



First United Methodist Church

Deming, New Mexico

January 2008

Church Improvements to Begin

With every dilemma there may be a silver lining. The slow-down in construction enables some contractors to undertake certain improvement projects. Such a project involves our church, namely the stairs to the upper-rooms in the Methodist Activity Center (MAC) building, the restrooms in the MAC building, and revised handicap access to the church.

The stair renovation will entail removing the current stairs at the east end of the MAC building and replacing them with stairs that are both wider and less steep, i.e. lower rise. A landing will be added about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way to the upper-rooms in the MAC building. This improvement will ease accessibility to those upper-rooms by a greater portion of the church family.

A portion of the restrooms at the east end of the MAC building will be consumed by the stair renovation. A single unisex restroom will remain and the shower in the restroom will be retained. A portion of the storage closet under the stairs will also be retained.

In conjunction with the stairs and restroom renovations, a new door from the paved parking lot into the foyer in the MAC building will be added; that door will be handicapped accessible. Handicapped parking will be relocated from the rear (north end) of the church to the paved parking lot adjacent to this new door. Entry into the church from the rear parking lot will not be allowed during Sunday school hours—this will improve security to the children in that area and enable the church to better conform to *Safe Sanctuary* principles.

These building renovations are expected to begin early in February 2008. Your cooperation while the renovations are underway will be appreciated.

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The Newsletter is Different

Yes, the newsletter has a new look – a new look at the start of a new year. The reasons are simple:

- ◆ Tighten the content. This means the same information on fewer sheets of paper. The reduced paper count is both environmentally responsible (think green!) and less costly.
- ◆ Reduce postage costs. Fewer sheets of paper means less weight and that will qualify the newsletter for a lower bulk-mail rate.
- ◆ Migrate toward the inevitable. Surface mail was high-tech in Ben Franklin's days and the pony express was nostalgic, but the horse gave way to the iron-horse and both are yielding to the mouse. The internet provides fast, low-cost communication alternatives and it's inevitable.

Your comments regarding the new format are welcome. Please send those comments to Claire, using eMail of course.

In Memoriam

Ferne Wolf, long-time music accompanist for FUMC, passed away on Friday, December 14, 2007.

It was Ferne's wish that her grand piano be placed in the sanctuary so it may be enjoyed by the congregation for years to come.

Ferne's life will be celebrated at a memorial service in the sanctuary on Saturday, January 5th at 11:00 a.m. Everyone is then invited to the gym to share a *potluck* meal as well as sharing memories of Ferne.

First United Methodist Church of Deming, New Mexico

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Equipping Disciples for Excellence
God is 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 with workshops in a variety of areas that cover leadership training, spiritual development and good fun! There are a variety of half-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.” A complete listing of all of the offered courses is available in the office.

The church will pay the registration fee. Registration forms will be accepted through January 11th.

EDE will be held on Saturday, January 26th at Trinity-First UMC in El Paso, TX.

Qualities of the Christian Steward

A Christian Steward is content. Christian stewards acknowledge that their strength comes from God through whom they can do all things regardless of how many or how few material possessions they have (*Philippians 4:11-13; 1Timothy 6:6-10*).

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me (*Philippians 4:13*).

Thanksgiving Food Boxes

The church gave twelve Thanksgiving food boxes to families identified by school personnel and gave an additional three food boxes to families identified by Love INC. All 15 families were definitely in need of these boxes and were extremely grateful.

Your participation in this United Methodist Men-led ministry is truly appreciated.



TAKE NOTE

Well, another year has come and gone. We make a commitment to the New Year that we will be better, stronger, or perhaps thinner. Many times the promises we make quickly vanish and we find ourselves wondering what in the world happened.

We serve a God who is great at keeping His promises. He never breaks one vow to His people. May you hold on to that hope as our own weaknesses give way to empty promises. Be assured that our God will never let you down.

Schedule for January:

All rehearsals begin the week of January 7th.

- Mondays: Handbell Choir.... 4:30-5:30 pm
 Praise Band..... 5:30-6:30 pm
- Tuesdays: Soul Kids..... 3:30-5:00 pm
- Wednesdays: First Call..... 4:00-5:00 pm
 Chancel Choir..... 7:00-8:00 pm

Blessings and Joy,
Joe

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 or Cazandra MacDonald at 544-8161.

Please pick up your dishes in the Fellowship Hall. Unclaimed items may find their way to the next Rummage Sale.

