

# The Chimes

of Westminster Presbyterian Church

A monthly newsletter of events and opportunities for the members of Westminster

## Presbyterian Heritage Sunday



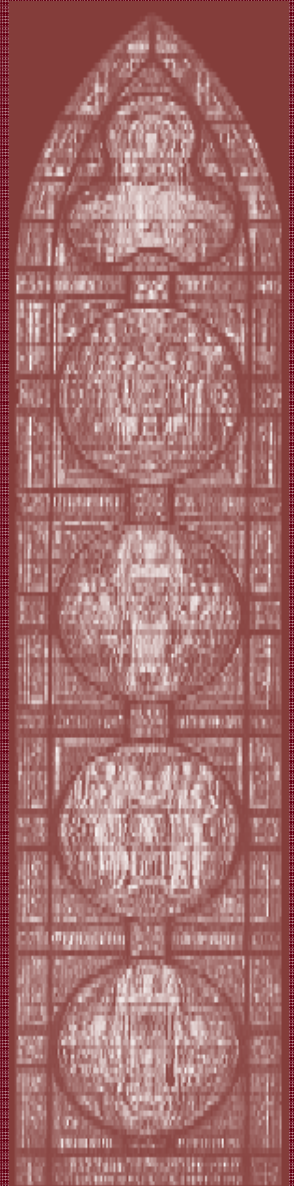
*with*  
*Miami Valley*  
*Pipes and Drums*

### January 24

### 10:00 a.m.

Members and friends of the congregation are encouraged to wear any Tartan or plaid that they may have such as skirts, kilts, and ties. This is a day to be Scottish, no matter what your heritage!

Where Loving God and Neighbor Is Transforming Lives



#### ***Inside This Issue:***

<i>Among Our People</i> .....	2
<i>2009 Annual Report</i> <i>information</i> .....	2
<i>Ash Wednesday</i> .....	3
<i>Parish Notes</i> .....	4-5
<i>News from New Orleans</i> ....	6
<i>Did You Know?</i> .....	7
<i>Adult Education</i> .....	8
<i>University of Michigan</i> <i>Men's Glee Club</i> .....	8
<i>Gifts from the Heart</i> .....	9
<i>Sermon</i> .....	10-11
<i>Annual Meeting</i> .....	12

**Issue 0110**  
**January/February 2010**

# Among Our People...



**Jean Bindeman** was honored as a 2009 Marie S. Aull Achievement Award recipient in December at Aullwood's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner. Jean is a Trail Guide and is valued for her excellence in teaching students natural history and agriculture and stressing the importance of conservation in protecting habitats.

**Elder Mary Ellen Jarrett** has resigned her position as Clerk of Session after 5 ½ years of service. Thank you, Mary Ellen, for your dedication and outstanding eye for making sure we were adhering to the Book of Order. You will be missed.

We are pleased to announce that **Elder Gloria Pugh** has accepted the call to serve as Clerk of Session commencing February 2, 2010. Gloria will bring to the position great organizational skills. Gloria chaired the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee that brought Laurie Davis to our church.

## Birth

**December 26, 2009**

Claire Ellen Toerner

Daughter of Mike and Hilary Toerner

**Judy Hamilton**, Executive Assistant to Dr. McConnel for the past 13 years, will retire on June 25, 2010. When asked what she was planning on doing in retirement, she said, "Less."

Our sexton, **Marv Fleming**, and his wife Becky, prepared and distributed bags containing homemade cookies, fudge, crackers, candy canes and other goodies to the homeless at Christmas. This is the third year the Flemings have prepared the bags and delivered them to those walking around downtown, to those in "tent city" and at St. Vincent. Marv has taken his young grandchildren to make the deliveries and they have learned much about the joy of giving.

