



The Westmorelander

August 2014

*A newsletter for the congregation and friends of
Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ*

This summer, we are giving our Sanctuary a much-needed makeover-- we are gussying up our place of worship. The Board of Christian Education is also making some changes to make our church a lovely, caring and safe sanctuary for all Westmoreland children, youth, and volunteers.

Westmoreland is a vibrant and loving faith community -- much of our vibrancy comes from the many children and youth in our church family. We care deeply about these young ones and the families that bring them to us. We want to reassure new families, long-time members, and volunteers that Westmoreland is truly a sanctuary.

Westmoreland is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. Because we care so much, the Board of Christian Education, with approval from the Governance Council, will begin implementation of "Safe-Church" policies. One component of these policies that is common throughout the UCC community is regular background checks for all staff and volunteers working with children and youth. Another simple element of these policies is the practice of always having two adults present when children and youth are convened in church sponsored activities.

The Christian Education board has examined the best practices of other congregations and worked diligently to create and implement these new ways of living our lives together. We are glad to have them in place and ready to welcome the new church school year for our children, youth, and volunteers.

Sanctuary is important -- it needs to be both physically and spiritually welcoming and hospitable. We want our church to be seen as a safe and holy place for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

--Amy Tutt, Board of Christian Education Chair



AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

1 Westmoreland Circle | Bethesda, Maryland 20816 | www.westmorelanducc.org | 301-229-7766

August Worship Plans

Theme for August: "Hands-On Church"

August 3

Communion Sunday
Psalm 17
Jill Johnson Preaching

August 10

Psalm 105
Tim Tutt Preaching

August 17

Psalm 133
Alexis Kassim Preaching

August 24

Psalm 124
Alexis Kassim Preaching

August 31

Psalm 105
Tim Tutt Preaching

Sundays in August

10:00 - 10:45am
Worship in the Social Hall

10:45-11:30am
Hands-on Projects for all Ages

11:30am
Coffee Hour



Wish List for Bethesda Cares (August 10)

- Granola bars
- Trail Mix
- Crackers
- Cookies
- Fruit (packaged slices or whole fruit)
- Bottled water

Wish List for Global Ministries (August 24)

- One pair of blunt metal scissors (rounded tip)
- Three 70-count spiral notebooks or 1-subject notebooks (no loose-leaf or filler paper)
- One ruler (12" or 30 centimeters)
- One hand-held pencil sharpener
- One large hand-held eraser
- Six #2 Pencils with erasers
- One box of 24 crayons (only packs of 24)

August Hands-on Mission Projects

August 3

Surprise box of well wishes for John-Forrest Douglas

John Forrest Douglas, who served on our church staff and is now in California, has been diagnosed with cancer and will have surgery Aug 6. Westmorelanders will make decorations and cards that could be put up around his hospital room and home to lift his spirits as he recuperates.

August 10

Snack bags for Bethesda Cares' drop-in clients

We will compile individual snack bags of food and water bottles for between 40-50 people who may drop in at Bethesda cares in need of assistance. (See list of needed supplies above)

August 17

Clean-up Around the Church

We will clean up the church school classrooms (Yellow, Red, and Blue), sort shelves and bookcases and tend to other "light" odds and ends around the building.

August 24

Global Ministries School Kits

We will compile school kits to help UCC Disaster Ministries and Church World Service restock school supply kits for kids all over the world after natural disasters and conflicts. (See list of needed supplies above)

August 31

Labor Day Thank You Notes

We will write cards of gratitude for local public safety officials, firefighters, and teachers. And we will send some notes to Casa de Maryland to distribute to the workers at their various Day Labor centers in Montgomery Co.

Thoughts from the Minister: Global Dreams

Later this month, I will have the opportunity to travel to Turkey with a group of ten area Christian clergy persons. I will be away August 20-30. The trip is being sponsored and coordinated by the Institute for Islamic and Turkish Studies in Fairfax. At least three of the clergy persons are UCC ministers (with Texas roots, by the way).



Tim Tutt

Our trip to Turkey is not tourism. The purpose is interreligious understanding. We will visit Muslim, Jewish and Christian sites. I expect to learn and experience a great deal. Having lived and traveled in Europe and the Middle East, I look forward to exploring Turkey as the bridge between the continents.

