



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

January 10, 2007
Volume 11, Issue 01

THIS SUNDAY

JANUARY 14, 2007

WORSHIP
10:30 AM

PREACHING

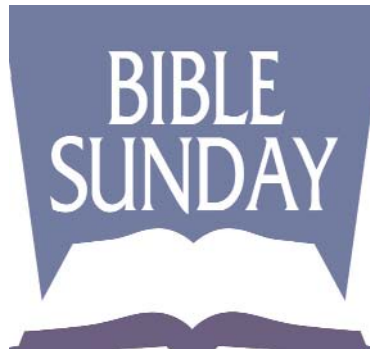
Rev. Dr. Thomas
Kimball

A CONVERSATION WITH OUR CHILDREN

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.



THIRD GRADE BIBLE SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2007

Join the third grade students and their families on January 21, 2007 as they receive their Bible from First UMC. Each year, we present the third grade class with Bibles engraved with their names. This year, 11 third graders will be attending a Bible retreat on January 20 and receiving their Bible on January 21, 2007.

In January, each student receives a packet of information, games and bible quizzes to take home. During Sunday School, they practice leading the Lord's Prayer, finding the books of the Bible and becoming comfortable with the Bible. At their retreat on January 20, they make canvas Bible covers, play games to learn the books of the Bible, practice the Lord's Prayer and learn new ways to make the Bible a part of their daily life.

After they receive their Bible on January 21, they will be leading the Bible readings and prayers at the Children's Worship Service on January 28.

In all of these different ways, we bring the Bible to life for a new generation. We will invite the third graders to greet everyone after worship on January 21. Take a moment and congratulate them for this step on their spiritual journey.

the **E** edition

Christmas Eve MEMORIES





memo

Rev. Dr.
Arvin Luchs

Dr. Martin Luther King is, to me, a hero.

It is not that he was a perfect person. But, then, neither was Moses, or David, or Peter or Paul-or so many of the heroes of our faith.

It was not that he accomplished everything he wanted. His campaigns against poverty and the Vietnam War were barely launched before his life was snuffed out by an assassin's bullet.

He was a spiritual giant-afire with faith in God and passionately committed to justice, equality and peace.

He was a visionary who moved the soul of our nation and gave the world a dream and a hope.

He was an agent of change who loosed the powers of non-violent love against prejudice, hatred and oppression.

Journalist Karen Pritzker is somewhat of an expert when it comes to heroes. Her website (www.myhero.com) offers a place for anyone to share stories of those who have inspired us and others. More than a million people visit the site each month. Their stories, Pritzker concludes have taught her that, "...a single stone thrown in a pond can produce ripples that extend farther than anyone can imagine at the moment of impact...there's no measure of the lives it will touch." * The ripples of Dr. King's life continue to touch and transform lives. That's why I am glad we pause each year to remember him, to test the quality of our justice today, and to give thanks for God's Spirit flowing through the heroes among us.

See you in church!

Arvin

* *(My Hero: Extraordinary People on the Heroes that Inspire Them, The Hero Project, Free Press, New York, 2005, pps xiv-xv)*

martin luther king

weekend events

and upcoming opportunities for justice

Sunday, January 14, 2007 at First Church

10:30 AM Human Relations Sunday in the United Methodist Church Worship Service Our guest preacher will be Rev. Thomas Kimball, Senior Pastor of Community United Methodist Church in Fairfield, CA. Rev. Kimball is a graduate of Gammon Theological Seminary and a clergy member of the California-Nevada Annual Conference, where he has served as a local pastor and Superintendent of the Golden Gate District. He and his wife, Connis, have five children. In addition to sharing our morning message, Rev. Kimball will baptize his newest grandchild, Lauren Kimball, daughter of Ken and Florence Kimball, who make their church home here.



12:00 PM Forum: "The Idea of Justice" a Chautauqua Talk (Sponsored by the Oregon Council for the Humanities (Lani Roberts, from Oregon State University will be the presenter)

Monday, January 15, 2007

7:00 PM Downtown Celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day First Baptist Church (909 SW Taylor)

8:30 AM The Skanner 21st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast until 10:00 AM at the Red Lion Hotel (Jantzen Beach) For tickets contact mlkbreakfast@theskanner.com

2:00 PM 15th Annual MLK March and Rally with speaker Willie Baptist. Meet at Sisters of the Road Café (133 NW 6th Ave.) at 2:00 PM, depart at 3:00 PM with a rally at 4:00 PM at St. Mary's Academy For details go to: www.sistersoftheroad.org

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVOCACY

Sunday, January 21, 2007

4:00 PM Interfaith Ecumenical Service for Peace at Augustana Lutheran Church (2710 NE 14th Ave., Portland)

Monday, February 5, 2007

7:15 AM Interfaith Advocacy Day at the Oregon State Capitol To carpool, meet at First Church, return at 5:00 PM Registration materials are available in the Commons and in the church office.