## Deaths

**December 9, 2009**

Esther Howard

**December 25, 2009**

Elizabeth "Betty" Neal

**January 1, 2010**

Ruth Whiting

**January 17, 2010**

Anna Rue Hall

## 2009 Annual Report coming soon!

Our *2009 Annual Report* will be posted on our Web site on **February 14**. For those who are receiving our publications in the mail, the report will be mailed on February 15. This year, the *Annual Report* has a new look with more photos and full color pages with Web links to other Web sites of interest. On February 14, visit our Web site at [www.westminsterdayton.org](http://www.westminsterdayton.org), click on the "About Us" tab and choose **2009 Annual Report**. Your comments may be sent to Judy Hamilton ([judy@westminsterdayton.org](mailto:judy@westminsterdayton.org)).

# ***NEW TAIZÉ SERVICE!***

## **Ash Wednesday**

### **February 17**

Two identical Taizé Ash Wednesday services will be offered on February 17 at 12:10 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. There will be no Ash Wednesday meals this year. Childcare will be provided at the evening service.

Taizé worship was originated by the Taizé community in France, an ecumenical, international community that wants its life to be a sign of reconciliation between divided Christians and between separated peoples. The worship liturgy is framed by a series of contemplative songs and prayers, accompanied by rich instrumentation with piano, strings and woodwinds. Our service will include the traditional imposition of ashes for those who desire it.

Start your Lenten season with this special service of prayer. As Brother Roger, the founder of Taizé has put it: "Prayer is a serene force at work within human beings, stirring them up, changing their hearts, never allowing them to close their eyes in the face of evil, of wars, of all that threatens the innocent of this world. From it we draw the energy to wage other struggles to transform the human condition and to make the earth a place fit to live in. All who walk in the footsteps of Christ, while holding themselves in the presence of God, remain alongside other people as well. They do not separate prayer and solidarity with others."

Let us begin our Forty Days of Lent in solidarity with God and one another in **Taizé worship on Wednesday, February 17.**



### **Journey with us to the cross**

Our Lenten Journey this year will feature sermons, literature, and hymns on the overall theme of "Peacemaking as a Spiritual Practice." The first Sunday in Lent is February 21. Join us for Holy Communion.

# Parish

## Be a part of one of our Interest Groups

We have two new groups: Bell Choir and Dominoes. All Interest Groups are open to everyone and provide a great place to bring a guest or two or three! Singles, beginners and all walk-ins are welcome.

- Bridge Interest Group #2 on Mondays, January 25 and February 22, at 6:30 p.m., in the West Parlor
- Dominoes Interest Group on Thursdays, January 28 and February 25, at 7:00 p.m., in the West Parlor
- Bell Choir Interest Group on Thursday, February 4, at 5:15 p.m., in Room 300
- Bridge Interest Group #1 on Tuesday, February 9, at 6:30 p.m., in Fellowship Hall

## Investigating Church Membership Seminar is January 31

Have you enjoyed visiting Westminster? Would you like to know more about us and how to become a stronger part of our congregation? Do you wonder what it really means to be a Presbyterian? If so, you are warmly invited to attend our next **Investigating Church Membership Seminar** Sunday, January 31, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Supper and childcare will be provided. To register, or for further information, please contact Laurie Davis ([laurie@westminsterdayton.org](mailto:laurie@westminsterdayton.org) or 223-7285).

## Labyrinth open walk

Come walk the Labyrinth, noon-7:00 p.m., Tuesdays, February 2 and March 2, in Fellowship Hall. Please note the change in our ending time. Invite a friend to come along for the walk. All are welcome.

## Church tour

Are you interested in finding your way around the church and learning more about the beautiful building? Stop by the Welcome Center at 11:20 a.m. on Sunday, February 7, after worship, for a brief tour that will conclude at 12:15 p.m.

## How about an evening out?

Are you a lover of the arts? Do you like really good food? **How about an evening of dinner and the theater?** Join the Just Friends group (anyone over 55) on Friday, February 19, for the area premier of the Broadway musical love story entitled *A Light in the Piazza* at Wright State University. We will leave the church parking lot at 5:30 p.m., travel by bus to Longhorn Steakhouse for dinner and then attend the romantic fable. Tickets are \$17.00 each for the musical; the cost of dinner is at your discretion. Checks, made payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church, should be given to Caroline Shuey by Monday, February 8, so tickets can be purchased in advance.

