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From the Pastor

This past month, we had over 50 people show up here to go through training to help out in our Sunday morning worship services. I was so excited to see so many of you here with a desire to serve and to learn how to serve effectively. Many of you signed up to help out in the coming months and I thank you so much for your willingness to serve. I have also seen selfless service in other ways like this past Sunday when Sarah was unable to be here, the worship team stepped forward to lead us in worship in the first service and Waldon and Carol were willing to serve as they have so many times in the second service. Thank you as well to those who have taken up working in the sound booth to give us a depth of servants in that area.

We have also had new people step into areas of servant leadership as 2011 goes forward. I won't even begin to try to name them all but thank you to all who are willing to help out the kingdom of God through this congregation. Others have volunteered and will be doing new ministries in the near future.

Now just because you were not asked or have not yet volunteered to serve does not mean all areas of ministry are

full and there is nothing left to do. One thing I have discovered in my time of ministry is that it is never completed. I still find it amazing that I work in a job where things are never finished and yet it is so fulfilling. Only God could make that happen. Thank you again for allowing me to not complete the task of ministry with you.

In Christ's love, Ernie

Little Lambs Registration

Little Lambs Preschool will start taking registrations for the 2011-2012 school year on March 1, 2011. All 3- and 4-year old children are welcome. Registration takes place in the preschool at the church on Monday thru Friday between 8:30 and 11:00 am.

Sign up your child for a wonderful early childhood journey.

Lamplighters

We have a new ministry to reach out to our homebound and those in assisted-living and nursing homes. The Lamplighters will be given one person or couple whom they will visit occasionally and deliver communion to once a month. We are looking for Lamplighters of all ages who would like to develop a relationship with one of our members who is unable to join our church family for worship. Individuals, couples, and families can be part of this rewarding ministry. Email Beth Simpson at beth@fumcdeming.com to join this ministry team.

UMW News

Many, many thanks to all who donated, purchased or helped with our rummage sale! Thanks, too, to all who ordered Bithell Farms Fruit. Will let you know the delivery date when we hear from them.

Mark your calendars for the following:

- The Spiritual Retreat March 18, 19 and 20th at Sacramento Methodist Assembly. Glory and Jacob Dharmaraj are the guest speakers.
- The UMW El Paso District meeting April 9th will be held at First UM Church in Monahans, TX.
- Our UMW "Barnyard Buddies" luncheon will be May 7 from 11 - 2:00 p.m. in the Mac Gym Bldg.

Our next regular program is March 19 "Women's History Month-UMW Style", leader to be announced. Business meeting at 2:00 p.m., program at 3:00 p.m. in the Chapel. Hostesses are Mickie and Kellye Stimpson. All are welcome.

Dear Friends of Love INC of Luna County

It's hard to believe that it's not only a new year but a new decade. As we look back at the past several years, we give thanks to God and to you for the incredible growth in the ministry. Love INC of Luna County opened its doors in May of 2007 after several years of establishing a firm foundation.

Since 2007, Love INC has mobilized the church to reach out with the Love of Christ to our community. Love INC is run primarily by volunteers who committed 2,045 hours this year to help the needy. We have had the opportunity to assist over 300 families during 2010.

Numbers do not reflect the entire picture. Love In the Name of Christ is about transformation. Our mission statement reads "Love in the Name of Christ mobilizes the church to transform lives and community in the name of Christ". Love INC helps the church to help those in need.

As we reflect on the past decade, we can joyfully announce that the transformation is taking place. Surprisingly, one of the first places transformation has begun is in our own volunteers. They are transformed as they see the churches working in unity to meet such needs as bus tickets, prescriptions co-pays, food for the hungry, heaters for the cold, shelters for the homeless, furniture and household products for those starting over, and hope and encouragement to those seeking help.

We also did not anticipate the transformation taking place in the agencies. Workers from Border Area Mental Health, PNM, Senior Center, Healing House, Columbus Electric, and City of Deming have been touched as they see the church responding to the needs of their clients. One agency employee was so impacted that she gave part of her summer to volunteer at Love INC as an intake worker.

Transformation in the lives of Live INC clients is our primary goal. When a client calls in with a need, it is our objective to make a connection with that person. Sometimes it is with prayer, sometimes it is with something tangible as a blanket. We listen to life stories and offer help by directing them to resources in our churches. Recently, an intake worker offered prayer at the end of the interview and the client gratefully accepted. Our volunteer listened compassionately as the woman poured out her painful story. Although this woman expressed no interest in attending church, a seed was planted and she accepted a Bible.

