

# West Hills

United Methodist Church Newsletter



Autumn 2007



## And when he had given thanks...

In the apostle Paul's first letter to the infant Corinthian church, he gives us the earliest memory we have of Jesus' sharing with his disciples the moment that has become the very core of Christian practice. In the face of despair and loss and betrayal, Paul tells us, Jesus gives thanks and brings us, his Church, into being:

*For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."*

(1 Corinthians 11:23-24/NRSV)

Thus, the central act of Christian worship, The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion, has become known as the Eucharist (from the Greek verb, *eucharisteo*, which means "to be thankful"). We who call ourselves Christian, are therefore, first and always, givers of thanks! Thanks and thanksgiving is the supreme act of faithful response to God's love. As the writer of First Chronicles sings:

*Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples.* (1 Chronicles 16:8/NRSV)

The word and the celebration are really two words, "thanks" and "giving". In other words, just as Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper by giving thanks and giving of himself, we are called as Christians to our first and most important duties, thanks and giving.



As we celebrate the American holiday (originally from two words as well: “holy” and “day”) of Thanksgiving we need to remember that for us, this is a sacred response to God’s goodness that identifies us as Christians. We are called to be thankful and giving.



As your pastor and friend, I want to urge you not to enter into to this season that moves from Thanksgiving, through Advent to Christmas, without beginning with our community celebration of giving thanks. Take good care of your Sacred Self by doing two things: First, celebrate the Thanksgiving Eucharist with us on **Wednesday, November 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 p.m.** And second, give. Find someway to give of yourself as an expression of gratitude. One good way, of course, is to contribute food through our Mission Committee’s Thanksgiving food drive that helps feed some of the literally thousands of families on Long Island who are below the poverty level and simply do not have enough to eat.

And speaking of giving in thanks, there is an envelope included with this mailing for you to use to “give thanks” by giving to the ministry of your church. The demands of our calling are great and the resources are scarce, so be as generous as you can.

I thank God continually for you. Let all of us give thanks for one another and for the world where God has called us to witness boldly by thanking and giving!

Faithfully yours,

Bruce

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## *United Methodist Women*

### *Christmas Party*

**All Women Invited!!!**

**Tuesday, December 18th  
at Judy’s house at 7:30**

**\$10.00 gift exchange—optional**

**Let Judy know if you plan to attend.**



You are Cordially Invited to...

3rd Annual  
West Hills United Methodist Church  
Family Christmas Brunch

FOOD

RAFFLE

GAMES



PICTURES WITH SANTA!

December 9th 12:00pm-1:30pm

We will be adopting a family for Christmas.  
Gifts will be collected at the brunch. More to follow

Sign up sheet is in the Narthex

# Halloween Happenings at the WHUMC Nursery School

It was time once again for the annual West Hills UMC Nursery School Halloween Parade and Party. Marching in separate parades, the 2,3 and 4 year old classes marched through the parking lot in costume on Halloween. After such a workout, trick-or-treaters were refreshed with goodies at the Halloween party in Jones Hall. Miss Deborah and staff were able to scare up a good time for children and parents alike.



## Sunday School Celebrates The Spooky Season

On October 14th, the Sunday School classes unveiled their decorated pumpkins, vying for first place in the annual West Hills UMC Sunday School Pumpkin Decorating Contest. For more than a decade, Sunday School students have worked for one Sunday on creating the most unique gourd possible. This year, the older elementary class won the competition, but the real winner was Habitat for Humanity. Parishioners voted for the best pumpkin using their loose change, raising over \$140 dollars. This money will go towards building a house on L.I. through Habitat during the upcoming summer. On October 28, the Sunday School held a raucous Halloween Party. Nearly 20 children and many adults stayed after Church for apple bobbing, cupcake decorating, Halloween Twister, bean bag tosses and a rousing game of musical chairs. Brian and Caitlyn won the Candy Corn guessing contest (1667 Candy Corns) and Gina enjoyed her last Halloween party by winning the musical chairs game.

