



March 2010

themessengerbell

www.firstunitedoakpark.com

In this issue:

SCARF Camp News

> page 3

Faith in Action

> page 3

Youth News

> page 5

Adult Education

> page 6 & 7

Calendar

> last page

There are 11 pages in this issue.

Welcome to the First United e-newsletter. This is a work in progress. Thank you for your in-put....

Please let us know what you think...

Easter Promise

Worship in March – Lent and Holy Week

Our Lenten theme this year is “Guide Our Feet in Global Mission,” and each week we will pray and reflect on another nation. For your Lenten prayers, we invite you to visit the World Council of Churches website and pray with the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle (www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/prayer-cycle.html).

March 7 – Third Sunday in Lent and Communion (fourth graders assisting)

Global Focus on Colombia: Deb Stracco

Isaiah 55:1-9 and Psalm 63:1-8 and Luke 13:1-9

“Finding a Way in the Wilderness”

March 14 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

Global Focus on Lebanon: Pauline Coffman

Worship will feature Handel’s “Messiah” performed with choir and orchestra

March 21 – Fifth Sunday in Lent

Global Focus on Haiti

Isaiah 43:16-21 and John 12:1-8

“Finding a Way to Restoration”

March 28 – Palm Sunday

Global Focus on Colombia

Luke 19:38-40 and Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 and Philippians 2:5-11

“The Donkey’s Point of View”

During Holy Week, we invite individuals and groups to follow “The Walk of the Cross.” This is a self-guided tour that begins and ends at First United, and recalls the walk of Jesus to Calvary. A map and bag of symbols will be available in the lounge for the devotional walk, which leads to several points within three blocks of the church.

April 1 – Maundy Thursday

Simple Supper and Communion is served in Centennial Hall at 6:30 pm.

The Tenebrae Service is held in the sanctuary at 7:30 pm.

April 2 – Good Friday Service from 12:00 to 2:00 pm in the sanctuary.

Reflections on the Seven Last Words of Christ from the cross will be offered by church members, and the service also includes silence, music and hymns.

Worshippers may attend all or part of the service.

The Easter Prayer Vigil begins in the Chapel at 2:00 pm Good Friday and continues through 7:00 am Easter morning. Individuals and groups are invited to sign up for a one-hour time slot to pray, reflect, listen to music or do artwork. The signup sheet will be posted in the lounge beginning March 14.

April 4 – Easter Celebration Worship and Communion Services at 8:00 and 11:00 am.

Transitions

Baptisms: Cole Catherine Daly, daughter of Christopher and Jessica Daly

Thomas Jeffrey Carter, son of Sarah Deardorff Carter and Joshua Carter, brother of Madeline and Barrett

Compassion: Bob Haisman

Edie, mother of Carol Youngkrantz

Jeb Metric

Rebecca Robinson

Compassion continued:

Jim Wisuri
Marian Jones
Liz Howells

Condolence: *Ellen, mother of Judith Loevy*
Terry, cousin of Sean O'Shea
Bob, brother of Herb Zobel
Myrtle, mother of Pat Morrow
Beth Drews, wife of Don, mother of Ellen and Tom
Sister of Anna Sadowski
Adele Hoppe, member for 47 years

Greetings, Church Family!

My name is Ally Vertigan and I am a second year student at Elmhurst College. This semester, I have been offered a fantastic opportunity to work with your staff as a pastoral intern. It is a true desire to build relationships with all of you, so here is a little bit about me! I am pursuing a double major in Religion & Service and Spanish with minors in psychology and social work. I am involved in the Honors Program, Straights and Gays for Equality, the Progressive Organization of Women, and the Spiritual Life Council. It is my plan to attend seminary and become a pastor in the United Church of Christ. When not participating in school activities, I enjoy reading (Harry Potter!), watching movies, and spending time with friends.

I look forward to growing in Christ with you,
—Ally

The Deacon Role

—Carl Nauert

The Deacon mission at First United was announced as: A board of Deacons will be established to nurture the ministry and culture of care of the church, supporting and serving the entire congregation as it works together to build the faithful and loving community of Jesus Christ.

The Deacons were assigned numerous ministries that already existed. The Deacons will provide information on each of these ministries in subsequent Messenger Bell articles. Examples include: PALs, meal delivery, flower delivery, the prayer ministry, etc.....

According to Scripture, the role of deacons began in Jerusalem, when the Apostles appointed helpers to see to the fairly allocated needs of the gathered community.

"Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith."
(Acts 6: 1-7)

New Deacons are referred to the Presbyterian (USA) Book of Order, excerpts include:

- G - 6.0401 *The office of Deacon as set forth in the Scripture is one of sympathy, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ.*
- G - 6.0402 *It is the duty of Deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith.*
- W - 6.302 *All Christians are called to care for one another in daily living, sharing joys and sorrows, supporting in times of stress and need, offering mutual forgiveness and reconciliation.*

This care is primarily offered as the community of faith worships together. Elders, deacons and pastors are called to special responsibility for congregational pastoral care.

Deacon Care Group

Deacon	Phone	(by Head of Family)
Lee Anderson	708-383-3304	Wiemken thru Zobel
Gary Cerniglia	708-386-1027	Stitzel thru Whitford
Chris Davis	708-3835632	Petrie thru Sandman
Bud Hayes	708-383-0071	Masterson thru Mockridge
Karla Hayter	708-386-1831	Aeschelmann thru Bierman
Grant Jones	630-797-8657	Mollinedo thru Pepper
Neal McNish	708-228-3867	Linhardt thru Massat
Carl Nauert	708-771-5176	Hedger thru Kareb
Karin Pietrini	708-386-5908	Schaeffer thru Stevenson
Connie Ronnow	708-366-9904	Kearley thru Lindsey
Sarah Shkutov	773-804-3114	Bianco thru Carter
Priscilla Sibley	708-848-2840	Donoghue thru Gentile
Sally Sutherland	708-386-7028	Castenada thru Dickerson
Irene Worley	708-848-2593	George thru Heavey

Rev. Mark Buck, Interim Minister of Mission and Membership
Carl Nauert, Chair of the Deacons

Clerk's Corner

—Beth Mrkvicka

Leah Fowler led us in a discussion of the last chapter of the book Council has been reading together this past year. The chapter, entitled *Spiritual Leadership on the Cutting Edge*, encouraged us to take a step outside our comfort zone and stretch ourselves spiritually. We agreed that the experiences we remember the most are those where we took a risk.

This discussion seemed particularly appropriate as we spent the remainder of the meeting hearing from our Vision Team members. Their task was to name the challenges our church faces as it looks into the next decade to discern a vision. By now, most church members have hopefully had a chance to hear and learn about the Vision Team's process and discoveries. More can be found elsewhere in the Messenger Bell. God's vision for us calls us to action. The three key concepts of the vision are:

- Moving from words to witness in our relationship with God.
- Moving from individualism to intimate fellowship with other members of the church community.
- Moving from charity to changing structures in our relationship with the world.

Council was asked to support these concepts and engage the congregation in conversation and action towards living the vision. This will not be a fast process, but rather one that will require deliberate thought and study.

— Spirituality, Creativity, Art, Reflection and Fun —Julie O'Shea

Yes, we're doing it again this summer. The dates are July 19-23 including worship July 25. "Hello God" is the theme we've selected. Who is God, where is God, how do we relate to God, how does God relate to us? We'll pray, play, paint, sing, drum, dance, act then maybe do some cooking and other art and music making. The camp is intended for youth of First United members going into 1st – 9th grades. The cost is \$95 ea. Please contact marylen@firstunitedoakpark.com for registration. Beside parent volunteers, we will also need a few good high school or college helpers to work for the week.

All Church Retreat — Julie R. Harley

Reserve a weekend for our fall spiritual retreat, to be held September 25-26, 2010, at Pilgrim Park Conference Center in Princeton, IL. We will have space for 30 people...men and women, couples and singles. Our pastoral staff will be the leaders.

SCARF
Camp

Vision Statement from the Annual Meeting — Vision Team

Our Church Council and the congregation received and responded to the new 2020 Vision Statement developed by Rick Ashton, Jane Barker, Mark Jolicoeur, Dick Krissinger, Mark Loafman, Sara Stevenson and Lead Pastor Julie R. Harley. Council is now engaged in communicating the vision and working with committees and groups to identify goals related to the vision.

God's Vision for First United Church of Oak Park

I have a dream that one day First United Church will be so authentically Christian that your acts of love, compassion and justice will astonish everyone. Your unashamed faith in me will burn like a beacon of fire, attracting people of every age, race, creed and spiritual condition to create a community of powerful worship and reconciliation.

Though others have used my name to oppress and exclude and preserve their own privilege, you will bear witness to me by liberating the poor, welcoming strangers and caring for your neighbors – even when it requires a sacrifice of your own comfort and convenience.

I have a dream that you will move beyond providing charity to those in need, and that you will take risks to create justice for my people. You will inspire churches, businesses, and service agencies in your community to join together to provide a strong web of resources to uplift those who suffer.

