

Spirit: Walnut Hills Happenings

December, 2011

Advent Hands

by Catherine Alder

I see the hands of Joseph. Back and forth along bare wood they move.
There is worry in those working hands, sorting out confusing thoughts with every stroke.
"How can this be, my beautiful Mary now with child?"
Rough with deep splinters, these hands, small, painful splinters like tiny crosses
embedded deeply in this choice to stay with her.
He could have closed his hands to her, said, "No" and let her go to stoning.
But, dear Joseph opened both his heart and hands to this mother and her child.
Preparing in these days before with working hands and wood pressed tight between them.
It is these rough hands that will open and be the first to hold the Child.

I see the hands of John, worn from desert raging storms
and plucking locusts from sand ripped rocks beneath the remnant of a Bethlehem star.
A howling wind like some lost wolf cries out beneath the moon, or was that John?
This loneliness, enough to make a grown man mad.
He's waiting for this, God's whisper. "Go now. He is coming.
You have prepared your hands enough. Go. He needs your servant hands,
your cupping hands to lift the water, and place his feet upon the path to service and to death.
Go now, John, and open your hands to him. It is time."

I see a fist held tight and fingers blanched to white. Prying is no easy task.
These fingers find a way of pulling back to old positions, protecting all that was and is.
Blanched to white. No openness. All fright.
But then the Spirit comes.
A holy Christmas dance begins
and blows between the twisted paths.
This fist opens slowly, gently, beautifully, the twisted fingers letting go.
Their rock-solid place in line has eased. And one by one the fingers lift.
True color is returned.
And through the deepest of mysteries, the holiest of holies, O longing of longings,
beyond all human imagining this fist,
as if awakened from Lazarus' cold stone dream
reaches out to hold the tiny newborn hand of God.

SpiritRoot - a new worship experience

Check out SpiritRoot on Facebook: www.facebook.com/spiritroot; or follow it on Twitter @spiritroot. Come to the first worship experience on Thursday, December 1 at 6:30 p.m.

Walnut Hills United Methodist Church Staff

Carol Sundberg, Pastor
James D. Walters, Director of Worship Arts
Emily Eastman, Christian Education Director
Rachelle Sorensen, Nursery Coordinator

Dick Clark, Retired Pastor
Pamela Ward, Business Administrator
Sue Petersen, WH Preschool Director
Mel Hollingsworth, Building Superintendent

Mission Statement

A place to call home where all are welcomed and sent forth to serve.

Vision Themes

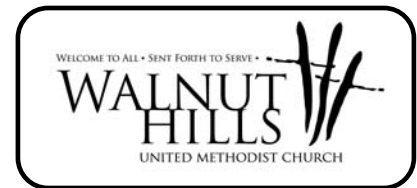
Interfaith Acceptance
Social Justice
Spirituality

Inclusion Statement

"We, the members of Walnut Hills United Methodist Church, welcome all individuals into the life and work of our faith community. We resolve to follow Jesus' admonition to 'love one another, as I have loved you,' regardless of age, race, ethnic background, gender, marital status, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, or any other human condition. As a reconciling congregation, we believe we are being reconciled to God and to one another."



RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK



December Worship Opportunities

December 1, 2011

First SpiritRoot worship experience - 6:30 p.m.

Expectation

Chris Winkler, speaker

December 4, 2011

2nd Sunday of Advent

All in the Family: Elizabeth & Zechariah Surprised

Luke 1:5-13, 18-20, 24, 57-64

Communion Sunday

December 8, 2011

SpiritRoot worship experience - 6:30 p.m.

Acceptance

Joani Hollingsworth, speaker

December 11, 2011

3rd Sunday of Advent

All in the Family: Shepherds Watch

Luke 2:8-20

Children's Christmas Program - 10:45 a.m.

December 15, 2011

SpiritRoot worship experience - 6:30 p.m.

