

Pass It On
February – March 2009
Mercer Island United Methodist Church
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Ash Wednesday February 25

Noon: A brief service, followed by soup and bread

Evening: 6:00 a soup supper, followed by service at 7:00.

The Service of Ashes involves the imposition of ashes, and marks the beginning of Lent. We are having two services so that those who cannot drive at night can come at noon. Those who work during the day, can come in the evening. Or so that you can choose the better time for you.

Lent Worship: Sharing Our Faith Journeys. Services in Lent will include reflections on faith journeys. March 1, Diana Blakney. March 8, Linda Hodge. The guidelines for these sharings: they must be personal, they must include God, Jesus and/or Spirit, and they must include church – this one or another.

The 40 Days of Lent. Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday [February 25 this year] and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday [April 12 in 2009]. Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten* meaning spring. The season is a preparation for celebrating Easter. Historically, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by converts and reconciliation for those who had been separated from the church. Eventually, it became a time for penance by all Christians. ---- *The United Methodist Book of Worship, alt*

Spring Is Coming. The camellia buds are already swelling, and the rhodies are working on theirs. Small birds and robins made a ruckus this morning. Small green tops of daffodils and early spring bulbs are working their way through the earth. The purple and white Lenten roses are blooming beside the church walkway.

Life is pushing forward as we begin the journey to the cross. Lent and Spring seem to be giving us different messages. Lent calls us to self-denial and hard realities. Spring calls us to open to life. I think there is a connection between self-denial and new, emerging life.

It is a time of hope, a time for starting new, and a time to be hungry for new life.

Lent is about preparing to live life faithfully. During this time, we take special care to pay close attention to Jesus' teachings, and to his journey. We watch what he says and does. We pay very close attention to what he was passionate about –the Kingdom of God on earth as in heaven.

We turn to prayer and practice which helps us move ourselves into alignment with the Dominion of God. We reset our inner compass to true north and get our bearings straight.

Lent is a wonderful time to read through all of the Gospels. You'll find a daily reading guide in this newsletter.

I encourage you to make this a Lent that will be spiritually fruitful for your life. Focus on ways that you can help yourself become green, supple, and responsive to our Lord.

See you in church,
Leslie Ann

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering -- March 22 United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

On behalf of the United Methodist Church, UMCOR brings hope and aid when a catastrophe strikes.

We rush to disaster areas all over the world with aid. And, along with food, clothing, shelter, and medical help, we stay to assist survivors rebuild lives. That's what United Methodists do in response to God's love.

From helping soldiers reintegrate into their communities as productive citizens to feeding schoolchildren to establishing medical clinics in remote villages, we are hope for millions in over 80 of the poorest countries in the world.

Here's Why Your Gift Is So Important: The One Great Hour of Sharing offering on Sunday, March 22, 2009, is absolutely essential to UMCOR. UMCOR receives no World Service funds or any other apportionments. Through our gifts to the offering, United Methodists can assure that when catastrophes cause suffering, our church, impelled by Jesus' love and compassion, will be in the lead to ease the pain.

Birthdays. February: 25 – Christine Weiser. March: 6 – Chick Hodge; 7 – Bailey Lake; 8 – Dick Dudley; 9 – Chandler Neames; 11 – Toni Baullinger; 13 – Sue Ogilvie; 14 – Clay Dudley; 15 – Ben Shoemaker, Ann Iwano, Imani Ambers; 22 -- Fred Dowdy; 23 – Bill Parker; 26 – Mary Furer, Mac Dudley

Prayers for Our Church Family and Beyond. Pray for those who are ill, the home-bound, and those who are recovering, especially Jan Numata, Ed Cowan, Christine Weiser. Remember all whose bodies hurt in daily life. . . . For those who are struggling

with difficult people and hard events in their lives, and those who are sad or grieving. For those who are suffering the loss of memory, and those who love them. . . . For the young people in our congregation. . . . For all who feel economically vulnerable . . . Pray that all may know the healing grace of God, the sustaining presence of the Holy Spirit, the love of Jesus Christ, and the faithful companionship of others.

