



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

April 16, 2008
Volume 12, Issue 08

LOOKING AHEAD

APRIL 20
Earth Day Sunday

Mary L. Collins
Pipe Organ
Rededication
and Concert

APRIL 27
Dr. Ignacio
Castuera
Preaching

MAY 18
Peace With
Justice Sunday

JUNE 1
Volunteer
Recognition
Sunday

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

FIRST CHURCH LOOKS AROUND THE WORLD



SOUTH AFRICA

Attend the
Travel Forum
on Sunday,
April 20

LIBERIA

Attend the
Forum
on Sunday,
April 27,
See page 4

LOUISIANA

Hear First Church
members share
after church on
Sunday, June 8,
See page 4

PORTLAND

Sign up to
participate in
2008 Volunteer Week.
Contact:
Matt Webber at
mwebber@
fumcpdx.org

GUATEMALA

Attend the potluck
on Friday May 2,
See page 4

PALESTINE

Hear First Church
members share
after church on
Sunday, May 18,
See page 4

NEWS FLASH

NEW DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY MINISTRIES NAMED!

Megan Hymphreys-Loving, former Children's Ministry Director at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Boston, Massachusetts has been selected to be First UMC's new Director of Children and Family Ministries. Her first Sunday will be May 4, 2008. More details will be in the next *Circuit Rider*.



Judging from dearth of the usual bombastic rhetoric, next week's General Conference may be United Methodism's first "stealth" Conference—flying 'under the radar' of ordinary eyes in pews and pulpits across the connection. Don't be lulled into indifference. Each time it gathers is significant. This time the stakes are particularly high!



The quadrennial meeting of nearly 1000 voting representatives from around the world will convene for a 10 day marathon starting April 23 in the Fort Worth Convention Center. Two delegates will be from our Conference.

They face a grueling nearly round-the-clock barrage of legislative committee meetings, speeches and reports, plenary sessions and spectacular, energetic worship. They'll confront a mountain of nearly 1500 action petitions and reports from members around the world and from our churches' "general" agencies. By midnight on May 2nd the exhausted conference will have virtually re-written our *Discipline* (the rules of order for our church); spoken out on a staggering array of social issues; and re-defined what it means to be a United Methodist. General Conference, you see, is the only group that is empowered to speak for all of us.

Organizers have issued assurances that procedures are in place to encourage this year's Conference to be a collegial conversation about our future--instead of devolving into the combative confrontation of past years. That will be a healthy change--but a daunting task. The Texas meeting will consider fundamental issues about the nature and structure of our organization that portend dramatic changes and great controversy.

There are issues concerning the global nature of our ministry. Membership in the United States is declining—while growth overseas is dramatic. An unprecedented number of voting delegates from areas outside the U. S. will cause the Conference to embrace greater diversity in attitudes and culture than ever. Four years from now—when the million-member conference in Cote d'Ivoire is fully enfranchised—that trend will accelerate.

The Conference is expected to confront proposals to re-organize so that church in the United States would become a "Regional Conference" and other "Regional Conferences" would replace the Central Conferences now operating in other countries. Questions abound. How would resources—now primarily flowing from the United States—be deployed? Would there be one set of "Social Principles" or several? How will the mega-denomination be funded?

Other matters facing the General meeting include: reducing the number of Bishops across the Jurisdictions; authorizing the development of a new hymnal; proposals for enhancing our ministries among racial-ethnic communities; and perennial questions of sexuality and inclusion.

The discussions and decisions of General Conference will make a difference for each of us. It should happen unnoticed. Fortunately, in this web-connected world—there are unprecedented ways to follow all the action, message our delegates—even view 'real-time' video of key moments.

Here's some ways you can keep up:

The denomination's web-portal, www.umc.org, has a link to regularly-refreshed news releases, photos, even streaming video. You can, if you'd like, sign up for e mail delivery of each news story—without charge!

Our Conference delegates will be posting a comprehensive blog—including pictures, opinions, and Conference "color." It is to be posted at www.umoi.org. There is to be a way to share your ideas and concerns with the delegation through that site.

