

Why You Should See *The Laramie Project*

“This is NOT a play about Matthew Shepard. It is a play about Laramie.”
(playwright Moisés Kaufman)

Laramie, Wyoming: a small city in a glorious setting in which differences, if not celebrated, were accepted... “We live and let live...” a town with a strong sense of community where everyone knows everyone. And then, on a day like any other day, a boy riding his mountain bike in the expansive hills outside Laramie discovered the badly beaten, dying body of university student, Matthew Shepard, who happened to be gay. In that moment, the security of a peaceful community was shattered.

Four weeks later, Moisés Kaufman and actors from the Tectonic Theater Project in New York City traveled to Laramie to explore how this horrific event could have happened in a quiet, tight-knit community. The actors’ mission coincided with the town’s soul-searching. The play is a compilation of verbatim interviews with over 60 of the citizens, representing persons of a wide range of beliefs and backgrounds. The openness and candor of the residents is a tribute to the sensitivity of the interviewers. The director and actors have been challenged to mirror that compassion as they interpret the personal struggle of each individual and the search for the soul of a community. Below are personal accounts from two of the actors sharing their experiences.

Being in the Metro Players production of The Laramie Project, and being a part of its cast and crew, and working with our director, Fran, has been a moving experience. I have been in many plays with the Metro Players over the years, and I have to say this is the first time I have gotten so into the character/s I am playing. The interesting thing is that every one of us in this production has, too! We have realized, because we are playing the part/s of real people and that our lines in the play are real words (thoughts, feelings, beliefs) of these people we are portraying, that we need to learn everything we can about our character/s (really get into who they are and what they are like.) Fran has directed us, and we have worked to make sure as actors, that we are sensitive to each person/s we play, not to bring our own feelings to the part, but to act as how that person really is and feels. It has been amazing, interesting, eye-opening, and moving, to share our (cast and crew) stories with each other, when we discover something new about our character/s or the other characters in the play; or share stories of other casts’ experiences as they have done this play; or learn and share with each other stories of other hate crimes that are still occurring even after “The Matthew Shepard Story” got so much national attention 10 years ago. I feel honored and happy to have gotten to know Romaine Patterson (one of Matthew Shepard’s best friends), by reading her book, “The Whole World Was Watching,” and learning and speaking her words and feelings, as I prepared to play her part in “The Laramie Project.” One thing Romaine has taught me, and she says Matthew taught her, was that “one person really can make a difference in this world! - Kathy Rawlings

In doing background work for one of my parts-Kansas minister Reverend Fred Phelps-in the upcoming Metro Players production of “The Laramie Project,” I found two informative and strikingly different sources. The first was the website of this minister’s church. It is difficult to describe the intensity of hate intended on these pages. Perhaps it is enough to say that the website address is “GOD HATES FAGS.” Displayed are pictures of church members, including children carrying signs with this and similar words used when picketing various events, including funerals. In contrast to this extreme abhorrence, were the results of contact I made with the Director (Topher Barrett) of this play when performed recently by Kalamazoo Michigan HS. His words challenge us through love and understanding to seek openness and justice. He states that ‘All people, particularly those marginalized, oppressed, ignored, and hated (sometimes killed) need to feel accepted and allowed to worship in unity and harmony.’ It’s not only us, it’s others. It is not only others, it is us. Now I don’t want to get preachy, but sometimes I feel that Jesus comes in many ways and forms, in part to observe my reaction. - Sam Rawlings

Dr. Charles Parker, Rev. Sandy Rector, Rev. Faith Lewis
The Advocacy Team and Metropolitan Players

Invite and encourage you to attend one of the performances of

The Laramie Project

Friday, April 25 at 8 PM Saturday, April 26 at 5 PM Sunday, April 27 at 2 PM*

***Join us following the Sunday performance for a “Talk Back.”**

*The members of the cast will share their thoughts and experiences - how, as they learned their lines, they also learned who these people were; and, how multi-faceted their personalities, relationships, and reactions to the crime and the community’s response were. The response of “Live and Let Live” may not be as benign as it sounds. Discussion will be led by Director, Frances Bartley Cleaver. *Parents: There is no profanity, but the language is strong and explicit.*