Another woman called Love INC after her husband was admitted to a hospital in El Paso after a serious fall. Since the couple had been traveling, the wife had no family in the area. Two of our volunteers drove her to and from El Paso on several occasions prior to the husband's passing. The support our volunteers provided the wife and the precious time she was able to spend with her husband was invaluable to her. She remains in contact with us. Love INC was also able to play a small part in reaching out with the love of Christ when First Baptist Church made their huge Christmas food distribution to Deming's needy. Love INC, in conjunction with two local agencies, supplied 300 client names to First Baptist. We sponsored a Thanksgiving Dinner held at First United Methodist Church for 183 people who were served by over 40 volunteers from various Christian churches. From supplying a kitchen table to a family who had always made the preparing of meals their special time of fellowship to helping a woman get out of an abusive situation, each day at Love INC presents unique and varied challenges. Witnessing the Body of Christ working together in our community to meet people's most basic needs has indeed been a blessing.

As we at Love INC minister to people who call for help, we pray that all of our clients be planted in local churches where the love of Jesus can be demonstrated to them. In the meantime, the clearing house will be a safe place for them to receive legitimate help and care. We will continue to keep the church informed of "gaps" in service that exist in the community in order to create more opportunities for ministry and service to those in need. As we enter into the new decade, we wait expectantly for God to work in our midst. We pray that the Lord enable Love INC to continue to support the church in loving; not in word only, but in love and indeed. We appreciate the vital part you play in reaching our community with Love in the Name of Christ.

In His Service, Sue Holdridge

Sacramento Methodist Assembly...

has completed their Spring 2011 Newsletter! The "Sacramento News" is full of information, including 2010 camping data, as well as several old photos in celebration of its 80th birthday. The newsletter will be mailed but you may view it now on the Sacramento website at this link:

<http://www.sacramentoassembly.org/#/library/newsletters>

Some of My Thoughts

A few years ago a great controversy arose across this nation involving the placing of the Ten Commandments in government owned buildings. A college professor decided to conduct a small research project with one of his classes. He first inquired about the number of students that believed it was appropriate to post the Ten Commandments in public places. Next, he inquired about why posting the commandments was important to them. Several students made impassioned pleas for the recognition of the Commandments as foundational for the laws and morals of this country. Finally, he gave a test with one issue—list, in sequence, the Ten Commandments in your test booklet. Only a few students named the Commandments and none of them could name them in sequence. This simple experiment demonstrated that we often care more about appearance than substance, at least when it comes to knowing and following the Ten Commandments.

One of the great challenges of Christian discipleship is distinguishing between appearance and reality. One can be a good citizen, an ethical worker, and a first-rate church member without being a disciple of Jesus Christ. Much more is required than believing what Jesus said and did. It is more than believing that Jesus is the Son of God and affirming most of the church's doctrines. Appearance is insufficient for being a disciple of Jesus Christ. A disciple follows Jesus, acts like Jesus, and slowly develops even the very mind of Jesus. We face a major problem of being a disciple of Jesus. Our intended destination eludes us. We are weak sinful creatures that struggle with inconsistency between our words and deeds.

This is the place where the amazing sanctifying grace of God brings us forgiveness and moves us closer to living what we profess. We are not perfect, at least not the vast majority of us. Jesus deploys us on a long journey to



love God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Our sinfulness crashes through in some most surprising places-- at least this happens for me on a much too frequent basis. We serve a gracious, understanding, and forgiving Savior, who lifts us up, dusts us off, and commands us to go in a different direction. What an amazing Savior we follow!

My personal challenge is learning from my behavior and experience. Jesus certainly does and will forgive. Jesus also expects me to learn from my experiences and not to repeat them again next week. I love that wonderful adage—I am not the person I used to be, I am not the person I wish to be, and by the grace of God, I am not the person I am going to be.

Growing in grace comes as we allow Jesus to transform one more part of our lives every day. That growth comes through my daily reading and study of scripture, through prayer and meditation, and reading about how others are growing in their relationship with Jesus Christ. By the grace of God working in and through me, one day I pray appearance and reality will be one. My words and deeds will be consistent.

