



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

June 18, 2008
Volume 12, Issue 12

LOOKING AHEAD

JULY 16-19
United Methodist
Church Western
Jurisdictional
Conference

JULY 27
First Church
All-Church
Picnic

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

June 22, 2008

LATTY SUNDAY



One In Spirit, All In Ministry



*oregon-
idaho
annual
conference*



OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN SALEM

The Oregon-Idaho Conference of the United Methodist Church will hold its Annual Conference beginning June 18, 2008 at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. This conference will involve congregational representatives and pastors, including those from First Church. A featured event this year will be a concert by contemporary music group, Jars of Clay, on Saturday, June 21, 2008 at 7:00 PM at the State Fairgrounds Pavilion in Salem. Admission is free, but you are asked to bring two cans or packages of food for a food drive. The conference will conclude with a worship service at Willamette University on Sunday June 22, 2008 at 10:45 AM.



memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin
R. Luchs

Last Monday week the Governor of Virginia, Tim Kaine, commuted Percy Walton's death sentence. Walton had been convicted of heinous crimes—the murder of three persons--and was scheduled to be executed Tuesday morning. Instead he will serve life in prison. The Governor's action came when it was pointed out that Walton is profoundly mentally ill, suffering from schizophrenia. The crime for which he had been convicted was horrendous—no one can condone murder. However, his death—at the hands of the state—would not atone for his deeds. Nor would it reconcile or restore the grievous suffering and loss he was judged to have caused. Taking Walton's life would have been an act of retribution--not restoration. It would be neither just nor humane. In my opinion, capital punishment never is.

The "Social Principles" of our denomination speaks unambiguously: "...We oppose the death penalty (capital punishment) and urge its elimination from all criminal codes." (Par. 164G, 2004 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, United Methodist Publishing House, p. 121.) It's not new a new position. United Methodists and predecessor denominations have been voicing opposition for decades. Virginia UMs along with our General Board of Church and Society and a nationwide coalition of UM opponents joined the effort to encourage Gov. Kaine to spare Percy Walton.

I write on Father's day remembering how proud I was of my pastor-dad for his leadership in ecumenical efforts to repeal the death penalty in Oregon. I don't think I ever saw him more elated than in 1964 when Oregon voters agreed. My heart is heavy, though, to realize his battle may be fought again!

Since first implementing a death penalty in 1864, Oregonians have twice repealed—and then re-instituted the practice. Since it was restored in 1978 only two men have been put to death. There are currently 34 souls on death row. Governor Kulingoski, according to *The Oregonian*, is personally opposed to the penalty—but is not willing to stop an execution. (Editorial, "Wanted: Dead . . . or Alive?" *The Oregonian*, November 04, 2007 reprinted in *Death Penalty News*, Volume V, No. 3, Fall/Winter 2007-2008, p. 3)

This week at our region's Annual Conference we consider renewing our declaration against capital punishment. There should be little opposition--after all it's our denomination's stand and we've been renewing the same resolution for years. This year, though, there will be something new: an effort to enhance that statement with a call to act in cooperation with a long established advocacy group, "Oregonians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty," to abolish the practice by the end of the decade. Since the penalty is embedded in Oregon's constitution, its repeal will need both legislative and voter agreement—a big challenge!

This is far more than a political matter. There are significant Biblical, ethical, economic, social and, of course, emotional issues involved. Your pastors are already anticipating extensive discussion and study--classes and forums--in which the many dimensions of this practice can be surfaced and considered.

This is not just a matter of the mind—it's also a matter of the heart. It calls us all to be in prayer to discern God's guidance and direction. Ultimately we may not all agree. It would be surprising if we did. People of deep faith and good will may well hear God calling them to different conclusions. But we can certainly listen and learn from each other.

I know even mentioning capital punishment is controversial. I'm aware it takes extraordinary effort from many people to change the State Constitution. It cannot be attempted casually or considered lightly. But no matter of life and death is ever simple or easy.

See you in Church!

Arvin

adults at first sunday morning classes

umw the women of first church

FELLOWSHIP OF SEEKERS

The Fellowship of Seekers meets each Sunday at 9:15AM in room 134. This is an on-going adult class that seeks spiritual growth through study and discussion of writings by current and historic religious thinkers. We are studying *Creation to Revelation: A Brief Account of the Biblical Story* by James O. Chatham. Lively discussions are led by a different class member each week.

CHANGING CHRISTIANITY

Changing Christianity Class meets from 9:00-10:15 AM in Room 202. This class discusses a number of emerging issues in contemporary Christian theology.

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

The Faith and Public Life Series will present a special short-term class called: *Who Is My Neighbor?*, facilitated by John Coppett. The class meets at 9:15 AM in the Fireside Room. This four session class will run through June 29, 2008.

