

# *OAK LEAVES*



Sunday School 9:00 a.m.  
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.  
Rev Gerald Harvey

Phone 210-492-3902  
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*Oak Meadow United Methodist Church*

*March, 2003*

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**WHO ARE WE?**

**WHERE ARE WE?**

**WHERE DO WE WANT  
TO BE?**

# *Oak Meadow United Methodist Church*

## *Looking to the Future<sup>(1)</sup>*

### *Where have we been?*

Oak Meadow United Methodist Church was founded in 1978. Since its origin, it has remained a small church, with membership never exceeding 175 people. At one point in the 1980s the church severely shrank to a point where average Sunday worship attendance was around 20 or 25. In the late 1980s the church made a comeback and added new members, many with young children. Through the 1990s the church expanded and contracted but managed to hold its own. From its founding, the church has had seven pastors. Our most recent joined us in June 2001. Average pastoral tenure has been less than four years.

From a period late in 2000 through the spring of 2001 the church suffered a series of setbacks. In the first place, we suffered a severe loss of key people, including children and adults. Second, an effort to create a youth ministry failed. That failed effort depleted our \$10,000 capital projects reserve. Finally, we lost our sixth minister. This combination of events put our church to sleep from the spring of 2001 through the fall of 2002. For all practical purposes we ceased to function as a viable church. For the most part, committees did not meet, social functions declined and financial problems were not seriously addressed.

### *Where are we now?*

The church has awakened. We have held a church conference to pass a budget and elect member to committees. Those committees are meeting for the most part on an accelerated basis. The United Methodist Men have reactivated themselves and are meeting in record numbers. The United Methodist Women have also become more active. We average

about 50 people for Sunday worship. An updated directory is being prepared and we are working to update and enhance our church website.

We have an adult Sunday School class that has been in place in its present form for two years. Each Sunday some 15 members participate in a careful and thoughtful text reading, currently in the Book of Exodus, to learn not only about the Bible but also to be equipped and encouraged to study on their own or to teach others.

We are having a careful look at and educating ourselves about the Mothers' Day Out program to determine the future of this church ministry.

Serious problems remain. We have a deficit budget and few financial resources. We have only two children who regularly attend our church. We are missing two generations. We have no paid music director. We have yet to develop processes to recruit new members. We have no clear goal toward which we are directed.

### *Where do we want to be?*

We want to be a church with a full sanctuary during Sunday morning worship. In hard numbers, that would mean about 80 people in the congregation, about 15 in the choir and another 5 including the pastor, liturgist, acolyte and ushers. In short, this would mean having about 100 people at worship each Sunday. We want a balanced congregation. A congregation composed of three generations. We want to provide a nursery for young children and a full time music director for our choir. We want to implement a means of keeping current members and to create entry points for new members.

We want to be that “third place,” beyond home and work. In contrast to home where we are known through kinship ties, and work where we are recognized by skill, position, or title, we want our church to be that “third place,” where we can relax and be identified by who we are as individuals as we worship and mingle together.<sup>(2)</sup>

We want to be a church with a first rate education program. That would include Sunday School classes for adults, youth and children. More might be added to education, but this is our minimum goal and this much we want to provide at a high level.

We want to be a vital and a caring church. These two features are closely connected. By vital we mean active. Committees meet regularly. Issues are raised, solutions proposed and plans implemented. At the same time we do not want to over organize and miss the genius of a small church, which is “knowing how to have just enough organization.”<sup>(3)</sup> Caring is a crucial component of vitality. We care for each other by keeping track of each other. We facilitate caring with a regularly updated church directory. This makes verbal exchange easy. We supplement the directory with telephone chains that enable us to pass along critical information to the entire congregation with a handful of telephone calls at a moment’s notice. If a member of our congregation experiences an emergency, the entire church can be notified and act immediately. We want to cultivate the habit of contacting each other on a regular basis during the week; to shorten somewhat the distance between Sundays. At regular intervals, we want to eat together, work together and play together. We want to know who among our congregation needs help, advice or comforting. We want to spend time in each other’s homes. We want to expand the role the church plays in our lives. In order to be a vital and a caring church we must be financially sound. Financially sound means meeting operational and maintenance expense and holding operating and capital improvement reserve funds.

We want to develop a mission outside the church, to broaden our horizon and to contribute to others. We want this mission to be close to home and so designed that all congregation members can in some fashion contribute.

<sup>(1)</sup>Draft by Chuck Hall as of February 15, 2003.

<sup>(2)</sup>Lyle E. Schaller, *The Small Membership Church: Scenarios for Tomorrow*, pp. 26-28.

<sup>(3)</sup>David R. Ray, *The Big Small Church Book*, p. 159.

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## Types of churchgoers:

**Pillars:** worship regularly giving time and money.

**Supporters:** give time and money if they like the minister, the Chairman of the Council, the Chairman of the Council of Elders, and the Treasurer.

