



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

August 13, 2008
Volume 12, Issue 17

SUMMER
SERMON SERIES:
It's About Change



August 17
How My
Heart Has
Changed:
Colleen McClain

August 24
How My Heart Has
Changed:
Rene Pino

August 31
How My Heart Has
Changed:
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.

LIVING A VIBRANT FAITH

BELIEVING THINKING ACTING

Children & Family Ministries says ...

**Come Grow
with Us!**



**WELCOME
HOME
SUNDAY**
Sept. 7

**BABY
PARTY**
Sept. 21

**CHILDREN'S
CHURCH**
Oct. 5

**FALL
FROLIC**
Oct. 17-19

ANNOUNCING: NEW COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIRECTOR AT FIRST CHURCH

We are pleased to announce that Adam Ortman will be the new Community Outreach Director at First Church. Many of you may already know Adam through his work as the Communications/Volunteer Coordinator at the Goose Hollow Family Shelter last year. Adam will continue his part-time work with the shelter, but will add the responsibilities of the Community Outreach Director position at First Church beginning August 18, 2008.

Adam brings a rich background with him to this important work. He has worked with the *L'Arche* Community in Tacoma, Washington and been a Program Coordinator at Steinbruck Center for Urban Studies in Washington, DC. He has been a tutor both with refugees and in an after school program, as well as serving as a translator for a medical missions program in Honduras and Nicaragua. Adam speaks Spanish and enjoys writing. In addition, Adam has a B.A. in International Service and Theology from Valparaiso University in Indiana. Please take the time to introduce yourself to Adam and welcome him to our church family in this new role.



memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin
R. Luchs

Okay—I admit it—I’m a sucker for the Olympic Games. I don’t know whether I’m just easy prey for all the media hype, addicted to the vicarious thrill of victory and agony of defeat, or tapping into a deep vein of national pride. Maybe it’s the spectacle. Weren’t you blown-away by the astonishing opening ceremonies from the Bird’s Nest? I’m in awe of those superb, finely tuned athletes—from all around the world, who brim with intensity and desire. Whatever it is, I discover myself mesmerized by sports I wouldn’t otherwise watch: beach volleyball, women’s trap shooting, rhythmic gymnastics. Put Olympic rings around them and I’m fascinated!

At the same time, I admit to ambiguous feelings about it all. I’ve heard that China has committed billions of dollars to host these games—not to mention untold financial and human resources expended by the participating nations for a few fleeting moments of Olympic glory. What a difference that would make if it could be focused on feeding the hungry, providing water, medical care, refugee resettlement, housing. We marvel at the performance of a relative handful of elite athletes but ignore that their opportunities and our entertainment may—directly or indirectly—have come at the expense of multitudes who struggle and suffer for basic human rights, simple justice and equity.

These are deep matters that yield no simple moral or ethical conclusions. I have grappled for years with that cryptic story John told of Jesus’ evening at Mary and Martha’s home. (Matthew and Mark have similar tales.) After dinner Mary brought a flask of costly perfume, anointed Jesus’ feet and wiped them with her hair—the room was filled with fragrance. The disciples (John singles out Judas) were outraged. Could she not have sold the oil and used the money to help the poor? Jesus’ response is curious—particularly for one whose ministry was so marked with compassion—“Let her alone. She’s anticipating and honoring the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you. You don’t always have me.” (John 12:7-8 *The Message*)

I’m not sure I fully grasp what Jesus was saying, but I think he is suggesting that there are some moments that are so full of God’s emerging vision that it is important to acknowledge and celebrate their meaning.

Is this one of those moments? A wise friend and long-time colleague, in a discussion of Beijing, commented, “China’s relationship to the entire world will never be the same after these games. They have stepped into the spotlight. They’re in the eyes of the world and can never again wall themselves off in isolation. It’s a history changing moment.” It has been estimated that a global audience of over 848 *million* people saw the opening ceremonies. Countless more will watch the 15 days of competition and read reports of the results. Along with outstanding and compelling individual performances, we are being exposed to glimpses of China and everyday life in a land mysterious to most of us. How often are so many of the peoples of the world united on one activity? In addition, there is an amazing gathering of world leaders—presidents, kings and prime ministers—at the Olympic venues. What benefits might there be for world understanding and peace when they have the chance for informal contact?

Yet, the horrors of Darfur, the agony of Tibet, the role of China abetting guerilla wars, the exporting of armaments and nuclear technologies, the global impact of unfettered industrial pollution, the repression of human rights, are big issues that cannot be trivialized or ignored while we’re diverted by a few weeks of sports.

These are big questions that pull within us. There are no easy or comforting solutions for those who want to be faithful.

Besides, I have to go! “Synchronized Diving” is starting and America has a chance for a medal!

See you in Church!

