



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

the E edition

March 21, 2007
Volume 11, Issue 06

**THIS
SUNDAY**

March 25, 2007

**WORSHIP
10:30 AM**

PREACHING
Rev. Dr. Arvin Luchs

**A CONVERSATION
WITH OUR
CHILDREN**
Agnes Zach



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.

CONFIRMATION 2007



Pictured Front Row (left to right): Peter Deffebach, Brian Hauenstein, Richard Kroell
Picture Back Row (left to right): Zach Little, Andrew Wright, Christopher Wright
Not Pictured: Joe and Rupa Owen

Each year, young people from our church attend a series of classes and then are paired up with mentors from our congregation as they move toward official membership at First United Methodist Church. On Sunday, March 18, 2007 we confirmed eight young people into our community of faith.

NEW MEMBERS AT FIRST CHURCH: AN UPDATE

Last year, 70 new individuals became a part of First Church. This is the largest one year total since 2000. In addition, so far this year, 24 new members have joined our church family. They come from various backgrounds, experiences, and parts of the country... and bring new insights, skills, and interests to our church.

If you have not yet met these individuals, we'd encourage you to stop by the bulletin board near the church office so you can put names and faces together. It's good to be a part of a growing community and have the opportunity to make new friends.

If you are new to First Church and would like to learn more, our next orientation session will be Sunday, April 22, 2007 from 12:00 to 2:00 PM. Call the church office, if you'd like to be a part of this session.



memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin R. Luchs

When we declared this Lent to be a “Season of Forgiveness” we did not anticipate the flood of public confessions and apologies deluging us recently. A drunken movie idol blurts out vile anti-Semitism, a self-righteous TV evangelist revealed as a hypocrite, a glamorous rock star admits drug abuse, a pompous politician-and would be Presidential candidate--confesses adultery, a comedian slurs his gay co-workers, Army hospital commanders agree they have neglected their duty and ask their soldiers for forgiveness. It seems that each day another celebrity or public official is pleading for understanding and forbearance.

What are we to make of the rampant public penitence? Are these serious attempts to unburden the soul, make amends, and repent? Or, does the new-found humility mask a fear of the consequences of punishment? Could it be they are cynical attempts to stir sympathy as a public relations strategy?

The truth is we can't really say. Confession, repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation are essentially spiritual matters and we can't really judge what is sincere and/or authentic in another's heart. Nor can we make generalizations about such very different people in unique situations.

But there are some things that distinguish meaningful repentance and forgiveness from easy apologies.

The Rev. Peter Storey knows about that. He is a spiritual advisor to the South African hero and leader, Nelson Mandela. Dr. Storey was also a key architect of the “Truth and Reconciliation Commission” that has brought healing to that once apartheid-divided land.

“Forgiveness and reconciliation never come cheap,” he told a clergy gathering in Virginia recently.*. “The deepest lessons in forgiveness come from those who have felt great pain.” Facing and truthfully acknowledging our wounds, both inflicted and received, is an important first step. Accountability must follow. Truthfully acknowledging what has happened-and accepting responsibility-is vital to both the victim and the perpetrator. That sets the stage for discovering different ways to live--embracing more careful and caring lifestyles. Finally, Storey suggests, we must realize that change and healing ultimately come from God. So, he concluded, “Make space to lift up the transforming miracle of forgiveness.” The motto of the Commission he helped created sums it up: “Without truth, no healing, Without forgiveness, no future.”

I do not know what to make of the current flurry of public confession and absolution-and it would be wrong to judge in haste. But it causes me to realize that meaningful forgiveness is tough stuff: spiritually demanding and often painful. But repentance, authentically understood as a way of life that involves reshaping thoughts, emotions and actions, is crucial for healthy living. **

Something to ponder during this “Season of Forgiveness.”

See you in Church!

Arvin

* Storey, Peter, *The Truth Must Be Told: From A Wound Comes Healing*, Virginia United Methodist Advocate, Vol 175, No 3, March 2007, p. 3.

