



The Westmorelander

Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Volume 55, No. 34

February 15, 2008

Learning to Pray

The forty days of the season of Lent are a reflection of the Biblical memory of Jesus beginning his ministry by spending forty days in the wilderness in prayer and fasting. While we're not going to make much of fasting (not with OUR coffee hours!), I thought that this Lent, in response to yearnings uncovered in our Worship Initiative, we would pay special attention to prayer.

There is a great longing to pray effectively, to connect with the Holy, to encounter a mystery larger than ourselves, both in corporate worship and in our daily lives. Diana Butler Bass identifies prayerful "discernment" and "silence" as two practices common to vital churches.

It's clear we at Westmoreland can do more to learn and grow in our practice of prayer. And so during this season of Lent, we're attempting to meet this need in several ways: Bob and I will be devoting several sermons to the topic of prayer; Bob will offer a special class; we will have one especially "contemplative" service; and each Sunday we will be teaching and practicing different forms of prayer, knowing that there is no "one size fits all" approach. What works for some may not be appealing to others. But in the end, we will not just talk about prayer, we will actually **do** it, and in that way, follow Jesus, which is what Lent is really about.

See you in Church!

Rich

Annual Meeting 2008

At the January 27 Annual Meeting, the congregation approved the 2008 budget of \$820,690, which includes pledges of 520,083 (assuming a 96% fulfillment). There was a discussion about the inclusion of \$40,000 from the Mabry Fund. The background and explanation for that is covered in an article elsewhere in this issue. The congregation heard reports from officers and board chairs and voted a full slate of nominations. Incoming Moderator, Sarah Wilson, offered her vision for the upcoming year, with an emphasis on membership development.

Worship Themes & Topics

Sunday, February 17

Second Sunday in Lent

"I Don't Know How to Pray"

Romans 8:26-27, Matthew 6:1-13

Rev. Rich Smith preaching

Sunday, February 24

Third Sunday in Lent

"Help in the Hard Place"

Exodus 17:1-7

Rev. Dr. Bob Maddox preaching

Prentis Mabry: The Legacy The "Mabry Fund", the Briggs Center for Faith and Action, and Westmoreland Church

Prentis and Margaret Mabry and their two daughters, Shirley Mabry Stubbs and Carol Mabry became founding members of Briggs Memorial Baptist Church in the early 1950's. Prentis, a gifted young Missouri farm boy, first ventured to Washington, DC to work in the 1930 census, then returned home. After FDR was elected in 1932, he and his family returned to work in the reconstituted Department of Agriculture and build a life together in the city.

A quiet, frugal man who lived fully and richly, Prentis never deprived his family of what they needed or wanted. Nevertheless he lived the simple life. Fancy clothes and cars never entered his mind. He, Margaret, and their daughters loved music and were good at it--choir, piano, brass -- they did it all. Prentis never met a broken anything he could not fix, from appliances at their home on Dana Place to the air conditioning at the church building on Massachusetts Avenue. From his small garden plot in their backyard, he raised a plethora of fresh vegetables the family froze or canned and shared with others.

Prentis taught himself the intricacies of the stock market to considerable advantage. Upon his death at

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Prentis Mabry *continued from page 1*

age 98, he made a substantial bequest to Briggs Church to help maintain their handsome building and a full ministry program despite declining numbers.

As negotiations between Briggs Church and Westmoreland Church neared conclusion, Briggs Church leaders enthusiastically voted to convey the remainder from Prentis' bequest, approximately \$106,000, to Westmoreland as an aid in the transition and with no strings attached. So the item in the Westmoreland budget labeled the Mabry Fund is well named. Prentis Mabry, his legacy, and family investment in God's work live on, gratefully memorialized in the naming of Westmoreland's Room 35 the Mabry Room.

Thus, the Mabry fund gift did not come from the sale of the Briggs property to the Washington Jesus Baptist Church, which took place the year before conversations started with Westmoreland. Proceeds from the sale formed the financial backbone of the Briggs Center for Faith and Action. As part of the negotiations between Briggs and Westmoreland, the Briggs congregation voted itself out of existence while voting in the creation of the Briggs Center for Faith and Action.

The commitment of the Center is to perpetuate the grand life of Briggs Church and the host of faithful servants who found spiritual life and fulfillment through it for half a century. In addition to a vigorous ten-year old program of teaching English as a Second Language, the Center contributes to a number of local self-help organizations. Likewise the Center looks forward to supporting selected ministry needs through Westmoreland in keeping with the Center's overall ideals.

The future seems bright and productive both for the Briggs Center and Westmoreland. I remain deeply grateful for the providence of God, Prentis Mabry, and the far-sighted leadership of everyone involved that has brought us to this fortuitous moment together.

Rev. Bob Maddox
Minister of Discipleship

**Never place a
period where God has
placed a comma.**

Gracie Allen

**Thanksgiving in February****Help the Hungry by Dining Out**

A reminder: You can help hungry people in Montgomery County by eating breakfast, lunch or dinner out at participating restaurants that will donate 10 - 20% of their **February 26** receipts to Interfaith Works (formerly Community Ministry of Montgomery County). Make plans with your friends, neighbors, family, service groups, co-workers -- anyone with whom you would like to share a meal. Pick up a brochure of participating restaurants in the Social Hall or visit www.thanksgivinginfebruary.org.

Lenten Prayer Retreat

What is prayer? Is prayer possible? Are we simply talking to ourselves? If God knows everything, what use it for me to pray?

