



# Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Corvallis, Oregon

Vol. XLIV, No. 44

December 9, 2005



## GUEST HANDBELL CHOIR WILL PLAY THIS SUNDAY

The **Carillon Revelry Handbell Choir**, conducted by **Colette Schegel**, will be a part of our worship service this Sunday. This ecumenical choir rehearses at the First Presbyterian Church and includes members from at least three different Protestant denominations. The Choir will perform "Christmas Reflections," for the Prelude (come early to enjoy!), "Silent Night! Holy Night!" for the Offertory, and "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" for the Postlude. We are in for a treat!

## BRIGHT GIFT SUNDAY IS HERE!

Please bring your unwrapped Bright Gifts this Sunday. The gifts will be brought forward and placed under the tree during the opening hymn. Please remember to attach the tag to your gift.

If you did not pick up a bright gift tag or would like to do something more, bring a food item on the 11<sup>th</sup>. We always need more packaged foods: **hot cereal, cold cereal, pasta, rice, macaroni and cheese, mixes**. If you would like to help



put food boxes together between now and *December 16* or help with pick up and delivery of boxes on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> contact **Alice Morrow** (752-3541).

The Vina Moses Center has been providing Christmas baskets to needy families in Benton County for more than 80 years. The Bright Gifts we bring to church on *December 11* are for this program.

## HANGING OF THE GREENS

Come help us decorate our sanctuary at 4:00 p.m. this *Saturday, December 10*. A chili and cornbread dinner will be served following the completion of the decorating (approximately 6:00 p.m.).

## THIS SUNDAY

**Adult Forum:** **Mark Esary** offers the this Advent's second "Faith Journey."

**Scriptures:** Matthew 1:18-25  
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

**Sermon:** "The Other  
Annunciation"  
Elizabeth Oettinger

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK***Ryan Lambert*

Dear Friends,

Recently I have spent a great deal of time traveling for the various committees I serve on concerning Camp Adams. On Tuesday a conversation took place at one such meeting where those of us sitting around the table identified Camp Adams as a holy place. Much of this definition was due to the important relationships that are built at Camp Adams, the beauty of the site, and the ministry that takes place there which makes important relationships possible. During my drive home my thoughts moved toward the boxes of Christmas decorations that need to be emptied so that our home can look prepared for Christmas. Although I love what the house looks like when it is decorated, I must admit that I also harbor some dread at the work required to get the house looking its “Christmas best.”

However, with the reverberations of the “Camp Adams holy place” conversation in mind I began thinking about the process and work of decorating the house in a different way. It seems that decorating the house is a way of creating holy space for the magic and mystery of Christmas to enter into our homes. The traditions that revolve around specific ornaments, Nativity scenes, Advent calendars, and even the perfect tree are all very personal ways that we prepare for the birth of Jesus. Candles, music, certain food—through memory, scent, and appearance, they all personalize the coming of the Christ child. All of these things create holy places in our homes so that the place where we gather with our loved one, the place that is our place for rest and comfort, this place is made holy by our traditional decorations.

I have a great deal of disdain for the commercial aspects of Christmas, even as I participate in many of them. Thinking about unpacking boxes and fighting with burnt-out tree lights as a part of creating a holy space where my family will welcome the Christ child makes the daunting task of decorating seem a little less stressful. It also makes it a little easier to see the advertisements that try to reduce Christmas to just another excuse to consume. As we move closer to the birth of Jesus I hope you enjoy the holy spaces that you have created in your home...may they be places where you find beauty and connection.

Advent Blessings,

**Ryan****MARY’S HEART PERFORMANCES IN OUR SANCTUARY**

<i>Thursday, December 22</i>	3:00 p.m.
<i>Friday, December 23</i>	8:00 p.m.
<i>Saturday, December 24</i>	5:30 p.m. (worship service)



The youth groups will not be meeting this week, but all youth are encouraged to attend the Hanging of the Greens on Saturday.

The Middle School and High School White Elephant Gift exchange will take place at 6:00 p.m. on *Sunday, December 18*. Youth are invited to bring a wrapped white elephant gift and a new pair of men's socks for donation to Circle of Hope when we gather. Location is yet to be determined.

## AN EVENING OF CANDLELIGHT & CAROLS

Revel in the beauty of Advent! Again **Corvallis Repertory Singers** offer the choicest carols for the season, at 7:30 p.m. on *Sunday, December 18*, in our sanctuary.

The professional-level chorus, conducted in this performance by **Hal Eastburn**, will perform, a cappella, a wide range of ancient and modern carols and spirituals, Some are familiar; some intricate, some light-hearted, some quite moving.

Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$4 for students, at Scandinavian Trading Company, Grass Roots Books Beard Frame Shop in Timberhill, and Sid Stevens in Albany.

At the door, regular admission is still \$15, but for this special concert, there is an alternative: adults may bring \$10, plus



two cans or packages of food for Linn-Benton Food share. Students will be admitted free with one can or package of food. Car pooling is encouraged.

Questions? Contact **Joan Caldwell** (753-2106 or [dcaldwell26@comcast.net](mailto:dcaldwell26@comcast.net))

## MORE HOLIDAY MUSIC

A "Holiday Serenade," featuring the **Portland Gay Men's Chorus**, will be held this *Sunday, December 11*, at 2:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church. **Jubilate!** will also perform. Music will include varying traditions of the holidays and celebrations in December: Winter, Christmas, Channukah, etc. Tickets are \$10/adults; \$5/children, students, seniors. All proceeds will benefit Corvallis/Albany PFLAG, OSU Pride Center, and the Valley AIDS Information Network.