**Jones, Greg, quoted by Caldwell, Neill, *Forgiveness Holds Our Community of Faith Together*, From the Editor's Desk, Virginia United Methodist Advocate, Vol 175, No 3, March 2007, p. 2



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TO FOCUS ON OUR FUTURE

At noon on Sunday, March 25, in the Fireside Room, there will be a third congregational meeting to look at plans for addressing physical plan needs and changes that will make our church building a more welcoming and engaging place for worship. As we think about our 50th Anniversary and beyond in the current church building, many members have been involved in looking to our future. Please join us for a presentation on these plans and how we may accomplish them. A light lunch will be provided and child care will be available.

adults at first

sunday classes



THE FELLOWSHIP OF SEEKERS

Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:15 AM in Room 134
How do you introduce Christians to Islam? Amir Hussain, who loves both religions, speaks of both with the candor that only love can confer in his book, *Oil & Water*. While conveying a core of basic information, this cogent, deeply personal book dodges none of the questions that most sharply divide these two religions. Join us in our study of this insightful book.

CHANGING CHRISTIANITY

Sunday mornings 9:00-10:15 AM in Room 202
Changing Christianity has begun a study of: *The Last Week*, by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan.

March 25:	Chapter 5	Thursday
April 1:	Chapters 6 and 7	Friday and Saturday
April 8:	Easter	No Class
April 15:	Chapter 8	Easter Sunday

THE POLITICS OF JESUS

A final session on Obery Hendricks' book *The Politics of Jesus*, will be held Sunday, March 25, 2007

When: The class will meet on Sunday morning in the Fireside Room from 9:15 to 10:15 AM.

GLOBAL WARMING: CHANGING cO2urse

Global Warming: Changing cO2urse, is a course developed by the Northwest Earth Institute. This four-week course will begin Sunday, April 15 and go through May 6, 2007. It will meet at 9:15 AM in Room 202. Participants may purchase the materials for \$15.00. This course will be a great chance for you to learn more and participate in the dialogue about how to address the issue of global warming and our environment. If you have questions or would like to sign up for this class, contact: Annie Heart at 503/228-3195 ext. 215 or aheart@fumcpdx.org.

OUR ENDANGERED VALUES BY JIMMY CARTER: APRIL 15, 22 AND 29

Join us for this three-part series, using Jimmy Carter's recent book *Our Endangered Values*. As Carter writes, "Americans cherish the greatness of our homeland, but many do not realize how extensive and profound are the transformations that are now taking place in our nation's basic moral values and political philosophy." Be a part of this lively discussion as we look at the current changes taking place in America

When: The class will meet on Sunday mornings in the Fireside Room from 9:15 to 10:15 AM.

umw

united methodist women

WOMEN OF FIRST CHURCH: UMW

All women are invited to the following meetings.
President: Pat Brockman, 503.292.6270.

UMW UNIT GATHERING

In keeping with First Church's custom of not scheduling meetings during Holy Week, the UMW Unit Meeting meeting has been changed to April 11, 2007. It is an appropriate way to recognize the sacredness of this week between Palm Sunday and Easter.

UMW BOARD MEETING

The UMW Board will meet Wednesday, March 28, at 10:00 AM in Room 110. Chair: Pat Brockman, 503/292-6270

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

The Circle of Friends will meet Wednesday, March 28, at 11:30 AM in Room 204. The program will feature news from the UMW legislative event. What is happening in Salem? How can we be involved? Bring a sandwich, dessert and beverages will be provided. New members and visitors always welcome. Coordinator, Joanne Weiss, 503/292-5947.

METRO DISTRICT SPIRITUAL RETREAT

The Metro District Spiritual Retreat is a one-day retreat that can be taken Friday, April 20, or Saturday, April, 21 at the Alton L. Collins Retreat Center, 32867 SE Hwy 211, Eagle Creek, OR. The retreat will be led by the Rev. Jane Shaffer, pastor at Newberg UMC. Cost: \$17. Make checks payable to UMW and give to Peg Cook before April 10, 2007.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Thursday, April 12
Spring Forum, Church Women United,
at First UMC, Portland

Friday, May 4.
Annual Spring Luncheon and Quilt Show
at First UMC, Portland

Saturday, May 19.
MFSA speaker, Sandra Olewine, author of UMW 2007
study book, at First UMC, Portland

July 12-15
School of Christian Mission,
George Fox University, Newberg, OR

September 22
Metro District Annual UMW Conference

October 25-27
UMW Oregon-Idaho Conference meeting
at First UMC, Portland

this and that

please make note

BORN IN THE 60S, 70S, AND 80S

The Born in the 60s, 70s and 80s Group will be getting together in April. Our March dinner conflicted with the Lenten Supper and Service so we did not meet. Please mark your calendars now for our April 11, 2007 dinner. We hope to see you then. For more info please contact Allison Anderson via email at ama1031@hotmail.com or by phone at 503/670-7649.

