

WEST HILLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

NEWSLETTER

WWW.WESTHILLSUMC.ORG

LATE SUMMER 2010

FROM THE PASTOR...

I was thinking (usually gets me into trouble—or into a place I can't get out of, but I do it anyway) about when I was only a Methodist. I started out as a Methodist because my mother was one and she didn't want to loose me to the Episcopalians. The man my father worked for was a master of English at an uppity prep school in Connecticut and since he didn't have any kids he took this liking to me when I was a four year old. He wanted to be my godfather, take charge of my education, put me through his prep school and make sure I went to Yale, his *alma mater*. And he was an Episcopalian. He had it all worked out and was beginning to convince my father of what a great plan it was.

My mother panicked and since I hadn't been baptized she quick arranged my baptism in the Methodist Church with The Rev. Mr. Edmonds. Since I was all of four years old, I can only surmise that Mom was not so concerned about my unbaptized soul going to Hell as she was about it going to the Episcopalians. She called on her brother and his wife to be my godparents. Now I was safe from "Mr. Mac" (as we called him)! He couldn't make me his godson or even worse an Episcopalian! Of course the free education at one of the most prestigious prep schools in the country and the free Yale education was the price of being freed from the threat of being an Episcopalian and freed to be a Methodist.

Simple, clean and catchy: only a Methodist.

Anyway, I say, "only a Methodist" because then we were only Methodists. A few years before I came on the scene we had been Methodist Episcopal (ians?—I don't know the adjectival form). I don't know if that second word in the name would have been a problem for Mom or not. I do know that through my growing up years we were only Methodists. I later realized that I had been saved from that second word twice!

Now, of course, when our church dropped that part of its name, it was careful not to dispense with the thing that made us "episcopal" since our beginnings: bishops. Since "episcopal" means "bishop" and since we have them, I guess, we could still call ourselves Episcopal. Or do we not call ourselves "Episcopal" because like Episcopalians, we also have bishops? After all this religious trauma, I decided I had better study theology, etc. or be confused forever.

But, as luck would have it, just as I was getting into serious study about this stuff in 1968, the Methodist Church (formally the Methodist Episcopal Church)

joined with the Evangelical United Brethren Church (now there's a church name for you!) to become the United Methodist Church. So now I realized that we were no longer only Methodists—we were *United* Methodists.

Now, you might think as I did at first, that this last move of organizationalists trying without trying to distract us from the dangers of focusing on the gospel, would just further confuse this already confused young United Methodist. But, (grace abounds!) instead of confusion this name switch brought a profound sense of freedom and liberation!

If these guys could make it up as they went, so could I. Now, I realized, I was really free!

I could be a Methodist, a (should this be “a” or “an”—you know the whole indefinite article before a vowel thing?) United Methodist, a Methodist Episcopalian, or just an Episcopalian! (end run around Mom)...or anything else since our leaders in 1968 had shown that we had defeated the constraints of nominalism once and for all!

Now, in 2010—all these years later—the United Methodist Church (formally the Methodist Episcopal Church; formally the Methodist Church) is in formal dialog with the Episcopal Church In America about “common communion” (sounds like double speak to me) and to explore the eventuality of becoming one church. Mr. Mac might get his wish after all, through no fault of my own and if I live that long, I might yet become an Episcopalian! I wonder if the deal is still open with Yale! Of course all this hinges on United Methodists and Episcopalians being able to agree (funny!) on the interpretation of the “historic episcopacy”—whatever that is, but that's the question.

**JOIN US FOR
A QUICK
DANISH AND
COFFEE
AFTER
CHURCH
SEPTEMBER
12TH!**

So, personally, I'm left with this brand new dilemma that is the dilemma that I started with. If the Episcopalians and United Methodists (and the Lutherans and Presbyterians) one day decide to take Jesus seriously (hold your laughter for now!) and become one “even as the Father and I are one”, does that mean out of loyalty to my Methodist mother I would have to leave the church I have loved (and hated) and served lo these many years?

Boy, it really is a mystery (as the Catholics would say) why people are losing interest in the Church!

This just might be the first installment in my journey of how I am becoming a United Episcopal Methodist Buddhist who is becoming ever more moved by His Holiness, The Dalai Lama. But more later, right now I'm getting ready to go on my retreat at this Hindu yoga center in the Berkshires. In the meantime, remember to say your prayers to the One God of All—as the bumper sticker says, “God is too big for any one religion!”

Blessings,
Lama Bruce

SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS AGAIN

Sunday, September 12th begins the 2010-2011 Sunday School Year. Since its Family Sunday, students can sit in church until Pastor Bruce's "Youth Talk" (Watch out for the Rain Stick). After that students can come downstairs for a quick assembly and then off to class:

Preschool and Kindergarten: Miss Caitlyn, Ms. Cindy and Mr. Paul
Elementary: Miss Chrissy, Mr. Todd and Mr. George
Confirmation Class: Ms. Joyce, Ms. Deborah and Ms. Darlene

Many thanks to our Youth Volunteers who will help as classroom assistants as well as help organize the many events we have planned this year, including a first ever Sunday School trip to Adventureland.

Our Youth Volunteers: Anthony Friedell, Sarah Goehring, Juliana Overbeck, Nicki Peluso

UPCOMING EVENETS

Thursday, September 2nd: Finance Meeting

Thursday, September 9th: Church Council Meeting

Sunday, September 12th: Regular Church Hours Resume
Sunday School Resumes
Family Sunday
Coffee Hour

Thursday, September 16th: SPR Meeting

Sunday, October 17th: Coffee Hour & Pumpkin Decorating Contest.

