



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

PORTLAND FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1838 SW JEFFERSON, PORTLAND, OR 97201

April 7, 2004
Volume 8, Issue 7

the **E** edition

COMING
APRIL 18

10:30 am

Worship
in the
Sanctuary

Sermon

Rev. Brenda Sene

Children's Time

Rev. Dr. Arvin Luchs



As
a Reconciling
Congregation,
members of First United
Methodist Church have
pledged to welcome and
support all who want to
worship with us,
regardless



Easter SUNDAY

Join us as we celebrate the joy of
the resurrection of Christ and the
glory that is Easter!

Worship services at
9:00 am and 11:00 am
in the sanctuary.

Rev. Dr. Arvin Luchs
preaching ...
The Heart of the Heart

SPECIAL MUSIC ...
Prelude music by the
Festival Brass and Organ

The Chancel Choir & Veritas
This Is the Day
Hallelujah (Mt. of Olives)

Sound Seekers
Antiphonal Alleluia

Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*
sung by the choirs and the
congregation.

Between services there will be an
Easter Egg Hunt for children, First
Grade and younger in the Beckham
Courtyard.



memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin Luchs

“Can we talk?” is the trademark opening for comedienne Joan River’s chatty—sometimes catty—monologues. It’s an important question to ask about our church today. It is precisely the question raised by Henry H. Knight III and Don E. Saliers in their book, *The Conversation Matters: Why United Methodists Should Talk with One Another*. (Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, 1993).

“We should be listening and speaking,” they write, “because...we are now in the midst of demanding tensions and conflicts, many of which strike at the root of Christian beliefs and practice. Churches and the whole American body politic find it increasingly difficult to discuss matters of essential importance without rancor.” (p. 12) They are, of course, talking about those issues that stir controversy in our communities: abortion, warfare, same-sex marriages, stem-cell research and the like. And, they are talking about issues internal to the denomination: ordination and appointment of gay/lesbian pastors, revelation, the nature and authority of the scriptures, culture and the church, and so on.

The book, itself, was a product of intense conversation. Saliers and Knight are themselves on different sides of the theological and political fence.

The authors conclude that reasoned and extensive conversation is necessary for the church and society to find those values and ideals that bind them together into community. In civil discussions we not only grow in our understanding of differences, but discover the value of diversity and tolerance. Such discourse, they assert, is particularly important for United Methodists.

“Finally, it dawned on us that we *should* be speaking and listening to one another ... because we stand in a tradition that honors communal theological thinking. John Wesley insisted on this ... he termed it ‘Christian conference,’ and intended this as a practice internal to the life of Christian faith.” (p. 12)

Soon after becoming your pastor I discovered a rich vein of open, honest—yet loving—conversation embedded in the life and culture of this congregation. I had a chance to glimpse it for myself in my first year as we grappled with the moral-ethical issues emerging from the events of 9/11 and the second war with Iraq. The conversations need to continue.

In the next few weeks we will have opportunity to participate in discussion of two substantial issues facing our church and our society.

On April 18th there will be a Forum titled, “The Discipline, The Constitution and Same Gender Marriage.” (1:00 pm in Fireside Room.) Three outstanding leaders—from church and community will keynote the time, but the emphasis will be on our discussion and interaction.

On April 18th and again on April 25th a “Policy Review” will be held (9:15 am, Room 202) on a proposed policy regarding sexual offenders and First UMC. A task force has been working for almost a year to write a policy and suggest procedures that will assure our facility will be a “safe” place for everyone—especially the vulnerable—and yet offer, with significant safeguards—the services of the church to persons who have been accused or convicted of the sexual abuse. Our Leadership Council adopted the policy last year—but asked that hearings be held to receive input and ‘perfect’ the document before consideration at a Church Conference in May.

Youth—as well as adults are urged to participate in both events. They promise to be important moments of Christian “conferencing.” Can we talk? I hope so!

See you in church!

Arvin

“can we talk?”



forum @ first

Church & Society Social Justice

On Sunday, April 18 at 1:00 PM in the Fireside Room, the Church & Society Social Justice Committee will present a forum: "The Discipline, the Constitution, and Same Gender Marriage." The forum will feature: Rev. Jeanne Knepper, pastor of University Park UMC; Charles Hinkle, Attorney at Law, specializing in civil rights and Constitutional Law; Rev. Rand Sargent, pastor of West Portland UMC. You are invited for a time of prayerful, thoughtful and enlightening interactive discussion. This forum will focus on the legal, moral, ethical and theological implications of same gender marriage. Refreshments will be served.

policy review

Congregational Response Sought

On Sunday, April 18 and again on Sunday, April 25 at 9:15 am in Room 202 a policy statement on sexual offenders and First United Methodist Church will be introduced to the congregation. This is a sensitive but important topic. We urge the congregation and our youth to attend and participate in these sessions. Attend one or both of the sessions.