Dinners for 8. “The goal,” says Linda Hodge, “is for everybody to get to know someone different.” Thanks to Linda for doing such a great job organizing. And special thanks to the households who hosted: Dick & Becky Dudley, Joe & Ann Iwano, Chick & Linda Hodge, Mary Furer, Bill & Diana Blakney, Bob & Dottie Hughes, Bill & Bev Parker, Will & Darolyn Quayle, John & Vicki Smolke, Jim & Sue Ogilvie. 40 people participated. We’ve had two rounds, and another round is coming up in the spring. New persons are invited! Call Linda Hodge 206-232-8078 or cghlgh@comcast.net.

About the Offering The food which is brought forward during every offering is taken to the Emergency Feeding Program. The books which people bring forward are taken to the Atlantic Street Center for children of all ages.

Worship Snapshot for 2008. Our average Sunday worship for 2008 was 45. That is everyone – children, adults, worship leaders, guests. Thanks, ushers, for doing that count each Sunday.

Pixie Hill Preschool. Pixie Hill Preschool and the MIUMC are hoping to have a relationship by September 2010. For another year, PH will stay in school district facilities, but if the city approves plans for parking and a playground, they will be able to do some alterations on our building and grounds to come up to code and preschool licensing standards and move in a year from this fall. The preschool has been well-known on the island since it was started 55 years ago and has a strong reputation.

Pixie Hill has forty children enrolled in two classes which meet on different days. There are twenty 3-year-olds and twenty 4-year-olds. Monday through Friday there will be one of those classes here from 9:00 until as late as 2:00. Some of the rooms will be shared; others will be designated for church or preschool use. Our building is great for education, and it will be well used. It has been a beautiful space sitting empty except for Sunday. We need to use our building as an asset for ministry in the community.

The work right now for PH is the city planning commission, which must approve the building and property use. Details for the rent have not been firmed up yet. Trustees need to find out how much the utilities will cost, and that will take some study. Rent will be expected to cover utilities and wear and tear. PH will pay for their own custodial service.

Finance Report. We ended January with a shortfall of about \$1,000, and so did not pay our apportionments. However, we paid all other bills and commitments. Thank you for your faithful giving. (Prepaid pledges are used proportionately through the year, and they have not been used up.) This year will not be easy, but with faithful, consistent giving we will continue, and we will work to connect with new people.

Birthday Coins and Dollars. The birthday offerings from the first Sunday of the month will be used for the boys housing at Jaama Letu (Our Family). Jaama Letu is a project in the Congo by Pacific Northwest United Methodists to shelter and educate orphans and displaced children. Volunteers in Mission go to Jaama Letu and Congo on a regular basis. If this calls to you, talk with Leslie Ann and she'll connect you with a future team. It has become a deep and strong love affair, this connection.

Court Date. The lawsuit filed by Mercer Island Citizens for Fair Process against the city, church, and SHARE for Tent City continues to hang on. A court date is set for March 20 for "summary judgment" which is not binding. We hope that will settle it, but they could decide to press ahead to a trial in December. There is nothing remaining against the church, since the only charge is against the city for violating law by using a temporary use agreement rather than an ordinance to regulate Tent City's stay. There is a rumor going around in MICFP circles that the city refused to release us even though MICFP wanted to do so, but that is untrue. That falls solely to the plaintiffs who have named us in the suit. Our annual conference continues to protect us and ministry to homeless persons. The conference is covering the cost.

Kudos to: Aleta Toy and Carla Neames for their persistent, enduring vision of the Parents' Night Out as outreach to young people. The program is growing, and is part of our children's ministry. . . . Bob Hughes, who as a conference leader for Church and Society, was part of a national leadership summit for UM conference officers. . . . Colton Lake for completing the "God and Me" project for the "God and Country" program. He received his pin in worship.

Readers of Anne LaMott. Friday, April 17, 7:30. Mercer Island Presbyterian Church. In all of Anne Lamott's books, she writes about loss – loss of loved ones and loss of personal control. She doesn't try to sugar coat the sadness, frustration and disappointment, but tells her stories with honesty, compassion and a pureness of voice. She is the author of six novels, as well as four best-selling books of non-fiction. She has been honored with a Guggenheim Fellowship, and has taught at UC Davis. Her biweekly online diary, "Word by Word" was voted The Best of the Web by Time Magazine. "Sidesplittingly funny, patiently wise, and alternately cranky and kind," says the Seattle Times. Worthy of a place on your calendar.