

CIRCLE

'Christ Encompassed in Community'

Ravenswood Fellowship United Methodist Church

AUGUST 2007

CHURCH BUILDINGS

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"Well why don't we just worship in a tent?" Barb Hall was emphatic about the future of the church building program. The highway department was widening the road, and we had to do something: move the building, tear it down, or move the congregation. Or worship in a tent.

She was voted down. Winters are cold in Illinois. You can't keep anything permanent in a tent. Our people aren't Hippies, after all. We tore the old place down and built a new church *building* a few yards away from the path of the bulldozers.

I have spent maybe half my career as pastor helping in efforts to build, design and fund church *buildings*. This is amazing to me. I never expected anything like this. My limited building abilities have been helped by the project management skills, construction skills and funding skills of wonderful congregants.

Early in my career in a suburban church appointment, the senior pastor loved to theologize about the "noosphere"— the thinking, progressive layer of the universe, according to the theology of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. "We need to preserve and develop our building as an advancing part of the noosphere," he proclaimed. I took this as gospel and have ever since.

Now we are putting in some wonderfully enormous furnaces, ducts and blowers to replace an antique heating system. The old heater is quaint, with jets of steam leaking and puddles on the floor and wisps of suspicious-looking insulation flaking off. It absolutely has to be done. Additionally, we will have air conditioning. The cost has been negotiated down to \$185,000.

But at conference this year, we heard the lay leader, Roger Curless, read from the memoirs of a Congregationalist minister from the turn of the century. He said that on summer Sundays the Congregationalists' worship inside their building was interrupted by Methodists singing down by the river. The Methodists went on all afternoon. In tents. He had to halt the worship inside because of all the singing outside.

Recently the DS assigned reading for all the clergy: "I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church." The author says that historically, the more elaborate our buildings became, the more our congregations dwindled. Hmmm.

Now our building is a wonderful resource; I for one wouldn't want to be without it. But there is something to be said for tenting.

Just think of a tent, and bring that spirit of simplicity, mobility, flexibility and adaptability to everything we do for Christ.

* Not every discussion group has to be in the church building; Starbucks has lots of people who aren't in

church Sunday mornings, so we could go to them.

- * The church pews are nice, but occasionally we can sing out on the lawn and be pewless with the passers-by.
- * We have a great coffee hour—go upstairs and turn right into the Sanctuary, then turn left through the door up in front, down a flight of stairs, then turn right into the gym. Perhaps we could bring a cup of coffee to someone who has trouble following directions.
- * We have some great programs for ourselves. Some are the best-kept secrets this side of the CIA.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was right. We do need to advance civilization. Make bold strides. Move forward in faith.

But maybe Barb Hall was right too. At least in the sense that we need to maintain the spirit of tenting. We were once an exciting, experimental group of folks, we Methodists. We can still be that today.

Pastor Gary



'\$50,000 CHALLENGE' UPDATE

Finance Committee

AS OF JULY 31ST, **\$29,515**

HAS BEEN PLEDGED TOWARD

THE

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

MATCH CHALLENGE



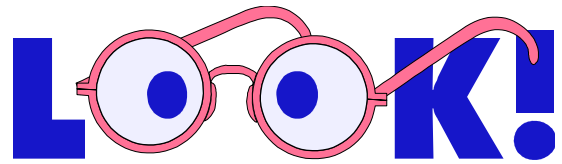
PRAYERS OF SYMPATHY

...for Yuka Yamamoto & family at the death of her husband Ken Yamamoto on June 11th.

...for friends at the death of Ruth Pfustler on June 20th.

FAREWELL TO KEN

RFUMC was saddened by the death of Ken Yamamoto on June 11, 2007. Services were held at Church on Saturday, June 16th. Ken and his wife Yuka have been long-time supporters and leaders of RFUMC. Ken was most generous of his time, his energies and resources, donating many, many of his professionally designed, beautiful signs for all Church events. He assumed leadership and initiated so many activities with cheer, good nature, and competence. Ken is sorely missed. Our heartfelt sympathies go to Yuka, Dean, Bruce, and their families.



UPCOMING EVENTS

SERVICE OF HEALING

for Survivors of Abuse

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9TH
7:00PM in the SANCTUARY

Save the Date
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2007
August 14 - 16 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Sunday, August 19 - 10:30 a.m.

*The Every Good Gift
Gift Shop*

Once again, the VBS Committee has come up with another exciting, fun, interesting and enlightening

Every Good Gift...
Vacation Bible School

The Bible study, games, music, skits and crafts will focus on the giving of gifts, material as well as gifts of time, Spirit and energies. The committee invites all children, as well as adults, to come out and enjoy the projects & interact with each other.

