



THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CONNECTIONS

First United Methodist Church

Mexia, Texas

January, 2008

... *“Something To Hope For!”*

Alexander the Great, in a mood of generosity, was once handing out gifts. To one he gave a great fortune, to another a province, to another a position of high honor. A friend said to him, “By doing this you will have nothing to yourself.” “Oh yes I have,” said Alexander. “I have kept what is greatest of all. I have kept my hopes.”

William Barclay, in his book *Daily Celebration*, wrote: “For a happy life, three things are necessary: **something to hope for, something to do, and someone to love.**” When we say, “Have a happy New Year” what do we mean? Do we mean, “I hope you get a promotion at work,” or “I hope you win the lottery,” or “I hope you stay on your diet.”? As Christians when we think of happiness we should think of something to hope for, something to do, and someone to love. In Christ we have all three – we have something to hope for both here and throughout eternity, we have something to do as individuals and as a church for the kingdom, and we have Jesus to love. I look forward to us having a happy New Year together as we serve Christ.

In Christ,
Brad

Message from Music Director, Richard Morgan...

Dean McIntyre, who shared the following story, is the Director of Music Resources for The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship. He moderates the Methodist Musicians listserv, which I read regularly and from which I get many ideas for music and worship, among other things. I had the good fortune to meet, work with, and watch perform Ken Medema this past summer. He is as incredible a person as Dean makes him sound, and I plan to get Medema’s CD, *Sea Change*.

Before you read it, though, please accept my thanks, on behalf of Wynona, the Chancel Choir, and the Chancel Ringers, for your support for our musical offerings throughout the year. It truly is a blessing to serve you, the Body of Christ in this place.

This story is my wish to all for a spirit-filled new year.

“Many know the incredible talent of singer and songwriter Ken Medema. For many years he has contributed to our worship services through his many choral and solo works, and he has blessed us through the sharing of his musical gifts as a touring performer and recording artist. I am privileged to count Ken as a colleague and friend and take delight in recommending his services whenever possible.

“This year I received a Christmas card from Ken. I’m sure he sends out many cards annually. This card, however, was different. It contained a gift. Attached to the top inside of the card was a crisp, new \$10

bill. It was part of a monetary gift given to Ken to be used in his ministry as he saw fit. Resisting his first impulse to use the gift to pay bills, Ken chose to use the gift in another way. His new album, *Sea Change*, encourages us to engage in a new way of seeing and acting in our world and our community, and Ken's turnaround gift in his Christmas card does that. He encourages the recipient to use the \$10 to "make a change by giving it to a charity, paying a toll for the car behind you and watching the reaction in your rearview mirror, or buying 24 stamps to send notes of cheer or thanks." He also gives permission to spend the \$10 on yourself for a movie or a cup of coffee -- something to "renew yourself, take a breath, and be reminded that you are amazing and deserving."

"What a wonderful act Ken's gift performs! Not only does it result in good deeds of ministry and generosity, but it also places a responsibility on the recipient to become further engaged in his or her own ministry and generosity. I had Ken's \$10 bill in my wallet when I stopped at the grocery store on my way to work this morning. In the checkout lane next to mine was an older couple who spoke in a thick east European accent of some kind. They did not have enough money to pay for their purchases, which appeared to me to be all staples -- no frills or extras. They were having to decide which of their purchases to send back to the shelves. I gave Ken's \$10 to my own checker and asked her to give it anonymously to the young woman checking out the older couple. It covered their deficit and allowed them to keep a few dollars in their pocket. They were gratefully confused as I watched them head for the door.

"I'm well aware that my act of generosity was not really mine; it was Ken's. But as a result of Ken's gift to the old couple, he has encouraged me to make my own gift that I know will contribute to the *Sea Change* accomplished through the work and ministry of UMCOR and Heifer International, both of which will receive donations this Christmas in honor of Ken Medema.

