



Westminster Witness

May 3, 2009

Sabbath rest begins with the seventh day of Creation in the Genesis account. God rests, after the creative work of the six days that have come before. (Genesis 2:2)

So do we. We may work six days, or in the modern world, perhaps 5 days, yet we allow ourselves to rest each and every week.

Whether in the ancient world of Judaism in which the entire land rested every seventh year for a sabbath year, or in a more modern context of weekly rest, "sabbath" is a part of our language. And from this ancient and holy understanding of rest comes our modern notion of "sabbatical leave". In the world of academia, it is a half year or a year of rest for professors.

For your pastor, it is a summer of rest and spiritual refreshment.

Pastor Andy will take this summer, beginning on May 18th, as a summer of rest and spiritual refreshment after seven years of laboring in your

midst. She will be gone from May 18th until August 18th. Her plans include time for travel, reading, a structured retreat, and time to explore the beauty of creation around us in the Inland Northwest. She will enjoy an opportunity to see her extended family at a reunion in Colorado as well as a trip to Germany with her father to visit her Dad's hometown and family.

Sabbatical Contacts

An important part of Pastor Andy's sabbatical is the peace of knowing that her beloved church is well taken care of in her absence, and the quiet of not being contacted by phone so that she can focus on her spiritual refreshment.

Anyone with need of pastoral care should call Pastor Marj Johnston at 624-1366 ext 12

Other important contact numbers:

Chair of Deacons Alan Borgens 535-2257

Moderator Lorna Kropp 448-2291

Co-Chair of Trustees David Vestal 869-1783

Co-Chair of Trustees Pam Beckstead 838-8970

Chair of Personnel Doris Holdaway 534-4548

Church Office 624-1366

Robin: ext. 10

Sarah: ext. 14

John: ext. 16



She is very grateful to the people of Westminster for this extended period of renewal and spiritual refreshment. And she knows very well that the staff and church family will continue to be the hands and feet of Christ in the city of Spokane!

There will be an opportunity to "send her off" with our prayers and songs on Sunday May 17th. Everyone is encouraged to come and join in worship at either the 8:30 or 10:30 worship services.

Ministers, All of God's People

Office Manager/Financial Secretary
Robin McLain

Interim Choir Director
Verne Windham

Caretaker John Koons III

Church Staff

Senior Pastor
The Rev. Andrea CastroLang

Assistant Pastor
The Rev. Marj Johnston

Organist Scot Stout

Nursery Attendant
Teresa Benedict

Publications Editor
Sarah Hopkins

Children's Activity Director
Jessie Vignali

God is Still Speaking,

News from Council and Committees

Outreach

Your Board of Outreach invites you to an information and training session on Tuesday, May 19, at 6:30 p.m. in the Parlor at Westminster.

The Interfaith Hospitality Network of Spokane made a presentation at a recent Board meeting, and in February several members of Outreach prepared, served and hosted a meal for families staying in the shelter at the Friends Church (in north Spokane). After reporting to the Church Council, the Board of Outreach scheduled the upcoming session to gather a team from Westminster. The hope is that we'll have enough people to provide an evening meal for up to 14 people at least twice each week that the Friends Church serves as the host site, once every 12 weeks. If you're interested in this collaboration with a community ministry and another church, please come! Questions? Call Pastor Marj or contact one of the Outreach members. (For more information about the Interfaith Hospitality Network, check out their website at <http://www.ihnsokane.org/>)

Sara Chapter

The May 21st meeting of Sara Chapter will be held at the home of Marjorie Johnson, 1803 S. Arthur St. Spokane

ONA @ Westminster

The Adult Discussion Group will have opportunity for a five-week series of discussions on "ONA" (Open & Affirming) at Westminster beginning May 10, from 9:30 to 10:20 a.m. in the Parlor. We will organize our discussions and learning around the following questions:

- Why and how did we become an official ONA Church?
- How do we explain this to people outside the church?
- What more do we need to know?
 - o How many sexes are there?
 - o What is gender?
 - o What do the terms "transsexual" and "transgendered" mean?
 - o *(Your questions will be answered here in a safe learning environment.)*
- What should we be doing next as a Church and as individuals?