## Just Friends travel to Asheville, North Carolina, in May

Just Friends and other travelers will take four days and three nights to explore the Biltmore Estate, North Carolina Arboretum, Mt. Mitchell State Park (lunch at the 6,684' observation point), and the Folk Art Center—all in the Asheville, North Carolina area.

**When: Wednesday, May 19, through Saturday, May 22**

**Housing and five delicious meals will be at the Montreat Conference Center.**

**Cost: \$226.75 for lodging, five meals, entry to the Biltmore and bus expenses**

The trip sounds so wonderful, and the rhododendrons should be coming into bloom! For more information, contact Kay at the church (223-7285) or Ray and Sue Merz on their cell phone in Florida (937-545-6881). But hurry, our buses accommodate only 30!

# Notes

## Has your contact information changed?

Don't forget to let us know when your address or phone number changes. Just contact the Church Office (223-7285). And please remember to direct your e-mail changes via e-mail to [carol@westminsterdayton.org](mailto:carol@westminsterdayton.org).

## Care giver support

Join with others who are facing some of the same concerns. Contact Kay Davis-Dudding (223-7285 or [kay@westminsterdayton.org](mailto:kay@westminsterdayton.org)) to let her know of your interest/need.



## Music Notes



### Choirs have resumed - new members welcome

Now is a great time to become a part of Westminster's music ministry.

#### Children's Choirs and Youth Handbells (Sundays)

##### 11:20-12:15

*Genesis Singers* (4 and 5 year olds, pre-kindergarten) – Rm. 104 - Holly Martin, Director

*Senior High Bell Choir* (grades 9-12), Rm. 300 – Jerry Taylor, Director

##### 11:30-12:15

*Cherub Choir* (grades K-3), Theater – Marcia Wood, Director

*Calvin Choir* (grades 4-6), Rm. 100 (Choir Room) – John Neely, Director

*Junior High Bell Choir* (grades 7 and 8) Rm. 301 – Brent Manley, Director

#### Youth Choir (Sundays)

##### 5:00-6:00

*Knox Choir* (grades 7-12), Rm. 100 (Choir Room) – John Neely, Director. Supper and youth fellowships follow.

#### Adults (Thursdays)

##### 7:30-9:30

*Westminster Choir*, Rm. 100 (Choir Room) – John Neely, Director. We promise an excellent musical experience and great fellowship.

Please contact John Neely (223-7285 or [john@westminsterdayton.org](mailto:john@westminsterdayton.org)) for details.

### MONTEVERDI'S VESPERS, 1610

Saturday, February 27, 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary

The Dayton Philharmonic Chamber Chorus \* The Bach Society of Dayton

The Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra \* Neal Gittleman, Conductor

Hank Dahلمان and John Neely, Chorus Directors

For tickets call Ticket Center Stage: 937-228-3630.



# News from New Orleans

by Ben Manuel

*Westminster member, Ben Manuel, is serving as a Young Adult Volunteer with the Presbyterian Church (USA). He is working as the Warehouse Manager for Project Homecoming, the construction program of the Presbytery of Southern Louisiana.*



In December I had the wonderful opportunity to welcome a mission crew from Westminster to New Orleans. Westminster was able to bring 13 adults of all ages down to work with Project Homecoming to help rebuild three houses in New Orleans. It was a truly wonderful experience for me, and I believe for them as well.



On one house, members of the group completed various final touches including installing a tile counter top in the kitchen, installing door handles, and general cleanup. This helped allow the woman who owned the house to move in during the first week of January. Without the work completed by Westminster, that would not have been possible.

Ward. They also laid bamboo flooring in the master bedroom and the main hallway of the house. For anyone that hasn't done either of these jobs, they are hard work. Just one piece that is not completely straight can throw off an entire room. The group from Westminster did excellent work.