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The Music Ministry Sings and Rings in the Holiday Season

The music ministry had a wonderful time preparing and presenting many aspects of the Christmas Season. Although the program was a little long, it was great to know that we have so many talented people in our church. Many thanks to everyone who had a hand in making this year's Christmas Celebration a very successful event.

To *Dee Huffman*: Wow. What can I say? You are truly a blessing to the life of our church and community. Words can never express how much I appreciate your offerings.

Marge Kemp: Is there anything you can't do? You are able to leap tall bells in a single bound, round up younglings, and do it all with style and panache. Again, words can never express my thanks.

Eldin Jontra: Thanks for all of your pre and post production efforts. We could not have sounded as well without out your sound expertise.

Jack Galbraith: Like Marge, you are able to leap tall bagpipes in a single bound, while at the same time ringing a million bells at once, while making sure that we are looking our best on video. Thanks for all you do!

Wayne and Margie Taylor: Thank you for "lighting our path" from the gym to the sanctuary. Your creative ideas constantly enhance everything we do here at the church. Thanks for helping us worship well.

Finally, to all of the unspoken heroes and heroines who constantly make our music making a top priority. Our worship is made complete with all of these dedicated individuals who sacrifice time to empower our worship with their dedication to the God given art of music making.



Remember to Greet Our Visitors! Your hello will make a difference in their world and yours!

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Bible Study

A new community-wide Bible Study about *Daniel, Lives of Integrity, Words of Prophecy* by [Beth Moore](#) is about to begin. Meetings are on Thursdays, January 31 through-April 24, 2008 (no class on March 20) at the First United Methodist Church. Workbooks are \$17.00.

To register, call Phyllis Mudd at 544-7787 or Suanne Delk at 546-2985. The registration deadline is January 20, 2008

Confirmation Class Completed

Come and help us support and celebrate the youth who completed the “Exploring Faith” class in December. Members of that class will be joining in fellowship with this Body of Christ on Sunday, January 13th at both worship services. We invite you to participate in making a covenant to support them on their Christian journey.

Little Lambs Preschool

November was a very fun month.

- ◆ The 4’s studied Fall, creation, being thankful, and silly songs.
- ◆ The 3’s finished their color studies and had a color celebration. They also studied shapes, being thankful, and music.

It is surprising how good we sing. One girl looked at the teacher and said “we sound pretty good.” Of course we do – **Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth ... come before Him with joyful singing.** (*Psalm 100: 1-2*)

We are very thankful for all that God gives us and for all that God has created. Thank you to FUMC for being the rock of our foundation at Little Lambs. God bless and keep you all.

It's time for Bithell Farms fruit orders!! Check for order forms on the table at the back of the Sanctuary. Any questions call Murray Basket 546-9104

Chrysalis

An opportunity to share and grow in faith is via the Chrysalis experience. The term “Chrysalis” symbolizes the spiritual growth that is essential for the transition to adulthood. Chrysalis lifts up a way to enjoy Christ’s friendship and love so as to be Christ’s 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 scheduled 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.

Point to Ponder

The Nativity story of nearly twenty centuries ago is known by all faiths as a hymn to the brotherhood of man. For Christians, it is the fulfillment of age-old prophecies and the reaffirmation of God’s great love for all of us. Through a generous Heavenly Father’s gift of His Son, hope and compassion entered a world weary with fear and despair and changed it for all time.

On Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Christ with prayer, feasting, and great merriment. But, most of all, we experience it in our hearts. For, more than just a day, Christmas is a state of mind. It is found throughout the year whenever faith overcomes doubt, hope conquers despair, and love triumphs over hate. It is present when men of any creed bring love and understanding to the hearts of their fellow man. The feeling is seen in the wondrous faces of children and in the hopeful eyes of the aged. It overflows the hearts of cheerful givers and the souls of the caring. And it is reflected in the brilliant colors, joyful sounds, and beauty of the winter season.

Let us resolve to honor this spirit of Christmas and strive to keep it throughout the year. — [Ronald Regan](#)

Columbarium to be Constructed

Sacramento Methodist Assembly will soon begin construction of a new columbarium, an enclosed memorial garden, on the camp's beautiful campus next to Bishop's Chapel, with niches for urns and engraved plaques for cremated remains. This ministry is offered to United Methodists, families, and friends who have not made other arrangements or who have a special love for SMA. Niches are now being sold at low introductory rates, with half of the payment going to the SMA endowment at the New Mexico United Methodist Foundation for the long-term maintenance of the columbarium and stability of the Assembly.