Please join us for these important conversations about our welcome to all! If you have questions, please contact Pastor Marj or Dan Distelhorst.

In May we celebrate 130 years of Westminster's presence in Spokane. In honor of this event, please enjoy a bit of history from 47 years ago!

I AM A DOWNTOWN CITY CHURCH

I have an honorable history. I was here nearly a century ago, and I will be here a century hence. Long after neighborhoods have changed, and good neighborhoods have deteriorated—I will continue to be strong.

For I am in the heart of the city, and my ministry is not to a section of the town, but to the entire city, for I reach out in every direction. My ministry touches every neighborhood and is extended to all classes.

I am not provincial in my outlook. In me the rich and the poor mingle in the fellowship of worship...

I live to serve. I exist for others. This may be the reason why I am able to keep my strength through the years.

You would not want me to die through your indifference.

I leave my future to you, for my place in the city depends upon your loyalty. I believe that I can count on you, **for I am Westminster Congregational Church.**

Author unknown, from the Westminster Congregational News, October 11, 1962

Pastors and Staff

Pastor's Pen

My sabbatical begins on May 18th and it causes my breath to catch in my throat, I have to admit. People assume I am excited to have this time to explore, rest, read, pray and grow. That's certainly true. But the flutter in my chest comes from the thought of leaving all of you for three months. I will miss you.

I know that you will do fine, and be fine, over the summer. Westminster Cong. UCC is a strong, growing, laughing, loving, and hard working community of faith. And that is why you will be fine. And that is why I will miss you!

But I have every intention of returning with renewed energy for our future together. There is always lots to do around here: we have meetings, and we have our worship and praise to God, we have gatherings over food, over ideas, over games, over the commitments we make to the city of Spokane and its people.

So, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to take this period of rest, and new adventures, apart from you. Being your pastor has been and continues to be a wonderful adventure and full of learning. I will take this summer to explore a few different things, different places and people. And you will have new stories to tell when we get back together in August, just as I will.

Pastor Marj will be here to lead worship and community life. Our Moderator Lorna Kropp will be here. Your Church Council will be here, with representation from every Board and Committee, ready to serve the church with its ministries, its fiduciary responsibilities, its pastoral care. Your church staff; John Koons III as Caretaker, Robin McLain as Office Manager, Sarah Hopkins for Church Publications, Scot Stout on the Organ, Verne Windham as Interim Choir Director, Paul Grove playing for the early service, and Chris McLain as our volunteer leading the "Sunday Players" will all be here to

lead and support our work and our worship.

And above all, God will be Here. In our midst, seen in one another, or unseen yet active in all we do, God is Here.

So, I pray God's protection upon you while I am away. I pray every blessing and joy, every courage and strength you need.

I pray you will offer me the same. In grateful service I remain,
Your Pastor, Andy

Marj's Musings

Sometimes the internet is a helpful tool and at other times it's part of that "too much information" experience in life. For something different, I decided to try my hand at some online study with a couple of websites related to worship and Bible study. During this past Lent a word that seemed to show up repeatedly in my readings of scripture and poetry was "steadfast" or "faithful." I just tried a word search on one website, and its "search engine" told me to try looking up "decision, perseverance, or stability." Nothing like getting bossed around by an invisible entity. Oh wait, that's sometimes how I've thought of God in my life, too! Most of my readings through Lent were from the Psalms, a poetry all its own. The word "steadfast" is often paired with the word "love," referring to the "steadfast love" either expected from God, received from God, or offered to God. At a most crucial moment in my readings, I read again Psalm 51 and heard in a different way the words of the psalmist asking God, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit in me" (English Standard Version). The "crucial" moment was that I began making lists (as I often do) of things I need to pay attention to in anticipation of something. It's my way of reducing potential anxiety instead of adding to what comes naturally. As Pastor Andy has been preparing and readying for her sabbatical time away from Westminster, there have been new lists. In one such list-making moment I remembered the words of the psalmist and realized

(Continued on page 6)

Westminster Family and Friends

Apple Blossom Tea

Saturday May 16th at 2:00 pm

Once again we will celebrate part of Westminster's history with the Apple Blossom Tea, started by Mrs. Cowley in her orchard garden. This spring, however, we will hold it in the park across from Donna Simanton's house in the Qualchan neighborhood. Her husband Jim had a dream to build a park and followed through with its creation, and gave it to the community. It is truly lovely. If the weather does not hold we will move our party inside Donna's home.

