

The Church On The Hill



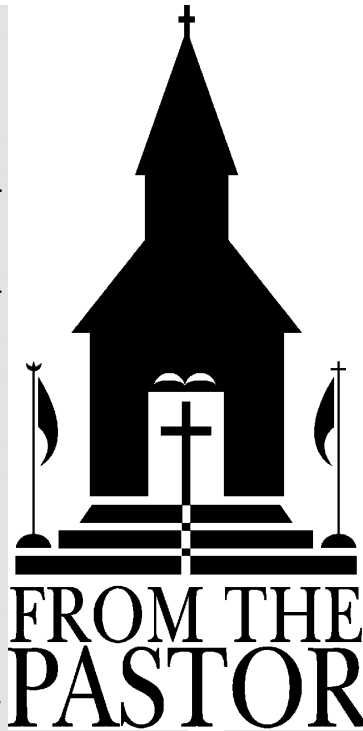
A Newsletter for members and friends of Waverly Heights Congregational, UCC

APRIL 2008 NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 103 VOLUME 2

DAVID ZAWORSKI, PASTOR
TRISH EFFENBERGER, EDITOR

I have had particular occasion these last two weeks to recall and reflect on my own experience of worship in the African American tradition. The occasion, of course, has been the turmoil surrounding a handful of moments culled from the thirty-plus years of preaching of Reverend Jeremiah Wright, long-time pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ and so of Senator Barack Obama who is a member there. My own experience was at seminary in Chicago. I and a couple other white students attended "Worship in the Black Experience" chapel services along with 15 or 20 Black students, and occasionally faculty members, who created and led this weekly service out of their own need for worship life that spoke more fully to them. (There were two other weekly chapel services: one a quite formal communion service and the other could be almost anything from utterly conventional to improv theater theological debate.) Over time, I learned to let out the moving of the Spirit in me with a heartfelt "Amen!" or "Yes, Lord." And somewhere in there, the leaders of this service asked me to preach.

I don't recall my text or theme. What has stuck with me is the amazing experience of preaching to an actively, out-loud, engaged congregation. It is completely empowering to hear the people



spontaneously say, "Amen!" And when I started losing my focus, they said, out loud, "Make it plain," and even more, "Help him, Jesus." Wow, people praying out loud for me while I was preaching, "Help him, Jesus." And you know what? Jesus did. That sermon hit its stride and walked in the Spirit to God's glory.

Not exactly the same experience as worship at 7,000 member Trinity UCC, but both are expressions of the same tradition and experience.

So what does this have to say to the controversy around Rev. Wright? First, an observation that could be made by any preacher who believes that the role of prophet has some place in the pulpit: if you could review my 25 years of sermons and pull sentences out of context into endlessly replaying loops, I'm quite sure you could manufacture a very distressing caricature of

my preaching. If we are called to "speak truth to power" and to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable" then we will say hard things. The context of those hard sayings makes all the difference.

My observation about the context of Reverend Wright's preaching is that he was speaking in worship, to a community that knows and expects to hear scriptural preaching that always comes round to God's good news. What I know is that preaching to a largely Black congregation, one *knows* if the people are with you.

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They let you know. "Amen!" And at Trinity, the amens are not just the Black Panthers at prayer. The people participating with Reverend Wright—listening for, hearing, and responding to God's word—the folk in the pews at Trinity include more than its share of Chicago's movers and shakers in politics, business, and the professions. If the endless loops of Reverend Wright's words seem outlandish, that might tell us less about him, the church he served, and his most famous parishioner and more about the distortion possible with today's media.

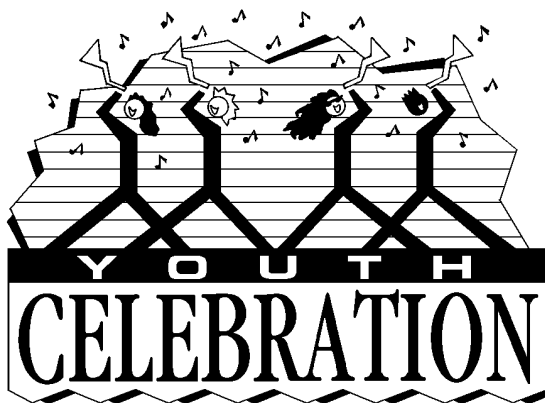
"Help him, Jesus." It's a powerful prayer. We'd all do well to offer that prayer for all our leaders. But let's remember when we do that "gentle Jesus, meek and mild" is also the one who overturned the tables of the moneychangers and drove them from the Temple.

Your brother in Christ,
David Zaworski

Our Annual Celebration of Children and Youth

Our annual celebration of children and youth is scheduled to be on Sunday, June 1st. During the service we will honor the efforts of both our kids and the adults who lead them.

Don't miss this fun event!



Waverly Consistory



Here's the list of our current Church Officers and Consistory Members. Below that is a very partial list of folks who coordinate all the many things that happen around the church. Talk to these people about how you can be more involved.

Moderator: Jeanne Clegg
Clerk: Carol Palumbo
Treasurer: Kay Orzel
Financial Secretary: Ruth Stellmon

Consistory Members:
Donna Cicerchi
Jill Johnson
Paul Kane
Bob and Beth Kress
Karen Lenore
Marie Zaworski

Who do I talk to about...?