Family

Laura Linn, speaker

December 18, 2011

4th Sunday of Advent

All in the Family: Mary & Joseph Wait

Matthew 1:18-25 & Luke 1:46-49

December 22, 2011

SpiritRoot worship experience - 6:30 p.m.

Yourself

Travis Schipper, speaker

December 24, 2011

Christmas Eve

6:00 p.m. - family service

9:00 p.m. - candlelight and carols service

11:00 p.m. - candlelight and Communion service

In those days...a child, Jesus, is born

Luke 2:1-20

December 25, 2011

Christmas Day

ONE worship service at 9:30 a.m.

Light of the World

John 1:1-5, 9-14

Hymn Sing

December 29, 2011

SpiritRoot worship experience - 6:30 p.m.

Christmastime is Here

Prayer stations created by James Walters

Satellite Worship

Sunday afternoons at Silvercrest Assisted Living at 2:00 p.m. Come for worship and visiting. For more information, contact Liz Coffman.

October Fun at Walnut Hills Preschool

Walnut Hills Preschool is thankful! The Preschool staff would like to express their thanks and appreciation for the support and opportunity to be a part of the ministry of WHUMC. The congregation has been so supportive over the past 13 years and we are blessed to be here. Thank you for all you do to help make this preschool a blessing to hundreds of children and their families!

As we look forward to the 2012-13 preschool year, please spread the word that we have some openings. Contact Sue if you have a child you would like to enroll or if you know of someone looking for a quality preschool program.

God's continued blessings to all of you!
Sue and the preschool staff

Youth group Cookie Walk:

The Sr. High Youth will be holding their annual Cookie walk again on December 11. Before and after both services, come participate to purchase yummy cookies, homemade by the youth and their families. Sugar cookies, snickerdoodles, chocolate chip cookies, and more will adorn the tables, waiting for the right family to come along and take them home for the holidays. Cookies will be available by the dozen, and each dozen sold propels the youth one step closer to their mission trip at Standing Rock reservation in South Dakota. Last year the cookie walk was a huge success, sending dozens of cookies home with the families of Walnut Hills.

Youth Group Scavenger hunt

In November, the Youth Groups combined to participate in a canned food scavenger hunt. Teams split off and were sent around the neighborhood going door to door, asking for donations. In about an hour, the youth collected 175 different items for the Des Moines Area Religious Council Food Pantry, along with a five dollar donation. The items ranged from peanut butter to canned salmon. Each item will make a difference in the lives of a local family. Thank you to the youth and drivers who made this event happen!

Chili Dinner and Caroling

On December 14, join the congregation for a Chili Cook-off and the competition for the next chili champion. Pots of chili will be available for sampling, and everyone involved will be able to vote as to who will dethrone last year's winner. After votes are tallied and the champion is announced, everyone will caravan to a local retirement home to share the joy of the season by caroling. Last year there were about 30 carolers. Let's beat that number this year! If you are interested in entering your fantastic chili, email Emily at emily@whumc.org.

Sunday School News

Over the past three months, the Sunday school classes have collected money and food to donate to the Des Moines Area Religious Council Food Pantry. As of November 15, they have collected \$248.89 and over 100 items! These donations will make a huge difference to families around the area as everyone heads into the holiday season. The Sunday school classes will continue collecting items and money throughout the year to keep making a difference in their community. Thank you, and congratulations on a job well done!

Morning Parent's Group

The Morning Parent's Group will be meeting at the Winkler's House for a family cookie and ornament exchange on Sunday, December 11 from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. This will be a chance to meet each other's families and have some fun! Bring 3 dozen cookies with you and take 3 dozen home. An easy way to get a variety of cookies for Christmas. Also, bring one wrapped Christmas ornament per family for an exchange. RSVP to Amy at acwinkler1@gmail.com or 276-0652 for address and directions.

