



# Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Corvallis, Oregon

Vol. XLIV, No. 9

March 4, 2005

## ENJOY AN AFTERNOON OF BACH

You are cordially invited to the annual Bach-a-Thon, *Saturday March 5, 1:00-3:00 p.m.* in our church sanctuary. The Bach-a-Thon is a celebration of the music of J. S. Bach. This year the Bach-a-Thon will include music for strings, piano and organ. Performers from the church include **Myles Criss, Chris, Julie** and **Kristin Rorrer**. This performance is free and open to the public.



Monine Stebbins with Alice Mills Morrow.

## CELEBRATING MONINE!

In worship last Sunday, it was announced that **Monine Stebbins** will be one of the lay women honored at the UCC General Synod in July in Atlanta. Monine's "leadership and spiritual vitality" have been demonstrated by her many gifts to the church of fabric creations and the many ways she contributes to the life of the church. Monine has served the wider community through her work on the school board, the school budget committee, and the sister city program. She represents all our lay people who give so much, and joins a distinguished group of First Congregational woman who have been so honored: **Welcome Lahey, Ruth Page, and Priscilla Zaworski.**

## THIS SUNDAY

**Adult Forum:** In this second (postponed from last Sunday) of three sessions of "Religion and Violence," **Warren Hovland** will lead the discussion on "Islamic Fundamentalism: Why Do They Hate Us?"

**Scriptures:** Psalm 23 (sung)  
Matthew 5:22-39  
Matthew 7:28-29

**Sermon:** "A Man of Authority"  
Harold Hunter

Dear Friends,

When I wrote to you last month, I was just about to dive into my experience here at Harvard. At this point, I think I can say that I am swimming strong in the deep end! It's hard to know where to begin to tell you about my life here, so I'll start with the basics: I am taking 5 classes, two of them as an auditor. The classes are two lecture classes—New Testament and Hindu Image, Myth, and Pilgrimage; two seminars—The Art of Preaching and Progressive Voices of Islam in America; and my Merrill Fellows Colloquium, which consists of guest faculty and cross-disciplinary reading from throughout the university. I have classes on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and spend most of Friday through Monday reading. You can picture me buried under a pile of books, trying to read my way out of them. It's a pretty accurate image.

I told myself when I started that I would do all of the reading for all of my classes; I confess that's not happening. Sometimes I choose to selectively read assigned texts to allow me more latitude to pursue unassigned texts. This is, after all, a sabbatical, not a degree program. To that end, I have just finished a wonderful book that I would recommend to any of you interested either in one woman's spiritual journey or in how we live faithfully with ourselves and others in a pluralistic world. The book is *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras* by Diana Eck. It's out in paperback, has won numerous awards, and is written for a lay audience.

My classes are all engaging and helpful. I am learning so much. If I had to choose, my favorite class is probably my preaching seminar. My opportunity to teach fell through, so I enrolled in a senior level class taught by a professor from Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, who is reputed to be the best preacher graduated from Harvard Divinity School in recent history. There are 12 students in the class and we are divided into two groups of six. Each student has to preach 2 sermons, 2 sermon openings, provide outlines for 2 more sermons. We also have to construct a sermon file (something I've thought about doing for 25 years, and never really done formally). I love my preaching group. We're getting to know each other pretty well, and I am struck by the dynamic. Most of the time, I'm just one of them, and I forget that I'm a good 25 years older than they are. At other times, they're interested in my experience. The professor has asked me to co-teach the last two weeks of class, which are about the contextual nature of preaching. I also was asked to preach the first sermon for the class since, supposedly, it would be easier for me. My knees shook the whole time; I felt like I had a lot of "face" at stake. But it was fine.

I lead a quiet life here. I'm working with a spiritual director to try to develop patterns of disciplined prayer and study that I can carry back with me to my life in Corvallis. Because part of sabbatical time is supposed to be rest and slow time, I try to limit my reading and class time to 8 hours a day, and take off one full day a week to explore the wonders of this part of the world. However, come Monday night, I am invariably scrambling to get everything done I need for Tuesday. I have a paper due

every Monday night by midnight—ah, the wonders of e-mail—and another due Wednesday afternoon.

Every Sunday morning I visit a different church. So far I have visited First Church, Cambridge (founded 1630), Old South Church, Boston (founded the same year), North Prospect UCC, also in Cambridge, Winchester First UCC, and The Memorial Church at Harvard University. I furtively peruse all their written materials and pocket any that seem interesting, check out how they go about greeting visitors, and shamelessly look to see if anybody's doing anything we can steal (imitation being the sincerest form of flattery). I hope to bring home some new ideas for worship. I've heard some wonderful organs and choirs—the Harvard University Choir sings for morning worship: 60 voices, all trained, all paid, beautiful—but different from having a choir of the congregation. For example, they only sing the anthems. They don't sing the hymns, and they sing hidden behind a carved wooden screen through which they are only vaguely visible. I am told many of them catch up on homework until it is time for them to perform.

I have had one major disappointment. When the first day of Spring Training for Major League baseball came around, I went online to get tickets to a Red Sox game—an important cultural experience—and every ticket for the whole season was sold out! Natives tell me that I will be able to find especially a single ticket just standing outside Fenway Park on game day, but somehow it just seems wrong that on a beautiful day in July, a Boston resident can't make a spontaneous decision to pack up the family and take in a ball game.

Well, this is getting long, but I hope it gives you a flavor of my life here. This fellowship is such a gift, but I miss you all, and will be excited to return to you. Really. Next month, I'll share with you my reflections on the politics of academe.