Grace & Peace, Max

Ash Wednesday Activities

We will have two services on Ash Wednesday, March 9th. The first will be a come and go service from 7 to 8 am for a time of quiet prayer and imposition of ashes. A traditional service, including imposition of ashes and Communion, will be held that evening at 6 pm. These services are open to community so please feel free to spread the word and invite others to come or better yet, to join you.

Sammy Rides

SammyRides is a project sponsored by Team Will, a non-profit organization made up of cyclists who volunteer their time and resources to support research, and help families whose children are currently undergoing cancer treatment.

On March 2, 2011, a team of four riders, whose average age is 70+, will start a 2400 mile bicycle journey across the southern tier of the U.S. Their journey will start in Sun City, Arizona and end in Sun City Center, Florida on May 1st. **This team will be stopping in Deming on Wednesday, March 9th. Our church is hosting them in the Fellowship Hall following the 6 pm Ash Wednesday service.** This will be an opportunity to hear more about their mission. If you know of a family who has been affected by pediatric cancer, or know someone who would be interested in meeting the riders, please invite them to join you for our 6 pm Ash Wednesday service. Or people may come at 7 pm to meet the riders and enjoy light refreshments.

Gila Road Closures

The U.S. Forest Service is considering road closures in the Gila National Forest. There are several alternative. B appears to be the way people have always enjoyed the forest. The Forest Service's preference, G, would eliminate all cross country travel, apparently closing nearly 1,300 miles of access and limiting dispersed camping to only 25% of the Gila's currently existing roads. All of the alternatives being considered would also limit the public's access for motorized big game retrieval.

Meetings are being held at the Gila Forest Service office in Silver City. The 60-day public comment period ends March 7th. If you would like more information, please visit the Gila National Forest website: type Gila National Forest Service in your search engine, click on Gila National Forest Home, click on the Land & Resources Management resources link on the left hand side of the page, then click on Travel Management Planning. This will bring up links to the "Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Maps" as well as links on how to submit your comments.

A condensed version of this document, that was presented at meetings, can found at

http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5246207.pdf

If those who camp, hike and hunt in the Gila Forest have an interest in this issue, remember, the comment period ends March 7th.

Dear Greater El Paso Area Congregations

I write this letter to offer you an opportunity to participate in an event that will glorify God. *Celebrate Segundo Barrio Community Fair* spearheaded by the Segundo Barrio ministry team (Lydia Patterson

Institute, Emmanuel UMC, Trinity First UMC and the Houchen Community Center) and community partners, is in conjunction with United Methodist Communications' "Impact Day" campaign. It's an opportunity to be connected in one accord in the name of Jesus, along with participating in a transforming experience that you will never forget. The United Methodist brand will be spread throughout El Paso through billboards, transit posters, direct mail, radio, newspapers, and flyers.

On the day of the event, there will be a live remote starting at 10 am telling the story of how United Methodists have come together for the "least of these" by providing a day of community recognition and service. Join us as we work in our UMC Focus Areas to address poverty locally and improve health globally. Four thousand flyers and 22,000 direct mailers have are being distributed. Volunteers will receive a free event t-shirt as well. The attachments will explain more fully. Please assign this program to someone in your church today to ensure follow-up.

You won't want to miss out on this wonderful opportunity to let your light shine for Jesus Christ.
In His Service, Steve McElroy, District Superintendent



Cancer Support of Luna County Walk

First United Methodist Church will participate in the Cancer Support of Luna County Walk on Saturday, April 30, at Pit Park. This walk honors those who have survived or lost their lives to cancer survivors. All money raised for this event goes to help local cancer warriors with related expenses.

Our church team, *Faith Walkers*, has been a visible participant for many years.

For more information, contact Mary Lou Cameron, Mary Frosch, Barbara Walsh, or Shirley Wheeler.

All Men and Their Sons...

are cordially invited to a free dinner sponsored by the United Methodist Men. The dinner will be held on Tuesday, March 22nd at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. In order to know how much food to prepare, please make reservations by Tuesday, March 15th. You may make reservations by calling Wally Tremper (544-0593) or Don Cameron (546-3103), or by using the sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall. For more information about the dinner, please call Wally or Don.

