



The Westmorelander

Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Volume 55, No. 3

February 1, 2008

Singing and Good Health: What's The Connection?

Did you know that research has shown a connection between health and singing? The following is excerpted from an article from the School of Public Health at UC Berkeley's *Wellness Letter* (December 2007, Volume 24, Issue 3):

Singing and asthma: Studies have found that singing helps people with asthma and bronchitis because of the deep breathing, and because a variety of muscles, such as the diaphragm, get a workout. There's even some evidence that singing can help suppress snoring.

...and **the immune system:** Researchers in Germany studied antibodies (part of a healthy immune response) and stress hormones in members of an amateur choir, comparing levels when the singers were singing or just listening. Their stress hormones went up when they listened, and their antibodies went up when they sang, possibly because singing made the singers feel good and they didn't like just listening.

...and **growing older:** In a survey called "Creativity and Aging" from researchers at George Washington University, members of senior chorales in the District of Columbia, San Francisco, and Brooklyn reported better health and fewer falls than non-singers.

...and **Alzheimer's:** A British branch of the Alzheimer's Society reports that singing is helpful for patients with dementia. Singing familiar songs and learning new ones can help build self-esteem and alleviate loneliness. Though there is no proof that engaging in such memory-dependent exercises as singing or learning new mental skills can prevent Alzheimer's, many experts think such activities may at least help delay the onset of memory problems in some people.

...and **sociability:** Chorus America, an organization of singing groups, conducted a survey a few years ago, and found that more people in the U.S. and Canada take part in choral singing than in any other performing art, and that most singers say that singing in a chorus builds social confidence.

...and **human intelligence:** Walter Freeman, a famous neurobiologist at UC Berkeley, believes that singing and dancing are genetic in origin, and that they helped the brain evolve. They have also served as a means of transmitting knowledge from one generation to another.

Please, don't delay; join the choir!

Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez
Director of Music

Worship Themes & Topics

Sunday, February 3

Transfiguration/Jazz Sunday
Washington Conservatory Traditional Jazz Ensemble.
Matthew 17:1-9

Wednesday, February 6, 7:30 pm

Ash Wednesday Service
Imposition of Ashes
Holy Communion

Sunday, February 10

First Sunday in Lent
"Not by Bread Alone"
Bible Presentation Sunday
Matthew 4:1-11
Rev. Rich Smith preaching

Valentine's Brunch

Bring a Friend Sunday - February 10

Enjoy breakfast casseroles, fruit, pastries, beverages and the company of your fellow Westmorelanders following the worship service. **Bring a friend or acquaintance** and introduce him or her to our church!

Sponsored by The Board of Membership and Fellowship

Ash Wednesday

Each year as we begin the Ash Wednesday service, I say something like this:

“We gather in the stillness of evening
to worship God,
who has set the stars to give light in the darkness,
and given us Christ to give light to the world.
“Tonight, we begin a season in which
that light momentarily fades,
a time when we pay attention to the
darker side of life
and of being human.
“Our journey moves more inward,
we become more introspective,
and even penitential.
“The colors turn more somber,
to purple and gray and black,
and the sound of Alleluia! fades.
“What we do tonight is very traditional,
some would say ‘Catholic,’
although its origins go back nearly a millennium
before the Protestant reformation.
“The liturgy is more recent, and the service has been
refashioned to be both contemplative and active...”

I then go on to describe how we will listen to the scripture lessons, sit in quietness, chant and pray, and then rise to visit “stations” where we may receive the imposition of ashes, a word of forgiveness, and holy communion. The service concludes with the burning of our sins – in the form of papers on which we have written our confessions – and then the ashes are spread in the Memorial Garden.

Those of us who participate have found this a most meaningful way to begin the season of Lent. I hope you’ll join us!

Rich Smith
Senior Minister

Caregivers: Take Note

Iona Senior Services is offering a one-hour interactive session, “Caregiving Near or Far” for caregivers of the young, the old or in-between. Learn to navigate the stresses, and find the joys, of the caregiving role: Wednesday, **February 6**, 8 – 9 am. A light breakfast will be served. RSVP to Justin at jpickens@iona.org or 202-895-9416 by February 4.

Westmoreland’s Live Calendar

Have you checked out the new **live calendar** on the Westmoreland website? Events are updated as they are scheduled. You can “see into the future” by looking at Westmoreland events in the months to come. Visit the website at www.westmorelanducc.org and click on “Live Calendar”. The “shortcut” to its location on the website is www.westmorelanducc.org/livecalendar.html. Put that address in your browser, then “bookmark” it or add it to your “favorites.”

Plan to Attend the Westmoreland Leadership Retreat

Our 2008 Leadership Retreat will take place on Saturday, **February 9**, 9 am- noon. We will focus on a particular aspect of “Greening and Growing the Spirit”: membership development. You do not need to be a board leader or member to attend. Every Westmorelander with energy, ideas, and opinions about membership development is welcome.

Stay tuned for further details about the program and location.

Stewardship Campaign 2007: Final Report

This year’s FY 2008 Stewardship Campaign, “Greening and Growing the Spirit” has essentially equaled the previous Westmoreland record for total dollars pledged! 156 Westmorelanders have pledged a total of \$541,753. This compares to the previous high for FY 2005 of \$544,262 set by 193 pledgers. With fewer pledgers, we raised nearly the same amount as our record high, making our current performance even more amazing.

