met in the Prayer Chapel on Tuesday mornings to pray intercessory prayers for members of our church, for issues in our church and in the world, for friends in need outside our church. Our pray-ers have been women so we've called ourselves "Women of Prayer".

However, we don't mean to be exclusive and would gladly welcome any man to join us if he feels led and called to do so. We would love to increase our numbers because as numbers increase, power increases.

Perhaps we should now call ourselves "Powerful Prayer Warriors" Please consider joining us!

Alice Carter

## THANKS FOR ALL PRAYERS AND HELP FOR KAIROS #23

As the leader of KAIROS 23, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all in LAFUMC who supported that weekend in any way. Many of you prayed (and your prayers were answered in a huge way) and many made the dozens of cookies which are offered as God's free gift to all incarcerated women and to all the employees who work at that facility in Grants, NM. We call God's free gifts AGAPE.

KAIROS 23 was most definitely God's weekend. And I praise Him!

Alice Carter



## LANDSUN HOMES ANNUAL MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL OFFERING

May 9th

## THIRD ANNUAL LA-FUMC FIRE AND POLICE APPRECIATION DINNER

5 to 8 PM Friday, May 14th

Please contact Alice Carter (carteras@comcast.net) to volunteer to help with this special event which commemorates the tenth anniversary of the Cerro Grande Fire!



# Ark Children

## Playing

## Peek a Boo



### PRAYER FOR THE NATION



National Day of Prayer  
 May 6  
 music 11:30 am-12 noon  
 prayer 12 noon-1 pm  
 in the Sanctuary



2010 Global Days of Prayer  
 - May 13-23  
 Pick up a Prayer Guide in  
 the church foyer

Lord,

We are thankful for the abundant blessings You have bestowed on America. Our fore fathers looked to you as Protector, Provider, and the Promise of hope. But we have wandered far from that firm foundation. May we repent from turning our backs on Your faithfulness.

We pray that this great nation will be restored by your forgiveness.

From bondage, You grant freedom.

Through Your own sacrifice, You offer salvation.

From the state of despair, You offer peace.

From the bounties of Heaven, You have blessed ---not because of our goodness---but by Your grace.

You have given us freedom to worship You in spirit and in truth as Your holy Word instructs. May our lives honor You in word and deed. May our nation acknowledge that all good things come from the Father above.

President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed that our nation should set apart a day for national prayer to confess our sins and transgressions in sorrow, "yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon...announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord."

"We have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our own hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own...we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God who made us! It behooves us then...to confess our national sins and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

Help us to pray earnestly for our president and leaders who govern, that they will humble themselves and seek Your guidance so that everything we do will shine the light of Your glory in a darkened world.

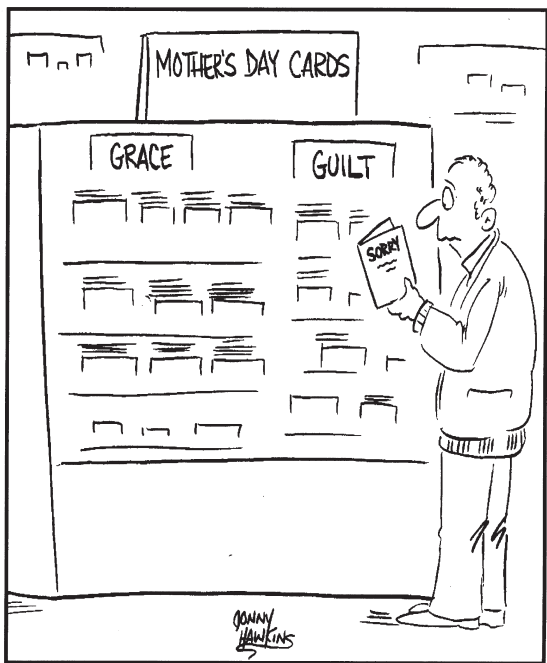
May our prayers as a people and a nation be heard and blessed for such a time as this. We make this plea in faith, believing in the mighty name of Jesus our Lord.

