



# Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Corvallis, Oregon

Vol. XLIV, No. 40

November 11, 2005

## GENEROUS GIVING IN OCTOBER

I am happy to report that many of you caught up on your pledges in October. If we continue to keep up, we are in line to finish the year in the black. In addition, the Mission Offerings were extremely well supported: Neighbors In Need, \$1,640; Benton Hospice, \$955; and Pakistan Earthquake Relief, \$2,770. You are a very generous congregation!

**Verlyne Phillips**, Treasurer

## BE AN ELF AT GIFTS FOR A BETTER WORLD!

Gifts For A Better World opens *Monday, November 14*. That means that **this Saturday and Sunday** the elves will be very busy setting everything up. And here's a little holiday magic. You can be transformed into an elf simply by joining the work party. Meet at the Carriage House at the Fairgrounds to assist with setting up shelves, stocking merchandise, and making the store sparkle. See you on Saturday from 11:00-6:00 or Sunday from noon until 4:00. It's lots of fun! The final day Gifts For A Better world will be open is **December 4**. Questions? Call **Rhonda Mueller-Warrant** (758-1667).

## Brrrrrrr!

Did you know that First Congregational Church now has 9 separate furnaces? Did you know that 5 thermostats with 28 periods each are programmed every week so that each space is heated only as needed?

To avoid wasting fuel, whenever you end a class, meeting, or rehearsal, please leave:

- Sanctuary doors (including accordion door) **closed**.
- Fireplace Room, Music Room and all church school rooms **open**.

The planet and the budget will appreciate it.

## THIS SUNDAY

**Adult Forum:** Architect **Chick Gerke** will speak about the Camp Adams portions of the Widening Our Welcome (WOW) Campaign.

**Scriptures:** 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11  
Matthew 25:14-30

**Sermon:** "Risking It All"  
Ryan Lambert

Greetings Friends,

The combined effect of the recent “natural disasters” such as hurricanes, tsunamis, and earthquakes has left people across the globe reeling from loss of life, loss of economic stability, and loss of emotional and spiritual hope in the face of dramatic losses. Such devastating events often lead to questions about the nature of a God who would allow such things to happen. Some spiritual leaders have even dared to suggest that some or all of these events are punishments from God for previous misdeeds. This, I think, is dubious theology that places God in the role of punishing foe instead of compassion sustainer. However, the theological rants of a few off-kilter religious leaders combined with some recent reading I have done on the issue of global warming has inspired me to write this week about environmental stewardship.

I do not think for a moment that “natural” disasters come to us as punishment. However, I do believe that there is very credible scientific research that points to the fact that due to long-term environmental choices, we have all contributed to global warming. Increasingly, scientists tell us that global warming has a causal link to some of the climate-related disasters of our time. The polar ice caps are melting at a dangerously quick pace. Heat waves are hitting urban and rural areas with increased frequency. Glaciers as near as Montana and as far away as Africa and Asia are melting and disappearing forever. Rising waters in Bangladesh have left 20 million people homeless at the same time that the Missouri River is at its lowest level in history. Environmentally I believe we are at a crisis point, and this, I believe, is an issue of faith and an issue of stewardship.

The outpouring of giving that has happened in light of the recent worldwide disasters has been unprecedented. However, giving in the aftermath of disasters is not enough when we have the opportunity to change some of the behaviors and trends that have led to the initial problems. At the most recent General Synod several resolutions dealt with the need for environmental stewardship, and I think it is one of the key theological issues that we must wrestle with. I would like to form an environmental working group that would begin meeting in January. This group would help identify environmental issues of immediate and long-term concern so that they may be brought to the congregation. Additionally this group would participate in implementing environmental educational opportunities as an ongoing program. The issue of environmental justice and stewardship is almost so large that I do not even want to touch it. However, I believe that it very well may be that our lives and lives of our children and grandchildren will depend upon our environmental stewardship efforts.

Is the environmental working group a place for you? If so, please leave me a message at church or email at [rylamb@yahoo.com](mailto:rylamb@yahoo.com).

Have a thoughtful week,

**Ryan**



The **Middle and High School Youth** groups will be meeting on *Saturday morning, November 12*, from 10:00 a.m.-noon at the Benton County Fairgrounds to help with the initial set-up process for the Community Food Drive. Wear warm work clothes, bring some gloves, and join us as we help feed our neighbors.

### **SIGN UP TO ATTEND, PREPARE THANKSGIVING DINNER**

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



### **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.

### **WORKING ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

The **Health Ministry Committee** will meet on *Sunday, November 13*, after worship in the Fireplace Room. We welcome new members to assist in planning and working toward a congregation whose members are more prepared for community disaster or emergency than we are today. There will be snacks! Any questions, contact **Eileen Marma** (753-0540).

### **MARY'S HEART REHEARSALS BEGIN**

The first rehearsal for our Christmas play, "Mary's Heart," was held on *Wednesday, November 9* in the sanctuary. The full schedule for rehearsals will be out soon. Performances will be *December 22* at 3:00 p.m.; *December 23* at 8:00 p.m. and at the 5:30 Christmas Eve service.



