



Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Corvallis, Oregon

Vol. XLIV, No. 42

November 25, 2005

Advent Festival

Children and adults are invited to join us for our annual Advent Festival on Sunday morning during the Christian Education hour (9:30) and during the fellowship time after worship in Gattton hall. We will have Advent wreath-making, cookie activities, pine cone bird feeders, potato stamps for making cards, and nametag lanyards. (A basket will be available for donations to defray the cost of wreath materials.)

In addition to a Heifer Alternative Giving table [see p. 3], there will also be another opportunity this year to buy dry soup packets to benefit the South Corvallis Food Bank. This is a wonderful inter-generational event and a great way to focus on the joy of Advent and the coming of the Christ child. Join us!

BRIGHT GIFTS ARE COMING!

Each year we provide new gift items for needy people in our community. You can pick up a tag this Sunday on a wreath in the foyer do your



Bright Gift shopping. Tags are available for Vina Moses and for Corvallis Manor residents. Bring your **unwrapped** Bright Gift(s) to worship on *Sunday, December 11*, with the recipient tag attached. If you are unable to attend on the 11th, gifts may be dropped off at the church office prior to the 11th.



SIGN UP SUNDAY FOR HANGING OF THE GREENS

Dee Loomis will again be doing sign-ups both before and after church this Sunday. If you are interested in being a Crew Head or just signing up for a crew, you can call Dee at 926-1593 or e-mail her at deeloomis@netzero.net. **Pete Nelson** is the Trees Crew chief. Donations of greens will be welcome, too.

THIS SUNDAY

Scriptures: Mark 13:24-37
Sermon: "What Are We
Waiting For?"
Elizabeth Oettinger

Dear friends,

The smell of turkey will linger, if not literally in your house, then figuratively in your mind as you awake on Sunday morning. It is quite possible that family or friends will still inhabit your guest room. Sunday's lunch may be one last opportunity to eat Thanksgiving leftovers or even include the first chance to taste the soup born in the aftermath of Thursday's culinary delight. No matter how much Thanksgiving lingers in your home and heart, come Sunday something new, yet very familiar is at hand.

The season of Advent begins on Sunday. The word Advent comes from the Latin and means "the coming." The Advent season is a time of preparation and spiritual reflection that allows us to move toward our celebration of Christmas with deliberation and focus. This year Advent begins just three days after Thanksgiving; a reality that I hope enables us to begin this season filled with a sense of celebration and an awareness of the blessings of our lives. I often find it difficult to keep my focus on the season and on once again preparing for the coming of the Christ child. Often there are too many things that get in my way: Christmas lists, shopping, wrapping, shipping, cooking, and decorating. All of these things are a part of the Christmas ritual, but often I find that they become the only Christmas reality that I can see. And that is why this season, and the intentionality that Advent requires, is so important. When the shopping lists are too long and the dog has once again knocked the bulbs off the tree, I know that Sunday morning will mean that we are moving closer to the completion of the drama that brought the Christ child into the world.

Each week in Advent we will hear another part of the story. You have heard it all before, but I encourage you to let the season unfold before you. I'm sure your "to-do" list is long, but as we move through the season of Advent don't succumb to the desire to rush through this season. Just as there are preparations that occur during the months leading to the birth of a baby, so too are there preparations that come with the birth of this baby. The Advent season is to be one of reflection and hope as we are invited to think about how the birth of Jesus will change us this year as we again welcome the baby Jesus into our lives.

Blessings to you as we enter this season of hope and promise.

Ryan

NEWSLETTER ALERT!!

Please send all information for *December 2 Congregational News* to **Ann Hawkins**. E-mails should go to the church at ucc@proaxis.com or the newsletter mailbox.



Save the Dates!

December 18 is the annual Christmas party and gift exchange. Also, once again we are going to try to do the “Fast that Lasts” around school schedules. The new date for this event is *December 29-30*. More details are forthcoming. See you on Sunday at the regular times for Middle School and High School youth groups!

Ryan

THANK YOU FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

To all the flock: thank you to everyone who contributed to making last Sunday such a wonderful day. Special thanks to **Verlyne Phillips** for the sanctuary Thanksgiving decorations; to everyone who cooked, worked in the kitchen and cleaned up from our extraordinarily successful Thanksgiving meal; to all of you who brought in your pledges Sunday morning; to **Ann** and **John Hawkins** for packing and hauling the morning’s food contributions to the fairgrounds; to the choir and the bell choir for the beautiful music and **Joan Caldwell** for our “Shepherd’s Grace.”

For those of you who have not returned your pledges yet, we need them as soon as possible in order to plan for the 2006 budget. Every sheep counts... and as we saw Sunday morning, we all have our gifts to give to the church. Thank you to all of you!

HEIFER PROJECT= ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

This Sunday morning, Heifer Project table will be set up in Gatton Hall to take orders for alternative gifts during the Advent Festival. What are these alternative gifts? Instead of giving more “stuff” to people on your list, you can honor them by sending an animal, bees, or tree seedlings to someone in need via Heifer Project.

Prices range from \$2 for a chick, duck, or goose to \$500 for an entire heifer. A flock of chicks, ducks, or geese is \$20. You may buy a share of rabbits, leucaena tree seedlings, a goat, sheep, or pig for \$10. A package of honeybees is \$30. Rabbit trios and leucaena seedlings are \$60. An entire goat, sheep, or pig costs \$120. Llamas are \$20 a share or \$150 each. Water buffaloes are \$250 each or \$25 a share. A heifer share is \$50.

Also, this year are a “Joy to the World” collection of two sheep, four goats, one heifer, and two llamas for \$1500. A share of that collection is \$150. Plus, a “Milk Menagerie” of four milk-producing animals for \$1000 or \$100 a share; and a “Knitting Basket” of four wool-producing animals for \$500 or \$50 a share. A “Flock of Hope” includes chicks, ducklings, and goslings for \$60.

