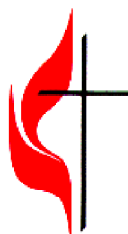




*Estancia United Methodist Church,
600 Williams, Estancia, New Mexico*

*Sunday Worship 9:00 AM
Nursery Provided
Church School 10:30 AM*



Dave Blackwell, Pastor

*P. O. Box 378, Estancia, NM 87016
Church Office 384-5215
Parsonage 384-2710
email: methods@ix.netcom.com*

MAY-JUNE, 2000

SUNDAY SERVANTS FOR JUNE

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Lay Assistant: Bonnie Thomas
Acolytes: (Need Sign-Ups!)
Ushers: Marcella Reynolds
Greeters: Pam and Mark Lambert

SCRIPTURE READERS

June 4: Nick Gomez
June 11: Ashley Welch
June 18: Catherine Gomez
June 25: Renea Calhoon

NURSERY VOLUNTEERS AT WORSHIP SERVICE

June 4: Ashley Welch
June 11: Catherine Gomez
June 18: Nick Gomez
June 25: Jacque Creamer

ALTAR FLOWERS

As yet no sign-ups for June. The sign up list is near the coffee pot.

FAREWELL POTLUCK FOR BLACKWELLS

On Sunday June 4th at 12:30 PM, a community/ valley gathering and potluck will be held at the Estancia United Methodist Church. Hope to see you here for this time of remembering and celebration.



FAREWELL POTLUCK FOR BLACKWELLS



FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

With mid-year fast approaching, we want to inform the church of our expenditures vs. the budget and our actual contributions vs. forecast revenues. Through April our total expenditures were \$21,750 vs. \$19,621 budgeted. The budget number is based on one third (four months) of the annual budget. Although the expenditures are more than the budget, all required bills and commitments have been paid and we have a cash balance of \$5,825.55. The one exception is the amount of apportionments paid are less than we had planned. We had planned to pay 10 per cent each month but due to the higher expenditures and less than expected contributions, we have had to forego

paying the apportionments as planned. Only two apportionments have been paid to date. Our contributions are only slightly behind our budget due to the receipt of an individual substantial gift. Our actual tithes and offerings are approximately ten percent lower than our anticipated level. If this trend continues, the finance committee will evaluate the budget vs. expenditures and contributions and recommend corrective measures. As our church continues to grow, it is not unusual to experience some financial peaks and valleys. -----Mel Stephenson

HELLO, ESTANCIA SAINTS...

Since our last Sunday here is June 4, I am certain that this is the last letter I'll be giving to you before Peg, Erinmarie, and I go across the mountain to serve at

Peralta Memorial United Methodist Church. Good-byes can be anything from uncomfortable to near disastrous. Mix a lot of tears and smiles, memories and passions together, and you may end up with a big, wet mess on your shoulders! So, I'll start the process now and we can hug later!

It has been some sight to watch this church nearly double in membership and triple in attendance over the last five years, complete with new programs, newer leaders trying to tackle the same problems, older leaders trying to tackle the newer problems.

At my first Ad Council meeting in June of '95, I said, "I don't know what I'm doing, but I do know that you want this church to grow. The only system I know is a laity-led system. I hope we can do that together, because if not, we're going to be in big trouble." Well, you are doing it, along with folks who have come to this fold over the last five years. And, I pray, you are not done. This church has huge potential to continue to be a bright Christ light for the valley, but it's going to take increased dedication in prayer, worship, and commitment on you, Christ's body to get it done for



His glory.