On another project, team members spent their week laying tile in the kitchen and dining area of a house in the lower Ninth

Due to the expertise and experience that Westminster folks brought with them, a couple of the more experienced members were "borrowed" to help oversee an additional site while the Construction Assistants on that site were out for an all-day meeting for the Americorp Delta Service Corp. This site had a large crew of college students from the College of Wooster who were installing drywall. The presence of these skilled members was



an invaluable resource to the construction staff here, as it allowed work to continue at a higher level of excellence.



All in all, it was wonderful to see so many familiar faces. Many of the people on this trip were repeat mission trip goers, and there were a couple new faces added to the mix. I hope these new folks will choose to join the ever-growing regular crowd of Westminsterites who continue to go on these mission trips and I hope there will be even more new faces next time. Even as we approach the five-

year anniversary of Katrina, there is so much work to be done here in New Orleans. I hope to see many of you down here in the future.

Gifts to support Ben's year of mission service may be sent to our Church Office. Checks should be made out to Westminster Presbyterian Church with Ben Manuel-YAV in the memo line so we will know where to credit your donation.

# Did you know???

- The interesting bulletin boards across from Laurie Davis's office were created by Donna Henry, wife of Mission Associate, Jim Henry. Donna's experience as a teacher and her vivid imagination have produced a great looking E.J. Brown bulletin board, as well as a lighted Fellowship board inviting all to the Progressive Dinner and Talent/No Talent Show on January 24.
- Our Building and Grounds Committee is working hard to reduce expenses, while keeping on task with necessary maintenance and repairs of our church. We use a Table of Action Chart to identify, track, prioritize and budget maintenance and repair activities. The committee and staff regularly review this document, thus enabling quick response to immediate concerns, while still keeping long-range plans on track.
- To help reduce expenses in 2009 volunteers maintained the grounds. A similar plan is in place for 2010. Repairs last year included painting window frames on the alley side of the church, replacement of heating system motors and valves, elevator repair and change of the elevator maintenance plan. We are currently conducting an energy audit and a security survey of the building. Church members are invited to contact Craig Showalter (223-7285 or [craig@westminsterdayton.org](mailto:craig@westminsterdayton.org)), or any member of the Building and Grounds committee with questions or concerns about church building repairs.
- Twenty-five Post-High and Young Adult members gathered at the home of Ande and Dan Han on December 23. A majority of those who joined in the holiday event work or attend school out of town. Great fun was had by all.
- Instead of exchanging gifts with one another this year, Westminster Youth gave games, books and toys to Agape for Youth, a local foster care program.
- The Cookie Walk, held on December 20, made \$2100 to benefit The Foodbank, Dayton Urban Ministries, and the Samaritan Health Clinic. You were invited to take a cookie walk – and you walked. You were invited to bake – and you baked. You were invited to buy – and you bought. Due to your generosity of time, talent, and treasure, the above charities will share equally in the \$2100. The cookies and candy were fresh and delicious, and everyone enjoyed the fun and fellowship of the event.

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**Editor's Note:** We ran across this excerpt from another church's bulletin about the complexity and opportunity of life in the church. We pass this along to you for your reflection in the hope that God will use us always to be a *lively* force for the Gospel in this community. This was printed in the newsletter of Columbia Presbyterian Church in Decatur, GA, September 22-28, 1991, author unknown.

## Comments on Lively Churches

- A *lively* church has parking problems;  
a dead church doesn't.
- A *lively* church has lots of 'noisy' children and young people;  
a dead church is fairly quiet.
- A *lively* church often changes the way things are done;  
a dead church has plenty of money for what it does.
- A *lively* church asks people to open up and risk involvement;  
a dead church plays it safe and never risks.
- A *lively* church sees challenges and opportunities;  
a dead church sees problems and dangers.
- A *lively* church apologizes, forgives and seeks forgiveness;  
a dead church never makes mistakes.
- A *lively* church uses its tradition and facilities to serve people;  
a dead church believes in the past and "holds on."
- A *lively* church is filled with committed givers;  
a dead church is filled with 'tippers.'
- A *lively* church dares to dream great dreams of God's Kingdom;  
a dead church has nightmares.