February 26, 2007

9:00 AM Interfaith Energy and Climate Stewardship Advocacy Day concludes at 4:00 PM. More details to come.

March 8, 2007

Living Faithfully in the Public Space-United Methodist Oregon Legislative Event (sponsored by United Methodist Women)

If you'd like more information about opportunities for advocacy contact Rev. Lowell Greathouse at 503/228-3195 x 224, lgreathouse@fumcpdx.org or Annie Heart at 503/228-3195 x 215 aheart@fumcpdx.org

adults at first

sunday classes

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SEEKERS

Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:15 AM in Room 134
During January, the class will study selected readings by
C. S. Lewis, Thomas Merton, John Wesley and Francis of Assisi.
Lively discussions are led by a different class member each week.
Materials are available in the classroom.

CHANGING CHRISTIANITY

Sunday mornings 9:00 -10:15 AM. Changing Christianity will attend
the Lane McGaughey class from January 14 to 28.

DR. LANE MCGAUGHEY CLASS TO BEGIN

A short-term adult class will be offered Sundays, January 14, 21,
28, 2007. Join Dr. Lane McGaughey from Willamette University
for a special three-part series: *The Legends of the Apostles*. These
classes will be offered Sundays from 9:15 to 10:15 AM in the
Fireside Room.

- January 14 Thomas Tradition (Gospel of Thomas, Acts of
Thomas, Infancy Gospel of Thomas, and Thomas the
Athlete)
- January 21 Sethian Gnosis in Egypt: The Secret Book of John,
the Gospel of Mary of Magdala,
and the Gospel of Judas
- January 28 The Apostolic Faith: The Acts of Andrew, the Acts of
Paul, and the Acts of the Apostles

training event

metropolitan district

METRO DISTRICT TRAINING EVENT

The Metro District of the Oregon-Idaho Conference will offer a
Training Event on Saturday, January 27, 2007 from 8:30 AM to
3:00 PM at Tigard UMC, 9845 SW Walnut, Tigard, OR. The event
will begin with a worship service led by Bishop Hoshibata. A
variety of workshops will be available:

- Drama as a Tool for Worship
- Cultural Differences
- Help for Caregivers
- Rotation Method for Sunday School
- Communicating In a Crisis
- Small Groups: Creating Connections
- Social Holiness and Strange Partners
- NW Context for Ministry
- The SPRC
- Healing a Broken Heart
- Ministries of God's Creation

A soup and sandwich buffet will be served at noon. The registration
deadline is January 18, 2007. If you would like to register or
receive a registration brochure for this event, contact Rev. Lowell
Greathouse at 503/228-3195 ext 224 or lgreathouse@fumcpdx.org.
Registration material are available in the church office.

umw

united methodist women

WOMEN OF FIRST CHURCH: UMW

All women are invited to the following meetings. Note
that the Unit Gathering is the first Wednesday of each
month. President: Pat Brockman, 503.292.6270.

READING GROUP

The Reading Group will meet on Thursday, January 11,
10:00 AM in the Library. Program: Discussion of *Angels
and Demons* by Dan Brown led by Sue Fisher Chair: Sue
Fisher, 503/203-1445

FAITH CIRCLE

The Faith Circle will meet on Wednesday, January 17,
10:00 AM in the Parlor. Program: Bible Study on Peace
led by Dr. Ross Miller. Chair: Eleanor Stubbs, 503/659-
9024

RUTH CIRCLE

The Ruth Circle will meet on Wednesday, January 17,
12:00 PM in Room 204. Program: Methodist Tales of
Yore as told by Dr. Ray Balcomb. Visitors are always
welcome. Bring a sandwich. Dessert & beverage
provided. Chair: Betty-Lou Hare, 503/292-1773

SPECIAL CELEBRATION

A Celebration of the 50th anniversary of full ordination
of women will be served at a very special worship
service on Sunday, January 28, 2007. Women of First
Church will lead this colorful and creative service,
which will honor women who were pioneers in this
important part of our history. It will include a time to
celebrate the ongoing contributions of women in
ministry. Looking at our "Courageous Past and Bold
Future," Colleen Foster, Diaconal Minister (Retired) at
First UMC will bring a message of affirmation and
inspiration. A time for Special Mission Recognition of
women in leadership roles is also planned. Special
music will be by juBELLation, and our Veritas and
Sanctuary Choirs.

library

used book sale

FIRST CHURCH LIBRARY NEEDS YOU!