Bagels and juice were provided to the children (and coffee to the adults) for lunch, as well as a parting goodie bag filled with candy, tattoos, and "Shine With the Light of Jesus" flashlights. Many thanks to all of the parents who brought their children, and to those who helped run the party (Ann S., Deborah O, Darlene F., Cindy W. & Todd W., Cyndee P., Heather V., Carol S., Kim G., Cheryl W., Mary Ann S., Sara G., Brittaney O, and more!) Another special thanks to those parishioners who donated funds and snacks for the party!





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## *News From the United Methodist Church*

### **"Open Hearts" Ventures Into Online Advertising**

NASHVILLE—August— The United Methodist Church's "Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors." advertising campaign enters a new realm this week with the placement of online ads targeted at reaching 22 to 44 year-olds. From August 20 until mid-October, the ads will appear on Beliefnet, eHarmony, Yahoo, CitySearch, About.com and other sites. More than 21 million people are expected to see the ads.

"We're seeking to reach people who feel like something is missing from their life and are looking for meaning or purpose," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications, which administers the "Open hearts" campaign. "Many of those people are searching online. We've chosen sites where they may be looking for something to fill a void in their lives-whether it's travel, relationships, or something more spiritual."

The interactive ads will ask users questions about their desires and beliefs, offering a choice of answers. After they submit a response, they will see a summary of the poll results, along with information and links to explore more about The United Methodist Church. The ads will also feature streaming video of television spots from the campaign, and offer a free MP3 download of the theme music. Users can follow the links to [www.UnitedMethodist.org](http://www.UnitedMethodist.org) to learn more about the denomination or find a local church, or they can request a brochure.

The focus of the national campaign, started in 2001 to raise awareness of The United Methodist Church, has primarily been cable television commercials aired each year around Lent, Advent, and the back-to-school season. This year's back-to-school campaign runs from September 3-16 on 18 networks at a cost of \$1.8 million. The commercial will air about 1,200 times, creating more than 276 million impressions, and is expected to reach 65 million adults.

New strategies are being tested to see which can best complement the TV commercials and reach more audiences. Last year, a large-scale outdoor advertising strategy was implemented, placing 450 billboards in 15 media markets to reach commuters and travelers in their cars.

Online advertising is undoubtedly a fast-growing medium. A report released last week by private equity firm Veronis Suhler Stevenson predicts that Internet advertising will surpass broadcast television and newspapers in the next four years to become the largest advertising medium in the U.S.

According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, Americans' use of the Internet for faith-based reasons is growing. Their report "Faith Online," indicated that 64 percent of Internet users surveyed in late 2003 use the Web for spiritual and religious activities-compared to only 25 percent of those surveyed in 2001.

Participants in the most recent survey were asked about the types of things they do online in matters related to religion and spirituality. Seventeen percent utilize the Internet to find information about where to attend religious services.

Twenty-eight percent of respondents said they had used the Internet to seek or exchange information about

their own religious faith or tradition, while 26 percent sought or exchanged information about the religious faiths or traditions of others.

## Changing Demographics Affecting Church Funding



The face of today's United Methodist is markedly different than it was 40 years ago — a reality that concerns church financial leaders tracking how changing demographics are hitting the denomination in its pocketbook.

In the United States, which provides the lion's share of denominational resources, United Methodists are becoming rarer in a growing population. They are generally older adults above age 57 who attend larger churches. Most are white or African American. And they are generally wealthier than United Methodists of previous generations.

The implications are far-reaching and represent a mixed bag of good news and bad news relating to denominational resources and reach, according to Don House, chairman of a task force that recently completed its study of funding patterns within the church.

"While the (U.S.) population is growing, our membership is decreasing per capita, which means United Methodists are having a smaller and smaller impact on society. That wasn't supposed to happen," said House, a research economist in College Station, Texas.

House presented the group's report during the September meeting of the governing board of the denomination's General Council on Finance and Administration, on which he also serves as a member. The board voted to send legislation based on the report's recommendations to General Conference, the denomination's top legislative assembly. Among other things, the legislation aims to hold leaders at all levels of the church accountable in their responsibility to promote, support and model Christian giving.