# Adult Education Opportunities

*Let's Learn and Grow Together*

**Every Sunday, 9:00 – 9:45 a.m.**

***Lectio Divina: Sunday Morning Meditation and Prayer***

**Room 206**

This class experiences the ancient practice of “sacred reading” of the day’s scriptures, seeking a personal word from God through the biblical text. Class members lead the group.

**Sundays, January 24 through February 21**

**11:20 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**

***Capitalism—An Ethical Inquiry***

**Chapel**

**Leader: Dr. Robert Reece, Professor Emeritus, Wright State University**

This discussion-oriented course will examine the theory and practice of capitalism from the perspective of ethical theory, with attention to its history and variations. We will explore issues in the ethics of capitalism and ethics in capitalism.

***Music and Transformation***

**West Parlor**

**Leader: The Reverend Dr. Lisa Hess,  
Associate Professor, United Theological Seminary**

Come prepared for historical and theological, classical and post-modern ways to think about “music,” and receive a deepened understanding of how music may serve God’s work of transformation in the church and in the world.

***Choices and Expectations: Challenges of Progress to  
an Individual Congregation***

**Rooms 203-205**

**Leader: Dr. Squire Brown**

This class will examine the influences of modern secular developments on typical mainline churches.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MEN’S GLEE CLUB

**Paul Rardin, Conductor**

**Saturday, February 20, 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary**



Founded in 1859, The University of Michigan Men's Glee Club is one of the oldest collegiate choruses in the United States and the oldest continually-run student organization on the Michigan campus. Long acclaimed as one of the finest male choruses in the world, the Glee Club has achieved this stature by sustaining and respecting the traditions which have been established during its 150 year history. A freewill offering will be received.

Housing is needed for the singers after the concert. The Michigan Alumni Club of Greater Dayton is seeking hosts for the 100 singers. Hosts are asked to house a minimum of two young men and feed them breakfast prior to returning them to the church on Sunday morning, February 21, the day after the concert. Those interested should contact Dave Grupe (dhgrupe@sbcglobal.net or 937-293-7799).



# Gifts from the Heart program sets record

**170 children (41 families) assisted. Thank you!**

Once again the members of Westminster (and some generous friends, as well), opened their hearts and checkbooks to make the 2009 Gifts from the Heart program one for the record books. The number of children identified for the program by the E.J. Brown school social worker began in early November with 135, and grew to 170 during the days just before Christmas break. These children represented 41 families. This is the largest number of children and families we have assisted since Gifts from the Heart began in 2000.

Small Group-Wilson has facilitated this program since its inception. Every year the group wrestles with how many children to “adopt.” The need for help at Christmas-time is evident every year at the school and most all of the students and their families could benefit from the program. However, the job of selecting the “most needy” falls to the school’s Social Worker, Jenne Gross. In this year of economic challenges, the need for assistance was tremendous and the question as to how many children Westminster could help was a concern as well.

Members and friends of Westminster adopted 162 children. Those members who chose not to “adopt” a child, but instead made a cash donation, allowed small group members to shop for the additional eight children that came to Jenne Gross’s attention just before Christmas. Generous cash contributions also enabled us to give each family a food basket again this year.

Thank you, Westminster, for once again showing your love of God and neighbor through the opening of your hearts to the E.J. Brown School community.

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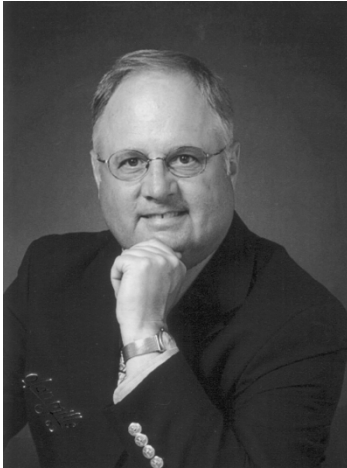
Thanks to Ondrej Paska (See Matthew 14:24-33) 01-04-2008

**PETER FINDS HIS FAITH TO BE MUCH STRONGER IN THE WINTER**

# In Spite of It All

by The Reverend Dr. George H. McConnel

As preached on November 15, 2009



Sandy McConnel

Genesis 12:10-20

On the surface, the story has all the elements of a soap opera - like an episode of *The Young and the Restless*: wife-swapping, deceit, adultery, male-chauvinism, mysterious illness, government payoffs. It's certainly not the kind of story you expect to find in the Bible, and with Abraham, of all people, the Father of the Faith, as the central character.

