

## BELIEFS Values

## Birmingham church debuts adult summer reading program

BY RINA FOLEA  
SPECIAL WRITER

Summer reading programs aren't just for kids anymore—at least not at the First United Methodist Church in Birmingham.

Now, adults can relax with a few good books during the leisurely months and discuss what they've read under the guidance of professionals well versed on the respective topics.

It's all part of the church's University of Life summer reading program, which is making its debut when yearly adult education classes lie dormant after 39 weeks of activity.

"University of Life, for us, is a short-term adult educational learning experience in a Christian context," said program director Bruce Hayden of Beverly Hills. "We cover a broad range of topics that are not religious on the surface. But in the Methodist tradition, we believe that we are in the world, not of the world. So whatever we do, we do it in a Christian context."

Initiated at the Oakland County church two decades ago, the community-friendly University of Life program continues to draw 350 individuals during fall, winter and spring months. The free summer program is expected to attract 60 individuals to each book session. Church members typically represent two thirds of the audience, with the balance being comprised of individuals from the greater community.

The summer program revolves

around five bestselling books, which are individually explored on a scattering of Tuesdays throughout the summer months. Participants can purchase the selected readings from Barnes & Noble or Borders book stores and attend the 90-minute sessions of their choice. Book discussions will begin at 7:30 p.m. on the respective dates in the Thomas Parlor at the First United Methodist Church, 1589 W. Maple, Birmingham.

The program begins on June 24, with "The Internet for Dummies," by John R. Levine, Carol Baroudi and Margaret Levine Young. Class time will center on connecting to the World Wide Web, sending and receiving e-mail and simply "surfing the net." The overview will be led by longtime church member Mark Swarthout of Bloomfield Hills, a program analyst at EDS.

Swarthout is also involved in the creation of a Web Site for First United Methodist Church.

On July 15, readers will explore "Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus," by John Gray, Ph.D.

Conversations about the fundamental differences between men and women will be led by Dr. Roger Whitcup, a Birmingham-based psychologist and crisis intervention specialist on retainer with the federal government.

The July 29 class will center on "Love, Medicine and Miracles," by Bernice S. Siegel, M.D. As a

Stephen Minister who has witnessed firsthand the power of healing, Hayden will draw on his own experiences in facilitating the dialogue for this class.

The Aug. 5 session will shed light on the hardships of living with a loved one stricken with Alzheimer's disease when book enthusiasts discuss, "The Notebook," by Nicholas Sparks. Leading the class will be Melody Hurley, a member of the church pastoral team whose mother is an Alzheimer sufferer.

The summer program concludes on Aug. 19, with "Who Wrote the Bible," by Richard Elliott Friedman.

"It's a scholarly book written as a way of bringing greater understanding to the lay people of the church," said Hayden. "And what better person to do it than Dr. (William) Ritter, who is Yeshua-trained and very well skilled in the Bible."

Ritter is a Detroit native who serves as senior minister of the 2,600-member congregation—Michigan's largest—United Methodist Church.

"You don't stop learning when you get out of college, and the church is a big part of that learning experience," added Hayden. "All these books are books you need to talk about and to react to with other human beings. It's certainly going to be a mind expanding experience."

There is no registration for the University of Life summer reading program, and participants are welcome to attend the sessions of their choice. For more information, call the church office at (248) 646-1200.



Summer reading: Program director Bruce Hayden will lead a discussion on one of five bestselling books to be explored by adults at First United Methodist Church.

STAFF PHOTO BY  
LAWRENCE H. MCREE

## Pipes from page B7

by N. P. Mander, Ltd., the faithful worshiped in the sanctuary for 10 months led by an electronic keyboard. During the on-site restoration work, multiple worship services for the 1,200-family Episcopal parish were held in the Guild Hall to the accompaniment of a piano in a space that only accommodated up to 200 individuals at a time.

"It was new, different and very intimate," recalled Sally Turner, director of Rochester Hills, director of communications.

"But the novelty quickly wore off," added Mullins, who was installed as rector of the church last year.

For Raines, the challenge in the smaller quarters lied in seeking new, piano-based hymns appropriate for worship. And his efforts proved successful.

"The whole congregation pulled together to keep worship alive and vigorous," said Raines, who assumed his position at the

church in 1980.

The organ restoration is one of the first major renovation projects undertaken at Christ Church Cranbrook since its consecration in 1828.

"We're going through a major three-year refurbishing of the church outside and inside, which includes the restoration of the organ," said Mulligan. "This is a massive project because it involves so many facets of the infrastructure of the parish."

A capital campaign held in 1992 provided the funding for the organ as well as the new sidewalks, indoor and outdoor lighting, additional landscaping, the refurbishing of the crenell and the stained glass windows and the remodeling of the kitchen, education wing and administration offices.

While construction crews continue the balance of the work at the Oakland County church, parishioners will worship in

style with a slightly larger, updated version of their original pipe organ.

"In the Christian worship tradition in general, the organ has played a central role in leading the congregation in worship," added Raines. "We are ecstatic that the project is complete and has been proven to be everything we expected."



## Prepare to Be Enchanted on June 21st

"Dreams of a Summer Past" was created in very limited quantities specially for this one-day Lladro event. Available only on Saturday, June 21, 1997, on a first-come, first-served basis. (Comes with a complimentary base.)

Figurines to be retired in 1997 will be announced and can be ordered with a special "Final Issue 1997" backstamp (space permitting).

• Preview the Fall 1997 Lladro Introductions, including the new Christmas collection.

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