If you want to track the progress of voting on particular issues or petitions you are welcome to access: www.umc.org

Confused? Have particular questions? InfoServ will be available to answer. Go to www.umc.org and click on "Ask InfoServ, or, give them a call 1-800-251-8140 during business hours (CDT).

At the very least, it should be an interesting ten days—don't miss it!

See you in Church!

Arvin

adults at first sunday morning classes

FELLOWSHIP OF SEEKERS

The Fellowship of Seekers is an ongoing adult class that seeks spiritual growth through study and discussion of writings by current and historic religious thinkers. However, we will not meet as a group from through April 20, 2008. We will be combining with the *Myth and Sacred Story in the Modern World* class. Please join us after that.

CHANGING CHRISTIANITY

Changing Christianity Class meets from 9:00-10:15 AM. This class will not meet as a group through April 27, 2008. We will be combining with the *Myth and Sacred Story in the Modern World* class. Beginning May 4, 2008 the Changing Christianity class will be look at questions like: What is a faith community and who is my neighbor?

MYTH AND SACRED STORY IN THE MODERN WORLD

April 20 and 27, 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.

FOOD AND FAITH

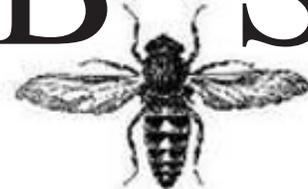
May 4, 11, 18, and 25, and June 1, 2008 in the Fireside Room from 9:15 to 10:15 AM.

What is the relationship between food and our faith? This class will use the book *Food and Faith* by Michael Schut. Join us as we seek to make connections between faith and food choices, celebrate the provision of "our daily bread," build a sense of community and support within the group, encourage more healthful eating habits, and explore the connections between industrial agriculture and ecological degradation. Leader: Laura Engle, an MDiv student at Marylhurst

umw the women of first church

UMW
Quilt
LUNCHEON
MAY 2, 2008

THE SECRET
LIFE OF
Bees



Pat Brockman, president, 503/292-6270

SPRING QUILT LUNCHEON

The Spring Quilt Luncheon will be Friday, May 2, 2008 in Collins Hall. The Cover to Cover quilters will highlight *The Secret Life of Bees*, by Sue Monk Kidd. Quilt viewing begins at 11:30 AM and lunch will be served at noon. The last chance to buy tickets in the Commons will be after the service on April 20th. As you enjoy a delicious lunch and view exquisite quilts, you also can know that most of your donation will be supporting mission work with women, children, and youth. Make checks (\$20 per ticket) payable to United Methodist Women. As in the past, Trudy Kayser will be coordinating this special yearly event..

THE UMW BOARD

The UMW Board will meet Wednesday, April 30 at 9:30AM in Room 110. Chair: Pat Brockman

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

The Circle of Friends will have their annual baby shower for FISH on Wednesday, April 30, at 11:30 AM in Room 204. Bring the gift unwrapped. Don't forget a sack lunch. Chair: Hazelee Stevenson, 503/283-0041.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

Church Women United will celebrate May Friendship Day on Friday, May 2, 2008. The theme will be: *God's Wisdom Inspires Hospitality*. The event will be held at Bethel A.M.E. Church, 5828 NE 8th Avenue, Portland. Registration at 9:30 AM. Contact: Betty-Lou Hare.

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)

*the
edge*

thoughts
for the
journey

**REV. LOWELL
GREATHOUSE,
MINISTER OF
DISCIPLESHIP**

In recent weeks, I've been teaching a class on Myth, Sacred Story and Modern Life. We've had some wonderful discussions, and I've learned a great deal in the process. Among the many readings I've shared with the class is this gem from Joseph Campbell:

"People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plan will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive... We're so engaged in doing things to achieve purposes of outer value that we forget that the inner value, the rapture that is associated with being alive, is what it's all about."

*(The Power of Myth,
Joseph Campbell)*

global missions
upcoming events

LIBERIA FORUM

On Sunday, April 27, at noon in Room 202, come hear about the church's work in Liberia. Our own Roland Clarke, a clergy member of Liberia Annual Conference, will share his experiences in mission to his home country. Your response to the eyeglasses project last fall was outstanding. The eyeglasses were personally delivered by Roland to Liberia. At least 200 people can now see and read clearly, thanks to the support of First UMC! Other projects which Roland will describe include installation of pumps for accessing water, and nutritious food programs for the elderly. Bring a potluck dish to share, and join in this safari of learning. Members of Global Mission Committee are providing bean soup and other fare; table service and beverages will also be available.

