



The Westmorelander

Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Volume 54, No. 3

February 1, 2007

Celebrate at Synod!

“Let It Shine,” the UCC 50th Anniversary Celebration Synod, will be held in Hartford, CT from June 22-26! I’ve heard many questions about the event, so I’ll address the top three here.

“What is a General Synod?”

A General Synod is the national gathering of the UCC, which takes place every other year. Each Synod has worship services, inspiring speakers, information and reports from around the country, and a “business” time when delegates vote on various issues. Whenever the UCC makes a proclamation about a certain issue, that proclamation comes from this representative body. You may remember, for example, that the 2005 Synod issued a pronouncement (among many) on marriage equality. I attended that Synod, and I can say that I was in awe at the power of God working in these people and the process.

“What is so special about THIS Synod?”

This Synod is a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the UCC. In 1957, two denominations (Congregational Christian and Evangelical and Reformed) merged to become the UCC. Their vision was to be diverse and unified; a vision that is still difficult to live out. This Synod will be celebrating that vision, and I emphasize **celebrating!** There will be numerous guest speakers, for example, Bill Moyers, the renowned journalist, and Marian Wright Edelman, president

of Children’s Defense Fund. There will be “Synod in the City,” a carnival-like day with different stages and booths, all with acts that highlight different aspects of the UCC’s Mission. There will also be two days of service projects because social justice is part of whatever we do in the UCC.

“Why should I attend Synod?”

We should all attend Synod because we are part of a church that is bigger than Westmoreland and this is an important reminder. I will take as many high school youth as I can to Synod as their “Mission Trip” this year because participating with other Christians is part of our mission. Getting outside of our self-centered routines is what Mission Trips are about, and this opportunity could not be better for understanding what God is doing in the larger community. I feel refreshed, renewed, inspired, and proud of the UCC when I come back from a General Synod, and **you** can feel that way, too. God shines a light through each one of us, so imagine the brightness of thousands (1,000 youth alone) worshipping and serving together. You can be part of God’s light shining in the darkness. Let it Shine!

In peace,

Amber

For more information on the UCC’s 50th Anniversary Synod, please visit www.ucc.org or speak with Rich or Amber.

Worship Topics & Themes

Sunday, February 4

“Fishing with Jesus –
What’s the Catch?”

Luke 5:1 – 11

Holy Communion

Rev. Rich Smith preaching

Sunday, February 11

“You Can’t Explain Love”

Song of Songs 2:10 – 13

Rev. Rich Smith preaching

Second Sunday Sundown Service

6 pm

“The Rock of Ages and
the Age of Rocks”

A Celebration of Evolution Sunday

Valentine’s Brunch Bring a Friend Sunday



The Board of Membership and Fellowship invites you to attend the annual Valentine’s Brunch on Sunday, **February 11** after worship. We will have breakfast casseroles, fruit, pastry and beverages. The sermon will be “You Can’t Explain Love” with Rich Smith preaching, and the music will include a special instrumentalist as well as the Children’s Choir singing “God’s Love”. BMF encourages you to bring friends or acquaintances that day. The mix of worship and brunch is a great way to introduce them to our church.

Briggs Center Launches Program

The **Briggs Center for Faith and Action** formally launched its program on December 17 with the first meeting of the Board of Directors. The Center adopted as its Philosophy Statement "...to advance the place of God in the world and enrich the lives of the human family through agreed on programs and ministries encouraging hands-on involvement by the people of Westmoreland Church, the Potomac UCC Association and the wider community as well as through limited financial support of targeted initiatives".

The Board elected Robert Maddox as Executive Director (part-time), Robert Shue as Chairperson, Robert Benton as Secretary and Carol Mabry as Treasurer. The Center will function on the income from the original sale of the Briggs Church building and also through seeking financial support from individuals, bequests, grants and other means. It endorsed these ongoing programs and ministries of the Center:

- English as Second language
- Martha's Table
- Interfaith outreach and cooperation with the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington DC
- Ongoing cooperation with City Gate and the Johnening Community Center and Shaw Ministries
- Ongoing cooperation with Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ

The Board made grants to a number of following organizations and initiatives including several that benefit Westmoreland: financial assistance for Westmoreland's Worship Initiative, transition assistance for the 2007 Volunteer Corp, helping to secure guest spiritual leaders during Rev. Smith's sabbatical and assisting with a youth mission trip.

The Center is committed to developing **hands-on ministry involvement** by many people to various organizations such as Jubilee Jobs, agencies supported by BCA, the Baptist Committee on Religious Liberty, the Potomac Association and Central Atlantic Conference of the UCC.

Finally, the Board stated that Carpenter's House should be a place of ministry and community service by individuals, religious and community groups whose purposes are compatible with the guiding philosophy of the Briggs Center for Faith and Action. The Board named a Carpenter's House Committee to oversee and work with the Executive Director in the ministry of the house.

Piano Up, Piano Down

You may have noticed that for the past two months, the piano in the Sanctuary has been up in the Chancel instead of in front of the lectern. The Board of Deacons had decided last fall to try a different configuration for a couple of months, with an eye toward assessing the acoustics and ease of use. By the time you read this, the piano should be back on the floor of the Sanctuary (if not, it will be soon).

We encourage all Westmorelanders to give some thought to the location of the piano and to express your views on this (and any other issues related to the Sanctuary). In the coming weeks, Deacons will be interested in hearing your thoughts, and everybody will have an opportunity to be heard.

