

January 2010 Issue

The LINK..... Keeping You Connected

People's United Methodist Church 103 N. Alpine Parkway, Oregon, WI 53575

10 Ways to Improve your prayer life in 2010

Moses went to a mountaintop to hear God. Jesus fled to the desert.

But for many Christians, their most regular place for praying is whatever pew they sit in on Sundays. Work, children, chores and other duties make stopping for prayer seem a luxury.

In today's culture, some even joke that Charles Wesley's quote "pray and never faint," refers to passing out from an overloaded schedule.

"We forget to intentionally make space for prayer," said Betty Kay Hudson of First United Methodist Church in Lancaster, S.C.



That's not the way it's supposed to be. Souls, like vines, tend to grow wild and weak when untended. No matter the season on the church calendar - Advent, Lent, Easter, Pentecost -- or all of the times in between, prayer is the gasoline that fuels Christians. "Prayer is the catalyst," says the Rev. Jeffrey Kersey, a United Methodist minister in Lexington, S.C. Prayer, like tennis, takes practice to

become accomplished. Spiritual guides and sages, pastors and other church members are filled with advice and counsel.

Here's some of that wisdom condensed into 10 tips about prayer:

- **You are worthy.**

Do not feel guilty about the quality of your prayer life, or fall victim to doubts and despair about your worthiness to talk to God. Each of us has a spiritual gift. So remember John Wesley's words: "In Christ we gain more than in Adam we lost."

- **The more you pray, the richer your prayers become.**

To deepen your prayer life, don't be a slacker. Like anything in life, to become good at prayer you must be disciplined. Just as running is an exercise in physical fitness, prayer is a spiritual discipline.

- **Prayer is active.**

Prayer involves action; namely being attentive to God's voice in your life.

Listening for God means stopping and sitting still. It means paying attention to what God may be saying to you at any point in your life.

- **Prayer should not be an afterthought.**

Prayer was the backbone of Jesus' ministry. Often, he broke away from his disciples to spend time with God. In the same way, prayer is essential to individual lives and to the life of the church. Break away from your daily routine for quiet time in prayer.

- **Surround yourself with people who are seasoned at praying.**

People who've established prayer routines have much to teach those wanting to draw closer to God. Seek out those who can help guide and encourage your prayer life.

- **God doesn't require eloquence.**

Don't worry if you fumble for words when you pray. God is not looking for Toastmaster's graduates, but sincerity (not that you can't have both at once). If the words won't come, God still knows what's in your heart. Lift up that desire.

- **Prayer need not involve words.**

The great Christian saints all write of prayer as a time of sitting quietly with God. Jesus even went off for 40 days of prayerful solitude. Take a deep breath. Exhale. Follow the breath as it flows in and out of your body. Think of it as the spirit of God breathing life into you.

- **Prayer is a time for conversation with a friend: God.**

Whether you see that friend routinely or just every once in awhile, know that whenever you turn to God, you're turning to someone who loves you.

- **Ask God for help if you get stuck.**

Maybe you've hit a dry spell. There's no shame in asking God to guide you to pray in a new way.

- **The three L's of prayer: Listen, listen, listen.** Listening for God is central to prayer, according to the great saints. It's so critical that St. Benedict began his famous Rule with this command for monks: "Listen with the ear of your heart."

And remember, prayer can happen anywhere -- it doesn't have to take place in a church.

January Mission Focus:

WI Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired

Every seven minutes, someone in America will become blind or visually impaired. By 2030, the estimated number of visually impaired Americans 65 and older will double to seven million!

Visual impairment can have a great impact on the quality of life for older adults as well as family members. Low vision can create challenges for elders to prepare meals, shop for groceries, find transportation to medical appointments, or manage the household and finances.

Our mission is to promote the dignity and independence of the people in Wisconsin who are blind and visually impaired by providing services, advocating legislation and educating the general public.

The Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired, located in Madison, is a private, not-for-profit community-based organization that provides a number of vision services:

- **Low Vision Services** - Teaching individuals how to maximize their remaining vision to read mail, write checks, watch TV.
- **Small Group Rehab** - Teaching individuals how to do everyday tasks, such as food preparation or clothing care, in new ways.
- **Orientation & Mobility Services** - Teaching individuals how to travel safely and independently.
- **Technology Services** - Offering technical help through the use of screen magnifiers & screen readers.

