



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

the **E** edition

April 19, 2006
Volume 10, Issue 08

THIS SUNDAY

APRIL 23, 2006

WORSHIP
10:30 AM

Children's
Musical: "Why?"
by W. Ramsay

Why?

a children's musical
by W. Ramsay

Sunday, April 23

Have questions? We have answers! Come experience the who-what-when-where and why we worship. Join us Sunday, April 23, 2006 as Pastor Arvin and the Soundseekers take us on a musical journey through the purposes of congregational worship.

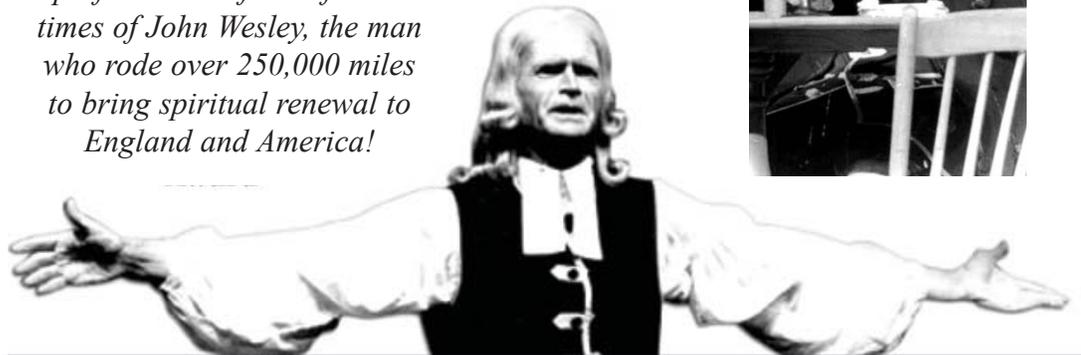
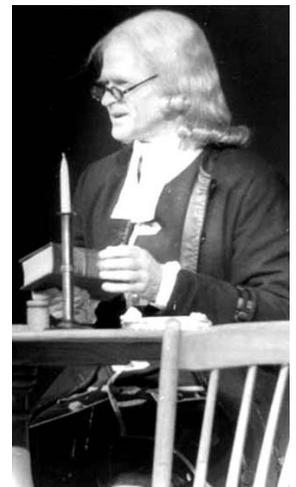
Sunday, April 30

The Man from Aldersgate

JOHN WESLEY PORTRAYED BY ROGER NELSON

SUNDAY,
APRIL 30, 2006
10:30 AM

Experience the award-winning performance of the life and times of John Wesley, the man who rode over 250,000 miles to bring spiritual renewal to England and America!



"An intriguing portrait of an extraordinary man!"

The Los Angeles Times

"A tour de force!" Pat Boone, Singer/Actor



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.



memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin Luchs

I'm basking in the glow of a rich and wonderful Holy Week and Easter. What a range of starkly contrasting emotions and themes ran through those days ... from the adulation of the people on Palm Sunday to the intimacy with the disciples at the Last Supper; from the agony and grief of death on Good Friday to the wonder of Easter resurrection! All of the drama and the pathos of Holy Week were captured in three powerful worship events—and then we broke forth in splendor—magnificent flowers,

indescribable music, children bursting with eagerness, a sanctuary full (about 1000 worshippers by first report) singing with joy, praying—even shouting “He is Risen, Indeed!”

Thanks to all who contributed so much to make it happen: Agnes and the children for the palms; Dr. Balcomb, Edie Jensen and Jeff Hall for the narration; Lowell for both the engaging children’s talks and the powerful mid-week services; Marty Martin (and the donors) for the flowers; Gene Balcomb and Holly Martin for sound, lights and all. And the music! Wow! What can I say? Jonas, Gary, Kelly, all the choirs, Festival Brass—Bravo! Thanks too, to David Jenkins and the office staff and volunteers for extra mile efforts. I could go on and on with appreciation.

