



# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Deming, New Mexico

December 2007

“Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.”

## STAFF AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. D. Max Whitfield - Bishop  
Rev. Beverly J. Jones - District  
Superintendent  
Rev. Keath Baskett - Pastor  
Joe MacDonald - Music Director  
Gordon McIver - Lay Leader  
Claire Phillips - Secretary  
Beth Simpson - Assistant to Pastor

*More people come to church for the first time through invitation than by any other method. We encourage everyone to **invite** your friends, family members and neighbors to come with you to worship on Sunday mornings.*

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## FUMC - DEMING MISSION STATEMENT

BUILDING UPON  
A FOUNDATION OF PRAYER  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH,  
DEMING, NEW MEXICO  
EXISTS  
**TO REACH OUT**  
AND BRING A  
VARIETY OF PEOPLE  
INTO A  
GROWING RELATIONSHIP  
**WITH JESUS CHRIST.**

The pastor would appreciate hearing about anyone who is in the hospital, has experienced a recent loss, or perhaps would like a visit. Please call the church office if you are aware of such a situation. We'd rather get many calls about someone than none at all. Thank you.



## PASTORAL PONDERINGS

### *So What Is Advent?*

Just about every year before Christmas someone asks me about the season of Advent. What is it? Why do we observe it? What difference does it make?

This year I thought that I might begin the answer by saying what Advent is not.

10. Advent is not just the time to send out Christmas cards.
9. Advent is not just the time to stock up on wrapping paper.
8. Advent is not just the time to go to Christmas parties.
7. Advent is not just the time to visit Santa.
6. Advent is not just the time to sing Christmas carols.
5. Advent is not just the time to order as many gifts as possible through the internet.
4. Advent is not just the time to suffer long lines in malls, stores, and just about everywhere.
3. Advent is not just the time to hang the Christmas lights around the house.
2. Advent is not just the time check out the Christmas tree sales.
1. Advent is not just the time to dig out the Christmas decorations.

That said, what is Advent? It is, as John the Baptizer said, a time to prepare the way for the Lord.

I like the way that Daniel Benedict described Advent. He wrote:

Advent is a strange and wonderful time in the life of the worshiping Community: strange, because we seem to be holding back when the culture is going

wild; wonderful, because we know that a night is coming when we will join together in singing "Gloria in excelsis Deo" and "O Come, All Ye Faithful" with candles blazing everywhere.

Advent is not a penitential period like Lent. But, like Lent, Advent is a season of anticipation and preparation. There is reason for restraint. Liturgically speaking, if you can't hold back, you can't celebrate. Christians know about fasting and feasting --or we could know about it if we used the means of grace and let the Christian calendar discipline us. Our culture is geared to instant everything, and "right now" is our demand. Yet the gospel's wisdom is that we do not live according to our timetable. We live by the Lord of time who is coming, but who never seems to be on our time schedule; who came long ago when no one was ready except a few shepherds who didn't know what to make of it.

So we do odd things in the church. We use purple to suggest a state of unfulfilled readiness. Then, at Christmas, we bring on the joyful white; and the contrast with the somber color of purple or blue sets it off with greater effect. The tone of Advent music and texts is more restrained so that the sound of the angels' song may resound with greater freshness on Christmas Eve!

Does this mean we need to be deprived during Advent? Absolutely not! Not if we enter into the character of the season and feel the tension pulling us and surfacing in us all our yearnings and longings for One who is like us in our suffering and struggle in the flesh and who comes from beyond death to bring justice and establish God's reign.

I hope that you will join us in worship this Advent as we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming Christmas season.

### ***Qualities of the Christian Steward***

A Christian Steward is ***compassionate***. Christian stewards are caretakers and caregivers. They concern themselves with the distribution of gifts and resources so that all might benefit (Genesis 2:4-9, Matthew 14:13-21; Matthew 25:31-46, 1 Corinthians 12:12-28; James 2:14-17).

*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it* (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Christians can show that they are concerned about their neighbors and the future by deciding not to over use lights, this Christmas. Yes, have a lit tree, but conserve the hours it is on. A decorative candle in the window may hearten people more so than decorations. If we believe that oil has about peaked and are concerned for global warming, little acts like this can make a difference. Another thought, LED lights can use up to 70% less electricity than regular Christmas lights.



### ***Our Christmas Programs***

“A Christmas Celebration”  
Sunday, December 9th at 6p.m.