One of my favorite books is *Travel as a Political Act* by Rick Steves. You may know Steves from his PBS travel shows or printed guidebooks. He is also a faithful Christian (an active Lutheran in the ELCA), committed to social justice. His book, *Travel as a Political Act*, is a guidebook for traveling thoughtfully. In that book he writes:

I fondly remember the confusion I felt when I first met someone who wouldn't trade passports with me. I thought, "I've got more wealth, more freedom, more opportunity than you'll ever have—why wouldn't you want what I've got?" I assumed anyone with half a brain would aspire to the American Dream. But the vast majority of non-Americans don't. They have the Bulgarian Dream, or the Sri Lankan Dream, or the Moroccan Dream. Thanks to travel, this no longer surprises me. In fact, I celebrate it.

I was raised thinking the world is a pyramid with us on top and everybody else trying to get there. Well into my adulthood, I actually believed that if another country didn't understand that they should want to be like us, we had every right to go in and elect a government for them that did.

While I once unknowingly cheered on cultural imperialism, travel has taught me that one of the ugliest things one nation can do is write another nation's textbooks. Back in the Cold War, I had a Bulgarian friend who attended an English-language high school in Sofia. I read his Soviet-produced textbooks, which were more concerned about ideology than teaching. He learned about "economics" with no mention of Adam Smith. And I've seen what happens when the US funds the publishing of textbooks in places such as El Salvador and Nicaragua, with ideological strings attached. The economics of a banana republic are taught in a way that glorifies multinational corporation tactics and vilifies heroes of popular indigenous movements. I think most Americans would be appalled if we knew how many textbooks we're writing in the developing world.



Blue mosque in Istanbul

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On the road, you learn that ethnic underdogs everywhere are waging valiant but seemingly hopeless struggles. When assessing their tactics, I remind myself that every year on this planet many languages go extinct. That means that many heroic, irreplaceable little nations finally lose their struggle and die. There are no headlines—they just get weaker and weaker until that last person who speaks that language dies, and so does one little bit of ethnic diversity on our planet.

I was raised so proud of Nathan Hale and Patrick Henry and Ethan Allen—patriotic heroes of America’s Revolutionary War who wished they had more than one life to give for their country. Having traveled, I’ve learned that Patrick Henrys and Nathan Hales are a dime a dozen on this planet—each country has their own version.

I believe the US tends to underestimate the spine of other nations. It’s comforting to think we can simply “shock-and-awe” our enemies into compliance. This is not only untrue... it’s dangerous. Sure, we have the mightiest military in the world. But we don’t have a monopoly on bravery or grit. In fact, in some ways, we might be less feisty than hardscrabble, emerging nations that feel they have to scratch and claw for their very survival.

We’re comfortable, secure, beyond our revolutionary stage...and well into our Redcoat stage. Regardless of our strength and our righteousness, as long as we have a foreign policy stance that requires a military presence in 130 countries, we will be confronting determined adversaries. We must choose our battles carefully. Travel can help us understand that our potential enemies are not cut-and-run mercenaries, but people with spine motivated by passions and beliefs we didn’t even know existed, much less understand.

Growing up in the US, I was told over and over how smart, generous, and free we were. Travel has taught me that the vast majority of humanity is raised with a different view of America. Travelers have a priceless opportunity to see our country through the eyes of other people. I still have the American Dream. But I also respect and celebrate other dreams.



Ruins of the Celsus Library in Ephesus, Turkey

I first read Steves’ book several years ago. As I write this column and prepare for my trip to Turkey, the news of the world is rattling around in my head—unaccompanied minors seeking a new future in this country, ongoing fighting in Gaza and Ukraine, fighting in Iraq and Syria, terrible gun violence on the streets of Chicago and other places.

I appreciate Rick Steves’ words: “Travel can help us understand that our potential enemies are not cut-and-run mercenaries, but people with spine motivated by passions and beliefs we didn’t even know existed, much less understand...Travel has taught me that the vast majority of humanity is raised with a different view of America. Travelers have a priceless opportunity to see our country through the eyes of other people. I still have the American Dream. But I also respect and celebrate other dreams.”

I hope you have had the chance to travel this summer. I hope you have the chance to respect and celebrate your dreams and other dreams.

