



The Westmorelander

Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Volume 57, No. 2

February 2010

Journeying Together in 2010

As we enter 2010 together, I can't help but think about a large Aucuba in my backyard. It's a beautiful plant with variegated leaves that bring beauty to a shaded corner. During the last winter storm, I looked out to see it bent low under the load of snow. Yet as always, it bounced back with the thaw and now stretches for the sun and the coming spring.

Westmoreland too has seen its share of challenges over the past few years, yet like my Aucuba the spirit of our church family rises to look forward to the future. Thanks to the resourcefulness of past leadership and the generosity of members, we have hopefully weathered the worst of the economic downturn. Yet, 2010 will be both a time of continuing challenge and of great opportunity. Building on past successes, we have the opportunity to expand our enjoyment of music and arts programs. With a firming financial base, we have the opportunity to use our creativity to continue the stewardship of our house and mission. With our expanding fellowship, we have the opportunity to grow together with new members. And with our former Briggs friends and newly ordained clergy now fully a part of our church family, we have the opportunity to joyfully enter our next 60 Years On The Circle.

As Moderator, I hope to continue to build upon the great work of prior church leaders that has brought us through the storms and provided us these opportunities. As with that Aucuba bush, I look forward to our shaking off the challenges of the past and focusing on what is important to the soul of our church family, while facing the coming year with optimism and hope. I welcome your help in my efforts to find ways for us to be efficient with the business of the church, so that we can focus our energies and hearts on the mission of our church. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as Moderator at this exciting time.

David Batson, Moderator

Leadership Retreat

Saturday, February 6, 9 am - 2 pm

Officers and board members strongly encouraged to attend. Members of the congregation are invited. Lunch will be provided. Meet in the Mabry Room.

Worship Topics and Themes

Sunday, February 7

“Put Out Into the Deep”

Luke 5:1-11

Communion

Rev. Rich Smith

Sunday, February 14

“Looking With the Eyes of Love”

Luke 9:28-36

Jazz Sunday with the Rick Whitehead Trio

Rev. Rich Smith

Ash Wednesday, February 17

Pancake supper - 6:30 pm

Service of Ashes with Communion - 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 21

First Sunday in Lent

“Temptation is No ‘Pact with the Devil’”

Luke 4:1-11

Rev. Rich Smith

Sunday, February 28

Second Sunday in Lent

“God is NowHere”

Luke 13:31-35

Rev. Rich Smith

Ash Wednesday: Gateway to Lent

Mark the beginning of Lent at a Pancake Supper and a brief Lenten service with imposition of ashes on Wednesday evening, **February 17**. Supper will be at 6:30, the service at 7:30 pm. Bring friends and family – including children – to this intergenerational evening.

Senior Minister.....Rev. Richard L. Smith

Minister of Discipleship....Rev. Dr. Robert L. Maddox

Minister for Children, Youth & Families ..Rev. Jessica Petersen

Director of Music....Dr. Alejandro Hernandez Valdez

Membership Coordinator & Newsletter Editor...Janet Moyer

Office Hours: 9 am - 5 pm

Westmoreland Pledge Campaign Sets New Record!

As the Westmorelander goes to press, a few days before the Annual Meeting and the official end of the 2010 Stewardship Campaign “Join the Journey: We Will Walk Together,” we have **created a new Westmoreland record for total dollars pledged of \$560,912**. This beats the previous Westmoreland total dollar record set in 2008 of \$541,753.

<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
151 pledges	162 pledges
\$526,000	\$560,912
Average: \$3,483	Average: \$3,462

Of 162 pledges:

- 24 are new pledgers or returning lapsed pledgers
- 138 are long-time pledgers

Of 138 long-time pledgers:

- 79 (57.2%) increased their pledges
- 121 (87.6%) increased or maintained their pledges
- 17 (12.4%) lowered their pledges

This year we have also increased our number of pledge units over both 2009 and 2008 and are approaching and may add one or two more to match or exceed 2007 (163 pledge units). This is a remarkable achievement since there were a number of moves, retirements, illnesses and deaths in 2009. Most of the pledgers from 2009 whom we lost were smaller and occasional pledgers. And our new pledgers typically begin at averages far below long-time members. In sum, the core congregation is involved, enthusiastic and giving more!