Groups Calendar - December, 2011

Religious Studies Group - Every Thursday at 2:00 p.m. in the Koth Library

Monday Morning Bible Study - Every Monday at 10:00 a.m. in the Koth Library

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

- Social Justice Team - 6:00 p.m. in the Koth Library
- Women's Book Group - 7:00 p.m. at the home of Kellie Kahle, *Holidays on Ice* by David Sedaris

Monday, December 12, 2011

- Women of Walnut Hills - 6:00 p. m. in the Koth Library
- Connecting Team - 7:00 p.m. in the Kitchen Annex

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

- SPRC Committee - 7:00 p.m. in the Koth Library

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

- Men's Roundtable - 11:45 a.m. in the West Gathering Area

Tuesday, December 20, 2011

- Administrative Council - 7:00 p.m. in the Koth Library

Tuesday, December 27, 2011

- Missions Team - 5:00 p.m. in the Koth Library
 - Reconciling Ministry Team - 5:45 p.m. in the Kitchen Annex
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Groups Contact Info

Brunch Bunch: Jean Swenson at 216-1173

Game Day: Marjorie Putney at 225-6739

Mission Team: Andrea Addington at 277-6901 or addinga4@msn.com

Morning Parent's Group: Amy Winkler at 276-0652 or acwinkler1@gmail.com

Reconciling Ministry Team: Christy Brown at 991-3605 or brown.christy@mchsi.com and Russ Kruse at 664-9705 or russkruse@aol.com

Religious Studies Group: Charlie Adams at 993-1818 or adamschsh@msn.com

Social Justice Team: Rachel Burrow at joyful_0720@yahoo.com

Women of Walnut Hills: Sandy Lorenzen at 221-2999 or slorenzen@cdsfulfillment.com

Women's Book Group: Kellie Kahle at 987-7319 or kkahle522@aol.com

Women's Nite Out: Peggy Palmer-Johnson at 577-4975 or lavenderim@aol.com

SpiritRoot

The new worship experience called SpiritRoot will begin Thursday, December 1, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. in the Celebration Center. SpiritRoot will be a marvelous opportunity to worship with music, spoken word, sharing of communion elements, and prayer.

Many have asked what will "happen" during a SpiritRoot worship. The answer is simple: you will experience a movement of spiritual growth within yourself with the help of worship enhancements, movement, teaching, and self-reflection.

During Advent and the Christmas season you will hear messages from Chris Winkler, Joani Hollingsworth, Laura Linn, and Travis Schipper. They will encourage and move you along your faith journey utilizing the three Walnut Hills vision themes: spirituality, social justice, and interfaith.

Please come and experience SpiritRoot for yourself. SpiritRoot welcomes everyone inside and outside of Walnut Hills and is open to all ages.



Children and Youth Dates - December, 2011

December 4, 2011

- Sunday School - 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

December 7, 2011

- Creative Kids and 56 Club - 6:00 - 7:15 p.m.
- Jr. and Sr. High Youth Groups - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

December 11, 2011

- Sunday School - 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.
- Children's Christmas Program: *Census Time in Bethlehem* - during 10:45 a.m. worship
- Sr. High Youth Cookie Walk - all morning

December 14, 2011

- All-church Chili and Caroling (NO Wednesday on the Hill activities)
- Jr. and Sr. High Youth Groups - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

December 18 - 2011

- Sunday School 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

December 21, 2011

- NO Wednesday on the Hill

December 25, 2011

- NO Sunday School

December 28, 2011

- NO Wednesday on the Hill

January 1, 2012

- NO Sunday school

January 4, 2012 - Wednesday on the Hill resumes

- Creative Kids and 56 Club - 6:00 - 7:15 p.m.
- Jr. and Sr. High Youth Groups - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

January 8, 2012 - Sunday school resumes

- Sunday school - 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday on the Hill Schedule

