



Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Corvallis, Oregon

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November 4, 2005



In addition to being Stewardship Sunday, *November 6* is Laity Sunday. Lay people – and not just the regulars – from our congregation will lead worship. **Sue Richmond** and **Norm Vedaa** will share the sermon time with “Reflections on Stewardship.” In keeping with our stewardship “sheep” theme, the choir will sing “All we like sheep have gone astray” from *Messiah*. **Myles Criss** will be at the organ to play several “wooly” favorites. Come celebrate our talented lay people and the call to stewardship, and enjoy wonderful music. Communion will be served.

PUTTING THE “CAR” IN CARING

An important responsibility of our congregation is providing transportation to church services for our members who are unable to get to worship on their own. We have several people who are regularly providing this service, and others who are willing to be called occasionally. **But we need to add to our list!** If you would be willing (1) to help with this for a month at a time, or (2) to be called on just once in a while, please call **Doris Sherry** (745-5607), or the church office, and indicate whether you would be coming to church at 9:30 or at 10:30. Having more people on our list makes it easier to find someone who lives near the person needing a ride.

Or if you are person (or know someone) who needs a ride regularly, or occasionally (e.g., in icy weather) we want to hear from you, too.

THIS SUNDAY

Adult Forum: “How Do We Learn to Give?” **Liz Oettinger** offers a presentation and conversation about how we learn to give and how we teach generosity.

[This year Adult Forum sessions are being videotaped. Tapes are available for check-out from the church library.]

Scriptures: Psalm 100
Mark 12:41-44

Sermon: “Reflections on Stewardship”
Sue Richmond,
Norm Vedaa

Dear Friends,

Last week I was in a small Presbyterian church in Salem. On the wall was a framed copy of a print ad done by the Presbyterian church three years ago, I'm told. It showed a very conventional portrait of Jesus, followed by the words, "Jesus came to take away our sins. Not our minds." It was a powerful statement. In very few words, it conveyed the essence of liberal Christianity. I liked it, even as I like many of the ads that the United Church of Christ has developed as part of the "Still Speaking" campaign. I have to say, though, that I have mixed feelings about church advertising, marketing faith like any other product. When I say I have mixed feelings, I mean truly mixed. On the one hand, liberal Christianity has been so eclipsed by conservative Christianity that many people don't even know that Christian groups like ours exist. If we don't get the word out somehow, then we risk silencing ourselves into extinction. And I don't want that. When I see United Church of Christ ads, there's part of me that celebrates that we have finally found the spiritual wherewithal to open our mouths, to make our presence known, and to give people the chance to know who we are.

On the other hand, to spend millions of dollars working with advertising agencies and focus groups to boil down our message in 30-second bites for appeal to particular demographics is ethically and theologically suspect to me. I watch how that has worked in our political system and it gives me pause. Slogans instead of substance; bullet points instead of complex discourse. I do not want to see God or the Church commodified, its message reduced to what "sells" best to this or that group.

It is truly a dilemma. The relationship of the Church to the prevailing culture has always been an issue for discussion in the church. If the Church insists on being entirely separate from its surrounding culture, it runs the risk of becoming out of touch, irrelevant to the real lives of people. If the Church is entirely enmeshed by the values of popular culture, it will lose its center and its claim to any kind of transcendent authority. Some kind of middle ground is called for, but exactly what middle ground, and for what reasons? The issue of advertising is just one more in a long list of issues the church has considered through the centuries.

How do you feel about the Church and advertising? Whether you're for it or against it is ultimately less important than your reasons for whatever position you take. What could be gained? What could be lost? What kinds of guidelines or limits would be important to you? How far are you willing to "spin" the Christian message to try to draw people in? What's negotiable? What's non-negotiable?

To think and talk together about these issues is important, discussion an essential part of helping the church of our day find a place to stand with integrity in the world.

Jesus came to take away our sins. Not our minds. It's a great ad—and a great reminder to use all the gifts God gave us as we explore the complex questions and balances of our lives.