### Mixed bag

House presented the bad news first. Membership has decreased by more than 20 percent since 1973, and membership per capita has dropped from 4.75 percent to 2.7 percent by 2005. The church has 8 million U.S. members and 11.5 million members across the globe.

During the same time, the number of United Methodist churches has declined by 12.4 percent. The declines have been significant in all five of the church's U.S. jurisdictions.

"There is no jurisdiction with a winning report card," House declared. "We are getting rare in the population, and it has an impact on our funding."

He cited numerous trends that help explain the drops:

**Ethnic background:** In counties with a high percentage of whites and African Americans, a solid percentage of the population attends United Methodist churches. However, according to House, "we don't do well" in counties with growing or larger percentages of Asians, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders and Native Americans.

**Age:** Based on the U.S. population, those attending United Methodist worship services today are underrepresented in the under-35 age group and overrepresented in the over-57 age group.

**Church size:** The largest churches are growing while the smaller ones are stagnant or declining. "The

smaller you get, the faster the decline in membership. It wasn't that way in the '70s," he said, noting that church growth 30 years ago was similar among all sizes of churches.

The good news is that, despite declining membership and attendance, United Methodist churches claim a relatively constant share of the dollar given to U.S. religious groups. While religious organizations in general are losing their share of the philanthropic dollar to educational institutions and foundations, The United Methodist Church has received a steady 6 percent of the religious dollar since the mid-1980s.

House cited data indicating that the average income of a United Methodist is growing faster than in the general population. He noted that, beginning in the mid-1990s, as older, lower-income members have died, new members replacing them have generally earned higher incomes. "United Methodists are higher-income earners than ever before," he said.

The task force report adds: "Much of the growth in giving per member since the mid-1990s has been caused by the growth in membership incomes rather than an improvement in the percentage of income given to our denomination."

### **Sagging apportionments**

The report says churchwide United Methodist ministries are struggling because they are receiving less funding from local churches

Such ministries are primarily funded through a system of apportionments, in which local churches make contributions based on an approved formula. The funds are transferred from local churches to their annual (regional) conferences, which then transfer the money to the denomination.

In recent decades, however, congregations have spent more on local ministries and needs, resulting in a decreasing share of total funds for the denomination. In 1974, local church contributions to the apportioned funds represented an average of 4.5 percent of local church expenditures, compared with 2.5 percent in 2005.

"We have lots of money," said House. "... Our problem may be the friction of getting that money from the local church. ... We need more respect for the mission and ministries of the general church, even while we celebrate what goes on in the local church. We are perhaps underfunding the connection. But at some point, the connection will begin to be dismantled."

While the denomination is managing financially for now, House and the task force are concerned about reaching a "tipping point."

"So far, while membership has decreased, our dollars have still grown. Will we reach a point where our dollars will decrease as well? This is the point when we would have to begin to disassemble our infrastructure," he said.

House noted that some annual conferences already have reached that point and, without change, others are expected to as well in the next 10 years. "We have seen annual conferences merging. We have seen districts merge. That is a footprint of the disassembly of infrastructure," he said.

The report cites the church's aging clergy as another factor expected to affect future funding patterns. The average age of United Methodist clergy has increased from 45.8 in 1982 to 51.4 in 2005. Annual conferences are increasingly relying upon second-career clergy, and only 5 percent of clergy are under age 35. The church anticipates mass retirements in the next 10 to 15 years that will result in a significant loss of

experience, leadership and expertise.

"If there is to be a concerted effort to increase membership and attendance through new church starts, and if these new churches are to be primarily served by first-career pastors, there must be a change in the current methods of attracting more persons to the order of elder," the report said.

## Taking action

The task force offered numerous recommendations — many related to revising the Book of Discipline — to hold church leadership more accountable, including bishops, district superintendents, local pastors and candidates for ordained ministry. The directors of the General Council on Finance and Administration are including the recommendations in their proposed legislation to General Conference.

The measures include a proposal to require jurisdictional committees that already review the work of bishops to also evaluate their bishops' leadership in promoting and supporting the full payment of apportionments. When found to be deficient in this task, a report would be sent to the president of the jurisdictional college of bishops, who would share the report with the Council of Bishops in executive session.