Wednesday on the Hill Meal - 5:15 p.m. in the West Gathering Area

Celebration Singers - 5:45 p.m. in the Worship Arts Room

Tintinnabulators - 5:45 p.m. in rooms 101/102

Creative Kids - 6:00 p.m. in the Celebration Center

Jr. and Sr. High Youth Groups - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Adult Disciple Bible Study - 6:30 p.m. in the Koth Library

Ringmasters - 7:15 p.m. in rooms 101/102

Giving for 2011

Contributions to be credited to 2011 need to be received in the church office no later than December 31, 2011. Final 2011 contributions may be placed in the offering on Sunday mornings, hand-delivered to the office center, placed in the drop box on the building near the north double doors, or sent in the mail (postmarked no later than December 31). Any contribution received after December 31, 2011 will be applied to 2012.

Children and Family Urban Ministry Meal

Six to eight servers are needed to serve the meal each third Tuesday of the month. Serving begins at 4:45 p.m., so persons who are volunteering in this way need to be at Trinity UMC no later than 4:30 p.m. The next CFUM Meal is **Tuesday, December 20, 2011**. Please check the STUB on Sunday mornings to volunteer.

Menu Needs:

- Pizza + \$10 tip for delivery = \$300.00
- Ready Salad - 3-4 bags
- Italian Dressing - 4 bottles
- Cookies - 16 dozen
- Milk - 4 gallons white, 6 gallons chocolate
- Coffee - One 2-3 pound can
- Paper Items - 150 strong paper plates, 150 napkins, 150 medium-size plastic or paper cups, 150 forks and spoons (please no Styrofoam)

Urbandale Food Pantry

Walnut Hills has joined with other Urbandale churches in collecting personal care items on the third Sunday of each month. The items for December are bars of soap. Thank you for helping your neighbors in need!

DMARC Food Pantry

The DMARC food pantry is committed to providing food that is fresh, healthy, and good tasting. Here is a listing of the items most needed by the 12 neighborhood pantry sites: 100% juice (tomato, orange, or vegetable in a can or plastic bottle); fruit (canned in water or 100% juice, not in heavy syrup); vegetables (tomatoes, green beans, mixed vegetables, or sweet potatoes, canned with no salt added); beans (dry or canned in water); peanut butter. Other items needed are canned tuna or chicken in water, whole-grain dry pasta or egg noodles, brown rice, vegetable soup (low-sodium). You can find a more comprehensive listing by going to movethefood.org/donate/most-needed-items-listing/.

If you are unable to purchase items needed, cash donations are always welcome. The food pantry can purchase 2-6 more times the food than what retail prices afford due to the fact they buy at wholesale and in bulk from the Food Bank of Iowa and other wholesalers.

October Giving

Members of Walnut Hills gave to these special funds in October:

- Peace with Justice - \$3.25
- DMARC - \$155.00
- Interfaith Hospitality Network - \$20.00
- Apportionments to date - \$4040.00
- Compassion International - \$116.00
- Habitat for Humanity - \$2075.00
- Bake Sale for Mission Trip - \$631.50
- Trinity Meals - \$670.00
- Needles of Love - \$10.00
- Prayer Shawl Ministry - \$10.00
- Bidwell Riverside - \$20.00
- World Communion - \$135.00
- Walnut Hills Has Talent - \$950.00

Candid Conversations

What is it really like for children living in poverty?

Join the Walnut Hills Social Justice Team for a conversation about children and poverty. We will take a closer look at the effects of poverty on children, reflect on the intersection of faith and poverty, and take action in support of policies to improve child well-being. Please join us for this interactive and important discussion on December 11 at 9:30 a.m. in Room 101.

Walnut Way Moment

L = Learning

For those of us who believe in an engaged Christianity, which takes seriously the strange pluralities and ambiguities of these times, the question remains: How do we celebrate the amazingly good news of the incarnation while remaining in touch with this suffering which touches into the daily lives of perhaps the majority of our sisters and brothers? That is a huge question. It's clear that we cannot celebrate Christmas in some kind of false comfort, disconnected from the world's suffering. And we certainly cannot retreat into a superficial Christian fundamentalism which regards the world as essentially a 'dark place' that must be left behind at all costs...

