



The Westmorelander

Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Volume 54, No. 4

February 15, 2007

Looking Toward Lent

If a tradition is established when something is done twice, then we will be observing our traditional **"Jazz Sunday"** on **February 18**, known in the liturgical calendar as "Transfiguration Sunday," or the last Sunday before Lent. We did this last year on this Sunday as well, also with the **Rick Whitehead Trio** and our own **Sanelma Sutton**. It is actually the tradition of many churches to make this Sunday kind of "jazzy," sort of a reflection of Mardi Gras, or at least Shrove Tuesday – the last "blowout" before the somberness of Lent.

This year, **February 18** has also been designated **"Amazing Grace Sunday,"** honoring the hymn by that name written by transformed slave ship captain John Newton, and his influence upon British MP William Wilburforce who worked tirelessly to end the slave trade in England. In fact, a major motion picture called "Amazing Grace" will be released on February 23, which tells that story. I was privileged to see a sneak preview of the movie, hosted by the producer, last month in California. So it all combines – Transfiguration, Jazz, and Amazing Grace – to give us an amazing Service of worship!

We will mark the beginning of Lent with our **Ash Wednesday** service, **February 21**, 7:30 pm. Ash Wednesday may not seem part of the UCC tradition, although it has been part of the UCC Book of Worship for some twenty years now. After having been abandoned

by our Congregational forebears – along with things like stained glass and liturgy – as being "too Catholic," Ash Wednesday was recovered in the ecumenical movement and discovered to predate the division between Protestants and Catholics by several centuries. For the last couple of years we have been doing a service that involves both contemplation and "stations" – movement between stations in the sanctuary where the imposition of ashes, forgiveness, and communion will be offered. We'll use a song I have written, and always close with the creation of some ashes of our own, which are planted in the hope of the transformation of Easter. A unique service not to be missed.

On the **First Sunday of Lent, March 25**, our worship will include a brief "Service of Installation" conducted by the Potomac Association, officially recognizing Bob Maddox and Amber Neuroth as ministers of Westmoreland. In the United Church of Christ the local church calls its own pastors, but it is the Association, with which we are in covenant, that installs them in their positions. So having had several votes and celebrations already, this is the final thing we need to do to make Amber and Bob "official." Associate Conference Minister Kwame Osei Reed and others from the Association will be present to participate in our worship that day.

Lots going on – and that's just in eight days! See you in Church!

Rich

Worship Topics & Themes

Sunday, February 18
Jazz Sunday - Rick Whitehead Trio
and Sanelma Sutton
"Now I See"
Luke 9:28-36
Rev. Rich Smith preaching

Wednesday, February 21
Ash Wednesday Service
Imposition of Ashes
Communion
7:30 pm

Sunday, February 25
First Sunday in Lent
Luke 4:1-13
"Temptation: Honor
and Opportunity."
Rev. Amber Neuroth preaching

Prime Timers "Visit" the White House



Rev. Dr. Bob Maddox will speak at the Prime Timers Luncheon on **February 21**, discussing his experiences in the Carter White House. All Westmorelanders and friends 65 and over are invited to attend. Gather at 12 noon in the Parlor for conversation and nibbles, followed by luncheon at 12:30. Cost: \$7. Make a reservation during Coffee Hour at the What's Happening Table or by calling Nona Cox at 301-229-6334. Hosts: Pat Barnett-Brubaker and Bru Brubaker and JoAnn and George Harris.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days

March 9 - 12, Doubletree Hotel, Crystal City, Virginia

You are invited to attend the 2007 Ecumenical Advocacy Days Conference, "...and How are the Children?" This is the largest ecumenical conference of its kind - convening over 1,000 participants from every denomination and every state, who come to learn about domestic and international policy, participate in ecumenical worship, get advocacy training, and raise their voices to their Congressional leaders. The conference will address issues related to Africa, Latin America, Middle East, and the United States. Marian Wright Edelman, Rev. Cliff Kirkpatrick (Clerk of PCUSA), and prominent members of Congress will address the conference. I would love to see Westmoreland well represented this year! Register at www.advocacydays.org, for \$150.

We need many volunteers at this large conference. Please contact me directly or sign up outside Amber's office.

Michael Neuroth

Ecumenical Advocacy Days Coordinator
www.advocacydays.org

Scholarship Recipient Sends Thanks

The 2006 recipient of the **Jan and Gordon Forbes Scholarship** at Bethlehem University in the Holy Land (established in 1999 by Westmorelanders), is **Rula Oassis** is a third-year student majoring in Social Work and minoring in Psychology. From her letter to Robert Mertz:

"I've enjoyed the past two years here but this year is now more difficult because of my major subjects. Now, I'm doing my practice at Epheta - a special school for children with hearing and speech difficulties - and I learn how to deal with clients and how to do assessment and diagnosis.

I am from Beit Sahour and belong to a family of nine which includes my parents, grandfather, 3 sisters and 2 brothers. There are 3 of us studying at the university. ...Three others are still in school. With all these family circumstances, my family and I are very grateful for this scholarship. If you have the chance to visit the Holy Land, please come and see us and I hope to meet you too.

I wish you God's blessings - for you, your family and for the family of Jan and Gordon Forbes, hoping that you will continue to help us Palestinian students in our education. Best wishes.

Gratefully yours,
Rula"

Church Attendance 2006

A question we are sometimes asked is "How many people, on average, attend Sunday worship?". The count is taken during the sermon. Later, the teachers are added to the "Worship" count and children are in the "Church School" count. Worship figures include children (except nursery) on those Sundays when we do not hold church school and children attend the entire worship service, e.g. Easter, Children & Youth Sunday. Because July and August attendance is well below average, and because the UCC national office asks for our "10 best months attendance", (minus July and August for WCUC) that is also reported:

Average weekly attendance for 12 months:	Average weekly attendance for 10 best months:
Worship 135	Worship 147
Church school 38	Church school 42
Combined 173	Combined 189

Best Sunday worship attendance: Easter - 306
Christmas Eve: 5 pm - 309 11 pm - 87

Many thanks to our ushers for their efforts in counting people each Sunday and to Amber for her effective reporting of Church School attendance.

