



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

the **E** *edition*

January 25, 2006

Volume 10, Issue 02

**THIS
SUNDAY**

JANUARY 29, 2006

WORSHIP

10:30 AM

Sermon

Rev. Dr. Arvin Luchs

Children's Time

Rev. Dr. Lowell

Greathouse



As a Reconciling Congregation, members of First United Methodist Church have pledged to welcome and support all who want to worship with us, regardless of race, gender, class or sexual orientation.

GOOSE HOLLOW FAMILY SHELTER

*If there is
a poor one
among you ...
in any of the
towns of the land ...
you shall not
harden your heart,
nor close your hand ...
you shall freely
open your hand ...
and generously lend
sufficient for their
need in whatever
they lack.*

Deuteronomy 15:7

The Bible contains more than 300 verses about the poor. Clearly, caring for the poor is an issue God cares about. At First Church, one of our most effective outreach programs for addressing poverty is the Goose Hollow Family Shelter, which provides food, housing, clothing, emergency funds and ongoing advocacy for the poor.

Yesterday I responded to a call from a woman with two children asking for assistance to pay her rent. She lost her job when she couldn't work because she couldn't afford childcare, and now she can't pay her rent and is about to be evicted—she said she was on a sinking ship and afraid she and her children would become homeless.

When people suffer from poverty, they often contact churches because they know God cares about the poor, and we at First Church are fortunate to be able to offer limited assistance. I receive several similar calls each week, and work with other community agencies to keep poor families from becoming homeless. Sometimes we can't stop the process and people do end up homeless. When people are homeless, drowning seems inevitable because a bond of trust between people and society is breached. Fortunately, people who stay at Goose Hollow become part of a community – a caring network that works to put poverty on hold. Goose Hollow is a life preserver for God's poor—a transitional step that helps people heal from the wounds of poverty, a place where fear is replaced with a bond of trust that builds hope and restores dignity.

This week I will attend a conference in Oakland sponsored by The National Alliance to End Homelessness that is part of a complicated Ten Year Plan to end homelessness. The plan may not end poverty, but it will require that housing stability be a measure of success for those who assist poor people. I look forward to learning how the Shelter, as an outreach program, can create more life preservers for people in danger of being homeless.

Thank you for your support in answering God's invitation to "open your hand" to the poor. Because of Goose Hollow Family Shelter families need not be homeless.

Annie Heart

Director of Outreach, First UMC

Visit the Goose Hollow Family Shelter webpage at www.fumcpdx.org



memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin Luchs

Jane Rhodes was, by profession, a school teacher. She also taught us. She taught us to live with faith and grace. She showed us how to die with dignity. Several years ago, with her permission, I shared some of her wisdom. Ann and Jerry Lindgren asked if I could reprint it. I'm glad to do so:

BRING YOUR SOUL UP TO DATE by Jane Rhodes - July 2002

I have a cancer. The medical field says it is incurable. I have spent time this past year reading, listening, and meditating to prepare, as best I can, for my death. All of you have your wills written, the medical documents signed, and the trusts in place. I have some specific, practical suggestions to help you bring your soul up to date. You can start them now!

Meditate or pray each day. You need to have a constant and renewing relationship with God. Two minutes at bedtime or while reading—even the Bible—will not do the job. Staying busy all the time builds walls around us and shuts God out. Be by yourself, relaxed, but not so comfortable you go to sleep, and talk with and listen to God. My meditations are not all quiet. I remember one where I threw a complete tantrum: “This isn’t fair. What did I do that was so terrible to deserve this? If you loved me, you would not make me go through this.” In my mind, I saw Jesus standing beside me. He stood quietly, with no head shaking, but murmuring, “You know that’s not true.” He just listened. And when I had spit out all the venom, he wrapped his arms around me and held me while I cried. I knew he understood.

Stay in touch with your loving community. This community includes those close to you, I would hope, but it may include strangers, too. God works through human beings—even you—to bring hope, love, and support. Don’t close out this wonderful resource by isolating yourself—even behind what sounds like good excuses: “I don’t want to bother anyone.” “There are others needier than I.” We are all worthy of God’s love, for we are all His children.

Forgive and ask forgiveness. You know holding a grudge hurts only you, but actually forgiving can be a challenge. I found it helps if I look for something I gained from the experience. Did I learn patience? Did I learn how to do something for myself? Did I learn how to overcome hate? At that point I not only forgive, but I give thanks for helping me grow. My biggest problem is forgiving myself. I may not wear sackcloth, but I hold onto my guilt with both hands. I constantly remind myself to let it go.