We would like to invite you to bring your used books in to
the library for the Library Book Sale. We cannot accept
big donations of "leftovers" from other large sales, and
we've found that there's no market for textbooks or
Reader's Digest Condensed Books. If you have any
questions, please check with the Sunday Librarian or call
Bob Wilson at 503 282-8761. Proceeds from the sale go
toward acquiring new books for the library. Feel free to use
the "Suggested Titles" sheets in the library and Commons
to let us know of books you'd like to see in our collection.



new irs guidelines by Christine Bostick, business manager

The IRS has released some new guidelines for donations to charities that we would like you to be aware of. To deduct any charitable donation of money, a taxpayer must have a bank record, such as a bank statement or credit card billing or a written receipt from the charity showing the name of the organization, the date and amount of the donation.

If you donate cash, please be sure your name is included on the envelope so we can properly record the donation. We do send out statements showing the amount of money we receive.

You can make your donations via electronic funds transfer from your checking or savings account. You also have the option of charging your donation on your Visa or Mastercard. If you would like more information on these easy payment methods, please call the office.

Prior law allowed taxpayers to back up their donations of money with personal bank registers, diaries or notes made around the time of the donation. Those types of records are no longer sufficient.

The new provision applies to contributions made in taxable years beginning after August 17, 2006. For taxpayers that file returns on a calendar-year basis, including most individuals, the new provision applies to contributions made beginning in January of 2007.

health care and prescription drugs

THE TIME IS NOW: FIXING THE BROKEN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM!

A Health Care Forum is scheduled on Sunday, February 4 in the Fireside Room, beginning with lunch at 12:15 PM, kids are welcome to eat lunch with us followed by a staffed "kid care" time. The forum will be over by 2:00 PM.

The forum celebrates the recently passed, Oregon Prescription Plan (OPDP), a very meaningful success. There will also be presentations regarding the next step to be taken, passage of health care legislation during the 6 month Oregon State legislative session that begins on January 7 in Salem. The following health care initiatives being introduced in the legislature include the Archimedes Movement, the Oregon Senate Plan, others not yet known, and the Healthy American's Plan, being introduced in the U.S. Congress by Oregon's Senator Wyden. The presentations will be followed by a question and answer period with the presenters: Cheryl Bittle, Debbie Fisher, Dick Pomeroy and Mary Beth Healy, from Oregonians for Health Security. Lowell Greathouse will be the moderator.

After the question and answer period there will be a discussion on how one can help make Fixing the broken health care system a reality. This will be led by Mary Beth Healy and Dick Pomeroy.

ELIGIBLE FOR THE OREGON PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM?

All Oregonians without drug insurance, regardless of age or income, are now eligible for prescription drug discounts through the state's expanded prescription drug plan. To get an application, call 1-888-411-6737 or go to the website www.odpd.org. There is no cost to individuals, and older Medicare beneficiaries who fall into the Medicare Part D "doughnut hole" are also eligible to join. There is a notebook with additional information available in the church library.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: A CHANCE TO SHOW YOUR WORK

The artwork display in The Commons West, Collins Hall, from February 4th 2007 through February 18th 2007 will be photographs taken by members/attendees. If you have a photograph you wish to share with the congregation, please contact Larry Sawyer by January 10, 2007. Suggested maximum image width is 20 inches. He may be contacted at 503-771-1616 (cell with voice mail) or by e-mail at larry_sawyer@comcast.net. Pictures must be matted and framed.



CHILDREN'S CHOIR

The Global Mission Committee will sponsor a performance by The Watoto CHILDREN'S Choir on Tuesday, January 30, 2007 at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary. Providing the perfect remedy to lift the spirits on a dark, cold night, these talented children will share a message of hope and light. Admission is free; however, a donation is requested to support the choir and its work.

Watoto, in the CHILDREN'S native language of Ugandan, means the children. Since 1994 this choir, accompanied by a small team of adults, has regularly toured the U.S., Canada, Europe and Australia. Watoto's performances are a soulful blend of native African rhythms, contemporary gospel music and ethnic dance. These children, ages 6-16, are among the more than 880,000 children in Uganda who have had the tragic and life-altering experience of losing one or both parents to HIV-AIDS.

