

**Oak Meadow  
United Methodist Church**

2740 Hunters Green  
San Antonio, Texas 78231  
(210) 492-3902

<http://www.oakmeadowumc.org/>

**Pastor Larry Scharmann**

**Laity Notes**

by  
Chuck Hall

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**GOOD TO BE BACK**

August turned out to be a month when work got in the way of writing, and just as work began to settle into a more manageable pace, my computer failed in a major way. In the jargon of computer enthusiasts, it “crashed.” Armed now with a computer that computes faster, but does not seem to write better, and with a bit of extra time, I will return to this effort.

**ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY – SEPTEMBER 21ST**

We are rapidly approaching the celebration of our church’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On Sunday, September 21, we will have a dinner following church service to celebrate our first quarter century. It is my understanding that the Reverends Mark Buchanan and Emet Huntsman will join us on that occasion. Others will be preparing old pictures and other memorabilia to celebrate what our founders did in 1978. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend this celebration.

Think back and ask yourself what you were doing in 1978. As for myself, I returned in the spring of that year from two years of research in India. Within a month of my return I underwent back surgery for a problem that had developed overseas. At that time in my life, church was at best a distant thought. I was yet clinging to the notion that religion was fine for those who did not know better, but I was one of those who did know better. Or so I thought. It would take

nearly another decade before I began a serious look at the Bible, beginning to think by then that perhaps I did not know better.

Where were you twenty-five years ago? A handful of you were busy laying the groundwork for Oak Meadow. Those curious might look at page 39 in our new church directory to see a list of charter members still present. How staggering that initial \$275,000 building loan must have seemed in 1978. At that time, our neck of the woods was on the edge of the city, and though the city was growing, such a loan demonstrated considerable faith and optimism. That faith and optimism were yet present a dozen years later when another \$100,000 was borrowed to expand the church. Today that \$375,000 debt has been whittled to just under \$10,000. There has been plenty of help along the way, but we are now on the verge of retiring that debt.

There is much to remember, and much left to do. Let us celebrate this joyous occasion together and look back and appreciate the work that has made our celebration possible. And at the same time, let us turn an eye to the future and renew our efforts to revitalize our church. Let us work diligently to insure that there will be a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Oak Meadow congregation to celebrate. Each of us has something to offer, and highest on that list is our presence. Let us come together and rejoice.

**FALL FESTIVAL – NOVEMBER 1ST**

As we look ahead this fall, we are but seven weeks away from the fall festival. Many hands have been working to lay the groundwork for a successful venture. In the period of a few short years, our fall festival has turned out to be our biggest single fund raiser. It has attracted art of the highest caliber and visitors from all walks of life. Last year someone stole a cross from one of our vendors, so we indeed have a full cross section of society entering our doors on that occasion.

Please make every effort to attend the fall festival. It will be held on Saturday, November 1, beginning in the morning and stretching into the late afternoon. There will be plenty to shop for and abundant food. It is an occasion ripe for extending an invitation to friends. Who hesitates at shopping and eating? In addition, there will be fun things for children to do so that parents can shop and visit in leisure.

## ***METHODIST ANNIVERSARY***

While we at Oak Meadow are celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our own church, as Methodists we are this year celebrating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John Wesley's birth. Born in 1703, Wesley lived until 1791, his life spanning nearly the entire 18<sup>th</sup> century. He once visited America, from March 1736 until February 1738, as part of the missionary effort of the Church of England, or the Anglican Church. While his own American venture was not particularly fruitful, and while Wesley rooted for the British during the Revolutionary War, the founder of Methodism linked us by doctrine to Henry VIII and the English Reformation.

Open a copy of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, and turn to the discussion of doctrine. There you will find "THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH." There are twenty-five such articles because John Wesley pared the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church to twenty-five for the Methodist Church. The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church marked the effort by Queen Elizabeth to settle the problem created by her father, Henry VIII, while in pursuit of her mother, Anne Boleyn.

Henry VIII was born in 1491 and ruled England from 1509 until 1547. Martin Luther was born in 1483 and died in 1546. Luther published his ninety-five theses in 1517, and as the Reformation began to unfold, Henry VIII remained a staunch Catholic. Had Catherine of Aragon, Henry's first wife, produced a male heir, the king and his kingdom might well have remained Catholic. By 1527, when Henry was thirty-six and Catherine forty-two, Henry sought an annulment to free him to marry Anne Boleyn, who had caught his eye and who at age twenty-five held the promise of a male child. When international complications in Europe and a weak pope stood in the way of Henry's annulment, he summoned the Reformation Parliament in 1529. During its unprecedented seven-year session, Parliament passed, at Henry's bidding, statutes which created a national church headed by the king. Henry VIII's solution was effectively Catholicism without the pope. This constitutional revolution was solemnized in 1534 by an Act of Supremacy which declared Henry VIII "Supreme Head of the Church of England."

Opposition came from both sides. Some thought Henry had gone too far, others that he had not gone far enough. The latter group rallied about Henry's only son, Edward VI, who ruled from 1547 until 1553, and the former drew strength from Henry's daughter, Mary, who ruled from 1553 until 1558.

It was left to Henry's third child, Elizabeth, who ruled from 1558 until 1603, to "put out the spreading fires of religious hysteria." This she did by enacting a religious settlement during the early years of her long reign. The Thirty-Nine Articles constituted a key component of this settlement. Passed by church convocation in 1563 and by Parliament in 1571, the Thirty-Nine Articles constituted a religious creed and doctrine for the Church of England, which was also known as the Anglican Church. Elizabeth's settlement has endured to the present day in only slightly modified form.

As had been the case with her father, Elizabeth faced opposition. Those who claimed that she had gone too far were branded "papists," because of their leanings toward Rome. Those who claimed that she had not gone far enough eventually emerged as "puritans," so called for their efforts to "purify" the church from Roman influence. Many found their way to New England as Congregationalists.

John Wesley was ordained as a priest in the Anglican Church in 1728, at the age of twenty-five. He died as a priest in the Anglican Church in 1791. He always refused to separate the Methodist societies from the Church of England, but the Revolutionary War forced him to ordain lay preachers in America when ties on this side of the Atlantic were severed by American success. Meeting in Baltimore in 1784, a group of American Methodist preachers adopted the Articles of Religion which Wesley had sent them after making his selection of twenty-five from the original thirty-nine. The Articles of Religion are today protected by Restrictive Rule 1 of the Church Discipline, which explicitly forbids any changes to the original document as prepared by John Wesley.

## ***COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS***

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