



**NUMC**  
**9650**  
**RESEDA**  
**BLVD**  
**NORTHRIDGE**  
**CALIFORNIA**  
**91324**

**BISHOP MARY ANN SWENSON**  
**DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT CATHLEEN COOTS**  
**REV. DR. PAULA FERRIS**

# THE METHODIST

PUBLISHED  
 BI-WEEKLY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Non-profit  
 Organization  
 U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
 Van Nuys, CA  
 Permit No. 558

DATED MATERIAL

May 14, 2007

Vol. 24, Issue 10

OFFICE: (818) 886-1555

FAX: (818) 886-9105

[WWW.NORTHRIDGEUMC.ORG](http://WWW.NORTHRIDGEUMC.ORG)

WEEKDAY PRESCHOOL: (818) 886-4949

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 9:00 & 11:00 AM

*Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors*

Pastor Paula's Pen

## Core Christian Values Need Full Commitment



We started this calendar year in our congregation looking at some **Core Values of the Christian life**, what we might call the hallmarks, or signs, of a **“fully-committed follower of Jesus Christ.”**

These included: Personal Spiritual Practice, Education (Wisdom and Teach-ability), Authenticity, Activism, Sacrifice, Conversion (Transformation) and Unity. These are in no particular order, each is important and we all start somewhere and work on all of them all of the time.

In this column I'd like to share some thoughts about **Conversion/Transformation.**

In worship yesterday (April 22, 2007) I invited each attendee to fill out a little pink slip about whether or not they'd had an “intense” experience of God's love/peace/mercy.

The slip offered five possible responses: 1) Yes, and I'd like to share it; 2) Yes, but it's been a long time and I'd like to recapture it; 3) Yes, but I don't want to share it; 4) No, but I'd like to talk to people who have; and 5) No, and no thanks.

Of course, these five answers don't cover all the possible responses to this kind of question. To begin with—what does it mean to have an “intense” experience of God?

The most conventional language to describe such an experience of God is “conversion.”

In recent years the word “conversion” has fallen out of favor among mainstream churches. For many people the idea of “conversion” equates to an emotional altar call at some revival. In some evangelical circles success in ministry could be counted by the number of “conversions.”

This feels false for some very obvious reasons:

1. It can be hard to measure a “conversion” from an altar call. Folks can have an emotional experience for a variety of reasons and not really be transformed at all.
2. The idea that we “count” conversions to determine our success in ministry is distasteful to those who think ministry is about a lot more than getting people to say “I believe.”
3. “Conversion” came to mean a one-time experience when lots of people have found their way to God in a slower, step-by-step kind of process.

I think it's too bad that we've relinquished this word because “converted” is what the faith journey is all about. We pursue God, look for faith, work on our spirituality (whatever language you like) precisely because we **want** some change.

One of the reasons I love the word “transformation” is because it speaks clearly of the need and desire for  
*(Continued on Page 2)*

**INCLUDE YOURSELF!**

**Consecration Sunday**

**Is May 20, 2007**

**Worship Celebration at 9 AM**

**Brunch Celebration in Fellowship Hall after Worship**

**Worship Celebration 11 AM**

**Brunch Celebration in Fellowship Hall after Worship**

## Pastor Paula's Pen

(Continued From Page 1)

change that draws us onto the spiritual path. It implies that faith isn't just something we already have. It acknowledges that we don't come to God because we're already OK. There's no point in a God that leaves you where she found you.

And, "transformation" allows room for all kinds of different experiences as a part of the spiritual process. It acknowledges that God loves us just the way he finds us, but when we are found we are drawn into a lifelong process of transformation.

Also, I like the word "transformation" because, to me, it includes the spiritual life of reaching out to the world. To me, "conversion" is something that happens to the individual. "Transformation" is both what happens to us and what we become a part of when we walk into the life of faith and belong to a community of faith. We are in the ongoing process of pursuing our own transformation, opening ourselves to God who does a transforming work in us **and** we belong to a faith community that seeks the transformation (but not necessarily the "conversion") of the whole world.