During the week I became aware of a subtle shift that marks the week. From Palm Sunday to Friday we *remember and commemorate* events that happened nearly two thousand years ago and their impact on history.

Easter Sunday is not a time of memory, it's a time of *celebration*. On that day we rejoice in the Risen Christ and embrace a living Lord and declare our faith in God's presence with us in our lives!

Vibrant faith is about more than memory—no matter how moving and profound. It is about discerning God's presence—the call of Christ in our midst—today. Likewise, the church is not a museum preserving and recreating the past—it is a mission for today—a movement that builds the future.

It surfaces an important question: “What is the place of historical memory in a living faith?” There are emerging church reformers who counsel us to ignore the past and focus solely on the movement of the Spirit in our hearts. “You can't put new wine in old skins,” they say, as they remember ancient scripture. (Mark 2:22 and parallels in Matthew and Luke) The orthodox and conservatives sometimes encourage us to bind ourselves to the past—limiting our thinking, our liturgy and our mission to recreating as faithfully as we can the early church, or the creeds of the Councils or the deeds of past saints.

But there are other ways of thinking about history. The past provides both challenge and insight into the way others have confronted eternal questions that we, also, face. That's how Tiger Woods deals with the past. He owns, apparently, one of the most extensive collections of videos of historic golf tournaments. He ponders past players to prepare for a tournament.

Our past is also peopled by amazing men and women who have discovered how to face life's challenges with the power of God's Spirit. They are models of faithfulness who challenge us to discover the way of God and apply it to the issues of our day.

This month United Methodists around the world highlight memories from our heritage. We've invited accomplished actor Roger Nelson to recreate one from our past—our founder, John Wesley. He'll do that during our 10:30 AM Worship Service on April 30. What a great opportunity to search for ideas from our tradition that can point us to more effective ways of being God's people today—and tomorrow.

See you in Church, *Arvin*



Some of you have wondered about the absence of impatiens which are usually planted in Beckham Court and around the cherry tree at our entrance each spring. These have been delayed somewhat because of the numerous bulbs now blooming among the winter pansies there.

We have heard many favorable comments on the improved appearance of Collins Circle. The area is owned by the city but was not being maintained. Since it is so near our campus we decided to beautify it. For the past two years we have kept it cleared of leaves and debris and sprayed unwanted weeds and grasses. Last fall, Jim Manuel, donated 300 daffodil bulbs which he and Dick Pomeroy set out and we now enjoy.

We welcome any who would like to join us each Thursday from 9:00 AM to noon for work and fellowship as we keep our space beautiful.

making a difference

addressing important issues

GLOBAL WARMING: A SCIENTIFIC AND POLITICAL UPDATE

Sunday, April 30, 2006 in the Fireside Room from noon to 1:30 PM.

Light snacks and refreshments will be available. Child care available.

The Planet Church Committee of Portland's First United Methodist Church is pleased to present Dr. Eban Goodstein, professor of Economics at Lewis and Clark College. His talk, *Global Warming: A Scientific and Political Update*, will address what many have described as the most serious problem facing us today. Dr. Goodstein is the author of numerous books on the environment, including the 2004 textbook, *Economics and the Environment*. He has also written for *Scientific American*, *The New York Times* and *The Economist*, and has spoken extensively on the subject of global warming.

For more information, contact Annie Heart at ahheart@fumcpdx.org or 503/228-3195 ext 215.

FAMILY OF FRIENDS: FAMILIES MENTORING CHILDREN

When: Sunday, April 23
Noon to 1:30 PM

Where: Fireside Room

A large number of children in the United States are living in situations that destroy their chances of growing into healthy, productive human beings. "Mentoring in America," research sponsored by the AOL Time Warner Foundation, found that there are 17.6 million young people who need or want mentors. Families like yours can make a difference in the life of a child who is growing up in poverty and community violence. Family of Friends is a program that matches volunteer families with six-to-nine-year-old children in need. The families serve as "mentors," or "guides" encouraging the child's positive growth and development. This forum will introduce you to this wonderful, life changing program. Kersti Pettit-Kekel, First Church Coordinator for Family of Friends, and Kris Linden, Executive Director of the program, will be on hand to discuss this important program and answer your questions.