You may contact former Assembly director Jim Hengstenberg at 575-631-2369 for more information.

Marriage Enrichment Opportunity

Sacramento Methodist Assembly is hosting a retreat for married couples. Sign up now for the *Making Love Last a Lifetime* event to be held February 15-18, 2008.

A descriptive brochure may be downloaded from the New Mexico Conference web site at [www.nmconfum.com/Married Couples Retreat Brochure. pdf](http://www.nmconfum.com/MarriedCouplesRetreatBrochure.pdf).

CCYM Winter Event

The New Mexico Conference reminds us that registration for the CCYM Winter Event *I Witness 4 God* will close soon.

The guest speaker this year will be the Rev. Todd Seelau, pastor at Methodist Churches in Clint, TX and in Fabens, TX. *Progeny* from San Antonio, TX will provide the praise and worship music. The Youth Service Fund project is *Rachel's Courtyard*.

Registration forms must be received no later than January 23, 2008. Information may be obtained from the church office or by sending an eMail to youthdir@nmconfum.com. Please contact that eMail address to inquire about the availability of scholarships.

Bereavement Support Group

Have you suffered a loss? Missing a beloved family member, friend, or even pet? Consider joining the Mimbres Valley Home Health and Hospice bereavement support group meetings held in their offices (111 N. Pearl, Deming NM, 88030; 575-544-4663) Mondays at 5:30 pm.

You may make a tremendous difference in the lives of people experiencing the painful process of losing someone they love. Mimbres Valley Home Health and Hospice is seeking caring individuals who can offer their time to help provide comfort to terminally ill patients and their loved ones. You may spend time with patients and their families or help with errands and day-to-day tasks. If you have a special talent that might be useful or provide enjoyment, this is a wonderful time to share it with someone in need of companionship.

As a volunteer, you will be provided with special training: training that also can be helpful in your own life. Your voluntary time commitment is up to you, but even a few hours a week can make a big difference. For more information about a rewarding experience as a hospice volunteer, please contact Melissa at Mimbres Valley Home Health and Hospice in Deming: 575-544-4663. Their office is located at 111 N. Pearl Street, right behind La Fonda Restaurant.

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.

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 the Pastor

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Fusion – the FUMC youth group needs your help!

As part of their ministry to the community, the church youth are assembling Sacks of Love. There are two types of sacks – one with personal products and one with food items. The sacks are distributed to member churches of the Love INC program and these churches distribute them to transients in need.

The FUMC youth can always use the items listed below. Give your donation to any Youth member or to a Youth leader.

Needed for the personal care bags:

1. Any hotel amenities. We can use small shampoos, conditioners, or lotions.
2. The small travel size containers for shampoos. The youth group will fill them with shampoo.
3. Toothpaste – travel or regular size.

Needed for the food bags:

1. Tuna fish packets that contain tuna fish and condiments as well as crackers.
2. Breakfast bars. These can be the ones for \$1 or \$2 at Family Dollar or Dollar Tree.
3. Fruit cups.
4. Bottled water.

These bags have been a blessing to many homeless as well as transients. They are a great way for the participating churches to start ministering to transients in need.

Thank you for your help.

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 "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!





Prayer List Jan.-Mar. 2008

Bonnie Baker
Mary Barnes
Joe Bencomo
The Burkles
Helen Covey
Breece DeBoutz
Chris & Ellen Gonzales
Bill/Sue Hoffmeister
Wayne Humphrey
Wayne Humphrey
Lois Kelly
Jewel Landrum
Gordon & Sue McIver
Lynde Murphy
William Penn
Ann/Brian Pettit
John Plant
Billy Price
John Silter & family
Gary Slayman
Bob/Kitty Tobey
Bridget & Dixon Wolf and
their unborn twins

Families dealing with grief:
Sayre, Chandler, Hoskins,
Wolf

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.

Pastoral Ponderings

Calendars and Begging Bowls

*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."
Matthew 9:36-38 (NRSV)*

Recently I read something that put two images together in an unusual way. The first image was of a calendar. Almost everyone I know has a calendar – some people even have more than one! We usually fill our calendars with things to do, places to go, people to see, and all manner of important things (at least they are important to us!).

The other image is of a begging bowl. Some religious orders give their monks a begging bowl. Instead of having plans for lunch with some friends, the monk goes out into the world with his bowl held out. He doesn't know from where the next meal will come, nor if it will give him an opportunity to speak to someone about Christ.