Blackwood Legacy in Concert

This amazing group comes to you directly from Nashville where much of today's Southern and Country Gospel sound originated. The Blackwood Legacy is led by 35-year Southern Gospel veteran, Rick Price who spent much of his career with the Blackwood Brothers. Joining him are contemporary worship musicians, Luke Yates, an amazing piano player and vocalist, and tenor Daniel Childs, grandson to the late Cecil Blackwood. Be prepared for a time of music and ministry that will appeal to all ages.

Sunday, March 20 at 6 pm in the First United Methodist Church. Admission is free!

The 23rd Psalm for Busy People

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not rush.
He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals.

He provides me with images of stillness, which restores my serenity.
He leads me in ways of efficiency
 through calmness of mind, and His guidance is peace.
Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day,
I will not fret, for His presence is here.
His timelessness and His all importance will keep me in balance.
He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activities
 by anointing my mind with the oils of tranquility;
 my cup of joyous energy overflows.
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours,
 for I shall walk in the pace of my Lord,
 and I will dwell in His house forever.

Thank You

Four thank you messages have been received.

1. Dear First United Methodist Church,

Thank you for allow us to use your building throughout the year for our activities. Also thank you for your continued support throughout the year of Luna County 4-H.

2. The Dust Devils write "Thank you so much for the use of your kitchen and your support!" *We are happy to have a facility, i.e. the Methodist Activity Center (MAC), that may service the needs of the community.*

3. UMCOR sent a message (*edited here for space reasons*) that reads "Thank you for your generous gift to United Methodist Committee on Relief. UMCOR programs provide food for the hungry, help farmers grow plentiful and nutritious food, and support people left destitute by natural disasters and war." This gift was an undesignated donation, meaning that it was not focused on Haiti or any other specific need but was to be available for the ongoing worldwide need supported by UMCOR.

4. **Bishop Max** write to thank the Church for giving more than 100% of the Shared Ministries allocated to us.

Dear Brothers & Sisters:

The State and national economy has begun a slow recovery. The recession has directly impacted some members of our congregations. More importantly it has created a culture of scarcity over many congregations. People are fearful. It is time for us to place our trust in God who has created a world of abundance. We have all the resources we need. We certainly do not have all the resources we want and desire, but God has provided abundantly for us.

The Conference Ministry Team and the Conference Council on Finance and Administration are working very hard to reduce requests for Shared Ministries. We are focusing on the primary mission to enable, equip, and empower local churches to develop dynamic disciples of Jesus Christ. This means that good ministries that do not significantly contribute to this mission may need to be reduced or eliminated. I believe local churches must ask what ministries and expenditures develop dynamic disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and use this standard to determine how best to utilize our financial resources. Blaming others will not facilitate the accomplishment of our mission of developing dynamic disciples of Jesus Christ.

I rejoice and give thanks you gave more than 100% of the Shared Ministries allocated to you. You assisted in starting new congregations, strengthening youth ministries in local churches, sending missionaries around the world, providing loans and scholarships for college and seminary students, training pastors and laity to make disciples in the congregation's mission field, and other vital ministries to fulfill our common mission. Your gifts made a vital difference in the Annual Conference and around the world.

I want to personally thank you for what you have done for the financial health of this Annual Conference.

Financial resources are essential in carrying out ministry. However, the most important challenge is resourcing and equipping congregations to enable persons to encounter Jesus Christ, grow toward perfection in love, and reach a new generation for Christ. We must keep Christ's commission first in all that you do.

Please pray for each congregation, each pastor, and a special prayer for me as we strive to make disciples of Jesus Christ and seek to use our resources in the most effective ways.

Grace & Peace, D. Max Whitfield

Some of My Thoughts

Do we live a philosophy of scarcity or a philosophy of abundance? The difference became apparent to me when I learned of the difficulty that missionaries faced in Bolivia in the late 1960's. The farmers harvested their "potato" crop long before the "potatoes" matured.

They feared their neighbors would arrive in the dark of night and steal their crop. Neither the farmers nor their neighbors believed there was enough for everyone. Therefore, they harvested their crops prematurely and there was insufficient food for everyone. Their fear induced behavior produced the results they anticipated.