Frankly, this distinction between "conversion" and "transformation" is a somewhat artificial one. The only reason I make this distinction is because it helps me distinguish between a narrow view of the faith process and a wider view of the faith process.

I believe that having an experience of conversion/transformation is central to the spiritual life and we have such experiences in an astonishing variety of ways.

**I also believe that we don't talk about this nearly enough, so many people are left with no opportunity to hear the many ways people experience their faith, many people are left with no way to talk about and explore their own experience and we're all left feeling isolated, confused and alone.**

It is my deep and heartfelt prayer that we will continue to grow as a church where people talk openly, freely and OFTEN about their faith experiences to the benefit of all in our faith community and to the benefit of the world.

Shalom,

Pastor Paula



### Articles Due For Next Newsletter

Articles for the May 28th issue of the newsletter should be submitted to the church office by 4:30 PM, **Thursday, May 17th.**



*In Our Thoughts  
& Prayers*



Our condolences to husband Seth, sons Robert Cornejo, Rhett and Forrest, and all the family of **Linda Whitaker** on her death, April 24, 2007. Linda was editor of The Methodist for many years.

Prayers of healing for:

**Bill Bowen; Joanne Buttrey; Bill Foster; John Hergesheimer; Pat Johannesen; Ruth Krause's daughter Konnie; Ileene Parker; Mary Jane Rotella (at Tarzana Rehabilitation Center); Joe Sands; John Slater and family; Jeanne Peters Webb.**



## Taizé

(Service of Chant and Meditation)

**6:30 PM- Sanctuary**



Our Taizé Service for May is being held on the fourth Sunday, May 27, 2007. Please join us for a service of silence, candlelight and simple repeated melodies from the Taizé community in France.

Experience a time to detach from the confusion, noise and busy activities of your everyday world and reflect on the living presence of Christ in your life.

Child care is available.

## Open Hearts

### In Gratitude

Dear NUMC;

Thank you so much for hosting our Bike-a-Thon riders on March 24. We were very grateful for Joann being there to receive our riders, give them fresh water and make restroom facilities available to them.

It was a glorious day, on all counts. The weather was perfect for a long ride. The riders had a great time riding together. The spirit of the riders and their supporters was very upbeat. The host churches gave us warm and enthusiastic welcomes.

Thanks for the support your congregation has given us. To date (April 11), we have raised over \$13,000 through this event. That will do much to continue the strong programs we are offering the people of the San Fernando Valley. We are grateful for your partnering with North Valley Caring Services.

Sincerely,

Becky Haase

President, Board of Directors

Leonora Barron

Executive Director

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Christian Friends;

Thank you for sharing in the support of the Kissy UMC Eye Hospital, Freetown, Sierra Leone, Africa, through the Advance Special 9229A. Thousands of children and adults are given sight-saving medicines or operated upon to enable the blind to see again. Along with the expert and up-to-date eye care, the Christian staff daily conducts times of chorus and hymn singing, reading of Scriptures, testimonies and prayers. Besides the restoration of physical sight, spiritual insight is gained into the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

The wonderful thing about the two blind men in Matthew 20:34 is that after Jesus in compassion had healed them, "they followed Him."

"Once I was blind, but now I can see; the light of the world is Jesus."

The Lord bless you for your missionary spirit.

Sincerely in Christ,

Lowell A. Gess, M.D.

### Opportunities for Recycling

Your empty printer cartridges and old cell phones can be recycled into donations for the church. NUMC can receive cash for those empty printer cartridges and outdated cell phones. There are boxes in the church library where empty ink cartridges (any kind — black or color — all brands) and old cell phones can be deposited.

Thank you, in advance, for your contributions!

### Funding & Planning

#### Endowment Fund Meets Special Needs

The NUMC Endowment Fund is actually three separate funds: The Mission Growth Fund, the Building & Grounds Fund and the General Fund. Income from the Mission Growth Fund is automatically designated for mission projects identified by the Missions Committee.

