

***Oak Meadow  
United Methodist Church***

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**Pastor Larry Scharmann**

***Laity Notes***

*by  
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***WELCOME PASTOR SCHARMANN***

Welcome Pastor Larry Scharmann to Oak Meadow United Methodist Church. We extend our greetings as a congregation and wish you well as our pastor. We offer our help and our encouragement to you. We extend our welcome to your wife, Trish, and open our hearts to you as a couple. We welcome your son, James, his wife, Stephanie, and your grandson, James. We welcome your daughter, Kimberly. We welcome your family to our church family.

At the same time we must be candid and offer a note of caution. We welcomed new pastors to our church in 1996, 1998 and 2001. During the past seven years, we have had three pastors and their average stay with us has been 2.33 years. We obviously do not offer tenure in our church. We write this not to frighten you, but simply to be honest with you and hopefully to lay a foundation of candor that may contribute to your longevity with our church.

Are we a difficult church? We certainly can be difficult, not only with our pastor, but also with each other. In this respect, Corinth would not be a strange congregation to us. At the same time, it would be equally true to say that we are a congenial church. We certainly can be congenial, not only with our pastor, but also with each other. We encourage you to pastor us in a manner which draws out our congeniality. We are teachable, and want to learn more about how to love. That is one reason why we come to Oak

Meadow to worship God, and we ask you to minister our efforts on this journey.

We are obviously a small congregation, but that by no means suggests that we lack experience, talent or energy. We have a good deal of all three. From time to time, however, we more closely resemble cats rather than sheep. We ask you to pastor us in a fashion that not only helps draw out our individual talents, but also in a manner that helps us to mold our talents that we might become more effective representatives of Christian living.

We are a small congregation that for the most part wants to remain small, but at the same time wants to flesh out our congregation and fill those empty seats on Sunday morning. We are for the most part more interested in becoming a complete church rather than a large church. Had we a taste for size, we have three options within a radius of less than five miles. We also believe that filling seats will cushion the plate and that the two go hand in hand. We do not ask that you do this work for us, since this is not a work for one but for many, but we do ask that you join and pastor our efforts toward this goal.

We also ask that you grow to know us. We invite you to our homes to help you do that. We are a congregation formed of individuals, and you will best get to know us, and we to know you, by sitting over a cup of coffee in our homes. We ask you to listen to our individual dreams for our church and for our lives, and to draw from this pool of ideas and hopes a common vision for our congregation.

Not all of the burdens of our church lie at your doorstep. If we are not afraid to ask much of you, we are also not afraid of working hard to help you. We understand that you cannot do this alone just as we understand we cannot do this on our own. That puts us in the same pot. We need each other just as surely as we need God's help along the way. The moment is ripe. Let us join hands and work together to seize this moment and create a truly vital small church for the benefit of all of those within our walls and perhaps for some beyond. Vitality has a way of becoming contagious. And the effort to create a vital small church can become a lesson in the art of Christian living.

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