



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

March 5, 2008
Volume 12, Issue 05

COMING EVENTS

March 9
**Confirmation
Sunday**
10:30 AM

March 20
**Maundy
Thursday**
7:00 PM

March 21
Good Friday
7:00 PM

March 23
Easter Sunday
9:00 & 11:00 AM

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.

LIVING A VIBRANT FAITH

BELIEVING THINKING ACTING



HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY

March 17

Join us for
worship at
10:30 AM as
we celebrate
Christ's entry
into Jerusalem.
There will be
a Children's
Processional
and special
music by the
Chancel
Choir. Rev. Dr.
Arvin Luchs
will continue
his series of
messages
entitled:
*Places Along
the Way.*

MAUNDY THURSDAY

March 20

There will be
a Maundy
Thursday
Service at
7:00 PM in
the chapel.
Maundy
Thursday (or
Holy Thursday)
was the day in
which Christ
broke bread
in the upper
room

GOOD FRIDAY

March 21

At noon
there will be
a community
Good Friday
Service at
the First
Christian
Church in
downtown
Portland.

At 7:00 PM,
First Church
will have a
Good Friday
service in the
chapel.

EASTER SUNDAY

March 23

On Easter Sunday
there will be
two glorious
services of
celebration:
9:00 & 11 AM.
Rejoice to the
strains of *Christ
the Lord Is Risen
Today!*

Following each
worship service
there will be an
Easter Egg
Hunt in the Fire-
side Room for
children in the
first grade and
below.



memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin R. Luchs

“Wake up and smell the coffee!”—the late Ann Lander’s signature riposte—pretty much summed up my reaction when last week’s headlines trumpeted the results of a new study of American’s religious practice. The “U.S. Religious Landscape Survey,” conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, is a first comprehensive look at our religious attitudes in many years. (you can read it for yourself at <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>)

It concluded that a growing proportion of Americans view their faith choices as just that--personal choices made primarily to enhance personal lives. More than 40% of adults have changed their faith since childhood, many opting for no faith at all.

That’s not surprising—many of us at First Church came from other denominations, even non-Christian faith traditions. In fact, I found very little that was new or startling. The findings mirror the 4-years-old study of faith in our area: *Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Northwest: The None Zone* (Killen, Patricia O’Connell and Mark Silk, AltaMira Press.) At the time *The None Zone* was published pundits from other regions scoffed, dismissing the west as eccentric. As it turns out, they just weren’t in touch with what was happened all around them.

Not surprisingly commentators have already issued their quick dismissals—or pious analysis--of the new findings. Many have expressed alarm that people aren’t loyal to denominations. Fact is, no one actually joins a denomination—we join a local church! It’s in a particular congregation, not a collective denomination that we live and express our faith.

That’s the point preacher and scholar Lovett Weems made. Reporter Marta Aldrich reported his sage observations:

According to Weems, the pathway for choosing a church home has changed significantly...

“Traditions and denominations don’t tend to be the beginning point for people today when they select a church,” he said. “The pattern today is belonging before believing. People have to feel like they belong first. It’s the sense of belonging that opens the door for people to move closer to beliefs. It used to be the opposite. A person believed and then they found a community of believers where they could belong and grow.”

Belonging, he said, involves questions such as: Can I experience community here? Does this church help me connect with God? How does it meet my needs and give me an opportunity to serve others?

“A lot of people say denominations and traditions don’t matter any more, but I don’t think that’s the case. I think it’s just no longer the deciding point and often not the beginning point when people select a church,” he said.

(Aldrich Marta W., “Pew study raises questions for Methodist leaders,” United Methodist News Service, Feb. 29, 2008.)

His comments are ones that larger congregations—like First Church—need to take very seriously. He’s saying many people today are not selecting a big church because they want to find a crowd where they can worship as anonymous spectators or because of the label on the sign. They want to be welcomed by gracious and friendly people—but, more than that, they also want to ‘connect’ and feel a sense of belonging. They are seeking experiences, opportunities to be involved, and relationships where they feel honored and appreciated and their expressions of faith accepted.

That’s a tall order for a congregation steeped in generations of individualism. But if we are to take the Pew Study seriously (and we should), we’ve got to ask what we can do not just to encourage people to ‘attend’ but how can we engage a new style of believers in a community faith and action.

See you in Church!

Arvin



umw
the women of first church

Pat Brockman, president, 503/292-6270

THE READING GROUP

The Reading Group will meet Wednesday, March 12 (Note change to the second Wednesday), at 10:00 AM in the Church Library. Hazel Wells will lead a discussion on *The White House Ladies: Fascinating Tales and Colorful Curiosities*, by Webb Garrison. Who is your favorite White House lady? New members welcome.

