

West Hills

United Methodist Church Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 1

Spring 2007



Church Improvements Continue...

Through the generosity of a nursery school parent, Deborah Overbeck was able to negotiate the replacement of the tile floors in both nursery school classrooms for the amazing bargain of zero dollars. In the works for several months, February break was finally designated as the time for the floor replacement. On Saturday, February 24, the crew from Pyramid Flooring came in before 7am and worked past 2 in the afternoon to get the job done. The upstairs room received a new plywood underlayment as well as new commercial tiles. Many thanks to this family, Deborah Overbeck, and the many parishioners who helped move furniture after

church during this time period. This thoughtful family is working with Deborah to replace more of the flooring in the building over the upcoming weeks. Though they cannot possibly replace all of the 40+ year old floors, it definitely puts us on the right track.

Also, the old upstairs nursery room has now been transformed into a church meeting & church resource room. It is excellent size for meeting, and also has a new DVD/VCR player, stereo system and t.v. Church library resources are also located in the room. A new coat of paint, new curtains and several hours scrubbing the floor has paid off. Now we will be decorating the walls with church photos. A personal thanks to Cindy Winch for helping out, and for my mom for baby sitting!



The Trustees plan to put a Renovation Calendar in place so that each year we can focus on improving dilapidated areas of the church. It is important for all of us to play a part in taking care of God's house.

Tile flooring for two rooms that haven't been updated since 1960	\$0	Keep this in mind the next time a Work Party is announced!
Labor to replace the flooring in those two rooms	\$0	
Updating the church and the nursery school program with little to		
No cost or effort on our own part:	priceless	

Sunday School Performs

Carol Doyna led the church Sunday School in a rousing rendition of “The Wonderful Book of God’s People” on March 18th. If you haven’t been blessed to see the Sunday School in action, then you are truly missing out. Make a special effort to come in on Family Sunday to hear what most have said is “music to God’s ears”.



REMEMBER WHEN....

1992 Salad Supper



Spring is Here, but Winter will Soon Come Again...

The Board of Trustees is still looking for someone interested in shoveling snow at the church during the winter

months. This person is responsible for shoveling the front and side walkways, the front stoop and making sure the rear door is accessible. There are shovels, rock salt and a working snow blower. Pay is \$15 per hour. If you know of anyone who is interested, please see Todd.



Mission Moments

The Missions Committee, along with the generosity of the West Hills congregation, helped collect new hats and mittens for the needy during the holiday season. The Missions committee also continued its annual Christmas Card Postage fundraiser in which members place Christmas cards for other congregants in the Narthex and donate the postage savings to the committee. The active committee continues its plans, even without a chairperson. On March 18th, the committee plans to hold another “Muffins for Missions” fundraiser.



Mark Your Calendar!

March 31: 12:00pm- “Stations of the Cross” visit to Our Lady of the Island.

April 1: Palm Sunday Service

April 5: 7:30pm- Maundy Thursday Service

April 6: 7:30pm- Good Friday service (Church is open all day for prayer)

April 8: Easter Service

April 22: 4:00pm- Spring Film Festival: The Da Vinci Code

May 20: 4:00pm- Spring Film Festival: Saint of 9/11



Words of Inspiration

“Walk In Faith”

I'll walk in faith with God today
Not knowing what it brings
I'll take each step that He directs
And trust Him in all things.

I'll not lose hope if I am led
In moments of despair
I'll lean on Him with all my might
And trust me to His care.

I'll not assume that I know best
If heartaches come my way,
Because He'll meet my every need
I'll walk in faith today.

I'll take my walk in faith with God
By every single minute.
And though my pathway be unknown
By faith, I will walk in it.

He knows the road that I must take
He knows each rock and stone
In faith I'll walk with God today
I will not walk alone

By Betty Purser Patten

“When Spring is in the Air”

It's a time for celebration
When Spring is in the air,
It's a time for exploration
With flowers everywhere.

It's so good to be alive then
When trees are born anew...
Such beauty stirs the hearts of men
As dreams are coming true.

The earth is filled with sights and sounds
So pleasing to our eyes
When miracles can be found
Adrift in Sunkist skies.

It's a time for celebration
When spring is in the air.
It's a heavenly declaration
That God is always there.

By Clay Harrison

West Hills Spring Film Festival



Pastor Bruce continues his use of films to provoke meaningful discussion this year in the first annual West Hills Spring Film Festival. The venue is Jones Hall, decked out with chairs, a top notch audio system, 10 feet wide movie screen, and state-of-the-art LCD projection unit. After the movie, tables are set up for pizza and post-theater debriefing. All you need to bring is a seat cushion.