I will take many memories with me. Youth scripture readers, first-time piano solos (even mine!), dark Ash Wednesday services followed by Easter services filled with flower and song; tears of joy at baptisms, tears of frustrations at unmet goals; snow-shoveling at 6 a.m. on Sunday morning for 20 people to come to church; driving at 85 mph or faster with Ethel to go to Mountainair and not be late to minister to two people; funerals of so many friends, weddings of others; births on earth, births in heaven; new families tottering in and then making significant impacts on all of us; Emmaus gatherings; water fights with certain young ladies who will remain nameless until they tell you; sermons by youth like Justin, Jill, Amy, Annie, Laura, Ashley, Justin, Jill, and Kelly; watching the sunrise on the "Baby Jesus" window; giving communion to tear-soaked hands; children's times that gave us all big belly laughs; painting the Ed Building in preparation for Logos; new roof on the church, new piano and new pew cushions in the church; a remodeled kitchen; new signs in town, new pavement and signs for the east parking lot; new fence on the south side of the yard; paying 100% of the apportionments for four consecutive years; increased budgets, increased programs, increased faith, increased blessings; confirmation classes, wasps in Sunday services, high school boys in Logos playing the handchimes; healing services, ecumenical community services; standing in the parking lot by myself after the 3rd Logos Wednesday because 55 kids saw Jesus; Easter cantatas; praise teams, musical trios, skits, country-gospel sings; potlucks, potlucks, and, yes, more potlucks; Bible studies; prayer groups, grief groups, reunion groups; the flood on the Ed Building floor, the new carpet; a New Year's service when the power went out; the meals and visits in so many homes,...and the fact that the time is near to move on. Pastors are temporary. God is eternal. So is His love. For you. And for us. Thank you all so

Dave



much.

Now it is time for you to move ahead with another spiritual leader. I trust that you will put the lessons I have been trying to teach you into practice about reliance and faith in God through Christ, living a forgiving life, and loving others as God has loved you with Johann and Anne. Many of you have prayed, "faithed", and worked hard for God's glory. I pray that you will never, ever lose that.



God's blessings, and my love for you, Pastor Dave

Greetings Estancia Saints,

Anne and I are honored and excited to be shortly moving to Estancia, even though we will have a tough time saying goodbye to people here in Odessa whom we have come to dearly love and appreciate over the past three-years. We know you will be struggling with very similar emotions as you have to say goodbye to the Blackwells who have, no doubt, found a very unique and special place in your hearts. So initially, I guess, we will both be doing a fair bit of consoling and encouraging one another and helping each other deal positively and constructively with the changes.

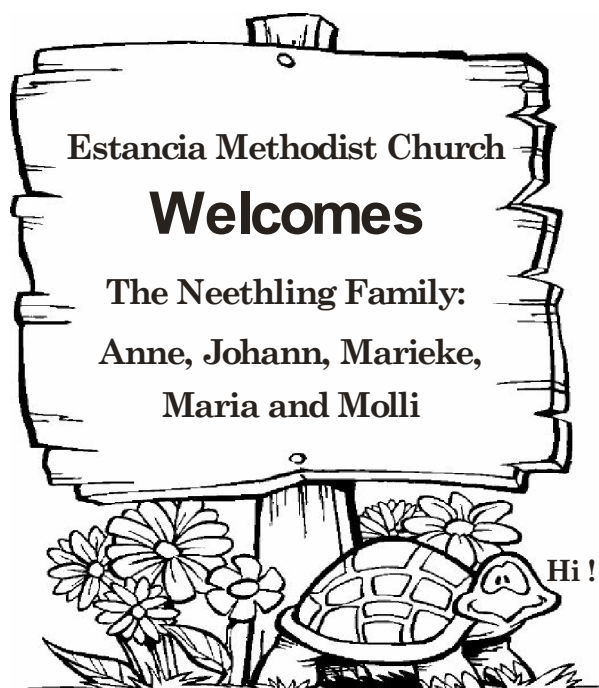
We appreciated the opportunity recently to meet some of you and discover something of your incredible warmth and hospitality. What a delight to know that you are a "hugging congregation" and enjoy a good sense of humor! We look forward to making some fun and fond memories with you.