Candidates for deacon or elder would have to include in their graduate theological studies the theology and discipline of financial giving, in addition to current required areas of study such as Old Testament, New Testament and church history.

Other legislation being sent to General Conference would:

- Increase the membership of each local church council by one to include an "advocate in connective giving" to promote the financial support of churchwide mission and ministries. Training and support for this position would be provided through the annual conference and denominational agencies responsible for stewardship and connective giving.
- Require that a study precede any proposal to change the apportionment formula or method by an annual conference. The change is designed to "protect the annual conference council on finance and administration from unprepared motions on the annual conference floor ..." and ensure that such changes and their implications are fully explored before being approved.
- Order a study of the ways that the central conferences — those in Africa, Asia and Europe — can participate in the apportionment system.

### General Church Sources of Funding From the Local Church (2005)

23% Special Offerings



77% Apportioned Funds

The apportionment system provides more than three-fourths of local church funds paying for denominational ministries. Source: GCFA

General Conference, which convenes every four years, will meet April 23-May 2 in Fort Worth, Texas.

\*Aldrich is news editor of United Methodist News Service.

News media contact: Marta Aldrich, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 742-5470 or [newsdesk@umcom.org](mailto:newsdesk@umcom.org).

# 17th Annual West Hills United Methodist Church

## COOKIE WALK

Can you bake?

Talk to Judy Knorr!

The UMC is looking for people who can bake 9 dozen of one type of holiday cookie.



Saturday, December 15th 9:00am-11:00am

Cookies are not only delicious for you to eat, but make great gifts!

### Remember When???

SPAGHETTI DINNER 5:00 & 6:30 PM  
seating

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1994  
Adults \$7.00 - Children under 12 \$5.00  
Salad, Entree, Bread, Dessert & Beverage  
(includes meatballs & sausage)

WEST HILLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
One West Hills Court-opp. Walt Whitman HS.

This is a donation so can be taken off  
Income Tax.



## YOU ARE INVITED

To The  
West Hills  
United Methodist Church  
Outdoor

## Christmas Pageant

at 3:00pm  
on Sunday, December 17, 1989

Presented as a Gift  
to the  
Huntington Community

by the  
West Hills Congregation

On the church lawn, West Hills Court  
Across from the Walt Whitman High School

With Live Animals

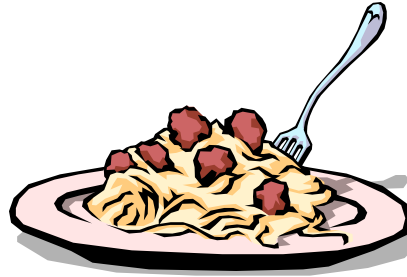
# Spaghetti Dinner

Come enjoy good food and good fellowship!

November 10th 6:00pm Jones Hall

\$12.00 adults \$8.00 children (5-12 yrs) Kids under 5 are free!!!

Spaghetti with meatballs, sausage, salad, bread, iced tea, coffee, tea and dessert. If you plan on attending, please let Bob Schreiber know.



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## Save The Date

Thanksgiving Eve Service— Wednesday, November 21 7:30pm

No Sunday School: Thanksgiving 25th

Christmas Brunch: December 9th—after church

Cookie Walk— Saturday December 15th 9am-11am

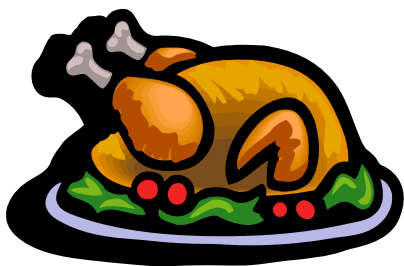
UMW Christmas Party: Tuesday, December 18th

7:30pm

Sunday School Christmas Pageant December 23

Christmas Eve Service: December 24, 7:45pm

No Sunday School: December 30th



## Thanksgiving Food Drive

Please bring in food items for the Thanksgiving food basket by Sunday, November 18th. Nothing perishable!! Corn, Stuffing, Turkey coupons and the like will be used to create between 3-5 baskets.

