



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

April 29, 2009
Volume 13, Issue 09

SUNDAY,
MAY 3,
2009

Worship at 10:30 AM
Rev. Dr. Arvin Luchs,
preaching

Children's Church

Following Worship
Children's Sunday
School Open House

Leadership
Restructuring Forum

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's sunday school
OPEN HOUSE - SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2009



godspell

children's musical
SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2009

Selections from *Godspell* will be presented in word and song by our Soundseekers and Veritas Choirs during our worship service on May 10, 2009. It will be directed by Ronnee Edwards and accompanied by Greg Henion on drums, Rick Walton on guitar and Jonas Nordwall at the piano/organ.

For some people in the congregation, it will be a new experience to hear this music. For others, it will be music that they remember doing when they were in high school or college. The choirs have been preparing for several weeks. It is their hope that you will come and support their efforts.



congratulations
**confirmands
of 2009**

Congratulations to the seven youth who became members of First Church on Sunday, April 26, 2009. We give special thanks for the adults who served as their mentors.



memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin R. Luchs

These are hard times. The news reports Oregon's unemployment and rate of home foreclosure is among the highest in the nation, many of us have maxed out our credit and things could well get worse before the economy turns around. Most of us—even if we're not yet in actual trouble—are apprehensive. We've heard our employers talk about furloughs or layoffs, seen our investments plunge, college savings deteriorate, retirement funds wither, and neighborhood stores shuttered.

As the crises grows and hopes wither, more and more people—many of whom have never had to ask for help before—are coming to the office or pulling us aside in the halls seeking assistance and guidance. We're grateful for donors who have established a modest endowment that provides some (very) limited funds to help—but the need easily outstrips the resources and many would rather be steered to job opportunities or career counseling rather than receive a handout.

It's clear that we need to find ways of providing more than emergency financial help and short-term counsel. Networking, skill training, job-search preparation and financial planning could be important. We are researching and exploring options.

Christine Bostick, our Church Administrator, discovered a helpful article in an online forum with suggestions useful not just for congregational leaders, but for us all.* Let me share three of them with you:

Speak about what everybody's already thinking.

It isn't easy to talk about job loss or financial woes. Our society puts such emphasis on "success" and "prosperity" in terms of money and possessions that we are often ashamed to talk about our struggles. There's an unspoken conspiracy of silence among those in trouble. Many who suffer are invisible. "Naming" our concern for joblessness, tight finances, dreams lost and plans thwarted, or feelings of insecurity in prayers or conversations is helpful. It can encourage friends to 'open up' risk speaking to who express care.

Look at money from a new angle.

So often we value others by their financial worth or the status of their job. Too quickly we make small talk by asking, "What do you do for a living?" Jesus made clear that our value is more than our net worth, our security found beyond our possessions. Even the poorest among us is as significant to God as the wealthiest. He called everyone to find faith, prioritize our lives on ultimate values, and organize our days according to our values. We can join hands with everyone else to see money and wealth in a different way—and put our money where our faith is—in compassion and care for all.

Ask deeper questions.

As Eric Reed wrote, "This is not a time for pat answers ... people at a crossroads may need help asking, 'What's my purpose now?'"* Recognize the spiritual side of their crises: wrestling with deep questions about failure, disappointment, anger, God and meaning. Encourage people to ask, "What is God calling me to do and to be in response to the difficulties." Take the time befriend and support those struggling with such questions as they explore a new dimensions of faith.

These are not easy things to do, but then, these *are* hard times!

See you in Church!

Arvin

*Reed, Eric, *Opportunity's Hard Knocks*,
accessed at ChristianityToday.com/le/thepastor/pastoralcare/opportunityshardknocks.html, April 24, 2009.

adults at first

sunday morning classes

FELLOWSHIP OF SEEKERS:

God Has a Dream:

A Vision of Hope for Our Time

by Desmond Tutu

The class meets each Sunday at 9:15 AM in Room 134.