Trust the survivors to take care of themselves. This is a tricky one, because you may be the survivor. Can you cook a meal for yourself without using the microwave or cold cereal? Do you know where the income tax receipts for next year are kept? Can you wash and dry a load of clothes and actually have them look good? Where is the check book kept? Do your heirs know the name of your accountant? If any of these areas are your exclusive domain, it’s time to share—even insist on sharing. You need to help the survivors, even if that’s you.

Accept as absolute truth that there is life after death. We may remain individuals. We may become part of this magnificent whole. There may be reincarnation. The important part is that Jesus will be with us when the door opens and will guide us into our new lives with God.

Am I ready to die? Nope! I still have roses to enjoy. I have lessons to learn and to teach. I have hugs to share. When my time comes, I hope I will say, “Thanks God for this great vacation. Now I’m coming home.”

Jane went home on January 7, 2006. We will celebrate her “vacation” and give thanks to God for the lessons she shared with us on Sunday, January 29 at 2:00 PM in the sanctuary.



See you in Church

Arvin

adults at first

sunday classes

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SEEKERS

Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:15 AM in Room 134

This class is currently discussing the book: *How to Be an Open-Minded Christian Without Losing Your Faith*, by Jan Linn.

CHANGING CHRISTIANITY

Sunday mornings 9:00 -10:15 AM in Room 202.

This class is studying *The Gospel of Thomas* and will continue for ten or eleven weeks. The basic text for the *Gospel of Thomas* study will be *The Gospel of Thomas, Annotated and Explained* by Stevan Davies. Copies will be available for purchase.

SHORT-TERM CLASSES

Matters of Faith: The Death Penalty and Restorative Justice:

This three-part series began Sunday, January 15, 2006.

Recently the 1000th person was executed in the United States since the practice was resumed in 1977. As people of faith, what is our position on the use of the death penalty in our country? And what role does restorative justice play within our larger community? This three-part series will explore these and other questions through the use of video and personal presentations.

Healthy Children-Healthy Planet

This eight-part series began Sunday, January 22, 2006.

The purpose of this eight-part series is to understand how the pervasive effects of advertising, media, and our consumer culture can influence a child's view of the world, discover ways to create meaningful family times and healthful environments for children, and explore ways to develop a child's connection to nature, and to foster creativity. The sessions will deal with cultural pressures, family rituals and celebrations, advertising, food and health, time and creativity, technology and the media, and ways to explore nature.

Ending Hunger Now

Ending Hunger Now is a four-part class beginning February 5 through March 5, 2006. It will explore the issues and scope of global, national, and local hunger, using the book by Bob Dole, George McGovern, and Don Messer, all United Methodists, as a guide. This series will serve as a powerful challenge and practical guide to show how we, as persons of faith, can help eliminate hunger in our neighborhoods and around the world. Books will be available for purchase at \$12.

PARKER GROUP

The Parker Group will meet Saturday, February 4, 2006 at 12:30 PM in Room 202 for a potluck lunch and program. During World War II some 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were incarcerated in ten internment camps in Idaho, California, and Wyoming. Nearly two thirds of them were U.S. citizens and protection under the Bill of Rights was denied. The Parker Group will have a representative from the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center to tell us about Oregon's part in this aspect of our national history. For more information contact: Dick Palmiter at 503/675-9218.

umw

united methodist women

The UMW Unit Gatherings are held the first Wednesdays of each month. All women are invited. Co-presidents:

Trudy Kayser, 503/292-7528,
Mary Covert, 503/652-6480.

UMW PROGRAM - FEBRUARY 1

All women—and men—are invited to come along on a trip to India & Pakistan, free of charge! We will be “taking off” on Wednesday, February 1 at 10:00 AM, the Fireside Room. Our very own Ravi Vedanayagam, who grew up in India, will share insights and experiences from his homeland. Ravi will relate first-hand observations of rapid changes he has seen happening in this important part of our planet. Assisting Ravi will be Trudy Kayser, who will describe UMW's important role in India's history and bring up-to-date news of UMW's current activities in India & Pakistan.

All this study of India's culture and customs will surely whet your appetite for India's fine foods. You're in luck! Delicious Indian specialties will be featured at the noon luncheon, prepared by Ravi & Trudy, following the meeting! Questions? Contact Colleen Foster at 503/641-3479.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED WINTER FORUM

The Church Women United Winter Forum will be Thursday, February 2, 2006. Registration is at 9:30 AM. The event will be at Montavilla United Methodist Church, 232 SE 80th, Portland. Randy Blazak, PSU professor, brought back by popular demand, will again inform us of hate groups in our community. All are welcome. Contact Betty-Lou Hare for more information.