The premise of the story is that to have a beautiful wife while living in a foreign country is a distinct liability.

As an alien, you may easily be mistreated and even killed by someone who desires her. But a beautiful sister is another matter. If some rich man wants her for a wife, there is the opportunity of negotiating a big dowry.

What if we filmed this story? For Abraham, we might cast George Clooney as a follow-up to his role in the movie *Ocean's Eleven*. Clooney would be perfect because in this story Abraham is a real wheeler-dealer. He does all the wrong things and yet he comes out better than he started!

We might cast Woody Allen as Pharaoh for whom nothing works right. Pharaoh, who seems to have acted in all innocence, ends up with a severe illness afflicting his family and he is short a good many sheep, oxen, donkeys, slaves, and camels. And besides, he is without the new wife who was the cause of it all.

We might have a harder time casting Sarah. What film star is young, beautiful, and a submissive wife? Those characters don't exist anymore. It's hard for us to understand Sarah putting up with Abraham's schemes. We'll have to settle for an unknown for Sarah.

If we were to do it right, we would need the producer and the director of *Law and Order* because behind all the action, deceit, and adventure are real people with real feelings. And like *Law and Order*, this story is one which lifts up real feelings and deals with life in all its sin and grace.

Abraham may come off as the epitome of male chauvinism, but, from the inside, we see something else: terror. The man is afraid; he is in desperate trouble. When he reaches the promised land, he finds famine. People are going hungry. Starvation is imminent. Abraham decides he must do something, not just sit and wait to die.

So he folds his tents a second time and with Sarah and his slaves and his flocks and herds, heads south to Egypt. He has heard that Egypt's fields are watered by the Nile and do not depend on rainfall for their fertility, so there he hopes to find food. But he also knows that the Egyptians were notorious for their suspicion of foreigners and their superior attitude to strangers. So he worries, all the way, about what may happen when they arrive. Eventually his worry escalates into blind fear that he may be murdered.

Gripping uncertainty about the future—do you know what that's like?—worry about a new place, a new situation; worry about one's reception by new people—have you ever felt that?—fear which blinds better judgment—can you appreciate that? This is a story for people who know those feelings.

Earlier in Chapter 12 of Genesis, just before our story, Abraham receives from Yahweh the "Barith Olam" - the everlasting covenant. Yahweh says to Abraham, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to a land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse, and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."

Now, this promissory covenant, which requires nothing of the human recipient, but just assures him that God has obligated himself on his behalf, plays a significant role in our story and in fact throughout the Bible.

You see, years before, Abraham and Sarah had gotten off to a good start in Mesopotamia. They had a nice house in the suburbs with a two-car garage and a high definition TV and a nice back deck. With their health and each other and their families behind them, they had what is known as 'a future.' Sarah got her clothes at Nordstrom's, did volunteer work at Miami Valley Hospital, and was a member of The Junior League. Abraham was pulling down an excellent salary for a young man, plus generous fringe benefits and an enlightened retirement plan.

Then they got religion, or religion got them and Abraham was convinced that what God wanted them to do was pull up stakes and head out for Canaan where God had promised that he would make Abraham the father of a great nation, which would in turn be a blessing to all nations. So that's what they did, and that's where their troubles started.

The Promised Land wasn't so promising after all. In fact, there was no Pine Club, no Dorothy Lane

Market; instead a famine was in the land. And so Abraham turns his back on Yahweh's promise and heads for Egypt. It is Egypt that is the great nation, not Abraham and his little clan. Abraham doubts God's promise and tries to work out things his own way. "Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you." Abraham never turns to God in this story: the man who later became famous for his faith appears here as one who cannot trust God to keep his promises. And what are the results of doing things this way?

