



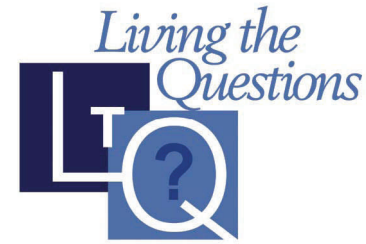
St. Paul's United Methodist Church

Progressive, Passionate, Personal People of God



Adult Spiritual Growth Fall 2011

www.stpaulsithaca.org
office@stpaulsithaca.org
607-273-5971



Sunday Afternoons
September 11 through December 4
4:00 – 6:00 pm
Memorial Rooms
Margie Mayson & Wes Perkins, Facilitators

*"Wisdom is asking the questions for which
there are no answers." Harrell Beck*

People know that Christianity has much good to offer the human race. At the same time, many have a sense that they are alone in being a progressive "thinking" Christian, and that reclaiming Christianity from black-and-white theology is a hopeless task. What is needed is a safe environment where people have permission to ask the questions they've always wanted to ask but have been afraid to voice for fear of being thought a heretic.

Living the Questions, a **13-week small group study**, provides a safe and open-minded environment where participants can explore beyond the traditions and rote theologies in which so many people today seem to be stuck. This class will help newcomers, seasoned members, seekers and "church alumni" alike in discovering the significance of Christianity in the 21st Century, and what a meaningful faith can look like in today's world.

The format of each 2-hour session includes a time of centering followed by a DVD presentation, guided discussion, concrete spiritual exer-

cises, Bible study and suggestions for engagement in acts of social justice.

Ongoing themes of the study include:

- Biblical authority
- Metaphor and how it shapes us
- The Jesus/Christ dichotomy
- What does faith look like in the 21st Century?

A **\$15 suggested donation** includes all class materials including the workbook. In order to have enough workbooks on hand for all participants, we encourage you to pre-register.

This course is perfect for St. Paul's because it honors the diversity and inclusiveness that are such a basic part of our core beliefs. We learned about many of the paradoxes of Christianity, including the humanity and divinity of Christ, the essential truths and myths surrounding the Bible, the unity and diversity in a Christian community, and the appropriateness of questions to a life of faith.

Julie Schnepel

I was so excited when I first learned that St. Paul's was offering Living the Questions and I wasn't disappointed. I found a great group of people who were willing to discuss the questions that I have had for years but felt I had to keep to myself. And I discovered that it's OK to have the questions and to live with them and still call myself a Christian.

Darlene De Jong

It was very exciting to have a chance to hear and see (on DVD) the leading cutting-edge people in the progressive Christian movement today. Sharing this with a group of fellow St. Paulians made it very special; we got to know each other in a deeper, fuller way.

Ruth Lovelace

It has been a stimulating treat for me to be a part of this group.

Elinor John



St. Paul's Fall 2011 Adult Spiritual Growth Opportunities

SUNDAY MORNINGS

September 11 through October 16,
November 13 & 20
NOOMA Video and Discussion
9:15 - 10:15 am
Durham Room
Greg Eells, Facilitator

These 60-minute classes will start with one of the edgy and thought-provoking short films by Rob Bell's NOOMA, an independent organization with a name based on the phonetic spelling of the Greek word for spirit. The class will include discussions and brief exercises to help participants reflect upon the role of faith in our lives.

I find Rob Bell and the NOOMA series engaging to all my senses and invoking a variety of emotions. The in-depth study of the historic basis paired with contemporary images and sounds gives new life and meaning to the Biblical word. I find myself watching them over and over and gleaning something new each time.

Sarah Crossgrove



October 23, 30 and
November 6
9:15 - 10:15 am
Durham Room

Greg Eells and Pam Carey, Facilitators

transACTION... a three-week study inviting interested St. Paulians into a place of understanding, acceptance, and welcome of transgender persons in our congregation and community.

transACTION.... using a format of readings, reflection and facilitated discussion, the three sessions will explore the concept of gender, how church and culture approach questions of gender identity, and suggestions for congregational action toward welcome and inclusion.

transACTION... the study materials come to us from The Institute for Welcoming Resources of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, working with member programs of the Welcoming Church movement.

transACTION.... a chance to explore, stretch, engage, expand our understanding of the rooted and radical love of Jesus Christ.

This class reminded mehow Jesus calls us to a new way of relating that looks to the heart and takes to heart the uniqueness and experiences of others. Eye-opening, heart-enriching, culture-challenging - an invitation into a deeper understanding of our faith and its call to hospitality and reconciliation.

Karen Kaufmann

I felt blessed to have the opportunity to learn about the experience of being transgender, terminology, and how to ask some things (or not), so I could do as good a job as possible to help welcome people.... The enthusiasm and thoughtfulness was incredible.

Helen Closs

WEEKDAY

Wednesday Evenings, Beginning September 14
6:30 - 8:30 pm
Pam Carey, Facilitator



Do you ever wonder why we as Christians read the Hebrew Scriptures? Is there anything in the ancient texts that is relevant for us today? This fall, Pam Carey, our seminary intern, will be offering an 8-week Disciple Bible Study called **Invitation to the Old Testament**. It will look at the story of God's call to the Hebrew people, and to us, told through the many voices and types of literature found in the Old Testament. It is an opportunity for fellowship and study, as we look at these texts together, exploring what they say to us as Christians, as well as what they said to the original readers of the stories. Pam is looking forward to seeing you there and sharing this journey with you.

A **\$10 suggested donation** includes all class materials including the workbook. In order to have enough workbooks on hand for all participants, we encourage you to pre-register.

For more information about any of these opportunities or to pre-register for Living the Questions or Invitation to the Old Testament, please contact Director of Church Ministries Jacqueline Bonner, 273-5971 or jbonner@stpaulsithaca.org.

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

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MEN'S RETREAT



Men's Adirondack Retreat
Friday, September 30 to
Sunday, October 2

Join other men from St. Paul's for this year's retreat in the Adirondacks! The theme is *Making Room for the Spirit*, and we will explore the topic through conversation, journaling, and enjoying the outdoors. You have the option of joining the group Friday evening, or during the day on Saturday. Carpooling possible! The retreat will conclude Sunday morning. Registration is \$20 to cover costs for food and supplies.

For more information or to sign up, contact Dave McCune (DaveMcCune@aol.com) or Kevin Miller (kwmhome@yahoo.com, office@stpaulsithaca.org).

An amazingly peaceful environment and great fellowship—this special combination enabled the spirit of the Lord to move within each and among all of us.

Paul Eshelman

I had such a fantastic time last year that I can't wait for the next retreat. The weekend was just the right balance between spiritual growth and recreation. I enjoyed getting to know some of the men at a deeper level through intentional conversation or just chatting on the hiking trail. It was so helpful to be surrounded by God's natural beauty in the Adirondacks. The setting created a perfect way to connect with other St. Paulian's and with God at the same time. For me it was very helpful to remove myself from my typical environment and allow myself the time to pause and appreciate the beauty of life and relationships. We also were able to cook up some pretty incredible meals, as well!

Adam Phillips-Burdge