The other two funds were established about 12 years ago to help meet special needs of our church, needs that are not normally provided for in the church's operating budget. The money in these funds has come from member contributions, memorials and from income generated by the funds.

The principal in these funds cannot be spent and only 80% of these funds' income can be expended, after approval by the Church Council. During 2006 and 2007 the following expenditures have been authorized to meet these special needs:

In 2006—Tree removal costs were \$2,000 and expenses to meet Safe Sanctuary requirements for Sunday School were \$4,000.

In 2007—Start-up costs for new Youth Choir were \$2,000 and replacement of key hammers on the sanctuary piano cost \$4,000.

Any contributions you choose to make to these funds will increase the Endowment Fund's capability to support missions and/or to meet special needs of our church.



#### Memorial Garden Plans Developing

In the coming weeks you will be able to read a short article in each issue of *The Methodist*, about various aspects of our planned Memorial Garden. If you have not yet seen the drawing of the Garden, stop by the Library where it is on display.

After an initial rendition by a professional landscape architect, which was met with little enthusiasm by the Memorial Garden Committee, Tandy Wilson volunteered her talents in the Garden's redesign. We are very fortunate to have in our congregation a person with Tandy's talents, as she produced a design which more than met our expectations. We are extremely grateful to her for her good work. She has presented the design to the Church Council, which has endorsed our continued efforts to make the design a reality.

For answers to questions about the Memorial Garden, call Norm Wendler, Nancy Easterly or Mike Shields.

## Open Minds

### Night at Hollywood Bowl Planned

Have you made your reservations for the Annual Family Night at the Hollywood Bowl on Saturday, July 28th? This is a great opportunity for church members and friends to make new friends and enjoy an evening of fun, fellowship, food and fabulous music.

This year's concert is "Viva Las Vegas: An Evening with Gladys Knight with Fireworks." The Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and special guest Wayne Brady will open the show singing the songs of Sammy Davis Jr.

We encourage those who haven't been able to attend in the past to come this year. Bring your picnic (or purchase one there) and join the fun. Tickets are \$30 per person and include the 6:05 PM park-and-ride bus from the Chatsworth train station on Devonshire.

For reservations, contact Nancy Easterly or the church office. Don't delay! Final payment is due June 11th.



### Meeting Date Changed

We will meet in Jean Thompson's home at 7 PM on Monday, May 21st. (NOTE: The date has been changed to the 3rd Monday to avoid conflict with Memorial Day.) Our discussion will cover Sara Gruen's book "Water for Elephants." Please call Jean if you would like to join us. "Freakonomics" by Steven Levitt is the selected book for June.

### Choir Needs Helping Hands

You can join the choir even if you don't sing. The choir needs many helping hands to complete its missions. Let us know what you like to do. We have tasks waiting to be identified. If you would like to volunteer in this ministry, leave a message in the church office or call Peggy Walters or Larry Jarvis.

## Missives From the Internet

### Life Explained

On the first day, God created the dog and said: "Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. For this I will give you a life span of 20 years."

The dog said: "That's a long time to be barking. How about only 10 years and I'll give you back the other ten?"

So, God agreed.

On the second day, God created the monkey and said: "Entertain people, do tricks and make them laugh. For this, I'll give you a 20-year life span."

The monkey said: "Monkey tricks for 20 years? That's a pretty long time to perform. How about I give you back 10 like the dog did?" And God agreed.

On the third day, God created the cow and said: "You must go into the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer's family. For this, I will give you a life span of 60 years."

The cow said: "That's kind of a tough life you want me to live for 60 years. How about 20 and I'll give you back the other 40?" And God agreed, again.

On the fourth day, God created man and said: "Eat, sleep, play and enjoy your life. For this, I'll give you 20 years."

But man said: "Only 20 years? Could you possibly give me my 20, the 40 the cow gave back to you, the 10 the monkey gave back and the 10 the dog gave back.

That makes 80, okay?"