Christmas Caroling  
Wednesday, December 19th at 5:30 p.m.  
followed by a soup supper

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Monday, December 24th at 6:00 p.m.

This will include Holy Communion.

Please invite your family, friends, and neighbors to join you for any and all of these services. They are also invited to join you at church for Keath’s Advent sermon series. Remember, personal invitation is best!



### ***Remember Those Who Work During the Holidays***

Murray and Jessie Baskett will be preparing goodies to deliver to emergency and law enforcement personnel to enjoy during Christmas. The goodies will consist of hot chocolate mix, hot tea mix and cookies, to be delivered to the Sheriff’s Department, Police Department, Border Patrol, Fire Station and National Guard.

If you would like to help, please see the list in the Fellowship Hall and sign up for what you will bring. Then drop it off in the Fellowship Hall kitchen (marked “for Murray”).

Help us be a blessing to those who bless us by serving during the holidays!



***EDE*** - What is it? ***It’s informational, enriching and fun!*** When and where is it? ***January 26th at Trinity-First in El Paso, TX.*** How can I learn more? ***See Claire in the office for a brochure; see page 8 of the newsletter.*** Will I enjoy it? ***YES!!***



OCT.-DEC. 2007

Joe Bob Brown  
John Bryant  
The Burkles  
Susan Castellani  
Breece DeBoutz  
Travis Dodson &  
family  
Christopher Fredrick  
Chris Gonzales  
Ellen Gonzales  
Mim Gottschalk  
Ruth Greenwood  
Bill/Sue Hoffmeister  
Wayne Humphrey  
Joe/Chelsie Hunt  
Lusia & Fred  
Lorraine Lutonsky  
Gordon McIver  
Allan/Sandy McNiece  
Sam/Bea Melendrez  
Amelia Moon  
David Munoz  
Lynde Murphy  
William Penn  
Ann/Brian Pettit  
John Plant  
Billy Price  
Chris/Gene Reynolds  
Gary Slayman  
Shari/John Trampush  
Bob/Kitty Tobey  
Bob Ward

Ferne Wolf  
Marlene Zachek  
California fire victims  
  
Families dealing with  
grief: Watson/  
McGrath; Cottle/Offutt;  
Campos-MacDonald;  
Sayre  
  
Service men & women:  
Travis Dodson's unit,  
Avilla Augustus, Alan  
Ballinas, Alan/Brian  
Carter, Amber  
Dunnihoo, Maj.  
Howard Gobble, Jason  
Hammers, Conrad  
Hughes, Shaun M.  
Jones, Jennifer/John  
Lively, Jennifer/Jarrold  
McGee, Michael  
Nunley, Josh  
Robertson, L. Charles  
Stanley, Greg Stube,  
Danny Symonds, Van  
Welch

Hospice patients and their families; our nation; our leaders; our armed forces, especially those serving overseas; our Sunday School: for increased attendance, people with a heart and passion for teaching to assist or substitute in our classes, for faithfulness.

## BITS 'N TIDBITS

There will be an **Enchilada Dinner** on Thursday, December 6th, from 4-6pm at the Oddfellows Hall on South Gold (just behind Baca's). \$5/person for a yummy meal and dessert! Proceeds benefit many programs, including local scholarships.

**Be A Hero!** Heroes are needed for our upcoming blood drive on Thursday, December 13, from 9am to 1pm in the Fellowship Hall. You may call the office for an appointment or drop in. The gift of life you give to a stranger may be the best present they receive this holiday season!

Our **Bread Basket Collection** for December will be the 2-in-One offering to help support the United Methodist Children's Homes in San Antonio and Waco, Texas. These two organizations provide many services to benefit families, orphans, and children with behavioral problems. The collection will be taken December 16th.

**What's doing in Deming?** There are a number of upcoming events to celebrate the holidays. Please check out the bulletin board in the hallway by the sanctuary doors to view the sections!

Visit our website, [www.fumcdeming.com](http://www.fumcdeming.com) for what's happening in our church! Remember to **invite a friend** to join you for church, Sunday School, or one of our many activities.

Please remember to *GREET OUR VISITORS!* Your hello will make a difference in their world and yours!

## *United Methodist Women*

A big thanks to all who helped at the UMW Bazaar. Thanks for the donations and thank you to all who helped make this a success - we appreciate all of you! The funds raised from the bazaar are used to pay the 4th quarter of our unit pledge to the UMW Conference, along with any other budget items that need to be paid before the first of next year.