## Editor's Note: Free Items

Anyone interested in a used refrigerator or range, please see me. Both are in good condition and are between 5-7 years old. The range is a glass top stove with a self cleaning oven. They are free to anyone who can pick them up and take them away.

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## New Addition to the Extended West Hills Family

Owen Michael Klein—Born June 14th, 2007 in the wee hours of the morning. Our best wishes to the family, especially proud grandparents  
Mike & Marge



## Missions Update

Please bring in new, unused mittens and hats for our “Mitten and Hat Tree” by the front door. These mittens and hats are sent to the Helping Hand Mission.

Also, remember your church friends by using our Christmas Card “delivery box”. Place the cards in the box by last name, and put the postage amount in the mission’s donation box. It’s a great way to relieve the post office of extra work at a busy time of year!! It also helps the church!

From the Desk of Doris...

## No Excuse Sunday

To make it possible for everyone to attend church next Sunday, we are going to have a special "No Excuse Sunday."

Cots will be placed in the foyer for those who say, "Sunday is my only day to sleep."

We will have steel helmets for those who say, "the roof will cave in if I ever come to church."

Blankets will be furnished for those who think the church is too cold and fans for those who think the church is too hot.

We will have hearing aids for those who think the preacher speaks too softly and cotton for those who think he preaches too loudly.

Scorecards will be available for those who wish to list the hypocrites present.

Some relatives will be in attendance for those who like to go visiting on Sunday.

There will be T.V. dinners for those who can't go to church and cook dinner also.

One section will be devoted to trees and grass for those who like to see God in nature.

Finally, the sanctuary will be decorated with both Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies for those who have never seen the church without them.



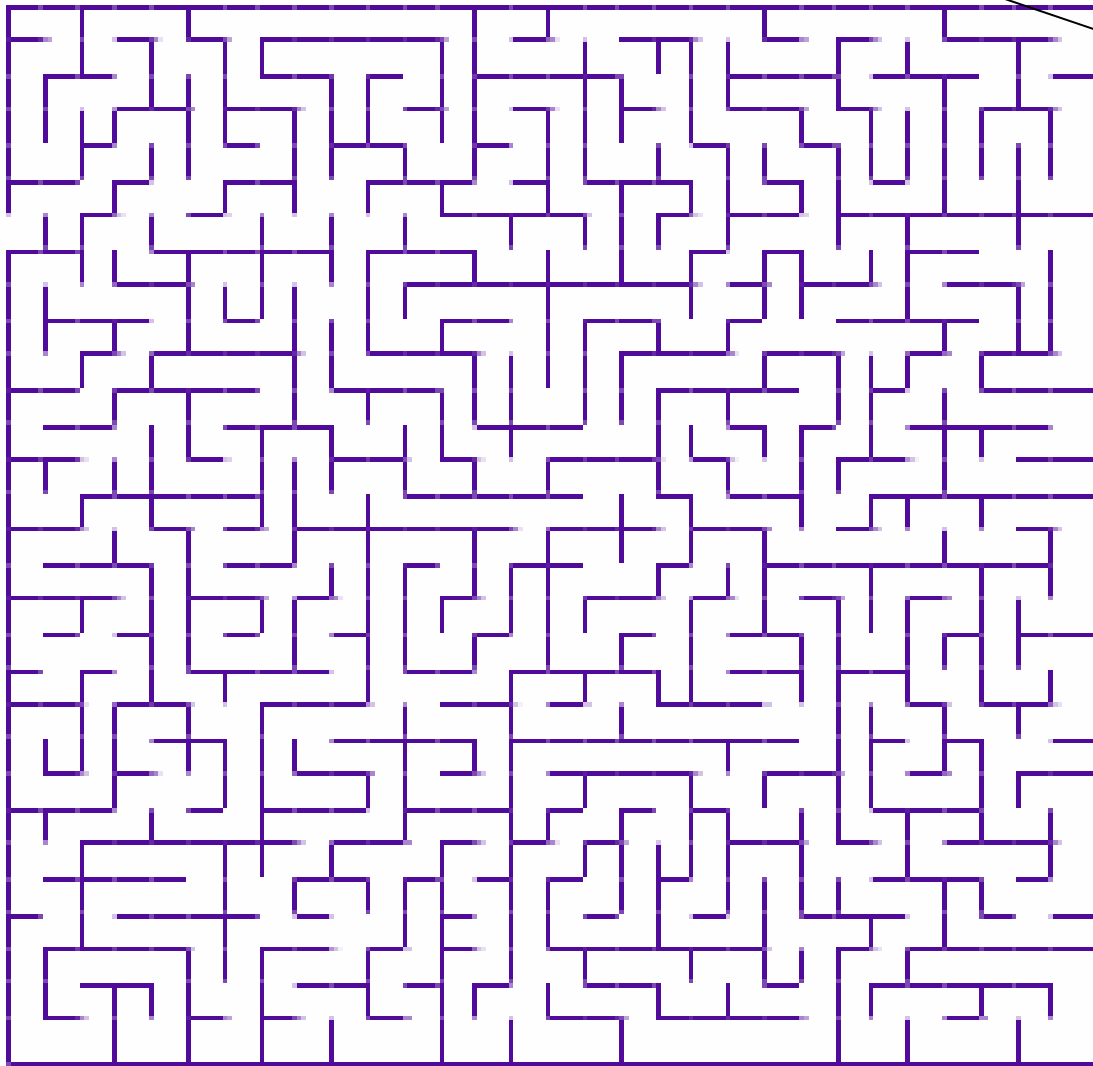
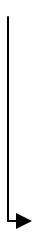
## Wedding Bells...