Christian Education (all ages) - Karen and Jill
Building and Grounds - Paul
Access Project - Glen Pullen
Soup and Culture - Marie
Worship - Bob and Beth
Greeters - Scott Selfridge
Nursery Care - Karen and Jill
Fellowship Hour - Marie
Kitchen Supplies - Bob and Beth
Table Decorations - Amy and Mark Hardin
Altar Decorations - Bob and Beth
Library - Donna C or Julie Thoma
Daytimers - Helen Feight
Social Justice/Mission - Kay
Wedding/Baby Showers - Marie
Parsonage - Paul
WWW - Jeanne
Bulletin Boards - Carol P
Newsletter - Trish Effenberger

Handicap Access Project Update

Not much mention has been made lately about Waverly's Access Project, and I'd like to take this opportunity to bring everyone up-to-date about where things stand.

Many possibilities have been discussed over the years, including a series of ramps connecting the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall (not practical); an elevator (too expensive to build and maintain); and an addition to Hyde Hall with upstairs restrooms (again, very expensive and not connected to Fellowship Hall and its kitchen, where much of the social life of the church would continue to take place).

The attempt to find a constructible and fiscally realizable means of making Fellowship Hall accessible, it was decided to pursue the possibility of installing a lift. Pastor Zaworski located a contractor willing to undertake the project, and blueprints and specifications were developed. The lift would be constructed in the space currently occupied by the storage closet in the corridor between Hyde Hall and the Sanctuary. The complete project would also include relocating the upstairs door between Hyde Hall and the Sanctuary, and more importantly remodeling the downstairs restrooms to meet ADA standards, and building a new wall between the Sunday School room and the restroom entrances.

The plans we have were prepared in October, 2005, and the resulting bid came in at just under \$63,000. But at that time the Church was preoccupied with other fiscal priorities, attempting to grow its membership, balance its budget and take care of its other obligations, so that the Access project took a place on a back burner, with the Consistory revisiting it from time to time to make sure that it was never entirely removed from the stove.

Meanwhile contributions to the Access Fund have continued to flow in over the past few years, and last year's round of pledging and fundraising has brought the current fund's balance to around \$38,000.

But what has changed since 2005 is that the Church's fiscal situation is much brighter. For the first time in many years Waverly has been able to meet its financial obligations without tapping into its savings, membership has grown, and a renewed spirit and energy is present on Sunday mornings and in the days in between. Thus the Consistory has decided to make a renewed effort to proceed with installing the lift, and I have volunteered to explore the possibilities. This involves obtaining an updated bid from the Contractor to reflect current costs, and looking into options for financing the project.

It would be a great step forward for the church to make 2008 the year that this remaining phase of the access project is brought to completion. I hope to have other developments to report to you in the near future.

-- Glen Pullen





Congratulations Waverly!!!

Because of your generosity and good will, the Youth Group raised \$487 toward camp scholarships at the Easter Bake Sale. Special thanks to Rebecca Millar, Joel Brandis, and Cameron Millar for managing the goodies table. And Mark Hardin for a great job as Auctioneer!



Seder Meal

Soup & Culture -- April 18, 2008 We will be holding a Passover Seder for our Soup & Culture event in April. The Seder is an occasion for praise and thanksgiving. Seder customs include drinking wine, eating matza and partaking of other symbolic foods. The rituals and symbolic foods associated with the Seder reflect the twin themes of the evening: slavery and freedom. Questions and answers are central to the Seder ritual, the most famous usually asked by the youngest child, is "Why is this night different from all other nights?" This is also an occasion to explore other issues of justice and injustice.

How does this relate to us? Jesus and the Disciples were celebrating Passover just before the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. This will be an evening of celebration, of joyousness, of family together. Join us Friday, April 18, 2008 at about 7:00 p.m. Jill Johnson and David Kertzner will be providing us with some Passover recipes. This will be a potluck and there will be a sign-up sheet at church to make sure we have some of all the foods we need.



Please submit articles for the May issue no later than April 22nd.

Thanks,
Trish Effenberger, Editor

IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST NEWSLETTER FROM WAVERLY...

This newsletter is about the current events of Waverly's ministry and mission. If you wish to have more information and background on Waverly, please feel free to call the church office at 503-238-1337.

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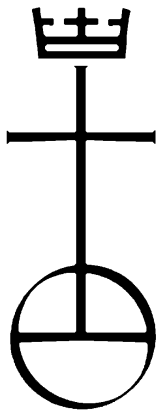
***Waverly Heights Congregational
United Church of Christ***

3300 SE Woodward
Portland, Oregon 97202
(503) 238-1337
www.waverlyucc.org

Pastor: David Zaworski

Worship Service:
Sunday - 11:00 am

WAVERLY HEIGHTS CONGREGATIONAL UCC



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**Waverly Heights Congregational
United Church of Christ
Welcomes all, Honoring each individual's path**

**We invite everyone to
Worship God, Learn the love of Jesus,
Care for one another
Work for change and reconciliation
In our community and the world.**