The introduction to the statement reads:

This Sex Offender Policy directly considers the issues of sexual abuse:

- to prevent sexual abuse of vulnerable persons, and
- to develop strong and caring guidelines when participants of our church are accused of sexual abuse or are convicted sex offenders returning to - or joining - our church.

An underlying premise to our considerations is that we wish to respect two values of our church. We want to be inclusive and provide a church community to any person who wishes to participate. We are determined to provide a safe sanctuary for children, their families and vulnerable populations.

Each session will include: an introduction to the policy statement and its significance for the congregation in light of the Social Principles of our denomination and current national concerns about the sexual abuse of children and other vulnerable persons. The congregation will have an opportunity to ask questions and give input before it is placed before a May Church Conference for adoption. The task force is comprised of: Dr. Leif Terdal, John Henry Hingson, Janice Gratton, and the Rev. Dr. Arvin Luchs.

response to protest

Fred Phelps, notorious for picketing Matthew Shepherd's memorial service, has indicated he will be picketing Portland First UMC on Sunday, April 18, from 10:00 am to 10:30 am. It will be very important for all of us on April 18 not to engage the protesters in dialogue or in any other way. Fred Phelps and his followers are motivated by hatred. Responding with anger and hatred may only escalate the situation.

electives

Electives for Elders

Senior Adult Ministries. Information: Cheryl Luce at 503/228-3195.

Electives for Elders Spring Term 2004

Tuesday Mornings

April 13 - May 4, 2004

10:00 am - 12:10 pm

Two Courses Offered:

FOLDING CHAIR THEATER

with Jim Shaffer

This series of classes will show through demonstration, examination and actual readings of selected plays, how we receive inspiration, direction -- and entertainment, from great minds who have utilized theater as their medium.

Rx FOR PREPAREDNESS

with various resource people

This class will feature helping Senior Adults be ...

Prepared for

Scams & Frauds

Prepared for

Fire & Natural Disasters,

Prepared for

Neighborhood Emergencies

TUITION: \$10.00

Registration Deadline: April 11, 2004

seniors

First Church Seniors

DINNER THEATER OUTING

Sunday, May 16, First Church Seniors will attend Sylvia's Dinner Theater's production of, *Moon Over Buffalo*. Enjoy a choice of three entrees for dinner, and a live theater production. Cost: \$36.50, group rate, including gratuity. Time: Meet at Sylvia's (5115 NE Sandy Blvd.) for dinner at 5:30. The play follows, from 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

RESERVATIONS DUE BY

APRIL 28th, WITH \$15 deposit.

adult

Christian Education

SUNDAY, APRIL 11

Changing Christianity,
The Fellowship of Seekers,
No class sessions on Easter

SUNDAY, APRIL 18

9:00 am *Changing Christianity,*
Fireside Room

We are currently reading *Remedial Christianity: What Every Christian Should Know About the Faith, But Probably Doesn't*, by Paul Allen Laughlin.

9:15 am *The Fellowship of Seekers,*
Room 134

groups

Fellowship Opportunities

JUST FRIENDS

"Just Friends" is a fellowship for gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered persons who are members or friends of First UMC. Their April potluck will be Saturday April 24th at Paul Nickell's home, 1552 NE 73rd Ave., at 6:00. Paul will provide the main entree, everyone else please bring a side dish. If you have questions, call Paul at 503/257-9109.

FIRST UMC HIKERS

Anyone who enjoys hiking is welcome to join us on our April hike on Saturday, April 24th at Tryon Creek State Natural Area in SW Portland. Tryon Creek is a 635 acre site which boasts of over fifty species of birds, many small mammals, and many varieties of trees. We will meet at the church parking lot at 9:30 am to carpool to Tryon Creek. Please bring a lunch, snacks and water and wear comfortable hiking boots. We will do about a 2-1/4 mile hike; it is an easy trail, suitable for children. We will have our lunch at the Nature Center covered area after our hike. If you have any questions or would like to join us, please e-mail Paula Justice at jpaula354@aol.com or call her at 503/524-3737.

umw

United Methodist Women

The UMW Unit Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month. Information: Trudy Kayser 503/292-7528 or Mary Covert 503/246-5603

APRIL 30

The UMW Quilt Show Luncheon
Quilts based on reading *Bless Me, Ultima*, will be hung April 26, 2004 in Collins Hall for a month. A luncheon will be held Friday, April 30, 2004. We will gather at 11:00 am. The luncheon will be prepared by the UMW. A member of the book/quilt group will discuss the quilts after the lunch.

