Generous and faithful giving keeps us on track; summer reading to prepare our hearts for this fall

BY REV. TOMMY WILLIAMS, SENIOR PASTOR

In this newsletter, you will always find a quarterly report on our church finances (see page 2). However, from time to time, I like to share the big picture of where we are in our stewardship and where we are headed. We praise God for one of the best quarters we have seen at Westbury in at least three years. The first quarter of 2011 (January 1–March 31) we operated in the plus! We have come far, friends. Just over a year ago we were consistently behind by $65,000, operating in the red from month to month. Now, after generous giving on your part, the good stewardship of our Business Office and Finance Committee, and critical decisions around staffing and management, we are living responsibly with what God is giving us this year.

Thank you for your faithful giving! It is truly a sign of God's work among us and your support for the direction we are headed. We are also on track for our goals around our covenant giving (apportionments) and in most areas, we are staying within budget.

STAY FAITHFUL IN SUMMER GIVING

As summer approaches, we need your regular giving to continue. In every church I have ever known or served, summer is a low point for giving. It is a joyous time for vacationing, summer camps and other fun experiences, which tend to interrupt or alter some habits including our attendance in worship and thus our giving. That being said, if travel sometimes takes you away from church this summer, you have other options for supporting your church financially. Most banks offer an auto draft for billing and payment, which many of you have taken advantage of already. If you would like to make this arrangement, contact your bank. If you have any questions, you may contact Patsy Caughman in our Business Office. Our revamped website at WestburyUMC.org will soon give you the ability to give securely online. I hope this offers you a few giving options for the summer and beyond. Thank you again for a tremendous beginning to this year in your stewardship. May God continue to bless our church's mission “to make followers of Jesus Christ who transform the community and the world through God's love.”

TAKE TIME FOR RADICAL READING

Lastly, I invite you to read with me a summer book selection. It is entitled, Follow Me to Freedom: Leading and Following as an Ordinary Radical, co-written by Shane Claiborne and John Perkins. Both Claiborne and Perkins will be our guests on World Communion Sunday, October 2, at Westbury. More details are coming on their visit with us. Reading this book will help us prepare to receive a word from the Lord through them. Claiborne is a 30-something, radically dedicated Christian living in Philadelphia, serving the poor in the name of Christ. He was raised a Methodist Christian. Perkins is a Baptist pastor, a veteran of the Civil Rights movement and also committed to serving the poor. He resides in Jackson, Miss. Reading and hearing from these two—one a young white man from Tennessee and one an elderly African-American man from Mississippi—will both inspire and challenge us to live out our mission.

“We praise God for one of the best quarters we have seen at Westbury in at least three years...thank you for your faithful giving!”

The Westbury WORD

A monthly publication of Westbury UMC

May 2011 Issue

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The next issue will be on June 3, 2011. Submissions are due by May 26 at 4:00 pm to Martha Upton, Communications Assistant, at martha1@westburyumc.org.
Westbury cares

Visiting Angels are needed to pay monthly visits to our members who are either homebound or in care facilities and take the sacraments to them on Communion Sunday. We need more volunteers to see that everyone has an “angel.” If you have a desire to serve in this capacity, contact Martha Upton, Membership Secretary, at 713-723-0175. You will be trained and receive support from the Living Water Caring Ministry.

The 7:14 Project is a prayer group that meets every Tuesday at 7:00 pm in the Chapel. It is an intentional time set aside to lift up the needs of others to God and to be thankful in this busy time. We invite you to join the pastors, staff and prayer warriors of Westbury for this weekly evening of prayer. For more details, contact Brenda Hallmark at 713-728-1748.

Our sympathy extends to those grieving the loss of: Virginia Tolbert, mother of Bill Victory (died 4/9/2011); Jane Moore, long-time member (died 4/13/2011); Nelda Jeanne Borello, mother of Frank Borello (died 4/22/11); and Gerry Goodloe (died 4/22/2011).

We continue to pray for those hospitalized: Audric Beaulieu, an infant in Hermann Children’s Special Care Unit.