MISSIONS POTLUCK

The Board of Directors of Salud y Paz is holding their semi-annual board meeting at First United Methodist Church on May 2 and 3, 2008. Salud y Paz is a long-term United Methodist project designed to meet the medical and dental needs of the Mayan people in Guatemalan Highlands who have limited or no access to health care. It is funded by contributions from people in the United States. The project is under the Iglesia Metodista Primitiva de Guatemala.

On Friday, May 2nd at 6:00 PM there will be a potluck, after which members of the board will give a power point presentation of medical/dental VIM teams who recently went to Salud y Paz clinics. In addition, Margie Groshong RN, a United Methodist from Eugene, OR will present information about Las Amigas, a program providing health education to Mayan women in the Guatemalan Highlands. There will time a question and answer time.

THE PLIGHT OF THE LIVING ROCKS IN THE HOLY LAND

First UMC members Betty Cobb and Dee Poujade have recently returned from "Seeking Peace - Pursuing Justice," a two-week study trip to Israel/Palestine/West Bank with the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM). During this trip, they not only visited the holy places, but also talked with the "living rocks" who are still living there.

Betty and Dee will share their impressions of the Holy Land on Sunday, May 18, in Room 202. The event will begin with a potluck lunch noon, followed by the program. This year, 2008, Israel is celebrating 60 years of statehood. At the same time, the Palestinians are commemorating 60 years of the "Nakba" - or disaster. Come and hear what Betty and Dee learned about the impediments to peace in the Middle East. For additional information call Dee Poujade at 503/243-3337 or 503/310-5577.

There will be a Sabeel International Young Adult Conference, July 24 - August 3, 2008 for young adults ages 18 through 35 in Jerusalem. The conference is \$1,000, plus air fare. Parital scholarships may be available. If you are interested, please contact Rev. Lowell Greathouse at: lgreathouse@fumcpdx.org by June 15, 2008.

GIFTS FOR UMCOR FILL FIVE LARGE SUITCASES

A cascade of hand-knitted, hand-crocheted garments, along with lovingly purchased items, filled five very large suitcases (also generously donated). Delivered to the Sager-Brown UMCOR Distribution Depot in Louisiana last week by your VIM team, all gifts found grateful recipients. Packed at Sager-Brown into hygiene kits, health kits, school kits, and layettes, your gifts will make all the difference to disaster survivors in far-flung places. Remarkably, somewhere in the world at least 40 newborns will be snuggled into tiny, colorful sweaters, all knit by one very devoted member of our congregation. As her Lenten giving, Dora Lukert knit one infant sweater per day! Your team will share its never-to-be-forgotten experiences at a very special after-church potluck on June 8, 2008. Mark the date now. In the meantime, know that your response in giving to others in need is twice and thrice blessed. A big "thank you" to each and everyone for your gifts, your prayers, your support of this First Church outreach.

On Sunday, April 20, 2008 Planet Church will address the congregation during the church service and the Commons in Collins will focus on Earth Day, with information on how to take Earth-friendly steps in your life at home, at work and at play. As Earth Day approaches, they're asking each First UMC member to take a step toward a sustainable lifestyle and a healthy planet. For a list of specific steps you can take right now to make a difference for our planet, be sure and visit the Planet Church table in the Commons in Collins Hall.



this and that
please take note

PASSAGE TO INTIMACY: 2 DAY PAIRS COUPLES WORKSHOP

First Church and Samaritan Counseling Centers are excited to invite you to join us in this innovative, experiential couples workshop, May 3 & 10, 2008 at First United Methodist 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. PAIRS is an intensive program to help couples communicate more effectively with less conflict. The workshop will be facilitated by Dominick Robertson, MS and Lori Whittaker, LCSW. The cost is \$119 per couple.