Jim

Thoughts from the Membership Coordinator

Fellowship Register. “Yeah, what about it?” you say. Do you know its purpose? Contrary to rumor, it’s purpose is not to take attendance. That would not give us a completely accurate record of who is here on any Sunday. The register has a dual purpose: First it introduces us to one another; as it is passed down the pew, we can see the names of the people who share our pew and the guests who chance to sit near us, thereby making it easier to address one another by name. Second it allows us to capture the names and contact information of our guests. And what do we do with that? On Monday, Tim writes a note or email of welcome to every new guest who leaves his/her information. I send that person/family a gift CD of a Westmoreland Chancel Choir concert. Using the contact information, we continue to invite guests back for worship and non-worship events, and insure that they get the mailings of the seasonal postcards (Lent/Easter, Summer on the Circle, Fall programming, Advent/Christmas) that are sent to the congregation.

In case you’re wondering, we welcome the comments written on the register and Tim, Alexis, Alejandro and I read them. We especially like the comments occasionally written by children!

When you take your seat in the pew on Sunday, please be sure to sign the register with your name - - children, too - - and your address or email as a good example for our guests. Then greet your pew-mates and guests by name. Not only will this enrich your fellowship experience, but will help Westmoreland be the extravagantly welcome church we want to be.

Janet

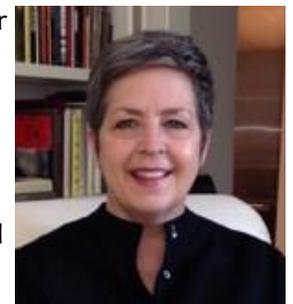


Janet Moyer

Thoughts from the Pastor/Intern

During the month of July, I had the opportunity to lead a book group as part of our Summer on the Circle classes. We read the book, *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor. We had insightful, sometimes funny, and thoughtful conversations about different kinds of darkness: physical, emotional, and spiritual darkness to name a few.

Taylor begins her exploration of darkness by dragging an air mattress out in front of her farm house to begin the process of watching the day slowly turn into night. She is surprised by how long a process this is! Shouldn’t she be returning e-mails, folding the last load of laundry, revising her manuscript? In the end, she admits how hard it is to wait, to watch, and to be present to the coming darkness where some of life’s most valuable lessons occur. This may seem counterintuitive to some of us. We have flash lights beside our beds, night lights to find our way to get a drink of water, we keep the porch light on...all just in case we meet up with something or someone we are not expecting. Yet, sometimes, the surprises the darkness holds in store are breathtakingly, stunningly, and awesomely beautiful.



Jill Johnson

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That's exactly what happened on July 12, 2014. It was just any other summer night in Manhattan when New Yorkers were on their way home, or to dinner, maybe just stopping to pick up a carton of milk for the next morning, when they encountered what they would dub as "Manhattanhenge", the first super moon of the season. Between the narrow street openings lined on either side by sky scrapers, something gothic, other-worldly occurred. In short, the moon was better than any 3D glasses could capture. It made people stop in their tracks.

There are two more super moons coming our way. On Sunday, August 10, at 7:55pm, those of us in the DC area who can get away from artificial light, and face just slightly south of east (103 degrees clockwise from true north) we may see a very large and bright moon rise. The rise of a "super moon" occurs when we have a full moon at the time when the moon and earth are closest (perigee of the moon's orbit). This sight is more spectacular in some places and during some specific weather conditions, but is definitely worth watching anywhere. We can hope for good weather, few clouds, and take the opportunity to try to see the moonrise and then to stay outside and continue to watch for a while. The moon should appear at least 15% brighter and 30% larger than usual for most of that night. The second super moon will appear on Tuesday, September 9, 2014.

We equate darkness with things to be feared and avoided, and then we get a full moon our imaginations could not conjure up, one that speaks to the primal part of our humanity and we are humbled before her. There are some things only darkness can reveal. Go ahead, drag out a quilt, or some lawn chairs, or even an air mattress and wait, watch, and be ready for the darkness to reveal its treasures

VILL



Super Moon Setting Over the Foothills

August Calendar (This calendar does not include contracted use by the Washington Conservatory)