GENEROSITY UPDATE

The Global Mission committee would like to thank everyone who participated in Alternative Christmas, as well as those who supported the Watoto Children's Choir. The numbers are in now. Alternative Christmas raised \$6,837, all of which went directly to the designated beneficiaries with no overhead! The Watoto Concert in January generated donations of \$3,175, all of which will help support the Watoto Children's Village in Uganda.

GORDON AND TECA GREATHOUSE TO SPEAK AT FIRST CHURCH

Gordon and Teca Greathouse, will share their experiences from 25+ years as missionaries in Brazil on Wednesday, April 18, in Room 202 at 5:30 PM. The presentation will conclude with a Brazilian meal provided by the Global Mission Committee. Gordon, a native Oregonian and member of the Oregon-Idaho conference, and Teca, a native of Brazil are presently in the United States visiting supporting churches and sharing information about their work. This event is open to anyone who is interested in learning more about what the Methodist Church is doing in Brazil. Donations will be accepted. For further information, contact Dee Poujade at deelaw33@hotmail.com or Lowell Greathouse at lgreathouse@fumcpdx.org.

A TOUR OF MT. ANGEL BENEDICTINE ABBEY

On Thursday, April 19, 2007 from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM, take this day-long excursion to the Mt. Angel Abbey, which was begun in 1882 and is located on the top of a mountain east of the town of Mt. Angel. This event will include: a walking tour of the abbey, noon prayer at the Abbey Chapel, and the opportunity to see the Mount Angel Abbey Library, which is housed in a world-renowned building designed by Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto. Following our time at the abbey, we will have lunch in Silverton. The cost is \$50 and includes lunch. The deadline for registration is April 1, 2007. To register contact Shirley Blalock at 503/228-3195 ext 225 or e-mail her at sblalock@fumcpdx.org.

HOLY WEEK GREETERS NEEDED

Greeters are needed for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and both services on Easter Sunday. Sign-up sheets are posted on the windows by the church office. Please help make our church welcoming to the many members and visitors we will have by volunteering a half-hour of your time as a greeter for one or more of these services. Thank you. Pat Rieke, Greeting Coordinator.

LENTEN SUPPER SERIES



At 5:30 pm each Wednesday night during the Lenten Series, come to Collins Hall for a Soup Supper Buffet. Michael Copeland will prepare a delicious meal. A \$5.00 donation is suggested.

a season of **FORGIVENESS**

March 28

Forgiveness and Liberation

Presenter: Tom H. Hastings

Tom is core faculty in the MA/MS program at PSU and, while not a Catholic, is a founding member of Whitefeather Catholic Worker Peace Community in North Portland.



SUNDAY, APRIL 1

Palm Sunday Service at 10:30 AM

THURSDAY, APRIL 5

Maundy Thursday Service at 7:00 PM

FRIDAY, APRIL 6

Good Friday Service at 7:00 PM (In the Chapel)

SUNDAY, APRIL 8

Easter Services at 9:00 & 11:00 AM

communicating

prayer concerns

by Tom Foster, Minister of Pastoral Care

We have several ways of communicating our requests for prayers at First UMC. The first is calling the Prayer Chain of the United Methodist Women. The information on the Prayer Chain is not shared in any other way unless specifically requested. The second, prayer concerns are announced at worship on Sunday morning. The third, is our Prayer Concerns Voice Message. It is extension 500 when calling the church office. The fourth, is the Circuit Rider, which is sent out every other week. In addition, private prayer concerns can also be given to one of the pastors with the request that it be kept private, i.e. only the pastors are told. It is our intention to only share a concern for prayers with the consent of the person for whom the prayer is requested. We know that there are times when a request may come from a family member or friend and consent from the recipient is not feasible, but we prefer to avoid this situation.