GIFT SHOP

ALL KIDS AND ADULTS
WELCOME!

VBS CELEBRATION/ HOMECOMING

Pastor Gary

This year, we are combining the Vacation Bible School Celebration Sunday with Homecoming. VBS Sunday will include the children's singing and lessons.

Following Church, we will break for refreshments. Hot dogs and goodies will accompany music of the Andrews Sisters as the Women's Choir of the Old Town School of Music provides entertainment. Hope to see you there, August 19th at 10:30am, concluding around 1:00pm.

WELCOME TO
MOSAIC UMC MEMBERS
TRANSFERRING MEMBERSHIP
TO RFUMC

Ravenswood Fellowship UMC happily announces that to date the following persons, formerly of Mosaic UMC, have joined the RFUMC congregation:

- Patricia Bailey
- Adrien Chely
- Robert & Susan Chennell
- Donna & Ken Govas
- Connie & David Long
- Barbara Sechrest
- Helen Terrulli
- Ann Warnecke

Mosaic UMC has also donated the red Bibles that you will now find in the pews.

FROM THE AD COUNCIL
Betty Morita

The Ad Council voted to approve a motion that RFUMC support the United Methodist Church's Nets Program along with the National Basketball Association, to raise \$1000 for 100 mosquito nets to prevent malaria in areas around the world where it is prevalent. Ann Warnecke reported that some Mosaic CDs had matured, and the funds, \$6000 in the Building fund and approximately \$9,000 in the memorial fund, would be transferred to RFUMC.

Jr. Morita reported that he had researched the installation of a chair lift on the Fellowship Hall stairs and that the cost would be a little over \$7,000. The contracts are being evaluated by the Trustees, and Ad Council and the Finance Committee are now investigating where the funds to cover this would come from. Pastor Gary announced that thanks to the initiative and generosity of Teddi Olsen, RFUMC would soon have a new enhanced web site: www.ravenswoodumc.org.

CONGRATULATIONS, LUKE DORNON

Word comes from Debbie and Dr. Lester Dornon in Middletown, Ohio that their son, Luke, graduated from High School in May. He is headed to Taylor University in Indiana. Congratulations to him and best wishes to all the Dornons.

TRUSTEES IN ACTION
Betty Morita

Dave Handwerk, chairman of the Trustees, announced at the meeting of July 15th that a contract had been signed with AA Service Heating Contractors to begin installation of the new heating system in what was formerly the storage closet in the Rummage Room (the large room under the Sanctuary.) Dave asked for volunteers to help clean out the storage area in preparation for the furnace but, by the time John & Paul Kato and David and Jr. Morita arrived, Dave had done most of the work by himself. There are so many areas in the Church that have become repository of many unused and unnecessary items. Dave Handwerk will be scheduling a clean-up day soon to get rid of a lot of stuff in preparation for the installation of all the new components for the heating and air conditioning systems. Please volunteer to help in this mammoth task when the date is announced. The contract is for \$187,000, so if you haven't pledged to the Capital Campaign or if you haven't paid toward your pledge, your cooperation will be much appreciated. Just think how toasty warm the Sanctuary will be during the bitter cold Sundays in January and how you can look forward to enjoying Pastor Gary's wonderful sermons in a pleasantly cool Sanctuary during "the "dog days" of next August.



RUMMAGE SALE IN THE WORKS
Saturday, October 6

Start cleaning your closets and your basements and attics. Chris Johnson is the chairman and has been organizing a meeting schedule for the last Sunday of the month after Church services. He's hoping that all who volunteered so graciously last year will once again do so. There have been a number of requests for pick-ups and Chris needs volunteers who have access to a van or truck to pick up donated items.



Newsletter of the Ravenswood Fellowship UMC

Telephone: 773.561.2610
Fax: 773.561.9471
Email: office@ravenswoodumc.org
Website: www.ravenswoodumc.org

Worship Warm-up -- Jesus, Mary, Cup of Joe: 10:00am
Sunday Worship Service: 10:30am
Sunday School/Nursery: Available
Second Cup of Joe: Noon

Pastor: Rev. Gary Hougen

Circle Staff -

Editor: Sandra Kinder
Reporter: Betty Morita
Circle Crew: Members of the RFUMC Walking Group

This  **CIRCLE** Made Especially For



Ravenswood Fellowship UMC
4511 North Hermitage Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60640-5303

*Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors
The People of the United Methodist Church*