Arvin

adults at first sunday morning classes

FELLOWSHIP OF SEEKERS

The Fellowship of Seekers meets each Sunday at 9:15 AM 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. During August we will read brief selections followed by lively discussions led by different class members each week. Material will be available in the classroom.

FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE

Peace, Propaganda, & the Promised Land, this four session class will be offered August 3, 10, 17 & 24 at 9:15 AM in Fireside Room

The birthplace of Christianity has been in the news a lot lately. Is a true peace possible the Holy Land? Is the media accurately reporting events in Israel/Palestine? What is life like for modern-day Christians, the “living stones” descended from the first Christians? Betty Cobb and Dee Poujade, who recently returned from a UMC study trip to Israel/Palestine will facilitate with the aid of films and speakers.

farmers' table experiencing God's bounty

LAST FARMERS TABLE OF THE SUMMER SUNDAY, AUGUST 31

Many thanks to all who have so graciously welcomed our guest refugee Hmong farmers this summer. While purchasing their fresh produce, berries, and flowers, you have helped protect our beautiful planet by supporting local agriculture and made a positive difference in the lives our Hmong friends. Special thanks to our First UMC Planet Church crew who have hosted the farmers each Sunday: Todd Engle, Bob Wilson, Martha Connell, Vern and Betty Groves, and Colleen McClain.

this & that please take note

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry is a program of our congregation that equips lay members to provide distinctly Christian care to those experiencing all kinds of difficulties in life. Please join our next training for new Stephen Ministers, which begins September 9 and ends on February 10, 2009. For a detailed listing of classes and times and more information regarding joining this class, please contact one of our congregation's Stephen Leaders: Bob Anderson at 503/705-0654, Joan Jozwiak at 503/848-6598, Mary Jane Hendrickson at 503/639-7775, or Marge Teradl at 503/244-5714.

PORTLAND CITYFEST AND THE HOMELESS CONNECT

Luis Palau's CityFest, August 22 & 23, 2008 will feature contemporary Christian music and entertainment in Waterfront Park, from 2:00 PM to 10:00 PM. The event is free of charge. There will also be the Homeless Connect in cooperation with this event and the City of Portland's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The Homeless Connect will include services for homeless individuals in the form of: meals, legal help, medical care, counseling, housing and employment assistance, connections with help agencies, and more. For more information about the event or to sign up for the Homeless Connect, visit their website at: www.portlandcityfest.com.

UMW PLANNING GROUP

UMW Planning Group will meet Wednesday, August 27, at 9:30 AM in Room 110.

REV. LOWELL GREATHOUSE, MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP

There are a number of wonderful, challenging books being written these days that call upon Christians to re-examine their faith in new, radical, fundamental ways. One such book is entitled, *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crisis, and a Revolution of Hope* by Brian McLaren.

In this book, McLaren says: “Sadly, in too many quarters we continue to reduce the scope of the gospel to the individual soul and the nuclear family, framing it in a comfortable, personalized format—it’s all about personal devotions, personal holiness, and a personal Savior. This domesticated gospel will neither rock any boats nor step out of them into the stormy waters. We have in many ways responded to the big global crises of our day with an incredible, shrinking gospel. The world has said, ‘No thanks.’” (p. 244)

However, McLaren goes on to say: “... A revolution of hope makes radical demands of us. It requires us to learn new skills and habits and capacities: the skills of a new way of seeing, the habits of a new way of thinking, the capacities of a new way of living.” (p. 283) This challenge makes it clear that, as disciples of Jesus, we have a lot of work ahead of us.

the
edge
thoughts
for the
journey

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 August 27, 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 ...

Harold Walkup, whose mother, *Irene Walkup*, died on July 25, 2008 in Texas ...
Julie Crosse whose mother-in-law, *Chris Calloway*, died on August 7, 2008 in New Mexico ...

PRAYERS OF CONGRATULATIONS FOR ...

Verne & Aki Naito, who were united in marriage on August 9, 2008 ...
Julie Crosse and Nathan Parr, who will be united in marriage on August 16, 2008 ...

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING FOR ...

Lynn (Kinney) Whitehead, who went home from a three month hospital stay ...

PRAYERS OF CONCERN FOR ...

Karin McDonough, who had a recent knee replacement ...
Ryleigh & Bayleigh Thomason, close relatives of *Marsha Freed*, are teenagers with leukemia ...
Mavis Newman, who is struggling with leukemia ...
Sandra Wood, who is making slow progress in her recovery ...
Mildred Davidson, the mother of *Bob Meyers*, who is in failing health in southern California. She is nearly 94 ...

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

Douglas Eberwein, Jim Jozwiak, Nell McManus, and Mary (Schuberg) Pennicooke

our giving

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

Expected: \$527,283

Received: \$474,594

Shortfall: (\$52,688)

PRAYERS FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY ABROAD:

Jared Bomberger
Daniel Bomberger
Margaret Walton
Craig Kubala