Chair: Sue Fisher, 503/203-1445

RUTH CIRCLE

The Ruth Circle will meet Wednesday, March 12 (Note change to second Wednesday), at noon in Room 204. This will be a time for Show and Tell. Share the story of one of your favorite things as we seek to know and understand each other better. Bring a sandwich. Visitors welcomed Chair: Betty-Lou Hare, 503/292-1773.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 2, 2008

The UMW Unit Meeting

The April UMW Unit Meeting will be April 2, 2008 at 11:00 AM in the Fireside Room. Rev. John Pitney, nationally recognized leader, will speak on food security and environmental justice, integrating his message with original music and images from both the Jewish and Christian traditions. All are welcome. Invite your friends.

April 12, 2008

Western District Mission Event, Woodburn UMC

April 18 or 19, 2008

Metro District Spiritual Retreat from 9:30 - 3:00. It will be a time of silence, song, storytelling, all essential for life at the Collins Retreat Center. Give registration check for \$18 to Peggy Cook. Scholarships are available.

May 2, 2008

Spring Quilt Luncheon in Collins Hall. The theme will be: *The Secret Life of Bees*, by Sue Monk Kidd.

May 16-18, 2008

UMW Pacific Northwest Conference Retreat at Yakima, WA. Rest, Rejuvenate, Rejoice, a spiritual retreat for women of all ages. See Trudy Kayser for registration information.

July 31 – Aug 2, 2008

School of Christian Mission, George Fox University, Newberg. Every year more than 20,000 clergy and laity, men and women, participate in this annual learning experience.

peace vigil
lighting a candle



AN INTER-DENOMINATIONAL PEACE VIGIL

on Friday, March 14 from 7:00 to 8:00 PM at the First Congregational Church, 1126 SW Park Ave, Portland. It will be an evening of reflection, music, unity, and lighting of candles. Everyone is welcome. Families are encouraged to attend. Five years of war ... may each of us bear witness for peace on one night. This event is co-sponsored by Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. For more information call: 503/260-9803.



It is time to order flowers to prepare our sanctuary for Easter. This year there are three choices: lilies, azaleas and hydrangeas for \$15.00 each. Use the form below to indicate which flowers you want to order and if they are in memory or honor of someone. **Return the form to the church office with your check, by March 12, 2008.** Indicate: LILY in the memo portion of the check.

- EASTER LILY (\$15.00)
- AZALEA (\$15.00)
- HYDRANGEA (\$15.00)

EASTER LILY ORDER FORM

Your Name

Name In Memory In Honor

lenten supper

the beloved
community



Join us for First Church's 2008 Lenten Suppers/Programs. This year's theme has been: *The Beloved Community: Reflections of Life Along the Way.*

Supper from 5:30 to 6:30 PM
in Collins Hall
Program from 6:30 to 7:30 PM

March 12
First Church ...

A Part of the Beloved Community
Presenters: Matt Webber and
Brandi Tuck

Come to the final Lenten supper and program. A simple, light supper will be prepared by Michael Copeland, beginning at 5:30 PM. There is a suggested \$5.00 donation for the meal. Then explore what it means to be a part of a "beloved community." Beginning at 6:30 PM, we will sing hymns, have table time conversations, and hear short presentations from members of First Church. Child care will be provided.

this and that

PLEASE TAKE NOTE

TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT SPIRIT BREAK

Our new spiritual offering, "Spirit Break," launched on February 17 on a Valentines theme with about 50 people in attendance. It will continue on the third Sundays of the month, March 16, April 20 and May 18 at 5:00 PM in the chapel. Spirit Break is a short spiritual experience for those who for any reason do not attend Sunday morning services at First Church or elsewhere. On March 16, the theme will be Irish culture, with Irish music, song, poetry and humor led by Jim and Joanne Ruyle and guests. The hope is that through this experience persons can find their spiritual selves in the everyday world. It's kid friendly, and child care is available. Please tell your friends!

STAFF TRANSITIONS

We want to thank Arden Bryce for her service these past eight months as the Director of Children and Family Ministries at First Church. During this time, Arden demonstrated a strong commitment to children and families and worked hard in this role. While she will no longer be in this position, Arden will continue to participate in the life of First Church and share her interests and talents in other ways. Please take the time to thank Arden for the work she has done on our behalf.

With this transition, it means that our SPRC is in the process of accepting applications for the position of Director of Children's and Family Ministries. This is a 20 hour/week position and the deadline for applications is March 16, 2008. The Director will begin in April. Job descriptions are available through the church office or on the church website at www.fumcpdx.org. Resumes may be sent to jobs@fumcpdx.org or for more information contact Rev. Lowell Greathouse at 503/ 228-3195 ext. 224 or lgreathouse@fumcpdx.org.