Amen

Franklin Graham  
 President & CEO Samaritan's Purse  
 Billy Graham Evangelistic Association  
 2010 Honorary Chairman of National Day of Prayer

## SPECIAL MAY DAYS

<b>Birthdays:</b>		Sarah Ricketts	05/26
Jana Beery	05/02	Kyle Beery	05/27
Fred DeVries	05/03	Walker Eaton	05/29
Hunter Eaton	05/03	Angela Hodgson	05/30
Jason Trimmer	05/04		
Tom Ricketts	05/06		
Bob Malone	05/09	<b>Anniversaries:</b>	
Rachel Taylor	05/11	May 9	
Debbie Trimmer	05/11	Ed & Lea Brodnax	
Brent Collom	05/12	May 21	
Brad Wescott	05/12	Tom & Vicki Ricketts	
Ron Jones	05/13	May 23	
Ed Brodnax	05/15	Dale & Linda Leschnitzer	
Anna Parks	05/19	May 24	
Hunter Dare	05/20	Bill & Carol Mead	



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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 April 30.  
The deadline for articles is Wednesday, April 21.

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Ann LePage  
Choir Director ~ Jim Beinke  
First Visions Editor ~ Jan Stong  
**Ark Child Development Center**  
Lorri White, Director  
(505) 662-4822

**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.

## UPCOMING EVENTS Highlights

### Sermon Titles

Sunday, May 2, 2010 - Holy Communion will be observed.

Pastor Ring's Meditation:  
"Why One and Not the Other?" New Testament  
Scripture Text: Acts 12:1-11

Sunday, May 9, 2010 - Mother's Day Pastor Ring's Sermon  
Message: "A Capable Woman"  
Proverbs 31:10-31

Sunday, May 16, 2010 -  
Teacher Appreciation Day  
Pastor Ring's Sermon Message:  
"Falling Up" Acts 26:12-18

### Roller Skating

Friday, April 30, 5:30 pm in the Senior High Room

### NO MF

Sunday, May 2, 4 pm in the Senior High Room

### Emmaus Gathering

Monday, May 3, 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall

### Powerful Prayer Warriors

Tuesday, May 4, 10 am in the Prayer Chapel

### Staff

Tuesday, May 4, 10:30 am in the Library

### UW Exec Board

Tuesday, May 4, 1 pm in the Library

### Missions/Outreach

### Please note the date change

Tuesday, May 4, 6 pm in the Library

### Newspaper Articles Due

Wednesday, May 5

### Adult Bible Study

Wednesday, May 5, 6 pm in the Friendship Center

### Choir

Wednesday, May 5, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

### City-Wide Worship & Prayer

Thursday, May 6, 11:30 am in the Sanctuary

### Boy Scouts

Thursday, May 6, 7 pm in the Fellowship Hall

### 1st Light

Thursday, May 6, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

### Roller Skating

Friday, May 7, 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall

### NO MF

Sunday, May 9

### Trustees

Monday, May 10, 6:30 pm in the Asbury Room

### Powerful Prayer Warriors

Tuesday, May 4, 10 am in the Prayer Chapel

### Staff

Tuesday, May 11, 10:30 am in the Library

### Christian Education

Tuesday, May 11, 6 pm in the Friendship Center

### SPRC

Tuesday, May 11, 7 pm in the Asbury Room

### Adult Bible Study

Wednesday, May 12, 6 pm in the Friendship Center

### Choir

Wednesday, May 12, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

### Global Day of Prayer

May 13-23

### City-Wide Worship & Prayer

Thursday, May 13, 11:30 am in the Sanctuary

### Boy Scouts

Thursday, May 13, 7 pm in the Fellowship Hall

### 1st Light

Thursday, May 13, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

### Create & Discover

Thursday, May 13, 7:15 pm

### Parent's Night Out

Friday, May 14, 6-9 pm in the Nursery

### Firemen/Police

### Appreciation Dinner

Friday, May 14, 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall

### NO MF

Sunday, May 16, in the Senior High Room

### Ark Board

Tuesday, May 18, 6 pm in the Friendship Center

### Finance

Tuesday, May 18, 7:30 pm in the Library

### Ark Graduation

Thursday, May 20, 5 pm

### H. S. Graduation Brunch

Sunday, May 23, 9:30 am

### Martha Circle

Tuesday, May 25, 1:15 pm

### Ark Staff

Tuesday, May 25, 6 pm in the Friendship Center

### Church Council

Tuesday, May 25, 7 pm in the Friendship Center

### Senior Appreciation Night

Saturday, May 29

### NO MF

Sunday, May 30

### Memorial Day

Monday, May 31

**Offices Closed**



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