electives

for enrichment

Bill Moyers
on FAITH & REASON

When religion and secularism meet the result is often a labyrinth of misunderstanding. In a five-session class, based on Bill Moyers' PBS series: *Faith and Reason*, we will explore the jagged, mysterious region between rationality and belief guided by the provocative insights of eight significant novelists and writers. Their views range from Islam through traditional Christianity all the way to agnosticism. Dr. Luchs will facilitate discussion of some of the most challenging issues for believers in this 'post-modern' world. The class will meet in the Fireside Room on Monday mornings from 10:00 AM to noon from April 23 through May 21, 2007.

Be
faithful
in small
things
because
it is in
them
that
your
strength
lies.

Mother Teresa

thank you

from the Iverson family

Dear Friends,

We want you to know how grateful we are to our caring church family who has supported us these past months and yes, even years. Your love, prayers and concern have always uplifted the whole family, especially Tom. What a blessing that he never felt forgotten during his long ordeal. Your letters, visits and phone calls were very meaningful to him and we want to thank you sincerely for your part in this process.

His service was a memorable occasion for all of us and we sincerely thank all those who participated, both music and the spoken word. Thank you too, for the many cards, notes and memorials that have been sent to us.

Sincerely,

Lyle, Beth Mikkel and Family

I also wanted to thank you. Your support with me has been the way I have gotten through all these years. I also need to thank all the anonymous people that have given gifts and contributed to my college fund.

I love you all,

Leif Iverson

FIRST SUNDAY FISH SUNDAY

Pictured to the right are members of First Church's Hunger Task Force and the bounty of food collected for FISH to distribute to hungry families in the Portland metro area. The next First Sunday is FISH Sunday is April 1, 2007.



the edge

thoughts
for the journey

Rev. Lowell Greathouse, Minister of Discipleship

The period of Lent has a serious, solemn feel about it. But this season also gives way to the celebration of Easter, and it is transformed by spring-with skies that alternately open to sun and rain...and a landscape that is transformed by flowers, various colors and the promise of new life. There is a scent of newness and possibility afoot during this time of the year. In this spirit, it is good for the spiritual seeker to be mindful of Emily Dickinson's thoughtful words: "The soul should always stand ajar, ready to welcome the ecstatic experience."

our prayers

prayers and concerns

PRAYERS OF CELEBRATION ...

Ben & Jennie Keller, on the birth of a son, Sawyer Thomas, born March 15, 2007. He is the grandson of Jonas and Nancy Nordwall;

Dr. Hal and Carol Howard, participating in a volunteer dental health mission in Cochabamba, Bolivia, March 18-28, 2007.

PRAYERS OF SYMPATHY ...

Rev. Al Rieke, whose brother, Jack, died in Nebraska;
Richard Allan, whose mother, Beverly died in Washington;
Roger Fricke and family, Richard's mother, Ruth, died in Washington.

PRAYERS OF CONCERN ...

Marliss Shelton, who is home recovering from surgery;
Bryan Smith, continues to struggle with pancreatic cancer;
Zell, a friend of Dee Poujade, who has pancreatic cancer.

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

Bill Hill, Robert and Virginia Anderson, Dick Clark, and Lettie Schulz

THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY ABROAD

Daniel Bomberger, in the USAF in Kyrgyzstan;

Jared Bomberger, in the USAF in Turkey;

They are sons of Judy Bomberger and grandsons of Betty Hager;

Michael Panck, in the US Army in Baghdad;

He is the son of Ken & Ruthann Panck;

Keith Bullock, in the US Army in Baghdad;

He is the son-in-law of Pamela Moyers;

John Lemmon, in the US Army in Baghdad;

He is the grandson of Betty Lemmon;

Steven Johnson, in the US Army in Afghanistan;

He is the son of Doug Johnson;

Karl Alger, in the US Army in Iraq;

They are nephews of Naomi Charbonneau; and grandsons of the late Edie Alger;

Venessa Walton, working for US Army in Iraq;

She is the daughter of Richard & Elizabeth Walton;

Craig Kubala, with US Army Special Forces in Afghanistan;

Craig is the husband of Venessa.

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 4, 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.