

***Oak Meadow  
United Methodist Church***

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***Laity Notes***

*by  
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***ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION***

Our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration was a resounding success. Our church was full. Our parking lot was full. Our nursery was brimming with children. The official count was eighty-nine people! What a wonderful feeling! One had to look for a place to sit, and there were children for the children's sermon. And to top matters off, most of the additional faces were familiar faces, people who not so long ago called Oak Meadow their church home. People who once attended Oak Meadow with regularity, people who once sat on our committees and made decisions about our church. They are not strangers, they are our neighbors this very day.

We thank each and every one of them for helping to make our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary such a joyous occasion, and we invite each and every one of them to come again. We invite them to give thought to the idea of once again making Oak Meadow their church home, the place where on Sunday they worship God.

And what a feast there was following worship service! Many people chose to remain for the potluck dinner and they were amply rewarded by a great variety of delicious food and warm fellowship. The line for food never seemed to shorten, and some had to wait their turn to find a table. Our warm thanks go out to all those who put for the effort to prepare this meal. It was truly a feast, and a feast produced by the efforts of congregational hands.

Such occasions do not happen by accident. Much effort and planning lay behind this day, and we offer our sincere gratitude to those who worked so hard to make our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary such a resounding success. Many hands were involved in many different ways. We thank them all. We also encourage those who made a call to invite someone to attend to now make a second call to thank them for coming

***CHURCH GOAL***

Anniversary Sunday was a good reminder of the church goal set by our Administrative Board earlier this year: to gather ten new families under our roof. Sunday gave us a sense of how the results would feel, and gave inspiration to charge our engines once again and renew our effort to bring new folks into our worship.

Just about a year ago we were on the verge of setting out on a serious effort to determine whether to continue to go it alone or to merge with University Methodist Church. After much and careful deliberation, we chose to maintain our independence. With that decision came the obligation to step forth and renew and replenish our church. Our coffer was low and our congregation short by two generations. Against this background, the Administrative Board set its goal.

Specifically, that goal was to target ten new families, with the ideal family being Mom, Dad and two children. That was the ideal, but all are aware of the complexity of today's family structure, and our arms are open to any combination, from the individual to a family by any description.

Thus far we have not signed on a single family. Our efforts were interrupted by the change in ministry, and it is now time to once again begin to focus on that goal. We chose to go it alone knowing full well that the decision for independence would involve much work. Much work has been done. Wednesday night meals have brought many new people under our roof. Some have worked steadfastly to attract youth after school on Wednesdays. Palm Sunday witnessed a large number of Mother's Day Out children and many of their parents. Before our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Palm Sunday had been our largest Sunday attendance of the year. When we invited people for Palm Sunday and for our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary they came to church. We do know

how to attract people to our church. Now is the time to put into place a more systematic effort to replenish our congregation.

#### ***NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE***

This past week the nominations committee, formally known as the “Committee on Lay Leadership,” met to nominate people to committee assignments for the coming year. A decision was made to combine the “Membership/Ministry Committee” and the “Evangelism Committee,” into one committee, and to ask that committee to focus on maintaining our existing flock while at the same time making efforts to add to our flock. The underlying idea is that there ought to be sufficient similarity in what it takes to maintain and what it takes to replenish to merit combining these two committees into one. Another thought behind this step was to minimize our number of committees in order to maximize our manpower and efficiency.

One of the reasons we gather together to worship on Sunday at Oak Meadow is because John Wesley was an organizational genius. As a small group at Oxford began to span across broad sections of England, Wesley took great care to organize the new movement. Despite rapid growth over a large geographical area, Wesley managed to develop small core groups and to find ways to keep them connected. In our effort to replenish, we can fruitfully borrow from Wesley.

The various church committees and their responsibilities can be found in our new directory. The nominations committee nominates people for these positions and a vote is taken at the Charge Conference for approval. Additional nominations can be made from the floor at the time of the Charge Conference. Should any of you want to serve on a particular committee, please make your wishes known.

#### ***FALL FESTIVAL – NOVEMBER 1ST***

We are now but five weeks away from the fall festival, which will be held on Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. This is our premier annual fund raiser for our church and a splendid opportunity for us to invite friends to Oak Meadow. There will be plenty of things to buy and much good food to eat. The fall festival presents us a great moment for fun and fellowship.

#### ***FOOD FOR THOUGHT***

I read the following in the spring of 1987, and thereafter began to read the Bible.

“My grandparents were ignorant people by our standards, and my grandfather held only lowly jobs. But their home was spiritually rich because all the things done in it, not only what was specifically ritual, found their origin in the Bible’s commandments, and their explanation in the Bible’s stories and the commentaries on them, and had their imaginative counterparts in the deeds of the myriad of exemplary heroes. My grandparents found reasons for the existence of their family and the fulfillment of their duties in serious writings, and they interpreted their special sufferings with respect to a great and ennobling past. Their simple faith and practices linked them to great scholars and thinkers who dealt with the same material, not from outside or from an alien perspective, but believing as they did, while simply going deeper and providing guidance. There was a respect for real learning, because it had a felt connection with their lives. This is what a community and a history mean, a common experience inviting high and low into a single body of belief.

I do not believe that my generation, my cousins who have been educated in the American way, all of whom are M.D.s or Ph.D.s, have any comparable learning. When they talk about heaven and earth, the relations between men and women, parents and children, the human condition, I hear nothing but clichés, superficialities, the material of satire. I am not saying anything so trite as that life is fuller when people have myths to live by. I mean rather that a life based on the Book is closer to the truth, that it provides the material for deeper research in and access to the real nature of things. Without the great revelations, epics and philosophies as part of our natural vision, there is nothing to see out there, and eventually little left inside. The Bible is not the only means to furnish a mind, but without a book of similar gravity, read with the gravity of the potential believer, it will remain unfurnished.” (Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, 60.)

#### ***COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS***

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