"I hope that you will include your own *Sea Change* Christmas gift this year in the midst of all of the shopping, wrapping, giving, and receiving that you do. Find a home for the homeless, a shelter for victims of domestic violence, a food bank, a Salvation Army bell ringer, or a hospice agency to give to. When was the last time you left a \$25 tip to a lower-than-minimum-wage waitress?

"Merry Christmas, Ken!"

Message from Youth Director, Walt Harrison...

Well, here we are in the New Year! I am very excited to tell you about what's going on with the youth this spring. We have a busy schedule ahead of us. During the Month of January we will be working around the community to raise funds for our 30 hour famine.

What is a 30 hour famine you ask? Now in its 17th year, World Vision's 30 Hour Famine raises awareness and money to fight hunger both overseas and in the United States. During the 30 hours, teens will BE HUNGRY – the theme for this year's Famine -- by going without food (consuming only liquids) for 30 hours to experience what the poorest children and families face every day. They also perform hands-on community service projects during the weekend in order to make a difference in their own community as well. Students that participate in this life changing event will be rewarded with a ticket to the Youth Rally in Dallas called Battle Cry. All of our efforts are to ultimately raise enough funds to take 20 of our youth to Louisiana for our summer mission trip.

I also would like to say thank you to all of you who have helped with our youth program over the last year, and I would like to encourage those of you who are looking for a place to serve our church to come and give us a try.

I would like to leave you with a story:

In ancient times, a king had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the king's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the king for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the big stone out of the way. Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. On approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded. As the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the king indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many others never understand. Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve one's condition.

Message from Program Coordinator Charlotte Posey.....

Hi everyone. I hope that you are enjoying this holiday season. As I look back and review all that our church has participated in this past year, I am filled with gratitude and love for all of you. In the name of Christ, we have reached out to many in our community in various ways. We have served meals, baked cookies, identified and honored new faces among us, and I believe have been the hands and feet of Jesus.

Thank you from the depths of my heart, for always being willing to take on another venture with me. I know that God smiles down on this church because you are a loving, caring church family who reaches out to others and accepts people for who they are.

We had a wonderful response to the Thanksgiving Community Service and the "soup supper" before worship. There were approximately 100 people for soup. Thank you to everyone who brought the delicious variety of soup and cornbread. Everyone had a great time visiting around the tables.

In November, our church fed the entire staff of McBay Elementary School an appreciation luncheon. Kathy Nutt, Sherry Manning, and Star Yelverton helped me serve around 100 employees a taco soup lunch, complete with dessert. The church office has received several notes of thanks and appreciation for our remembering them in this way. Thank you ladies for your needed help. We will continue this ministry on January 25, when we will be serving the same meal to Sims Intermediate School. We then will serve Mexia Junior High and Mexia High School the following two months. Dates are yet to be scheduled. If anyone would like to be a part of those who serve, please contact me @ 625-0550 or the church office (562-5567.) We would love to have you join us as we serve our school employees.

Our most recent venture was a great success. We delivered around 130 dozen cookies collectively, to employees of our local hospital, fire department, police department, and the City Hall. We did this to show our appreciation for their service and sacrifice for our community all year long. Thank you for baking cookies. A big "Thank You" to Vicki Watson and Kathy Paschal for helping me to deliver these many cookies.

Message from Children's Coordinator, Cheryl Hancock...

The Peacekeepers learned in December that JESUS is the reason for the season and "giving" is always better than "receiving". We showed this by visiting the local nursing homes and sharing not only the Christmas spirit through our voices in song but, with treats we made and handed out to the residents. In January we are planning to have a Lock-In on January 19th and include some of our friends. If anyone would like to provide snacks for this please contact me.

“FUMC Mexia 101” Class

Beginning Sunday, January 6th we will have a class entitled FUMC Mexia 101. In this class we will cover the basic doctrines and beliefs of the United Methodist Church, as well as the structure of the United Methodist Church. We will also talk more specifically about what we are doing here at FUMC and how you can get involved. This class is perfect for those who are thinking of joining the church or those who would like to know more about the United Methodist Church. We will meet the first three Sundays in January (6th, 13th, and 20th) at 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. I look forward to seeing you!