CHANGING CHRISTIANITY:

Christianity and American Democracy

by Hugh Hecklo

The class meets each Sunday from 9:00 to 10:15 AM in Room 202.

OUR CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS



May 3

What's Happening in Washington?

In this session, Cyreena Boston, from Senator Merkley's office, will share the latest on what is happening at the federal level and share perspectives on current national legislation. Cyreena is a Field Representative for the Senator and is official staff liaison to communities in the Portland area.

learn & grow

more opportunities

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

This Bible study explores the parables of Jesus. It is taught by Rev. Lowell Greathouse each Wednesday evening at 6:00 PM in the Church Library.

RECONCILING UNITED METHODISTS

The next meeting of the Oregon-Idaho Reconciling United Methodists (OI RUMs) will be Saturday, May 16, 2009 at Epworth UMC, Portland, OR. It will begin at 9:45 AM and include a program, potluck lunch and closing worship service.

Visit their website at www.oirums.org.

CHECK IT OUT

The Church Library has some new books to check out: *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell and *Peace in the Storm: Meditations on Chronic Pain and Illness* by Maureen Pratt.

umw

united methodist women

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

All women are invited to participate in the activities listed below. We strive to develop a supportive fellowship as we promote concern for women, children, and youth at home and abroad.

President, Melba Rizzo, 503/635-6716

MAY UMW UNIT GATHERING

The UMW Unit will meet Wednesday, May 6, at 10:00 AM in the Fireside Room. After the business meeting the spiritual growth study, "I Believe in Jesus" written by Bishop Minerva Carcaño, will be reviewed by Marilyn Outslay. Marilyn will also include her personal experiences with the bishop. The study is both challenging and inspirational. All are welcome. Bring a sandwich for the noon luncheon in Room 202. Dessert and beverage will be provided

ATTENTION QUILTERS

On Wednesday, May 6, all who are interested in quilting are invited to Room 202 at 1:00 PM. Jan Fornan, an expert quilter and teacher, will help our group get started and will carefully guide us through four beginning sessions. The first project will be a wall hanging using your own choice of fabric and block design. For further information, contact Marion Hollenberg at 503/640-3270.

up coming events

please take note

LEADERSHIP RESTRUCTURING

On Sunday, May 3, 2009 our Leadership Restructuring task group will conduct a forum to lay out our proposed Leadership Restructuring plan. Printed copies of the proposal are available in the church office and an electronic version is on our website, www.fumcpdx.org.

Our next All Church Conference will be June 28, 2009 in the Fireside Room, following worship. At that Church Conference we will act on the task group's report, considering a new design for our congregation's leadership.

ANIMAL BLESSING SERVICE PLANNED

"We, along with all animals, are part of the community of creation." from *Blessing the Animals* by Lynn Caruso

We are planning to hold a Blessing of the Animals Service this fall after church on a Sunday afternoon. If you'd like to be a part of the planning team for this special event, please let Rev. Lowell Greathouse know at lgreathouse@fumcpdx.org or at 503/228-3195. Let him know ASAP, so you can be involved in the plans from the start.



the edge

thoughts
for the journey

Lowell Greathouse, Minister of Discipleship

On the heels of Earth Day, it is worthwhile to remember the remarkable life of John Muir (1838-1914), who walked extensively throughout the American wilderness, swayed public opinion to help preserve many of our country's natural wonders and treasures, and wrote extensively about his experiences in nature. Muir belonged to no church, affiliated himself with no formal creed, but yet was intensely religious. As Edwin Teale wrote: "To understand Muir and the fire that burned in him, it is necessary to realize that for him all outdoors was at once a laboratory for research and a temple for worship." (*The Wilderness World of John Muir*; p. xiii)

One of the great stories about Muir goes like this: "During the Harriman Expedition to Alaska in 1899, someone mentioned the great wealth of the sponsor, the railroad magnate, E.H. Harriman. Muir replied, 'Why, I am richer than Harriman. I have all the money I want and he hasn't.'" (p. xvi)