Have a blessed Easter. My girls will be here visiting me for Spring Break, and I will hold you all in my heart.

**Liz**

P.S. We just got eight more inches of snow! I haven't seen the ground since I arrived.



### FUNDRAISER

Looking for an easy way to support the Mexico Mission Trip? Come eat at **Baja Fresh** on *Monday, March 14* between from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Either bring in one of the flyers that will be available after worship or tell them that you are there to support the “First Congregational Church Mission Trip” and we will get 15% of your purchases. Baja Fresh is located at 845 NW 9<sup>th</sup> Street just north of Borders Books. Thank you for your support!



Many helpful hands are needed to make Holy Week and Easter happen! Sign-ups will be available Sunday to attend the Maundy Thursday meal and worship, and/or help with the flower bouquet and boxwood standard preparation on *Saturday, March 26* from 10:00-noon in Gatton Hall. All are welcome!

If you have garden flowers for use on the flower cross, Easter baskets and breakfast flower vases, please bring them to Gatton hall by 10:00 a.m. on Saturday.

### EASTER BREAKFAST

On *Easter Sunday, March 27*, breakfast will be served between the two worship services to all who join us to celebrate Easter. It’s a wonderful time for gathering and eating with family and friends.

Many helpers are needed to make this a successful event. Sign-ups begins this Sunday, before and after church, in the Gatton Hall entryway. Volunteers are needed to do the following:

- Prepare breakfast casseroles (recipes provided)
- Bake or buy bread
- Set up and prepare juice (on Saturday morning)
- Help in the kitchen Sunday morning
- Clean up after the breakfast

If you have questions, call **John Shea** (754-6832).

### SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

You may remember that **Marsha Gulick** and the Church entered into a one-year agreement for Marsha to provide spiritual formation/direction expertise in exchange for using the CE office to see church members and non-church clients. Due to an unexpected “wrinkle” regarding the Church’s liability insurance not “covering” non-church clients, the agreement has been cancelled by mutual agreement of Marsha and the Spiritual Direction Committee. Although disappointing to all involved, it is important to recognize that in her usual “proactive” style, Marsha had already completed the class development and delivery required in the agreement. Look for Marsha to continue her active involvement as a congregation member, including spiritual formation activities, just not to be seeing private clients in that regard.

### CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE NEEDED

Students handle many of our childcare needs, but we have ongoing needs for childcare during the Tuesday noon Bible study and during the monthly Women's Fellowship luncheon. Because these events fall during school hours students aren't available for childcare. Please let **Ryan** know if you would be willing to provide occasional childcare during these events. This is a great opportunity to get your "toddler fix," help out some parents, and play with some really fun toys.

## Congratulations!

... to **Amanda LaBonte**, **Alex Mueller-Warrant**, and **Annie Mueller-Warrant** who will be leaving in mid-March to travel to Germany to take part in the Camp Adventure program. While in Germany they will be working as Camp Adventure interns at Childcare Centers on U.S. military bases. Congratulations to all three of you! Although we will miss you (and so will our children), we look forward to your return and hope you have a wonderful experience!



### INTERESTED IN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

A two-session **Inquirers' Class** for people interested in finding out more about the United Church of Christ and First Congregational, Corvallis, will be held *April 10* and *April 17*, with those who decide to join being received into membership on *April 24*. Contact **Ryan** or the church office (757-8122) to indicate that you would like to be part of this class.

### A D CIRCLE TO MEET

The A D Circle will meet *Wednesday, March 9*, at 1:30 at the home of **Anna Marie Holmes**, 3848 SW Neer Ave. **Coral Torley** will lead the discussion. All are welcome. For further information, contact Coral (752-0114).



Zander Emery, trumpet, son of our choir member, Rose Hart Emery, played an impressive musical offering last Sunday. Thanks to Brian Lee for the photos.



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Copy deadline for next issue of newsletter is Tuesday noon, March 8.

**WEEKLY CALENDAR**

*Friday, March 4*

7:00 a.m. First Friday Forum,  
 Burton's

**10:00 a.m. World Day of Prayer**  
 at First Presbyterian  
 (Fellowship at 9:30)

*Saturday, March 5*

**1:00-3:00 Bach-a-thon**

*Sunday, March 6*

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Choir  
 9:30 a.m. C E classes  
 10:30 a.m. Worship  
 4:30 p.m. Middle School Youth  
 6:45 p.m. High School Youth

*Monday, March 7*

9:00 a.m. Staff  
 5:30 p.m. Basketball  
 7:15 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 1

*Tuesday, March 8*

Noon Lectionary class

*Wednesday, March 9*

7:15 a.m. Breakfast Group  
 1:30 p.m. A D Circle (*see page 5*)  
 5:30 p.m. 40+ Basketball  
 6:30 p.m. Bell Choir  
 7:15 p.m. Sanctuary Choir

*Thursday, March 10*

6:30 p.m. Lenten vespers  
 7:00 p.m. Lenten classes  
 7:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 142

**LOOKING AHEAD: March 24 and 25:**  
 Maundy Thursday and Good Friday ser-  
 vices; **March 27:** Easter Sunday

**Our Thoughts and Prayers**

... are with **Jean Heath** following  
 the recent death of her sister **Mary**;  
 ... and with **Jean Mater** as she re-  
 covers from recent surgery;  
 ... with **Jim Cantey** who expects to  
 be home this weekend after surgery in  
 Portland on Wednesday, March 2;  
 .. and with for **Susan Princehouse**,  
 Pastor of the Hood River UCC, and who  
 has been diagnosed with liver cancer.