"Okay," said God. "You asked for it."

So that is why, for our first 20 years, we eat, sleep, play and enjoy ourselves. For the next 40 years we slave in the sun to support our family. For the next 10 years we do tricks to entertain the grandchildren. And for the last 10 years we sit on the porch and bark at everyone.

Life has now been explained to you.

\* \* \* \*

### Gas-Out Planned for May 15th

A nation-wide one-day boycott of gas stations is planned for Tuesday, May 15, 2007. The email says: Don't Pump Gas on May 15th.

In April, 1997, there was a one-day "Gas Out" conducted nationwide in protest of gas prices. Gasoline prices dropped 30 cents a gallon overnight.

On May 15th, 2007 all internet users are asked to avoid pumping gas in protest of high gas prices. Gas is now over \$3 a gallon in most places.

There are 73,000,000+ American members currently on the internet network, and the average car takes about \$30 to \$50 to fill up.

If all users did not go to the pump on the 15th, it will take \$2,292,000,000.00 (that's almost 3 BILLION) out of the oil companies' pockets for just one day, so please do not go to the gas station on May 15th.

## What's the Big Secret in "The Secret"

Being overweight has nothing to do with food, Jesus was a millionaire, and you are the most powerful transmission tower in the universe — these are just a few of the claims found in Australian Rhonda Byrne's "The Secret," which has 3.75 million copies in print and has sold more than a millions copies in its original DVD format, fueled in part by a feature on "Oprah."

The burning question is, of course, what's the big secret?

In truth, it has been around much longer than Byrne, and is simply what its followers call the Law of Attraction. The Universe manifests in your life that which your thoughts attract. If you are poor, it's because you aren't focusing positively on wealth. Fighting illness? You aren't focusing on good health.

Byrne and the book's contributors are not simply referring to thinking on good things or even to cognitive behavioral therapy. It's about literally causing events to happen.

The advice runs the gamut from common sense (stop complaining), to biblical (love your enemies), to what some would consider ridiculous (laughter and joy dis-

solve disease). There is, on the whole, just enough truth to make some readers gloss over the far-fetched statements, such as Byrne's suggestion that whenever tragedy has struck large groups of people in history (e.g. natural disasters, the holocaust), it is because those people were thinking "thoughts of fear, separation and powerlessness." In other words, they brought it on themselves.

However, for the Church, the book's most disturbing facet is its eerie parallels to the prosperity Gospel. Wealth and health not happening for you? You're not focusing on the right things. Not getting what you want? You don't have enough faith. By the end of the book, Byrne has heaped up a veritable mountain of spiritual caveats to explain away any situation that might defy the Law of Attraction.

I found "The Secret" to be the product of warped Western values and selfish materialism that seeks to invalidate the suffering and pain of millions.

Sincerely,

Pastor Paula

*(This article is adapted from Outreach Magazine, May/June 2007.)*

## Does Your Coffee Cup Support Poverty?

How much do you really know about the brew that gets you up and going in the morning? Did you know that over the past five years, the price paid to the farmer for coffee beans has fallen almost 70% from a high in 1997, to a 30-year low today, forcing many coffee farming families out of business?

Most coffee farmers sell their beans for less than they cost to produce and live on less than \$1.00 a day. Across Ethiopia, the birthplace of the coffee bean, more than 15 million people rely on coffee for their income. But now, with the price so low, many of these families are suffering from malnutrition, schools have closed and very little health care is available to them.

Why this has happened is complicated, but if you want the full story, go to [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org) or [www.blackgoldmovie.com](http://www.blackgoldmovie.com) or try to rent the documentary "Black Gold" and watch it with your friends. But I want to talk about what we, you and I, can do to help these farmers, not only in Ethiopia, but in many other coffee growing areas of the world.

There has been an exciting development just recently (May 3, to be exact). The government of Ethiopia and the Starbucks Coffee Company have agreed in principle to sign a licensing, distribution and marketing agreement that recognizes the importance and integrity of Ethio-

pia's specialty coffee names, Harar, Sidamo and Yirgacheffe. With this agreement, Ethiopia will be able to protect the valuable reputation of its coffees and enable poor growers to capture a greater share of the retail price.

