

CORPUS CHRISTI DISTRICT – JULY 2010 NEWSLETTER



REV. ERADIO VALVERDE, JR.
District Superintendant

Cultivating a Culture of Growth

Sunday, July 11, 2010, will always be a special day for me. On that day, Bishop James Dorff came to First United Methodist Church to celebrate my appointment as district superintendant. The Reverend Greg Hackett, his fine staff, and wonderful congregation, several choir members from across the district, musicians, brother and sister clergy from the district (and some from other districts!), and family members made the day very special. Bishop Dorff spoke very kindly about my appointment and the confidence he has in me being a Cabinet member and extension of his office. I in turn, thanked him for his confidence and especially for his vision of having a **Culture of Growth** in our annual conference.

I shared in my sermon how his vision resonated with that of Bishop Scott Jones, who spoke at the welcome to Bishops Week in Mount Sequoyah with a word about his vision that God is about to do a great thing in the life of the people called United Methodists. Though he was chided by one of his close friends for saying that, I heard and received that. And that formed the core of my sermon.



I shared three things I know will be the building blocks on which God can build. The first I shared with all church families. The number one for all church people to do is to **believe in the power of prayer**.



Prayer is a gift, but it is not a given. I am guilty, as are many, of taking prayer for granted. God desires to hear our prayers and to be blessed by the words that form a good relationship. I heard a UM bishop share how she wished her annual conference pastors would spend at least five minutes in prayer. What a sad indictment on the pastoral ranks if they're known for not even praying five minutes a day. I shared how a study leave that I took some years ago revealed that at the time, the fastest growing churches in our denomination were those churches who took seriously the ministry of prayer and asked God to bless them. All three churches that I visited had dedicated rooms for prayer and a dedicated team of prayer that would serve and support the church with their prayers. The first church I visited had twelve prayer stations that asked each member of the prayer team to

pray at least five minutes at each. At the end of the prayer time, the team member would have spent one hour in prayer, not to mention answering the question, "How can I possibly pray for an hour? I don't know what to say?" If we would but pray daily for our churches and how God could best use us, we would see an almost immediate blessing to the work that God would have us do. ...

The second thing I shared with my church pastors and those who preach in our churches is to have **passion in the pulpit**. Those who know and love Jesus give passionate sermons about how Christ has changed and blessed them and how he can do the same for our churches. It's interesting to note that many original church ideas and practices have been "borrowed" by the secular business world. For example, the NY Times of Sunday, July 11th had an article about Dan Rosensweig, the CEO of Chegg, an online book textbook rental service, who is quoted as saying, "One of the blessings I've had is working with founders of companies, whether it was Ziff-Davis or Yahoo. What I love about that culture is the energy, enthusiasm and unbridled passion for what's possible, as opposed to spending a whole lot of time trying to figure out the obstacles." That applies to the church as well. We are the people of God, who made all things, and who will have the last word in all things, including the future of God's church. As we stand in our pulpits let that energy, enthusiasm, and unbridled passion be ours. Let our preaching reflect that!



And the third thing I shared with all church members and friends of our churches is to have a sense of **purpose in the pew**. I believe that God would have us put away the old attitudes towards worship, especially the selfish and self-centered priorities we put on all things and begin to be those who seek a purpose by praying for our pastors, loving our pastors, praying and loving our pastoral families and being open to the leading of God's Holy Spirit in our midst.

One district superintendent at Bishops Week in a small group I was in, asked, "How can we be asked to make disciples when we don't know what they look like?" I was very tempted to ask, "Does your bathroom not have a mirror?" Do the examples of the old Holy Club from Oxford not have a mirrored image which we can copy of those whose methodical way of serving God caused them to be called United Methodist? How can we not believe that Jesus was serious with his words about our caring for the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, the prisoner and the stranger? With that we will begin to see the beginnings of this great thing that God is about to do in the people called United Methodists!



Linda Morrow
Director of District Ministries

Are we getting ready for the Great Things that God is preparing to do through us as United Methodists?

Following the Installation of our new District Superintendent, Rev. Eradio Valverde, Jr. and his words on **Cultivating a Culture of Growth**, I began considering this question. Quietly considering this question I began to see that we like the first disciples must continually seek to live and learn the ways of our master. There is a true difference between followers of Christ and disciples of Christ. Followers just tag along, but disciples listen, learn, and are actively involved actually representing Christ in the world in every area of their lives. The early disciples walked daily with Jesus learning his ways, experiencing his love, and finding out how to minister and become leaders.

I believe that we like the early disciples need to walk with Jesus, speak to Him, experience His love, and be trained to live as faithful disciples.

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The Leadership Development Team has been praying asking God to help us see how to help our churches train, encourage, and develop disciples who will serve in leadership in the churches throughout the district. The team is seeking a long term plan and is putting together both Spiritual and Educational events for the upcoming year.

You may want to mark your calendar for these opportunities:

- **Lay Speaker Training – September 25** at First United Methodist, Portland 8:30am-5:30pm (both Basic and Advanced – go to the website for registration www.ccdistrictumc.org).
- **Spiritual Retreat – October 1 & 2** at Mustang Island Retreat Center; registration also on Website.

We invite you to pray with us and to help us understand what may be helpful for you and your church. You may email me at ccprogram@bizstx.rr.com with what you discern.

Finally, I pray that each of us will be open to the Holy Spirit and join in God's work, for I believe that the Great things are already beginning. Let us keep our eyes open, and let us lean into where God leads.

AUGUST

- 7 Pastor's report due at District Office
- 12 Sea City Workcamp at District Office – 6:00 p.m.
- 17 Newsletter Deadline
- 17-19 Gospel of John Bible Study in Kerrville
- 24 District Clergy Family Picnic – St. John's UMC – 6:00 p.m.
- 29-September 3 – DS Training

SEPTEMBER

- 2 Sea City Workcamp at District Office – 6:00 p.m.
- 6 District Office Closed
- 7 Pastor's Report due at District Office
- 14 Newsletter Deadline
- 14-16 Senior Christian Retreat – September in the Hills – Mt. Wesley
- 18 District Celebration at FUMC-CC – 5:30 p.m. -- Bishop Dorff will be attending
- 25 Corpus Christi Lay Speaker Basic & Advanced Training – Portland FUMC

OCTOBER

- 1-2 District Spiritual Retreat – Mustang Island Retreat Center