In these days of preparation before Christmas, the Spirit invites us to let go. A letting go of our often over-active minds so that our souls can more clearly illumine our understanding of these confused times, in which both people and the Earth are screaming in pain. A moment to be still and to listen to God; a moment of engaged listening, of being centered in our depths.

God, tenderly, entered our human condition in a particular way at the back of a Bethlehem inn two thousand years ago. Knowing that, we can welcome Christmas morning with both laughter and tears, as a people of love – prepared to let go and let God transform us again.

Peter Millar, *Candles & Conifers* (a publication of the Iona Community)

Christmas Offering for Trinity United Methodist Church

Trinity has been designated as a "Mission Church" by the Iowa Conference. It is identified as such because it houses and administers three separate and very important missions:

1. Basic services of worship, Christian education, fellowship, support, and counseling.
2. Transportation for loved ones to visit family members in prison and support for people returning home from prison.
3. Children and Family Urban Ministries (CFUM) - free breakfasts for children, free suppers for families, programs for teenagers, distribution of food items, and other programming.

Trinity is located in the inner-city of Des Moines. Many people in the neighborhood live in poverty. Ninety percent of the students who attend Moulton Elementary School, located across the street from Trinity, qualify for free or reduced school lunches. The area has a large population of poor, unemployed, homeless, elderly, and victims of the struggling economy.

The congregation of only 100 members has done a remarkable job of supporting ministries and programs. However, they have not been able to provide necessary repair and maintenance on the building. For example, the antiquated electrical system has not been upgraded for 100 years, resulting in frequent outages and fire hazards. The kitchen has not been upgraded for at least 50 years, in spite of the fact that over 41,000 free meals were served there in the past 12 months. The list goes on.

A capital campaign is in progress to address these critical issues. The goal is \$350,000. With your generous contribution, you will be helping Trinity serve thousands of children, youth and adults who desperately need help. Christmas offering envelopes will be available in the Celebration Center on Sunday mornings and in the bulletins on Christmas Eve.

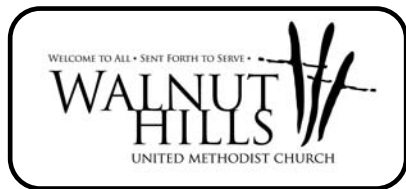
Thank you for your support!
Rev. Russ Wilson.

Coed Volleyball to Begin

Volleyball will be Sunday, January 8, 2012 until Spring Break from 4:00 - 5:30 p.m. in the Celebration Center. People in high school or older are encouraged to come and play a few matches. If you would like more information, please contact Connie and Marlyn McKeen at 253-9017 or check the STUB on Sunday mornings.

Walnut Hills United Methodist Church

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A Moment for Prayer

O God, we are challenged to be patient during these days of Advent. Yet we find ourselves growing less patient as we wait in slow retail lines, manage our overfilled calendars, wrap gifts, and do online shopping and home decorating into late-night hours. Be patient? Yes, be patient. In this worshipful moment, strengthen our hearts, center our minds, and quiet our bodies, for your coming is near. We pray as your beloved ones. Amen.

David Bell, 2007
Worship & Song

Please send your newsletter submissions for January, 2012 to communications@whumc.org by December 15.

Sunday Service Bulletin and Insert Information

Submissions are due no later than 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday of that Sunday's bulletin. Please send information to communications@whumc.org.

Walnut Hills Newsletter and Online Calendar

See the latest issues of the Walnut Hills Newsletter in pdf format and a calendar of events at www.whumc.org/whatsnew.html.

An electronic newsletter can be emailed to you

Email the church office at communications@whumc.org to request the newsletter by email.

Office Hours

Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.