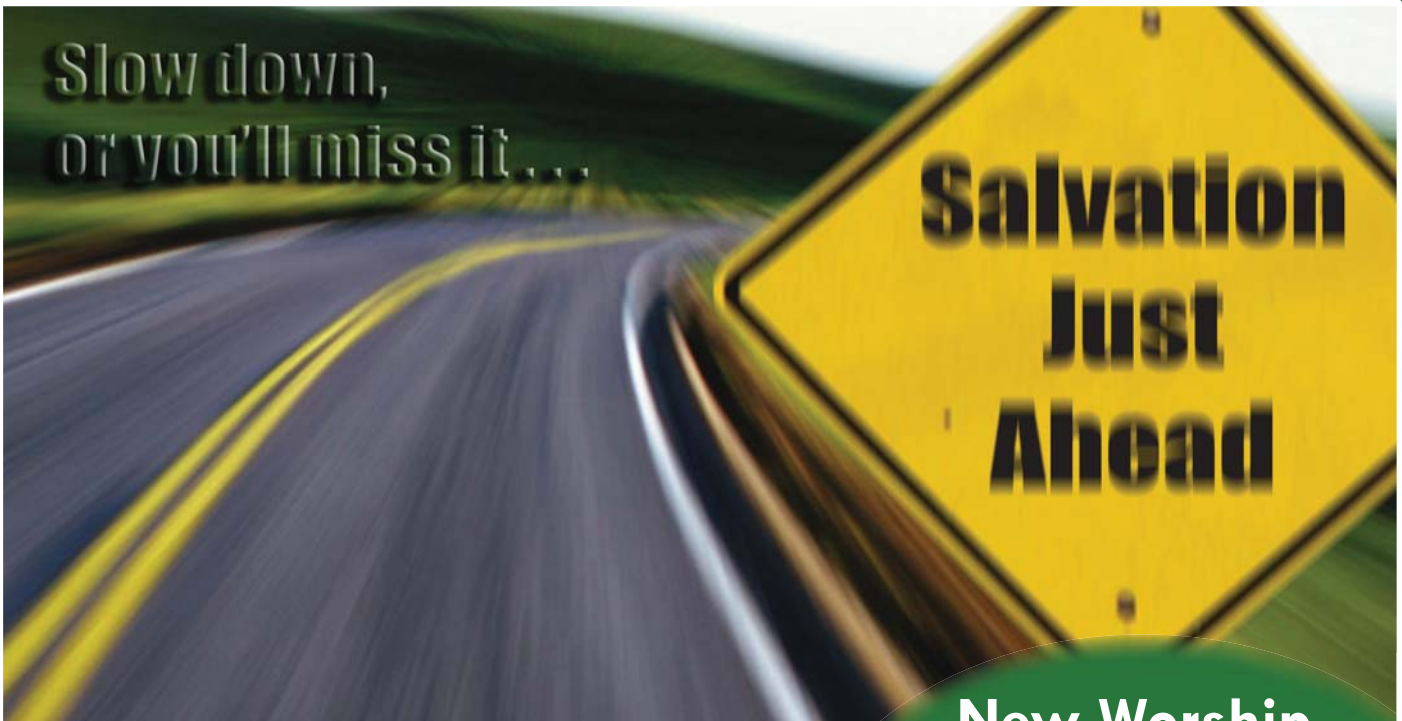


WEST U METHODIST WITNESS

The Road to Calvary and Beyond An Invitation for the West U Community

Here is your opportunity to invite our community to join us on the journey to Salvation, and experience discipleship first hand!

March 2009
Issue 3



Beginning March 1st, WUUMC will embark on a campaign to invite our community to join us for Holy Week. **Here's where we need your help!** ID tags, along with a schedule of Holy Week services, will be available for you to take and give to friends, neighbors, and co-workers as a personal invitation to *travel the road to Calvary and beyond with us April 5-12th*. Please take an info card for yourself and an extra (or two!) with ID tags for someone you know. This is a great opportunity to reach out individually to the West U community and celebrate our faith. *(Info cards and ID tags are available in the church office and at all Sunday worship services while supplies last.)*

New Worship Schedule!

**One service @ 10 am
Sunday School @ 11 am**

*Beginning April 19th
Details on next page!*

3611 University Blvd. Houston TX 77005 713.664.8111 www.westumethodist.org

From Mark's Desk

We have arrived at the season of Lent, that period of the church year in which people figure we are supposed to feel miserable. After all, just prior to Ash Wednesday we run into Fat Tuesday - Mardi Gras in French - a time of joy and revelry which stands in stark contrast to the observance that begins the next day. The fun stops. At least that is the popular understanding.