The suggested price for tickets is \$15 but you can pay more or less. In other words, you purchase a ticket for whatever you can afford. We do not want to leave anyone out! **Proceeds will go toward refurbishing the north stained glass window.** There will be 40 tickets available, ten tables, four guests per table.

Table hosts will be selling tickets, decorating their tables, and hosting. Table hosts who have tickets to sell are: Mary Rupert, Lou McKee, Phyllis Northrop, Mary Pat Wakely, Donna Simanton, Nada Morse, Barb Safranek, and Margaret Ennis.

If you have questions, please contact Mary Rupert (838-7449) or Lou McKee (624-8541).

Get into the mood. Wear a hat and gloves or straw hat and spats... any hint of days gone by. You are encouraged to! Maybe we will parade around the neighborhood! There will be special music and entertainment. Join the fun. We will see vintage dresses worn at the tea, courtesy of Linda Stephens. If you have a special teapot you would like to bring we will put it on display with others.

Directions: head south on I95, right on Qualchan Drive, left on Lincoln, 2nd left on Bolan. The Park is just ahead.



May Birthdays

- 1st - Margaret Moore
- 3rd - Lorraine Weber
- 4th - Terry Hunt
- 5th - Kathryn Ellsworth
- 8th - Loretta Kister
Nina Machen
- 10th - Zach Alden
- 11th - Martin Escandon
- 13th - Gilbert Escandon
- 14th - Stephanie Leek
Deb Rose
- 16th - Tim Henkel
- 17th - Sara Weaver
Fritz Rosekrans
- 21st - Kathy Lin
- 25th - Chloe Meuler
Lou McKee
- 26th - Rick Bartels
- 27th - Elsie Patterson
- 30th - Hannah Joss
Bethany Abbott
- 31st - Mark Bohe

Happy Anniversary to....

- 8th - Dora & Harry Pearson
- 20th - Rick Bartels & Grace Leaf
- 21st - Marjorie & Eugene Johnson
- 27th - Kathy & Steve Olson
- 31st - Lorraine & Doug Weber

Thank You

Dear Westminster,
Thank you so much for the lovely Easter Lily plant delivered by Barbara Borgens on Easter day to Gordon. It is beautiful and has a lot of blossoms. We enjoy it. Thank you, Gordon and Betty Graham

Crafters

The Saturday Crafter's Group will be taking a hiatus through the summer. Look for news in August about a schedule for the fall!

Knitting Group

The Friday night knitting group will meet Friday, May 29. Questions? Contact Cindi Abbott at 533-1964.

Faith and Family Enrichment

TAGS is Returning

TAGS (Talking About God Stuff) is coming this summer to a church (Westminster) near you. Starting on Sunday, June 21, TAGS will be making a return engagement to Westminster UCC during our summer CAFÉ hour between the early and later worship services.

TAGS is an opportunity to present a short reading, movie clip, art, music, or other media that is related to spirituality, religion, or community followed by comments/questions/discussion. This is a great occasion for all who attend either of our worship services to participate and get to better know each other. Everybody is encouraged to participate and anyone can sponsor/facilitate a Sunday TAGS session. It's as easy as showing a movie clip and posing a question. Please contact Marcus Soper (SoperML@comcast.net) or anyone on the Nurture Board if you have an interest in sponsoring/facilitating a TAGS session or if you have any questions. TAGS, you're it!

Let's go to camp!

The Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC has two amazing spots where groups of all kinds gather throughout the year. And then there are *SUMMER CAMPS!* Coming up at N-Sid-Sen this year:

Women's Retreat May 15-17

Work Camp June 7-13

Kids Camp June 28 - July 1

Intermediate Camp July 5-11

Sr. High Aqua Camp* July 12-18

Family Camp #1 July 26 - August 1

Jr. High Aqua Camp* August 2-8

Family Camp #2

August 9-15

*Aqua Camp includes water skiing, wake boarding, and tubing with power boats, plus canoes, sailing, and other water activities!