Where Can I Take My Stuff?

Bazaar 2007 is many months away! Please **do not bring any items for the bazaar to the church** until Amy Wooden announces that we are accepting them. We do not have room to store anything at this time. In any case, **we never accept clothing**. Here is the alternative: The Community Ministry of Montgomery County (CMMC) will accept your usable furniture, household items and gently used clothing. These items are made available to those in our community who need them most. Go to SHAREmc.com where you can fill out a form stating what you have to donate or call 240-361-1736. You may also place used clothing in the green bin in the parking lot, the contents of which benefit CMMC.

Souper Bowl Sets Record

Westmoreland youth collected 15 food items and \$350 in cash - - a new WCUC record - - on Souper Bowl Sunday. Thanks to all who helped collect and to the many generous donors.

Join a Choir of Soaring Voices

Westmorelanders have more compelling reasons than at any time in years to join the Chancel Choir and strengthen it as a force for fellowship, artistic beauty and worship. During the past several months, three changes have energized the choir. First, the Washington Conservatory has brought a passel of accomplished musicians under our roof. Second, many musically talented people from Briggs have reinforced our tenor, alto and soprano sections. Finally, we are now led by Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez, an excellent and gifted Director of Music.

The choir is building on a long, solid tradition. One token of this is the 1,000 compositions in our library. Westmorelanders who join the choir in the next few weeks will combine with two other regional choirs for performances on March 30 and 31 of **Requiem** composed by Gabriel Faure and parts of Handel's **Messiah**.

Membership in the choir requires no extraordinary musical talent, only enthusiasm, teamwork and a desire for improvement. Four gifted leaders for every section -- soprano, alto, tenor and bass -- guide us measure for measure. Also, the choir requires a limited time commitment. Rehearsals begin at 8 pm on Thursdays and run usually until 9:30 and sometimes to 10. We also practice for about 30 minutes on Sunday morning beginning at 9:15. We take summers off.

Music is art expressed in time. Because of this evanescence, great music encapsulates the challenges, lessons and joy of life itself. Liturgical music is one of the highest forms of fellowship and praise of God. Every week in the sanctuary, the choir tries to craft from out of the clangor and confusion of the workaday world moments of the sublime. Please join us.

Jim Tyson

Contact: Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez 301-229-7768

Literary Reading to Benefit Partner School

Join us on Friday, **February 23**, 7:30 pm in the Social Hall when novelist **Mary Kay Zuravleff** and poet and fiction writer **Doug Lang** will read from their work. The reading is free; voluntary donations will be accepted to benefit the Marie H. Reed Community Learning Center in Adams-Morgan, Westmoreland's Partner School. A book-signing and reception will follow.

Doug Lang is an expatriate Welsh writer who teaches in the Academic Studies Department at the Corcoran College of Art and Design. He has published novels, stories, poetry, reviews, and essays. A volume of his selected poems is forthcoming from Edge Books.

Mary Kay Zuravleff is the author of two novels. **The Bowl is Already Broken**, has been described by The New York Times as "a tart, affectionate satire of the museum world." Her first novel, **The Frequency of Souls**, won the Rosenthal Award from the American Academy of the Arts and the James Jones First Novel Award. Mary Kay and Picador, her publisher, have generously agreed to donate all the proceeds from the sales of her books following the reading to the Marie Reed Learning Center.

Parish Notes

Our prayers of sympathy are extended to:

Ed Carlson and his sons on the death of **Elizabeth Carlson**, who died peacefully, surrounded by her family, on January 18 in Edina, MN. Liz had been a member of Westmoreland for 31 years, actively involved in the life of the church, particularly as a member of the Chancel Choir. A memorial service was held on Thursday, January 25 in Wayzata, MN.

Sally Smith, whose mother died in Texas on December 14.

Book Groups

The Women's Reading Group
The Heart is a Lonely Hunter
 by Carson McCullers
March 7, 7:30 pm
 Bonnie Hetzel's home



Wednesday Evening Book Group
House of the Spirits
 by Isabel Allende
March 14, 7:30 pm in the Parlor

Have Wheels, Will Drive

The District of Columbia Meals on Wheels program is in dire need of volunteers to drive or deliver meals in two areas. You may volunteer weekly or once per month, three hours, 9 am – 12 noon, any day Monday through Friday.

Please call the program office if you can drive or deliver for either of these two areas in need: Georgetown-Ward Circle (202-966-8111) or New York Avenue (202-393-3949).





February 15—28, 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				15 Choir rehearsals Pass Tones 7 Chancel 8-9:30	16	17 Yoga 9 am WCM Faculty Concert 7:30
18 Worship & Church Sch 10am Jazz Service	19 <i>President's Day</i> Office closed Boards Meet 7:30 pm	20	21 Prime Timers 12 Noon Ash Wednesday Service 7:30 pm	22 Choir rehearsals Passing Tones 7 Chancel 8-9:30	23 Literary Reading 7:30 pm High School Lock-In 8 pm	24 Yoga 9 am Guitar Concert 8 pm
25 Worship & Church Sch. 10am	26	27 Sandwich Making 10:30 am Exec Comm 7:30 pm	28			

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
 Newsletter Editor.....Janet Moyer
Office Hours: 9 AM - 5 PM

Newsletter Deadlines

Issue Date	Deadline
Mar 1	Feb 15
Mar 15	Mar 2

Articles should be emailed to:
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