



Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Corvallis, Oregon

Vol. XLVI, No. 26

June 29, 2007



GET YOUR SALMON BARBECUE TICKETS

SUNDAY!

Salmon Barbecue tickets are available again this Sunday and crew sign-ups continue. We still need volunteers, and especially a **chair for Program!**

Tickets for the *July 15* event are \$7/adults; \$3.50/11 and under. If you won't be in church this Sunday or the next, but want to attend, just call the church office (757-8122) and leave your name, with the number of tickets to be reserved for you (adults and children).

Those not eating salmon do not need to purchase tickets, but the set-up crew will need to know who is attending so that you may be included in the count. A separate sign-up sheet will also be available for those persons.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School is fast approaching (*July 15-19*). Registration forms are available in the church office. Please register your children soon so that we have a sense of our numbers for what promises to be an exciting week.



summer worship

THIS SUNDAY – July 1

Scriptures: 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14
Music: Julie Rorrer, violin
Chris Rorrer, cello
Sermon: “Infected by Hope”
Elizabeth Oettinger

NEXT SUNDAY – July 8

Outdoor service in Hanson Grove

Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-2:3
Music: Jim Strathdee songs
Joan Caldwell, alto;
Matt Lovell, tenor/
guitar
Sermon: “Caring for
the Critters”
Ryan Lambert

REMOTE THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK*Elizabeth Oettinger*

Dear Friends,

What has over 12,000 participants, 1200 local volunteers, 450 musicians, 30 world-class speakers and performers, 22 members of the Corvallis UCC ,10 business committees, 7 plenary sessions, 5 major worship services, and best (or worst) of all—14,000 dozen cookies (that's 168,000 cookies if you are math-challenged!!!!)? It's General Synod XXVI of the United Church of Christ in Hartford, Connecticut.

I'm sitting in my hotel room late in the evening of Day 4 trying to decide how best to give you a sense of this wonderful General Synod. So let me start with the physical arrangements. We are meeting in the Hartford Civic Center. Not the Convention Center because they are in the midst of a labor dispute, but the Civic Center—think large basketball arena. The official delegates and official dignitaries sit on the floor. The rest of us climb up and down the steeply-pitched steps to sit for hours in some of the most uncomfortable seats ever created. The persons on the stage seem like stick figures to us. We are entirely dependent on the large screens overhead to see what's going on. I will say that for me, this is the Synod where the United Church of Christ grew up in its use of multi-media display and presentation. From the ever-changing backdrops to the skill of the person who operated a large camera mounted on what was probably a 20-30 foot boom, the lighting, graphics, and visual effects were stunning. They helped create a sense of intimacy and closeness in an austere and non-intimate setting.

Synod has been divided into three phases. Friday was introductions—an opening worship with a drum ensemble, organ, brass, guitars, and other varied musicians; welcomes from the governor of Connecticut, the mayor of Hartford, and the Connecticut Conference minister; the recognition of visiting dignitaries and past leaders of the church; an honoring of our past and the spirit of the uniting Synod of 1957. Well satisfied with ourselves, we adjourned for the night. Saturday was “Synod in the City”: workshops, presentations, musicians, plays, scattered through the downtown area. Saturday was also the day for our two most notable speakers: Bill Moyers in the morning, Barak Obama in the afternoon. If I could have left Synod after Moyers spoke, it would have been enough. Moyers gave essentially a sermon that lasted a little over an hour. It was the most compelling address I have ever heard in my life. It laid out, with care and erudition, the problems we face in this country and why; it proclaimed God's interests in the problems; it called the church to respond in an uncompromising, unwavering voice, and promised God's presence and help in the struggle. Classic sermonic form. It brought me to tears, not just once, but several times. Every person there I think was infected with a sense of high purpose and an urgency

to act. Obama followed in the afternoon—and he was good, but he is running for President; he has to be more careful, more centrist, and therefore less powerful than Moyers. Still, Obama's presentation spoke again of the obligation of the liberal church to act. The line that ran through his address repeated over and over again, "Our conscience will not rest until....." One last note on Saturday. In the evening there was more celebration including a laser light show and the honoring of the scientist who won a Nobel prize for the development of the laser: Dr. Townes from UC Berkeley—a long time member of Berkeley UCC.

Sunday we were given the morning off, encouraged to visit local churches. In the afternoon we met for a two-hour worship service with a choir of at least 250 persons; sermon by John Thomas, our President and General Minister; a great procession of dignitaries; and communion for about 10,000 people (imagine the logistics!). I have to admit, the service seemed a little like a camel: the organizers wanted to include everything anyone thought of—a great parade, singers, dancers, youth drama, old music, new music, hymns in several languages—and it didn't hang together as well as it could have. It was good, but not as good as Friday night's worship or Saturday morning.

After the weekend's teaching, festivities, and big events, on Monday Synod got down to business. Today and tomorrow are about reports, resolutions, elections, and the rest of our business. Business at Synod is led by the Moderator of the UCC, aided by the past-moderator and vice-moderator. All of these lay leaders are superbly prepared and competent.