Most noteworthy, this year’s average pledge of \$3,473 definitely set a new WCUCC record by a wide margin! Thank you to all Westmorelanders for your great generosity.

Bob Musil
Stewardship Chair

Never place a period where God has placed a comma.

Gracie Allen



Volunteer Opportunities

Making a Difference at Shaw Ministry

The Shaw Ministry (located at R and 7th in DC with an adjacent Metro stop) is expanding its After School Program and seeks volunteers as tutors and/or mentor-friends. The After School Program serves two sets of age groups: 2nd-5th graders and 6th-9th graders. Ideally tutors could come one afternoon a week from 3:30 pm-5:30 pm to assist children with their homework and/or with other educational activities. Mentor-friends would hopefully meet with students at Shaw twice a month at the same times.

The Executive Director says he could also use volunteer clerical help, especially in things like sending out thank you letters to contributors, assisting with grant applications, and helping with board reports. Computer skills in word processing are a necessity.

If you are interested in being a tutor, a mentor-friend, or in providing clerical help, please contact Shaw Ministry Executive Director, Rev. Robbie Morganfield at robbifield@yahoo.com or on his cell phone at 817-797-0924. Or contact SCM Board president, Barbara McDowell at bmcowell@legalaiddc.org or at work, 202-661-5972 or at home, 703-354-8432.

Hospice Caring

Since 1989 Hospice Caring, Inc. has been providing, at no charge, practical and emotional support to adults and children facing life-limiting illness and grief. Hospice Caring has opportunities for those who would like to facilitate adult or children's grief groups, or become a caregiver and share in someone's end-of-life journey. Training is scheduled for March 4, 5, and 6. For more information or to register please call Karen or Penny at 301-869-4673. Make a difference in the lives of others and become part of the Hospice Caring family.

Thanksgiving in February

Help the Hungry by Dining Out

You can help hungry people in Montgomery County by eating breakfast, lunch or dinner out at participating restaurants that will donate 10%, 15% or 20% of their **February 26** receipts to Interfaith Works. Gather your friends or neighbors in a group and make a dinner party! Pick up a brochure in the Social Hall or visit www.thanksgivinginfebruary.org.

Children's and Youth Ministries

Family Worship Night is on Saturday, **February 2**, 5 – 7 pm. Bring a dish to share at our potluck in the Social Hall before we head up to the Sanctuary to learn about several different aspects of the worship service. Stations will focus on acolyting, communion, the pulpit and the lectern, the collection, prayer, and the organ and choir. This is a great opportunity for families to explore worship together.

Middle School youth (grades 6, 7 and 8) are invited for a Valentine-themed evening of fellowship, games and food Friday, **February 15**, 6:30 – 9 pm in the Youth Room. Invite a friend, if you like. RSVP: Jessica at jpetersen@westmorelanducc.org.

Harry and Christianity

The January 15 issue of **The Christian Century**, on pages 24-27, has an article on Christian themes in Harry Potter entitled "A Wizard's Mission." The magazine and a photocopy of the article (both of which can be signed out) are on the periodical table under the window in the Library. At 823.914 on the shelves, we have Connie Neal's **The Gospel According to Harry Potter**.

Women's Book Group

The **February 6** gathering will be held at Bonnie Hetzel's home at 7:30 pm. The group will discuss **The Most Famous Man in America** by Debby Applegate. RSVP to Bonnie at 301-229-8895.

Parish Notes

Roberta Marshall extends her thanks to all who sent notes and cards on hearing of Hayward's death in October.

Congratulations to **Jean Lutterman** who marked her 80th birthday on January 3. Her children surprised her with a party that included about 100 family and friends and staged a musical tribute to celebrate her "first 80 years".

Congratulations to these Westmorelanders who, on February 2, will mark fifty years as members:

Robert and Donna Boies
Thorndike and Janet Saville

The Westmorelander
Westmoreland Congregational UCC
1 Westmoreland Circle
Bethesda, MD 20816
www.westmorelanducc.org



February 1 - 15, 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 WCM Concert 8 pm	2 Family Worship Night 5-7 pm
3 Jazz Sunday Fellowship Bkfst 8:30 am Worship & Ch. School 10 am Baby Shower 11:30 am	4	5	6 Ash Wednesday Worship 7:30 pm	7 Chancel Choir 7:45 - 9:45 pm	8	9 Leadership Retreat 9 - 12 Noon
10 Worship & Ch. School 10 am Valentine's Brunch 11:30 am Confirmation 4 pm	11	12 Mid-East Comm. 4 pm	13	14 Chancel Choir 7:45 - 9:45 pm	15 Middle School Youth 6:30 - 9 pm	

Senior Minister.....Rev. Richard L. Smith
Director for Children's & Youth Ministries...Jessica Petersen
Minister of Discipleship....Rev. Dr. Robert L. Maddox
Director of Music....Dr. Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez
Newsletter Editor.....Janet Moyer

Office Hours: 9 AM - 5PM

Newsletter Deadlines

Issue Date	Deadline
Feb 15	Feb 4
Mar 1	Feb 17

Articles should be emailed to:
jmoyer@westmorelanducc.org

