

## The Pastor's Message

Lent, 2009



WINTER 09

Dear Members and Friends of West Hills UMC,

The beginning of Lent is almost here! "Lent" of course, literally means "spring." And right now, as I write this, we're preparing for the next "wintery mix" to strike. Not to mention that Advent, Christmas and Epiphany are barely over! And, the hard and cold world fiscal crisis does not seem to be about to warm up anytime soon. How can we be thinking about Lent and/or spring already? Sometimes I just can't keep with the pace!

W. H. Auden, in his long celebration of Christmas which he calls "For The Time Being," notices our Christmas-Lenten dilemma. In the concluding section of that splendid work he is reflecting on our experience of putting Christmas behind us when writes:

*...already the mind begins to be vaguely aware  
Of an unpleasant whiff of apprehension at the thought  
Of Lent and Good Friday which cannot, after all, now  
Be very far off. But, for the time being, here we all are.*

"Here we all are," indeed! Ready or not this is where we are and God is waiting for us to show up. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 25. Join us at the church at 7:30 p.m. for our service of reflection and thanksgiving.

Lent is always a time of reflection, self-examination and recommitment as, individually and communally, we prepare for the central event of our faith: Resurrection. But, we need this time of disciple so much more, as our bishop, Jeremiah Park, would say, "In such a time as this." These are, undoubtedly, difficult and trying times. Our world economic system is in shambles and our nation is sinking deep in debt after spending billions on fruitless and ill conceived wars. Humanitarian concerns are at an all time high both here at home and around the world. The resources of churches and other groups dedicated to caring for the suffering and needy are stretched to the breaking point. There has rarely been such a critical moment, at least in most of our life times, as in this Lenten season: "*Here we all are!*"

We are reaping the consequences of unbridled materialism like the world has never seen before. The price to be paid for our worship of wealth and stuff will be dear, indeed. The only thing that can save us from more suffering and disasters of world proportion will be a renewal of a strong spirituality. That alone can counter the terrible crash of the awful delusions of materialism. In our tradition, that means a returning to God as the center and kindness as the theme of our lives. Nothing else will do it! Could it be that God has let us create this desperate situation so we have a chance to face this reality and rediscover how and by what and in Whom we live?

In any case, this Lenten season is a call to turn from banker-driven values, Wall Street and corruption in high places to a new God centered and humane way of living. I believe that God's people are called to lead the way. But, to do that we must get *ourselves* straightened out. This is our chance. I don't know about you, but I need all the help I can get. So I'm asking you to join with our community and all sincerely caring people everywhere to answer God's call and our world's need. Let's make this the most important Lenten season ever! "*Here we all are.*"

I'll see you there!

Blessings,

Bruce

## MISSIONS UPDATE

Since the last newsletter, the Missions Committee has been very active carrying out the mission of the church. In November several food baskets were created for members of the congregation. Additional items were donated to the Huntington Food Council and Helping Hand Mission. The church was able to supply gifts to two community families for Christmas through the gifts collected at the Christmas Brunch. Dozens of hats and mittens were collected throughout the Christmas season and delivered to the Helping Hand Mission.

March is Missions Month! In March, the committee gets into high gear. Ann Spessard will be focusing on the Sunday School mission activities for the year, which will include the current Souper Bowl contest as well as donating funds to the Little Shelter (animal shelter). The committee is also looking into the possibility of having a special Missions speaker on March 29th while Bruce is away. Muffins for Missions will be held March 8th, so bring your appetite and your wallet. Finally, the committee will be returning to the practice of sponsoring a Navajo family. More to come on that!

## Minor Changes in the Upstairs Hallway



If you take a look at the bulletin boards, you will notice that the church events calendar has been moved closer to the sanctuary. If you are chairing a committee, please be sure to put all dates on the calendar!!

A First Aid kit is now located under the mailboxes at the end of the hallway in case of emergencies.

## ***Sunday School Happenings***

The Sunday School presented its annual Christmas Pageant as a gift to the congregation (better than fruitcake) on Sunday, December 21st. Since last year's pageant was very traditional in nature, this year the Sunday School presented a more modern retelling. In the play, Julianna Overbeck was the home-bound mother of a large "brood" of children, all who had just returned from Sunday School. (Yes, it was a stretch to have one of the Overbeck's playing the role of someone with a broken bone...) They retold the Christmas story to their mom, using the figurines from the crèche display to talk about all those involved in the first Christmas. After the performance ended, children (and adults) celebrated downstairs with a birthday cake for Jesus.



*West Hills UMC Sunday School*

*3rd Annual Palm Sunday*

*Easter Egg Hunt*

*Easter Egg Hunt, Crafts and Snacks*

*Sunday, April 5th right after church*



### **REMEMBER WHEN...**

Consecration Program after the church was moved from Jericho Turnpike and expanded. March, 1963

# 4th Annual West Hills UMC Family Christmas Brunch



Open Hearts Open Minds Open Doors: The People of the United Methodist Church

# 4th Annual West Hills UMC Family Christmas Brunch



West Hills United Methodist Church, Huntington Station New York

## 4th Annual West Hills UMC Family Christmas Brunch



Merry Christmas West Hills!