The cost of the lunch is \$12.00. Funds will be raised for Hispanic projects in New Mexico and other locations. Invite your friends.

Bless Me, Ultima is a book written by Ruldolfo Anaya, a New Mexican Hispanic author. The story is of a Hispanic family living near a New Mexican town. Six year old Antonio Marez is about to enter the school his two older sisters attend at the same time the curandera, Ultima, joins his family.

The intertwining of the community, land and town, Catholic and pagan religions, and witchcraft are wonderfully told in this tale. The culture, physical area and characterizations of the people are vivid part of this book. Anaya has written several books. *Bless Me, Ultima* is considered one of his classic books.

UMW APRIL HAPPENINGS ...

APRIL 16-17

Metro District UMW Retreat

All women are invited to the Metro District UMW Spiritual Retreat at Alton L. Collins Retreat Center. Plan to attend on either Friday or Saturday, and help celebrate our 135 year legacy of Women in Mission. Featured event will be "Singing Psalms," led by Nadine Gilmore, former Conference UMW president. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. each day. Fee of \$14 includes lunch and refreshments. Contact Trudy Kayser to carpool 503/292-7528.

APRIL 21

Faith Circle will meet at 10:00 am in the Church Parlor. Plan to bring along show-and-tell articles for the program "Sharing Visual Arts from Your Home." Also, please bring non-perishable food items for Fish.

APRIL 21

Ruth Guild will meet at 12:00 noon in Room 204. Trudy Kayser and Ruth Green will present the 2003-2004 mission study program: "Creating Interfaith Community."

APRIL 22

Reading Group will meet at 10:00 am in the Library. Trudy Kayser will review *Bless Me, Ultima!*, the book used as the basis for the April 30 Quilt Show Luncheon. Come gain insights for April 30 Quilt Show Luncheon.



FIRST UMC HIKERS

Join First UMC Hikers for a hike at Tryon Creek State Natural area on Saturday, April 24.

missions

Annual Conf. Project

This year's "parade of boxes" at Annual Conference will have a new twist - its a "parade of bags." And the parade leads to Portland's waterfront for donation to the Portland Seafarers Mission. About 25,000 sailors from poor and third-world countries visit Portland every year. Most are young and away from home for months at a time. Because of increased security measures, unless a sailor has a visa (which most do not), he must stay on board. Seafarers Mission provides various items and services for these sailors.

The following items are sought for donation to the Seafarers Mission: Bibles, religious materials, daily devotionals, small toilet articles (soap, shampoo, combs, toothpaste and brushes), paperback novels, magazines (especially National Geographic and sports), t-shirts, belts, pencils, pens, writing paper, envelopes, dominoes, cards and small games.

The items collected will be placed in large paper grocery bags, filled 1/3 full with as many different items in each bag as possible. Beginning the first Sunday in April, a collection box will be placed in the Narthex. Donations may be made of any and all of the above-listed items - and donations of filled bags are, of course, also welcome.

Seafarers Mission is also accepting donations of funds to use for transportation and telephone calls. Checks for this purpose may be made out to Conference Treasurer, marked as Conference Advance Specials/Portland Seafarers, and mailed to First UMC.

- The Global Missions Committee



planet church

Raising Our Awareness of Environmental Issues

Thank you, Trustees! The Planet Church Committee is pleased to announce that the Trustees of First UMC have approved the purchase of renewable energy to fulfill a portion of the electricity needs of the church. The Planet Church Committee estimated that it takes approximately 600 kWh of electricity to light the sanctuary each month and the Trustees have authorized the purchase of blocks of renewable energy equal to this amount.

While this is only a small amount of the church's electricity usage, this decision demonstrates our acknowledgement of the contribution of our church facility to global climate change and our commitment to take steps to mitigate our environmental impact.