Corrections

The Spring Ring Handbell Concert originally scheduled for Saturday, May 14, will be postponed to a later date TBA. Contact Rev. DeAndre Johnson at 713-723-0175 for details.

Worship Attendance
Goal for 2011 = 400
Average to date = 379

Covenant Giving
2011 Conference apportionments due..........................$108,947
Goal is for Westbury UMC is to meet 60% in 2011; 80% in 2012; and 100% in 2013 and thereafter
Paid through 03/31/11......$15,376
2011 District apportionments due..........................$7,500
Goal is for Westbury UMC 100%
Paid through 03/31/11....$750

Income and Expenses
1st Quarter Income as of 03/31/11............................$191,947
1st Quarter Expenses as of 03/31/11............................$191,001

In Honor of...
- The Handymen of Westbury UMC from anonymous

In Memory of...
- Nancy Glaves from Carmin Cleavenger, Strivers Sunday school class, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Hazlett, Charlice Finck, Jackie Rundstein, N.G. Owens
- Jane Moore from Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Hanson
- Jon MacMoy from Phyllis MacMoy

UMCOR Fundraising
- Japan relief............$3,450

General Announcements

Thanks to all who helped with the 2nd Saturday Workday on April 9! Your dedication to our community of faith is demonstrated by the beautiful flowers and shrubs in the main entrance way planted by Chris Lockhart, Brenda and Joe Hallmark, Steve Ewing, Ian MacMoy, Jim Shugart, Mike Rocha, Fred Riley, Todd Wiggs, Tommy Behrman, Becky and Amelia Grinstead, Elsa Garza, Daron Hester, Gerda Gomez, Laurie Sturdevant and Mary Ann Griggs! Our next big workday will be in the fall. Some of us will be working every 2nd Saturday and invite you to join us in this fellowship and service. We plan to replace the old shrubs in front of the main building. If you’re interested in helping, contact Mark Chatfield at 713-283-5118.

Thanks to all who supported the Quilters’ Palm Sunday sale. We raised $305, which will be donated to Westbury’s Youth Mission Scholarship Fund. Our Youth Director, Cody Cruise, said the need is great this year for the combined mission/youth choir trip this summer. Also, we have donated $300 to the Braes Interfaith Ministries (BIM) School Supply Fund. These monies will purchase school supplies, new socks and underwear for children when they begin school in Fall 2011. Since 1992, the Piecemaker Quilters have worked to achieve greater skill in quilting, promoted Christian fellowship, made items for donation to charitable organizations and raised money for church-supported mission projects through sales. The group provides all the materials and labor for the items we make. If you missed the Palm Sunday sale and would like to make a purchase or place a special order, call Centha Davis at 713-729-6515. Also, you are welcome to join us every Wednesday in W-201, 7:00–9:00 pm.

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Communications updates are grounded in our call to love God and love neighbor

BY KELSEY JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

By now you’ve probably noticed some of the changes being introduced in key pieces of communication at Westbury UMC (this newsletter being just one of many)! Responding to and balancing the needs of both the church and the surrounding community has been an exciting challenge for me in these first couple of weeks as your new director of communications. I value your input and look forward to your participation in a churchwide communications survey that we will conduct later this month.

THE REASON BEHIND IT ALL

Westbury UMC is centered around two guiding principles: love God and love neighbor. This is reflected in the warmth and diversity of the congregation, its passion for reaching out to the community, and in its vision to be “a church for all people...with more than enough love to go around.” All the designs that—in essence—rebrand the church have stemmed from these truths put into practice. Allow me to elaborate on the design process.

LOGO AND COLOR SCHEME

The new cross logo is based on the concept of a mosaic made of many different parts that come together as one beautiful picture of God’s love. The logo captures the myriad differences of the people of Westbury UMC and how—despite these differences—we are united by a single focus. Thus, the mosaic is in the shape of the cross and is composed of varying colors and sizes of circles, symbolizing our true focus: Jesus. The friendly style of lettering that we’ve adopted is a refreshed and updated take on the various fonts that Westbury has used in years past. The new typeface maintains the feeling of Westbury’s established presence but its approachability in style adds a touch of the “here and now.”