Strange. The word "Lent" originally meant "springtime," not misery. Because the church season always fell at this time of year, the name came to apply to the ecclesiastical observance as well. The Lenten observance has changed over the centuries. The early church celebrated Lent only for a few days before Easter. Over time, the length of the season grew until it was several weeks long. In the seventh century, the church set the period of Lent at forty days (excluding Sundays) in order to remind people of the duration of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.

The Lenten observance began as a time of purification and preparation.

In the early church, baptism was only performed on Easter Sunday - an entire year's worth of converts to the faith would be baptized and brought into the church on that day. Lent was the time before Easter in which these converts would fast and pray, preparing themselves to be members of Christ's church. As years went by, the church began to baptize and

confirm people on days other than Easter Sunday. Lent was no longer a time of preparation for these events, but it remained as a special time of prayer and fasting. After the Reformation, the discipline of fasting became unpopular (and it has never regained much favor). Thus, as a way of preserving Lent as a time of self-sacrifice, the church leaders encouraged people to give up something they enjoyed during Lent. Speaking of giving things up, here are some suggestions:

- **Give up** grumbling! Instead, "In everything give thanks." Constructive criticism is OK, but "moaning, and complaining" are not Christian disciplines.
- **Give up** looking at other people's worst points. Instead concentrate on their best points. We all have faults. It is a lot easier to have people overlook our shortcomings when we overlook theirs first.
- **Give up** your worries and anxieties! Instead, trust God with them. Anxiety is spending emotional energy on something we can do nothing about: like tomorrow! Live today and let God's grace be sufficient.
- **Give up** judging by appearances and by the standard of the world! Instead, learn to give up yourself to God. There is only one who has the right to judge, Jesus Christ. Now aren't you glad you don't have to do that anymore?

Lent is still the church season in which we prepare for Easter Sunday. It is a time to remember the temptation, the suffering, and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Remember the admonition of the Gospel lesson to do it right - "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them." This is not Show Time! It is a special time of prayer and reflection, of confession and self-sacrifice. Most of all, it is a time to ready ourselves for the sheer joy of Easter morning - it is a time to ready ourselves to meet our risen Lord once again.

God Bless, *Mark*

NEW Worship Schedule at WUUMC

Dear Church Family,

After 4 cottage meetings, Worship Committee discussions and recommendations, the Board of Stewards has come to a consensus regarding worship services. The decision was made after a lot of prayer and input from many in our church family.

The questions that were asked of our congregation were, "What creative ways can we offer that will pave the way and create access points for our greater, diverse community to encounter God through Jesus Christ?" and "What kind of, and how many services, do we need to provide so that everyone who comes to WUUMC may passionately and meaningfully encounter God and want to come back and experience God again?"

The responses to those questions were many but what came out of the careful recording of the cottage meeting comments was a yearning to fellowship and a sense of community in our church. There were preferences expressed for both traditional and contemporary styles of worship but the overpowering expression was for creation of unity and opportunities for relationship building.

Many expressed a desire for more time for Sunday school so that members were not rushed and that they can make it to worship or time. The Board of Stewards believes that the best alternative to serve those needs and desires is **WORSHIP at 10 am and SUNDAY SCHOOL at 11 am**. We also intend to create a coffee and donut fellowship time for those who would like to visit with members who may not be in their Sunday school class. **The new WORSHIP at 10 service will begin on APRIL 19th, the Sunday after Easter.** It is our prayer that God will bless our leaders with His power to provide services that instill passion with both traditional and contemporary elements.

We ask for your continued prayers and support. We believe this is an exciting new way to unite as a church family and provide services where everyone who enters the door at WUUMC may passionately and meaningfully encounter God through Jesus Christ.