Have a thoughtful week.

Liz



Several of our high youth will be spending the weekend at the Central Pacific Conference's **Fall Youth Event** in Beaverton. Look for pictures and wrap-up information on the youth bulletin board.

Due to the varied school calendars we are once again postponing the "**Fast that Lasts**" until a later date. The preliminary plan is to participate in the fast following the Christmas holiday.

We are looking for youth to help with the **Stone Soup** meal on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Contact **Ryan** at the church or at rylamb@yahoo.com for more details.

HEIFER PROJECTS OFFERS ALTERNATIVE GIFTS

November has begun and that means the **Advent Festival** is not far away. As usual, there will be a table at the Festival for those who would like to give alternative gifts through Heifer Project. If, however, you will be away over Thanksgiving weekend or otherwise won't be at church on *November 27*, you can arrange for Heifer gifts by contacting **Nancy Klingeman** before then.

Stewardship Statement

I am a member of the youth group at First Congregational UCC. I have been attending church here for five years now, and I love it here. When we say "church family"; we mean it in the most literal sense. Ever since I have been a part of this church, I have also been a part of the youth group here. The FCUCC youth

group is an amazing group of kids/young adults. Coming to youth group is something I look forward to every week. I have a blast with these people. We do all sorts of things, ranging from missions trips, to community service, to carving pumpkins, to leading service, to just coming to church and being goofy. Yeah, I have my friends at school, but at youth group, I can come and not worry about the school "drama"; I can just come and hang out. However, youth group, like most everything else requires money to run. We can raise a lot of money ourselves, but every once in a while we need a little help, and anything you can donate will be much appreciated. Thank you for helping give my buddies and me a way to connect spiritually with other people our age!

Megan Chambers

CHURCHES RESPOND TOGETHER TO DISASTER—October 20, 2005

Once again, Church World Service (CWS) was uniquely positioned to respond to a disaster. Churches in the Pacific Northwest, along with churches throughout the United States, opened their hearts to people in need. Having had relief and development operations in Pakistan for more than 25 years, CWS was one of the first relief agencies to begin distributing relief assistance in the wake of the earthquake, initially moving 6,000 shelter kits and family food packages to Murree, north of Islamabad.

Because much of the work of CWS in Pakistan is medically related, they were able to begin immediately just on the street outside of the health clinics in Pakistan. Between Pakistan Airlines and the Pakistan army helicopters, they have been able to get shelter kits and food to some of the inaccessible areas. Recently, CWS airlifted in an additional 40-45 metric tons of tents. Using army helicopters has allowed CWS to carry out rapid distributions not only in inaccessible areas but has also prevented goods from being looted.

PAKISTAN: Described as Pakistan's most catastrophic earthquake, the death toll has exceeded 40,000 and continues to increase as more areas become accessible. The international community has joined the massive rescue and relief operations; however bad weather and aftershocks are creating hazardous conditions, including landslides on roadways and landing strips that slow relief activities.

Relief is getting through to some of the hardest hit areas including Muzaffarabad and Balakot. However, in remote mountain villages where temperatures are as low as 7 degrees Celsius and snow is falling, conditions are severely hampering humanitarian response activities. CWS-Pakistan staff reports that many are opting to carry supplies on foot or by pack animal to get them to certain remote areas. The Pakistan emergency relief coordinator says that 2 million blankets and 100,000 tents are needed. CWS will provide 15,000 affected families with food and non-food items and plans to increase the number of beneficiary families to 22,000 in the coming weeks. Non-food items will include shelter kits and housing reconstruction supplies. CWS is also setting up two field clinics, to provide assistance to the injured.

Families to be served are those who have lost their houses along with women, children, and vulnerable families who are without food and shelter and have taken refuge outdoors will be served.

INDIA: The October 8 earthquake caused substantial destruction in northern India. More than 1,300 people are dead, 7,000 injured and 150,000 homeless, according to government sources in India. These numbers are likely to rise, as access to remote villages is still limited. Similar to the situation in Pakistan, a shortage of shelter materials and other basic needs are primary concerns. The Government of India, international agencies, and local non-governmental organizations are responding but are hampered by severe weather conditions and blocked roads.