Combined Choirs to Present Requiem

The choirs of Westmoreland Congregational UCC, All Saints Lutheran Church (Bowie), and St. Matthew Presbyterian Church (Silver Spring) will combine their 60 voices with an 18-piece orchestra to present two powerful performances of Faure's *Requiem* and excerpts of Handel's *Messiah* on Friday March 30, 8 pm (Westmoreland) and Saturday, March 31, 7 pm (Bowie). The performances are free, but a good-will collection will be taken to benefit Bethesda Cares.

Please support our music program and Bethesda Cares by attending one or both of these exciting performances and tell your family and friends about these concerts. Director of Music, Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez, would welcome your participation if you would like to join in singing at this event. Please contact him: 301-229-7768 or ahernandezvaldez@gmail.com.

Parish Notes

Congratulations to **Bonnie and Otto Hetzel** who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on January 26.

Our prayers of sympathy are extended to Doris Kemper and her children on the death of **Lee Kemper** on January 16. Lee, a former member of Briggs Church, had been with Westmoreland since September. He was actively involved as an usher and as a treasurer for the 2006 Bazaar. A memorial service was held on January 22.

IONA Sponsors Workshop on Aging Baby Boomers and Prime Timers: Take Note

Take Charge of Your Aging! is a new workshop series sponsored by IONA Senior Services. It includes resource sharing and education about **successful aging** including concerns and hopes about growing older. Anyone 50 years or older is invited to attend.

The workshop will run on Wednesdays, 2:30 – 4 pm, **February 21 – March 28**. Whether you are 50 or 80 years old, come find out how to make the most of your “Boomer and Golden years”. Call 202-895-9448 to register. Fee: \$35.

Care for the Caregiver

If you are responsible for the oversight or care of a frail spouse or parent, a chronically ill child or sibling, you are a caregiver! Get some support for this demanding role for both you and your loved one. Connect with resources, programs, and services and share your concerns and joys with other caregivers. IONA Senior Services runs a Caregivers Support Group the third Saturday of every month, 10 – 11 am, led by a social worker. Registration is suggested (202-895-9448).

Christian Education

The Race is On - Middle School youth return for the Amazing Race on Friday, **February 2**, 6 – 9 pm.

Pre-Synod Youth Rally for High School Youth - High School students and their parents are encouraged to attend a gathering at Little River UCC in Arlington on Sunday, **February 11**, 3 – 5 pm to “get the scoop” on attending the Synod in Hartford, CT in June which includes a service project and youth events. Questions? Contact Amber.

High School Lock-In - Be part of World Vision’s 30-hour Famine Lock-In, **February 23**, 8 pm, for youth all over the country. WCUCC will hold its own fast with activities to help alleviate hunger in DC as well as the usual lock-in activities. Contact Amber for further information.

Make It a “Souper” Bowl Sunday - Westmoreland youth will collect your contributions of non-perishable food items and monetary donations on Sunday, **February 4** to help alleviate hunger. Suggested donation: 1 food item or \$1 per attendee at church.

Going Green On January 24 the new Westmoreland Green Group, concerned with making environmental stewardship, sustainability and care for God’s creation central to Westmoreland Church life, held its first full meeting. The group will continue to seek ideas and interest from any and all who would like to be engaged in helping to make Westmoreland a leading congregation on the environment. You don’t have to be an expert to help! For further information or to submit suggestions, contact me at 301-493-4571 or bmusil1@yahoo.com.

Bob Musil

February 3 Leadership Retreat Open to All

The Annual Leadership Retreat will be **open to all** Westmorelanders this year as we will be focusing on how our spirituality is reflected in our worship. Moderator Jeff Eagan stresses the importance of all officers and board members attending the retreat, but wants as many Westmorelanders as possible to participate in thoughtful discussion about worship. Dr. Sid Fowler will lead the session and report on the results of the all-church survey on worship conducted in January.

Join us on Saturday, **February 3**,

9 am - 12 noon
(coffee is available at 8:30 am) in the Social Hall.



Book Clubs

The Women’s Reading Group will meet Wednesday, **February 7**, 7:30 pm at Diane Wagener’s home to discuss **Ghost Light** by Frank Rich. The March selection is **The Heart is a Lonely Hunter** by Carson McCullers, about a deaf-mute man who becomes the confidant of the misfits in his Georgia mill town.



The Wednesday Evening Book Group meets **February 14**, 7:30 pm in the Parlor and will discuss **Things Fall Apart** by Chinua Achebe about the European colonization of Africa from the view of the colonized people. The March selection is **House of the Spirits**, Isabel Allende’s novel of three generations of a family living through a century of violence and turbulence in Latin America.



February 1–17, 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Choir rehearsals Pass Tones 7 Chancel 8-9:30	2 Middle School Youth 6 pm	3 Yoga 9 am Leadership Retreat 9 - 12
4 Phoenix Class 8:45 am Worship & Church Sch 10am “Souper” Bowl Sunday	5 Phoenix Class 12:30 pm Carpenter Hse	6	7 Women’s Reading Grp 7:30	8 Choir rehearsals Passing Tones 7 Chancel 8-9:30	9	10 Yoga 9 am
11 Phoenix Class 8:45 am Worship & Church Sch. 10am Pre-Synod Youth Rally 3 pm Little River UCC	12 Phoenix Class 12:30 pm Carpenter Hse	13	14 Wed. Evening Book Grp 7:30	15 Choir rehearsals Passing Tones 7 Chancel 8-9:30	16	17 Yoga 9 am WCM Faculty Concert 7:30 pm

Senior Minister.....Richard L. Smith
 Minister for Children, Youth and
 Families.....Amber Henry Neuroth
 Minister of Discipleship.....Robert
 Maddox
 Director of Music.....Alejandro
 Hernandez-Valdez
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Office Hours: 9 AM - 5 PM

Newsletter Deadlines

Issue Date	Deadline
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Articles should be emailed to:
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