There is a mobile technology lab which allows the council to move training to various locations throughout the state of Wisconsin, allowing them to reach out to more individuals who need services.

Thank You!

Mission Giving Year-to-Date, 2009

Month & Mission	Amount
Jan - Second Harvest Food Bank	1242.00
Human Relations Offering	115.00
Souper Bowl + match	1155.00
Feb - Heifer International	1114.00
Heifer from First Monday	295.00
Mar - Habitat for Humanity	
"Apostle Build"	3542.00
One Great Hour	1700.00
Apr - Children's Fund for	1427.00
Christian Missions	
May - Nothing But Nets	1549.00
Golden Cross Sunday	101.00
Native American	145.00
Ministries	
Jun - The Road Home	1308.00
Peace with Justice Sunday	125.00
Jul - Compassion International	1348.00
Aug - NINA Fund	1612.00
Sept - World Vision	1120.00
Road Home	130.00
Horse Camp	75.00
Oct - Habitat for Humanity	1329.00
World Communion Sunday	107.00
Samaritan/medical device	595.00
Nov - Harvest of Hope	1763.00
Dec - Leukemia/Lymphoma	562.00
YTD Samaritan Fund Giving	755.00
Mission Giving Year-to-Date	23,214.00

12/1 - 12/13 Year to Date

General Fund	\$16,636	\$330,928
Debt Reduction	\$2,814	\$66,216

***Principal payments of \$63,000 have been made YTD. Church building loan balance is \$100,939. Parsonage loan balance is \$133,356.**

Finance Update As of 12/13/09, we have a deficit of \$19,700. A big thank you goes out to all of you who give so faithfully and to those who have given extra to help reduce our deficit.

2010 Extravagant Generosity Pledge Update: As of 12/13/09, we have received 111 pledge cards totaling \$269,000 in pledges. Thank you for getting those in! We have a long way to go to fund a reasonable 2010 budget; the Finance Committee will keep you updated as the budgeting process continues. As always, we appreciate your prayers, presence, gifts and your service as we all work to bring God's love to our neighbors.

All Church Conference Pastor Jon Claude Bartlett gave an update of the church-wide Five Year Ministry Plan. Questions were asked to obtain an assessment of the congregation. The Pastoral Report was provided. There have been some changes in membership, finances will be an issue for the 2010 budget, the church is still moving in a positive direction. Staff and Committee reports were presented. Rev. Marianne Cotter moved for items that required a vote:

Removal of Members - No members this year. Church will review the process for removal of members.

Election of Lay Leaders - All people listed were approved. Church Council will help to fill the vacancies.

Approval of Pastoral Compensation - Pastor has requested no increase for 2010.

Packets of all materials presented at the conference are available from the church office.

"Two hundred silver pieces wouldn't be enough to buy bread for each person to get a piece." (John 6:7 The Message)

When I was a child, it was a big treat to go to McDonald's.

Our family rule was that everyone paired up to share a shake and a small order of fries to go along with their hamburger or fish sandwich. The one who divided the shake allowed their partner to choose first and my brother (now a math teacher) would often count out the fries! Almost every time we went I remember thinking, "This isn't enough. I'm *really* hungry." The reality was that my perceived scarcity often turned to abundance as I forced myself to eat those last few fries that were mine!

As we begin a new year, we're facing new challenges of perception in the church. Do people really have enough money to go around? It's already been a cold winter and some find themselves choosing between heat and food or medicine. The snow plowing bills are already high and we're only one month into the season. The stock market is still bouncing all over the place and investment income is way down.

Many have lost their jobs and others live in fear of the same. Yet, God is good – all the time. And, all the time – God is good. We say this. We encourage our children and youth to repeat it with great enthusiasm. Yet, do we believe it? How does it become real in our lives? God is calling us to rework our priorities and, perhaps, re-imagine our ministry.

When times get tough – financially or emotionally – it's very tempting to withhold our money from God because we're convinced we don't have enough. When we remember that everything we have is a gift from God, it's easier to give the first check or the first payment of every week or month to the ministry of Christ through the church. And whether our gift is enough to buy a half-order of fries or feed the multitudes, we know it will be used to proclaim the Good News. Praise God! Happy New Year!