Over twenty parishioners came out for the premiere of the first film in the series of three. It was the Oscar Award winning documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, which offers a passionate and inspirational look at one man's fervent crusade to halt global warming's deadly progress in its tracks by exposing the myths and misconceptions that surround it. That man is former Vice President Al Gore, who, in the wake of defeat in the 2000 election, re-set the course of his life to focus on a last-ditch, all-out effort to help save the planet from irrevocable change. In this eye-opening and poignant portrait of Gore and his



"traveling global warming show," Gore also proves himself to be one of the most misunderstood characters in modern American public life.

Here he is seen as never before in the media - funny, engaging, open and downright on fire about getting the surprisingly stirring truth about what he calls our "planetary emergency" out to ordinary citizens before it's too late. While this may not seem like typical Methodist fare, keep in mind the Social Principles of the Methodist Church include environmental responsibility:

“160 All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect. Economic, political, social, and technological developments have increased our human numbers, and lengthened and enriched our lives. However, these developments have led to regional defoliation, dramatic extinction of species, massive human suffering, overpopulation, and misuse and overconsumption of natural and nonrenewable resources, particularly by industrialized societies. This continued course of action jeopardizes the natural heritage that God has entrusted to all generations. Therefore, let us recognize the responsibility of the church and its members to place a high priority on changes in economic, political, social, and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically equitable and sustainable world leading to a higher quality of life for all of God's creation.”

- 2004 Book of Discipline

Make some time to come out and enjoy the next two films in the series. The Da Vinci Code will be shown on April 22nd, and on May 20th, “The Saint of 9/11- The True Story of Father Mychal Judge.



U.S., Iranian religious leaders promote peace



By United Methodist News Service*

Feb. 21, 2007

A United Methodist is among religious leaders from the United States and Iran meeting in Iran to find common ground among faith groups as a step toward international peace, particularly as political tensions grow between the two nations.

The 13-member U.S. delegation arrived in Tehran on Feb. 19 and includes Jim Winkler, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, the church's social ac-

tion agency.

The delegation met with the Archbishop of the Armenian Church in Iran and the Tehran-based Ayatollah who leads Friday prayers and is a member of the Iranian Council of Experts.

Their Feb. 19 discussions were among a weeklong series of meetings scheduled between the U.S. religious leaders and Iranian religious leaders--both Christian and Muslim--as well as government leaders in Iran.

The group is expected to meet with Iran President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad during the next few days.

Representatives participated in a three-hour Quest for Truth meeting on Feb. 20 sponsored by the Islamic Culture and Religion Organization. Scholars and religious leaders agreed that although dialogue is important, now is the time for action.

"We need to go beyond dialogue and establish tangible results," said Iranian Ayatollah Monhagheh Damad of Shahid Behesti University in Tehran. "We need to hold dialogue to eliminate ambiguities and misunderstandings between religions that emerge once in a while and work through them to establish peace."

"Peace is the key teaching of Christianity and Islam and this will be realized in our lives," said Archbishop Sabu Sarkission of the Armenian Orthodox church in Iran. "This is the product of dialogue."

In addition to The United Methodist Church, the U.S. delegation represents the Mennonite, Quaker, Episcopal and Catholic churches. The group is scheduled to return Feb. 25 and plans to meet with members of Congress to report on their conversations.

The delegation has scheduled a news conference for Feb. 26 at the National Press Club in Washington. For the latest news on the group's talks, visit www.irandelegaton.org.

Lent 101

(originally posted on UMC.org, then on our church bulletin board)

by Penny Ford

Lent is a season of the Christian year when people are invited to simplify their lives to focus on their relationship with God in Christ.

Where does the concept of Lent come from?

At Jesus' baptism the sky split open, the Spirit of God, which looked like a dove, descended and landed on Jesus, and a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, My Beloved, with whom I am pleased." Afterward, as told in Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus hiked into the wilderness. Maybe he needed some time with God to sort through the major changes happening in his life. Maybe he was searching for direction and answers. Maybe he needed to get away from family, friends and the familiar routine in order to see God, and himself, more clearly. For whatever reason, Jesus retreated into the wilderness for forty days to fast and pray. While he was there, he was tempted by Satan and found the strength to make some tough decisions. He also found clarity about God and what kind of person God wanted him to be.

What does Lent have to do with me?

It's pretty easy to get caught up in the drama of work, school, relationships, and family. Our lives are filled with distractions that take us away from living a life with Christ. We try to fill the emptiness inside us with mindless TV, meaningless chatter, stimulants, alcohol or other things. We run from silence because we're afraid of being alone with God. So, like Jesus, we need to take some serious time to pray and figure out where God is in our lives, and where God is calling us to serve. We need to re-focus our lives to be more in line with God.

