FIRST UNITED CHURCH of Oak Park

Adult Education
Seasons of Easter and Lent

Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Please note that this schedule is subject to change. Please check bulletin updates for latest information.

Conference Room: Bible Study- Jesus and the Kingdom of God
Beginning Sunday, March 7, we will engage in a 12-week course, taught by Rob Coffman and Bob Hahn, called "First Light: Jesus and the Kingdom of God." This class will examine the theology of the subversive Galilean who still transforms lives today. We will delve into the parables, the Sea of Galilee as a metaphor for our world, and theological ways to look at the crucifixion and resurrection. This is the same class that has been offered at our Weekday Bible Study, and has been such a hit that people asked us to offer it on Sunday mornings, too!

Our Lenten focus is a global one, on places in the world that experience oppression. We reflect this focus in our worship together, in our Adult Ed offerings, and hopefully you will pray for and advocate for these places as part of your Lenten practice.

February 28: "Seeking Justice for Latin America: Testimonies from Participants in The Army School of the Americas Vigil." Lois Thiessen Love and Jeff Olson are teaching, and Deb Stracco, Pennie Ebsen, Ricky Sain, Jim Boushay and Pastor Julie Harley will provide photos and share their experiences

March 7 and 14: Called to Colombia Our church has been called in many ways to stand in solidarity with brothers and sisters experiencing political and economic oppression in Colombia, South America. Hear from Gary Cozette, Program Director of the Chicago Religious Leadership Network on South America both Sundays, and via skype on March 7 only from Rev. Mamie Broadhurst, former Associate Pastor at FUCOP and current mission worker in the Presbyterian Peace Foundation Accompaniment Program, living with her husband Richard in Barranquilla, Colombia.

Book Study March 21 and 28- Reinventing Evangelicalism: The story of Moral Re-Armament
Evangelicalism is the dominant religious tradition in America, shaping even Catholicism and liberal mainliners like us. In the 1920s, an American religious movement tried to reshape evangelical Christianity to make it more attractive to the wealthy elite. Led by Lutheran pastor Frank Buchman, they talked about life-changing rather than conversion and hosted house parties rather than revival meetings. The movement went by several names, but was best known as Moral Re-Armament. Daniel Sack, member of First United and author of a new book on MRA, will talk about this reinvention in two sessions in early March. On March 21 he'll describe Buchman's early outreach to elite college students and what he called "soul surgery," which eventually created Alcoholics Anonymous. On March 28 he'll describe MRA's evangelical song-and-dance shows, culminating in Up With People.

March 21, 28 and April 11: A Steadfast Hope Judy Vojta and Pauline Coffman will lead these three sessions on the situation in the Middle East. We will introduce a new resource, written and published by the Presbyterian Church (USA) Israel Palestine Mission Network, called *Steadfast Hope: The Palestinian Quest for Just Peace,* and add our comments from what we saw and experienced. We will focus on

- The two narratives—Israeli and Palestinian;
- Why does all the talk lead to no peace?
- Is it apartheid?
- Why don't the Palestinians practice non-violent resistance?
- Who profits from the occupation?
- Why haven't we known this?
- Living with occupation
- "I did not know what I did not know."

April 18-May 9: Faith and Finance The Bible contains hundreds of references to money. As Christians, we are charged to be good stewards of our finances and to direct them in the service of others, especially the poor. But what about when the economy no longer serves the common good? How do we deepen our trust in God when our financial security is weakened? This discussion guide will ground users in the deep security of God with practical suggestions for how to be faithful financial stewards in hard economic times and in good economic times.

May 2: Colombia Emphasis Again we will explore ways our congregation can be in solidarity with displaced persons and with other marginalized groups in Colombia, by partnering with the Presbyterian Church in Colombia. Hear from Carrie Fox, a student at McCormick who participated in the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship's Accompanier Project in Colombia.

May 16 and 23: Fish Out of Water Filmmaker Ky Dickens, who grew up in this church, presents her animated documentary that brings together theology, her own coming out experience, and biblical scholarship. Ky will be with us to show and discuss her film, which was awarded "Best Short Documentary" at Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Film Festival.

Other Adult Education Events:

An Invitation…Judy Vojta and Pauline Coffman will report on the Traveling Seminar to Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Palestine, on Sunday, March 7, 2010, following worship, in Centennial Hall. We plan to order lunch from the Jerusalem Café. Please let Pauline Coffman (p.coffman@sbcglobal.net) or Leah Fowler (lfowler@firstunitedoakpark.com) know if you are coming so we know how much food to order!

We plan to show pictures and will talk about what we learned, regarding:

- The living conditions for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon;
- The plight of Iraqi Christian refugees in Syria and Lebanon;
- The living churches we visited in Lebanon and Syria;
- Current realities in Israel and Palestine;
- Bring greetings from our sister church in Beirut…and a gift!

Book Group Monday, March 15: Greg Mortenson's book *Stones into Schools* will be discussed at 7 pm in the Chapel. The book discussion is sponsored by First United Church's new group: Peace with Justice Forum. Plan to read, attend and join in the discussion of Greg Mortenson's special mission to promote peace with books—not bombs—in Afghan and Pakistani villages.

Connecting to God, the Environment, and Community through Vegetables: The Bible is rich with stories/passages that meld of God's gifts of earth, sun, and water to nurture and in some case restrict the growth and harvesting of fruits, grains, and vegetables.
In this 10 month Adult Ed session we will strive to mix a theological references to gardens, vegetables and grains with-a-hands on introduction into the joys and trials of Home vegetable gardening. If all goes well, we will harvest a bountiful basket of fresh, locally grown vegetables, and experience the joys of sustainable community agriculture. Whether you're a beginner or veteran gardener this interactive offering will likely provide some new insights into wonders of gardening. We will meet in the library at 9:30, on the third Sunday. The tentative schedule for this session is as follows:
March 21- Construction, Transplant Seedlings, soil testing
April 18- Spring Planting
May 16– Early Summer Planting
June 20– Summer Planting, Pests & Pest Control, Maintenance, Fertilizer
July 18 – Maintenance, Pests & Pest Control, Harvest,
August 15- Harvest,
September 19 - Final harvests, cleanup, notes
October 17- cleanup and planting for Spring (e.g. garlic).
Course Instructor: Paul Aeschleman- Paul has been an avid vegetable gardener for the past 20 yrs and is looking forward to sharing his experiences with the design, planting and maintenance of numerous vegetable and native gardens.

Adult Education at First United

Christian faith is a journey; not a destination. Throughout our lives, it should call us towards transformation. We believe in the Christian formation is as important to adults as it is to children and youth. The Adult Education program at First United offers a wide variety of opportunities for education, growth, and fellowship—ranging from lectures by leading scholars to intimate discussions of life and faith. Whatever the setting, you can bring your whole self—including your questions, your doubts and your humor.

The Adult Education Committee is:
Leah Fowler (Staff) Stan Davis,Melinda Haag, Janet Haisman, Jeff Olson, Jim Smith, Bob Worley… and many thanks for the good and hard work of William Tweedley, who has been our chair for the 2009-2010 year. Best wishes as you discover new paths of ministry in Washington, DC!