-Rev. Jean Ehnert Nicholas

Pastor's Corner

January Greetings! As we celebrated our first Christmas in our new home I am aware that I have not thanked this congregation and the people that helped us move into the new parsonage.

So.... Thanks to all the folks who put things in their cars, drove them across town, and put them in the new parsonage. We have unpacked and found most of our stuff (and when you have to move it, it does become stuff). The keys to the treadmill were lost until I went to Sears and got a new one, the very next day I found the old ones. (Never fails!)

2009 was quite a year for People's UMC. There are so many people to thank for their faithfulness, their prayers and their hard work to bring about the Kingdom right here. Thank you and God's Blessings!

Peace! Jon Claude

Afghanistan-Pakistan: Part Two If you were intrigued by the book, *Three Cups of Tea*, or didn't get the chance to read it, you can listen to author Greg Mortenson talk about his mission to help the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan educate their children, despite incredible hardships and challenges. Go to www.wpr.org, and search "Greg Mortenson". Listen to Greg share his passion for this effort.

Support our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan with prayer. If you want to make your prayers personal, go to: www.anysoldier.com, and pick a soldier and his or her squad to hold in prayer. Don't forget to include the people from these countries who are suffering great deprivation and the stress of living in this highly unstable region of the world.

In December, PUMC sent 28 boxes of toiletries, snacks, games, etc to our service people in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each box held items worth approximately \$40 and cost \$12 to mail - all a result of donations from the congregation. That's Extravagant Generosity at work! If you or your family would like to support a military unit, go to www.anysoldier.com and find a match. The requests written up by the soldiers state how much it means to know they are supported by folks back home. Call Barb Feeney at 843.2272 to get a few tips that make the mailing easier, based on the church's experience.

Website something new has been appearing on the home page of our website. Church polls asking some fun and some serious questions about church life. Check it out and then look to the next LINK for poll results.

December/January's Poll: Prayer. How often do you spend time in private devotional activities such as prayer, meditation, reading the Bible?



We are proud to offer you a monthly electronic newsletter delivered right to your e-mail inbox. This format will allow more timely information on church events & opportunities, news & updates from around the congregation.

Best of all, the paper-free format supports our commitment to caring for our environmental & economic challenges.

A paper version will be placed in your church mailbox for handy pick-up.

Sign up for the email newsletter at www.peoplesumc.org

If you have received the mid-month LINK by email in the past, you do not need to sign-up again.

Volunteers are a priceless gift! Volunteers at PUMC are at the very heart of our ministries and success, they are instruments of God, working to help shape the Christian experience to all who come through our doors. Volunteers are unpaid, sometimes unknown, and often unrecognized. They give of their time, talents & energy to many aspects of our church; from watering plants, serving on leadership committees, and for the spiritual care of others. As People's church grows, more of what we do and offer will rely upon volunteers. Research shows that volunteering has it's benefits:

- Greater well being
- Stronger immune system
- Gain interpersonal skills
- Better communication skills
- Increase in knowledge on social issues

There are many volunteer opportunities out there, so why put forth my efforts to the church specifically? James 22-24 "Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear!" Be aware of this expectation before you decide to be His follower. It is the way to show our love for Him.

- 1) Jesus doesn't tell us to go and make believers; He tells us to go and make disciples - committed followers of Christ.
- 2) God doesn't ask us to be his ministers without helping us. He blesses us with specific abilities "spiritual gifts". We all have something to offer in ministry, because he gave it to us.
- 3) Volunteering isn't based on filling jobs, it is based on each persons unique giftedness. It is up to us to help one another move into discipleship by identifying, training and entering into the ministry for which God has designed for us.

Great ways to get involved & help your Church! For information see our website, www.peoplesumc.org or call the church office, 835-3755.

- Confirmation Mentors
- Hospitality Team Members
- Website Design
- Desserts for Wednesday Night Supper

Good News From GoodSearch People's UMC was recently awarded our first payment for using GoodSearch as our preferred internet search engine. There have been a total of 1759 searches which has resulted in \$18.70 cash. Some of you have been shopping which has brought in an additional \$1.11 for a total income of \$19.81! **This is free money!** Each time you search the web with GoodSearch's Yahoo-powered search engine, about a penny will go to our church. Also, every time you shop online at 1,000 participating stores including Amazon, eBay, Target, Staples, Expedia, etc., a percentage of your purchase will be donated



for free! Start using GoodSearch today and let's see how much money we can raise in 2010!