Congratulations to Rich Wienecke and his wife Jasmine on their summer nuptials this pasty June. West Hills played host to gala occasion, and the congregation wishes them a bright, joyous future!

# Fun Pages

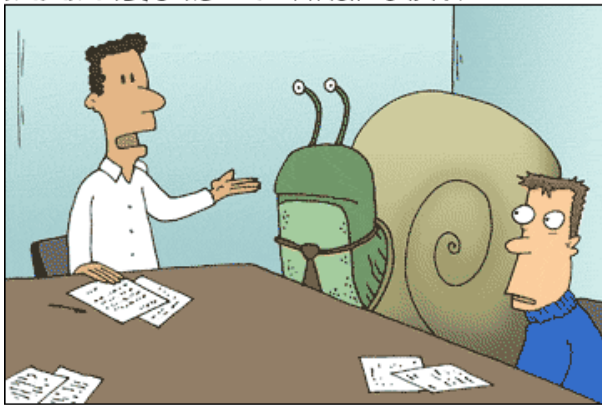
## Corn Maze

Start



End

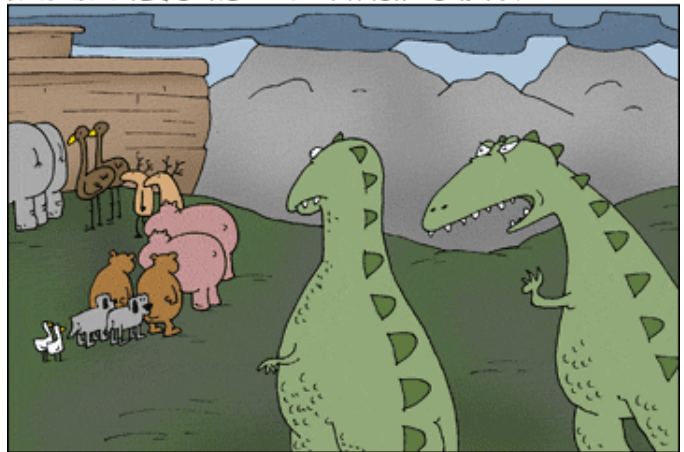
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Thanks to Barry Rutter 12-18-2006

I'D LIKE YOU ALL TO MEET THE NEWEST MEMBER OF OUR COMMITTEE ... WHO JOINED BECAUSE HE LIKES THE SPEED AT WHICH WE HANDLE OUR BUSINESS