Your Board of Stewards,

Jan Lindley, Dean Quinn, Chris Stacy, Andrew Koenig, Paula Arnold, Clint Carlin, Barbara Havlik, Diane Burnett, Jim McBride, Mark Woodward

(from a sermon by David E. Leininger)



“Evolution, Intelligent Design and Religion in the Schools”

presented by The University of Houston Law Center and Anti-Defamation League - Southwest Region

Friday, March 27, 2009

10:30 am to 12:30 pm

University of Houston Law Center

Krost Hall, 4800 Calhoun, Entrance 19

Free and Open to the Public

Two hours of CLE including one hour of ethics

Speakers:

Dean Erwin Chemerinsky

Founding Dean, University of California, Irvine School of Law

Judge John E. Jones

U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania

Moderators:

Dean Raymond Nimmer

Dean, University of Houston Law Center

Marvin Nathan

Chairman, ADL's National Civil Rights Committee

This program analyzes the ever-controversial topic of teaching evolution in the public schools, and continuing efforts to require that the science curriculum include teaching about creationism, intelligent design, or the “strengths and weaknesses” of the theory of evolution.

Dean Erwin Chemerinsky will analyze the topic from a constitutional law perspective. Judge John E. Jones III, who presided over a six-week trial on this highly-charged issue in the case of *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area Sch. Dist.*, will address the importance of an independent judiciary.

Parking is available in lot 19B in front of the Law Center. **Complimentary parking decals will be mailed to registered attendees before the event.**

Questions? Please contact Jodi Bernstein, jodi.bernstein@adl.org, or Kelli Cline, KCline2@Central.UH.EDU

RSVP's requested to jodi.bernstein@adl.org.

**A Special Invitation
from
Rev. Mark Woodward**

Thank you Kids of the Kingdom and Sonbeam Choir for your incredible message in song with your presentation of the musical "Simon Says." We enjoyed your "rockin' trial!"



Cole Jackson and Meg McDonald holding their crosses they received after the musical. Cole is the first child to participate for 6 consecutive years in the children's choir program and Meg received perfect attendance for the year, being at all rehearsals and Sunday morning worship singing.



The Sonbeam Choir, under the direction of Sheryl Moore and accompanist Julie Jackson, sang at the Holly Hall Chapel service on February 1st.

Dear Lynne & Troops,

Simon said "celebrate" as this presentation of joyful music and message rocked the audience with its energy. The Kids of the Kingdom were filled with the spirit, rhythm and excitement as they sang, danced, and acted their hearts out. Kudos to Lynne Jackson and here talented staff who pulled together spellbinding performances on Sunday, February 22nd. What a wonderful way to light up our world!

Thanks to each of the Kids of the Kingdom and Sonbeam Choir who were shining stars as well as to all of the team that worked on these performances - outpourings of joy! We are praising God for the marvelous talent alive in our church and for the hard work reflected in the presentation of Simon Says, the Rockin' Trial of Simon Peter. The success of this program cannot be denied!

P.S. Lynne, thank you for all YOU do to keep our church alive and exciting!

Still rocking,
Meg Caldwell

Thank you for

attending the African Children's Choir concert and supporting the choir's mission to help the children of Africa. Many thanks to: Sandi Allen, caterer; the S.A.L.T. team, our host families - Paula Arnold; Andrea Behrend; Ron, Bonnie and Ryan Clements; Dick and Laura Elwood; Bob Glazner; Diane Kerr and Abby Wallin; Michael, Janine, Lily, Ameila and Chloe Schueppert; Leba Shallenberger; and Greg, Dale, Julia, and Kirk Waller, and all those who served in an Outreach capacity.



WUUMC
Women's Ministry
Annual Retreat

March 27-29

Spa
for the
Soul

reconnect
refocus
rest
refresh
reflect

Register on-line at
www.westumethodist.org
on the Women's Ministry page

Rio Lago
Ranch
East Bernard,
Texas

March 27-29th
Rio Lago Ranch
East Bernard Texas
www.riolagoranch.com

Registration deadline:
March 14th

Guest Speaker
Pastor Juanita Rasmus,
St. Johns UMC

Worship Leader
Pastor Kimberly Orr,
West University UMC

**Cost: \$150 per person,
meals included**

Contact Person
Lee Ann Payne
leeannpayne@hotmail.com
or 713.664.4678

*Activities include leader led
discussions, worship, quiet times,
spa time, and fellowship.*

Eggstravaganza!

Annual Egg Hunt

Sponsored by the Children's Ministry

Sunday, April 5th

3:00-4:00 pm

Toddlers - 2nd Graders



Bring your Easter basket to carry
all your Easter goodies!



Class Chat

▶ **Faithkeepers** - We are so pleased to have a new member in our class today. Lucille Davis, Christi Quinn's mother. Welcome Lucille. Our new study is being led by Charlie Hall. We are so fortunate. Thank you Charlie for being here for us in this study.