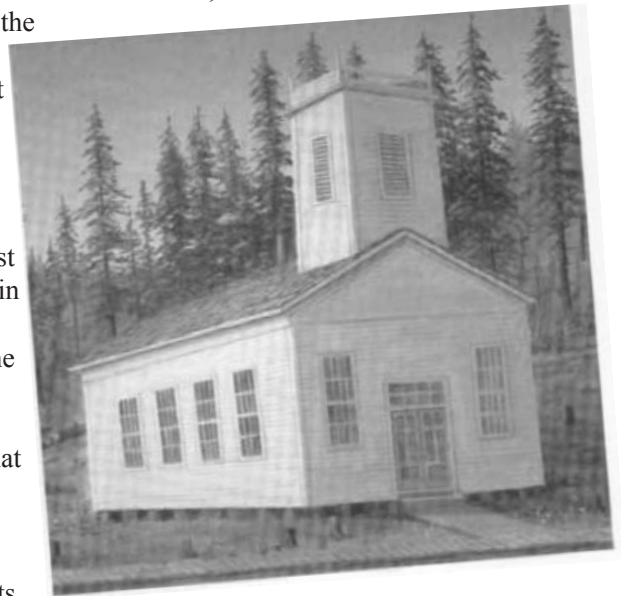
The Planet Church Committee will continue to work with the leadership of First UMC to find ways of taking steps to lessen our environmental footprint.

If you are a PGE or Pacific Power customer at your home, you can buy renewable energy for your residence. PGE customers can go to: www.portlandgeneral.com/home/products/renewable_power/ and Pacific Power customers can go to: www.pacificpower.net/Article/Article22008.html to learn more and to sign up.

history & archives

Dr. Raymond E. Balcomb, History & Archives, Chair

I know everyone isn't as interested in this as I am, but I want to add something to the last piece I wrote upholding our claim to be "Portland's first church." I want to get it into print for future historians to chew on! The Oregon and California Mission Conference was authorized by the Methodist Episcopal General Conference in 1848. Before that time the workers here had been under the authority of the Board of Missions. Travel and communication times being what they were, the new Conference was not exactly organized until 1849, at which time its Superintendent, William Roberts, reported five churches in Oregon: Oregon City and Portland, Salem, Yamhill, Mary's River (i.e.: Corvallis) and Astoria (plus a few in California). No mention of St. Johns, the only possible conclusion being that there wasn't any church there! A fact supported by another: none of the first Trustees of the St. Johns' M.E. Church moved to the St. Johns area until 1850 or later.



*Painting of Father Wilbur's Chapel, taken from Dr. Balcomb's book, **Portland's First Church: The Sesquicentennial History**. This book is available in our church library*

around the parish

Prayer Concerns and Expressions of Thanks

Betty Groves, who is recovering at home after a stay in the hospital;

David Perkins, whose father has had strokes;

Lorna Carey who is hospitalized;

Doris Lavelly, who is scheduled for surgery on Wednesday, April 7;

Rick Walton, who is recovering from surgery;

and Margaret Walton, who is serving in Iraq.

We offer prayers of thanksgiving for

a new grandchild for Carol and Bishop Paup;

James Robert Webster, born March 9, 2004 to David and Ann Marie Webster.

He is the brother of Andrew and Julia

We continue our prayers for

Jane Rhodes, Jan Marshall, Kitty Riddle, Tom Iverson, and Harry Baker.

... etc ...

Items of Interest

The Alliance for Police and Community Accountability

is sponsoring a candidates' forum for the 2004 City of Portland primary elections for both the mayoral and two Council races. The forum will be Saturday, April 17 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the downtown branch of the YMCA, located at 1111 SW 10th Ave, Portland. The event is free and open to the public.

Alton L. Collins Retreat Center Presents A Symposium on Spirituality and Sustainability

The symposium will feature: Rev. Fritz Hull of The Whidbey Institute and will be held on April 18 and 19, 2004. Call The Retreat Center for information and registration materials 503/ 637-6410.



Considering adoption?

“Plan Loving Adoptions Now” invites you to a free seminar on adoption, April 22, Thursday, from 7:00 to 8:30 pm, at First UMC in room 202. Learn about the adoption process, different options for adopting from other countries as well as the U.S., and ideas on how to finance adoption. Learn how you can meet the love of your life! If you need more information, call PLAN at 503 472-8452.

Publication Deadlines

Articles for *The Circuit Rider* are due no later than 4:45pm on the Thursday before publication the following Wednesday. The next *Circuit Rider* will be published on April 21.

Bulletin insert information is due no later than 4:45pm on **Wednesday**.

Sunday service participant information for the Sunday bulletin is due no later than noon on **Wednesday**.

E-mail: office@fumcpdx.org or place in the *Circuit Rider* box in the office.