The Arts at Metropolitan



The Arts Council is happy to welcome Charlie Albright in his second appearance at Metropolitan, on Sunday, May 4 at 3 p.m. Charlie appeared in May 2007 in a program that was appreciated by many members and visitors alike. Charlie, age 19, will present a program that includes works by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Ravel, and Menotti.

Charlie Albright is the first winner in the history of the New York Piano Competition to be the recipient of two first prizes. He received First Prize in the solo category as well as sharing First Prize in the one-piano, four hands ensemble in 2006. Charlie, a native of Centralia, Washington, who attended Centralia High School, began playing the piano at age 3 ½ and started taking lessons shortly thereafter. Charlie has studied with Nancy Adsit of Olympia, Washington since 1996, and has been selected five times as an Olympia Chapter representative to the Washington State Music Teachers Convention. He was also chosen to play with the University of Puget Sound Orchestra at the University 1998 Piano Festival.

During 2003, he was a prize winner in the Northwest Chopin Festival and was the guest artist to perform the Grieg Concerto with the Port Angeles Symphony. A week later, Washington State Music Teachers Association selected him top pianist in the state 2003 Senior Piano Division. Charlie was selected and

performed at the 2004 Texas Christian University/Cliburn Piano Institute Young Artists Program in Forth Worth, Texas. He was the youngest pianist selected that year.

Throughout his music studies Charlie has coached with many renowned instructors, including Randolph Hokanson, Yoheved Kaplinsky, Andre Laplante, Harold Martina, John Owings, Leonard Richter, Boris Slutsky, Tamas Ungar, Blanca Uribe, Richard Goode, and Jack Winerock. He was selected the State MTNA Senior 2004 Winner and Winner at the Division Competition in Spokane in January 2005. Charlie also won the Olympia Music Teachers Association Fifth Annual Concerto Festival Senior Division competition. Charlie was one of the top seven senior piano contestants in the country to compete at the National MTNA Convention.

In July 2005 Charlie was the First Place Winner of the 2005 International Piano Competition in Lawrence, Kansas. In January 2006, he was the Second Place Winner of the First Schimmel Senior International Piano Competition in Tempe, Arizona. In 2006, Charlie also was the First Prize Winner in the Eastman Young Artist International Piano Competition, and in 2007 received Third Prize in the Hilton Head International Piano Competition.

Charlie appeared in concert at the Williamstown Theater Festival in Massachusetts, June 2007, and entered Harvard University/New England Conservatory in September 2007.

Prayer Shawl Ministries

Bind Us Together with Love



Carol Tippett and Sue Roach knit prayer shawls during the monthly gathering of knitters.

Shortly after our Prayer Shawl Ministry began at Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church in the fall of 2006, we presented a shawl to Phyllis Kindley, 102 years young, one of our members living at Asbury Methodist Village in Gaithersburg,

Maryland. Phyllis had been a very active member of our church for 58 years, working endlessly with the annual church bazaars and many other activities of the United Methodist Women.

While visiting her mother from California, Phyllis' daughter, Sarah Young, also a member of our church, enjoyed hearing her mother tell of her gift from "my church." Sarah remembered her Mother's keen interest in knitting and recalled Phyllis' "busy needles" clicking away both at home and in the car as the family enjoyed vacations.

As mother and daughter visits continued, Phyllis expressed a

desire to knit again and to create a prayer shawl for the Ministry. So, Sarah went shopping for yarn and needles and the quest began. Sarah attended Prayer Shawl meetings at our church whenever she was in town visiting her mother and shared news of the progress on "their shawl" and the joy of working with her mother on this shared treasure.

