



Summer
2011

West Hills

United Methodist Church Newsletter

From the Pastor...

Summer 2011

Dear Members And Friends Of West Hills!

Greetings in the name of the One who creates and recreates.

Here's wishing you all a wonderful and blessed summer!

I was in the process of writing a piece for this edition of our newsletter that I was calling "Marduk Lives" when I received our episcopal leader, Bishop Jeremiah Park's letter about the recently passed law regarding same sex marriage. I feel that Bishop Park's message to all United Methodists of the New York Annual Conference was so important that I wanted to share it with all of you and save Marduk for later.

Let me simply urge you to read and digest Bishop Park's letter carefully and prayerfully. I pray that it might be the backdrop for any discussions that we have regarding this important moment in our lives as people and communities of faith.

Blessings,

Bruce Anspach, Pastor

Bishop Jeremiah Park writes:

"Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love."
(Ephesians 6:24)

June 27, 2011

Dear United Methodists of the New York Annual Conference:

I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, Prince of shalom, Healer of our brokenness and Hope of the world!

Last Friday Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York signed a bill that will make same-sex marriage legal in New York effective July 24th. Because same-sex marriage is already legal in the state of Connecticut, same-sex marriage will soon be legal within the boundary of the New York Annual Conference.

As you know, the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church affirms that "all persons are individuals of sacred worth," (Paragraph 161.F of the Book of Discipline) and directs us to honor the basic rights and civil liberties of all persons. Still, our Book of Discipline declares that "Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches."
(Paragraph 341.6)

To be very sure, United Methodists in the New York Conference are not of one mind about homosexuality and same-sex marriages or unions. I respect people on both sides of this issue. It is clear to me that two people can study the same Bible, pray to the same God and come to different conclusions about this and many other matters.

"all persons are individuals of sacred worth,"

As difficult as it is for persons who feel passionately about this issue, such openness to other [opinions](#) and beliefs and respect for persons who hold them is one of the hallmarks of being a United Methodist Christian. We believe that God's church is large enough that all of us have a place and a voice and find affirmation as God's beloved as we "go on to perfection."

It is my hope and my prayer that no matter where one stands on the issue, the occasion of the legalization of same-sex marriage within both states of the New York Conference will be an opportunity for us to "embody a beloved community of hope," as the Vision Statement of our New York Annual Conference declares. May God help us to embrace the fullness of God's grace and extend God's love to all our brothers and sisters in Christ, particularly those with whom we disagree, for such a time as this.

Sunday School Moving Up Ceremony

June 12th saw the Sunday School students graduate to the next grade level. Each class provided a snapshot of what they learned during the year. That was followed by a video yearbook presentation, attendance awards and certificates. Teachers and assistants were also celebrated, since without them very little teaching would take place.



The video yearbook highlighted the events of the past year, including the Halloween Party, pumpkin contest, Luncheon with Santa, Christmas Pageant, Easter Egg hunt & party and much much more.

Many thanks to our teachers and volunteers this past year: George & Joyce Friedell, Deborah Overbeck, Todd Winch, Anthony Friedell, Sarah Goehring, Caitlyn Overbeck, Juliana Overbeck, Chrissy Peluso, Nicole Peluso.

If you are interested in teaching or assisting next year, please fill out the form at the back of this newsletter and submit it to the SPR committee no later than August 20th.

West Hills “In the house” at the Annual Conference



Saturday’s festival of mission kicked off with a banner parade of more than 1,500 extra laity and youth in attendance. The banners highlighted the ministry and mission work of each congregation. Also honored were the hundreds who had served as Volunteers in Mission during the past year and the 137 churches that won the Mission Gold Award. Thomas Kemper, Harriett Jane Olsen and Una Jones – all from the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries – were guest speakers.

Midway through the celebration, Bishop Park walked to center stage, and said, “This is the moment you’ve been waiting for!” The arena filled with a roar because the crowd knew that meant just one thing: the bishop’s pushup challenge was about to begin.

He removed his jacket and microphone before dropping to the stage as the crowd counted out 130 quick push-ups. During the 2010 annual gathering, Park had completed 120 pushups to emphasize the connection between spiritual and physical health. Afterward, he promised to repeat the stunt in 2011 and challenged each of the conference’s 475 churches to donate \$1 for each pushup.

Many thanks to congregants from West Hills who attended the annual conference at Hofstra.

Annual Church Picnic

Nearly two dozen parishioners braved unfriendly skies to enjoy the annual church picnic. Bob Schreiber and Rich Columbia fired up the grills and Paul Knorr took over the kids games (since Todd was unfortunately unable to attend).

Prayer requests were immediately put in for better weather next year!



The All-New Prayer Labyrinth

Many thanks to Robert Iredell and his Eagle Scout Project. Robert has built a *Prayer Labyrinth* on the south side of the property. Please join us in September for our dedication of this labyrinth,

Annual Conference Summary by Carol Doyna

The theme for this year's Annual Conference was For Such A Time As This: We Are Heart Warmed United Methodist In Mission. On the closing day churches who marched with their banners used the same theme.