How do Christians celebrate Lent?

It's different in different traditions. But generally it's a time to return to Christ by cutting out all that distracts us. For some people that means giving up something like candy, TV, soft drinks, beer, cigarettes or meat as a way to purify their bodies and lives. Others take something on and collect food for the needy, volunteer once a week to help children, or decide to be kind to someone they don't like. Whatever "stuff" is given up or taken on, the intent must be to draw us closer to Christ. Lent is a resolution to simplify our lives, and to return to the One who loves us -- Jesus.

When is Lent?

It's the forty days before Easter. Lent excludes Sundays (you math geniuses), because every Sunday is like a little Easter. Basically, it's about one-tenth of a year (like a tithe of time).

What does "Mardi Gras" mean?

Mardi Gras means "Fat Tuesday." It refers to the day before Lent starts. and since Lent always starts on a Wednesday, the day before is always a Tuesday (duh). And it's called "Fat" or "Great" because it's associated with great food and parties.

What do Mardi Gras parties have to do with Lent?

In earlier times, people used Lent as a time of fasting and repentance. Since they didn't want to be tempted

by sweets, meat and other distractions in the house, they cleaned out their cabinets. So they used up all the sugar and yeast in sweet breads before the Lent season started, and fixed meals with all the meat available. It was a great feast! Through the years Mardi Gras has evolved (in some places) into a pretty wild party with little to do with preparing for the Lenten season of repentance and simplicity. Oh well. But Christians still know it's origin, and hang onto the true Spirit of the season.

So the real beginning of Lent is Ash Wednesday?

Yes. Ash Wednesday, the day after Mardi Gras, usually begins with a service where we recognize our mortality, repent of our sins, and return to our Loving God. We recognize life as a precious gift from God, and return our lives towards Jesus Christ. We may make resolutions and commit to change our lives over the next forty days so that we might be more like Christ. In an Ash Wednesday service, usually a minister or priest marks the sign of the cross on a person's forehead with ashes.

Why ashes?

In Jewish and Christian history, ashes are a sign of mortality and repentance. Mortality, because when we die, our bodies eventually decompose and we become dust/ dirt/ash/whatever. Repentance:, because long ago, when people felt remorse for something they did, they would put ashes on their head and wear "sackcloth" (scratchy clothing) to remind them that sin is pretty uncomfortable and leads to a sort of death of the spirit. This was their way of confessing their sins and asking for forgiveness.

Where do the ashes come from?

On what we now call Palm Sunday, Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem while people waved palms and cheered him on. Less than a week later, Jesus was killed. The palms that were waved in joy became ashes of sorrow. We get ashes for Ash Wednesday by saving the palms from Palm Sunday, burning them, and mixing them with a little water (like tears). It's symbolic.

What do Christians do with ashes?

At an Ash Wednesday service, folks are invited to come forward to receive the ashes. The minister will make a small cross on your forehead by smudging the ashes. While the ashes remind us of our mortality and sin, the cross reminds us of Jesus' resurrection (life after death) and forgiveness. It's a powerful, non-verbal way that we can experience God's forgiveness as we return to Jesus.

COOL THINGS TO DO FOR LENT

Skip one meal a day and give the money to the poor.

Start a prayer "rhythm." Say a prayer every time you brush your teeth, see a commercial, or check your e-mail.

Read a chapter in the Bible a day. (Matthew is a good book to start with).

Forgive someone who doesn't deserve it (maybe even yourself).

Give up beer or sodas. Give the money you save to the Red Cross.