Here's some of what you'll learn:

- Methods to deal with conflict that will strengthen your relationship
- The ability to coach yourself through difficult times and develop a life time of love and intimacy
- A full-set of skills to build intimacy: tools for communication, problem solving, resolving conflict, and healing relationship wounds

Please call 503/281- 3318 x0 to register, or go online at www.sccpdx.org. Lunch is provided. Childcare provided if requested in advance.

OFFICE VOLUNTEER WANTED

First Church is seeking office volunteers with telephone and copy machine skills. Our administrative staff seek to develop a pool of office volunteers that can assist in the office by answering the telephone and routing calls as needed as well as assist in a variety of projects as needed. If you would like to look at a more detailed description of tasks and skills needed contact Christine Bostick or David Jenkins in the church office: 503/228-3195 or email office@fumcpdx.org.

SPIRIT BREAK AFTER THE CONCERT

After Jonas rhapsodizes you with his organ concert on April 20, why not drop in on Spirit Break in the chapel from 5:00 to 5:45 pm and treat yourself to some special springtime fare that will touch your spiritual self? Singer-friend Nancy Pruden will warm your heart with Rodgers and Hart's *Spring Is Here*, joined by John Goff's flute and singer-guitarists Todd Engle, Jen Graver, and Richard Allan in other fun music for kids and adults. Jim and Joanne Ruyle will lead some semi-serious dialogue about spiritual moments. Then enjoy refreshments and conversation and even join a group across the street at the Goose Hollow Tavern for supper. Child care available.

giving
dollars and sense

WE DID IT!

We're pleased to report that we have closed our budget gap. The original \$50,000 problem between pledged income and budget needs has been overcome. Thanks to new gifts and pledges you provided, and with only slight trimming of budget plans, we now have a balanced budget for the year. We will be able to respond to mandated rising costs and keep staff and programs strong. Your generosity has made all the difference!

LET'S MAKE CHANGE: 2008

Every third Sunday of the month is "Let's Make Change" Sunday in which we collect change in a basket at the back of the sanctuary. The Outreach Committees of First Church have selected a variety of 501 (c) (3) organizations related to our outreach initiatives to be recipients of these funds. Below is the schedule of up coming groups and causes. Join us in this effort to support this important work in the world. April 20 will benefit EMO: Oregon Interfaith Power and Light and May 18, Sabeel.

LOOKING AHEAD

Watch for details on the upcoming Good Sense Budget Course in June 2008.

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 April 30, 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 ...

Marty and Holly Martin, on the birth of granddaughter Kacia born on April 8, 2008 to Kellye and Isaac Jameson ...

Whitney (Freed) & Justin Palfreyman, on the birth of a son, Liam, born on April 6, 2008. He is the grandson of Randy & Marsha Freed and the great-grandson of Norman and Dorothy Freed ...

PRAYERS OF CONCERN FOR ...

Dayle Beach, who is recovering at home following a heart attack ...

Annabel Thomas, who at the age of 99, is now in a care center. She is the mother of Nancy Nordwall ...

Chuck Thomas, who is fighting cancer. He is the brother of Nancy Nordwall ...

Karl Alger, who is hospitalized in North Carolina with a leg infection. He is the nephew of Naomi Charboneau ...

Julie Hansen, who is suffering with Wagoneers Disease. She is the niece of Dean Lang.

P•R•A•Y WITHOUT CEASING

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR:

Robert Anderson
Dick Clark
Charlotte Cridland
Douglas Eberwein
Diane Hall
Jim Jozwiak
Nell McManus
Patrick O'Brien
Mary (Schuberg)
Penniecooke,
Marilyn Ringquist
Sadame Tsunenaga

PRAYERS FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY ABROAD:

Jared Bomberger
Daniel Bomberger
Margaret Walton
Craig Kubala
Steven Johnson

notes items of interest

BOOK SALE

On Sunday, May 4, 2008 after church, the Library Committee will offer all the books left over from the Winter Carnival Book Sale by donation...take what you want, and leave what you can. Proceeds will be used to purchase new books for the Library.

Also, there are lots of items in the Supply Room that are ready to find new homes. These are surplus items purchased overtime that were never used. Stop by the table in Collins Hall on May 4 and find a special something from First Church to take home.