



February 2010

SPIRIT IN THE PARK

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MORGAN PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

International FAMILY NIGHT

Submitted by the Nurture Team

Saturday, February 27, 2010
5:00– 8:00 p.m.

Celebrate our Diversity!

Food...Games...Language

Music...Clothes...Books

Maps...Dance...Poetry

"We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God. We therefore work toward societies in which each person's value is recognized, maintained, and strengthened" (§162, *The Book of Discipline 2004*).

Come join in the International Family Night! Our potluck dinner will feature a variety of foods from throughout the world. After the dinner, we will feature presentations of music, dance, or spoken word. If you would like to perform something special during this time, please contact Laura Parker and let her know in what way you would like to participate. We will have an update from Carolyn McPherson on her trip to Nepal. We will also have a special remembrance for our sisters and brothers in Haiti. Last year we had a lot of fun sharing our cultural diversity.

Bring a dish for our potluck supper, music CD's, picture books, mementos from your travels, flags, maps, anything that will help us celebrate our backgrounds and the beautiful diversity that makes up Morgan Park United Methodist Church. This is a Family Night, so bring your favorite games to play; board games, floor games, card games, whatever will help us have fun together. Be prepared to learn new games.

Morgan Park United Methodist Church is blessed to have people from around the world, people from different cultural and religious backgrounds, as members. Many of us have said that this diversity is one reason we are members. Several studies have demonstrated some of the benefits of diversity. These include cross-racial understanding, breaking down of racial stereotypes, and promoting learning outcomes. Experts assert that diversity is essential to national security. It is also essential if the dream of one Nation, indivisible, is to be realized.

Please join in celebrating each of the diverse backgrounds we bring to the church as we continue to work toward that one nation in spirit and in truth.

FEBRUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 7, 2010

Holy Communion
"To Listen and to Obey"
Isaiah 6:1-13 and Luke 5:1-11

FEBRUARY 14, 2010

"Transfiguration"
Exodus 34:29-35 and Luke 9:28-36

FEBRUARY 17, 2010

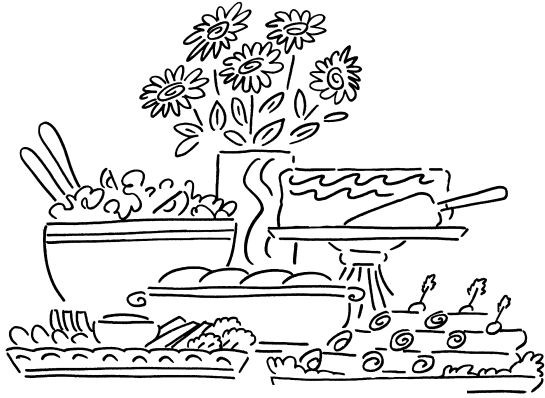
Ash Wednesday
Imposition of Ashes
Meditation and Special Music
Joel 2:1-17 and Matthew 6:1-6; 16-21

FEBRUARY 21, 2010

"Remembering the Past...Celebrating the Present"
Deuteronomy 26:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13

FEBRUARY 28, 2010

Youth Sunday
Pastor Micah Briggs will preach.



Lenten Study & Potluck Suppers

Potluck Suppers Followed by Discussion

Thursday Evenings:
February 25th through April 1st
Parlor – 6:30 p.m.

*Please bring a dish or two of food to share and
your own table setting (plate & silverware).*

Study Book
“With Open Hands”
By Henri Nouwen

It is nearing the season of Lent. Ash Wednesday is on February 17th. We all know that this means it is also time for our “Foodtastic Potlucks” and our Lenten Studies. The first potluck/study will be on Thursday, February 25th, and will continue with our last session being on April 1st. We would like to begin eating at 6:30 p.m. If you to arrive by 6:20 p.m., we can get the food on the table ready to serve by 6:30 p.m. Our study and discussion sessions will begin about 7:00p.m. We will dismiss at 8:15 p.m. We will furnish drinks, but please bring your own table settings. We really want to see some new faces this year, so if you have not attended in the past, give it a try; we think you will enjoy this opportunity to fellowship and to deepen your spiritual journey.