Bob Maddox will lead two mini-retreats on prayer: Monday, **February 25**: 12:30 pm and then repeat the material at 7:30 pm. Both will be held in the Carpenter's House, next door to the former Briggs Church. Materials will be drawn from a Kerygma study guide, from John Shelby Spong and, most of all, from the group's collective experience. This study will fit in with a series of sermons Pastor Rich Smith will preach during Lent.

Meet Our New Members

Please introduce yourself and welcome our newest members who joined on January 27:

Margaret Fagg has been attending Westmoreland since last summer. She quickly became involved with our sandwich-making group and has made a number of friends in the congregation. She lives in Bethesda, is retired and enjoys reading, travel and bridge. She joined by affirmation of faith.

John Parachini has been attending Westmoreland since last spring. He is a researcher for Rand Corporation. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing. He and his wife, Hadley, have a daughter, Julia, who is 5 years old. They reside in Washington. John joined by affirmation of faith.

Women's Book Group

The group will meet **March 5**, 7:30 pm and Alice Hogarty will host. The book is **The Glass Castle** by Jeannette Walls. RSVP to Alice at 301-320-6673.

Word of Witness

Stacey and Casey Fannon offered these words of witness during the worship service on November 4:

Stacey: Casey and I started coming to Westmoreland Church about four years ago. Bridget, our oldest daughter, was around one year old and I was pregnant with Megan. Our family was growing. We wanted our children to believe in God and to be part of a Christian community.

Casey: I grew up in a Congregational church and Stacey grew up in a Catholic church. After moving to Washington we visited several churches in the area. Over a period of four years we tried several denominations. During this time we were married by a Baptist minister. But none of the churches we attended felt right to us for a variety of reasons. When we began to search for a church home, we knew we wanted a protestant denomination. So we decided to try a Congregational Church.

We did an internet search and found Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ. Westmoreland fit our immediate criteria. It was Congregational – although we had no idea what UCC was at that time. It was close to home. AND, it had child care during the service.

Stacey: Janet Moyer enthusiastically greeted us on our first Sunday. We immediately felt welcome. We came back again and again. We both liked the thought provoking and spiritual sermons. Westmoreland reminded us of New England and of Casey's church back home in Massachusetts. Bridget loved playing with Mia in the nursery and at Coffee Hour. Casey and I loved Coffee Hour, too. It was a great place to meet people in a casual environment. People would come up to us and introduce themselves. It was during Coffee Hour when we were asked to serve as The Holy Family in the Christmas Pageant. It was also in Coffee Hour when Mary Hallward-Driemeier invited me to join BCE. We knew we wanted to be part of this community.

Casey: After attending Westmoreland for a while, we were more convinced that this was the right church for us. We liked that Westmoreland was open and affirming. We liked that Westmoreland accepted women, gays, and lesbians as leaders in the church. We liked that Westmoreland did not take the Bible literally and welcomed independent thought. We liked that Westmoreland had congregational meetings and that major decisions were voted on by the

congregation. At the first church meeting we attended it was clear that people held Westmoreland close to their hearts and cared for the community a great deal.

Stacey: We loved Westmoreland so much that we decided to become members and to get more involved. Over time, after two baptisms, BCE meetings, Trustees meetings, Dinners for Eight, sermons, play-dates, and retreats, our love for Westmoreland has grown. We love Westmoreland now because of the people and the relationships we have made here. It's you, the members and friends of Westmoreland, who have touched our lives and hearts in simple and profound ways. It was Amber who spoke to me about God – a loving and compassionate God, and Jesus – a divine yet very human Jesus. It was Bob and Elizabeth Maddox who visited us in the hospital after Gillian was born. It was all of you who cooked us dinners. It was the phone call I received last week asking me to bake for the Bazaar yesterday. It is the many people who donate Thanksgiving baskets, Christmas presents, time, and money to those less fortunate in our community and afar.

Casey: For all these reasons and more, we give our money, time, and talents to Westmoreland. So, as we prepare for Consecration Sunday on November 18, reflect on what Westmoreland means to you and please pledge generously.

Parish Notes

Congratulations to **Gail and John Edie** on the birth of their sixth grandchild, Quinn, (the first boy!), born to Samantha and Pete Shanley, who are currently residing in Munich, Germany.

Our sympathy is extended to **Jane Williams** on the death of her aunt, Ola Williams. Services were held on February 6 in North Carolina.

Prime Timers

February is not just for presidents' birthdays; it is for lovers, too. All Westmorelanders over 65 are invited to join the Prime Timers for lunch on Wednesday, **February 20**, 12 Noon and share their story of "How I Met my Spouse." Jean Lutterman will provide a romantic interlude including some of the old love songs of the forties and fifties. Requests for your special song should be made to Jean. Sign up during Coffee Hour at the What's Happening Table, or call Nona Cox at 301-229-6334. Cost is \$7.

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



February 15 - 29, 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					15 Middle School Youth 6:30	16
17 Worship & Ch. School 10 am	18	19	20	21 Chancel Choir 7:45 - 9:45 pm	22 Young Professionals 7 pm	23
24 Worship & Ch. School 10 am Confirmation 4 pm	25 Lenten Prayer Retreat 12:30 pm Repeats at 7:30 pm Carpenter's Hse	26 Sandwich- making 10:30 am	27	28 Chancel Choir 7:45 - 9:45 pm	29 LEAP YEAR!	

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

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Articles should be emailed to:
jmoyer@westmorelanducc.org