You can encourage Starbucks in this endeavor by going to <http://act.oxfamamerica.org> to send a message to CEO Jim Donald. You can also help by asking the manager of the supermarket where you shop if they stock fair trade items.

You can even get a Supermarket Report Card off the above website, take it to your supermarket and grade them on their fair trade work. You can then report the results by entering the information at [www.checkoutfairtrade.com](http://www.checkoutfairtrade.com).

Trader Joe's sells organic, fair trade coffee at their stores. Not only do the farmers get a much fairer price for their beans, but they work together to assure that a portion of the proceeds goes back into the communities to be used for improving education, housing and overall quality of life for the people who live there.

Don't you think we should be using fair trade coffee at our church functions?

Joann DeSantis

For the Church and Society Team

### Cache Congregations

When was the last time you went on a treasure hunt? Does it date back to the time you were growing up and thought if Jim Hawkins in "Treasure Island" could battle the pirates, outwit Long John Silver and (with the treasure map and the aid of Ben Gunn) actually discover the hidden gold, silver and jewels, then so could you?

Ah! The fun and folly of our youthful days! But let us not give up on childhood dreams. Look for the treasure all around, perhaps not buried in a chest, but here in Northridge Methodist Church. Have you thought of our church as a treasure? If you have not, perhaps it is time you did, for hidden treasure can be found in many forms.

Can anyone argue that at this time of spring the rose garden in all its colorful blooming glory is not a treasure? As you walk into the garden area, have you felt the joy of being alive and sensed a spiritual uplifting as you made your way toward the sanctuary? What a wonderful way to begin a Sunday morning. It is also not a bad way to start whatever brings you to the church campus any other day of the week.

How many treasures have you discovered when you visit the church? Have you discovered the Monday through Friday treasure known as the Weekday Preschool of NUMC? Those of you who have, or have had, children in that program know they have indeed found a treasure tucked away on the campus.

Church members are encouraged to visit and witness in person the joyful expressions, the shouts of laughter, the display of fun and the outpouring of childhood exuberance so much a part of all who participate. The boys and girls enrolled there have such a good time. They are hardly aware that daily lessons, taught by outstanding teachers and aides, take place as well.

Some of our church members have, or have had, children in the preschool. Others have become members of NUMC because their children were enrolled in the Week-day Preschool. Yes, the preschool is a treasure trove of more families who may well wish to learn about us.

The director of the preschool, Debbie Goodman, a gem and a treasure in her own right, will talk briefly at both services on Sunday, June 3rd. She knows and values this very strong relationship between the school and the church.

Your leadership team is mindful of this school treasure and will incorporate in its plans ways to best introduce interested parents to our "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors." With map in hand, our hidden people treasure hunt is under way.

Charles Mortensen  
For the Leadership Team

### Family Camp Goes "To the Woods"

Remember Family Camp! This year Family Camp is the first weekend in June, at the United Methodist Camp in Wrightwood. It is a great time to relax, enjoy the forest and be at fellowship with family and friends.

Registration is being taken at our table in Fellowship Hall during coffee time. Reserve your space early for this wonderful weekend with your family in the mountains. Cost for camp, including all meals and lodging, is \$5 for children 3-years-old and younger, \$50 for children ages 4 to 12-years-old and \$70 for ages 13 to adult.

For more information call Elizabeth Andersen, Sharon Elkins, Patti Sciortino or the Church Office.

### Elementary Summer Camps 2007 Santa Barbara District Programs

#### "Let's Hop, Skip & Jump with Jesus"

Younger Elementary

At Camp Colby Ranch

For 1st to 3rd graders in the fall of 2007

June 24th-27th Cost: \$200

#### "Visiting Nazareth"

Older Elementary

At Colby Ranch

For 4th to 6th graders in the fall of 2007

June 24th-30th Cost: \$280

#### "On The Way"

Younger & Older Elementary combined

At Camp Arroyo Grande

For 1st to 6th graders in the fall of 2007

Sunday, July 15th—Tuesday, July 17th

Cost: \$140

District Summer Camp

Registration Forms

are available

in the church office.