N-Sid-Sen is the camp and conference located on the shores of Lake Coeur d'Alene, a beautiful hour-plus drive from Spokane. We have "camperships" available to those who want to participate. For more information about N-Sid-Sen, web-wanderers can visit www.-sid-sen.org.

Resource Review

From time to time I receive requests to read a new publication or watch a new DVD and provide a review. Some of the materials are things you might find helpful and interesting.

All God's Children: Teaching children about sexual orientation and gender diversity is the third publication from a ministry called God Loves Each One. Some of the questions used to shape the booklet include: When are children old enough to learn about sexual orientation and gender diversity? Will openness about these topics influence children's developing gender identity and sexual orientation? What will other families, teachers, and communities of faith think about what we're teaching our children? What if we don't know the answers to the question our children ask? Where do we start?

Author Melany Burrill addresses these questions with "It isn't talking about sex; it's about getting to know and appreciate people and all their wondrous variety!" Burrill provides tips on language useful for conversations with children, questions children aren't afraid to ask, and even some ideas of how we adults can broaden our own learning about acceptance of all God's children.

If you're interested in borrowing and reading the booklet, let me know. I also have copies of *Made in God's Image: A resource for dialogue about the church and gender differences* and *And God Loves Each One: A resource dialogue about sexual orientation*; both are written by Ann Thompson Cook. More information can be found at www.godloveseachone.org.

Pastor Marj

The Spokane Indians Need Us!

Well, maybe they don't really need us, but they invite us to join other congregations on Friday, July 31, for Church Family Night. It's also Yoke's \$1 Family Feast Night! To purchase your reserved bench seat tickets for this game--just \$5 each-- you have two choices: Use the easy and secure web sign-up at www.spokaneindiansbaseball.com. Click on "Group Tickets" then select "Purchase tickets with your group." Find Westminster in the drop-down menu and click "Purchase." It's THAT easy! Or you can call the ticket office at 509-343-OTTO (6886) and be sure

In the Neighborhood

Book & Salad Club

The group meets at 6:30 pm in the Church Parlor—you are not required to read the book, but please bring a salad to share. In July we will meet at Marian Thackray's home and in August we will meet on the West side of Comstock Park. September meeting will be at Marilynne Wilson's home.

May 5 "The Hornet's Nest" by Jimmy Carter
facilitated by Marian Thackray

June 2 "The Book Thief" by Markus Zusak
facilitated by Margaret Ennis

July 7 "Snow Flower and the Secret Fan" by Lisa See
facilitated by Nada Morse

Potluck for ALL!

In partnership with the Inland NW LGBT Center, Westminster is the host site for a monthly potluck for the LGBTQ community **and** their allies and friends. On the first Saturday of each month, our Social Hall comes alive with good food, laughter and renewed and forming friendships as folks of all ages gather. Join us! From 6:00 to 8:00 pm, bring a dish to share and join in the informal gathering. The next potluck will be May 2. Questions? Contact Pastor Marj!

PJALS Auction

Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane fundraiser

Friday, May 8

6 pm—finger food potluck, 7 pm—Auction

Mountain Gear—6021 E. Mansfield, Spokane Valley
Some of the auction items include: Mountain cabin getaway, Dinner for 10, River rafting, Legal services, Massage and body work, and more!

May Events

May Tea—2 pm on **May 16**

Pastor Andy—leave taking on **May 17**

Ongoing:

Worship Sunday at 8:30 am and 10:30 am

Café Hour—from 9:40-10:20 Sundays

Chancel Choir rehearsal Sundays at 9:00 am

Marj's Musings (Continued from page 3)

that this summer we will have opportunity to trust in God's renewing of a "steadfast spirit" in each of us. That's all we'll need as we move into June, July and August, to remain steadfast in our learning about God and loving God and our neighbors and each other. We're called to remain steadfast in our work together in this place and in our community. And steadfastness is something we can do!

Westminster is a place of steadfastness. For 130 years Westminster has been steadfast about welcoming all who will come for worship. Those who serve on various committees and boards, the many who volunteer for all sorts of fun, and those who share part of their journey with us before moving on are all part of the "steadfast love" for this place and for God's people, both inside the church and in our community.