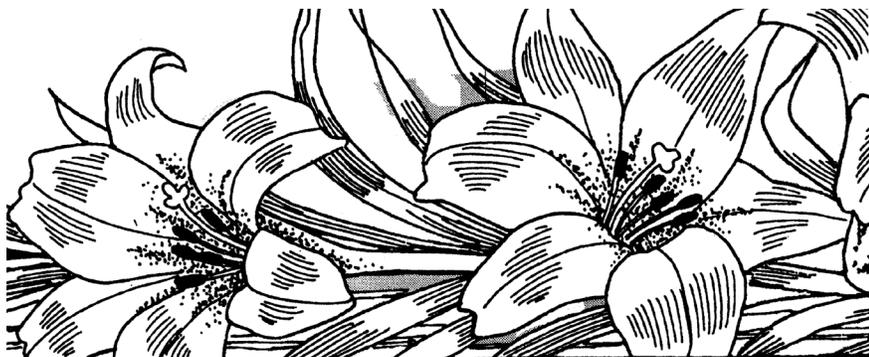
CREATIVE SPIRIT EXHIBITIONS

A new art exhibition is now on display in Collins Hall, *The Art of the Word*, featuring the works of Jo Oekerman. You can see them Sunday morning when you visit the Commons in Collins Hall or by appointment through the church office, 503/228-3195.

ELECTIVES FOR ENRICHMENT

The 2008 Spring Electives for Enrichment will be: *Christians and Empire*. This five-session course will be offered Mondays, April 21 - May 19, 2008. Jesus and Paul confronted the empire of Rome with a new realm ... the reign of God. These sessions explore that Biblical tradition and ask, "How should Christians live in the face of empires today?" It will be facilitated by Rev. Dr. Arvin Luchs, First Church Senior Pastor. Sessions will be held in the Fireside Room from 10:00 AM to noon beginning Monday, April 21, 2008. (Cost: \$15 for series, \$4 per session)

Deadline: April 11, 2008.



Use the order form
on the reverse side to
order your Easter flowers.

Deadline:
March 12, 2007

adults at first sunday morning classes

FELLOWSHIP OF SEEKERS

The Fellowship of Seekers meets each Sunday at 9:15AM in room 134.

The Fellowship of Seekers is an on-going adult class that seeks spiritual growth through study and discussion of writings by current and historic religious thinkers.

We are currently studying: *Creation to Revelation: A Brief Account of the Biblical Story* by James O. Chatham. Books are available in the classroom. Lively discussions are led by a different class member each week.

CHANGING CHRISTIANITY

Join the Changing Christianity class as we study: *Letter to a Christian Nation* by Sam Harris, in room 202 from 9:00-10:15 AM.

FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE SERIES: AMERICAN GENESIS

We are listening to and discussing *American Genesis: A Musical Narrative*, which is the ancient Epic of Creation and Evolution wrapped in fresh lyrics and tunes by Karl Luckert and arranged for organ by Jonas Nordwall. In each session, Karl and Jonas will take us through the music and provide an opportunity for us to discuss its meaning.

Session 5: March 9
New Heaven and new Earth—
History and Salvation Revised

MYTH AND SACRED STORY IN THE MODERN WORLD

March 30 and April 6, 13, and 20, 2008
in the Fireside Room from 9:15 to 10:15 AM.

We live in a world in which fact and physical reality compete with myth, sacred story and the spiritual world for our attention and allegiance. Is the world simply about facts to be learned and the physical reality we experience with our senses? Or...is it about mysteries to be discovered and a "sacred canopy" that frames our experience of life? In this series, Rev. Lowell Greathouse will help us address this and other related questions, using a variety of resources that includes Joseph Campbell, Peter Berger, Abraham Heschel, biblical references, the ancient mystics, and key framers of our modern world. We will explore how we, as people of faith, might come to terms with the various realities that shape our lives.

the edge

thoughts
for the
journey

REV. LOWELL GREATHOUSE, MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP

In her national bestseller, *The Holy Man*, Susan Trott writes about a holy man who lived in a hermitage on a mountain. The book is filled with short chapters, which describe the various encounters that individuals had with the holy man.

As people heard about him, long lines formed to see him. Here is how Trott describes the encounters that people had: "In no time at all they had passed through the entire first floor of the house and were at the large door similar to the one the pilgrim had entered. It was the back door. The monk opened it wide and said, 'Goodbye.' 'But I have come to see the holy man!' said the visitor plaintively. 'You have seen me,' he gently replied. And the next thing the pilgrim knew he would be outside, the door solidly closed behind him ... Most times the holy man would add, 'If you look on everyone you meet as a holy person, you will be happy.'" (*The Holy Man*, pages 4-5)



volunteer opportunities to serve

COFFEE HOSTS

Would you consider being a Coffee Host on Sunday mornings after worship? It is an easy but important task in the life of the congregation. It is an excellent opportunity to meet people and enjoy great fellowship. If you would like to know more about becoming a Coffee Host or would like to sign up, see Erin Riley after worship in the Commons in Collins Hall.