Though you are accustomed to knowing, discussing and leading with authority, I have a dream that you will expect everyone in your community – children, youth, adults and seniors – to be shaped, challenged and transformed by the power of my Spirit. Your life together will be filled with deep connections, nurturing relationships and grace-filled prayer that extend far beyond Sunday morning.

One day every member of First United Church will live with deep spiritual humility and commitment to a shared vision. No one will be a spectator. Everyone will be actively engaged in worship. All your members will work and pray to create a nurturing quilt of love for those who are broken and in need of healing and strength.

I have a dream that people at First United Church will choose to do what seems unpalatable, rather than what is convenient, in order to bring my realm to earth.

Vision Theme One:

Moving from words to witness in our relationship with God. From rhetoric to God-pleasing actions. From symbols to life-changing, visionary action. We will voice our beliefs and express words that speak to our beliefs AND we will embody those words through action, not expecting that someone else will take the action.

Vision Theme Two:

Moving from individualism to intimate fellowship in our relationship with other members of the church community. To live our love for God, for each other and for our world. First United Church will be a community based on deep connections, bringing people of faith together in love and support of one another and in service to God.

Vision Theme Three:

Moving from charity to changing structures in our relationship with the world. While we continue to support those in need, we will invest passionately and aggressively to improve the social and cultural structures which create and sustain the need.

Our Vision 2020 calls us to move from charity towards changing structures. There are three different trips where you may take part in this kind of systemic change:

Ecumenical Advocacy Days, March 19-22: Several members of First United Church will join progressive Christians from all over the country in exploring how our faith may make a political impact in terms of global justice issues, women's rights, the environment and more. We will even have a day when we can share our hopes with our elected US Senators and Representatives. If you find this trip arouses your interest, learn more about it at www.advocacydays.org and speak to Leah Fowler, who is organizing a delegation to go.

WIG

The Wildly Important Goal of First United Church is "creating and maintaining a framework that nourishes the spiritual welfare of the congregation"

Faith
IN ACTION

Mission Trip to New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina Recovery Work

First United is organizing a mission trip to New Orleans June 19-27, 2010, with other UCC churches in the Chicago metropolitan area. New Orleans is like Haiti four years later, and help is greatly needed. Five people have already registered for the trip; contact Julie R. Harley to put your name on the list.

Called to Colombia: A delegation from our Presbytery will be going to Colombia July 22-August 2, 2010. We will be in three parts of Colombia: Barranquilla, to attend local churches, visit with the Presbytery, and hear from displaced communities; Cartagena, to see the historic city center and port for the former slave trade, and visit Afro-Colombian communities; and Uraba, for home-stays, meetings with displaced communities, and worship with local congregations. We will get to see Mamie's and Richard's ministry in Colombia up close. We will also return ready to use our power and voice as Americans and Christians to advocate for justice in Colombia. Registration applications with a \$200 deposit are due March 15. Speak with Leah Fowler (lfowler@firstunitedoakpark.com) for more info. Scholarships are available.

FUSH News

From a FUSHee:

"This past month at FUSH we have done many fun and new Activities. On January 31 we hosted the FUSH Coffeehouse. The night was filled with singing, dancing and talent-sharing. Thanks to everyone who came and supported us! Also, February 22 began our Lenten Art Study, which continues until Easter. Look for ways FUSHees will practice spirituality through creating beautiful pottery and other artwork. It will appear in worship in various ways during Lent."

—Lara Miller, *Sophomore and Council member*

FUSH SCHEDULE:

Sing to Video Gaming Music as an act of worship! Bill Chin has a special piece to share with a FUSH choir. Practice is at 5:15, before FUSH, on March 7 and 14.

Friday, March 6 at 8 pm: FUSH Lock-In (Ends 8 am Saturday)

No FUSH March 7!

March 14: Dan leads us in a Lenten discussion on Temptation, 6-8 pm!

March 21: FUSH goes to Interfaith House! Come help lead a Birthday party. As you celebrate, make friends with residents who live in the shelter. We especially need people who can help with the shopping ahead of time for the party!

March 28: FUSH goes to brunch after worship. Meet in church lounge at noon.

FUJI News

For 7-8th graders, Our Whole Lives Youth Sexuality Education Training (also known as OWL!) will meet as an in-church retreat Sat-Sun. March 13-14, beginning at 9 am Saturday. This is a comprehensive program that helps youth think through their values and God's call as they form a sexual ethic. It's fun, and it's useful information. If you would like to see a copy of the curriculum, it will be available on the Elder's Desk. Parents should have attended an OWL orientation by now. Parents and guardians may also schedule an appointment to meet with Leah Fowler if they would like further information. Many thanks to our wonderful Lay Leaders who help to make this experience happen: Joanne Desportes, Jackie Zdziarski-West, Gary Cerniglia, Sylvia Menninga, Rich Wheelock and Walter Miller.