**Leaners:** use the church for funerals, baptisms, and marriages only.

**Working Leaners:** work but do not give money.

**Annals or Easter Birds:** dress up, look serious, and go to church on Easter.

**Hypocrites:** Leaners who say they are better than pillars.

- St. Philip's Society

# Oak Meadow UMC & University UMC Merger

*Larry Wilson*

The merger possibility between OMUMC and UUMC began in about August 2002 with a conversation between Rev Gerald Harvey and Rev Sue white. Those talks ultimately lead to an exploratory meeting arranged between member and staff of both OMUMC and UUMC in September 2002. The purpose was to see if a merger would be something that could meet the needs of both churches.

Russell Greiner, Chairman of the Administrative Council appointed Larry Wilson, Chuck Hall, Donna Armstrong, Ivan McDougal and Rev Gerald Harvey to be part of the negotiating team to examine what a merger would look like. Work started in October with Russell gathering legal, financial and operational data to share with UUMC. UUMC furnished manuals on their leadership, building use policy and procedures and paid for inspections to be made at OMUMC facilities.

UUMC was very open and up front about the merger being staffed and controlled by them with representation on major committees from OMUMC. They were very helpful, to Maria Bercher of our Mother's Day Out staff that indicated a good partnership could occur with increased children at OMUMC. During the many meetings, hammering out expectations and communicating results of the negotiations to each congregation, was a primary concern for both our negotiating teams. Our last meeting with UUMC took place on the Friday before the vote to be taken on the following Sunday, January 13, 2003.

A number of things occurred at the meeting indicating a concern at UUMC about extra

costs they envisioned for them to interface the two church operation. Also there were things revealed after the meeting on our part that were not addresses at the meeting. As a result of the ensuing confusion and lack of time to bring the issues to the congregation before the vote, we consider the vote to table the merger the best option.

Those of us on the negotiating team feel that the effort has had a very positive influence on our church. We recognize that we had become complacent and not doing what is necessary to become a vital church serving a three generation congregation. We can identify what we need to do to build on the good qualities we have of a small, friendly, caring church and grow it even better.

Regardless of whether we ever reopen merger negotiations with UUMC or continue on our present course of building an effective church for all people who enter our doors and serving others in mission, we will be better for the effort now underway to serve God here and now in this place.

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**The whole art of pleasing lie in never speaking of oneself, always persuading others to speak of themselves. Everyone knows this and everyone forgets it.**

*Edmond and Jules Goncourt*

# *Elizabeth Knox*

## **Texas Student Ambassador to China**

From a very young age, I dreamed of traveling the world and discovering new, exciting things. As I grew older, I maintained this dream but it developed into an aspect focused more on service and the study of how the peoples and cultures of the world are similar and different. As a young child I wanted to find the cures for cancer, find archeological relics, discover new cultures hidden deep in the rainforests of Africa, and be the President of the United States.

I now realize that while I may not be able to achieve all those high reaching goals I had as a child, I certainly should try to reach as many of them as I can. As my course of study is developing in high school, I find that I have deep interest in learning as much as I can about the way of the world in the social studies arena. I hope to one day find a career where I can incorporate my passions for politics, diplomacy, and the media.

I feel that being a student ambassador to China would be an ideal stepping-stone to accomplishing this goal. I yearn to learn more about foreign relations and I cannot think of a better way to do so than by first hand experience. As an enthusiastic learner and leader, I would share the tales of my journey to China with all who would listen. As the editor of my high school newspaper, I would run stories and photos in relevant issues and I would submit articles to my local papers as well. As a very involved member of my community and school, I have many avenues through which I can share what I will have learned with others. I have not had much travel experience outside the United States so I would be a very eager and excited ambassador.

Being an ambassador would be an excellent channel for me to begin fulfilling my dreams for myself and for the world. It would help me

prepare in the best way possible for the careers I plan to explore as I enter life after high school. I truly want to make a positive impact on the world and in order to do that, I feel I must see and examine cultures with great diversity from my own. I am a person of an open mind: I am very willing to accept other cultures and people for the way they are. I question things only because I am truly curious—I embrace that which is different, I feel that I learn something new from everyone and everything that crosses my path in life.

I know that I would learn an incredible amount from the people and culture of China. Being selected as a Texas Ambassador to China would be an incredible experience that will help guide me in my future goals and help me accomplish all my dreams.

“Submitted by a very proud Grand-mother-Martha deFunes.”



## **Staff/Pastor Parish Relation Committee**

Katie Wardell and the Pastor Parish Relations Committee has met twice. They have reviewed and approved the Pastors compensation package. This was forwarded to the Finance Committee to include in the revised 2003 church budget. They also completed the Pastor evaluation for 2002.

