



Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Corvallis, Oregon

Vol. XLV, No. 1

January 6, 2006

IS YOUR 2006 PLEDGE IN?

We are still missing a handful of pledge cards from church members who pledged last year. Is your pledge card perhaps buried in the "to get to" pile on your desk? If you wish to make a pledge to the 2006 budget, please try to get that pledge in to the church office by *January 9*. If you pledged last year, but are unable to continue your pledge this year, we would like to know that as well. Thank you.

Your Stewardship Committee

Plan for Winter Weekend!

Winter Weekend is coming, (Presidents' Day weekend), *February 18-20*. Mark your calendars! Numbers for this fun-filled and relaxing weekend at Suttle Lake are limited, so watch for sign-ups.

A BOX FOR SOX!?!

During the month of January we are collecting new socks (and other clothing items if you wish) to be distributed to people in need at Circle of Hope, a local drop-in shelter. The wet weather means cold feet for those who live on the streets and warm socks are greatly appreciated.

Most of the clients seen by Circle of Hope are men so men's socks are most in demand. Please look for the "BOX FOR SOX" in the foyer and donate!

INQUIRERS' CLASS THIS SUNDAY

An Inquirers' Class will be held on *Sunday evening, January 8*, at 7:00 at the home of **Ann** and **John Hawkins**. Anyone interested in learning more about the United Church of Christ and First Congregational, Corvallis is invited to participate. Part 2 of the class will be at 9:15 a.m. on *Sunday, January 22*, at the church. Please call Ann (752-5146) to indicate your interest or for further information. Class participants who decide to join the church will be received on *Sunday, February 12*.

THIS SUNDAY

Adult Forum: A presentation on Habitat for Humanity.

Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-5
Mark 1:4-11

Sermon: "Why Baptism?"
Elizabeth Oettinger

Dear Friends,

We are in a new year! But before we leave the last one behind, I need to take just a moment to reflect backwards on my experience of your generosity and commitment in 2005.

For me, that reflection begins with my profound thanks for my five months of sabbatical. It was such an important experience for me of rest and study. As I reflect back seven months after returning to work, I realize that it did what it was supposed to do. Even after a very busy Christmas season, I am filled with energy and excitement about what the future holds for our church. There are new things to try, new projects to undertake, and I am delighted by that. Thank you for that gift.

And speaking of gifts, I was looking over the preliminary year-end figures for our church's giving. As I counted up mission giving beyond what is contained in our budget, it totaled an amazing \$69,000. This includes your responses to the monthly mission offerings, other emergency offerings, your 2005 contributions to the WOW campaign and our youth mission trip. You would think that after fourteen years, I would cease to be surprised at the level of your generosity, but I was deeply moved by the numbers I saw and the compassion and commitment they represent.

You are as generous with your time as with your money. On top of all the usual work of church members, I come away from this December with a sense of real wonder about our church's production of *Mary's Heart* at Christmas. I can not begin to count up the hours spent by church staff, cast members, children and adult choir members, all those who worked on publicity, lights, make-up, costumes, sets, and miscellaneous others. Hundreds of hours to bring the story of Christmas alive and to benefit Community Outreach. (We raised about \$1,688 for the work of Community Outreach). As the play's author, I can not find words to express what it feel like to have so many people involved in trying to make my vision real. It is a figure of the Word made flesh. The production of the play is a concrete reminder of what it takes to make all of God's Word flesh, the commitment of our bodies and our hearts. And it certainly touched my heart.

Finally, it is certain at this point that the church will end 2005 financially in the black with some amount of carry-over for the 2006 budget. Please take a moment to give thanks with me. While we do not want to fall victim to the sin of pride, I think it is important to allow ourselves to be joyful and encouraged at what we have accomplished and can accomplish. Generosity of time, talent, and treasure is one of the essential spiritual disciplines. The more we stretch ourselves, the more we grow and the more we find to attempt together.

It is a privilege for me to work and serve and give with you. You have taught me more about incarnational theology than any collection of polished words by great theologians. Thank you so much for all that you are, all that you do, and all that you give. I look forward to this year's challenges.

God's blessing on you all.

Liz



Informational Meeting for Western Regional Youth Event (WRYE)

Following worship on *January 8*, there will be an informational meeting in the Fireplace Room for **high school youth and their parents** regarding WRYE. The event is open to all those who will have completed 9-12 grades in June and will take place in Colorado from *June 22-26*. Sunday's meeting will not be long but we will pass out paperwork for the event and answer initial questions. The early (save money!) deadline for registration is *February 15*, so it is important to make plans soon. Questions? Contact **Ryan** at the church or rylamb@yahoo.com.

Welcome to 2006 and thanks to all the youth who helped at prepare and serve Stone Soup on December 20, those who brought socks to donate to Circle of Hope during the youth gift exchange, and those who participated in the 24-hour fast on December 29th. Great job by everyone in *Mary's Heart* too!

This week **Middle and High School youth** will meet together from 5:00-6:30 at the church—as part of that meeting we

will have sign-ups for some childcare needs during January and do a little planning for a couple of upcoming events – bring your calendars or know your schedule for the month! See you there!

DRAMA, DESSERT AT EVENING WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Reader's Theater will be the subject of the *January 19* Women's Fellowship evening event. Women of the Church and their guests are invited to a special Theater evening with **Jean Heath** (recently in *Mary's Heart*) and her friend **Jane Donovan**. They have both been in many theater productions and will give entertaining excerpts from plays to illustrate how a reader's theater can be used in many settings.