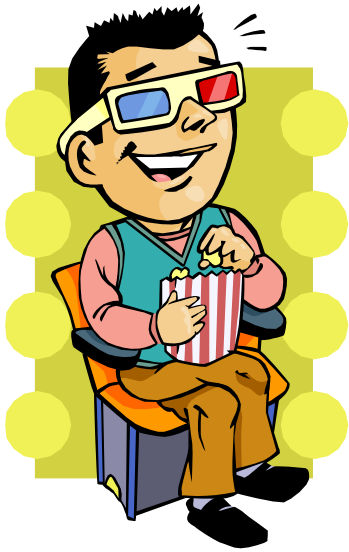
Even upon arriving on June 8th for registration at Hofstra University, I was still not sure about being the delegate for West Hills. There were a lot of doubts in this mind of mine. But, I forged forward and registered. Rather than travel back and forth each day I decided to rent a dorm room and was I ever glad. The days started at 7:00 AM unless you wanted to get started even earlier for a short worship service at 6:15 AM which I did not do and ended between 10:00 - 10:30 PM.

On the evening of opening day we gathered at the arena for some opening statements and a worship service. Our Bishop Jeremiah Park preached the sermon on "Blessed Assurance" and the theme that kept being emphasized was "Be Assured God Loves You And You Cannot Change This". For the response to the word we sang the hymn "Blessed Assurance". Afterwards we got some training on how to use the wireless keypads for voting purposes. No longer do they use the paper ballot system. I felt like I was on the program Who Wants To Be a Millionaire. As requested by the contestant please now vote on your keypads. Opening day was the easiest.

On the second day after breakfast we once again gather at the arena at 8:15 AM for some gathering music lead by the Music Team. They really were very good and a Memorial Service: Remembering the Saints Followed and the preacher this time was our DS the Rev. Adrienne Brewington. One of the clergy that was remembered was Albert Hillard one of the Pastors I had while at the Lucien Memorial United Methodist Church in Kings Park many years ago. The Sermon theme was to remember is to understand who you are in relation to God. I must say that both the Bishop and the DS gave very good sermons. Almost as good as our own Pastor Bruce. After lunch we broke up into various sessions. I attended Section 2: Connectional Ministries and Ministries of Nurture at which time there was a lot of discussion of the three camps Epworth, Kingswood and Quinipet. At the moment Epworth is losing money. Securing a loan to help keep the camps afloat was discussed at great length. There was concern shown about this because who in the end who is going to pay for this loan "Each individual Church" including us. Discussion followed as to why don't we look into better utilizing these camps and looking to ways of making it more beneficial for church groups to use the camps for weekend retreats and etc. I liked this idea very much. So much time was spent on discussing the three camps that it did not leave time to really discuss other issues that were on the agenda.

Friday morning there were more reports given and also a Bible Study based on Matthew 28: 16 - 20 and Jesus gives the disciples the command go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost and the promise of Jesus that he would always be with them to the end of age. What a comfort to know that our Lord is still here for each one of us today. At lunch time all the Lay Speakers were able to have lunch together. Peter O'Neil spoke with us and it looks like a sure thing that instead of the title "Lay Speakers" the title would be changed to "Servant Leaders" with the thought that Lay Speaking is more than just doing a sermon it is serving and administering to people. This is why my Nursing Home Ministering is so important to me. Friday evening I also attended the Ordination Service. Even though it was 3 hours long I did find it to be a very touching time. One of the people recognized was Gertrude Nation Pastor of Union United Methodist Church in East Northport who has become a friend of mine these past few years. During parts of this service they had a person doing Liturgical Dancing which I find very fascinating.

Saturday at lunch time after seeing some of our own people at the Arena I left for home. The traffic was horrible and it took me almost 2 ½ hours to get home. I finally arrived home very tired and exhausted but in a way it was a very happy and fulfilling tiredness. I was nice seeing people that I know and have not seen for a while and meeting new people and had much conversation and the exchange of ideas. I saw Pastor Shim one of our former Pastors and I know God had a hand in having Pastor Shim showing up at just the right time when I felt the most that I cannot do this. He would say something like "Carol you can do this" and it would be just enough to give me the strength to continue. Would I want to do this again next year???? I do not know but I will cross that bridge when I come to it if this is what West Hills wants. It is a year away and a lot can happen in that time. Only God knows and he is not talking.



Annual Outdoor Family Movie Night Friday, July 15th

(raindate- Friday, July 22nd)

Vote for the movie you want to see at

www.westhillsumc.org

**Free Popcorn— Bring chairs, a blanket and
dinner if you like.**

Dinner & Games 6:00-8:00pm

Movie: 8:00pm

Sunday School Volunteer Form

(please tear off and put in collection plate or SPR mailbox)

Yes, I would like to help out in the Sunday School during the 2011-2012 school year!

Name: _____ Grade level preferred: _____

I can help for (circle one or more) Fall Winter Spring Other: _____

Please note: West Hills strives to put one adult in each class every Sunday in order to maintain compliance with *Safe Sanctuary Policies*. All placements are determined by Staff-Parish Relations Committee based on recommendations from Sunday School Superintendent(s).