FUJI SCHEDULE:

March 7: Skit Night: Exploring Temptation

March 13-14 OWL Lock-In

March 21: The Most Excellent Board Game Competition

March 28: Spring Break (no FUJI)

Music in Lent

— Bill Chin

Catch some great music during worship in Lent. On March 7 we'll hear "Hope for Resolution," a piece by Chicago-area composer Paul Caldwell that melds South African harmony with traditional hymn singing. Our Lenten Cantata is on March 14; it's excerpts from Part 2 of Handel's "Messiah," with soloists, chorus, and orchestra. March 21 features young musicians in our congregation and church community; they'll bring us "Baba Yetu," a setting of the Lord's Prayer from, of all things, a video game (Civilization IV). But wait, there's more—especially if you'd like to sing on the last Sunday of the month in our Open Choir.

Quest Journeys On —Marylen Marty-Gentile

Our Questors continue their journey toward the decision as to whether or not to affirm their faith and become adult members of First United. In February the class visited church Council to observe how the big-picture discussions happen. Sessions on how to live as Christians, worship, prayer, and sin (though not necessarily in this order) were on February's agenda. Questors have also had outings with their Friends in Faith and on a Saturday, repainted the tunnel to resemble a night sky. Their questions and observations keep all of the leaders awake and on their toes. One Questor observed that this is one of the first times they have had the space to really ask questions. These youth have been asking questions in church school all their lives, but they are just ready to start asking harder and deeper questions. It's all part of their Quest toward a fuller faith.

Marking Lent

Our church school classes mark Lent. In each room, you will see a worship table covered in purple on which is placed small symbols of the Lenten journey: rocks, sand, cactus. Some classes include more silence and prayer in their sessions. Some create art installations reflecting the Jesus stories in Lent. Some spend more time exploring the question of how to be more like Jesus. All continue to collect offering and items for their mission partners as a way to serve others. As do adults, children and youth walk the Lenten journey with Jesus.

Heard in Class

Recently the junior high church school class explored the parable of the Good Samaritan. They did some parable reenactment to feel as well as hear the parable. Afterward their leaders asked them to reflect on the parable, but they could only ask questions about it. On a sheet of paper they had to write one question about the content of the parable and the second question directly of Jesus. All the questions were provocative, but one in particular is worth repeating. The youth wrote to Jesus and asked, "When I behave like guy #1 [the Levite] and guy #2 [the Priest] how will knowing you help me to become more like guy number #3 [the Good Samaritan]." Wow!

—Leah Fowler

March 7: 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 the Conference Room. We plan to order lunch from the Jerusalem Café. Please let Pauline or Leah Fowler know if you are coming so we know how much food to order! Pauline: p.coffman@sbcglobal.net or 708-524-5444. Leah: lfowler@firstunitedoakpark.com or 708-386-5215.

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!

Adult Church School Classes (9:30 am Sundays in the Conference Room)

Spring Bible Study: *"First Light: Jesus and the Kingdom of God."* This class will examine the subversive 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.

March 7 and 14

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 7, he'll describe Buchman's early outreach to elite college students and what he called "soul surgery," which eventually created Alcoholics Anonymous. On March 14, he'll describe MRA's evangelical song-and-dance shows, culminating in Up With People.

children's
ministry

Adult
Education

Easter
Promise

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, and from Rev. Mamie Broadhurst via Skype, former Associate Pastor at FUCOP and current mission worker in the Presbyterian Peace Foundation Accompaniment Program, living with her husband Richard in Barranquilla, Colombia.

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."

March 21: *Gardening with God Series:* Paul Aeschleman teaches how to construct your garden, transplant seedlings, and test your soil.

GREEN SPACE — Laurie Bunkers

Environmental Stewardship Team – Open Invitation

Are you interested in helping First United become more environmentally friendly? If so, please join us in the conference room, 8:30 am, every third Sunday of the month.

Next meeting: March 21 – meet, then stay for the gardening class that follows.

Green tip: Did you know it takes 1-1/2 cups of water to produce one sheet of paper? You can reduce paper junk mail by contacting the Direct Marketing Association, 1120 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036-6700, 212/768-7277, www.dmachoice.org (you can also reduce the number of unsolicited advertising emails you receive via this website).