Abraham is alive and wealthier, but his future, which was to come through Sarah, is cut off. He has made sure, by what he did, that God's promises, which were to be fulfilled by a son born to Sarah, would never come true. Sarah is now in another man's harem, about to become an adulteress. Pharaoh has a new wife, and everybody in the house is sick. Abraham took his destiny into his own hands, and fouled up the lives of everyone around him.

Have you ever given up trusting God and thought: *I'll do it my way*, and then suffered the consequences? This is a story for people who have accepted God's promise, but have had trouble living the promise.

Well, if we are going to film this story, there is one more star we will have to recruit. It would be good if we could hire George Burns to play God one more time. You see, although he is only mentioned once, God, as usual, is the main character in this biblical story.

The two questions on which the plot turns are these: (1) Will the sojourning man and woman be able to trust God's promise? (2) Will this God keep his promises? The two questions are not the same, but they always come together.

Will the sojourners trust God's promise? Clearly no. They did not. And that disbelief brings death.

Will God keep her promise? Unambiguously yes, far beyond any reasonable expectation. The story confirms fully the graciousness of God, while the faithfulness of Israel, in its very first testing, is found wanting. Abraham, the bearer of the promise, is the greatest enemy of the promise.

But even if Abraham cannot trust the promise, the promise is not voided. God will keep the promise in spite of Abraham. What Abraham has upset by his fear and doubt, God puts right again by his grace. That is the gospel in this story. Neither Pharaoh nor Abraham can finally control the power of the promise; God presides over that in God's own free ways.

Is any predicament beyond saving? For us, yes; for God, no. Is there any way we can foul up God's plans for us? Yes, through fear and doubt.

But, is there anything we can do that will ultimately separate us from God's promise, from God's love, from Jesus Christ? No, of that we are assured when we understand that this strange story is not a fantasy - not a segment of *Law and Order* - in reality, this story is our story.

I hope we never experience famine or wife-swapping or any of the other details of this story. But I know that what is really happening in the story does happen to us. We fail God, but God does not fail us. We need the assurance this story gives, that although fear and doubt lead us into trouble, God is still there, still faithful, still loves us, in spite of it all.

The sermon was drawn from:

*In Spite of it All, Reclaiming the Old Testament in the Church Pulpit* by Henry Gowen

*Telling the Truth*, by Frederick Buechner

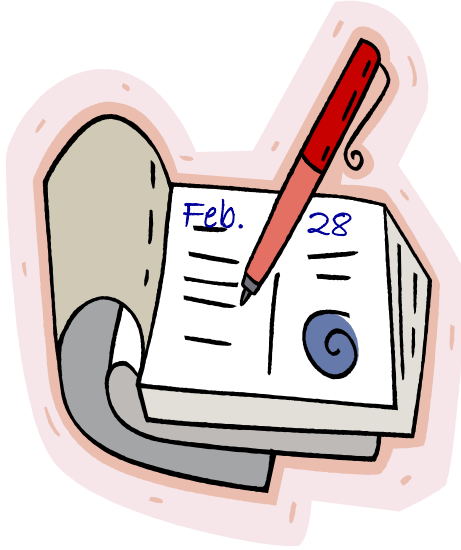
*Genesis* by Walter Brueggemann



*Let us pray:*

*In spite of the hate, in spite of the deception, in spite of the fear and the doubt, in spite of all things we do which separate us from you - you hold on to us. You love us with a love that will not let us go. We praise you for that love and that faithfulness and give you thanks. Amen.*





# Annual Meeting is February 28

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be on Sunday, February 28, at 11:00 a.m., in the Sanctuary, immediately following worship. Your participation in this important meeting is encouraged.

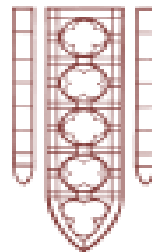


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