HOLY WEEK GREETERS

Greeters are needed for all services during Holy Week. Sign up sheets are on the windows on the long hall by the office. Please help keep First Methodist known as a welcoming congregation by helping to greet during this special time of the year.

THE OREGON FOOD BANK

On Saturday, March 15, 2008, First Church's Hunger Ministries Team will be sponsoring a morning at the Oregon Food Bank (OFB). For those who have never been to OFB, it's a great opportunity to volunteer for beginners and seasoned pros. The event is also super family friendly so please bring your children. Not only do volunteers get to help the hungry – they also get a tour of the facility and an education about the operation and the issue of hunger in Oregon. Sign up in The Commons or contact Matt Webber.

BUDGET SHORTFALL

As reported earlier in the Circuit Rider, even though the estimates of giving to support our ministries and mission this year increased slightly, it has come up short of what we project is needed to keep current programs and staff vital. Frankly, we remain \$50,000 short. That represents just over 5% on the \$875,000 portion of our budget that must be covered by congregational giving.

Over the last few weeks several committees have struggled with positive solutions and helpful alternatives that will provide the funding needed and keep our programs as strong as possible.

Our education, worship, outreach, and pastoral care are all important aspects of our church's life. Each of them enhances the spiritual lives of our members, nurtures our children and youth, and enables us to reach in Christ's love to those in need. They deserve the financial support needed to be sure our church thrives.

"The 5% Solution" is a catch-phrase used by some management consultants to say that just a small amount of change can yield substantial results. That is so true for us.

If members and friends could increase their anticipated giving this year by just 5% it would support fully the anticipated shortfall in this year's budget!

Would you consider accepting that challenge?

Yes, we know many are already giving what their means will allow. Some are facing uncertain times. We understand and want them to know that we appreciate their commitment.

But if you are able to help provide an additional gift on top of what you have already have estimated, it will be appreciated and will help allay even more difficult decisions by our finance, education, worship, pastoral, and outreach ministries.

"5% Solution Gifts" could be a one-time contribution, or spread out over the remainder of the calendar year. Either way, your special-effort gifts will have a big impact on all our ministries impacting our children, youth, to adults, and our outreach partners.

Thank you for your response to this important concern.

I will provide that extra giving amount of 5% (or other amount)

Name _____

Address _____

Please include my (our) extra pledge/gift of \$_____ to help support the programs of First United Methodist Church this year.

You may count on this support through:

- an amount to be added to my regular pledge.
- a one-time gift that is included with this form
- a gift that will be paid in installments of \$_____
- quarterly
- semi-annually

THE
5%
SOLUTION

Signature _____ Date _____

Please return this commitment to:

Portland's First United Methodist Church, 1838 SW Jefferson, Portland, OR 97201

Publication Deadlines

Articles for The Circuit Rider are due no later than 10:00 AM on the Thursday before publication the following Wednesday. The next Circuit Rider will be published on March 19, 2008.

Bulletin insert information

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

Sunday service participant

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

E-mail:

office@fumcpdx.org

The Circuit Rider Online or by E-Mail

See the latest and past issues of **The Circuit Rider** in color at <http://www.fumcpdx.org/newsletter>

The Circuit Rider can be e-mailed to you. E-mail the church office at office@fumcpdx.org to request it by e-mail.

our prayers prayers and concerns

PRAYERS OF CELEBRATION FOR ...

The Eberwein family, on their return home to Portland.

Douglas will now have follow up treatment at OHSU for his bone-marrow transplant done in Seattle, WA ...

Robin White, who will celebrate her 65th birthday on Easter Sunday ...

PRAYERS OF SYMPATHY FOR ...

Ted Barber & family, Ted's mother, Yvonne Barber, died February 20, 2008, in San Jose, CA ...

Peggy Rockwood, Peggy's step-mother, Jane Rockwood, died in Washington state on February 27, 2008.

PRAYERS OF CONCERN FOR ...

Marilyn Ringquist, she fell and broke her left wrist and knee-cap in Hawaii on February 26, 2008 ...

Grace Erfle, the mother of Nancy Fortner, was hospitalized for on-going respiratory problems ...

Eloise Matlack, who has been moved to an adult care facility ...

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

Robert Anderson
Patrick O'Brien
Dick Clark
Diane Hall
Jim Jozwiak
Judy Rogers
Sadame Tsunenaga
Robin White,
her son, Sean
Churgin, and
her mother,
Joy Bannister

PRAYERS FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY ABROAD ...

Jared Bomberger
Daniel Bomberger
Michael Panck
Vanessa Walton
Craig Kubala
Steven Johnson

