



## First United Methodist

Become a part of God's family at First UMC

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*Vision: Hamilton First: a growing extended family sharing Christ's love  
in the heart of the city (A United Methodist Congregation)*

*Mission: To Know Christ and Make Him Known in the World*

June 4, 2010

Dear Friends,

The revitalization process is moving ahead. We have great news. Our congregation is going to partner with Fields of Grace to start a meal for those who are hungry in downtown Hamilton. It will be a weekend meal at First. We have a core group of four people from our congregation and four from Field of Grace to plan this new meal. We want to offer it the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> weekends of the month, because that is when people tend to run out of money. When exactly we will offer this meal is still up to negotiations, as we do not want to duplicate what others are doing.

Why are we partnering with Fields of Grace Church, and who are they? Fields of Grace is a non-denominational church that had a meal in German Village. They had offered this meal for a couple of years, but lost their space. They know how to do what we want to do and will work with us. As you know, we are rich in space and that is one of the things that we have to offer, a space that is ample and welcoming.

We are looking at the weekend, because that is when the least number of meals are offered. People can go to the Salvation Army at lunch time five days a week. The Presbyterian Church hosts a Friday evening meal. Saturday and Sunday there are less options for folks to get a good meal.

How will the people be treated who come to our doors for this meal? Anyone who comes will be welcome. We even hope that members from our congregation will come, pay to eat, and join the group. Everyone who attends will be our guest. Doesn't this remind you of the way that Jesus would either invite others to eat with him or join those whom others would look at funny for a meal. Everyone has a place at God's table.

This is based on our concept of communion actually. Everyone is welcome at the communion table because it is a "means of grace." "Means of grace?" What does that mean? Based on the way that Jesus defined neighbor and the understanding that Jesus died for all our sins, then the grace of God has to be for everyone. Grace is God's free gift to us so that we might move closer to God and be more fully God's people. Communion as a "means of grace" equals, expression of grace. A way for us to experience, in communion -- tangibly, that God's grace is real and available to us. Communion is a "way" for us to feel God's love for us as we recall what Christ did for the forgiveness of sins.

In communion, we gather at the table God has prepared for us as a free gift of grace, so that we might be fed. At our community meal, we would be preparing a meal that will fill people's stomachs; one that is prepared as a free gift, parallel to God's gift to us. We hope that as we fill stomachs, we might also begin to fill souls. Thus, the need we have to treat people as welcomed guests.

Keep your eyes open for further details about this new mission of our congregation. A mission is a place where the love of God, the grace of God, meets the needs of the world. I hope you might find a way to help with this mission. One of the most important ways is to keep the church in your prayers.

You might think where you have been treated as a guest this week and how it makes you feel? Maybe then you could think about how to treat someone else as a guest and offer them a little of God's grace. After all, God's grace is available to you 24/7.

Have a good walk with God this week.

Grace and Peace

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy".

Rev. Peggy