Each year we choose a book to study that will hopefully enrich our lives and deepen the meaning of this season of the Church Year. This year we will be reading With Open Hands by Henri Nouwen who was an internationally renowned priest and author, a respected professor and a beloved pastor. He wrote more than 40 books on the spiritual life. Most of his pastoral work was spent with the poor and disenfranchised all over the world.

Born in Holland, Nouwen came to the United States in 1964 to study at the Menninger Clinic. He went on to teach at Notre Dame and the Divinity schools of both Yale and Harvard. At the time of his death, he was living in Toronto, Canada at the L’Arche Daybreak, which is one of over 100 communities founded where people with developmental disabilities live with assistants.

Lent is a time for reflection and for prayer. With Open Hands is about prayer, reflection, silence, hope and a longtime spiritual journey. There are five sections:

1. Introduction and Preface
2. “Prayer and Silence”;
3. “Prayer and Acceptance and Prayer and Hope”
4. ”Prayer and Compassion”
5. “Prayer and Prophetic Criticism.”

If we allow it to happen, this book is one that can positively change our lives and the way we view prayer. With Open Hands is a book that can be read by young people as well as adults; we would love to have some of our high school folks in attendance.

We will have a very special guest on March 18th who will speak with us on “Being Christian and Gay.” He is Benjamin Reynolds and he was the senior pastor at Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church in Colorado until he came out. He is now the director of reconciling ministry at the Chicago Theological Seminary and a PhD. candidate. We feel his presentation will be quite timely as we are in the process of becoming a reconciling congregation.

So, mark you calendar for Thursday, February 25th. Just think -- you won’t have to cook a complete meal for six weeks, and you can fellowship and engage in meaningful dialogue at the same time.

See you there.

Submitted by the Nurture Team

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE



February 17, 2010

7:30 p.m.

Parlor

Joel 2:1-17 & Matthew 6:1-6; 16-21

**Imposition of Ashes
Meditation & Special Music**

RAINBOW COVENANT MISSION PROJECTS 2010

One of the great traditions in the Northern Illinois Conference is the Rainbow Covenant Program. As a Rainbow Covenant church, MPUMC not only pays its apportionments in full, but also gives mission money to each of the nine designated bands, affording our members and friends the opportunity to embrace the concept of comprehensive support of our mission life as connectional United Methodists.

The Outreach (Mission) Team met in January and the Mission Projects for the 2010 Rainbow Covenant have been selected. The projects selected are listed below with the hope of providing information and also with the hope of encouraging your continued support of the outreach program.

BURGUNDY BAND

Global General Advance Specials

Street Children Ministry, Cambodia

Works to provide education, health care and nutrition for orphans and to construct a school to serve more than 300 children. Clara Biswas works with this project.

Poverty Alleviation & Micro-Credit in Mo-Dega and Pepease, Ghana

Uses micro-credit to provide supplies to improve crop yields and animal husbandry methods to help eliminate poverty in rural areas.

Asian Rural Leaders Training Program, Japan

Trains grass root leaders in sustainable agriculture, community development and leadership.

RED BAND

USA General Advance Specials

Tree of Life Ministry, South Dakota

Ministry with Native Americans, which addresses needs on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations.

Nothing But Nets

A global, grass roots campaign to save lives by preventing Malaria in Africa by providing insecticide-treated bed nets to families.

ORANGE BAND

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

Disaster Relief, Internationally and USA

Provides quick response to meet emergency needs and to address natural disasters as well as on-going help as needed following disasters.

United Methodist Global Aids Fund

Supports education, prevention, care, and treatment programs for [people living with HIV/AIDS, in the United States and worldwide.

YELLOW BAND

The Children's Fund for Christian Mission

Divided into child-serving projects both globally and in the USA, this fund is all about "children helping children". It educates children, giving them the opportunity to learn

about and donate to these projects; thus, helping them to understand the meaning of "being in mission".