Obviously, Westmorelanders are feeling the spirit, even in tough economic times. **We have increased the pledge total over 2009 by 6.5% so far**. We have also now increased our pledging over the previous 2008 high of \$541,753 by 3.5%. This is good news indeed.

Thank you all for your incredible generosity and deep caring and concern for Westmoreland and its wider mission! We will walk together...



Peace,
Bob Musil
Stewardship Chair

Classical Comedy: Celebrating New American Music with Humor and Heart

Come laugh away your winter blues as Brooke Evers, soprano, and pianist Grace Cho present a recital of exciting new American music that will not only touch your heart, but also tickle your funny bone. This upcoming Music and Arts Concert will be held on **February 20 at 7:30 pm**. The concert, which will benefit the Marie Reed School, will feature two artists well known to the Westmoreland Congregation.

Singer Brooke Evers was the soprano section leader and soloist for the Chancel Choir before her career took her to Vienna, Berlin, and Milan, and to solo performances in Washington in such venues as the Kennedy Center, the Embassy of Austria, and the National Cathedral. Pianist Grace Cho has performed in concert at Westmoreland on two previous occasions. No one who attended the concert last year featuring Grace and her husband, Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez, will forget their magnificent four-hand performance of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Grace holds a doctorate from the University of Maryland and has performed extensively in her native country of South Korea as well as in the United States. She has been a prize winner in the Chopin International Piano Competition in Corpus Christi, Texas; the Sidney M. Wright Collaborative Artist Competition; and the University of Maryland's concerto competition.

February's concert will feature works by William Bolcom, John Corigliano, Lori Laitman, Libby Larsen, Tom Cipullo, Goldrich & Heisler, Jeanne Tesori, and others. The concert will be followed by a reception highlighting the work of artists from the Westmoreland Congregational UCC community. All are welcome to the post-concert reception to socialize and admire the artistic talents of fellow Westmorelanders.

Mark your calendar now and plan to attend what promises to be a wonderful evening of music, art, and refreshments!

Westmoreland Artists on Exhibit

Artists and craftspersons (children and adults) from the congregation are invited to exhibit their work in the Mabry Room and hall from February 20 – March 20. Up to three items (ready to hang or to place) will be accepted. If you wish to be included, contact Sanelma Sutton at ssutton@westmorelanducc.org or Martha Hill at marthajane17@gmail.com.

Outreach Ministries

Bethesda Cares is one of the outreach ministries of the church. "What does Bethesda Cares do?" Always an intriguing question because we can list all the programs and how they impact, but it still doesn't get to the heart. We serve the homeless on the street with day shelter, food, hot coffee, clean socks, clothing, and provide showers. We connect them to services, provide counseling, psychiatric care, assistance with medication, eyeglasses, identification, job assessment, and resume writing, to name a few of the services.

We also listen, make eye contact, and work with each person as an individual. If a person doesn't fit our program, we build a program for the person. The "we" is staff and volunteers who work daily with our clients. Our lunch program volunteers remember the names, inquire about family and offer a loving respite from the street.

Bethesda Cares also prevents homelessness in Montgomery County by stopping evictions and utility shut-off. As you would expect, shutting off the flow of people coming to the streets is critical especially in this economic environment and winter season.

Saying "thank you" to Westmoreland barely scratches the surface. Thank you for volunteering, thank you for partnering with us in outreach, and thank you for financial support so we may continue our work. Bethesda Cares is a community outreach program for the homeless -- thanks to you, the community.

Sue Kirk, Executive Director
Bethesda Cares

Have a "Souper" Sunday

On Sunday **February 7**, the Middle School Youth will be hosting a "Souper Bowl Sunday." You can buy a bowl hand painted by the Middle School Youth for \$25 or make a donation for a cup of homemade soup during Coffee Hour. If you choose to buy a bowl, you can fill it with soup for free. You can also donate cans of soup for Manna Food's food pantry, which will be collected in the Social Hall.