CLASSES COMING THIS SUMMER

Read Aloud Together: Our Town
(July 13, 20 and 27) in the Fireside Room

Faith and Public Life: Peace, Propaganda, & the Promised Land
(August 3, 10, 17 and 24) - Room 160

Read Aloud Together: To Kill a Mockingbird
(August 3, 10 and 17) - Fireside Room

Read Aloud Together: Spoon River Anthology
(August 24) - Fireside Room

Melba Rizzo, president, 503/635-6716

SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN MISSION

Now is the time to register for The School of Christian Mission. This important summer event is held at George Fox University on July 31 – August 3, 2008. It is open to both men and women. Choose from the following studies.

Spiritual Growth Study,

text by Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño

Native American Mission Study,

text by Thom White Wolf Fassett

Israel/Palestine Geographic Study,

text by Rev. Stephen Goldstein

For information and registration forms, call Trudy Kayser.

YOUNG WOMEN'S EVENT

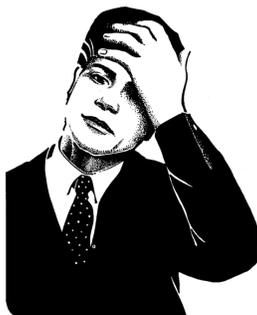
The Sixth Annual UMW Young Women Event will be held August 1-3, 2008 at George Fox University, Newberg. All young women ages 18 and up are welcome. It will be a time of fun and fellowship, storytelling, and Bible study. Tuition scholarships are available. For information, call Melba Rizzo, 503/635-6716.

stewardship good sense budget course

GOOD SENSE BUDGET COURSE

Regardless of your financial situation, a budget "spending plan" is necessary to enable you to control your money rather than have your money control you. The goal of the Good Sense Budget Course is to help you develop a Biblically-based "spending plan." The next course will be offered July 11 from 6:30 to 9:30 PM and July 12, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The cost is \$20.00 per person or couple. This includes the cost of the book. Lunch will be on your own. Child care will be provided. Please contact Peg Cook at 503/452-7298 to register or sign up at coffee hour after church. Registration will close July 1, 2008. This course is taught by Dave Griffiths, a certified trainer.

What if gas
prices reach
five dollars
this year?



HERE IS WHAT SOME FIRST CHURCH PEOPLE HAVE SAID ABOUT THE GOOD SENSE BUDGET COURSE:

"This course has very practical and useful tools for personal financial budgeting. It helped me understand how to make financial decisions in a Christian context."
- **Barb Delaney**

"This course is a must! A practical approach to evaluating your budget that makes good sense!"
- **Bev Graver**

farmers' table

beginning June 22, 2008

Our Farmers' Table will take place every Sunday, except the first Sunday of the month, from June 22 through August 31 from 11:30-1:00 where coffee hour is held. Hmong farmer, Yua Lo, and her family will offer flower bouquets and vegetables from a local family farm.

Our Farmers' Table is sponsored by our Planet Church committee with the help of the Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.

Our Hmong refugee farmer, Yua Lo walked out of Laos as a young child with her family in 1975 when the American CIA left the region. She began school in the US never having even held a pencil much less a book. But she persevered and now she and her husband have two sons, the eldest at OSU with hopes of becoming a family practice physician. Yua loves farming, fulfilling her family's long tradition. She lights up with a smile recalling the sacred experience of planting a seed, tending the soil, and watching a plant grow into a lovely flower.

To learn more about Hmong refugees like Yua, go to www.HmongNet.org.

summer interns

making the community better

2008 FIRST CHURCH INTERNS

We are pleased to announce that this year's First Church interns are Sarah Goff and Michael Fricke. Sarah will be working at First Church on a number of projects this summer to expand our church's involvement in the larger community. In addition, she will work with Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. Michael will be working with Friends of Tryon Creek State Park on several environmentally-related projects. For over 25 years, our congregation has placed interns in a variety of settings to help make our community better. Congratulations to Sarah and Michael on their selection!

REV. LOWELL GREATHOUSE, MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP

As a part of their on-going effort, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture is promoting a nationwide anti-torture banner campaign during the month of June. Congregations from all 50 states are participating in this effort to mobilize the American faith community in opposition to US-sponsored torture.

In February, I had the opportunity to participate, with a number of other religious leaders from Oregon, in a conference call with Senator Gordon Smith's Washington, DC staff. This conversation took place just prior to the Senate vote that would have banned the use of torture by all US government agencies, including the CIA and its subcontractors. While the measure ultimately failed to become law, Sen. Smith did vote to ban the US-sponsored use of torture.

Sometimes matters of faith and public policy come together in a very clear manner. For me, I expressed it in this way in the conference call: "As religious leaders, we are all sensitive to the use of torture by those in power, because often in history, torture has been used against people from nearly every faith tradition. As a Christian, I am especially sensitive to the use of torture, because Jesus, whose teachings I seek to follow, was tortured by the most powerful nation of his day...and his torture ultimately led to his death." I remember hearing a prolonged silence on the phone after I said this. A discussion of torture should always be troubling in this way. If you would like to learn more about this issue, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is sponsoring a one day Interfaith Dialogue on the Ethics of Torture and Human Rights in an Age of Terror on Wednesday, July 23, 2008. More details to come.

grads post-high school



We celebrate with our recent college/and graduate school grads ...