## Open Doors

### Methodist Men's Club Breakfast

**Sat, May 19th**

**8:00 am**

In

Fellowship Hall



### Best Breakfast in Town

Join us for breakfast and hear our guest speakers share their wisdom.

As always, women are also welcome.



**Dinner Bridge**  
**Sat., June 9th – 5:30 PM**  
**Fellowship Hall**

For reservations, please call one of our co-hosts, Bill & Roz Conroy, Ruth Sanders or Bob King by Tuesday, June 5th.

### Women Plan "Magic" Summer Luncheon

The Northridge United Methodist Women will present "The Magic of Summer" from 11 AM to 2 PM, Saturday, June 30, 2007, in Fellowship Hall.

Get your tickets early for this fun-filled afternoon. The River Oaks Chapter of Sweet Adelines and the Pipes and Drums from Granada Hills High School will provide the entertainment.

Tickets are \$15 per person with all proceeds going to support North Valley Caring Services. Jean Thompson and Margie Douglas are selling tickets with Della Brown serving as committee chairperson. Please let the church office know if baby sitting services are needed.



### Dodger Tickets On Sale

Tickets to Dodgers baseball games are on sale in Fellowship Hall between services on Sunday.

Support NUMC fundraising. Remember, order early to get your reservations for the best games... and the best seats.

### 2007 Entertainment Books Available



We still have a few 2007 Entertainment Books available in the church office. Help support our Youth Group and start saving on your entertainment costs today!

### At-A-Glance for Everyone

#### May

- May 14... **UMW Executive Board Meeting**  
@ Noon in Kendall Bldg.
- May 15... **UMW Noon Fellowship**  
@ 11:30 AM in Kendall Bldg.  
**Trustees Meeting** @ 7 PM in Kendall Bldg.  
**Finance Meeting** @ 7:30 PM in Library
- May 16... **Church Council** @ 7:30 PM  
in Fellowship Hall — All are Welcome
- May 17... **Newsletter Articles Due**  
@ 4 PM in Church Office
- May 19... **Men's Club Breakfast**  
@ 8 AM in Fellowship Hall
- May 20 ... **CONSECRATION SUNDAY**  
**Worship Celebration @ 9 AM**  
**Celebration Brunch in Fellowship Hall**  
**following Service**  
**Worship Celebration @ 11 AM**  
**Celebration Brunch in Fellowship Hall**  
**following Service**
- May 21... **Church & Society Team Meeting**  
@ @ 7PM in Kendall Building
- May 22... **Caring Ministries**  
@ 4 PM in Library
- May 27... **Family Camp Meeting**  
@ 10:15 PM in Library  
**Celebration Ministries Quarterly Meeting**  
@ 12:30 PM in Library  
**Taizé, Service of Prayer**  
@ 6:30 PM in Sanctuary
- Mondays...* **UMW Arts & Crafts**  
@ 9:30 AM in Kendall Bldg.
- Tuesdays...* **Cracker Barrel** @ 10 AM in Library  
**Senior Exercise Program**  
@ 11:30 AM in Fellowship Hall
- Wednesdays...* **Weekday Maintenance Volunteers**  
@ 8:30 AM in Church Office  
**Celebration Ringers Rehearsal**  
@ 7:30 PM in Room 5 & 6
- Fridays...* **Cracker Barrel** @ 10 AM in Library
- Sundays...* **Adult Study** @ 8 AM in Library  
**Worship Services** @ 9 & 11 AM  
**Grief Healing Support Group** @ 10:30 AM in Library  
**Taizé, Service of Prayer** @ 6:30 PM  
on 4th Sunday of each month.  
**Childcare available at all services.**