With each gift purchased, you will receive a donor card with an insert about the animal you have chosen. Checks should be made out to **Heifer Project International** and are tax-deductible.



Advent, Christmas & Epiphany 2005

Sunday, November 27: Advent Festival in Gatton Hall at 9:30 and after worship.

Sundays, December 4, 11, and 18: The Adult Forum offers "Faith Journeys" by members of the congregation at 9:30 a.m. in the Meeting Hall.

Saturday, December 10: Hanging of the Greens – a fun event for the whole family!

4:00 p.m. Come decorate the church for the Advent and Christmas season. There will be activities for children and adults.

6:00 p.m. A simple dinner follows.

Sunday, December 11: Bright Gifts will be brought forward during worship. Remember to bring your new, unwrapped gift to the worship service or drop it off in the office earlier that week.

Wednesday, December 14: Women's Fellowship Cookie Baking Exchange on from 9:00 to noon in Gatton Hall kitchen. Bring a batch of their favorite cookie dough, ready to bake, and a container to take home your share of the finished cookies.

Thursday, December 22: Performance of "Mary's Heart" in our sanctuary at 3:00 p.m.

Friday, December 23: Performance of "Mary's Heart" in our sanctuary at 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve – Saturday, December 24:

5:00 p.m. Instrumental carols

5:30 p.m. Worship and the final performance of "Mary's Heart"

11:00 p.m. Service of lessons and carols with Sanctuary Choir and instrumentalists – Communion is served

Christmas Day – Sunday, December 25:

7:00 p.m. Christmas night service

Sunday, January 8: Epiphany Art Festival begins



JOIN THE OCO

Orchestral instrumentalists, young and old, are invited to play Christmas carols from 5:00-5:30 on Christmas Eve, under the direction of **Carol Huntington**. Rehearsals will be held after worship *December 4, 11, and 18*.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BRUNCH

On *Wednesday, December 7* at 10:30 there will be a Christmas Brunch for all women of the church. We will have a choice of crafts—rubber stamp Christmas cards or package tags; a lovely dimensional paper star; or decorating a gingerbread house, church, and train to be given to Senior Meals as their December table decorations. There will be gingerbread kits, with already baked gingerbread and the candy to decorate them with, available for sale with proceeds going to CARDV. **Pat Johnson** and her helpers like the idea of gingerbread houses helping families that are in need while providing a fun activity for families. There will also be Christmas carols and stories. This will be a fun time to get together to enjoy the spirit of the season. There is no charge for the light brunch.

Optional opportunities to spread Christmas cheer: Bring a non-violent toy for CARDV, suitable for a child from infancy to teens. (Not stuffed toys). Suggested items: board or card games, dolls, trucks, balls, Legos, and books. Or bring cookies for Jackson Street Youth Shelter. Or just bring yourself!

Sign up the next two Sundays or call the church office. Call **Pat Johnson** (619-4943) or **Monine Stebbins** (754-8039) if you need transportation or childcare.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Brenda Koenig-Chase 12/1, Betty Massoni 2/2, Virginia Stockwell 2/2, Jen Maguire 12/6, Beth Koch 12/7, Mike Huntington 12/10, Cameron Bodwell 12/15, John Shea 12/16, Sue Richmond 12/16, Marion Whitney 12/17, Alice Mills Morrow 12/17, Norm Vedaa 12/18, Steve Lucker 12/18, Claire McMorris 12/23, Sandy Murphy 12/23, Martin McLemore 12/25, Kathie Merriam 12/26, Don Olson 12/26, David Jones 12/29, Kathy Benson 12/29, Betty Busch 12/29, Becky Flitcroft 12/29, Wayne Phillips 12/30, Pat Johnson 12/30

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Nick and Susan Piasias 12/17 (33rd)
 Jack and Marion Whitney 12/20 (53rd)
 Harold and Charlene Hunter 12/20 (25th)
 Bob and Monine Stebbins 12/27
 Norm and Mary Vedaa 12/28 (9th)
 Keith and Doris Sherry 12/29 (49th)
 Mark and Ginnie Esary 12/30 (21st)

Our Thoughts and Prayers

... are with **Steve Lucker's** mother, **Catherine**, who recently suffered a stroke.



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Copy deadline for next issue of newsletter is Tuesday noon, November 29.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Friday, November 25

Office closed

Sunday, November 27

9:30 a.m. Advent Festival

10:30 a.m. Worship

(following) Advent Festival
 concludes

(following) Children's Choir,
 Music Room

4:30 p.m. Middle School youth

6:45 p.m. High School youth

Monday, November 28

5:30 p.m. Basketball

7:30 p.m. Boy Scout Troop1

Tuesday, November 29

9:00 a.m. Staff

Noon Lectionary class

7:15 p.m. Church Council

Wednesday, November 30

5:00 p.m. Mary's Heart rehearsal

5:30 p.m. 40+ Basketball

6:15 p.m. Bell Choir

7:15 p.m. Sanctuary Choir

Thursday, December 1

7:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 1

NO Mary's Heart

Friday, December 2

7:00 a.m. First Friday Forum

7:00 p.m. Bridge Group



COOKIE BAKING EXCHANGE

Women's Fellowship is sponsoring a Cookie Baking Exchange on *Wednesday, December 14* from 9:00 to noon. Each person should bring a batch of their favorite cookie dough ready to bake. We can do the rolling out, forming, or decorating together there in the Gatton Hall kitchen. We can use the big cookie sheets and the ovens to bake all the cookies. Then we will divide the cookies among those who came to bake. We'll have an instant variety of cookies! Be sure to bring containers to take your share home.