



Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Corvallis, Oregon

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February 24, 2006

Celebrate Seminary Sunday!

This *Sunday, February 26*, is the day in the church calendar where we are invited to celebrate the work of theological education and the students who engage in that education on their way to serving the church. For our celebration, we welcome to the church **Kate Stewart**, a student at Northwest House of Theological Studies in Salem, Oregon.

Until recently, our “local” seminary was Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. PSR is a wonderful institution, but its location in the Bay Area makes it less than convenient for Oregon church people who wish to “test” their call to ministry. Older students with homes, jobs, and families are particularly impacted by this geographical barrier. Several years ago, PSR joined with four other seminaries in founding Northwest House. This seminary is designed for commuters and persons who hold full-time jobs. It has no campus or facilities of its own. Classes are held evenings and weekends. Faculty come from the sponsoring seminaries as well as local resources. Students attending Northwest House can complete as much as their first two (out of three) years in Oregon, then finish their theo-

logical degree with a resident year at one of the sponsoring seminaries. It is a new approach to offering seminary education to older, second-career students, and if you speak with the students who are part of the program, the response is enthusiastic.

Kate Stewart, our guest preacher, is in many ways a “typical” Northwest House student. Kate works in Corvallis at Summit Information Systems as a Senior Technical Consultant. Though her career path has lain, up to this point, in the world of credit unions and financial software, church has always been impor-

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THIS SUNDAY

Adult Forum: **Aleita Hass-Holcombe** and **Michael Bendixen** will report on their recent experiences in Central America with a “Witness for Peace” delegation.

Scriptures: 2 Kings 2:1-12
Mark 9:2-9

Sermon: “What Next?”
Kate Stewart

Dear Friends,

“Water for Water.” It’s a simple idea, and a Lenten project that we will be sharing with several other UCC churches in the Central Pacific Conference. We are so blessed in this country. We simply turn a spigot and out comes clean water. Even the water we use to water our gardens or wash our clothes is clean enough to drink. We take it for granted, but for many of the world’s people, the quest for clean water is a constant urgent battle, a matter of life and death.

In most parts of the world, it costs relief agencies about \$3500-5000 to dig a well that will provide potable water for a village—only \$3500-5000 for an entire village.

This year, during Lent, we are inviting the congregation to drink more water, not expensive bottled water, but the water that comes as a blessing out of your tap. Drink water as a spiritual discipline to remember what a gift clean water is. Drink water instead of lattes, sodas, alcoholic beverages, and sport drinks—and give the money you save to the “Water for Water” project of the church, money that will be used directly to drill wells in third world countries. It’s simple. It’s direct. It’s good for you! It helps your neighbor. And it is a daily exercise in mindfulness of our abundance.

Health professionals tell us that most of us don’t drink enough water. I know that I rarely drink it. I drink a lot of tea; I spend \$2.40 a day at Starbuck’s on a tall, one Equal, no-foam latte, and I share with certain covert others of the congregation a love for Coca-Cola. All that adds up. I’m going to try to go through Lent just drinking water, and I invite others of you to join me. But even if that seems too extreme for you (my colleagues are not at all sure they’re enthusiastic about my giving up caffeine altogether!), try just giving up one non-water drink a day, and give the church what you save. At the Ash Wednesday service March 1st and on March 5th, the first Sunday of Lent, we will provide those who wish with a special coffee cup “bank” in which to collect your savings.

At a recent clergy meeting, one of my ministerial colleagues expressed the hope that the CPC churches could fund the drilling of ten wells through this joint Lenten project. I’m betting that we at First Congregational can be responsible for one. There are several organizations through which we can work. More information will be available on these organizations through Lent. The fun part is that with all of them, we get to know where our well was drilled. That makes it more personal. Because we choose to drink water, the people of ????? will be able to drink water as well.

Water for Water. It’s a Lenten invitation and challenge for all of us.