The definition of family is all-inclusive. Come and learn more!

SAVE DARFUR RALLY

The Outreach Committees of Portland First UMC have added their name to the list of sponsors for the "Portland's Save Darfur Rally" to be held on April 30 at 1:30 PM at Pioneer Courthouse Square. This event is in conjunction with the major rally being held the same day in Washington, D.C. under the auspices of Million Voices for Darfur. Other faith organizations who are co-sponsoring this event include Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Greater Vancouver Interfaith Association, Inter-Religious Action Network of Washington County, Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland and Congregation Neveh Shalom. Recent news reports indicate the genocide in Darfur continues to get worse with a death rate calculated at 6,000 week. The conflict is beginning to spread across borders and is described as "a disaster of biblical proportions."

Our church members who plan to participate in the rally are reminded to first attend the important forum on the issue of Global Warming that is being sponsored by Planet Church Committee at noon, and then take the Max train to Pioneer Courthouse Square.

BREAD FOR THE WORLD

First Church's Hunger Task Force and Church & Society Committee invite you to be a part of the Bread for the World Offering of Letters. The ONE Campaign for 2006 advocates for the poor and hungry in our world. On Sundays, May 14 and 21, in Collins Hall after worship you will have an opportunity to join at tables set up in Collins Hall to write letters to their Congressional representatives to give voice to the voiceless. We will have sample letters, stationery, pens, pre-addressed stamped envelopes and people there to help. Join with people of faith and conscience across the US, to urge our leaders to fulfill their promises to help the world's hungry and poor people. The letters will be dedicated and mailed directly to Washington, DC. as a part of Bread For The World's National Lobby Day, June 13, 2006.

MISSIONS POTLUCK

The Global Missions Committee invites you to a potluck on Wednesday, May 10 at 5:30 PM in the Fireside Room, featuring Esther Gitobu. Esther is a General Board of Global Ministries missionary currently serving in Cambodia. She will present a program on the United Methodist Church's presence and activities in Cambodia. Dinner begins at 5:30 PM and the program following at 6:30 PM. Esther Gitobu and her husband Nicholas, are originally from Kenya and have been serving in Cambodia for the past two years. Anyone wishing more information about this event can contact Lowell Greathouse or Dee Poujade.

mission

volunteers
in mission
to Gulfport,
Mississippi

by Dee Poujade



From top left:
Cathy Connall, Mel Mills,
Mary Brelsford, Caroline
Crumpacker, (seated in
middle) Bruce Wenigmann,
Dee Poujade, Bruce
Hanna. (seated in front)
Rev. Rachel Benefield.

I was privileged to lead a seven-member United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) team to Gulfport, Mississippi, in late March. Like so many others who have traveled to this storm-ravaged area since August 29, I was horrified by what I saw there. Foundations, often with the ubiquitous FEMA trailer parked in front of them, are the only evidence that homes once stood. Battered signs advertise restaurants that no longer exist, and piles of debris decorate most of the front yards.

Our team of seven went to Gulfport in part because, after Katrina, a task force at Portland's First UMC, adopted the Handsboro UMC and we wanted to do more than just make material contributions. We wanted to put a human face to the relationship. We were four women and three men and representing five different Oregon churches (Portland First UMC, Bend UMC, Wilsonville UMC, Hillsboro UMC and City Bible Church of Portland). Like many recovery workers going to the Gulf Coast, we had little idea of the specific work we would be doing and were not even sure where we would be sleeping or eating! We did know that we had been called to go to the disaster area and to do whatever work God led us to do.

In Gulfport, we were housed in a portable building at the Handsboro church, a building that the church's insurance company had provided to replace the destroyed educational/social wing. We slept on Army cots and air mattresses. We had two toilets, but no showers. We showered at the homes of nearby church members until the portable showers arrived that had been donated by an Indiana church.

