



News From Holland

Holland First United Methodist Church

February 2010

Dr Phil Shuler, Pastor

Web Site: www.hollandum.org

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

The last newsletter concluded with the wish that everyone have a Happy New Year! While I have the same feelings for each one, I have to admit that the year has not started out the way I had hoped. I have personally become overwhelmed with recent events that are beyond explanation.

Of course, number one on that list is the heart-rending tragedy that has struck an already impoverished Haiti in the form of a devastating earthquake. Hundreds of thousands have lost their lives, aid is impaired by a severely damaged port preventing help by way of water, and the airport has only one useable runway. Getting any aid into this isolated country of nine million people is somewhat of a miracle at any level. Violence is increasing as "survival" becomes the central concern of individuals. Time is quickly running out for possible survivors trapped in the rubble. Countless numbers are missing in addition to 5,500 Americans yet to be located. The disposal of bodies is essential to prevent disease and is being done at the expense of identification and signs of loving recognition.

UNIMAGINEABLE DEVASTATION! It has hit us also. We have learned that the top leader/executive of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) died amid the rubble while attending an international meeting on relief at the Hotel Montana in Haiti. There are many other such stories.

Back on the home front as I write, I have just learned that the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church in Temple has been destroyed by fire! What else can happen? When? Where? Why? Even at the beginning of the New Year, some are asking, "where is God?" "How could God let these things happen?"

While such questions have no real answer even though I understand that one "Christian" leader has spoken irresponsibly and insensitively of a Haitian "bargain with the Devil," there are signs of God's presence in the aftermath of these tragic events. There is a worldwide response of care for those suffering in Haiti. People from various nations are attempting to send and offer help. Our own nation has responded with food, medical care and supplies, and manpower to help. My wife's son, Benjamin Brown, is there now giving assistance as part of the 82nd Airborne sent by the U.S. He was thrilled to be a part of reaching out a caring hand to the people of Haiti. Medical teams and equipment are getting there from the U.S. and other countries including China, all on a single runway for now: slow, yes, but getting there nevertheless. And get this: 22 million dollars has been contributed to the Red Cross *by way of cell phone texting* in \$10 increments! Our own churches – Holland, Cowboy, and Granger – sent \$500+ in aid to Haiti. And the outpouring has just begun! All of this is as remarkable and astonishing to me as is the devastation of the earthquake itself! I have no doubt that a new Haiti will emerge from this tragedy: I believe in resurrection! I'm sure there will also be one for the members of the First Baptist Church in Temple.

The thought does come to me, though. Wouldn't it be a truly wonderful miracle if we could come together as a world who reaches out to every single person with caring love not generated by natural disaster or war? You know, PEACE. In Christ, this CAN happen. He reached out for all...regardless....

See ya in church, Sunday.....Phil

The United Methodist Men will meet on Feb 13th at 8:30 am at the Fellowship Hall of the church. They meet in conjunction with the United Methodist Motorcycle Enthusiasts each month. Stay tuned for breakfast plans.

UMW

The Holland UMW met on Jan 20th at the fellowship hall and made plans for the 2010 meetings The next meeting will be Feb 17th at the fellowship hall @ 1:00 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Judy's News

Granger

Community Food Bank –Granger UMC

Times are still hard and jobs are scarce. We had 37 families come through on Thursday; the 21st. Six of them were new comers. We are out of Pancake mix, ketchup, rice, bags of pinto beans, cereal, and Quaker oats. God is good and His mission will continue; thanks to generous givers.

5th Sunday Community Service

We will be having our 5th Sunday at the Brethren Church in Granger on Sunday, the 31st. Everyone is welcome. It is the first time for this church to host it so it is exciting to have another church join us.

Haiti Donations

I am so proud to be a part of three churches who gave so generously to this cause. The money was sent in to UMCOR. Members from Granger church gave \$125, Holland gave \$295 and Cowboy church \$111 – total \$531.00!!!!

Cowboy Church

Although our attendance was down some, it was a great night. It was so good to see newcomers as well. Don Johnson brought a great message and Brandon his usual beautiful music. Mark the 21st of February. Dianna and Bill Hobbs are coming to bring the music.

Future Dates to Remember

Date	Time	Event	Location
Feb 3rd	5:30 pm	Youth Bible Study	Cearley's
Feb 13 th	8:30 am	UMM/UMME	Fellowship Hall
Feb 17 th	1:00 pm	UMW Meeting	Fellowship Hall
Feb 17 th	5:30 pm	Youth Bible Study	Cearley's
Feb 21 st	5:00 pm	Cowboy Church	Hegar's Farm

If you have any events to add, please give the information to Betty Jett.