Proceeds will go to the N Street Village organization.

Emily Kuttner and *Katya Kazmin*
8th Graders

Ed. Note: N Street Village provides clients with day and night shelters, transitional and low-income housing, wellness, education and employment services.

Parish Notes

Congratulations to:

Emily Musil and **Josh Church** on their marriage at Westmoreland on January 2. They reside in Easton, Pennsylvania.

Grace Cho on the completion of the requirements for her Doctorate in Musical Arts (D.M.A.) in Collaborative Piano from the University of Maryland, College Park. She passed her Defense in December and will walk at the Commencement ceremony in May.

Our prayers of sympathy are extended to **Sharon Graham** on the death of her brother, James Graham, in Port Townsend, Washington on January 11.

Meet Our New Members

Please give a warm welcome to the following people who joined on December 27, 2009:

Ron Oechsler has been attending Westmoreland since January 2007 after moving here from California. Professionally he is an economist with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. His leisure pursuits include hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing and reading. At Westmoreland, he is an active and enthusiastic member of the Chancel Choir. Ron lives in a nearby neighborhood in Bethesda with his wife, Debra Neumann and his two daughters, Amy, a ninth-grader and Eliana, a seventh-grader. He is joined by reaffirmation of faith.

Marcela Zegada has been attending Westmoreland since April 2008. Most often you will see her with her daughter, Jessica Ghaffari, another member of Westmoreland. Initially retired from a career with IBM, Marcela now works as an Executive Assistant at Mid-City Financial Corporation in Germantown. She lives in Rockville and in her spare time she enjoys reading, gardening and travel. She is joined by reaffirmation of faith.

UCC Haitian Relief Efforts

The United Church of Christ has raised a significant amount of money for relief efforts in Haiti, money that will be shared with Church World Service and the National Spiritual Council of Churches of Haiti (CONASPEH) through our Global Partners program.

Online giving is the fastest and most economical way of contributing. Please visit www.ucc.org to make a safe and secure contribution to the relief efforts.

The Westmorelander
Westmoreland Congregational UCC
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Bethesda, MD 20816
301-229-7766
www.westmorelanducc.org



**March Westmorelander
deadline: February 16**

February 2010

Monday, February 15: Office closed

Wednesday, February 3, 10, 17, 24
Weekday Study (Carpenter's House)

Thursdays, February 4, 11, 18, 25
Chancel Choir

Friday, February 5
Middle School Night

Saturday, February 6
Leadership Retreat
Family Worship Night

Sunday, February 7
Fellowship Breakfast
Nursery, Children's Choir (Grd 1-8)
Worship, Church School
Middle School "Souper Sunday"
High School Pizza & Discussion
Confirmation Class

Monday, February 8
Bd. of Christian Education

Sunday, February 14 - Jazz Sunday
🎵 Music by The Rick Whitehead Trio
Volunteer Corps Board
Bible Study, Children's Choir (Grd 1 - 8), Nursery
Worship, Church School
Bd. of Membership & Fellowship

Wednesday, February 17

Prime Timers 12 Noon
Pancake Supper 6:30 pm
Lenten Service 7:30 pm

Friday, February 19
High School Youth Night

Saturday, February 20
Music & Arts Concert: 7 pm
🎵 Brooke Evers & Grace Cho

Sunday, February 21
Tech. Committee, Outreach Ministries 8:30 am
Bible Study, Child. Choir (Grd 1 - 8), Nursery 9 am
Worship, Church School 10 am
Confirmation Class 4 pm

Tuesday, February 23
Sandwich Making 10:30 am
Executive Committee 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 28
Bible Study, Child. Choir (Grd. 1 - 8), Nursery 9 am
Worship, Church School 10 am

Looking ahead...

Sunday, March 7
Children's Musical 10 am

Friday, March 12
College of Wooster Choir Concert 8 pm