Our next regular meeting, led by Genie Wall, will be Saturday, December 15th at 2:00 p.m. in the Chapel. We will have our pledge service and the installation of Officers. All women are welcome to attend and enjoy the refreshments at the end of the meeting.

The UMW has open office for President and Vice-President. The rest of the slate has been filled and our programs and mission study for 2008 have been set! If you are interested in becoming part of the UMW, please contact Rosalee Gillett at 544-8201.

In other news....four persons attended the UMW Annual Meeting in Roswell in October, along with a few aliens. We again qualified for a bronze award for a "Mission Today" unit, along with certificates for our studies and reading program. Betty Gottschalk was remembers with a donation to the Mission Candle.

The UMW is dedicated to supporting a variety of missions in a variety of ways. Some of them are local, some are in our state or other parts of the country. Some are in other parts of the world. We are one with them all!

## *Crafty Kids*

For the fourth year Crafty Kids (our after school craft program for elementary children) will have a decorated tree displayed at the Deming Arts Council's Tannenbaum Festival.

If our tree sells (all or most of these trees are for sale), we will donate the money to the Humane Society. Last year, we donated \$20 to help feed the animals.

Our theme this year is "Nature's Treasures." Stop by the Deming Arts Council and see our tree!



## *Chrysalis*

We are spreading the word about an opportunity to share and grow in faith through the Chrysalis experience. The term "Chrysalis" symbolizes the spiritual growth that is essential for the transition to adulthood. The Chrysalis experience lifts up a way to enjoy Christ's friendship and love so as to be Christ's friend and partner in the world. The focus is on God's grace, one's individual experience with Christ as friend, learning to be part of the body of Christ, and giving love to a needy world.

If you (or someone you know) are interested in Chrysalis, the Men's and Women's Journeys are schedule for January 18-21. Please call Laura Smith at 575-640-4616 for the Women's Journey, or Mike Hofacket at 575-544-5174 for the Men's Journey. You may also visit [www.emmausborderlands.com](http://www.emmausborderlands.com).



## TAKE NOTE

Advent is here. This is my favorite time of year. We eagerly await the coming of Christmas. We prepare our hearts by remembering that we truly were I people in darkness. The good news of our faith is that we know that out of the wreckage of our past we get to Christmas. Yes Christmas. This is the time of year when we adore the miracle that came into our world. We worship the miracle of a child. The promise that God exclaims to us, in the form of a baby; that we are worth it!

The usual carols are being sung all around the world. Think about the text of many of your favorite Christmas songs. "Silent Night, Joy to the World, O Come All Ye Faithful" are some of the many songs we hear and sing. Look at the words. They share our faith. This is our ministry. This is our mission. May these words ring true in our daily lives. My prayer for this season is that we may all remember the reason for the season. We celebrate the birth of Christ and joyfully and graciously come and let us all together adore the holy one.

*Merry Christmas to All  
Joe*



## Schedule for December

Week of December 3<sup>rd</sup>: Regular  
Rehearsal Schedule

**\*\*Extra Rehearsals for Christmas:**  
Chancel Choir - Tuesday December 4<sup>th</sup>:  
Treble Voices, 5:30-6:15 pm  
Tenor Bass Voices, 6:15-7:00 pm

Everyone on Saturday December 8<sup>th</sup>:  
Praise Band 9:00 – 9:30 am  
Chancel Choir 9:30-10:00 am  
First Call 10:00 – 10:30 am  
Soul Kids 10:30 – 11:00 am  
Everyone 11:00 – 12:00 noon

Everyone on Sunday December 9<sup>th</sup>:  
**\*\*Performance\*\*** 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Week of December 10<sup>th</sup>: Regular  
Rehearsal Schedule with the exception of  
Bells who will not have a Monday  
rehearsal.



## *Women's Depression Support Group*

Do you suffer from depression and have no one who understands your condition? Do you have a loved one who suffers from depression and you don't know what to say? Come be part of the new Women's Depression Support Group on Thursdays from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. We meet weekly in the church parlor to study scripture that pertains to depression and find hope in God and one another. Confidentiality is highly valued. For more information please contact Beth Simpson at 546-2791 or Cazandra MacDonald at 544-8161.

### ***Ministry Opportunities***

Many thanks for your contributions to the Thanksgiving Food Boxes. Many families were blessed by your generosity.