I have to admit that looking at these two images together makes me a little nervous. I love my "to do" lists. I like knowing not only from where my next meal will come, but that it's a working meal with a committee to finish a project. Can anything be as comforting as a well-organized calendar?

Yet Jesus always wants some of that calendar space! And to make matters worse, he wants me to leave him room without knowing exactly when he will need some of my time. I don't think that Christ would object to calendars, he would just remind us that if we are his disciples, we also have a begging bowl. We never know when special opportunities will come our way. We never know when we might be blessed by being called upon to serve others. And if our calendars are too full, it's like carrying around an upside-down begging bowl—there's no room for Christ and his blessings of service.

When Jesus told his first century disciples to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers, he was talking about us. All we have to do is to keep room in our lives (calendars) for him, and his work. This is similar to keeping the begging bowl turned upright and ready to receive a gift. For those who choose to follow Jesus, the best gift that he can give us beyond eternal life is the opportunity to serve others in his name.

I pray that this new year will be filled with blessings and opportunities.

Keith



Church Calendar

There is no church calendar in this newsletter; it may be found instead on the church website. It's easier to update and keep current on the website.

There will be an Enchilada Dinner on Thursday, January 3rd, from 4-6pm at the Oddfellows Hall on South Gold (just behind Baca's). \$5 per person for a yummy meal and dessert! Proceeds benefit many programs, including local scholarships.

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Guest Ponderings

GEN-X RISING

By Rev. Andrew C. Thompson—andrew@mandatum.org

Think about these possible reasons a friend might give you for leaving his wife:

- ◆ She's boring.
- ◆ She said something mean; she hurt my feelings.
- ◆ I need a wife who can have more interesting conversations with me.
- ◆ I want a wife who thinks the way I think.

If your friend sought a divorce for one of these reasons, you'd tell him he was crazy. Either he wasn't serious when he made his marriage vows or else he must have literally lost his marbles.

And yet these are all common excuses given by people who decide to leave their church in search of greener pastures. They complain that the service (or the preacher) is just too boring. Their paper-thin skin gets bruised when someone makes a careless comment.

They skip a few Sundays in a row and get offended when no one from the church organizes a search party to find them. They want more exciting programming, or they want a community where everyone holds the opinions they do.

Sound familiar?

American consumer culture has so shaped the way we look at the world that we assume church shopping is natural. Like anything else in society—a restaurant, a cell phone plan, a magazine subscription—if we don't like the product we're getting, we opt for another one. That's the consumer's right, isn't it?

Well, yes, it is the consumer's right. But it is not the Christian's right. When we make vows of church membership, we pledge to be loyal to both the universal church and the local congregation with our prayers, presence, gifts and service (*United Methodist Hymnal*, p.38). And because it is Jesus' church, those are vows made to Jesus himself. They are at least as important as our wedding vows.

I believe there are only four valid reasons for a layperson to leave a church after vows of membership have been made:

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1. Death
2. Change of residence out of the area
3. Calling to a different ministry location
4. Outright heresy on the part of the church leadership

The first two circumstances make a membership change unavoidable. The third involves anyone who faithfully responds to the call of God. The fourth impacts one's own salvation, and should thus impel all church members to either censure the heretical leadership or leave for the sake of their own souls.

But none of them is about personal preference.

Ubiquitous church-shopping signals two things about our culture. First, the consumerist market mentality permeates even the most sacred aspects of contemporary life. Second, the church is experiencing a terrible poverty in the quality of its life together.

- ◆ When pastors fail to teach their congregations that their connection to the church is the surest path to salvation, they do their church members a grave disservice.
- ◆ When parents fail to teach their children that the church is the greatest repository of grace in this life, they hinder their kids' sanctification.
- ◆ And when the church fails to truly embody the community of Jesus' friends, tied by vows of loyalty and love, it is robbing itself of the full joy of life in Christ.

Paul tells us that the church is the body of Christ and that we are its members (*1 Corin. 12:27*). Peter says that the church is a spiritual house and that we are its stones (*1 Peter 2:4-5*). Rip off a body part and the body is wounded. Remove a stone and the house can come tumbling down.

When we break our vows of membership to the church for reasons of personal preference we commit a form of ecclesial adultery. We cheat on our church.

Our common calling today is thus in learning to treat the church as a community instead of a commodity. Rather than something that merely exists for our use as individuals, the church is the place where we find our lives by losing them.

First United Methodist Church

1020 S. Granite St.
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“Kindness is a
language we all
understand.
Even the blind
can see it and the
deaf can hear it.”

Mother Teresa

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