A major task for this group is hiring a person to assist with our music program. Dottie Burkett and Anna Cram have done a remarkable job filling in and keeping our music program active and performing at the highest level

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee will be working with the MDO Program Director Marie Bercher to ensure that this program is properly staffed and operating as efficiently as possible working with the children.

Another significant task for this group is to ensure that all people who deal with the children have the proper background checks and are approved for working with the children

A final task is to ensure that the church has on file job descriptions which properly reflect what is expected of each employee.



## **Trustees**

Larry Wilson and the Trustees have been busy determining the condition of our facilities and developing a plan to carry out the responsibilities of the Trustees. At the first meeting in January all the trustees present toured the building and property to identify the condition of the building and identified areas that needed immediate attention.

Larry developed a list of 20 + items that needed to be repaired immediately. This list included many routine maintenance item as well as some other tasks such as replacing the flooring the men's bathroom, installation of a roof vent, and repair of water leak at the outside bib near the kitchen.

A work day was scheduled for the 22<sup>rd</sup> of February and the Trustees and other men assumed responsible to see that many of these repair items were completed. There are still some items left on the list and anyone desiring to help in this area should contact Larry to see where they can assist.

There was considerable discussion regarding the amount the church was paying to support the MDO program. The Trustees

determined that a fair value would be 30% of the utility bill.

Larry Wilson developed and presented to the Trustees a list of Capital Improvements/Expenditures that should be anticipated in the next 3 to 5 years. These include items such as a new roof (est \$18,400), 2A/C units and 3 furnaces, (\$15,500), new storage facility with a 1 hour fire barrier, (\$7, 850) and new siding for the SE end of the church (\$1,200) These items

will be presented to the finance committee for inclusion in future funding requirements.

A new self propelled vacuum cleaner is to be purchased from the memorial funds available to the church. Larry Wilson and Nancy Ridenour have agreed to shop for and purchase this item.

The Trustees will also be looking at the Property Insurance, Property Evaluation and changing access to the church safe deposit box.

## **Finance Committee**

Betty Stone and the finance committee are trying to get a handle on the financial status of the church. They have revised the budget for 2003 and at present there is an approximate \$10,000 shortfall of income versus expenses. The finance committee will be looking at ways to reduce expenses and increase income.

They will be looking at the possibility of fund raisers during the year to help alleviate this shortfall. All fund raisers for the church must be approved by the finance committee and be for a specific purpose.

The mortgage due on the facility was \$30,757 as of January 2003. Our current payment is \$1,206 a month. A special fund

raiser was started in early February to raise some additional funds to pay off the remaining mortgage.

The finance committee has also been tasked with evaluating the MDO program and to determine if there is a more appropriate way of accounting for income and expenses to the church for this program. It should be remembered that this is an Oak Meadow United Methodist Church Program and is not operated as a privately run group separate from the church.

The finance committee will also be looking at ways to fund the capital expenditures anticipated by the Trustees in the future.

***Oak Meadow United Methodist Church  
2740 Hunters Green  
San Antonio, Texas, 78231***

# Word Find

Write the words from Mark 10:14b in the blanks and then find as many of these words as you can in the Word Find.

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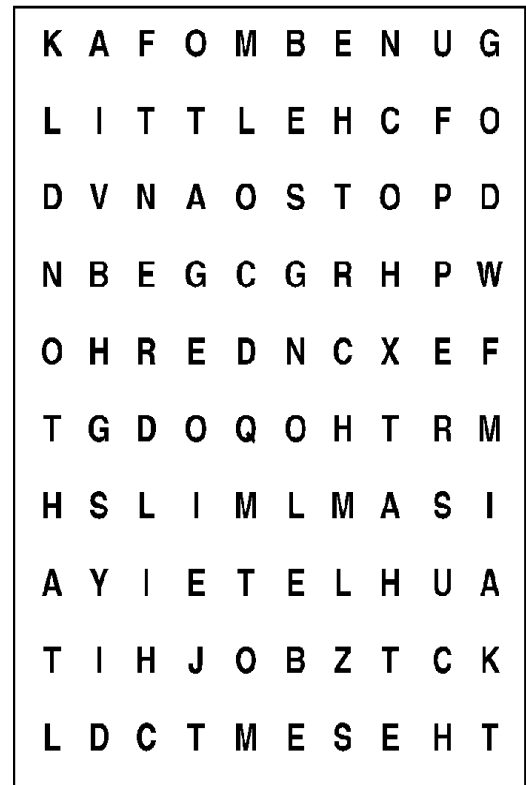
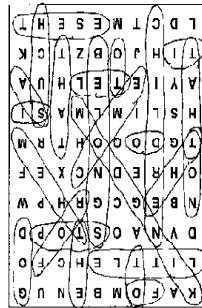
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# Picture Find

Use a blue crayon to color all the spaces that have a letter in them. What do you see?

Here's a hint: in Hebrews 3:6, it says, "Christ, however, was faithful over God's house as a son, and we are his house if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope."