Administrative Board Meeting

Our first Administrative Board meeting for 2008 will be on **Tuesday, January 8th at 6:30 p.m.** In addition to approving the 2008 church budget, we will also share ideas on various ministries for 2008. As always, every full member of the church is a voting member of the Administrative Board and is encouraged to participate.

Wednesday Worship in Sanctuary

Our Wednesday night worship service has moved from the fellowship hall to the sanctuary. Join us on Wednesdays for a relaxed, fellowship service that includes lots of singing, praying, hearing God's Word, and celebrating Holy Communion. Wednesday worship will resume January 9th at 6:00 p.m. Invite your friends who may not have a church home.

Disciple II Bible Study

On Wednesday, January 9th we will begin the Disciple II Bible Study program. This study will take an in-depth look at the books of Genesis, Exodus, Luke, and Acts. We meet every Wednesday in the boardroom at 9:00 a.m. We would love to have you be a part of our group as we study and learn together. Reminder: this is a Bible study that requires reading throughout the week.

Remember Your Baptism

On Sunday, January 13th we will have a special time in our 10:30 a.m. worship service where we remember and reaffirm our baptism. The same Sunday we will be focusing on the baptism of Jesus and it is appropriate for us to remember our own baptism as well. This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to not only remember what God has done for us through baptism, but to recommit our lives in the new year to God's service.

Tool Shower – Sunday, January 20th

We are having a “Tool Shower” on Sunday, January 20th at 3:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall. We are in the process of collecting donations and tools to stock our mission trailer. You can help by donating tools, gift cards, etc. We will have finger foods, punch and cake as a part of the shower. If you have any questions about this project contact the church office 562-5567.

Confirmation Class Forming

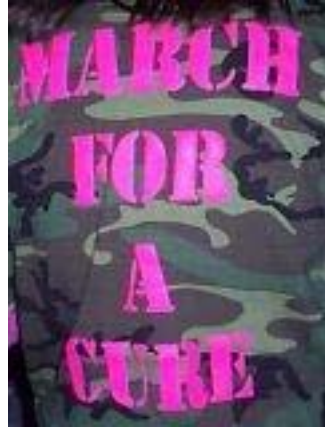
Confirmation is a special time in the life of our youth as they make conscious decisions to follow Jesus Christ. Confirmation class is designed for children 5th grade and up. If you have children you would like to register for Confirmation, call the church office 562-5567 or email Brad at bradbrittain@hotmail.com. Our Confirmation Classes will be from Sunday, February 3rd until Sunday, March 9th. We will meet every Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. Adult mentors will play a big part in this year’s Confirmation class so it is important that we know how many students we will have in the class before February 3rd. If you have an interest in being a mentor, contact Brad.

Ash Wednesday Worship Service – Feb. 6th

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, which means “spring”. The season is a preparation for Easter. Ash Wednesday emphasizes a dual encounter: we confront our own mortality and confess our sin before God within the faith community. We will have a special Ash Wednesday service on Wednesday, February 6th at 6:00 p.m. Join us as we begin the journey to the cross and the empty tomb together.

Faith Seeking Understanding – Christian Theology Class

All of us are at different stages in our Christian journey. Some are new to the faith, while others have been Christians for decades. One of the needs expressed by some in our church is for a study group that digs deeper into Christian theology. There is an excellent book entitled *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* by Daniel Migliore. This was one of my assigned readings in seminary and I think it would be a good resource for our class. If you are interested in participating in this class give me a call 562-5567 or email me bradbrittain@hotmail.com. If there is enough interest, we will begin our classes on Sunday, February 10th at 6:00 p.m. and meet for six-weeks throughout Lent. Topics will include: The Meaning of Revelation, The Authority of Scripture, The Triune God, The Good Creation, The Providence of God and The Mystery of Evil, The Person and Work of Jesus Christ, Proclamation, Sacraments, and Ministry, etc.



