

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Learning for Life

February 2008

If you want to learn more about our denomination, join Rev. Joel Kershaw on **Sunday February 3 at 10:45am in the Brides' Room** for a **Crash Course in Methodism**. Discover what makes Methodism unique, learn more about John Wesley, and deepen your understanding of what it means to be Methodist in the 21st century.

On **Tuesday February 12**, we welcome a Visiting Scholar, **Dr. Pamela Eisenbaum**, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies and Christian Origins at Iliff School of Theology. Focusing on the three primary themes she sees in Romans, Dr. Eisenbaum will offer us **A New Look at Paul's Letter to the Romans** from **7:00 – 8:30pm in the Parlor**. Dr. Eisenbaum, author of the recently published DISCIPLE short course Invitation to Romans, will explore ways in which today's readers of Romans can be in conversation with Paul.

As part of our preparation for Easter, you're encouraged to participate in our **Lenten Studies on Wednesdays February 13, 20 and 27 and March 5 from 7 to 8pm**. Following a light supper at 6pm, you can attend one of the following classes:

In **The Last Seven Words of Jesus**, Rev. Schuster will explore with us what these seven last sayings mean for us today.

In **Hollywood's Search for the Holy Grail**, Rev. Kershaw will look with us at four films related to the theme of the Holy Grail of Christ, the cup Jesus used at the Last Supper.

Rev. Everhart and Bev Halperin will lead an intergenerational exploration of faith **Learning and Living the Faith Together: A Class for the Entire Family**. Each class will offer opportunities for dialog and learning as we focus on relevant themes of the Christian Faith.

Rev. Dalke and Rev. Miller will co-facilitate **Things We Wish We Had Said: A Class for Fathers and Sons**, where we'll explore questions and issues that can either create a chasm or a bridge in the father-son relationship.

Reflections on the Year 2007

By: Charles Schuster

It seems we have altered the focus from renovation to revolution. We are more concerned about what we can do to make a difference in the world than what more can we do to make a good impression so more people will join us. We are growing now but not because growth is our goal. Mission is our goal and people want to help us. Our financial picture is stronger than it's been in years and not because we have tried to emphasize our lack of funding, but because people, who believe in what is happening, have stepped forward to help make it happen.

This church has an important function in the Annual Conference and there are some things we will want to accomplish. There are objectives I have set in concert with what I believe to be in the best interest of the church, fulfill its dreams, and they are as follows:

1. Build a Family Life Center and focus on young people.
2. Create a new church congregation. We have failed to do this three times already. The effort in Wellington is fragile. It needs help.
3. Establish a viable Campus Ministry; a Wesley Foundation.
4. Complete the Columbarium. The congregation needs to resolve this once and for all. I have hoped to help them do that.
5. Change the demographics of leadership by reducing the ages of the leaders.
6. Help the church find a way to support the ministry it wants and needs. No longer do we merely "get by". It's time for us to "get going."

Enable this church to take its rightful place as a church where the best we can hope for in United Methodism is realized—open hearts, open minds, open doors.

We have an opportunity to do something in and with this church that is truly significant. There is no area in our ministry that is less than very strong and there is no area in our ministry that cannot be improved. Likewise, there is nothing about what any of us do that we need to apologize for, and there is nothing about what any of us do that couldn't be better.

What we have here is an alive and active church congregation with a staff made up of very talented and dedicated people. We also are fortunate to work with church leaders whose concern about the church is extreme and unusual.

We have done some amazing things this past year, and the potential for this church is beyond what any of us can imagine. This church has an opportunity to be prototypical of the best that United Methodism can become. We can become a significant institution without lapsing into the "mega-church" mentality that places quantity over quality. We can develop program and outreach that create the sense of the church as a center for Christianity to "come of age", and properly enter into conversation as a catalyst for other world religions.

First church has an opportunity to do something important and the vision of what that is should drive everything we do and how we interact as a staff and as a congregation.