To give you as quick an overview of our family as possible, I will merely hit a few highlights in bullet form and we can always fill in more details later for those who might be interested:

- Johann and Anne met at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa in 1966. Johann was completing his undergraduate Theology degree and Anne was studying Music.
- Johann's family history in South Africa goes back to around 1690, while Anne's mother came from Germany before WWII and settled in what is now Namibia.
- In 1967 Johann attended Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Anne came over in January 1968 to continue nursing studies commenced back in Johannesburg. We were married on Anne's birthday, June 17 1968 at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, California.
- 1969 - 1972 we both attended Heidelberg University in Germany - Johann learning German and doing a variety of Old Testament studies and Anne graduating from the University Nursing School with the German equivalent of the BSN. Our first daughter Maria was born in 1971.
- 1972 we returned to South Africa - Johann to do his Theology Masters at Rhodes University and Anne to be the Staff Nurse at Diocesan School for Girls, a

prestigious 100 year old Anglican Church boarding school.

- 1974 our second daughter, Gabrielle was born.
- 1975 Johann was ordained in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and a variety of churches - rural and urban - was served throughout the country.
- Our third daughter, Marieke, was born in 1977.
- We pastored numbers of White, Colored, and Black Churches during the traumatic Apartheid years and were very active in the struggle for racial reconciliation and justice
- In 1986, after much prayerful consideration, we accepted an offer of appointment to a two-point charge in rural North Indiana. Until Anne was able to take her Foreign Nurses Exam and obtain her Indiana Nursing License, she worked as manager of an exclusive Horse Stable in Fort Wayne.
- From 1988 to 1992 - Johann served full time as School Chaplain and-Religion Teacher to Canterbury School, an Independent K-12 college prep. school in Fort Wayne, IN. Anne-obtained her Pediatric ICU and Trauma Nursing certifications at Lutheran Hospital.
- From 1992 to 1996 Johann was appointed as Chaplain, Religion Teacher and Conflict Mediation Supervisor at McCurdy (Methodist) School in Espanola, NM. During these years we commenced a growing Sunday evening worship service at the Paradise Hills UM Church in Albuquerque.
- Our three-daughters had grown, graduated from school and attended colleges and universities from one end of the USA to the other - Gabrielle at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, WA and Marieke at Warren Wilson College in Asheville, NC.
- January 1997 we accepted the invitation to move to Odessa' TX as the Associate Pastor at Highland UMC and in June 1997 offered to become the pastor Mackey Chapel UMC when their pastor moved to New Orleans. August, 1998, Molli Anne was born to Maria and the two of them came to live with mom and dad (Omi and Papa). Anne has worked in the PICU, ER, Nursing Education and other units at Medical Center Hospital. Maria has been a straight



"A" student at Midland College and is now looking to go into pre-Med studies at UNM.



- Gabrielle graduated from CWU in 1998 with a degree in Geography and Environmental Science and graduates from United Airlines Flight Attendant School in Chicago on May 4. Marieke graduates from WWC in December with a degree in Outdoors Leadership. She will be conducting a 6 week Summer Youth Adventure Camp in the wilds of Alaska.
- June 7, Johann, Anne, Maria, Molli and Marieke and Pecos Dachshund and Grace Keeshound (both members of the Senior Canine Community) will arrive to set up home in Estancia.

We look forward to getting to know you, to hear and learn your stories, and together to share THE STORY OF STORIES, of Jesus and His Love.

Grace and peace, *Johann and Anne Neethling and family* <ixthus><

I WAS WITH HIM.....

Some of you have wondered where your pastor was at times. Some of you knew where he was and wondered about that, too! And, some of you didn't really want to know. But I've been with him and thought you might like to know some of the places where I have been accompanying him.

I was with him every July in Kansas City while he was at school. I know how much he missed you. I also know he wanted to leave school and come home in the middle of the term every year, but especially last year when little Matthew was so sick.

I have been with him on many Monday mornings in the church before the sun was up so he could pray and have communion with Me and you to start the week. Sometimes he and I were the only ones there for 3 hours. Other times were blessings to others.

I have been with him on long tear-filled, blue-languaged car trips after so many funerals he conducted.

I have been with him to over 200 hospital calls, to homes where domestic disputes threatened everybody in the house, in homes where the shock of a death was just beginning to sink in, and in restaurants where all he wanted was to spend time with his family or himself, but was called upon to listen to someone else's problems.