Live the Vision —Judy Vojta

In the spirit of Vision 2020, the Nominating Committee will be seeking members to various committees in our church community with the theme LIVE THE VISION. We encourage everyone to build connections with one another and in service to God through the active participation in the various committees and activities related to mission, education, worship, financial, community building, and leadership at First United. An interest survey will be available on-line and in our church bulletin March 4 through March 21. Let us embrace the challenge of turning our thoughts and words into action! If you have any questions or would like to nominate yourself or someone else before March 4, please contact me at jvojta10@yahoo.com or 557-4261.

Evening Division – "Vietnam Revisited" — Marcia Ashton

Our March 4th program will be of broad interest to many people in the congregation. Harriet Udelson's program will highlight her work with a Medical Mission team to Vietnam last year. Their medical services provided dental care to 1500 patients in two weeks. In her role as a health educator, Harriet was part of a public health team that worked with mothers to improve birthing experience and general care for their children. This program will offer insight into the life of people 36 years after the end of the Vietnam War. You may come at 6:30 pm for dinner or at 7:15 pm for the program only. RSVP to Grace Behrendes (708-386-2721) by February 28th. All members of the church are welcome.



Prayers
for Peace
On the front
steps of the
church every
Friday evening
at 7pm

InnerPeace
WorldPeace
Saturday at
8:30 am, in the
Conference
Room
All are invited.

Easter
Promise

Pledge and Budget Update

— Joanne Despotes

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You! 276 families have pledged for 2010 for a total of \$678,238. Wow! This is especially impressive when compared to the pledged totals for 2009 (\$635,000) and 2008 (\$630,000). We are also well on our way to meeting our goal of 55 NEW pledges in 2010 with 46 new pledges totaling \$37,225. All these pledges have put us in a position to balance the budget and include increases for staff, interest on the building loan, and an allocation for mission from current giving (instead of mission endowments).

Here is the budget the Church Council, Committees and Staff are working with for 2010:

Sources of Funds:

Projected Pledge Income:	\$ 644,000	(95% of pledge total)
Mission Endowment Draws:	142,719	
Other Endowment Draws:	88,673	
Other Income:	119,500	
Total sources of funds:	\$ 994,892	

Uses of Funds:

Pastoral and Administrative Staff:	\$ 518,986
Other Personnel costs:	4,900
Admin & Building:	230,000
Faith in Learning:	22,830
Faith in Worship:	17,915
Faith in Community:	13,070
Faith in Action:	165,919
Total uses of funds:	\$ 973,620

Net General Operations Fund: \$ 21,272

The Net General Operations Fund amount is managed by Church Council to determine its best possible use for meeting the vision and goals of First United Church.

If you haven't pledged this year ... It's not too late! Stewardship Committee has set a goal of 90% of members pledging to the annual fund by 2015. We are currently at about 60%. Note that we are looking for participation, NOT a certain minimum pledge amount. Truly – a pledge of \$10.00 a year would be as welcome as a pledge of \$10 a week or \$10 a day. If you have never pledged, consider taking a leap of faith. Your pledge will not only benefit the Church financially, it will also benefit you in ways you cannot imagine.

A Campaign Celebration! Sunday, March 14, 2010, After Church

— Joanne Despotes

A milestone in the 2006 Growing in Faith -- Building to Serve capital campaign calls us to celebrate on Sunday, March 14th. Whether you are one of the many members and friends who contributed financially or not, you have benefited from the changes in our church life made possible by the building improvements funded by the campaign: the new lounge and its view of and access to the Church's side lawn; the Bergstraesser Library; the office suite; the new entrances off the parking lot into the lounge and into the sanctuary from the lounge; and the upgrades in Centennial Hall.

All pledges to the campaign, totaling nearly 2 million dollars, were due to be received by mid-March. The remaining balance (approximately \$220,000) is held as a loan obligation at Park National Bank. We are paying 4% interest on this loan and as of 2010 have included the interest in our operating budget. The sooner we pay down the loan, the less interest we will have to pay. We hope that some of the new members who have never been asked to contribute will contribute toward the retirement of the debt and that others who may have contributed previously will consider contributing again. When the loan is paid we will have a gigantic Debt Retirement Celebration. In the meantime, we will celebrate the end of the Campaign and all the work, energy and gifts that have gotten us to this point. So – come to the lounge after Church on 3/14 for a short program and a few surprises.

Charitable Remainder Workshop

—Gene Armstrong

Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 17, 2010 - the date the Planned Giving Committee will present a workshop on charitable remainders. A charitable remainder is a very useful tool for anyone who would like to include a gift to First United Church in his or her estate plans, but wants to have a reliable stream of income to meet financial needs in the later years. If you are one of these people, you are not alone. Take heart! There is good news! With a charitable remainder, you can accomplish both objectives - and enjoy an immediate income tax benefit! Others have done it and you can, too. Who wouldn't want to know more about charitable remainders? Be sure to watch the weekly church bulletin; as plans for the workshop are solidified, we'll provide specifics as to the when and where. Or call me or Rev. Julie R. Harley. Hope to see you at the workshop!