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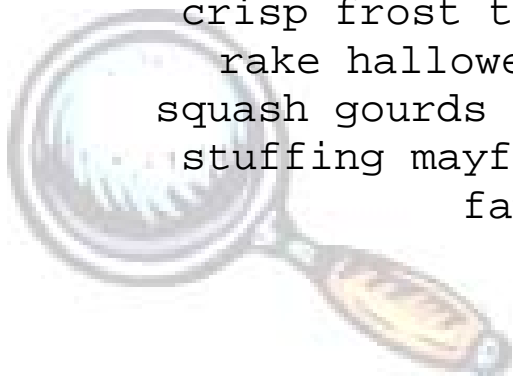
(See Genesis 6-8) 10-19-2006

NO WAY MAN ... YOU KNOW I DON'T WAIT IN LONG LINES

# Super Duper Harvest Hunt

H X X Z E S T M J U F I I T T E G M E I T N I A N  
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N G U R A H C L G T I M L Y E E E G S B A S S O T  
S O D H S Z A S X M N H H I O K Y S R Q T T O V D  
I C A E T F H F G O L A E T H S A U Q S T Y P E L  
F S Y O E L F B Z R A U E B U L R R W D E T S T Y  
S D R I A T O Q L Y N T E I E L P A M C N I L M T

Find these Words: fall autumn pumpkins  
skeleton haunted bats pies leaves maple  
crisp frost thanksgiving turkey harvest  
rake halloween pilgrim foliage acorn  
squash gourds scarecrow candycorn hayride  
stuffing mayflower parade prayer bounty  
family gatherings





Bruce Anspach, Pastor

The people of The United Methodist Church  
Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.



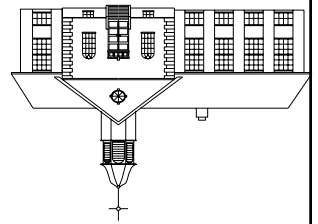
Thanksgiving Letter  
Enclosed!

West Hills United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 467  
One West Hills Court  
Huntington Station, NY 11746

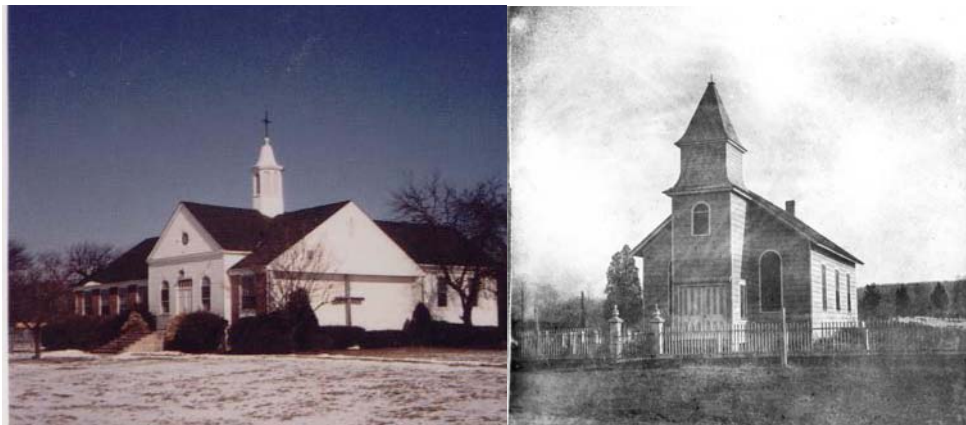


# Newsletter

Fall 2007



West Hills United Methodist Church



## PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the West Hills United Methodist Church is to be a living church, where we can learn about our Lord, love Him, worship Him, and serve Him. We want our church to emphasize fellowship with a sense of sharing one another's concerns and joys. We want our church to reach out to the needs of our youth, and encourage them to participate in our programs. We want our church to be actively involved in the world community, with outreach programs to help the needy and less fortunate, and to attract others in our community who are not currently attending worship service.

Visit us On-line at [www.westhillsumc.com](http://www.westhillsumc.com)