METRO DISTRICT UMW TRAINING EVENT

The Metro District UMW Training Event will be Saturday, February 4, 8:30 AM to Noon at Portland First United Methodist Church. All UMW officers are urged to attend. A special program is planned for all non-officer members. For more information contact: Mary Covert.

hunger issues a compassionate response

Portland First UMC is seeking to respond to hunger issues in our area. In addition to a short-term class on hunger we will be conducting a food drive and taking a survey of the congregation.

FOOD DRIVE

December donations to Portland's FISH Emergency Service were down more than \$16,000 from a comparable period last year. You can help by bringing canned and packaged foods to church on Sunday, February 5, 2006. Most needed are easy-to-prepare items such as

- tuna, chili and other canned meats
- peanut butter
- canned or packaged hearty soups
- Ramen
- boxed macaroni and cheese
- pancake mixes
- packaged cereals
- rice and pasta
- cake or brownie mixes
- pudding and jello mixes

Please note that FISH cannot accept home-canned or prepared items.

FISH helps more than 1,913 Oregonians per month by providing emergency food boxes, clothing, personal care products (soap, toothpaste, laundry soap, etc.) and referrals to people most in need. Over the past three years, FISH has seen a 30 per cent increase in families asking for emergency food and help. For more information, contact Nancy Miller at 503/626-1624.

HUNGER AWARENESS SURVEY

On February 5 and 12, the Hunger Task Force will hand out surveys at the morning worship service. The purpose of the survey is to learn how First UMC members view the Church's and individuals' responses to the issues of hunger and poverty; learn what members already are doing relative to hunger; and what members are open to doing to respond to the issues of hunger. The results of the survey will be used to design an action plan that will engage First UMC long-range in working to end hunger. We hope that each member will take a few minutes to respond to the survey and return to Task Force members.

generosity abounds reporting our successes!

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS

Thank you for your generosity during the Christmas Season. This year the Alternative Christmas, sponsored by Global Outreach, raised a total of \$9,035. This is nearly \$3000 more than last year and the highest total ever raised. This effort, combined with the \$38,760 raised this fall for Hurricane Relief, truly made this a "season of giving" at First Church.

CHRISTMAS IN GULFPORT: THANK YOU LETTERS

Dear First United Methodist Church:

The Christmas gifts from First UMC Portland shed a lot of light into our darkness. Thank you to your congregation for remembering us in our time of need. The gifts were much appreciated by young and old. The toys were especially appreciated in that our Toys-R-Us has not yet reopened! Our Gulf coast had been graciously gifted with clothes, mostly summer clothes in that the hurricane hit in the summer, and we found that the winter clothes were not as easy to find until your church came to the rescue with the winter coats. Thank you so much for remembering us in our time of need. We also appreciated the gift cards, which were offered to families who were hit the hardest by the storm. May God bless you in this New Year and keep you happy and healthy. The Peace of the Lord be with you.

Sincerely,

Rev. Rachel Benefield, Handsboro United Methodist Church

From Jackie in Gulfport, MS ...

I received two of your gift cards. I did lose my home and all my possessions in Katrina. I was so blessed to have been with friends during the storm and for 34 days. Then with my sister in Florida for 44 days. I now have my own apartment again. I have been getting things big and small to make it a home...Thank you so much for the gift cards. The best blessing is knowing that folks like you care and are helping us to recover. With love and prayers.

From Nita in Gulfport, MS ...

Thank you to all at First UMC. I had eight feet of black mud and water in my house-my son, brother, niece and nephew lost everything too. Your gifts for my family really touched my heart! I have been a member of Handsboro United Methodist Church since I was in the 4th grade, and I'm 57 years old now. I always knew the Methodist people were great and your church really proves it! Thank you again.

FIRST CHURCH VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION TRIP TO GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI: MARCH 18-26, 2006

First United Methodist Church-Portland has created a Partner Church relationship with Handsboro UMC in Gulfport, Mississippi. We will be taking a Volunteers in Mission Team to this region from March 18-26, 2006. Please consider joining in this effort to help with hurricane recovery there. For details contact Dee Poujade, the UMVIM Coordinator for this trip. She can be reached at 503/43-3337 or by email mimi99@easystreet.com. There will be a team meeting on Sunday, January 29 at noon at First Church for those who are interested.

THE PITTOCK MANSION TOUR

Join First Church Seniors in a tour of The Pittock Mansion and Lunch at Albertina Kerr's on February 8, 2006. The Pittock Mansion is one of Portland's most elegant landmarks. It is a 22-room French Renaissance chateau and remains one of Portland's architectural glories. Join us for lunch at Albertina's, followed by a tour of the Pittock Mansion. We will meet at the church at 11:00 AM. Lunch will be served at noon. We will return around 3:00 PM. A \$10 deposit needs to be made by January 29, 2006. Cost is \$20.00 and includes admission to the Pittock Mansion and lunch at Albertina's. (Indicate if you have a Pittock Mansion membership.) To register contact: Debbie Morse in the church office at 503/228-3195 or dmorse@fumcpdx.org.

