Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Corvallis, Oregon

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Takarazuka Church Partnership Update

The October 2004 visit by our partner Takarazuka Church members brought an exchange of friendships and insights of Christian mission, justice, and peace from Japan. The delegation was led by Rev. **Masato Tsukuda** and included seniors to children. As was noted in this newsletter earlier this year, First Congregational was then invited to visit Takarazuka Church and Japan this fall.

At the end of October, we will be sending a delegation to visit Takarazuka Church to continue our partnership and sharing of Christian experiences and mission. The delegation will consist of **Kiko Kimura, Ryan Lambert, Marsha Gulick, Brian Lee, Nancy Klingeman, Dorothy Price,** and **Chris Rorrer.** The delegation will be officially commissioned by the Congregation during worship on *Sunday, October 22.*

Among the activities of our delegation will be visiting the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Park, Rainbow House (our sales of vests made by Takarazuka church members supported this halfway house for disabled children), homestays with church members, and a visit to the Kyosei-An retreat center which is operated by the Rev. **Juntaro Arakawa** and his wife **Natsue** who visited us last year.

GFBW NEEDS YOU!

Gifts For a Better World is an ecumenical endeavor selling fairly-traded items during a three-week period from mid-November through early December. Their efforts benefit artisans from around the world and local non-profits. This year Gifts for a Better World will take

(continued on page 3)

THIS SUNDAY

October 8

Adult Forum: The Health Ministries Committee will present information regarding state senate and representative candidates' statements about health care reform, taken from their discussions.

Scriptures: Mark 10:2-16
Job 1:1, 2:1-10

Sermon: "A Conversation With Many Voices"
Elizabeth Oettinger

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK ***Elizabeth Oettinger***

Dear Friends,

Two weeks ago, when I was in Seattle visiting Jessie—now working for a year as an Americorps volunteer for the Student Conservation Association—I had the good fortune to visit the traveling Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at the Seattle Center. For those of you not up on your biblical archeology, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered (in limestone caves near the Dead Sea in Israel) by some teen-aged Bedouin shepherds in 1946. While throwing rocks at some malingering sheep, they heard a rock strike a pottery jar. Later, they looked into the opening of a small cave and removed three clay jars filled with old scrolls. The scrolls, after some misadventure, found their way to scholars, and set off a major excavation, not just of the hilly area of the caves but also of the neighboring area. What was uncovered proved to be the settlement of an ancient religious community, which many believe to been Essene, a sect of Judaism, and many, many more scrolls and artifacts. There are over 50,000 manuscripts and manuscript fragments uncovered at Qum'ran, many of them from the Hebrew Bible. These manuscripts caused a major stir in the biblical world because they predate the next oldest manuscripts in our possession by 1000 years!

The exhibit in Seattle does a wonderful job telling the story of the scrolls and the community we believe created and used them. It makes clear distinctions between what we know, what we presume, and what we might speculate. There is an entire room of the exhibit dedicated to methods of identification and preservation for such old documents—the science is mind-boggling. There are many facsimiles of full scrolls, complete with translations, and in the final room, some of the scrolls themselves.

When I entered the exhibit, I expected to be interested; I didn't expect to be moved. But I kept thinking: these scrolls and artifacts are roughly contemporaneous with Jesus. This is what the scrolls he read looked like. These sandals, these basket fragments, these coins, these pieces of fabric, these jars—they would have been the ordinary stuff of his daily world. It touched me, and made me want to study more biblical archeology, to visit these sites, to better understand the world in which the New Testament was created.

The exhibit blended history, theology, science, technology, and imagination. What a powerful mix! If you find yourself in Seattle between now and January, it's definitely worth an afternoon.

Liz

This week the **Middle and High School** groups will gather together to watch "An Inconvenient Truth" and follow the movie with a discussion about global warming, ecology, and faith. Both groups will meet at the church at 6:00 p.m. on *October 8.* Please eat dinner before you come and bring a snack to share with the group. In honor of the movie, perhaps all of our snacks should be green! (in color, or fresh and local—you decide!)

"AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH" COMING HERE SOON

The Just Peace committee will be sponsoring an all-church showing of "An Inconvenient Truth" on *Friday, October 20*, at 7:00 p.m. with discussion to follow the 95-minute film. Copies of the film have been made available through Paramount Pictures and Interfaith Power and Light to help put a spotlight on the global and theological ramifications of global warming. Plan to attend!

OCTOBER MISSION OFFERING

This month's Mission Offering is one of five national offerings which support the work of our denomination, the United Church of Christ. Through the **Neighbors in Need** offering, the church expresses a common commitment to justice and compassion throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. One-third of the offering undergirds the work of the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM), including much-needed financial support for 20 American Indian congregations in the UCC. Two-thirds of the offering supports justice advocacy and direct service projects for such diverse things as the people of Vieques, Puerto Rico, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, the National Black Environmental & Economic Justice, and the Biblical Institute of Social Change (BISC).

GFBW ***from page 1***

place right here in our church and your help is **URGENTLY** needed.

Because we will be in two separate rooms, we need two volunteers for each shift. Please, if you are available to work one or more shifts, call **Rhonda Mueller-Warrant** (758-1667). Folks who can work during weekdays will be in high demand. Thanks for helping us.

GIVE TO THE TAKARAZUKA CHURCH OFFERING

The delegates from our partner church in Japan, Takarazuka Church, attended a Sunday worship service at First Congregational in October 2004. During the offering, they gave nearly $900 that had been collected in pledges from their congregation to honor their partner churches. In keeping with the mutual in-

terests of the two churches, one-third went to organizations selected by the Just Peace Committee, one-third went to organizations selected by the Mission Board, and one-third was held to further partnership activities.