Perhaps as we contemplate our lives it is important to continue asking ourselves these questions: What do we need that we do not have? And, what do we have that we do not need?

a reception

honoring
Rev. Lowell Greathouse

In April, Rev. Greathouse became Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's new Board President. There will be a reception to honor Lowell Greathouse, on Sunday, May 17, 2009 in Collins Hall following the worship service that Sunday.

transitions

farewell to
Adam Ortman

ADAM ORTMAN OFF TO HARVARD

It is with sadness that we announce that Adam Ortman will be leaving First Church as our Community Outreach Director at the end of June. Adam has served our congregation well, organizing groups to volunteer in a variety of community settings, coordinating the work of the Commons each Sunday morning, creating new projects, and connecting more of us as volunteers at the Goose Hollow Family Shelter.

However, Adam has exciting things ahead of him. He has been accepted at Harvard Divinity School in their Masters in Theological Studies program. Let us keep Adam in our thoughts and prayers as he undertakes this new life adventure! Plan to join us for a reception to be held in Adam's honor after church on Sunday, June 21, 2009.

farmer's table

begins
May 31, 2009

On Sunday, May 31, 2009, come discover beautiful bouquets of spring flowers and fresh lettuce, spinach, bok choy, sugar and snap peas at the Farmer's Table near Collins Hall. Welcome back our farmer, Yua Lo, Hmong refugee who has a talent for growing gorgeous flowers and delicious vegetables. Lower your carbon footprint by buying locally grown food.

Thanks to the generosity of Yua Lo and members of First Church, we will be donating some of the Farmer's Table produce to the Northwest Portland Ministries Food Box and sending flowers to area nursing homes.

outreach

please take
note

PROFILES IN SERVICE

What's your passion? Your fear?
How would you change the world
if you could?

On May 17, 2009, an exciting new forum series at First Church will highlight the fascinating and inspiring work of our own members. Working with teenage graffiti artists, women in prison, and the public awareness around the environment, the first three presenters just may enhance your perspective on what it means to live a vibrant faith.

Come prepared to ask questions and share your own thoughts on how we are called to be salt, light, and servants in the city. Watch for more information in the coming weeks.

The forum on Sunday, May 17, 2009, will last from noon to 1:30 PM and will be in the Fireside Room. Child care and a light lunch will be provided.



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



world missions SPOTLIGHT

**Janet Lahr-Lewis
in Palestine**

INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST COVENANT MISSIONARY: JANET LAHR LEWIS

by Colleen Foster, for Global Missions Committee

“Christ calls us all to be ministers of justice. Through my work . . . I will be able to answer this call by working for a just and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis, so that reconciliation and healing can occur.” - Ms. Lahr-Lewis

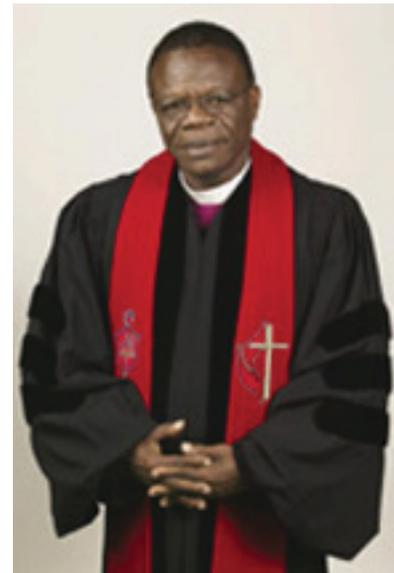
A tall order! Ms. Lahr Lewis, who worked as a civil engineer and architectural designer in Ohio, was very active in her local church. Then, following a “typical Holy Land tour” she experienced not only a “call” but a “push” to return to that “not-so-holy land” to do whatever she could to bring freedom for the oppressed. She sold her house in Ohio and worked as a volunteer for several years in Galilee, then in Bethlehem. The mother of three grown children, Ms. Lahr Lewis served several years with the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem, and for two years as the executive director of Sabeel-North America. She also served as personal assistant to Archbishop Elias Chacour, president of Mar Elias Educational Institutions in the Galilee area.