Tait Switzer

... from Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA with a Doctorate in Pharmacy

Trevor Jones

... from Willamette University

Jeffrey Cruse

... from Reed College

Lindsey Greathouse

... from University of Oregon

If you are aware of other recent college graduates, please notify the church office at 503/228-3195.

the edge

thoughts
for the
journey

learn and grow more opportunities

JULY 11: OREGON COLLEGE OF ART AND CRAFT

Join us on this tour of The Oregon College of Art & Craft. The OCAC educates the public on the value of arts and crafts in daily life. We will meet at First Church at 11:00 AM and carpool to the OCAC campus. An on-campus lunch will begin at 11:30 AM in the Hands-On Cafe. Following lunch is a visit to the various galleries, featuring local, regional, and several international artists. The tour will follow and include all the teaching studios on the campus. We will return to First UMC at about 3:00 PM. Cost: Free. **Deadline: July 6, 2008.**

JULY 18: THE WASHINGTON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL TOUR

Be a part of First Church's participation in this annual educational tour of Washington County sponsored by the Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce. The tour lasts from 11:30 AM to 6:00 PM and will be in an air-conditioned bus. Lunch is included. Cost: \$50.

AUGUST 28-30: OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Enjoy two plays in Ashland, Oregon! This adventure includes round trip motor coach to and from Ashland, two nights accommodations at the Best Western Bards Inn in downtown Ashland, admission to Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Clay Cart* (a play by Sudraka that is bursting with music, dance, color, action, and romance), continental breakfasts at the hotel, and an excursion to Harry and David's in Medford. All other meals not included. Cost: \$395 for double/\$555 for single per person. **Deadline: June 23, 2008.** (Make a deposit of \$100 to hold your space)

OCTOBER 7: TRIP TO TWO RIVERS CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

Join us for this journey to the Two Rivers Prison in Umatilla, Oregon to view a performance of Hamlet by the inmates. This will be followed by a dialogue with the inmates and the director of the production, Johnny Stallings. We will depart from First Church at noon, have dinner on the road, meet at the prison from 5:00 to 9:00 PM, and return to First Church by 1:00 AM. Johnny Stallings is Executive Director of Open Hearts, Open Minds, a non-profit organization dedicated to opening hearts and minds and re-imagining how to look at those in prison through the lens of our common humanity. Cost: For transportation to and from the prison, TBD. **Deadline: July 1, 2008**

stephen ministries

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry helps meet the needs of individuals who are---hospitalized, seriously ill or disabled, facing loss of any kind, bereaved, in a life transition, in a job crisis, experiencing a broken relationship or in a spiritual crisis. All inquiries and referrals are strictly confidential. A new class to train Stephen Ministers will begin in September 2008. Learn more about Stephen Ministry by attending an informational meeting on June 22, 2008 at 11:45 AM in room 110.

a dinner friends of music



FRIENDS OF MUSIC: SUMMER STARS GARDEN PARTY

Save the Date! Friends of Music presents a "Summer Stars" Garden Party with dinner, fellowship, and entertainment on August 17, 2008 at 5:00 PM, at the home of Trudy and Art Kayser. Watch for more details!

pride 2008



first church: a reconciling congregation

PRIDE 2008

Over 20 members and friends of First Church marched in the Pride Parade on Sunday, June 15, 2008. For more info on Reconciling ministries contact: Lowell Greathouse at 503/228-3195.

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 July 2, 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 SYMPATHY FOR ...

Ruth Smith, her mother Muriel Gragg, died on Sunday June 15, 2008.

PRAYERS OF CONCERN FOR ...

Nancy Hascall, as she continues her recovery from a cranial aneurism ...

Clare Humphrey, who is having surgery on Friday, June 20, 2008.

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

Douglas Ederwein, Jim & Joan Jozwiak, Nell McManus, Mary Pennicooke, and Lynn (Kinney) Whitehead

CAN YOU HELP US ... ?

We do not have contact information for the following members of First Church:

Ames Gerould
Ethel Johnston
Tia Keever

If you can provide the church office with any information, call 503/228-3195.

thanks caring & sharing

PRAYERS FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY ABROAD:

Jared Bomberger
Daniel Bomberger
Margaret Walton
Craig Kubala

FROM CAL BROCKMAN, SR

I've been truly overwhelmed by the many wonderful cards and e-mails sent after my by-pass surgery last month. I've been blessed to be a part of this great fellowship for 56 years and praying for more with all of you!

Sincerely,
Cal Brockman, Sr.



Please remember to keep your pledges up during the summer months. Here is a "snapshot" of our year-to-date giving:

Received:	\$330,708
Expected:	\$386,674
Shortfall:	\$55,966