Our congregation will send a delegation at the end of this October to visit Takarazuka Church. In keeping parity with their custom of honoring partners, the Church Council invites your contributions to our church partnership fund during the next two weeks up to the 23rd. Our delegation will then donate the collection to Takarazuka Church during the offering at their worship service.

Your donations may be deposited during the Sunday offering or mailed/dropped off directly to the church office. Please designate the donations for "church partnership."

READ & FEED MEETS

On *Sunday, October 8,* Read & Feed will meet at the home of **Bill** and **Susan Wickes**. Discussion of *Collapse* by Jared Diamond will begin at 7:00 p.m. with dessert following.

WALK A MILE FOR A CHILD

Community Outreach is raising money to support Mari's Place, its on-site therapeutic child care center that focuses on the needs of children born into difficult circumstances: homelessness, chronic poverty, drug addiction, domestic violence, or mental illness. To run the program costs an average of $689 per child per month. Some expenses are covered by the Department of Human Services; families contribute what they can; however, much of the cost must be covered by donations.

"Walk a Mile for a Child" is a one-mile walk along the Corvallis riverfront that will take place *Saturday, October 14,* at 10:00 a.m. **Liz Oettinger**, as a Community Outreach Board member, will be walking, but it would be great to have a group of walkers from the church. If you would like to walk or to sponsor a walker, there will be a table in the church foyer this Sunday to allow you to sign up. Mari's Place serves the needs of some of the most vulnerable children in our community. Your support will be appreciated.

GROUNDS CREW GIVE-AWAY!

Free riding mower: The Trustees have replaced the old lawn mower with a new one, and the old mower, a John Deere model LX 176 riding mower, has no resale value. If anyone is interested in it (free), contact **Wayne Phillips** soon. If no one is interested, it will be delivered to Fisher Implement to junk.

Free Firewood : Need a few pieces of firewood (already cut into fireplace lengths)? It's free for the taking. Look at the base of the "memorial rock" adjacent to the main entry drive just off West Hills Road. Please haul it off and make the tree trimmers happy.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Being prepared to get through a natural disaster remains a Health Ministries Committee goal for the congregation. Last spring we presented information on a family disaster plan and starting a kit of supplies needed for self-sufficiency. During 2006-07 the committee will continue to bring you practical information to increase your family preparation for disaster. With practical tips and information from emergency planners, one topic will be presented monthly. You are encouraged to use this as your reminder to complete your family disaster plan, get all the supplies recommended, teach your family how to shut off natural gas, water or electricity when it's necessary and practice your plan as a family. If one focuses on only the suggestions offered each month, within the next 12 months, one could have a complete plan. When a disaster occurs, it would be better not to have to say, "If only I had taken care of this before...." So join us in completing your preparations. Just follow the recommendations each month. The Health Ministries Committee will be happy to get your feedback as we progress through the coming months.

FOUR STEPS TO SAFETY – Part I

1. Find Out What Could Happen to You

Contact your local emergency management or civil defense office and American Red Cross chapter – be prepared to take notes:

- Ask what types of disasters are most likely to happen. Request information on how to prepare for each.
- Learn about your community's warning signals: what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Ask about animal care after disaster. Animals may not be allowed inside emergency shelters due to health regulations.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.
- Next, find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, your children's school or daycare center, and other places where your family spends time.

2. Create a Disaster Plan

Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and earthquakes to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together.

- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.
- Pick two places to meet:
  1. Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
  2. Outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact's phone number.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Plan how to take care of your pets.

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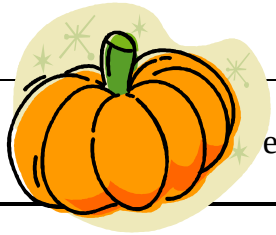

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Copy deadline for next issue of newsletter is Tuesday noon, October 10.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Friday, October 6
- 7:00 p.m. Confirmation retreat at church (through 5:00 p.m., *October 7)*

Sunday, October 8
- 9:15 a.m. Church School, Room 5
- 9:30 a.m. Adult Forum
- 9:30 a.m. God at Home class
- 10:30 a.m. Worship
- (following) Inquirers' Class, Fireplace Room
- 6:00 p.m. Middle and High School youth *(page 3)*
- 7:00 p.m. Read & Feed, Wickes

Monday, October 9
- 5:30 p.m. Basketball
- 7:30 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 1

Tuesday, October 10
- 10:30 a.m. Staff
- Noon Lectionary class
- 7:00 p.m. Budget Committee, Conference Room

Wednesday, October 11
- 1:30 p.m. A D Circle *(below)*
- 5:30 p.m. 40+ Basketball
- 7:15 p.m. Sanctuary Choir

Thursday, October 12
- 7:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 142
- 7:00 p.m. Psalm Pstudy class

A D CIRCLE BEGINS YEAR

At the first fall meeting of the A D Circle, **Eleanor MacDonald** will present the first of the UCC material from Middle Eastern and U.S.A. women concerning spiritual practices leading to hope.

Any/all women are urged to attend this gathering to try to understand some areas of world affairs. A D Circle will meet *Wednesday, October 11*, at 1:30 p.m. at **Coral Torley's** home.

Our Thoughts and Prayers

… are with **Brian Lee** and his family following the death of his Aunt **Margaret** in San Diego.