



# News From Holland

Holland First United Methodist Church

July 2012

Dr Phil Shuler, Pastor

Web Site: [www.hollandum.org](http://www.hollandum.org)

## FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

June 3-6, was the time our Central Texas Annual Conference met in Waco. Holland First United Church's lay representative was John Stephenson. This was an unusual experience for me for several reasons. For the past couple of years we have heard the word, "change," over and over again with reference to the invigoration of the United Methodist Church. Our Annual Conference (CTC) has taken the lead in changing our organizational structure with the decentralization of our administrative structures, the reduction in the number of districts, and the overhauling of the office of the District Superintendent. Then came the meeting of the General Conference – our governing body – that was to be the group through which major changes would occur. Alas, consensus was not forthcoming, and the church's Judicial Council ruled the last minute "compromise" legislation for change that did pass, unconstitutional. The result? We're practically back to square one! Reports from our General Conference representatives confirmed this state of affairs.

I recently read a book by Darren Hardy in which he wrote: "You only see, experience, and get what you look for. If you don't know what to look for, you certainly won't get it." While the UMC is growing expeditiously in Asia and Africa, it is the decline of membership and participation in the American UMC that has prompted the call for change. We seem to know what we're looking for. It's a rejuvenated, committed church reflected in terms of numbers and participation. Hardy argues that the first question following the formulation of a goal is not what do we do to achieve the goal. Rather, it is "who do we need to become?" If the rejuvenation of the UMC is the goal, then the question is "who do we need to become" in order to meet that goal?

My own response to this question is simply this: "the people of God!" The answer may appear vague and intangible, but there are empirical signs that point to its reality. One is the commitment of people evident in worship, study, prayer, and generosity. Another is the selfless outreach of people who display care and compassion for others (whoever and where-ever they may be). I would also suggest that another sign would be a people who live out the mission of Jesus, the Son committed to God and His purposes on earth.

In an age of accountability such as ours, how one measures the extent by which the UMC is reflective of the "people of God" concept is difficult. The use of numbers is *helpful* but not always *accurate*. Sound like a contradiction of terms? Perhaps. But I'm not convinced that the corporate CEO(s) who receive the multi-million dollar bonuses are necessarily the most effective leaders. Neither am I convinced that daily measuring in centimeters of the infant plant's growth necessarily conveys the productivity of the fruit that is forthcoming. Personally, I'm one who believes that through human committed care, watering, and light, it is God who gives the growth and provides the yield.

As unsatisfactory as number measurements may be, we continue to use them because it's helpful to do so. It is my prayer, though, that we allow God to so live in us that the dynamic empirical signs of His presence become noticeable to others. This way, our church will become rejuvenated, and with it the United Methodist Church. I hope to see you in church Sunday.

Phil Shuler, Pastor

## Community Breakfast

The August 5th, 2012 Free Pancake Breakfast will be held at the Kuhlmann Center 7:30-9:00am. We will have our regular church service at 9:00 am. Come and enjoy the food and fellowship!

## Judy's News

### Granger Community Food Pantry

Along with the heat June's mission brought in 58 families. Many had donated fresh vegetables so that was a nice bonus. We are currently low on canned vegetables, fruits, peanut butter, and rice and beans. Our next one will be July 19<sup>th</sup>.

We were blessed with a generous donation, and we are going to replace the carpet there in the pantry area. We are also replacing and lowering the ceiling fans so it will be cooler. God sends so many wonderful giving people our way for His mission, and it is indeed blessing our community. In return we who work and give to it are so blessed! Thank you for all your manual labor and giving's.

## Special Thank You!

### Volunteer Fire Departments

Let's not take them for granted. When witnessing their dedication and mission personally, I was ashamed how I did! All I could think was, "What if we didn't have them?" That wasn't a pleasant thought. The summer has just begun and their work will be overloaded, I'm sure. Let's support them any way we can and be sure and say, "Thank you."

## UMM

The United Methodist Men will meet again in September. Have a great summer.

## UMW

During an impromptu meeting on June 24th we elected the officers for 2013. The current officers were elected by acclamation.