

The Westside Connection

January/February 2010



Celebrating a New Year!!

From the Pastor

Dear Friends and Family,

We are launching a new year. As we do so, I wanted you to be encouraged to practice thinking in new ways, to practice thinking along the lines of faith, of hope, of the passionate love God has for you. This is to do what Paul enjoins us to do in Colossians 3:1 and elsewhere, to “think higher thoughts.”

Sometimes others will claim that this is just a meaningless phrase, claiming that the Bible cannot match up to anything science can tell us. Well, actually...Brain research done over the past 25 years by Stanford University’s Gordon Bower and University of Wisconsin’s Richard Davidson revealed just how apropos Paul’s injunctions were. In their work they discovered the fact how thoughts get strung together along pathways in the brain and how these pathways form literal changes in the topography of the brain, they form “ruts”.

This brings a whole new meaning to the phrase: “get out of the rut”! In one work these “ruts” were described like a street with streetlights in a valley. One emotional experience in the present then that relates to one of these pathways will cause all the “lights” along that valley road to light up. So, the current situation will be flooded with the emotional weight of this whole string of memories.

One secular work actually used Paul’s phrase and recommended learning to think higher thoughts – to get out of the thinking ruts.

The interesting part of the research is this – that if one begins to think higher thoughts, if one can keep from traveling the old emotion-led pathways, then new pathways can be developed along other lines of thought. How amazing that God was WAY AHEAD of these brain researchers telling us to “think higher thoughts”.

The fact is that when we forgive, when we invite Jesus into old pain, when we allow what Jesus has done for us to free us from past hurts through reconciliation and healing, we are stepping off the old pathways, we are thinking higher thoughts – we are dwelling upon what God has done, and brain researchers tell us this will actually change the topography in our brains.

So, friends this month and next, think higher thoughts, meditate on the fullness of who your God is and get out of the “ruts” of old patterns of thinking and into the grace God intends.

I will be joining you on this journey.

Blessings to you all and remember you are passionately loved. Pastor Brian

From Our Worship Pastor

We have had an interesting opportunity to come awake to worship this month as both Pastor Brian and I have focused on the church. At least for some, the change in the arrangement of the chairs has been a powerful wake-up call. For most people, the movement of the chairs so that one side can face the other has either caused great joy or some level of irritation.

One of my greatest joys in the past two weeks since the chairs have been facing each other is the varied conversation I have had with people about their experience of worship. I am so blessed that people are talking about it and, even more, trying to express what they really like or really don't like about the arrangement.

Some feel a greater sense of community as people have seen others crying or sad and in need of a hug or a tissue. The same sense of community is conveyed in the joy and laughter shared across the open middle space. Several appreciated the passing of communion in the rows, inviting people to serve each other family style.

Others have described how they have seen God at work in their own hearts as they are challenged to find “their place” in the sanctuary for worship.

Some have not been able to see the screen and are hindered in their worship because of that. Those who may not hear well have a more difficult time with this arrangement, since they had found seats that were optimum for sound and amplification. These logistical frustrations are important to keep in mind as we want all worshipers to be an active part of the worship time.

In the process of these conversations, I have thought of Romans 12:1-2, in which Paul encourages the Roman Christians to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God as a spiritual act of worship. Often we are ready to bring our minds to engage with the word of God through song, Scripture and the message. But it's easy to forget that we carry those minds around in bodies. Our bodies are part of the worship experience too. Perhaps though this time of change, some have become more aware of God's presence or more present for worship. If it has made you uncomfortable, perhaps you have leaned more on God for peace in an unsettling situation.

In any case, I appreciate the numbers of you who have embraced this as an opportunity for spiritual growth both personally and as part of the community at Westside. May the work that God has begun in us all through these rearranged chairs, continue in our growing, seeking hearts.

Always listening for the new verse in the song of life, Pastor Karen

About Lent



Lent is a season of soul-searching and repentance. It is a season for reflection and taking stock. Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days.

Because Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, we skip over Sundays when we calculate the length of Lent. Therefore, in the Western Church, Lent always begins on Ash Wednesday, the seventh Wednesday before Easter. This year Lent begins on Wednesday, February 17. In many countries, the last day before Lent (called Mardi Gras, Shrove Tuesday, Carnival, or Fasching) has become a last fling before the solemnity of Lent. For centuries, it was customary to fast by abstaining from meat during Lent, which is why some people call the festival *Carnival*, which is Latin for *farewell to meat*.

Many Christians today "give up" something for Lent. This may not always be a food item, but can be a habit, like drinking coffee, or even a relational behavior, like sarcasm or gossip. The idea behind this practice is to walk in a daily reminder of Christ's suffering on the Cross and to be mindful of the sacrifice Jesus made on behalf of all of humanity. Also, to purposefully and prayerfully "give up" something is an invitation to personal growth and transformation as we let God touch our longing hearts.