I have been with him in the car delivering food, money, medicine, clothes, books, toys, and hitchhikers.

I worked with him in his office. I've seen him eat, type, and talk on the phone at the same time. I got on my knees and prayed for him with people who came to him to talk about abortions, illicit affairs, illegalities, parents, children, money, illness, etc. I did not hear him judge one person.



JUNE

Sent with a prayer to:

*Estancia United Methodist Church
P. O. Box 378
Estancia, NM 87016*

I watched him stay up all night with his daughter who was sick. Without any sleep, he prepared a sermon, went to a meeting, continued to take care of his daughter, and tried to prepare dinner for Peggy (who had to work all day, too), while getting reprimanded on the phone for not quickly returning phone messages.

I was with him on an early Sunday morning before worship when he almost quit being a pastor. I was with him two hours later when he confessed his sin to the church before he could baptize a 9 year old girl. I was with him after that service when a woman came to him and said, "Yes, you have been an ass."

I have been with him to many, many high school sports events. I was even with him when he was loudly insulting the referees. He knew it later and felt bad about it.

I have been at the door with him at all hours of the night to help give money, food, directions, and prayers to some people you knew, some you thought you knew, and some you say you don't want to know. I have been at the door with him when people shoved things in his hands and spun on their heels to their car without saying a word. I have seen him humbly and graciously accept gifts and food from others who just wanted him to know they cared.

I was with him when he drove a soon-to-be mom-to-be 90+ mph on Hwy 41 and I-40. And when he ran two red lights on Louisiana, to get her to the hospital in time to have the baby delivered with 30 minutes to spare.

I have been on the phone with him or on the streets when he has been called names that would start fights in most barrooms, when he was ignored by others who previously said they loved him, and when he was publicly humiliated in front of others at meetings by some who were angry. I have seen the hurt in his eyes when he heard what others were saying about him, and I followed him on his walks to tell him in his language, "Get over it!" And, I have been with him when he prayed for those same people who asked him to do so because they were ill or in trouble.

I have stood by him while he has almost collapsed from the pressure or melted under the prayers of others.

I was with him in Mountainair--him and Ethel--when he was so pleased that over twenty people came to church four consecutive Sundays and there were Thursday Bible studies. I was with him and Ethel a year later when there was no one at church but them and no one would tell him why. I was with him at the

school and businesses many days. I was with him there when he was threatened with physical harm because, on a tip, he had observed the residents of the church-owned trailer possibly dealing drugs.

I have been with him as he helped at school spelling bees, town functions, county functions, at YDF functions, in other churches, and in back yards meeting and trying to find ways for others to see Me.

I have been in places he did not belong by himself trying to bring peace, order, and dignity to families while teaching them that I love them.

I have been in the church or the parsonage with him as he practiced his sermon about Me ten to fifteen times a week. I've been with him on Sundays after he had no practice. And when he had practiced all week and I gave him something new to practice at 6:00 a.m. Sunday morning.

I was with him at those initial Logos planning meetings when there was no agreement, no money, no training, nothing. I prayed for him and with him when he did not know what to pray. I felt the tears on his cheeks after so many of those Logos Wednesdays when children and adults came to learn and celebrate my promise to them.

I've watched his hands...pray with others, wipe tears, clean little noses, change diapers, serve communion, make continual mistakes on his word processor, play the piano, punch walls, hold crayons, and graciously eat potluck meals. I've seen his heart do the same things.

I have been with him on Walks to Emmaus when he saw the revelation to others of how much I love them, and when he laughed, giggled, danced on the tables, and hugged everybody. I've watched people, mesmerized by his talks, pray with him after everybody else went to bed.

You, Christians of First United Methodist Church of Estancia, are to be commended for putting up with him. I know it has been a challenge. But, if you ask him what he wants, he will tell you that all he has ever wanted for you was for you to get closer to Me. He did what he could. He did it through me, because as much of a challenge as he has been to me, I love Him, too.

Jesus