Initially we expected to spend our time helping with a variety of projects (sheetrock, painting, yard work, etc.) in various church members homes - but the pastor, Rachel Benefield, had asked if we could spend our first few days helping her move back into her home. Rachel, her husband, Scott, and their two young children, had been displaced by Katrina and, since the storm, had been living with her 86-year-old mother, Eleanor, in the second story of Eleanor's home. Rachel's home needed more extensive work than had originally been thought. We spent the entire week working with her, performing such tasks as raking the debris from her yard and planting flowers, cleaning storm gunk off the few personal possessions that had survived the water, building cabinets, and helping to move clothes and furniture into the house and put them in place. Initially, some of us were disappointed not to be doing more "meaningful" work, but, as the week progressed, it became increasingly clear that this was just the work that God had sent us to Gulfport to do - to help Rachel put her life back in order so that she could then help the members of her congregation put their lives back in order.

The week wasn't all hammers, rakes and dishpan hands. One afternoon we took a 20-mile drive along the beach, from Biloxi to Pass Christian, to see for ourselves the extent of the storm damage. It was a sobering experience. We couldn't imagine what day-to-day life was like for the people rebuilding their homes and their lives.

Workers will be needed along the Gulf Coast for many years to come. Other teams from the Oregon-Idaho Conference are planning group trips; individual volunteers, particularly those with specific skills, are always welcomed. For those who cannot go in person, donations can always be made through UMCOR (Advance #982523, Hurricanes 2005).



SOUNDSEEKERS TAKE PART IN "JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT"

Six children from the Tigard Christian Church Children's Choir combined with ten children from our First Church Soundseekers Children's Choir to sing the Children's Choir part in the Broadway production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, written and composed by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber this April. Ronnee Edwards, our Soundseekers Choir director, was responsible for teaching the children the music. The children then met with the Artistic Director of the production, Bill Newberry, for seventeen hours between April 1 - 4 to learn the choreography. Needless to say it was intense learning! The children then performed at Keller Auditorium in eight shows from April 4th through Sunday, April 9th. Congratulations to these sixteen children that stole the hearts of the people that attended each and every show! They did a truly "Amazing" job of representing our church!

around the parish

prayers and concerns

thanks

and praise

WE PRAY FOR ...

The family and friends of Muriel Oliver, who died on March 27 2006;
The family and friends of Hazel Anderson, who died on April 10, 2006;
Joan Hill, following surgery,
Sarah Callier, following surgery;
Marion Janney, mother-in-law of Nancy Townend Janney.

WE CELEBRATE THE RECENT MEMBERSHIP OF ...

Patricia Barron, reaffirmation of faith;
Jaden & Arden Bryce, transfer from MCC Charlotte, NC;
Cara Chrimes, reaffirmation of faith;
Kyong Vaandering, profession of faith;
Michael MacFerrin, reaffirmation of faith;
Traci MacFerrin, transfer from Woodlands UMC, Woodlands, TX;
James Clarke, transfer from Mt. Lebanon UMC, Pittsburgh, PA;
Lori Clarke, transfer from Sherwood Oaks Christian Church,
Bloomington, IN.

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

Jim Whitcomb, Al Leonard, Dick & Agnes Clark, and Tom Iverson

TO A CARING STAFF & CONGREGATIONS

I extend the gratitude of my wife Donna and myself for the love, care, kindness, and concern shown by Lowell Greathouse, Tom Foster, and your congregation for our family. We are especially grateful for the care shown to Matt Davis, whose neck was broken in several places as the result of a car crash and also to our daughter, Carrie Davis. From my phone call being accepted by a secretary who knew what to do with a crying and hurting father, the care and concern has overflowed.

Please accept this gift to your Congregational Emergency Fund as an inadequate "thank you." We praise God, Matt survived the car crash and there was no paralysis. May God richly bless you all.

In Christ,
Lamer and Donna Pettus

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 **May 3, 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.