PrimeTime at Elmhurst College Theatre

—Janet Haisman

Join fellow PrimeTimers on Sunday, March 14 (12 – 5 pm), for a performance of *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, and then participate in a post-performance discussion with the director and actors! After the discussion, dine with your carpool at a choice of three Elmhurst restaurants: Roberto's (Italian \$16-\$25 entrees); Mack's Golden Pheasant (Czech \$9-\$15); Wok'n Fire (Pan-Asian \$9-15). We'll begin with a brown bag lunch at church after the service and leave via carpool at 1 pm for the 2 pm performance. Cost of the play is \$6, plus \$1 per rider for your carpool driver. Contact Susan and Bud Meyers by March 8 to purchase tickets, choose a restaurant, and/or volunteer to drive (hnsmeyers@sbcglobal.net or (708) 524-1634).

Empty Bowls Dinner

—Pennie Ebsen

The Empty Bowls Project Community Dinner will be at Oak Park and River Forest High School on Friday, March 19, from 6 - 8 pm. Your investment of \$15.00 per person (\$10 for children) will allow you to select a handmade pottery bowl, stand in a soup line and have a simple supper of soup, bread and water. You get to take home the bowl and use as a reminder of all those who have empty bowls for dinner on a regular basis.

First United Church has traditionally been a great support to the Empty Bowls Community Dinner!! We hope you will be able to stop by and support this fundraiser before you head off to your evening plans. The proceeds go to PADS, the Food Pantry, and Global Alliance for Africa.

Think Spring! The Nursery School's Annual Plant Sale is Here!

—Holly Wiemken

Our spectacular geraniums and enormous Boston Ferns are back again this year as well as all the flowers, plants and herbs you will need for your spring plantings. We have many repeat buyers each year who rave about the quality of these plants. This Annual Plant Sale helps support the wonderful programs offered by the Nursery School. A Nursery School representative will be in the lounge with order forms. Orders are due by March 16th. Order pick up will be available Saturday, May 8th and Sunday, May 9th. Cash and checks will be accepted. Questions? Contact me (708-524-9020 or holly.wiemken@att.net). The Nursery School appreciates your support. Believe it or not, spring is just around the corner.

Join in celebrating twenty years

Promoting awareness, advocacy, accompaniment. and action in Latin America by Dancing for Justice with the Chicago Religious Leadership Network - CRLN - April 10, 7-11pm. There will be music, dancing, food and drink and a silent auction. Where: Christo Rei in Pilsen, 1832 W. 22nd Place; \$ 25/\$50 standard and patron. The guest MC will be Jerome McDonnell of WBEZ's World Vision. For further information contact Kris Ronnow.

**SPECIAL
THINGS
TO DO!**

Showcase Your Talents for a Great Cause —Marcia Ashton

Inviting all artists, bakers, technical advisors, photographers, landscape pros, crafts-people, handymen/women, etc. to contribute your talents to support a great cause. Evening Division will host its annual "Best-ever White Elephant Sale" (May 6th) to benefit several local mission projects. This year the entire congregation will have the opportunity to bid early (and often). For more information or to offer your talents, please contact me – 708-524-5126 or marciaashton@msn.com.

Save These Dates

Tuesday, March 2	8:30a	Walk-in Ministry Community of Congregations Breakfast
Thursday, March 4	6:30p	Evening Division Dinner
Sunday, March 7	12:15p	Middle East Traveling Seminar
Saturday, March 13	9:00a	FUJI Youth OWL Lock-in
Sunday, March 14	12:15p 2:00p	End of Captital Campaign Event PrimeTime Event
Monday, March 15	7:00p	Peace and Justice Forum
Saturday, March 20	7:00p	Music for Life Concert

*Note: Dinner & a Movie is taking March off and will return in April.
Enjoy your Easter celebrations!*

FIRST UNITED CHURCH OF OAK PARK

848 lake Street
Oak Park, IL 60301

708.386.5215
Fax: 708.386.7480

office@firstunitedoakpark.com

Staff:

Julie R. Harley, *Lead Pastor*

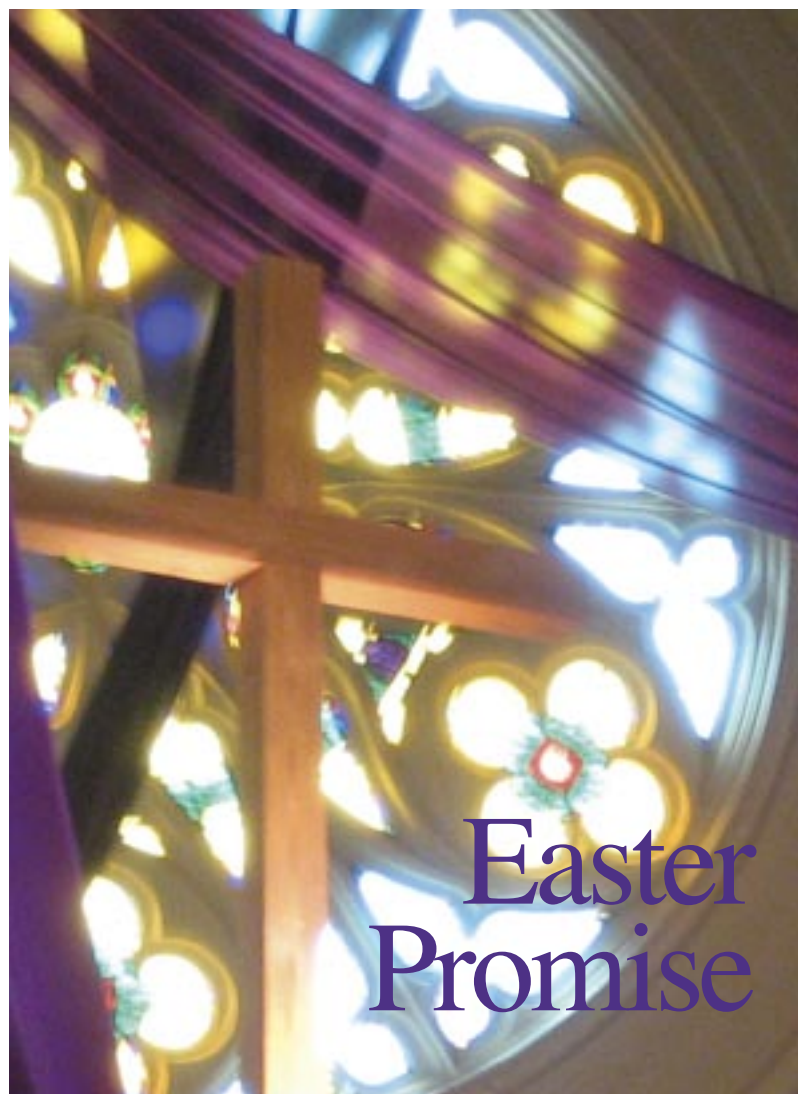
Leah Fowler,
*Associate Minister of Youth
and Adult Education*

Marylen Marty-Gentile,
*Director of Children
& Family Ministries*

Jeff Foels,
McCormick Seminary Intern

Ally Vertigan
Elmhurst College Saff Intern

Bill Chin,
Director of Music Ministry

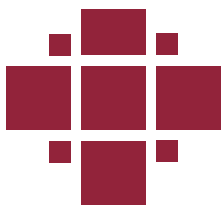


Easter
Promise

Deadline for the April issue 2010 is March 15th.
Please e-mail information or articles for the MB to:

office@firstunitedoakpark.com

2.2010 .emorymead



March 2010

Regularly Scheduled Weekly Meetings: Please check with convener if you have questions.

<i>Sundays</i>	12:15p	<i>Children's Choir</i>	<i>Bill Chin – 386-5215</i>
<i>Mondays</i>	7:30p	<i>PADS Shelter</i>	<i>Bill Lovell – 445-2665</i>
<i>Wednesdays</i>	11:00a	<i>Weekday Bible Study</i>	<i>Leah Fowler - 386-5215</i>
<i>2nd 3rd & 4th and 1st</i>	3:30p 7:00p 7:00p	<i>Food Pantry Open</i> <i>Food Pantry Open</i> <i>Adult Choir</i>	<i>Kathy Russell/Michele Zurakowski - 386-1324</i> <i>Bill Chin – 386-5215</i>
<i>Thursdays</i>	6:30p	<i>Cluster Tutoring</i>	<i>Kathy McCabe – 773-378-5530</i>
<i>Fridays</i>	7:00a 7:00p	<i>Men's Breakfast Group</i> <i>Peace Prayer Vigil</i>	<i>Ted Despotes – 386-4809</i> <i>Bob Haisman – 383-2035</i>
<i>Saturdays</i>	8:30a 9:00a	<i>Inner Peace/World Peace</i> <i>Food Pantry</i>	<i>Jeff Olson - 383-3154</i> <i>Kathy Russell/Michele Zurakowski – 386-1324</i>
Walk-in-Ministry	Monday— Saturday 10 to 11am		<i>Susan Zaruba—386-1946</i>