GREEN BAND

Northern Illinois Conference Advance Specials

Marcy-Newberry Association

Provides a variety of social services for all ages at multiple locations on the west side of Chicago.

Methodist Youth Services

Provides programs and services to troubled youth in the Chicago area.

Camping Scholarships

Camping fees rise each year. Scholarships make it possible for persons from all parts of the Northern Illinois Conference to attend camp.

Chua, Bolivia Church Construction

Through the Northern Illinois Conference's partnership with the church in Bolivia, we are building a church in Chua, Bolivia. Volunteer in Mission trips assist with the construction.

BLUE BAND

District Advance Specials

Humboldt Park UMC: Homeless Program

Serving between 100 and 150 homeless persons each day, this program provides hot meals, shelter, counseling and referrals.

Care & Counseling Center/Evergreen Park Ministry

A ministry of pastoral care located in a shopping plaza (Evergreen Plaza) that is approachable and accessible.

INDIGO BAND

Missionary Personnel

Clara Mridula Biswas

Clara is a missionary assigned as a community worker in Cambodia. She works to improve the lives of impoverished children in Phnom Penh, many of whom are homeless and live in the streets. She was born in Bangladesh.

Jonathan McCurley

Jonathan is now a missionary assigned to the Asian Rural Institute in northern Japan.

PURPLE BAND

Local Benevolences/Special Sunday Offerings

This band includes General Church Special Offerings, as well as, our offerings to our prison ministry, the Community Food Pantry, Esmond School, New Neighbors, CROP Walk, UNICEF and Shiva/Nepal Orphanage.

WHITE BAND

Sister Church Relationships

Community Partners for the Common Good Fund

Works in partnership with local churches, interfaith and other community organizations to identify and secure necessary resources to fulfill community goals and aspirations.

**Thank you for your continued &
generous support of mission outreach.**

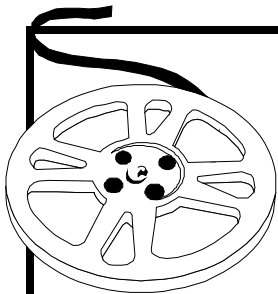
HEALTH KITS URGENTLY NEEDED FOR HAITI

The Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church is assembling Health Kits to be sent to Haiti. Please bring the following items to the church on or before **Sunday, February 7th**:

- **HAND TOWELS** (15" X25" up to 17" X 27", no kitchen towels)
- **WASHCLOTHS**
- **COMBS** (large and sturdy, not pocket-sized)
- **NAIL FILES OR FINGERNAIL CLIPPERS** (no emery boards or toenail clippers)
- **BATH-SIZE BARS OF SOAP** (3 oz. and up)
- **TOOTHBRUSHES** (single brushes only, no child-size brushes)
- **ADHESIVE PLASTIC STRIP STERILE BANDAGES**
- **GALLON SIZE ZIPLOC BAGS**

IMPORTANT KIT ASSEMBLY INFORMATION!

- All items included in kits must be **NEW** items.
- All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items – nothing more.



FEBRUARY FILM DISCUSSION GROUP

On Saturday, February 6th, at 5:30 p.m. the Film Discussion Group will meet at the home of Yvonne Brown. We will view and discuss a 2007 film titled "When Did You Last See Your Father", based on a contemporary British novel of the same title.

The film dramatizes the fractured relationship between a father and a son, who comes to terms with who his father is when the father becomes terminally ill.

All are welcome to join in exploring the issues raised by this thought provoking film.

For more information, contact Shirley Butler.

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER Benjamin Reynolds

MARCH 18th
7:00 p.m.
Parlor

In conjunction with the Lenten Potluck Suppers & Discussion we will have a very special guest on March 18th who will speak with us on "Being Christian and Gay." Our guest speaker is Benjamin Reynolds. He was the senior pastor at Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church in Colorado until he came out. He is now the director of reconciling ministry at the Chicago Theological Seminary and a PhD. candidate.

We feel his presentation will be quite timely as we are in the process of becoming a reconciling congregation and encourage all to attend.