WEBSITE

Continuing the “Love God, Love Neighbor” theme, the new website organizes all that Westbury UMC is about into these two categories. Worship, discipleship, prayer/caring and age-specific ministries all fall under “Love God”; while our extension ministries to the world and local community (including the Day School and Mother’s Day Out) can be found under the “Love Neighbor” tab. As the website is a primary point of contact for new folks, we were mindful to highlight a section for first-time visitors with FAQs and a word of welcome. Other new features include clickable rotating announcements on the home page, as well as full staff bios and photos on the “Contact” page. Over the summer, watch for an interactive sermon audio and blog, more photo galleries, an online calendar, a PayPal financial giving option and social media integration through Facebook.

ORDERS OF WORSHIP

In an effort to simplify things, worshippers now receive a single sheet of paper that contains the order of worship. This accompanies another document that is passed out by the ushers/greeters: The Weekly Word, which contains abbreviated news, calendar items and prayer requests for the week. In this small change, we are consolidating our messages and cutting back on paper waste, not to mention a duplication of efforts.

GUEST INFO AND PRAYER CARDS

We depend on clear communication with our guests in worship. To accomplish this with less interruption and confusion, there are no longer attendance pew pads or visitor tear-offs in the worship order. Now, our guests fill out one thing—the new guest cards in the pews next to the offering envelopes. On the reverse, there is a place for anyone to submit a prayer request. These cards are consistent throughout the church campus to avoid repetition in multiple formats.

FUTURE ENDEAVORS

I have many other items on my radar and will be rolling out projects as time and resources permit. These projects include refreshed ministry brochures, video promos, e-news option, updated stationery, improved navigational signage, interior design revamps, streamlined bulletin boards and more! As always, thank you for your prayers, encouragement and constructive criticism. There is much to be done, and I am thrilled to be heading up the efforts!
Vacation Bible School...the menu is almost complete!

BY JANA KINCANNON, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

VBS this year will be **August 1–5** (9:00 am–noon). The theme is full of cooking fun with “Shake it Up Café.” We’ll be learning about the feasts celebrated in the Bible.

Adult and teen volunteer sign-up sheets are on the VBS table in the East Foyer (the tiled area between the Children’s Wing and Office). We still have jobs—big and small—that need to be done before, during and after VBS. Westbury, this is *your* Vacation Bible School for the children of our church, our Day School and our community. Make sure *your* name is on the Menu sign-up sheets on the VBS table. Don’t be the missing ingredient!

Registration forms for children are available in the East Foyer or online at [WestburyUMC.org](http://WestburyUMC.org). Our VBS is for children who are 3 years old by August 1 and for those who have just completed the 4th grade.

The cost is $20 for the first child and $15 per sibling.

For more information, contact Jana at jana1@westburyumc.org or 713-723-0175.

Mark your summer calendars for exciting children’s Sunday School activities

BY JANA KINCANNON, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Summer Sunday School will be full of fun and learning from the Bible. We continue to offer childcare for children under 3 and a Sunday School class just for preschoolers. Post-kindergarten–5th grade will be meeting together in room C-1, but some Sundays we’ll be doing stuff outside for part of the Sunday School hour (9:45–10:45 am). Both girls and boys may want to wear summer clothes, including modest shorts.

We will continue to have The Highway (children’s worship) on Sunday mornings at 11:00 am, except for May 29 and July 31. On those Sundays, families will worship together in the Sanctuary at the 8:30 or 11:00 am services.