Relay for Life was a very exciting time for the FUMC team. We had several church members, preschool employees and many of my (Cheryl's) family members in attendance. We also had several survivors and care takers come and walk with us.

Our team participated in the clown car races and had a couple of our younger girls dance with the Aggie Wranglers. We were also one of the few teams that stayed for the entire relay and kept at least one person walking the entire time. The team raised approximately \$1,000.00 dollars.

I would like to personally thank each and everyone of you who gave your money and time in support of Relay for Life.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Hancock

P.S. Stop by the FUMC office to see the plaque we were awarded from the 2007 Limestone Co. Texas American Cancer Society.



Welcome New Member
Brandi Owen
Profession of Faith 12/16/07

January Birthday's

6th-Barbara Owens, 7th-Cass Candy, Pat Irwin, 11th-Pam Crider, 12th-Rebecca Adair, Josh Willett, 15th-Trinity Edwards, 16th-Emily Ray, 18th-Connie Beasley, Katelyn McKeand, 19th-Brian Hullumn, 21st-Joann Temples, 24th-Mason Carter, James McKeand, 26th-Talbert White, Margaret Jackson, 27th-Tommy Platt, 28th-Boone Crider

January Anniversaries

4th-James & Dawn McKeand, Valerie & Mike Bolton, 22nd-Pat & Michele Irwin, 25th Kenneth & Johnnie Christian, 26th Bob and Lady Carter-Fain

Menus for January

Wednesday Night Dinners

1/09—Chicken Spaghetti
1/16—Soup Medley
1/23—Meatloaf
1/30—Picante Chicken

Sunday Breakfast

1/20—Biscuits, Sausage & Gravy

Attendance for December

	<u>SS</u>	<u>Worship</u>
12/2	56	131
12/9	52	158
12/16	60	144
12/23	40	151
12/30	49	123

Deadline for submitting an article to the
February Newsletter
is
January 24th

Church Committees / Leadership

You might be a Methodist if you have ever uttered the phrase: “Am I on that committee? Didn’t I rotate off?” Here is a list of our required committees and their members for 2008:

Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee

T.D. Shivers (chair), Donna Williford, Lois Willet, Tracy Machacek, Jack Forrest, Wendy Simmons, Carol Ann Dawley, Randy Kott, Dawn McKeand, Kent Kendall (Lay Leader)

Finance Committee

Michael Miller (chair), T.D. Shivers, Joe Paschal, Kent Kendall, Mary Benson, James Dawley

Trustees

Joe Paschal (chair), Art Nutt, T.J. Hathaway, John Burkes, Randy Machacek, Cheryl Hancock, John Posey, Valerie Bolton, Kathy Morgan

Committee on Lay Leadership

James McKeand, Carol Ann Dawley, Buddy Williford, Mike Bolton, Karen Harrison (Lay Leader), Kathy Paschal, Bob Crider, Ann Pendleton

Administrative Board Chair – James Dawley

*Every full member of the church is a voting member of our Administrative Board

Lay Leader – Kent Kendall

We have additional committees in the church that are formed throughout the year to accomplish certain projects. At our first Administrative Board meeting of 2008 we will discuss how our church will be structured in the coming year for ministry and ways we can involve more members.

Your Church Staff

Brad Brittain, Pastor

Dr. Richard Morgan, Director of Music

Walt Harrison, Minister of Youth

Cheryl Hancock, Children’s Coordinator

Charlotte Posey, Christian Education/Program Coordinator

Wynona Lipsett, Organist

Mary Benson, Administrative Assistant/Fiscal Coordinator

Mike Bolton and Barbara Owens, Building Maintenance and Cleaning

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. - 1:00 –5:00 p.m.

Friday

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.