CWS partner Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) will provide assistance to 10,000 earthquake-affected families, and will distribute heavy wool blankets, clothing, and other non-food items. Five hundred families will receive family-sized tents for temporary housing, and housing reconstruction kits (described below) will also be distributed to assist the most vulnerable families whose homes were damaged or destroyed.

Church World Service is a cooperative ministry of 6 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations in the United States doing emergency response, development, and refugee assistance work in more than 80 countries, including the United States.

To support these efforts, gifts may be made to: Church World Service, Southern Asia Earthquake--#6979, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515, or by calling 800.297.1516, ext. 222. Contributions may also be made online at www.churchworldservice.org

GIFTS FOR A BETTER WORLD COMING SOON

It's nearly time for Gifts For a Better World – and you know what that means. It's a great time to *volunteer* to help in the store. Because I'll be out of town from *November 6-10*, I need you to call *today* or Saturday. The store's open days are *November 14-December 13*. Your help is needed, so please call.

Rhonda Mueller-Warrant (758-1667)

CHILDREN'S CHOIR STARTS

The Children's Choir, made up of fourth through eighth graders, will begin to prepare music for "Mary's Heart." Children should gather in the Music Room following worship on *Sunday, November 13* for the first rehearsal.

SIGN UP TO ATTEND, PREPARE THANKSGIVING DINNER

Sign-up sheets will be in Gatton Hall this Sunday, looking for volunteers to roast a turkey at home on *Saturday, November 19*, or help make stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy the same Saturday in the Gatton Hall kitchen – and, of course, lots of folks to eat all the good food on *Sunday, November 20* after the service. Call the office if you can't sign up in person.



CORRECTION

Rose Hart's e-mail address is: doloresemery@comcast.net. It is correct in the directory, but was wrong in last week's newsletter.

STILL TIME TO GET A CUSTOM FCC CALENDAR

2005 is winding down and you will be needing a new calendar for 2006. There are a few left of the beautiful ones that **Mark Thackray** made to help raise funds for this past summer's mission trip. They are filled with many color photos of life at First Congregational. The cost is \$20 each, and the money goes into the fund for the next mission trip. Get yours, while they last, at the table in Gatton Hall this Sunday.

A D CIRCLE TO MEET

The A D Circle will meet *Wednesday, November 9*, at the home of **Beth Christianson**, 4606 NW Acacia Drive. **Priscilla Zaworski** will lead the discussion, continuing from the October meeting. All are welcome. For further information, call **Coral Torley** (752-0114).



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Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
 Office Phone: 757-8122
 Facilities Coordinator: 753-2106

Susan Wickes, Editor
 e-mail: sbwickes@comcast.net
 Home Phone: 754-0117

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

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Friday, November 4

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

7:00 p.m. Bridge Group

Stewardship Sunday, November 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, November 7

5:30 p. Basketball
 7:30 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 1

Tuesday, November 8

9:00 a.m. Staff
 Noon Lectionary class
 7:00 p.m. Adult Confirmation
 class, Library

Wednesday, November 9

7:15 a.m. Breakfast Group
 5:30 p.m. 40+ Basketball
 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir
 7:15 p.m. Sanctuary Choir

Thursday, November 10

7:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 142

Friday, November 11- Veterans' Day
Office closed

NEXT NEWSLETTER ALERT

The November 11 issue of the *Congregational News* will need copy submitted by noon Tuesday, November 8, even if by e-mail or phone. Thanks for your help.

Susan Wickes

LAUNCHING BONNIE'S BOOK

The book launch reception for *Ever Blooming: The Art of Bonnie Hall*, published by Oregon State University Press, will be *Thursday evening, November 10*, from 6:30-9:00 at Pegasus Frame Studio and Gallery, 341 SW Second St. **Jim Hall** will be there to sign books and a few words will be offered about the book.