We will celebrate Pastor Andy's leave-taking on May 17, wishing her a safe journey and sending her off with hugs. And on May 17 we'll have opportunity to commit to our own learning about what it means to be steadfast in this place and in the work we share. It is my honor to serve you and to serve with you. It is a privilege to serve the community in which we're located, sharing that God IS love, and that sometimes sharing experiences of God's love looks different than anything I could imagine. Let us spend our days being steadfast together, celebrating all the good God gives us to do with our hearts, our hands, our minds and our souls.

What a journey!

Pastor Marj

April Financials

	April	Budget	Jan-April	YTD Budget	Annual Budget
Income					
Pledge	7,921.07	12,500.00	49,915.35	50,000.00	150,000.00
Non-pledge	1,948.05	1,458.34	6,422.15	5,833.34	17,500.00
Other	1,650.00	1,233.34	46,488.98	21,808.34	72,300.00
Total Income	11,519.12	15,191.67	102,826.48	77,641.68	239,800.00
Expense					
DUES	0.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
BUILDING OPERATIONS & MAINT.	10,066.38	4,830.68	26,975.70	21,860.68	69,316.00
CHRISTIAN NURTURE	164.76	133.50	210.17	504.00	1,480.00
CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT	4,481.00	200.00	4,611.00	4,225.00	4,225.00
DIACONATE	35.27	41.66	95.13	166.66	900.00
MUSIC AND ARTS	172.04	429.80	903.73	1,455.40	4,352.50
OFFICE EXPENSE	1,479.82	2,050.40	6,851.59	8,059.18	25,035.00
OUTREACH	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	6,000.00
PASTORAL MINISTRIES	4,733.87	10,463.65	22,639.00	28,697.62	72,935.93
PAYROLL CLEARINGS	9,540.00	9,893.68	39,523.55	39,709.21	118,293.36
Total Expense	30,673.14	28,043.37	102,309.87	106,677.75	303,037.79
Net Income	-19,154.02	-12,851.70	516.61	-29,036.07	-63,237.79

May 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
The Monday evening Bible Study class is on hiatus until the fall.					1	2 INW LGBT potluck
3	4	5 Nurture 5:30 p Book & Salad 6:30 p	6	7 Diaconate 7 p Yoga 5:30 p	8	9
10 	11	12 Music & Arts 7 p	13 Joanna Chapter/Harborcrest noon Trustees noon Bible Study 12:30 p	14 ONA 7 p	15	16 May Tea 2 pm
17 Celebration of Pastor Andy in worship	18 Pastor Andy's sabbatical begins	19 Poetry 2 p Outreach 5:30 p IHN Info training 6:30 p	20 Bible Study 12:30 p	21 Sara Chapter 10:30 a	22	23
24	25 Memorial Day	26 Newsletter deadline at noon Church Council 7 p	27	28	29 Knitting Group 7 p	30
31						

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WESTMINSTER CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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No matter who you are, or where you are in your faith journey, you are welcome here.

Our Covenant

*I covenant with you, members and friends of
Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ:*

- *To create and hold an open, trusting Christian Community where we can each discover our unique relationship with God:*
- *To accept you as we seek ways to resolve our differences, and to rejoice as a community of faith and trust:*
- *To seek opportunities for expression of faith by sharing talents and resources with our church, community and world;*
- *To celebrate with you the power of God's call & God's Love.*

Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ embraces a spirit of hospitality founded in the gospels of Jesus Christ & a willingness to live out that welcome in meaningful ways.

As an Open and Affirming Church, our longstanding culture of welcome extends to all people regardless of sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, gender, physical ability, socioeconomic status or faith background.

This Month's Readings and Schedule For Worship

**May 3—At Rockwood Manor
John 10:10-18**

Liturgist: Sherry Barrett

May 10 Psalm 22:9-10
Liturgist: Nick CastroLang

May 17 John 15:9-17
Liturgist: Barb Safranek

May 24 John 17:6-19
Liturgist: Jon Louis

May 31

Pentecost:

Guest Preacher Rev. Hollis Bredeweg
Liturgist: Ann Marie Floch

Sunday Worship: 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM