



WEST HILLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

NEWSLETTER

OPEN HEARTS OPEN MINDS OPEN DOORS...THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WINTER 2010

Dear Members and Friends Of West Hills UMC,

In the name of God who makes all things new, greetings!

Happy and blessed New Year! It doesn't seem possible that we have already completed a full decade of the twenty-first century. But here it is the year 2010! This year will mark ten years that I have been your pastor. I must consider openly and honestly how faithful I have been to this sacred trust. I am well aware that as I do so it is with fear and trembling. Have I really given my best? Have I really been the leader this community needs? I must look seriously and deeply into these questions. I pray that you will honestly and courageously help me with this discernment.

As with every new period in our journeys, this is a time to reflect back over the last year and indeed, the last ten years, to remember and to look ahead. For God's people this should be a time for us to wonder about our faithfulness in this highest calling, as well as to think seriously about the health of our spiritual life together as a community and as families and individuals: Time past and time ahead... what will the next ten years hold for WHUMC, for our whole church and for the world? What does the future hold for you personally as one of God's people called to bear witness to God's redeeming love for the world?

Now that we are coming through the joyous, yet sobering celebration of the birth of Christ, and as we move toward the sobering, yet joyous observance of Lent and Resurrection, let's take time to find some space to sincerely talk about how we are doing as a community of God's people. Do we have a future; and if so what should our vision and reality be? Can we hope to survive as a viable church community without changing? If we need to change, then how? What do we need to be and do to RE-THINK CHURCH? Are we really called by God to stay vital and relevant in this time and place?

These are troubling questions at a time when most of us feel like we've got enough trouble already. We could easily sing along with the old African American spiritual:

"Nobody knows da trouble I seen/Nobody knows but Jesus!" But God often "troubles" us for our own redemption...for our own healing. A troubling gift, indeed! But in the end a Gift none the less!

I would like to invite all of us to prayerfully consider embracing this "troubling gift" of honest sharing and open discussion...and HEALING...and RETHINKING CHURCH as we resume our "Thursday Nite" meetings on **JANUARY 21 at 7:30 at the church**. Not only would I invite you to show up and be part of the trouble...but I want to challenge you to come and open yourself and your community to HEALING AND RENEWAL. GO AHEAD...I DARE YOU! We just might find some ways to embrace new life together! I'll see you there!

Faithfully (I hope),

Bruce Anspach, Pastor

The Christmas Season at West Hills

It was another exciting holiday season at West Hills. Starting with the Contemporary Service run by the Confirmation Class, the Advent season was full of good food, good fellowship and good fun.



December 6th brought with it the annual decorating of the church Christmas tree.



The 21st annual Cookie Walk was a raving success, raising over \$700 for the UMW. Our Annual Family Christmas Brunch was held December 13th. Over 50 people came out to celebrate and collect gifts for a local family in need that West Hills adopted. Thanks to Carol Doyna and Marge Klein for their help!!

Though the Blizzard may have postponed the Sunday School Christmas pageant, it would have taken more than that to cancel it. An extra special thank you to Anthony Friedell who was excellent as a last minute fill-in as Joseph. The entire Sunday School did a fan-tabulous reenacting the birth of our savior. Many thanks to Joyce Friedell, our esteemed director, and the entire Sunday School for their efforts!!



Celebrating the Life of Dave Knorr

Growing up at West Hills is like having a second family— you don't remember the first time you meet family members, you just grow up with them always being there. That's what it was like for me and Dave Knorr. It was as if he was a physical part of the church. When I joined the Trustees, he was there as the quintessential trustee president. He was ever present at work parties, determined to battle against the encroachment by the bushes along the edges of our lawn, using a lawn mower that looked several decades older than him. When I joined the Pageant Committee, he was there, as the lighting/sound/scenery/everything engineer. The most enjoyable committee meetings were those when we watched the previous year's pageant videotape, which Dave had lovely crafted. If you want to see Dave at his best, borrow one of the Pageant tapes from the conference room and watch it.

Though I can't remember the first time I met Dave, I can tell you the time I truly came to know him. We were working on the stable section of the pageant staging area. Dave had found some particularly straight trees that could be used for the reconstruction. The only issue was that these trees were located behind a six foot high fence, down in the sump. While this would discourage most sane individuals, Dave was unphased. Within a few moments he had devised a pulley "contraption" that would help hoist the trees from down in the sump and up and over the fence. It truly was amazing. At that moment, Dave became, for me, a true-life "MacGyver" (and if you don't know who MacGyver is, look him up online). It's a slice in time I remember as if it were yesterday (similar to when I recognized him on the front cover of Newsday after having calculated the amount of his life he spent commuting on the LIRR).

Whether it was developing a "chimes" system, acting as a computer assisted organist, or helping to resolve the squirrel problem in the shed, Dave was the model "go-to" guy. He is someone who would win a season of Survivor—in the first episode, after building an entire village out of bamboo and coconuts (and yes, there would be a 16 inch gauge train that would ferry other survivor castaways back and forth to Tribal Council). If West Hills was an episode of Gilligan's Island, he would be our Professor. West Hills will miss him, and so will I.

THE STARFISH STORY

ORIGINAL STORY BY: LOREN EISLEY

*One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed
a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean.*

Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?"

The youth replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean.

The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die."

"Son," the man said, "don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish?"

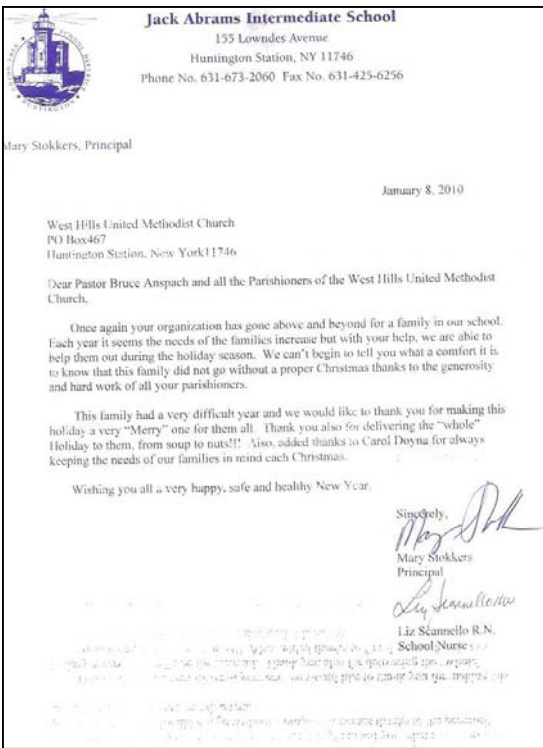
You can't make a difference!"

*After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish,
and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said..."*

I made a difference for that one."

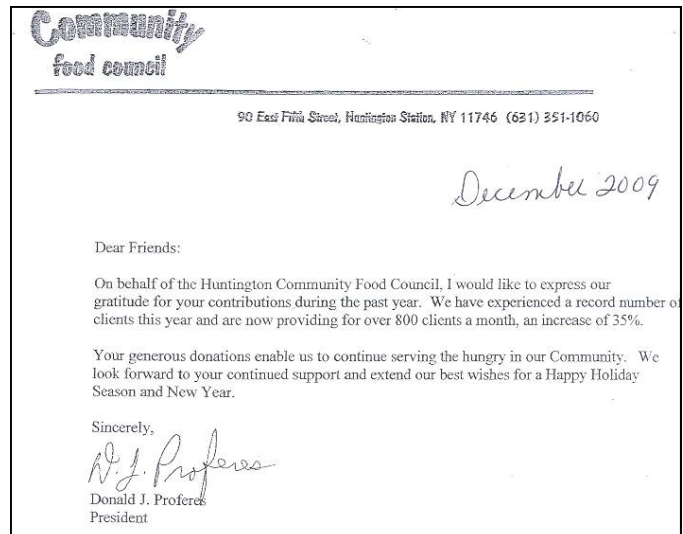
A Season of Thank You's

Our congregation received thank you notes from several places over the past few weeks. We received a certificate of thanks from New York Annual Conference for paying our 2008 Apportionments in full (glad to see they're punctual in sending out the certificates- at least we're punctual in paying for them). So that you don't have to hold your breath til next January, I'll let you know that we also paid our Apportionments in full for 2009.



Story" (see page 2).

We also received letters of thanks from the Huntington School District for the gifts we collected for the family we adopted at our Christmas Luncheon. The Huntington Food Council also sent us a letter of thanks for supporting them during the year, especially at a time when they have had a 35% increase in individuals seeking requests for food.. These are some examples of how West Hills fulfills the "StarFish





Missions Moment

Through the gracious help of the parishioners of West Hills UMC and our Nursery School, we were able to collect dozens of new hats and mittens for the Helping Hand Mission in Huntington Station. Thank you for your help!!!

Nursery School Christmas Pageant

For over 30 years the West Hills United Methodist Church Nursery School has been educating the pre-school children of the Huntington community. The past Christmas, the students donned their “first Christmas” garb and acted out the nativity from 2000 years ago. Many thanks to Deborah Overbeck for her many years of dedication to the program, and everything



Leader to Leaders Workshops

New to a committee? First time chairperson? Feeling burnt out and need some new ideas? The Leaders to Leaders Workshops run through the Methodist Church offer a great opportunity to learn new things and see what other churches are doing. Go to our church website for all the program descriptions.

Food of the Month Program



This Winter, the Missions Committee will be sponsoring several Food Drive initiatives. One such initiative is our “Food of the Month” program, as outlined below:

January: Tons of Tuna – bring in cans of Tuna fish

February: Soup Month (in connection with the Super Bowl). The Sunday School & Missions Committee will be sponsoring a Soup Luncheon after church on February 21st. More info to follow.

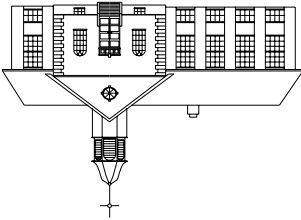
March: Oodles of Noodles – Bring in any type of pasta all month long. Sunday School incentives- If the Sunday School brings in 100 boxes of pasta products during March, there will be Pizza at the Palm Sunday Easter Egg Hunt/Party.

Huntington Station, NY 11746

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West Hills United Methodist Church



www.westhillsumc.org

Newsletter

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Upcoming Events At West Hills

Weekly Sunday Service & Sunday School: 10:45am

Thursday, January 21st: Thursday Night Group Meetings resume

Sunday, February 14th: Special Sunday School Presentation & Fellowship Hour

Wednesday, February 17th at 7:30pm— Ash Wednesday Service / Lent Begins

Sunday, February 21st after church— Soup Luncheon in Jones Hall

Sunday, February 28th at 4:30—West Hills Winter Film Festival begins—Movie:
Earth 2100

Sunday, March 28th: Palm Sunday & Sunday School Easter Egg Hunt & Party

Thursday, April 1st at 7:30pm Maundy Thursday Service

Friday, April 2nd at 7:30 Good Friday Service

Sunday, April 4 at 10:45am— Easter Sunday Service

Sunday, April 11th at 10:00am— Pancake Breakfast