### **PLAN AHEAD FOR NEXT SUNDAY**

On Thanksgiving Sunday, *November 20*, we will have an offering of food for the annual Community Holiday Food Drive during worship. Bring commercially canned or packaged food [see below] which will be brought forward during the introit. Cash or checks (made out to "Community Holiday Food Drive")



for the purchase of turkeys and other necessities are also welcome!

Hunger does exist in Benton County. The number of families and individuals who are receiving emergency food boxes and eating their meals at soup kitchens, has increased by 57% since 1997. Changes in Federal programs addressing hunger relief, a lack of health insurance, and high utility and housing costs have made it increasingly difficult for families to make ends meet. They simply do not have the resources to provide a special holiday meal.

Approximately \$45,000 worth of food will be distributed to more than 4400 low-income individuals in Benton County through the Holiday Food Drive. Approximately \$20,000 must be raised in order to purchase turkeys, chickens, perishable goods and other food items to supplement what is donated through the Door-to-Door Drive, conducted by the Boy Scouts (*on November 12*), and local food collections like ours.

**Types of food needed:** canned fruits, canned vegetables, canned pumpkin, and canned milk, peanut butter, stuffing mix, tuna and other canned fish and meats; baby foods, olives, Jell-O and cake mixes, fresh apples and fruits, winter squash, potatoes and other fresh vegetables. No home-canned goods can be accepted.

### CHILDREN'S CHOIR STARTS

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

### READ & FEED MEETS

Read & Feed will meet at the home of **Monine** and **Bob Stebbins** to discuss *Providence of a Sparrow* by Chris Chester. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. on *Sunday, November 13*, the discussion is followed by dessert.

### HOMETOWN ACTOR HITS BIG CITY

If you will be in Portland in the next couple of weeks, you can catch **Hans Eleveld** in his first play there. "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" ("Dangerous Liaisons," performed in English) by Christopher Hampton will be presented at the Lincoln Performance Hall at Portland State University. Dates are *November 10, 11 & 12* (7:30 p.m.); *November 13* (2:00 p.m.); *November 16, 17, 18, 19* (7:30 p.m.). The play is recommended for mature audiences. For ticket info, call the PSU box office at (503) 725-3307.

## FOURTH SUNDAYS AT FOUR EVENT THIS WEEK

On *Sunday, November 13*, Good Samaritan Episcopal Church offers a multimedia event. The Bells of the Cascades, under the direction of Martha Wilson, present a unique concert that offers a spectacular visual tour of Oregon as a backdrop for a varied musical program. Original compositions for handbells show off the beauty and versatility of the instrument. The concert begins at 4:00 at

333 NW 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Corvallis. There is no charge for this performance, but a free-will donation in support of the series is welcome.

## SCRAPBOOKERS WELCOME!

You are invited to join the group of scrapbook enthusiasts at their next meeting, *Sunday, November 20*, in Room 3, from 1:00-6:00 p.m. **Ineka Estabrook** (754-3027) can give you more information or answer questions.



(left) This Sunday marked the debut of our new pew-end candleabra. They were made possible by the Eva Rickert bequest. Brian Krabill of Halsey crafted them.

Thanks to Brian Lee for the photos.

## ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY

(right) Susan Leo, Pastor of Bridgeport United Church of Christ in Portland, was the guest speaker at the WOW! lunch that followed worship.

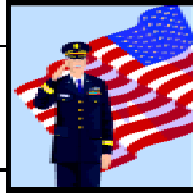




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Veterans' Day



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Copy deadline for next issue of newsletter is Tuesday noon, November 15.

**WEEKLY CALENDAR**

*Friday, November 11—Veterans' Day*

**Office closed**

*Saturday, November 12*

10:00 a.m. Youth to food drive,  
 Guerber Hall,  
 Fairgrounds (page 3)

*Sunday, November 13*

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Choir  
 9:30 a.m. C E classes  
 10:30 a.m. Worship  
**(following) Children's Choir**  
 (following) Health Ministry,  
 Fireplace Room  
 (following) Outreach & Evangelism  
 Library  
 7:00 p.m. Read & Feed, Stebbins

*Monday, November 14*

5:30 p.m. Basketball  
 7:15 p.m. Mission Board  
 7:30 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 1

*Tuesday, November 15*

9:00 a.m. Staff  
 Noon Lectionary class  
 7:00 p.m. Trustees Board  
 7:30 p.m. Spirit Quest

*Wednesday, November 16*

5:00-7:00 Mary's Heart rehearsal  
 5:00 p.m. Endowment Board,  
 Conference Room  
 5:30 p.m. 40+ Basketball  
**6:15 p.m.** Bell Choir  
 7:15 p.m. Sanctuary Choir

*Thursday, November 17*

11:00 a.m. Spirituality Group  
 11:45 a.m. Lunch Group  
 7:00-9:00 Mary's Heart rehearsal  
 7:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 142  
 7:30 p.m. Men's Fellowship

**LOOKING AHEAD:** *Sunday, November 27:* Advent Festival

**Our Thoughts and Prayers**

... are with **Aleita Hass-Holcombe** and her family. Her brother, **Delbert**, died on November in Portland.