▶ **Fellowship Forum** - The Lenten season provides abundant opportunities for reflection and meditation. The Bible studies offered at the church are group offerings to go deeper in our journey with Christ. We will offer a Christ Care Group on Tuesday evenings. For personal reflection, Cokesbury has a variety of books for journaling and prayer. Let us not pass this season of giving up ourselves to Christ on the journey to the cross. Please call Joy at 713.664.1612 if you have questions.

▶ **Cornerstone** - We have had a great series with Dr. Jay Quine, President of the Houston College of Biblical Studies. We will be completing our study of the Old Testament "Preparing the Way for Christ."

▶ **Koininia** - Please join us in our study of "United Methodist Beliefs."

▶ **Solomon's Porch** - Our class has begun the study of "The Lives of Great Christians"; an entertaining video series taught by Professor William R. Cook - a colorful character. We are also including the church-wide study of "United Methodist Beliefs."

▶ **Vines and Branches** - Our class is growing! Come join us, we can always bring in more chairs!

▶ **The Walk** - We are having a lively class discussion on the "United Methodist Beliefs." Thank you Sue for leading today's discussion on Salvation.

A Good Read!

by Charlie Hall

If you are ready for a refresher course in prayer and praying is my recommendation for the month of March 2009, read *The Shack* by William P. Young. Here is a preview of the fictional story - "Mack's youngest daughter, Missy, is abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later in the midst of lingering grief, guilt and sadness, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him to meet God there for a weekend." The rest of the novel is a journey through a Christian understanding of God's mysterious nature, grace, salvation, and love. To me this is a must read for a church like ours that is digging into the basics of its faith.

This book has been recommended by Michael W. Smith and Wynonna Judd (recording artists), Eugene Peterson (Bible translator of *The Message*), and I am delighted to join them. Mike Morrell wrote, "This story reads like a prayer - like the best kind of prayer, filled with sweat and wonder and transparency and surprise."

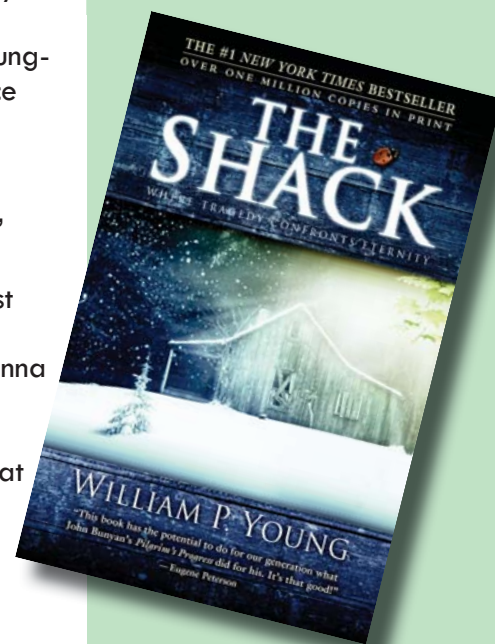
If you want to join the prayer ministry team consider joining Joy and I as we visit several local churches in our neighborhood who offer the community the experience of praying in a Taize prayer service. Services are held on select Friday and Saturday nights. Call to make arrangements to go with us and other members of our prayer teams. **We are planning to take a large group to the Taize prayer service on Friday, March 27th at 7 pm.** Transportation will be available if 5 or more join us.

Welcome New Members!

- Amy and Kaam Sahely
February 8, 2009
- Kristy Alejandro
Sofia and Olivia
February 15, 2009

Baptisms

- Luke Kuriakose Thomas
Vargheese
Son of Melissa Susan Thomas
and Ajay Kuriakose
Vargheese
February 22, 2009



"The Shack"
by William P. Young

Small Groups for Lenten Studies Forming

Christ Care "Small" Group

This Lenten study will be held on Tuesdays, beginning March 3rd from 7:00-8:30 pm in Room 115, led by Joy Hall. It will focus on Lenten Lectionary scriptures and journaling. As a "Christ Care" group, it will include sharing, active listening, and praying together.


Lectionary "Small" Group

This Lenten study will be held on Monday afternoons, beginning March 2nd from 4:30-5:30 pm in room 105, led by Gary Edmondson and advised by Charlie Hall. This study will discuss the Lenten theme presented in Lectionary Psalm, Old and New Testaments and the Epistle for each of the 6 weeks prior to Easter Sunday on April 12th.

Increase your biblical and devotional preparation for the Christian celebration of Easter by attending either of these studies.