May you seek God's direction for your life during this Lenten time and may you be blessed with an ever-deepening sense of His presence in your daily living.

Connecting People to Jesus Christ

Youth Ministry Seeking Mentors



Our youth group has 10 members and, in order to grow, we'll need more adults to join us. We normally meet on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8:00. We like to play games, work on creative projects, and spend time talking to catch up on what's happening in our lives. Each person discerns where God is leading him/her to serve others, and the group joins together to help make these dreams happen. We have a wonderful group of youth, in grades 6-10, who attend several different schools in Beaverton and Hillsboro. They have positive attitudes, value each other, and appreciate the youth group.

Here are some qualities of a good mentor:

- Someone youth trust and respect
- A person with a growing faith that is obvious in his/her lifestyle
- Someone who is patient with people
- Someone who motivates or inspires people
- An individual who likes young people and relates positively to them
- A person who listens
- A person who cares about others and is a good role model

If God has gifted you in these ways, and you're willing to share a couple of hours on a weekly or monthly basis, please contact Nancy Miller at 503-648-3476 or NJBMiller@verizon.net.

Valentines for the Troops

On January 31 the children of Westside Garden will use their Sunday School time to make valentines to send to <anysoldier.com> to be distributed to soldiers who don't get a lot of mail. We are also collecting some items that soldiers sometimes have to do without. Anyone is welcome to contribute. Items we can use: gummy candies, gum, packaged cookies & snacks, packaged nuts, Rice Krispies treats, tea bags, beef jerky, trail mix, drink mixes, Beanie Babies, magazines, pens, pencils, & notepads, envelopes, air fresheners, zip-lock bags, playing cards, soaps, body wash, lotions, lip bal,



disposable razors, foot powder, sunscreen, shaving gel (not foam), personal hygiene wipes, nail clippers, nail files, toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss. For more information talk to Susan Weaver, 503-625-8077, or check out www.anysoldier.com.

New Member Classes (3 parts)

If you are interested in joining Westside UMC, transferring your membership or just finding out about what it means to be a member of Westside UMC, please join Pastor Brian Shimer in a 3-part series of informal classes. The current class began on January 17, and will continue on January 31 and February 7, from 5-7p. Those wishing to join or transfer their membership will be welcomed in worship on February 14, 2010. There will be a new class every other month, so if you missed out this time, please consider joining the next class. For more info, please contact Judy Wardrum at judywardrum@comcast.net, or call 503-292-1751.

International Potluck and Worship Service

This service on January 30th will focus on Malaysia. Everyone is invited to attend, as the evening begins with an international potluck at 6:00 p.m. (Please make an international dish to share.) Reservations are requested by January 25, for those planning to attend, so that we can prepare enough food, etc. Sheila Sullivan will be the featured speaker. Please RSVP to the church e-mail @ sdavis@westsideumc.org, or call the church off at 503-643-8070.

Women's Retreat 2010

Edwards Lodge has been reserved for April 16-18 @ Camp Magruder. The Keynote Speaker- will be Victoria Suarez and the theme is, "Jesus: 24/7."



We are very excited for this year's Women's Retreat. We want to make sure everyone has a chance to attend and this is where we need your help. Below are listed several planned fundraisers to help offset the cost and to set up scholarships as needed.

- **Theme Basket Silent Auction:** Jan 31 and Feb 7, Westside Family Room; Bids close at Noon on Feb 7.
- **Burgerville Night (and possibly others, stay tuned):** Mid February; Details to be announced.
- **Demarle Party:** Thurs, March 4, 6:30- 8:30, Westside Family Room. This is a cookware product demonstration, hosted by Lisa Bodry. Bev Farr is the product rep.

Restaurant**Tour**



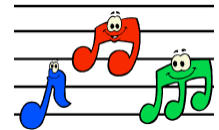
Restaurantouring Group

Join this adults' only group each month, at a different local restaurant, for a time of fellowship and good food. The January outing will be on Sunday, January 24 at 1:00 p.m. at the McMenamins Restaurant on Cedar Hills Blvd. in Beaverton. At this first get-together we can discuss the format, date, time, etc. for future outings. The group is open to all adults of the church. RSVP to Sherrell/Don Davis, 503-645-9713 or sheridon2@verizon.net by January 21.

Praise Jam Gathering

Feb. 4, 7-8:30p @ Westside. This event is open to interested musicians, worshipers, and singers. Anyone is welcome to bring an instrument and play along, or come to sing or just to worship. Talk to Susan Brehmer (503-627-9191) or Karen Shimer (503-591-5308) for more info.

A second Praise Jam Gathering is planned for March 6, 10-Noon.