Week of March 1

Monday 1	7:00p	Fellowship of Reconciliation	
Tuesday 2	8:30a 7:00p	Walk-in Ministry / Community of Congregations Breakfast Library Committee	<i>Cindy Palombi</i>
Wednesday 3	11:00a 7:00p	Children's Ministry Committee Weekday Bible Study Adult Education Committee Stewardship Committee	<i>Andrea Alter/Barb Metric</i> <i>Leah Fowler</i> <i>William Tweedley</i> <i>Joanne Despotes</i>
Thursday 4	6:30p 7:30p	Evening Division Dinner Pastor Search Committee	<i>Carole Ferguson</i> <i>Melinda Haag</i>
Saturday 6	9:00a 1:00p 3:00p	Fourth Grade Bread Bake Dances of Universal Peace Adele Hoppe Memorial Service	<i>Marylen Marty-Gentile</i> <i>Cindy Palombi</i> <i>Julie R. Harley</i>

Week of March 7

Sunday 7	9:30a 9:30a 11:00a 12:15p 6:00p	Christian Education for All Quest Worship-Lent 3-Fourth Grade Communion Middle East Traveling Seminar FUJI Youth Group	<i>Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile</i> <i>Pauline Coffman</i> <i>Leah Fowler</i>
Tuesday 9	7:00p	Finance Committee Youth Board Shawl Ministry Deacons	<i>Claudette Zobel</i> <i>Leah Fowler</i> <i>Elan Long</i> <i>Carl Nauert</i>
Wednesday 10	8:00p	Communications Committee	<i>Martha Reese</i>
Thursday 11	11:00a	Weekday Bible Study	<i>Leah Fowler</i>
Friday 12	7:30p	Pastor Search Committee	<i>Melinda Haag</i>
Saturday 13	9:00a	FUJI Youth OWL Lock-in	<i>Leah Fowler</i>

Week of March 14

Daylight Savings Time Begins

Sunday 14	9:30a 9:30a 11:00a 12:15p 2:00p 6:00p	Christian Education for All Quest Worship-Lent 4-Cantata Finance Committee End of Capital Campaign Celebration PrimeTime Event FUSH Youth Group	<i>Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile</i> <i>Marsha Ashton</i> <i>Leah Fowler</i>
Monday 15	7:00p	Peace and Justice Forum	<i>Bob Haisman</i>
Tuesday 16	7:30p	Church Council	<i>Laurie Jolicoeur</i>
Wednesday 17	11:00a	Weekday Bible Study	<i>Leah Fowler</i>
Thursday 18	7:00p 7:30p	Spiritual Guidance Groups Pastor Search Committee	<i>Julie R. Harley</i> <i>Melinda Haag</i>
Saturday 20	9:00a 7:00p	Directions Music for Life Concert	<i>Don Sibley</i>

Week of March 21

Sunday 21	8:30a 9:30a 9:30a 11:00a 12:15p 6:00p	Environmental Stewardship Team Christian Education for All Quest Worship-Lent 5-Preschool Lord's Prayer-Baptism Nominating Committee FUSH to Interfaith House / FUJI Youth Group	<i>Ann Alexander</i> <i>Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile</i> <i>Judy Vojta</i> <i>Leah Fowler</i>
Tuesday 23	11:00a 7:00p	Evening Division Board Building & Grounds Committee Personnel Committee Faith in Action Committee New Member Committee Youth Committee	<i>Carole Ferguson</i> <i>John Zaruba</i> <i>Al Parchem</i> <i>Bob Hahn</i> <i>Susan Saliny</i> <i>Judy Bradeen</i>
Wednesday 24	11:00a	Weekday Bible Study	<i>Leah Fowler</i>
Thursday 25	7:00p 7:30p	Shawl Ministry Pastor Search Committee	<i>Elan Long</i> <i>Melinda Haag</i>

Week of March 28

Sunday 28	9:30a 9:30a 11:00a 12:15p 3:00p	Christian Education for All Quest Worship-Palm Sunday FUSH to Brunch PFLAG	<i>Art Spooner/Marylen Marty-Gentile</i> <i>Leah Fowler</i> <i>Kate Kroker</i>
Wednesday 31	4:30p	Holy Week Bread Baking	<i>Marylen Marty-Gentile</i>

“Perhaps
there is only
one person's
voice lacking...
for peace to
come about
in the world.”

Easter
Promise

www.firstunitedoakpark.com