The beautiful completed prayer shawl in colors of deep purple and red was completed just prior to Phyllis' death in January of this year while Sarah was visiting from California. She brought the completed shawl to our next meeting and, after thoughtful prayer, asked that the shawl be presented to her Mother's beloved friend, Bess Jones, who for many, many years shared Christian fellowship and love in their numerous church activities. These dear friends remained in contact with each other until Phyllis' death. In fact, they were together for lunch at our annual bazaar in November of last year at which time they revisited the church kitchen and relived their many, many days of preparing meals together.

And so, our Prayer Shawl Ministry continues to radiate joy and His love into so many lives, across our country, and even across the oceans. Softly folded, colorful prayer shawls, gently placed on shoulders, comfort and remind all that God is always with us.

Children's Ministry



The Morningstar choir will rehearse for the rest of the year in the music office with Mrs. Cartwright while the Cherub Choir will rehearse with Mrs. Settlage in the choir room. Be sure to join us each week as we have 3 more performances before the end of the Sunday School year.

- **April 20** - Morningstar Choir only at the 9 a.m. Worship Service
- **May 11** – Both choirs for the single 10 a.m. worship service
- **June 1** – Both choirs at both services for Children's Celebration Sunday

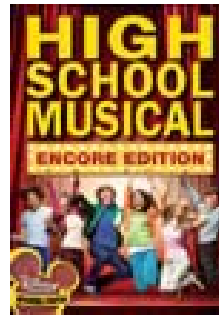
Third Grade Bible Presentation

Calling all Rising Third Graders, time to order your Bible for this fall's Bible Presentation ceremony on Sunday, September 14 during the 9 a.m. worship service. Parents please call or email Kay Jacobi with the exact spelling for your child's personalized Bible. We hope to place orders in May because they can sometimes take up to 3 months for delivery. Thanks for a quick response! Thanks for a quick response from Ann Morgan, Elena, Julia, Abby, Ben and Madison!



Nursery School Mother's Day Concert

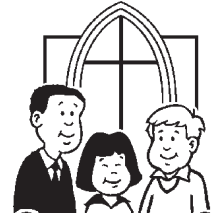
Join us for Metropolitan's Nursery School annual Mother's Day concert on Friday, May 9. We start at 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary – so come out for a morning of joyful noise and smiling faces as we celebrate the gift of Mothers everywhere!



Family Movie Night Date Change! Date Change!

The next Family Dinner and a Movie Night has been changed to Friday, May 9 from 6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. We will watch High School Musical in the new Great Hall! Be sure to warm up those vocal chords and wear your dancing shoes... we will have a HSM sing-along after the movie!

Children's Celebration Sunday



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...
Children's Celebration Sunday is June 1!

A Message from Our Children's Director

I am delighted to share with you that SPRC approved a two month unpaid leave of absence for me again this summer. You may remember that I also took 2 months of unpaid leave last summer and it was truly a blessing! I returned in August with more energy and ideas and I trust that I will return this August with even more of both. My time off allows me to spend time with my family in the Carolinas and Georgia, affords me uninterrupted time with my two girls and Geoff, and gives me time for rest and re-energizing.

I am delighted that **Douglass Anne Cartwright**, the current Director of our Morningstar Choir, has accepted the two month contract position as Summer Children's Director. You will remember that Douglass Anne also ran our summer programs last year and I am delighted that she has agreed to return for another year! Douglass Anne will be a wonderful addition and I know everyone will enjoy the programs she is planning. In the weeks ahead, Douglass Anne will share her summer plans – so watch your *Messenger*, your *Parent Pages* and the church website for all the details.

A special thanks from me to everyone who has been so supportive of my unpaid 'sabbatical leave.' It is such a blessing to work in a place where you feel truly supported and cared for... Thank You!

If you have questions about any of these events or programs, please contact our Children's Ministry Director, Kay Jacobi at 202.363.4900, ext. 26 or kjacobi@mmumc-dc.org.