Nurturing Them In the Faith

Westside Prayer Ministry

Another special Healing Service was held in the sanctuary on Thursday, December 17th. Thank you again to Jean Stratford who organized and picked the music selections for the Healing Service straight from her heart and to Susan & Steve who accompanied her. Pastor Brian gave a contemplative sermon on hope & healing. This month 2 healing services will occur on January 31st during regular worship times. An evening service is scheduled for Thursday, February 18th.



Thank you to the Prayer Team Members that prayed for all the December activities - what a memorable Advent Season we enjoyed here at Westside UMC!

Monthly Prayer Team meetings continue each month after the second service. If you have questions about the Prayer Ministry here at Westside UMC or would like to join us, please contact Carol Marsh 503-789-0897 or the marshfamily4@verizon.net or contact Judy Wardrum 503-640-8297 judywardrum@comcast.net.

News from Westside Garden

Life in Bible Times has been the theme for January, with Tim & Katie Leishman (Music & Games), Sherrell Davis (Stories & Drama), Marilee Laurins (Art & Crafts), and Merry Goldthorpe (Cooking) serving as Farmers. The children have heard the story of Mary and Martha told in various ways, tried on and have tasted cheeses, breads, and fruits that were common in Jesus' time. The story of Jesus' baptism, and the meaning of our own baptisms, will continue through February.



Mission projects continue to be important to the Westside Garden. In December, over \$600 was collected through alternative gift giving, to purchase 5 sheep in support of Heifer International's project in Ukraine. On January 31st the children will make valentines to add to care packages for our troops in the Middle East. The next mission project is yet to be determined, and ideas are always welcome.

Something new during the February unit will be a large group "Gathering Time," when the groups will learn some songs that they will present to the congregation later. The activities presented in any given unit depend upon the volunteers who choose whether they would like to do crafts, games, cooking, science, stories, or any other type of activity. The curriculum provides many ideas, plus options for adapting the activities to the various age groups. New volunteers are always welcome; a good way to "try out" children's ministry is to sign up to be an assistant Gardener for one Sunday. See Kathy Anderson for details.

Life Transformation Groups

Back by popular demand, these groups began on January 13. The studies meet on Wednesday evenings at 7:00p and are discussing the book of Luke. The on-going assignment is to read five chapters a day. The groups will be transitioning to other books every 4 weeks.



Imago Dei Ministries Seminar For Men

Imago Dei Ministries presents "The Trinity Model: Living out the Ministry of Reconciliation." This is a 2-day workshop, March 12-13, at Rock Creek Church, 4470 SW 185th. The seminar will work the principles of life-giving relationship practices based upon the idea of becoming aware of those drama triangles and now to

steer clear of them in conversation and relationships. Brochures are available on the literature table at the church.

Men's Retreat

Feb 26 (evening) and Feb 27th; location: Philomath UMC. The guest speaker will be Dr. Raj Nelson, who has a small mission outreach called Small Groups International in the Riverside area in CA. He and his wife work with students at UC Riverside and the surrounding areas. He also travels to Taiwan, and the Far East and India, where he holds workshops for Small Group Ministry and addresses Pastor's conferences in those countries. He will be leading attendees through the book of Malachi. Pick up a flyer on the literature table.

Equipping Them to Serve In Our Community and World

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Wed. January 27, 2-7p at Westside. Contact Marianne Cooper for appointment (503-614-9281) or for more information.



Thrive Where You're Planted

Revitalizing Ministry in the None Zone Seminar – March 19-21, 2010 at McMinnville Cooperative Ministries in McMinnville, OR. The program will offer a new approach and tools for revitalizing congregations. Pick up a flyer on the literature table, and contact Pastor Karen, 503-591-1308, if you would like to register as part of the Westside group,

Lord's Harvest House

Needed this month are juice and Bisquik type products. Volunteers are always needed to work at the food pantry. Contact Jan Roberts to volunteer (503-245-5090).



Christians For Action

The group got off to a good start this fall. We are studying the book *Loving Justice* and completed the first 3 chapters. After a Christmas hiatus, we are now meeting again and all our welcome to join us. Our "action" included serving dinner to the Family Bridge in November and we helped to set up the tree lot on 11/27. I know

members of our group will also be involved with all upcoming outreach activities. Contact Kari Suppes, 503-848-3292, for more information.

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is requesting Emergency Kits for Haiti

Westside is gathering items for these kits; if you would like to contribute supplies or money for the disaster relief in Haiti, please bring the items and place them in the container in the entryway, or write a check to the church, with Haiti disaster relief on the memo line. A list of needed supplies is available on the literature table.



Church Calendar (located in hall to Family Room, outside Secretary's office)

To avoid conflict over building use, it is very important to put all building use and meetings on the "official" church calendar. There have been some instances in the past few months when two things were scheduled at the same time. Simply stop by the calendar and add your event/meeting in pencil. If you have questions, please talk to Sherrell Davis, 503-643-8070. Band leaders and committee chairs this includes you also!! Thank you in advance for your cooperation.