Learn About "A Gift to Your Family: Advance Care Planning" HospiceCare Inc. will hold its next question-and-answer seminar, "A Gift to Your Family: Advance Care Planning," on Tuesday, Jan 12, 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., at the Don & Marilyn Anderson HospiceCare Center, 5395 E. Cheryl Parkway in Madison. The free seminar helps participants get started in preparing their own advance directive, a document that makes an individual's healthcare wishes clear to family, friends and healthcare professionals. Pre-registration is requested; call Carrie Glantz at (608) 327-7202

Dear Family and Friends,



There are many aspects of my role as parish nurse that are very rewarding. I am blessed to have the privilege of listening to your life stories, praying with you, and helping you sort through health issues. Our bodies are remarkably and beautifully intricate. The mind-body-spirit is more than “where we live”—it needs our attention to be healthy Christians.

Years ago I wrote a LINK article on the thyroid and doing a “Neck Check” using a mirror as you swallow something from a glass. A congregation member told me later that what she learned prompted her to see her doctor and she was diagnosed with a thyroid problem, which has been under control since diagnosis. Education is an important part of what I do here as your parish nurse.

So...let me tell you that January is Thyroid Awareness Month! Hormones produced by the thyroid gland influence nearly every organ, tissue, and cell of the body. They help control the function of your heart, brain, liver, kidneys and skin. Imbalances can cause fatigue, weight gain or loss, nervousness, depression, feeling cold, bowel problems, menstrual problems, a racing heart and more seemingly unrelated problems.

Recognizing the symptoms of thyroid disease and having your doctor do a blood check to see if your thyroid hormone levels are in balance are critical to your well-being. I have placed a handout on the Health and Wellness bulletin board that has more information and directions for doing the “Neck Check”. Pick one up or call me and I’ll mail one!

New Year’s blessings,

Susan Payne, People’s Parish Nurse

Who can believe that January has arrived? Beat the “winter blues” by coming to the First Monday Gathering on January 4th to hear an inspiring, heartwarming family story told by author Joan Laffey. Joan’s 14th grandchild was born with a syndrome presenting many medical challenges. Joan has written a book about her experience, *Saving Grace: A Grandma’s Story of Spiritual Growth*. We will meet for a potluck at 11:00 AM with the program to follow. Bring a friend!! Questions welcomed by Susan, the Parish Nurse at 835-3755 x 24.



Each Wednesday evening from 5:00pm to 6:30pm. Enjoy a mid-week break from cooking, come as you are, bring a friend, neighbor or family!

January Menu:

6th - Soup & Salad Bar

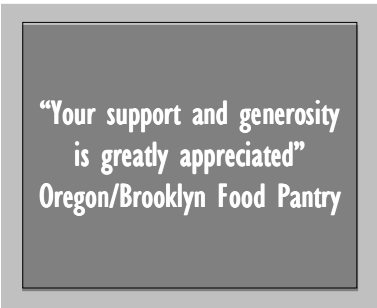
13th - Chili & Toasted Cheese Sandwiches

20th - French Toast, Ham & Sausage, Fruit

27th - Taco Bar, Rice, Fruit & Soup

You may check the menu right from the calendar on our website. Simply select the date, click on Wednesday Night Supper and read the description.

PUMC was recently able to make a donation to



The **Oregon Brooklyn Food Pantry** in the amount of \$230! This monetary support will go to purchase perishable and non-perishable food items for local distribution.

Thanks to all and keep up the good work! Please continue to keep us in mind as there are fewer drives in the January to March, and our supplies will be diminished.

Food Pantry Collection at a Glance

Here are some monthly suggestions of what to collect to keep the local food pantry stocked.