The morning started off with the annual decorating of the West Hills Christmas Tree. With members bringing ornaments from home, the tree is truly a reflection of our church family.



Sunday School students made ornaments at home with a focus on what they would give Jesus if He was born today. After service the festivities truly began. Over 45 members of the West Hills family turned out at the 4th annual Christmas Brunch. Plentiful food and warm fellowship was in the air as parishioners broke bread together.



Carol Stockwell's famous French Toast casserole, roast turkey and baked ham were just some of the yummy foods in the buffet. This was followed by a visit from good 'ole St. Nick.

Children (and adults) were able to sit on Santa's lap to whisper suggestions for presents this year. Santa's bag of goodies was empty by

the time he left, but the kids just moved on to the craft table run by Ann Spessard where they made ornaments for their trees at home. Dozens

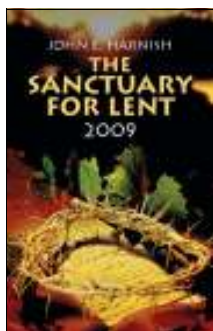


of presents were collected for two local families in need. Heather Nielsen's hand-woven throw was raffled off (and won by Helen Rehfeldt),

with proceeds going to the church. Many thanks to all who came out, as well as to all those who helped make this day a special one for the

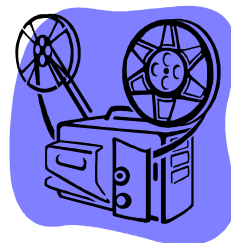


West Hills family! Special thanks to Carol Doyna for assisting us in adopting two local families and to the Missions Committee for organizing the event.



**Lenten Devotionals are now available on the Narthex table.**

**The West Hills Winter Film Festival 2009 continues! Check the Weekly Bulletin or Web Site for the next movie.**





## NEW CHAIR LIFT INSTALLED

The Board of Trustees is happy to announce the installation of a chair lift that can bring parishioners between the rear landing and the lower level. The Trustees have wanted to have this installed for a long time, but funding was not available. A very generous donation from a church member made it possible. Mike Stone (pictured) from Diving Designs Inc. completed the installation in under 2 hours!

### SAVE THE DATE

March 8th: Coffee Hour & Muffins for Missions

April 5th: Palm Sunday & Easter Egg Hunt

April 9th: Holy Thursday Service 7:30pm

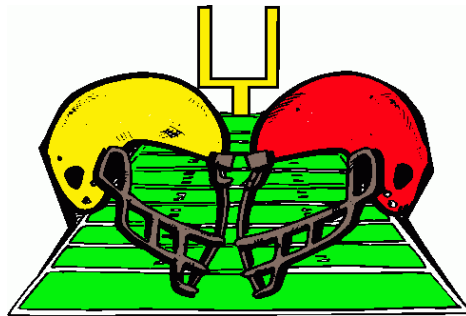
April 10th: Good Friday Service 7:30pm

April 12th: Easter Sunday Service: 10:45

*Check the website and weekly bulletin for additional events*



## 2009 Souper Bowl Game



### Sunday School Saints vs Congregation Cowboys

The Sunday School is challenging the congregation to a "Food-off".  
Whichever team wins after 4 weeks gets a "prize".

The rules are as follows: 20 cans of Soup = 1 Touchdown (7 points); 20 items of other food = Field Goal (3 points)

2 point safety to other team if one team doesn't bring in anything on a particular Sunday

**ALL FOOD RAISED GETS DONATED TO THE HUNTINGTON FOOD COUNCIL**

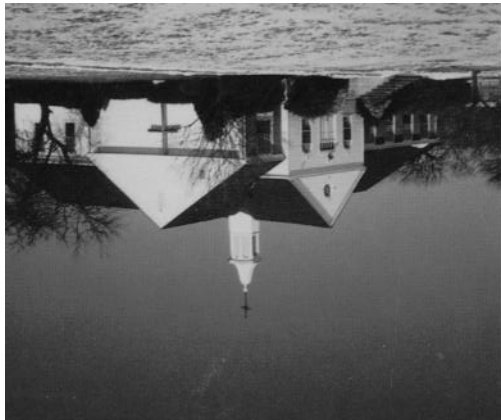
**AND/OR HELPING HAND MISSION**

*West Hills United Methodist Church, Huntington Station New York*

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



West Hills Today



West Hills, circa 1800's



[www.westhillsumc.org](http://www.westhillsumc.org)

Newsletter also available online at:



West Hills United Methodist Church

# Newsletter



Bruce Anspach, Pastor

Todd Winch, Newsletter Editor

LATE WINTER 2009

West Hills United Methodist Church

P.O. Box 467

One West Hills Court

Huntington Station, NY 11746