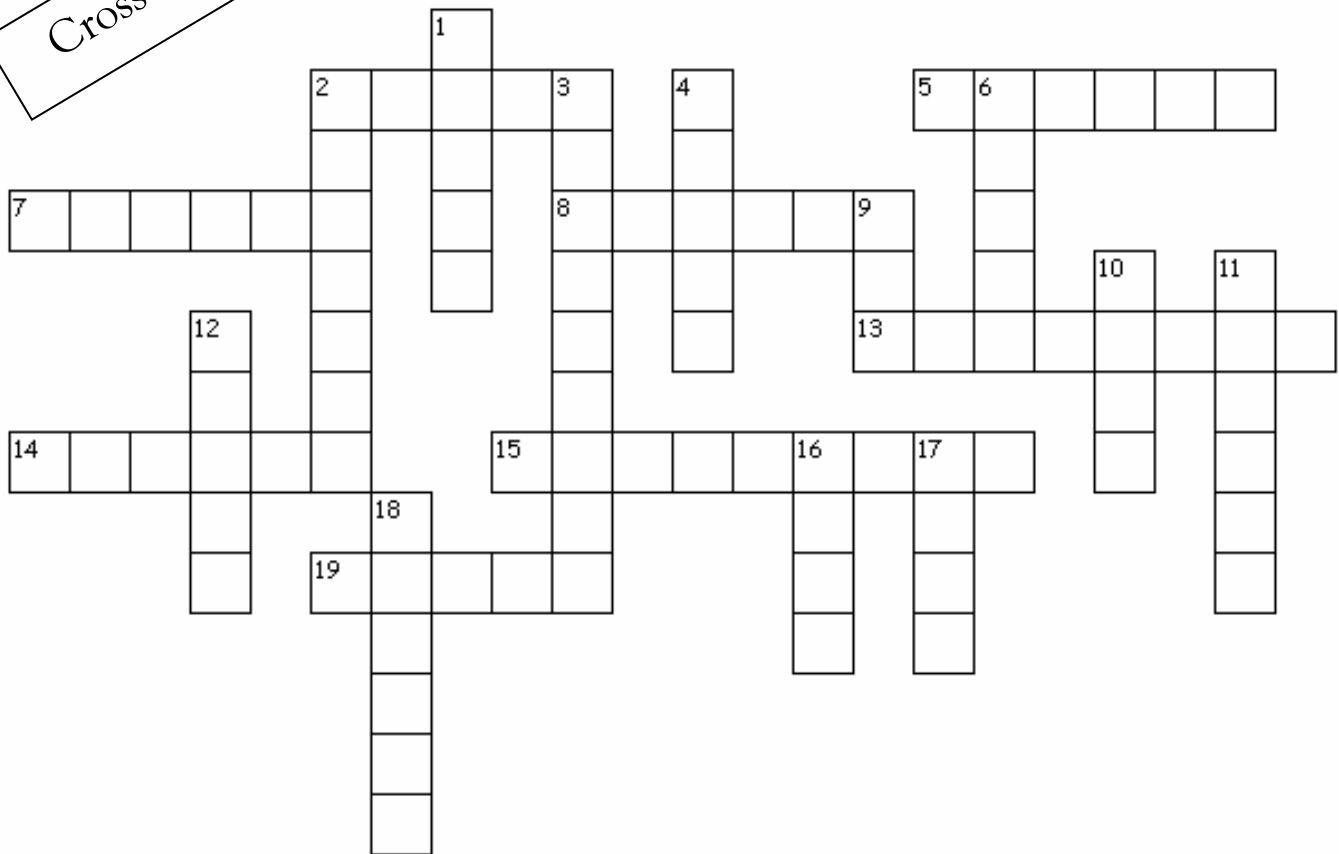
Spend thirty minutes a day in silence.

Write someone a thank you letter.

Say one nice thing to someone each day.

Crossword

EASTER & SPRING

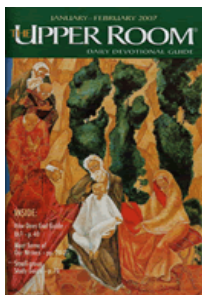


Across

- 2. Wednesday's ashes, one year earlier.
- 5. adaptation of "mandatum novum"
- 7. spring bulbs
- 8. presiding Roman governor
- 13. site of Jesus' crucifixion
- 14. His crown
- 15. These rabbits we all like to eat
- 19. Thursday night's room

Down

- 1. what communion wine represents
- 2. spring colors
- 3. Church of the Holy _____
- 4. You don't eat hot dogs with these beans
- 6. Month of showers
- 9. Popular Easter hunt
- 10. what communion bread represents
- 11. this many pieces of silver
- 12. Month of lions and lambs
- 16. 40 days prior to Easter
- 17. Where Jesus wasn't
- 18. meaning of "lencten", origin of "Lent"

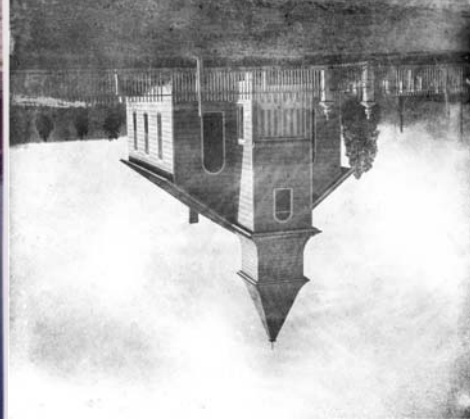


21ST CENTURY TIP:

The Upper Room devotional is available free online at <http://www.upperroom.org/devotional/>

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.

PURPOSE STATEMENT



Visit us On-line at www.westhillsumc.com



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Newsletter



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Easter Letter
Enclosed!