- January** Soup
- February** Bath Soap/Shampoo
- March** Paper Products

Birthdays & Anniversaries

1st	Allie Christensen William Cihla Derik Doescher Lynn Slack Nathan Varese	18th	Lauren Ace Heidi & Dan Rossiter
2nd	Dennis Staskal	19th	Juanita Franke
3rd	Linda Svanda	20th	Barb Bryant Marshall Mennenga
4th	Greg Kienitz Cynthia Majors-Culp	21st	Cathy Mellen Emily Temte
5th	Dan Rossiter	22nd	Laura Behrend Holly Dregne Ann Peterson
6th	Avery Carpenter Mike Hawkey Dana Lindsey	23rd	Jack Hoffmann Haley Klassy Anthony Lindsey
7th	Erin Powell Holly Rausch	24th	Rachel Angel Pauline McMannes Jim Schliem
8th	Oscar Gonzalez	25th	Lauren Beauchaine Duane Newton
10th	Justin Bellisle Shauna Slack Danielle Slack	28th	Brittani Ace Kim Machotka
12th	Casey Garton Ethan Rausch	29th	Kysa Samu
13th	Trish Arndt James Bradley Jason Ostrander	30th	Pam McIntyre Neil & Nancy Denton
14th	Pat & Laura Zimmer	31st	Dean Flood
15th	Rosann Conklin Morgan Machotka		
16th	Tim Edwards Liz Grady Shirley Jones Rayna Kluz		
17th	Lydia Smith		



Do you notice an error or an omission? Please notify the office.

Church Records

Deaths

New Members

Baptisms

Weekend Stats Nov 21-Dec13

Visitors 26
Attendance in Worship 919

Children & Youth Ministries

A big THANK YOU to all who participated in our Pennies for Peace drive to help support schools in Afghanistan. The students raised over \$170, which will benefit both current and future schools in this region.

Another big THANK YOU to those who participated in our Wednesday Night Supper Youth fundraiser! Through this event, and also from our Sunday school offerings, Children & Youth Ministries was able to help support all three of our "Host a Family" recipients. Thanks also to Julene Smith for heading up this effort.

January 3rd - No Sunday School or Confirmation classes.

January 6th - Wednesday Night Youth Programs resume.

January 10th - Junior & Senior High Mission Trip Meeting: Are you interested in participating next summer on a mission trip? We will meet at 10:00am in the Youth Room to discuss trip options and potential fundraising needs. If you can't attend, but are interested in going on a mission trip, please contact Sue Koch.

January 13th - 8th Grade Confirmation Students, Parents & Mentors Meeting: We will meet at 6pm in the Youth Room to go over materials, answer any questions, and review the expectations for the program.

January 24th - Next meeting for the 3rd Graders and their Bible mentors.

Children's Choir and Drama Teams schedule changes in January: Drama & Drama Team Jr. will alternate performing on the 3rd Sunday of the month. The Children's choir will perform once a month on the 2nd Sunday. For January, the **Children's choir will perform on January 10th during the 9:00am worship service.**

Drama Team will perform on January 17th during the 10:30 worship service.

Thank you to Julene Smith and Jeanne Carpenter for setting up and supervising ringing bells for the Salvation Army. Both the Junior and Senior High Youth were able to participate thanks to their efforts.

Four Year Kindergarten Update: Katie Grady and Diane Haag have been participating in the task force put together to determine whether or not the Oregon School district would provide 4 year kindergarten next year. A final decision is anticipated soon, and more specific details will be provided when available. If you have questions or concerns, you may contact the District directly: Cynthia DiCamelli - 835-4052, cad@oregonsd.org; or Candace Weidensee - 835-4004, cjl2@oregon.k12.wi.us.

FROM THE WI CONFERENCE: Senior High CONVO Marks its 34TH Year with an inspiring weekend: One-thousand high school-age youth and youth leaders gathered Nov. 13th-15th in Wisconsin Dells for a weekend of worship and learning during one of the largest and most beloved ministries of the Wisconsin Conference: Youth Convo. Keynote speaker Chris Lahr was a top highlight of 2009. Convo's many traditions were complemented by an innovative partnership with the Wisconsin Council of Churches, which helped the event reach even more youth than usual. Thanks to all who made this inspirational event possible. **A special Thank You to Anila Russell, who represented People's Church on the Design Team for CONVO! We had three other Senior High Youth attend: Ethan Rausch, Lydia Russell, and Sara Wendlandt. Holly Rausch went as a chaperone.**

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