Saturday, August 02, 2014		Tuesday, August 19, 2014	
9:00a	Flower Preparation	MR, SH	2:00p Staff Meeting
9:30a	Yoga Class - Cancelled		
Sunday, August 03, 2014			Saturday, August 23, 2014
9:00a	Adult Study: Lectionary Discussion	P	9:00a Choir Retreat (Tentative)
10:00a	Summer Worship	SH	9:30a Yoga Class
10:00a	Nursery Care for children through age 2	N	10:00a Briggs Center Meeting
10:45a	Intergenerational Hands-on Projects	SH	Sunday, August 24, 2014
11:30a	Fellowship Hour	SH	9:00a Adult Study: Lectionary Discussion
Tuesday, August 05, 2014			10:00a Summer Worship
2:00p	Staff Meeting	L	10:00a Nursery Care for children through age 2
Saturday, August 09, 2014			10:45a Intergenerational Hands-on Projects
9:30a	Yoga Class	MR	11:30a Fellowship Hour
Sunday, August 10, 2014			Tuesday, August 26, 2014
8:30a	Volunteer Corp. Board Mtg.	Blue	10:30a Sandwich Making for Martha's Table
9:00a	Adult Study: Lectionary Discussion	P	2:00p Staff Meeting
10:00a	Summer Worship	SH	Thursday, August 28, 2014
10:00a	Nursery Care for children through age 2	N	8:00p Chancel Choir Rehearsal
10:45a	Intergenerational Hands-on Projects	SH	Saturday, August 30, 2014
11:30a	Fellowship Hour	SH	9:30a Yoga Class
Tuesday, August 12, 2014			10:00a Martha's Table Sandwich Preparation
7:00p	Board of Christian Education Mtg.	L	Sunday, August 31, 2014
Wednesday, August 13, 2014			9:00a Adult Study: Lectionary Discussion
9:00a	Staff Retreat	Off Site	10:00a Summer Worship
7:30p	Governance Council Meeting	L	10:00a Nursery Care for children through age 2
Saturday, August 16, 2014			10:45a Intergenerational Hands-on Projects
9:30a	Yoga Class	MR	11:30a Fellowship Hour
Sunday, August 17, 2014			
9:00a	Adult Study: Lectionary Discussion	P	
10:00a	Summer Worship	SH	
10:00a	Nursery Care for children through age 2	N	
10:45a	Intergenerational Hands-on Projects	SH	
11:30a	Fellowship Hour	SH	
11:45a	Mid-East Committee Meeting	P	

The Sanctuary renovation will continue through the month of August

CR ~ Choir Room	L ~ Library	N ~ Nursery	S ~ Sanctuary	YL ~ Youth Lounge	BLUE ~ Blue Class
K ~ Kitchen	MR ~ Mabry Room	P ~ Parlor	SH ~ Social Hall	RED ~ Red Class	YELLOW ~ Yellow Class

News About Ministerial Housing

Rev. Tim Tutt, representatives from the Governance Council, Mary Staley and others gathered on July 2 for an open discussion with the congregation on shared equity agreements. Mary served on the Senior Minister Housing Committee that surveyed several other churches in urban settings within and outside of our denomination regarding housing assistance. The Committee found that all churches assisted their ministers with housing in a variety of ways: parsonages, loans, and shared equity agreements.



Based on the information provided, the Governance Council is pursuing the shared equity option and has approved to fund such an agreement up to \$200,000. Please contact Mary Staley with any questions.

--Jeanine Derr, Moderator

Summer on the Circle Schedule

(Details on Page 2)

10:00 - 10:45am

Worship

10:45-11:30am

Hands-on Projects for all Ages

11:30am

Fellowship Hour



Welcome Back Sunday September 7

Youth and Adult Classes at 9:00am

Worship at 10:00am

Picnic following Worship



Visit the Islands at Hope UCC!

September 13, 4:00-9:00pm

Hope UCC partners with the Hawaiian cultural school Halau Ho'omau I Ka Wai Ola O Hawaii to host a biannual Luau. The Luau features authentic Hawaiian food, Hawaiian dancers, crafts, and activities for children! There is also a silent auction with many great items and services available. This year's Luau will be held at Hope Church on September 13, 2014, from 4:00 to 9:00pm. All proceeds from the Luau go to support Hope's programs and local social justice missions. Contact: Amber Neuroth (pastor@hopeucc.org)

Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.
--Mark Twain

THE DEADLINE FOR THE SEPTEMBER WESTMORELANDER IS AUGUST 25

Please send your submission to Mimi Miller at mmiller@westmorelanducc.org.

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