Fear and anxiety hang over many people in this country. The global recession caused many individuals and companies to collapse. Some congregations suffered from the same malady. They made bad decisions, assumed they would experience significant future growth, and these new members would be very generous contributors to the church's desired future. The recession hit and their response was to cut ministries and focus their energy on finding sufficient money to meet their financial obligations instead of concentrating on God's mission and calling. God promises to meet our needs, but not our wants and wishes. God provides sufficient resources so that no one needs to go hungry, without shelter, or deprived of an education. God provides, but God assumes that we are willing to take only what we need and share with those who do not have what they need. God expects us to keep our eyes and hearts focused on our mission instead of allowing our fears and anxieties to lead us into acting as if God is unable to provide for our needs.

Several years ago a congregation invited me to consult with them about designing strategies for their congregation's future. It became obvious that the leaders were unable to envision big hairy audacious goals. Everything was restricted by what the leaders believed they could afford. Even when I urged, begged, and pleaded with them to allow an awesome God to use them in ways they had never known before; they were unable to shake off the philosophy of scarcity. They did not have enough money and could not imagine carrying out the ministries without the infusion of far more money than they had ever known before.

This philosophy of scarcity is contrasted with another congregation in the community that believed God would provide. They dreamed of doing ministries that some thought were impossible. They refused to allow the lack of financial resources to curtail their assurance that God would transform the lives of individuals in their communities beyond their wildest expectations. They learned to do many of the ministries without additional money. They became the resource people instead of hiring individuals to do the ministry for them. They learned leadership skills they did not know they possessed. Those big hairy audacious goals became a reality.

We worship and follow an awesome God. Our God provides for our needs. As Eugene Petersen paraphrases Paul in his letter to the Church at Corinth, "Just think-you don't need a thing, you've got it all! All God's gifts are right in front of you as you wait expectantly for our Master Jesus to arrive on the scene for the Finale" (I Corinthians 1:7).

Grace & Peace, Max



Everything I Needed to Know *by Jacquie Sewell*

Everything I needed to know about life, I learned from a jigsaw puzzle.

- Don't force a fit. If something is meant to be, it will come together naturally.
- When things aren't going so well, take a break. Everything will look different when you return.
- Be sure to look at the big picture. Getting hung up on the little pieces only leads to frustration.
- Perseverance pays off. Every important puzzle went together bit by bit, piece by piece.
- When one spot stops working, move to another. But be sure to come back later (see #4).
- The Creator of the puzzle gave you the picture as a guidebook. Refer to the Creator's guidebook often.
- Variety is the spice of life. It's the different colors and patterns that make the puzzle interesting.
- Working together with friends and family makes any task fun.
- Establish the border first. Boundaries give a sense of security and order.
- Don't be afraid to try different combinations. Some matches are surprising.
- Take time often to celebrate your successes—even little ones.
- Anything worth doing takes time and effort. A great puzzle can't be rushed.

- When you finally reach the last piece, don't be sad. Rejoice in the masterpiece you've made and enjoy a well-deserved rest.

Little Lambs Report

January was very cold. We stayed in and had lots of fun. The 4's reviewed their skills, had physical fitness week (even the teachers worked out) to keep our bodies healthy, learned how to share and cook great food, and best of all we made things that have wheels. It's a great world we live in.

The 3's reviewed their skills, worked on cutting (the scissors only work if you hold your tongue out to the side), and learned about creation. We have a Bible creation video that we watch. This was the first year that after they watched it they all clapped. One of the students said, "that God, He really does good work".

What a wonderful thing to remember ... *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ... Genesis 1:1*
He really does good work!

Lay Speaker School

The Lay Speaker School at University UMC in Las Cruces will have a unique format. Four courses will be offered, each course consisting of six class sessions. Dates are March 6-April 10, 5:00-7:30 pm.

Completion of the Basic course is a requirement to become either a Local Church Lay Speaker or a Certified Lay Speaker. Full information plus a registration form is available on the church website.

Blood Drive

United Blood Services has changed the way they book blood drives. Due to the distance they come (from El Paso), we need to have 20 people signed up before they will book a date. Wednesdays seem to work the best for the church calendar. We usually book from about 9 am to 1 pm. Possible date is March 23rd.

UMM Scholarships

The United Methodist Men are once again taking applications for college scholarships. The scholarships are available first to high school seniors and then to those currently enrolled in college. The amount of scholarships awarded is dependent upon funds available and the number of applicants.

Scholarship forms are available online, or in the church office. The deadline to return completed applications is Sunday, March 27th.