Have a thoughtful week.

Liz



UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY AT OSU

You are invited to join in a celebration of ministry as we install the Rev. **Leah McCullough** as our newest Co-Director and Campus Minister with the United Campus Ministry at Westminster House. We will gather *Sunday, March 5* at 3:00 p.m. at Westminster House (corner of 23rd and Monroe). Join us for a joyful community celebration followed by time for conversation and refreshments.

Timothy Stover, Campus Minister



The **Middle and High School Youth Groups** are going bowling on *Saturday, February 25*, from 5:00 p.m. until 6:30 at Highland Bowl. Please bring \$4.50 to pay for bowling as we see who is the best bowler in the youth group. We will have prizes too! Bring a friend if you would like and contact **Ryan** at the church or at rylamb@yahoo.com if you have questions.



STILL WAFLING ON PANCAKES?

There is still time – but not much – to sign up to participate in the **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Suppers** (*February 28*). If you (and your family)

would like to join others for an informal pancake supper in the home of a member of the congregation, you need to **call the church office by noon on Saturday, February 18**, and let us know so hosts and guests can be matched up.

PFLAG LOOKS AT YOUTH ISSUES

PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Transgendered People) will hold its February meeting on *Monday, February 27*, at 6:45 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 1165 N.W. Monroe Avenue, Corvallis (in the basement Martha Room). All who celebrate diversity are welcome, gay or straight.

Jim Gouveia of Benton County Health will talk about the problem of bullying in the schools and other youth-related issues. There will also be time for sharing.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Clara McCormick 3/1, Steve Elbinger 3/1, Alex Svela 3/2, Caroline Zaworski 3/2, Natalie Lucker 3/3, Monine Stebbins 3/8, Linda Hadfield 3/9, Meghann O'Dell 3/9, Marilee Sherwood 3/13, Christopher Rorrer 3/14, Greg Christianson 3/15, Welcome Lahey 3/20, Jacob Zaworski 3/28, Logan Lamb 3/31.



MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

Harry and Ruth Freund 3/2 (61st)
Ineka and John Estabrook 3/20 (7th)

Not on our list? Contact **Susan Wickes**.

Ash Wednesday Schedule

5:30 p.m.	Soup and bread supper, Fireplace Room	
6:15 p.m.	Child care available	
6:20 p.m.	Service of penitence and imposition of ashes	
6:45-7:25 p.m.	Flash classes*	
	Bell Choir	Music Room
	Choral Skills 101	Sanctuary
	Writing Our Faith	Library
6:45-8:15 p.m.	Full-length classes*	
	Sin, Forgiveness, Grace	Conference Room
	Voluntary Simplicity	Room 8



***Sunday, February 26 is the last opportunity to sign up for Lenten classes.**

SEMINARY SUNDAY *from page 1*
 tant to Kate. Her religious path has been eclectic. She grew up in a Catholic family in Wheaton, Illinois, spent her high school years active in the Assemblies of God, college with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and her recent life as a member of First United Methodist Church in Corvallis where she has participated as part of the worship team for the Sunday evening service. The question of call to a more formal place in ministry is one that she has always answered, “Well, maybe someday, but...” Her latest “but” was answered when she found she could begin formal theological study and ministry training at Northwest House, as she further discerns her sense of call. Says Kate, “I don’t know what God has in store for me. I’ve never seen the plan. It’s more like God says, ‘turn left here,’ and I turn left.” Her last left

turn started her down the road of theological education. Where she goes from here is an open question. Kate is intelligent, perceptive, and brings a sense of humor to her understanding of life and ministry. Those who have heard her preach at First Methodist tell us we’re in for a treat. As well as preaching, Kate will be available after church to speak with those wanting to learn more about Northwest House. We hope to see you all Sunday to give her a warm welcome!

WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP LUNCH

“Adventures of Singing in China” will be the Women’s Fellowship program for their luncheon this *Wednesday, March 1* at noon. (In some of the early publicity, the meeting was scheduled a week later.) **Libby Ankarberg** and her two daughters, **Beth** and **Jennifer**, all traveled to China with the Heart of the

Valley Choir in the summer of 2005. They will share some of their adventures using video and photos as well as tell us about some outstanding events, such as singing on the Great Wall of China and at the Temple of Heaven. They also had a Royal Welcome at X'ian. Lunch is \$4 and will be served promptly at noon in Gatton Hall. The program will be presented in the Meeting Hall at 1:00. Be sure to sign up this Sunday or call the office to make a reservation.

MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Last Sunday we welcomed the following new members:

Brian and Tracey Meara

The Mearas, with daughters **Lauren**, 4, and **Elise**, 2, moved here this past summer from Kansas. Brian is an accountant at the Comptroller's Office with the Oregon State System of Higher Education, based in Corvallis. They found the United Church of Christ through the website: progressivechristianity.com. We are pleased that the high tech age steered them our way!

Leah McCullough

Leah is our new Co-Director and Minister at United Campus Ministry, Westminster House, to be installed on *March 5 [see page 3]*. Leah has been involved in campus ministry in North Carolina, Colorado, and Iowa. She formerly was Director of Recruitment and

Admissions at Iliff School of Theology. Leah's partner, **Vicki Hesse**, is a seminary student at Iliff School of Theology; she will be moving here in December 2006, after completion of her studies.



left: (l to r): Leah McCullough, Brian Meara, with Elise, and Tracey Meara are welcomed by Liz and Ryan. (Photo by Brian Lee)

DARKNESS & LIGHT IN MUSIC

Let beauty prepare us for Lent when the **Corvallis Repertory Singers** explore darkness and light on *Sunday afternoon, February 26; 3:00* at First Presbyterian Church. In **Steve Zielke's** absence, the Singers, with organ and orchestra, are being directed by visiting German conductor Dr. **Tobias Hiller** in a short Bach cantata, four Lenten motets by Poulenc, and Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*—all powerful expressions of penitence and salvation.

Familiar faces will include **Virginia Stockwell** and **Joan Caldwell** in the alto section, **Julia Lont**, **Anne Ridlington**, and **Robin Miller** (three of the four cellos), **Myles Criss** on the organ bench—

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Copy deadline for next issue of newsletter is Tuesday noon, February 28.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Saturday, February 25
 8:30-12:30 Seeking Justice in
 Health Care workshop
 5:00-6:30 Youth group bowling
Sunday, February 26
 9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Choir
 9:30 a.m. C E classes
 10:30 a.m. Worship
 (following) Learning Bell Choir
Monday, February 27
 5:30 p.m. Basketball
 6:45 p.m. PFLAG [see page 3]
 7:30 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 1
 7:30 p.m. C E Board
Shrove Tuesday, February 28
 9:00 a.m. Staff
 Noon Lectionary class
Pancake suppers
 (various times,
 depending on hosts)
 7:00 a.m. Adult Confirmation
 (6:15 supper)
 7:15 p.m. Church Council
 (6:15 supper)

Ash Wednesday, March 1
 Noon Women's Fellowship
 luncheon [see page
 4]
5:00 p.m. 40+ Basketball
5:30 p.m. Lenten meal
6:15 p.m. Child care begins
6:20 p.m. Imposition of ashes,
 Chapel
6:45 p.m. Classes begin
7:30 p.m. Sanctuary Choir
Thursday, March 2
 7:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 142
Friday, March 3
 7:30 p.m. Bridge Group

REPERTORY SINGERS from page 5
 and, back just in time, **Steve Zielke** in
 the audience!.

Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$4 for stu-
 dents. at Scandinavian Trading Company
 and Grass Roots Books, The Frame Shop
 in Timberhill, and Sid Stevens in Al-
 bany. Some will be available at the door.