Preceding the concert, the families hosting the choir members and their chaperones will hold a potluck supper in Room 202. Any members of the church family wishing to attend are welcome; please bring your own table service and a dish to pass. For further information, call Dee Poujade at 503/243-3337 or e-mail deelaw33@hotmail.com.

learning

a video conference

church library

books in review



TRINITY THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

January 23-24, 2007

9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Trinity Institute Web Conference

God's Unfinished Future:

Why It Matters Now

As a regional partner site, Grace Memorial will host a webcast of the 37th Annual Trinity Institute Theological Conference, which is being held in New York City Monday, in late January 2007. The webcast conference at Grace will include the keynote addresses panel are Jurgen Moltmann, author of *Theology of Hope*, The Rev. Barbara R. Rossing, ThD, author of *The Rapture Exposed*, James Carroll, novelist, and The Rev. Professor Peter J. Gomes, professor and preacher at Harvard University. Cost is \$30 for both days; lunch and refreshments are included. To register call Grace Memorial at 503/287-0418 x 102 or email to rector@grace-memorial.org

Grace Memorial Episcopal Church is located at 1535 NE 17th Ave in Portland. Ample parking is available at NE 16 and Weidler.

youth

a lock-in

On Sunday, January 14, there will be a lock-in for all middle school and high school youth. Come for youth group, stay for breakfast. It begins with dinner at 6:30 PM on Sunday night and runs until 8:30 AM on Monday.

the edge

thoughts
for the journey

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

Check Out the "News" from the Library

Here are some of the new titles in the First Church Library:

Middle Church, by Bob Edgar - National Council of Churches General Secretary Bob Edgar lays out his progressive vision for America's Mainline Denominations. Best American Spiritual Writing 2006, edited by Philip Zaleski - Author and anthologist Philip Zaleski has scoured the spiritual and secular press to come up with these thirty-plus gems of spiritual memoir.

Gospel of Judas, edited by Rudolphe Kasser, et. al. - Read this "newest" ancient gospel and see for yourself what the hubbub is all about.

Whose Bible is It?, by Jaroslav Pelikan - This look at the development of the Jewish and Christian Bible is the last work of the great biblical scholar, Jaroslav Pelikan who passed away in 2006

Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary, by Marcus Borg - This new title by the popular theologian from Portland started as a major revision of his earlier book *Jesus: A New Vision*. But when the dust settled Borg realized that what he had was a brand new book.

The Secret Message of Jesus, by Brian McLaren - This reconsideration of Jesus' vision and message offers an accessible introduction to the thought of "emergent" theologian Brian McLaren.



thanks!

expressions of gratitude

As we approached the center of the Seaside the main reader board had a message "PIPER IS CANCER FREE!" What a blessing to have all that support and love come through for her. I could not begin to thank all of you, who too, have been praying for my daughter through the years of her uphill battle with melanoma cancer. Piper and I thank you for being the loving compassionate church family you are. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye will receive." (Matthew 21:22)

Lovingly in prayer,
Betty-Lou Thompson Hare

I want to express my thanks to everyone for their prayers and all of those who sent cards to me with the loss of my mother. It was of great comfort to me and my family. Thank you again,
Violet Ricci

Rev. Lowell Greathouse, Minister of Discipleship

In my last entry for "The Edge," I included "A Friendship Blessing" from the book *Anam Cara*. Coincidentally, during the last several months, I have been in contact with a number of friends who I haven't connected with in years. These reconnections have had a remarkably affirming, heartwarming feeling to them. It is good to hear from old friends and recall good times from the past. As the new year begins, I'm reminded of a quote by Stephen Levine that says: "If you knew you only had one day left to live, who would you call? What would you say? Why don't you do it?" Today's as good a day as any to make that call, send that email, write that letter or card...and reconnect with someone you care about.

our prayers

prayers and concerns

PRAYERS OF THANKFULNESS ...

Greg & Whitney Henion, we congratulate them on the birth of their daughter, Daphne St. Clair, who was born on January 4, 2007

PRAYERS OF CONCERN ...

Marsha Freed, home recuperating from neck surgery
Janice Hauser, home recuperating from hernia surgery
Allen Dobbins, home recuperating from a stay in the hospital
Piper O'Brien, home recuperating from a broken knee cap
Tom Iverson, now in hospice care
Bob Fulton, suffering from an upper respiratory infection
Bill Hill, in the hospital

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

Al Leonard, Dick Clark, Lettie Schulz, Mike Rogers, Jane Baker, Bryan Smith, and Beverly Allan

FINE ARTS EXHIBIT FOR JANUARY

Fine Arts Program presents EXPRESSIONS. Three artists mixed media paintings. Bruce Ulrich, Sunny Smith and Ari Foote. Exhibit runs through January.