We are still accepting coats for the Keep our Kids Warm program, and blankets for the homeless. For those who have taken an Angel Tree tag, please return the wrapped present (with the entire angel tag attached) to the Fellowship Hall tree no later than Tuesday, December 18th. If you need more information about any of these, please see last month's newsletter.



### ***Transportation Ministry***

Looking for a new way to do some good in the world? There are a number of people in our church who occasionally need a ride to a doctor's office in Las Cruces, Silver City, or El Paso. We need some willing drivers who would share their time and their "wheels" in a ministry of transportation. (Most times you would be reimbursed for gasoline.) Please contact Beth Simpson at 546-2791 if you could help with this important ministry. Thanks!



### ***Your Assistance is Requested***

We keep a variety of office supplies (pens, pencils, tape, stapler, etc.) at the receptionist's desk, should you need them. We simply ask that you return borrowed items to the desk so that the office volunteers are able to perform their duties, with thanks from the volunteers!

Please help the church be good stewards of resources by turning off lights when you leave a room, and assuring the heater (or air conditioner) is turned off as well. Every little bit we can do will make a big difference by the end of one year!



### ***Equipping Disciples for Excellence God's at Work — Have You Clocked In Yet?***

Have you been asked to be part of a new committee or ministry team? Would you like a short spiritual enrichment course? Would you like to learn something just a little different? Would you like to strengthen your Christian Discipleship? If so, then Equipping Disciples for Excellence (or EDE) is for YOU!

EDE is offered yearly in El Paso with workshops in a variety of areas that cover leadership training, spiritual development and good fun! EDE will be held on Saturday, January 26th at Trinity-First UMC.

There are a variety of 1/2 day and all day workshops to appeal to everyone. They include: "Where Did My Memory Go and How Can I Find It?", "The Time Card is Prayer—Is Yours Punched?", "How Do People Know You're a Methodist?", "When Religion Becomes Evil."

In order to assure *EVERYONE* can attend, the church will be pay the registration fee. Forms are in the office. Stop by and get yours today. We'll be accepting registrations through January 11th.

## ***FROM THE BISHOP'S DESK***

It is time for a major shift in attitudes and understanding. I am referring to the terminology surrounding the appointment of pastors.

Presently, the appointments appear to be to a particular congregation. A quick review of the history of Methodism in the United States reveals the fallacy of such an assumption. Early appointments in Northwest Texas and New Mexico often covered several counties. Pastors resided in rather fluid geographic areas. Pastors preached, taught, celebrated the sacraments, and ordered the life of the communities of faith within those geographic areas. The lay members assumed responsibility for carrying out the primary ministries of being the church. (After all, the preacher might only come to the congregation once a month.)

A pastor recently inquired when this reversal of roles took place, where pastors assumed their primary role was to care for the members of the church and to do the ministries for the congregation. I could not and cannot accurately answer the question. I do know this assumption was predominant in many communities by the middle of the 1960's when I began my ministry. I do not know whether seminary professors and district superintendents taught this, or I caught from the lay leadership that my primary role was to preach, visit the sick, visit the membership of the congregation (on a regular basis), and if I had time, visit the unchurched in the community. Anything I did beyond those duties they appreciated, but found unnecessary for fulfilling my essential role as a proclaimer of the Gospel. I strongly suspect this reversal of roles, from proclaimer of the word and equipper of the laity for ministry to the one providing the ministry to the members of the congregation, occurred about the time clergy

persons started settling into communities, and pastoral tenure began to lengthen.

Many of us can easily recall members of congregations announcing that no one in the church cared enough to visit them while they were in the hospital, then turn around, and name eight to ten members of the congregation who, in fact, came to visit them during their hospitalization. What they really meant was, none of the paid staff, particularly the senior pastor, visited them during their illness and recuperation. They assumed the pastor did the ministry for the Church.

My imagination expanded to comprehend the transformation that could occur if our appointments clearly communicated assignments to a geographic area to establish communities of faith, equip laity for ministry, and serve as evangelist to those not actively involved in a community of faith. What would happen if laity provided the ministry of the church, including evangelization, and new faith community development? Rev. Michael Foss makes this point in his book *Power Surge*.

Baptism calls laity into ministry. Laypersons possess a variety of gifts, but when the Holy Spirit releases those gifts, we develop new disciples and God transforms the communities in which we live.

If we want to discover more about this movement, we need only read from the Bible the Act of the Apostles. It is an old, old story that begs repetition.

Grace & Peace,  
Max