Worship @ 6:10

An Evening of Praise and Worship
Contemporary: Contemplative



Quench Your Thirst for Life

Services are the last Sunday of each month.

Next Two Services: February 22nd; March 29th



The Road to Calvary and Beyond

Holy Week: April 5-12, 2009

Palm Sunday, April 5th: Special parade of the palms with donkey at 10:30 am, outside Sanctuary. Services at 8:45, 9:00, and 11:00 am. Communion at all services.

April 6th: Worship Service, 12-1 pm (lunch available), Chapel

April 7th: Worship Service, 12-1 pm (lunch available), Chapel

April 8th: Worship Service with Agape Meal, 11:45-1 pm, Drummet Bldg., Reservations required

April 9th: Candlelight Tenebrae Service with Communion, 7 pm, Sanctuary; Childcare available (crib-Pre-K)

April 10th: Good Friday Service, 12 pm, Sanctuary; Childcare available (crib-Pre-K)

Easter Sunday, April 12th: Christ is Risen Services, Contemporary - 9 am; Traditional - 11 am

Sanctuary; No Sunday School; Childcare available (crib-Pre-K); Bring fresh flowers to adorn the cross on the front lawn!



March 2009 WUUMC Events

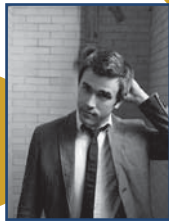
March 1st,
MYF, High Court, 6 pm

March 8th
Girl Scout Sunday
Sonbeam Program

March 27th-29th
Women's Ministry Retreat
Spa for the Soul
Rio Lago Ranch, East Bernard TX

March 29th,
One combined worship service
End of H2O Project
Worship @ 6:10, Chapel

April 5th
Palm Sunday
Eggstravaganza
3-4 pm



Mid-High: April 17-19
Speaker: Brian McCormick
Worship Leader: Wayne Kerr
Senior High: April 24-26
Speaker: Chris Seay
Worship Leader: Zack Hendricks

Cost:
\$125 from March 2 - April 1
\$150 from April 2-17

more student stuff

BOOGLE = Best Opportunity of Giving Love Ever
Mid-high mission trip (must have completed 6th-8th grade)
June 22-26, Austin Texas



FLIP - StudentLife Camp, Orange Beach Alabama
All grades, July 10-14
Speaker: David Rhodes; Worship Leader: Kristian Stanfill

Costa Rica Mission Trip
Senior High trip (must have completed 8th grade)
June 1-9

COSTA RICA

2009 e5 Student Ministry Fundraiser

Date: May 1st and 2nd



Keep Up the H2O Challenge!

We are past commitment Sunday, so . . . how is the challenge going? Keep reminding yourself what an amazing impact you will make by such a small sacrifice. Drilling for a well in Guatemala WUUMC is helping to fund will begin in June 2009.

If you haven't heard about the H2O Project Challenge, or haven't made a commitment, there's still plenty of time! The challenge goes through Lent ending Sunday, March 29th. For additional information, stop by the church office, or go to our website at www.westmethodist.org and click on the H2O Project link on the home page.

Questions? Please contact Josh Arrington at 713.664.8111 or josharrington12@yahoo.com.

H2O Project sponsored by the e5 Student Ministry.

The WUUMC Youth Group Needs Your Help!

Please mark your calendar for **FRIDAY, MAY 1st** and **SATURDAY, MAY 2nd** and plan to join us for some great fellowship and fun. This year's Youth Fundraiser promises that you will . . . **LOL!** **May 1st** is our Dinner, Auction and Raffle in the High Court with Comedian, Ron McGehee. **May 2nd** is our Golf Tournament at Hermann Park.

We need your help! Two important ways you can help us out are to be a part of the planning committee **OR** donate items for the Live Auction and Raffle.

We are looking for donations of the following:

- Vacation homes
- Air miles
- Wines for a wine cellar
- Restaurant gift certificates
- Sports tickets or memorabilia
- Tickets to TUTS, the Symphony, Broadway Across America, etc.
- Hosting social events

If you would like to fellowship with other church members, become part of the planning committee. Contact Kim Weill by email at kfweill@comcast.net or by phone at 832.455.1128, or Dolly Thomas by email at dawson@ddiexec.com or by phone at 713.301.9949. **Your participation is greatly appreciated!** Proceeds from fundraiser benefit Costa Rica missions and summer youth interns.