Day School serves up fun and sweets to children and their families at Ice Cream Social

BY SUSAN EDGE, DAY SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Ice cream and laughter—the perfect recipe! Westbury’s Day School hosted its 6th Annual Ice Cream Social on Friday, April 1 (see photo below). Nearly 150 children and their families came to enjoy a scoop—or two or three!—of ice cream. Our Day School staff served ice cream as a way of showing appreciation to our families for another wonderful year! The playgrounds were full of laughter and excitement. It was a wonderful opportunity for families to visit with other families, staff and many former students. Here’s a big “thank you” to the entire staff and their families who attended and helped serve ice cream! We can’t wait for next year!
Children celebrate Easter at Westbury

Our elementary students enjoyed Westbury UMC’s 3rd Annual Easter Egg Launch where over 1,000 empty plastic eggs showered down from the rooftop as the kids scrambled to fill their baskets (see photo below). They later “redeemed” their eggs for candy and learned about what redemption through Christ means. Meanwhile, the 3- and 4-year-olds had some fun of their own during an Easter egg hunt out on the playground (see photos at left).

Photos are needed for Senior Sunday

By Cody Cruise, Youth Director

Senior Sunday is coming up on Sunday, May 15, at the 8:30 am worship service! If you are a high school senior, Cody would love for you to send him a baby picture, middle school age picture and a senior picture to use for a special dedication. Please drop the pictures by the Office or send them to codycruise@gmail.com. A reception will be held at 9:45 am in the Parlor.

UM Army camp to be in Huntsville this year

By Cody Cruise, Youth Director

The week of Sunday, June 12–Saturday, June 18, Westbury youth (8th–12th grade) will head to Huntsville, Texas, for UM Army. One of our freshmen, Sarah Kubena, recently said that UM Army 2010 was one of the best weeks of her life. I have seen many youth’s lives changed because of this incredible mission camp. The cost to go is $200, and we have scholarships for anyone who needs assistance. The deadline to sign up is Sunday, May 15!

Spots for Daytona trip are going fast!

By Cody Cruise, Youth Director

Westbury youth and youth choir already have 27 spots booked for the mission trip to Daytona Beach, Florida, on July 9–16. Only three spots are left! Let Cody or Pastor DeAndre know as soon as possible if you want to participate in this amazing experience! We will stay in a hotel on Coral Beach and attend events featuring worship leader Chris Tomlin and popular speaker Louie Giglio through the week. We will also do mission projects in Daytona Beach, as well as sing at nursing homes and churches. Bible study will be held throughout the week. This is open to any youth who wants to come and participate with us. For more details, contact Cody Cruise at 713-723-0175.
Wesley scholar from SMU to offer enrichment lecture on 5th Sunday, May 29

BY REV. TOMMY WILLIAMS, ADULT DISCIPLESHIP LIAISON

May’s 5th Sunday Fellowship will be held on Sunday, May 29, at 9:45 am as we welcome Dr. Ted Campbell, Associate Professor of Church History, from Southern Methodist University’s Perkins School of Theology. Dr. Campbell specializes in Methodist history and doctrine and will give a presentation on “Covenant Discipleship Groups in the Wesleyan Christian Tradition.” This talk will serve to prepare and equip us for one of our goals as a church: to begin Wesleyan-based small groups in Fall 2011. Adult Sunday school classes and all who are interested are welcome to Humphrey Hall that day. Did you know Dr. Campbell is also the proud son-in-law of Westbury members, Carl and Wava Fick!? Please note that there will be no “The Highway” on this 5th Sunday. Children will worship with their parents at the 8:30 and 11:00 am worship services.

Women’s Missionary Society to learn about ‘Plants of the Bible’ on May 11

BY ELLIE HANSON, CONTRIBUTOR

The Women’s Missionary Society will have their general meeting in the Chapel on Wednesday, May 11, at 10:00 am. The Steering Committee will meet beforehand at 9:30 am. The program will be “Plants of the Bible,” presented by Bob Lonard, who is active at Westbury UMC and Braes Interfaith Ministries (BIM). He does much work with the BIM community garden. Lunch will be served by the Rebekeh and Sarah circles.

Pastor’s Bible Study on Deuteronomy starts this week!