She is now a missionary for the Board of Global Ministries of United Methodist Church. Appointed as a liaison between ecumenical groups and Israel and Palestine, she is the primary contact for VIM (Volunteer in Mission) teams and other United Methodist visitors who wish to spend time in the area with local Christians. Her focus is upon advocacy and activism. The challenges are immense in the “ongoing crisis.”

Informing visitors of the realities of the situation, she organizes conferences, develops media campaigns, and plans worship experiences. Three Portland First UMC members have experienced Janet’s hospitality during recent Board of Global Ministries sponsored trips to the Holy Land. Corinne Frohlich, Dee Poujade and Betty Cobb have brought back to our church and our conference a vivid picture of the dire needs of the area.

There is a long list of missionaries from which Covenant relationship choices can be made. So why has First UMC’s Council on Ministries endorsed a relationship with Ms. Lahr-Lewis? Upon researching critical needs in many parts of our world, it seemed her work in this sometimes lonely pursuit of peace ranked very high. It is not only our investment of mission dollars (\$2500 per year) where they can do the most good, but a real and tangible way to walk with Janet in her labors for justice. And having personal contact with our covenant missionaries is such a boon. Just ask Corinne, Dee or Betty!

Watch for future profiles of First Church’s other Covenant Missionaries in upcoming *Circuit Rider* editions.



Bishop Innis of Liberia, words of appreciation

Bishop John Innis, in his recent Episcopal Address at the Annual Conference gathering in Liberia, shared these words of thanksgiving about First Church’s commitment of support and resources for the Methodist Church in Liberia:

“We are also pleased to acknowledge with thanks and appreciation the contributions of First Church Portland to the Ministry to the Aged program of our Conference. This ministry, for the past four years, has been providing active spiritual, social and health services to senior citizens of our church and around the country. The ministry is currently constructing a five-bedroom house, for the first time for our old folks in Monrovia since the civil war. In addition, this ministry is also constructing wells to provide safe drinking water for our seniors to prevent them dying from diarrhea, choleric and other diseases. Thanks to the loving and caring people of First United Methodist Church in Portland, Oregon for their generous contributions and support to this Ministry in Liberia. We are particularly grateful to the Global Mission Committee of First UMC for being a strong and supportive arm to our conference. We look forward to continuing to be in mission with them.”

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 May 13, 2009.

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 THANKSGIVING FOR ...

The birth of Sparrow Beaux-Charoneau Lake to Brigitte Charboneau and Bailey Lake. Sparrow was born April 1, 2009 and is the grandson of Naomi Charboneau.

PRAYERS OF CONCERN FOR ...

Bill Haden, in the death of his wife, Betsy Flanagan, who died April 16, 2009.

PRAYERS OF REJOICING ...

The following people are now recovering at home:
Bernie Cook, Kate Lore, and Jim Lawlor.

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

Carol Howard

PRAYERS FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY ABROAD ...

*Karl Alger, Jared Bomberger, Daniel Bomberger,
Ian Kalgren, Steven Johnson, and Michael Panck*

items of interest

please take note ...

BILL BIRGE HONORED

Bill Birge was acknowledged recently with the prestigious **2009 Treasure Award** for his volunteer contributions to Good Samaritan Hospital & Medical Center. This is an honor bestowed by the Wistar Morris Society of Good Sam. Bill gives many hours by serving on the Good Sam Foundation as a trustee and President of the Volunteer Board. He also sits on the Grants Committee for funding the hospital and volunteers at the Cancer Center.

COLLEGE GRADUATES

It is that time of year again, when we are seeking information about those graduating from college or receiving degrees from institutes of higher learning. If you have this information, please contact the church office at office@fumcpdx.org with names and dates. Thank you.