## COOKIE BAKE AND TAKE

Do you like a nice variety of cookies to serve to family and guests but don't have time to bake them all? Women's Fellowship is sponsoring a Cookie Baking Exchange on *Wednesday, December 14*, from 9:00 a.m. to noon in Gatton Hall kitchen. Bring a batch of cookie dough ready to bake and anything that is needed to decorate or finish them. We'll bake them in our big ovens on the big cookies sheets, help each other with the finishing touches, and then share all the different kinds. Be sure to bring a container to take your share home. Contact **Monine Stebbins** (754-8039).

## CHURCH FINANCE NEWS

Financial books will close on *January 1, 2006*. We gratefully receive your donations anytime, but if you want a contribution on your 2005 Giving Statement, it must be physically at the church no later than *Sunday, January 1, 2006* and dated by *December 31, 2005*. Do your treasurers a favor and turn in requests for reimbursement of 2005 expenses now! After reporting strong October income, we had a weak November. We can never relax for a moment, can we? If we have a good December, we can still end the year without a deficit, but it will take all of us doing what we can to complete our pledges.

**Verlyne Phillips**  
**\$ \$ \$**

Beginning in January, the church will be offering the opportunity for you to make your regular donations to the church by electronic transfer from your bank account or credit card. This program is entirely voluntary and is being set up because of interest expressed by members of the congregation. A packet containing an explanation of how the program works and an application form is being sent to all households in the church. If you wish to participate starting in January, please return the completed application to the church office by *December 20*. If you have questions about the program after reading the material in the packet, please contact me at 758-5307 or 760-7437.

**Jim Cantey**

## GIVE A GIFT OF FLOWERS FOR THE CHURCH YEAR



Again in this Sunday's worship bulletin, there will be an insert provided as an opportunity for you to make a contribution to the church's Flower Fund. Donations to this fund allow the church to purchase Christmas poinsettias, Easter lilies, and flowers for other special occasions. The insert has space for you to list the names or persons in whose name you may wish to contribute – whether it be in honor, celebration, or memory of someone.

The insert will also be in the next Sunday worship bulletin; the names of the donors will then be listed alphabetically in the two Christmas Eve worship bulletins. We invite you to share in this Christmas tradition.

## THANKS FOR HEIFER SALES

Many thanks to everyone who purchased animals from Heifer International at our Advent Festival! Our total sales for this one-day event was \$4,104. Thanks also to **Priscilla Zaworski** who helped staff the table. All through the year, **Nancy Klingeman** has special cards for memorial, wedding, or birthday gifts from Heifer.

**TROOP ONE INVITES  
UCC BOYS TO GO  
ROCK CLIMBING**

The Boy Scouts of our sponsored Troop One are extending an invitation to all boys in our church who are 10-17 years old to join us for a rock climbing outing at OSU's indoor rock wall on *Monday, December 12*, from 5:30 until 8:00 p.m. This is one of the best indoor climbing facilities in Oregon, and it's a fun way to learn about the sport, whether you are interested in "bouldering" (low unroped climbing near the padded floor), or higher climbing (secured by a billet rope) that can go as high as 40 feet. It's exciting to find your way with handholds and footholds to the top, and then rappel back down. If you want to ask a boy about how it is, check with **Carl Lucker** or **Eric Hall**. Prior climbing experience is not necessary; we will teach you. If you want to go, you need to let **Frank Hall** know (752-1303) ahead of time. Cost is \$8.



**Our Thoughts and Prayers**

... are with **Betty Johnson**, who is recovering from a fractured shoulder;

... and with the **Thornton** family, following the death of **Jan's** mother, **Edith Just**;

... and with **Jim Ballard**, recovering from knee replacement surgery;

... and with **John Quesenberry**, also recovering from two surgeries, the second of which was December 8.



**Congratulations**

... to **Lara Wickes** and **Ben McIntosh**, who were married December 4 in Pasadena, California. **Liz Oettinger** officiated and, also representing Corvallis UCC was Bridesmaid **Yoshie Kimura**.

**Congratulations**

... to **Carl Christianson**, who is graduating from OSU Honor's College in Construction Engineering Management with a minor in Business. He will start work with a construction firm, Hoffman Construction, possibly in Seattle, Washington.



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Copy deadline for next issue of newsletter is Tuesday noon, December 13.

**WEEKLY CALENDAR**

*Saturday, December 10*

**4:00 p.m. Hanging of the Greens**  
 (until 8:00)

*Sunday, December 11*

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Choir  
 9:30 a.m. C E classes  
 10:30 a.m. Worship  
 (following) Occasional Congrega-  
 tional Orchestra,  
**Meeting Hall**  
 (following) Children's Choir,  
 Music Room  
 2:30-5:00 *Mary's Heart* rehearsal  
**6:00 p.m.** Read & Feed potluck  
 and games, Wickes

*Monday, December 12*

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

*Tuesday, December 13*

9:00 a.m. Staff  
 Noon Lectionary class  
 7:00 p.m. Adult Confirmation,  
 Library  
 7:30 p.m. Spirit Quest, Chapel

*Wednesday, December 14*

7:15 a.m. Breakfast Group  
 9:00 a.m. Cookie bake, exchange  
 Gatton Hall kitchen  
 5:00 p.m. *Mary's Heart* rehearsal  
 5:30 p.m. 40+ Basketball  
**NO** Bell Choir  
 7:15 p.m. Sanctuary Choir

*Thursday, December 15*

7:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 142  
 7:15 p.m. *Mary's Heart* rehearsal

**CHRISTMAS FUN AND FOOD**

**Read & Feed** will meet at 6:00 p.m.  
 on *Sunday, December 11*, for a potluck  
 supper followed by games, at the home  
 of **Bill** and **Susan Wickes**.

**Christmas Eve Services**

5:00 Instrumental carols  
 5:30 Worship and *Mary's Heart*  
 11:00 Lessons and Carols