Taught by Pastor Tommy, this study will begin Wednesday, May 4, and continue for six weeks. The study will be held in the Parlor at 7:00 pm and will center around the Book of Deuteronomy and how to live in community as God’s people. All are welcome to attend. Childcare is available with advance notice to Jana Kincannon at 713-723-0175.
Volunteers are needed at Anderson School

By Elsa Garza, Anderson School Partnership Liaison

Anderson Elementary School will have their Field Day on Friday, June 3 (the last day of school), 9:00 am–11:30 am. They would love to have at least 20 church volunteers to help them achieve a successful, safe and fun event for all the students. Volunteer if you are free that Friday morning! All volunteers must undergo a criminal background check (VIPS clearance) as soon as possible; the process can take up to two weeks to complete. Do this by going online to HoustonISD.org and then to the parent or community tab and choose VIPS Login and follow the directions. The last step asks you to choose the school. You must highlight the school name (Anderson Elem) and then press the “move to yellow box” button and then hit save at the bottom of the page.

Westbury UMC to raise funds and food for Braes Interfaith Ministries throughout May

By Rev. Romonica Malone-Wardley, Community Ministries Liaison

Each of the 12 congregations that support Braes Interfaith Ministries (BIM) commit to one month each year to make a special “over-the-top” effort in fundraising. Westbury UMC’s designated month is May! Look for the BIM bins around the church to donate your non-perishable foods. (Please check the expiration date on each item.) Also, be aware that BIM can turn your $1 donation into $27 worth of food at the Houston Food Bank. Please be generous as this vital community ministry has $10–20K in operating expenses each month, depending on client volume.

Westbury welcomes its newest members, baptized and confirmed into the faith

By Linda and Jack Tollefson, Confirmation Teachers

On Confirmation/Palm Sunday, April 17, Westbury UMC welcomed 10 young people into our church family through a service of baptism and confirmation! See photos on page 6 and below (left to right): Alex Caputo, Casey Lockhart, Chidie Ukaegbu, Christian Cato, Cole Bishop, Cory Garza, Jill Pennington, Josh Howard, Mackenzie Caputo and Ugonma Ukaegbu. Four of the students—Jill, Christian, Cole and Alex—were baptized, and the other six confirmed their baptismal vows.

The students studied hard, professed their faith and pledged to uphold the church by their “prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness.” They have also written their personal creeds, which are displayed on the wall across from the Office. Please stop by and take a look!

As with all new members, the Westbury congregation has vowed to “do all in our power to increase their faith, confirm their hope and perfect them in love.” Look for and greet these young people in the hallways, pray for them always and support them as they continue their faith journeys!

For all their many contributions, we extend thanks to: Christopher Lockhart, Sam Walker, Mauria Howard, Cindy Parker, Don and Louise Miller, Juanita Rogillio, Christiana Anderson, Kaitlin Sarkodie and Diane Sindelar.
Our summer pastoral intern, Emily Peterson, is coming May 22

The Texas Annual Conference pairs a limited number of churches with pastoral interns who have applied to work in a local church setting for the summer season. It is an honor to be chosen as a host church! Please read this greeting from our intern, Emily Peterson, and pray for her in advance of her arrival on Sunday, May 22.

I am a sophomore studying Religion and History at the University of Texas at Austin. I grew up attending Bulverde UMC just outside of San Antonio. At the age of 11, I came to Christ and then, when I was in 8th grade, I accepted a call to ministry. Throughout high school I was very involved with my youth group. I led worship, attended Bible studies, coached Upwards basketball and even preached a little. I was also the chaplain of my high school band and led a school-wide Bible study my senior year.

The summer after I graduated high school, I packed my bags and flew to the Amazon jungle of Peru for four weeks on a mission trip. That summer radically changed me and ignited a passion for missions that had been stirring inside me for years. In the summer of 2010, I went to India for two months on a mission trip to work with human trafficking prevention and after-care. I have a huge heart for missions, and I feel called to work internationally at some point in my life, but I also feel called to work with the American church, specifically with youth.

Other passions of mine include leading worship, playing frisbee, camping, climbing trees, photography and watching documentaries. I am so excited to spend a summer learning and growing with the people of Westbury UMC!