BIBLE STUDY DISCUSSION COURTESY OF KURT SCHIELKE

“The Jesus Factor in Solomon’s Seal: Song of Solomon 08:6”

The Jesus Factor can best be seen in Solomon’s seal as a paradigm to an alternate ratio: “When the radius vector is the base of a right triangle, the ratio of the arcs intercepted by the hypotenuse and its opposite side are 3 to 1” The geometry of Solomon’s seal requires that the hypotenuse to be in a 2 to 1 ratio with the radius vector. The Jesus Factor proves the above ratios by using the respective quadrants of the circumscribed Solomon seal.

NEWS UPDATE:

The Jesus Factor and its nano potential were demonstrated in the class.

BE SURE TO PICK

UP A COPY OF

THE NEW 2010

CHURCH PHONE

DIRECTORY.

COPIES ARE

LOCATED IN THE

NARTHEX

FROM THE LONG ISLAND COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

HOW TO HELP FLOOD VICTIMS IN PAKISTAN

Large numbers of people in all four of Pakistan's provinces have been driven from their homes by the area's worst flooding in more than 80 years. Church World Service Pakistan staff are working urgently to provide the basics — food packages, shelter materials and non-food essentials — to families in need. And CWS medical teams and mobile health facilities are helping to provide emergency health services.

Church World Service has worked in Pakistan for more than five decades and has provided emergency assistance to more than 100,000 people. If you have not already responded to disaster relief efforts in Pakistan through your denomination, please consider supporting the efforts of CWS. More information can be found at www.churchworldservice.org.

SCHOOL KITS COLLECTION

The Sunday School will be collecting items to create school kits for UMCOR during the month of September. With some of the fantastic deals out there, try and pick up some of the items listed below:

- ✦ 1 pair blunt scissors (rounded tip)
- ✦ 3 pads (or loose leaf) of 8 1/2" x 11" ruled paper
- ✦ 1 30-centimeter ruler
- ✦ 1 hand held pencil sharpener
- ✦ 6 unsharpened pencils with erasers
- ✦ 1 eraser, 2 1/2"
- ✦ 1 box of 24 crayons (only 24)

NEWS WRAP UP

Since the last newsletter came out in the winter or 2010, its time to do a mini, photographic “Year in Review”.



Starting at the bottom left with the Picnic photo and moving up:

- 1- The Church Picnic group photo. A beautiful day filled with good food and fellowship, ice cream, games and water slides.
- 2- The Soup Luncheon: Four delicious soups (can you remember them all?) accompanied by a photo lecture on Nicaragua Mission trips.
- 3- (Top left) A photo of the West Hills contingent that went to the NY Annual Conference. This photo made it onto the NYAC website.
- 4- Judy's beautiful quilts from the Memorial Day service
- 5- Sunday School students handing out palms on Palm Sunday.
- 6- Confirmation Class 2010- Anthony Friedell, Juliana Overbeck, Sarah Goehring, Nicole Peluso, Jack Spessard
- 7- The newly installed sink in our kitchen (thanks to Paul, George and Todd)

CAN YOU NAME THE NEWSLETTER?

Instead of a "Photo from the past" section, we will be holding a "Name that Newsletter" contest over the next few newsletters. We will be re-printing articles selected from newsletters of the past. If you can tell me the date (month and year) of when that article appeared you can win a \$10 Dunkin Donuts gift card.

A Special Garden

First, plan five rows of peas: Preparedness, Promptness, Perseverance, Politeness and Prayer. Next to them plant three rows of squash: Squash Gossip, Squash Criticism and Squash Indifference. Then, five rows of lettuce: Let Us Be Faithful, Let Us Be Unselfish, Let Us Be Loyal, Let Us Be Truthful, and Let Us Love One Another. And no garden is complete without turnips: Turn up for Church, Turn Up with a smile, Turn up with determination.

- Dear Abby, July 7, 1996

CAN YOU SOLVE THE MYSTERY?

WORD SEARCH FUN

GENESIS CHAPTER ONE

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| G T H I V F S D S S N G I S I S | BEGINNING RESTED |
| A N T O O R E E U E E S T T T T | CATTLE SEAS |
| O T I U R F A T R Y L H O U S I | CREATED SEASONS |
| F D R N T S R A E Y G A O H T R | DARKNESS SECOND |
| E T O R R I T E G I O H H N A I | EARTH SEED |
| H O F T H O H R L E T E A W R P | EVENING SIGNS |
| W A T E R S M C E I S A E S S S | FIFTH SIXTH |
| G R T S E E D G W S N O S A E S | FIRST SPIRIT |
| R E H A T N E N S D T F I F T H | FOURTH STARS |
| A T L R H V E I I S B E E G T I | FOWL THIRD |
| S N E T E N I N X N E D D N S G | FRUIT TREE |
| S E Z N T O F N T M N N E A R N | GRASS VOID |
| A L I L O A T I H O H V K E I N | HEAVEN WATERS |
| R N A C C O C G C U A N T R F A | LIGHTS WHALES |
| G S A F O W L E R E E M E R A M | MAN WITHOUT |
| E L Y I M A S B H T H I R D G D | MORNING YEARS |