Come at 7:00 p.m. to the Fireplace Room for light dessert and then we will move to the Meeting Hall for our special play. The Women's Fellowship Board is holding two evening meetings this year to encourage women of the church who can't come at noon, to come and get to know other women. If you need transportation, please contact **Pat Johnson** (619-4943) or **Monine Stebbins** (754-8039).



RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

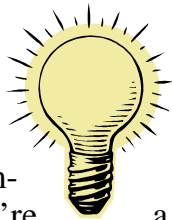
After all the wonderful music of Christmas and *Mary's Heart*, it is a pleasure to announce that another musical opportunity begins the third week of January at the church. **Adam Grieve** will start an intergenerational bell choir for people of all ages (fourth grade and older), with "beginning to early intermediate" bell-playing experience. This is a six-week commitment and a chance to learn about (or **more** about) handbell ringing.

If you or any members of your family would like to participate, please let **Ann Hawkins** (757-8122) know. Please also let her know which of the following practice times would be more convenient: Sundays following worship or Wednesdays at 6:15 p.m.

SHED SOME LIGHT ON ENERGY SAVING

Take the online home energy audit and receive four free, energy-saving compact fluorescent lights if you're a PGE or Pacific Power customer. Sponsored by Energy Trust of Oregon.

<https://www.energytrust.org/analyzer/index.html>



Also, an educational experience on smart energy use is available at the "Energy-smart University."

<http://www.energyguide.com/esu/default.asp?sid=433&referid=183&bid=eto>

A D CIRCLE TO MEET

The A D Circle will meet on *Wednesday, January 11*, at 1:30 p.m. The location is still to be determined. **Priscilla Zaworski** will lead the discussion. For further information, contact **Coral Torley** (752-0114).

AT OTHER CORVALLIS FAITH COMMUNITIES

Come and celebrate Christian Unity Week (*January 18-24*) at an Ecumenical Service on *Thursday, January 19*, at 7:00 p.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church. **Mary Jo Tully** will speak. She is Chancellor and Associate Director of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for the Archdiocese of Portland.

Noted Rabbi Richard Schachet will lead a discussion "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Judaism But Were Afraid to Ask" from 2:00-3:00 p.m. on *Sunday, January 8* at the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship. The event is free and open to the community.

Rabbi Schachet has a Doctorate in Theology from Princeton and has received the Martin Buber Award for outstanding work in Jewish Life. He has a strong background in social action and civil rights and was involved in the first dialogue between Arab and Jewish

youths in Jerusalem, participated in the sit-ins in the South, and marched with Dr. Martin Luther King.



EPIPHANY FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

Beginning this *Sunday, January 8*, our sanctuary will be filled with the work of artists in our congregation as well as the wider community. All artists of First Congregational Church are welcome to display their work at this year's show. Hanging day is *January 7*. All two-dimensional work must be ready to hang, preferably framed. Three-dimensional works should be ready to display on a table or pedestal. Please write the **title, medium, artist's name, price or insurance value** on a slip of paper. Work must be at the church by 9:00 a.m. *Saturday January 7*.



READ & FEED THIS SUNDAY

Read & Feed will meet this *Sunday, January 8*, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of **Rose and Greg Christianson**. This will be the first of two discussions of Karen Armstrong's *The Battle for God*. The January meeting will cover the book through page 166. The second part of the book will be the topic for next month's session.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Mary Bolton 1/1, Bill Buckley, Jr. 1/1, Isaac MacLean 1/4, Gregg Smith 1/5, Kim Thackray 1/5, Alessandra McCann 1/6, Marilyn Starker 1/8, Nancy Orcutt 1/12, Abi Sperling 1/12, Jim Ballard 1/13, Kaye McCluskey 1/13, Madeline Neely 1/13, Doris Sherry 1/16, Jessie Oettinger 1/18, Phillip Svela 1/20, Sara Fisk 1/24, Gretchen Morris 1/26, Myron Cropsey 1/29, Carol Huntington 1/29, Sarah Thornton 1/29

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Mark and Kim Thackray 1/9
Wally and Beth Christianson 1/14 62nd
Alan and Aleita Holcombe 1/17 31st
Karen and Rowland French 1/30

E-mail additions/corrections to **Susan Wickes** or leave in newsletter mailbox.

[left] **Monine Stebbins'** lovely Advent banner offers a wish for the New Year.

[Thanks for Brian Lee for the photo.]



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Copy deadline for next issue of newsletter is Tuesday noon, January 10.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Friday, January 6

- 7:00 a.m. First Friday Forum,
Burton's
- 7:00 p.m. Bridge Group

Saturday, January 7

- 9:00 a.m. Hanging of art show
in the sanctuary
- 6:30 p.m. Staff Christmas party

Sunday, January 8

- 9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Choir
- 9:30 a.m. C E classes
- 10:30 a.m. Worship
- (following) Meeting of high school
parents, Fireplace Rm.
(see page 3)

**5:00 p.m. Middle and High
School youth**

**7:00 p.m. Inquirers' class,
Hawkins (see page
1)**

7:00 p.m. Read & Feed,
Christianson (page 4)

Monday, January 9

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

Tuesday, January 10

- 9:00 a.m. Staff
- Noon Lectionary class
- 6:00 p.m. Budget Committee,
Conference Room
- 7:00 p.m. Adult Confirmation
- 7:00 p.m. Trustees Board

Wednesday, January 11

- 7:15 a.m. Breakfast Group
- 1:30 p.m. A D Circle (page 3)
- 5:30 p.m. 40+ Basketball
- 7:15 p.m. Sanctuary Choir

Thursday, January 12

- 7:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 142

LOOKING AHEAD: Sunday, January 15: Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday;
 Wednesday, March 1: Ash Wednesday

ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING
Sunday, January 22
following the worship service