PRAYER CONCERNS ACCESS

We have established a way for members of our church family to access our prayer concerns via the church phone at any time. The extension for that information is 500. It can be accessed anytime to hear an updated list of those for whom we have prayer concerns. If you would like to be on that list, or know of someone who would, you may call my extension 233 and leave me a message. We also have Prayer Concerns posted on the Church Office Window each week. We must have that persons request or permission before we place them on this list, on the phone message, or announcement the names at worship on Sunday morning. As a new addition we would like to have the names of members of our church family who are serving in some branch of the military. We would list them as a permanent roster at the bottom of our weekly posted prayer concerns on the Church Office Window. If you have someone you would like included in this list, please give me, in writing, their name, branch of service and relationship to you.

Tom W. Foster, Minister of Pastoral Care

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 **January 24, 2007**.

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.

A Conversation Between Bev Graver and Art Kayser

*(This conversation took place before the congregation on Sunday morning, January 7.
They are discussing the Comparative Pledge Report which is printed on the reverse side..)*

Bev: For this church to continue to provide the programs and service that you, the congregation members, desire to meet your spiritual needs, we need financial support from every household of this church. Many of you have already made a pledge to the church for 2007. Some haven't. You have called upon this church to help provide your spiritual wishes. Providing them comes with a financial cost.

What has the church done over the last few years to finance the essential needs requested of this congregation?

Art: The Comparative Pledge Report shows that our total pledged amount has been pretty flat for the past few years, around \$800,000. That wouldn't be too bad, except the fixed costs like heating, electricity and insurance increased faster than other costs. And then, of course, there are the regular inflation related increases. Consequently, our program costs, staff costs and dollars to missions and outreach have been reduced in each of the last two years. Salary increases have been minimal and more staff members are working part-time. It is a challenge to continue all of our current programs or add new ones.

Bev: Over the last few years, how has our performance been in terms of numbers of pledging households?

Art: The number of pledging households has been going down since 2003. This year we had 669 households who attended at least monthly. 317 households pledged financial support for 2007. That's about one out of two households pledging.

Bev: We are a growing church and the people of this church have put their faith into programs and services that they desire. For this church to fulfill God's needs to this congregation, a pledge commitment from every household is a necessity.

Art: I am also concerned about our future. One-third of our household's givers are 75 years and older. They pledged 37% of our 2007 financial support. In 2006, 19 of our over 75 givers passed away.

Bev: When it comes to a household's pledge amount, to what extent have the pledges been changing?

Art: Well, that's part of the problem too. The number of households reducing or increasing their pledge from the past is down. The number of households pledging the same amount as last year has gone up a lot. Less than 40% of our households increased their pledge for 2007.

Bev: The front page of the Oregonian had headlines saying wages are up, the economy is up. With Oregon's strong economy and economic progress, we would trust that the same economic strength would be evident in increased pledge amounts from households of this church.

What can we do to strengthen our financial support of this church?

Art: We need to spread the load. We need to increase the number of households who financially support our church and make a pledge to do so. People also need to realize that costs do increase over time, and to increase their pledge amounts. Ask yourself: "What is God calling me to give?"

HERE I AM, LORD?

Comparative Pledge Report 2007 Annual Giving Campaign End of Campaign Report

	2002	2003	2004	2005	As of 12/31/2006 2006
Pledge YTD Total	\$694,590	\$780,047	\$815,755	\$791,395	\$802,028
Number of Pledging Units	366	392	391	337	317
Average Pledge	\$1,898	\$1,990	\$2,086	\$2,348	\$2,530
Household Pledging Information					
Reduction in Pledge from Previous Year	55	63	43	51	37
Increase in Pledge from Previous Year	103	156	173	128	111
No Change in Pledge from Previous Year	140	101	88	90	125
New Pledges or renewing after a lapse	68	72	52	69	44
Number of Households Pledging	366	392	354	337	317

What is the financial impact? Fixed costs continue to increase faster than other costs. Program costs and staff and \$ to missions and outreach have been reduced in the last two years. Salary increases have been minimal.

What about the future? In 2006 we had 689 households who attended at least monthly. 47% of our households pledged financial support for 2007.

33% of our pledging households givers are 75 or older. They provide 37% of our 2007 pledged financial support. In 2006, 19 of our 75 and older givers passed away.

What can we do? Spread the load. Increase the number of households financially supporting our church and making a pledge to do so. Ask what God is calling you to give.

Or further reduce program costs, staff and/or \$ for missions and outreach.