FOOD AND FRIENDS

Food and Friends will be meeting at Mama Mia Trattoria on 439 SW 2nd, on February 10, 2006 at 6:30 PM. Nursery care is available at the church for a nominal fee. Anyone interested in this dining experience, please contact Donna Clark at 503/289-3829, or dclarkio@msn.com.

SCOUTING SUNDAY

Scouting Sunday will be February 12, 2006. Everyone is encouraged to wear their Cub Scout, Boy Scout or Girl Scout uniforms to church that Sunday.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Sunday, January 29, 2006 in the Fireside Room from noon to 1:30 PM. Light snacks and refreshments will be available.

In response to the persistent tensions and ongoing violence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland has created a new educational program, that uses multimedia. Explore the history of the persistent tensions and ongoing violence of this conflict, as well as to examine how peace could be achieved in the region. Later in the Spring, a second presentation will be offered utilizing resources from the Muslim community.

BREAKING BREAD GROUP ORIENTATION-

For those interested in being a part of small fellowship groups within the church, Breaking Bread Groups will have an orientation on Sunday, February 5, 2006 after worship in the Fireside Room to answer any questions you may have.

A FORUM AT FIRST: HEALTH CARE

Sunday, February 12, 2006 in the Fireside Room from noon to 1:30 PM. Light snacks and refreshments will be available.

Few people in Oregon would disagree that "the health care system in Oregon is broken." Addressing the matter of "brokenness," Oregon State Representative Mitch Greenlick, will be making a Power-Point presentation on the Oregon and U.S. approach to health care and its brokenness by showing: (1) How we've tried nationally for 100 years to achieve universal access and failed; (2) How the current Oregon Health Plan is threatened because of the growing number of uninsured; (3) How we're in trouble, along with other states; and (4) How The Hope for Families ballot initiative No. 40, is the proper next step to deal with the problem. He will also comment briefly on the Kitzhaber approach so much in the news today.

Following the presentation a three-person panel will engage Mitch Greenlick in a health care conversation. The panel consists of: Cheryl Bittle, chair of Church, Society, and Social Action; Ron Jamtgaard, member health committee of the Metropolitan Alliance for the Common Good, and David Leslie, Executive Director of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon .

Child care will be available.



THE NONE ZONE: RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Sunday, February 26, 2006 from 9:15 to 10:15 AM

First Church is pleased to sponsor this special Oregon Chautauqua program with Mark Shibley. The Pacific Northwest, and particularly Oregon, is the least-churched region of the country. Recent public opinion polls suggest that relatively few people here identify with a historic religious tradition-leading scholars to refer to this region as the "None Zone." Yet spirituality abounds in this secular province. Southern Oregon University professor Mark Shibley highlights these religious patterns and raises questions about the past and future role of secular spirituality and church-based religion in the public life of the Pacific Northwest. Mark Shibley is Associate Professor of Sociology at Southern Oregon University

This program is made possible by funding from the Oregon Council for the Humanities (OCH). OCH is an independent nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities and is dedicated to providing opportunities for lifelong learning for Oregonians through programs like Oregon Chautauqua.

around the parish

OUR PRAYERS ARE WITH ...

John Huddleston, recovering from his serious burns;
Paul Groundwater, who has a brain tumor,
his wife Chris is the niece of Marge Terdal;
Bob Ross, who is still struggling from the effects of a stroke;
Bruce Hendrickson, who recently had knee surgery;
Mary Bywater Cross, upon the death of her mother, *Janet Bywater*, in
Iowa. Mary is currently in Iowa for the service.
The family of Erik Iverson. His memorial service was Friday;
The family of Jane Rhodes, her service will be next Sunday at 2:00 PM;
The family of Gloria Misar, her service will be Sunday,
February 12 at 2:00 PM;
Rene Pino, whose very good friend, *Ruth Emory*, died last week.

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

Jim Whitcomb, *Al Leonard*, *Agnes & Dick Clark*, *Tom Iverson*,
Bob & Virginia Anderson,

thanks

words of appreciation

FROM EDITH JENSEN & FAMILY

Edie Jensen and their daughter Jennifer wish to thank the congregation for the many calls, cards, emails and prayers sent on behalf of John Zuidema during his recent illness and death. This outpouring of love and concern is deeply appreciated.



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 **February 8, 2006**.

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.