Prayers for Peace

God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, that Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. Psalm 67:1-2



Submitted By

“We Are the Branches”

The Prayer Ministry

Lord, show us your ways. Teach us your paths. Lead us in your truth and teach us, for you are the God of our salvation (Psalm 25:4-5). There is nothing that is too difficult for you, therefore I ask that you would enable the countries of the earth to come together and cooperate peacefully. Specifically, I pray for our country. Bring peace to the world and its people. Bless our troops with protection and favor in whatever nation they are in.

In a world of high stress and short tempers, peacemakers stand out in a crowd. People notice when we choose kindness rather than retribution. They wonder at us when we use a soft word instead of an angry one in a tense situation. But peacemakers are not wimps; they exercise amazing self-control when they reject impulsive words and behavior in order to promote peace.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Submitted by Anne Genther

The United Methodist Women will be meeting on Saturday, February 13th at 11:00 a.m. We will begin with a time of fellowship and refreshments followed by a business meeting. A program/pledge service will follow with the title "What Gift Can We Bring?" Join us!

For those who have not been involved in UMW before, now is the time to come and see what we are about as we begin our new year. The purpose of the United Methodist Women is as follows:

The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

All women who are interested in and supportive of that purpose are welcome to be a part of the UMW.

THE OFFICERS FOR 2010 ARE:

President – Anne Genther
Vice President – Pat Hawkins
Secretary – Jazelle Echols
Treasurer – Trudy Hill
Nominations Chair – Dorothy Gray
Secretary of Program Resources – Elaine Reynolds

Please speak to any of them if you have questions about United Methodist Women.

...FEBRUARY IS...



“Have a Heart for Mission Month”

February is often referred to as "Heart Month". The Outreach Team will be collecting donations for the Rainbow Covenant by selling hearts to be displayed in the parlor during February.

For \$1.00 (or more) you may place someone's name on a heart showing that you and they have a "heart for missions". Let's see how many hearts we can display. Come to the parlor on Sundays and buy a heart!



In the Mailbag

The 2009 year-end contribution letters (to aid you in your tax preparations) have been mailed. If you have not received one, have questions or corrections, please contact Pat at the church office as soon as possible. Please remember that these are not pledge statements, as the church's fiscal year doesn't end until May 31, 2010.

Souper Bowl Sunday



February 7, 2010

Each person attending church is asked to give at least \$1.00 to the "Souper Bowl" collection to raise money in support of hunger ministries.



Just a Friendly Reminder

Food served during the "coffee hour" on Sunday is not a budget item. Please remember to put something in the dish, because that is the money, which supports the expenditure for next week. (Suggested donation; \$1)

OUTREACH BAKE SALE

Sunday, February 7th
Parlor

Following worship on Sunday, February 7th you will have the opportunity to purchase some goodies at the Outreach Team Bake Sale. The money raised will go toward our Rainbow Covenant Projects.

Be sure to stop and get some cookies, cakes, muffins, and other tasty treats and help others through your purchases.

If you would like to share some goodies to sell bring them to the parlor earlier than the service.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Elaine Reynolds

...FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

Submitted by Shirley Butler

PEACE STARTS WITH A SMILE.

JUST A REMINDER...The deadline for the March newsletter is **Monday, February 15th.**

FEBRUARY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

LITURGISTS

February 7...Irene Harvey

February 14...Irene Harvey

February 21...Edward Parker

February 28...Edward Parker

GREETERS

February 7...Geraldine Washington & Sylvia Robertson

February 14... Eugene & Jazelle Echols

February 21...Owen Skelly & Charles Davis

February 28...Alyssa Zopp & Kelsey Zopp

ACOLYTES

February 7... Kaline Langley & Carinne Parker

February 14... Christopher Parker & Will Zopp

February 21... Sydney Cerrentano & Carinne Parker

February 28... Christopher Parker and Pierre Parker

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

MPUMC will celebrate Black History Month during worship in February by highlighting the music of several black composers.

Look forward to special choir presentations.