So that's the official look at Synod. But General Synod is more than just the sum of its events. Last night, I ran into my best friend from Advanced Preaching class at seminary. He is now Minister of Education at Riverside Church in New York. I have thought of him so many times in the past 28 years, and there he was, in front of me. Almost simultaneously, I heard my name called, and there was one of the students from Harvard Divinity School whom I got to know on sabbatical. I'll have lunch with him tomorrow. I went to a workshop on the Middle East put on by our mission staff in Turkey, Lebanon, and Israel. Later I stopped by the Global Ministries booth in the display hall—which is an event in itself!—and talked more with mission personnel home for Synod. The wisdom and devotion of these folks who serve the church, often in primitive or dangerous circumstances, inspires me. AIDS in Africa, or unrest on the West bank, or violence in Colombia are not "issues" to them; they are the fears, frustrations, and urgencies of daily life.

With all of the above, General Synod is less a meeting than a family reunion—the good and the frustrating, old connections and new ones, work and worship, celebrating and mourning—and through it all, the cookie hospitality of the bakers of the Con-

necticut Conference. This Synod has been extraordinary, truly extraordinary. I will leave today less cynical than when I arrived; more in love and charity with my denomination than when I arrived; energized to try to really create change in the world in the name of and through the power of God. What more could one ask?

Yours faithfully,

Liz

P.S. It is for the youth to tell you their story in their words, but I am so glad we brought them here. They have been great, and Ryan and his merry band of chaperones deserve a lot of credit for their work here.



Outdoor Worship

On *Sunday, July 8*, we will gather for worship in Hanson Grove as we celebrate the beauty of God's creation and explore our call to the stewardship of God's creation. During our opening hymn, all are invited to bring examples of nature's beauty forward and place them on the altar to help create our worship space. Items might include flowers, pictures that remind you of God's creation, or other such items. Join us to sing, pray, and worship amid the beauty of Hanson Grove!

SUMMER EMERGENCY MEAL COORDINATORS NEEDED

We are looking for a couple of people to coordinate emergency meals for the months of **July** and **August**. If there is a need for emergency meals for a member of our congregation during this period, the coordinator for the month contacts someone from the list of volunteers who have offered to prepare meals. If this is a

job you can do or if you want more information about what's involved, please call **Alice Mills Morrow** (752-3541).

MAY MISSION OFFERING THANKS

Dear People of Corvallis First Congregational Church,

Thank you so much for your donation of \$1,104.50 to Northwest House of Theological Studies I know you were moved to support the school because of the people you know and appreciate so much. In addition, supporting NHTS gives donors great "bang for their buck." NHTS provides excellent seminary education at a lower cost, so students accumulate less debt and thus can afford to serve where they might not otherwise have.

What you may not know is that NHTS has received a challenge grant specifically aimed at congregational support. Vancouver First United Methodist Church has pledged to pay \$1 for every \$3 other congregations donate to NHTS from June 1, 2007 through 2008 up to a

total of \$12,000. This means that your donation will be multiplied, and the gift will be worth \$1,380.

Your gift to NHTS builds a legacy, because it helps build the Kingdom. You know the stories because you have met the people. Everywhere I go, I am touched by the stories I hear – students who could not have begun their studies elsewhere, congregations touched by Field Education students, missions filled by NHTS alumni. The seed will be multiplied. Thank you for what you have done.

Yours in Christ,

Lynn E. Ries, Director of Development

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Jody Eleveld 7/1, Susan Cowles 7/2, Dale Kirk 7/2, Doris deLespinasse 7/3, Brian Meara 7/5, John Holmes 7/7, Erin O'Dell 7/7, Mary Youmans 7/11, Eric Skillingstad 7/11, Justin Chi 7/13, Mary MacLean 7/16, Abigail Neely 7/16, Gloria Buckley 7/18, Will Zaworski 7/21, Karen French 7/26, Cliff Trow 7/27, Jean Heath 7/27, Megan Chambers 7/29, Alice Sperling 7/31



JULY ANNIVERSARIES

Rick and Amy Nafshun 7/1
Michael and Susan Henthorne 7/6
John Koch and Libby Ankarberg 7/7
(23rd)
George and Rhonda Mueller-Warrant
7/12 (33rd)

Kathy and Phil Mason 7/18 (19th)
Tim and Susan Cowles 7/25 (37th)

Are your family's occasions on our list? If not, or if corrections are needed, get the information to **Susan Wickes** via e-mail (sbwickes@comcast.net) or by dropping a note in the church office newsletter mailbox. (Anniversary dates are optional.) We don't want to leave anyone out.



*Mary Seeman and Jim Hall
invite you to share in the
celebration of their wedding
Saturday, July 7, 2007
two o'clock in the afternoon*

*First Congregational Church
4515 SW West Hills Road
Corvallis, Oregon*

*Reception following at the church
No gifts, please*

*Please reply to 752-7967
if you will attend*

Our Thoughts and Prayers

... are with **John and Ellie Erkkila's** son, **Kyle**, and his wife, **Emily**. Their home was destroyed in the fire in South Lake Tahoe, California.



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

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Saturday, June 30

10:00-2:00 Youth ministry, Eugene

Sunday, July 1

9:30 a.m. Worship

Monday, July 2

5:30 p.m. Basketball

7:30 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 1

Tuesday, July 3

7:30 p.m. Personnel Committee

Wednesday, July 4-Independence Day

Office closed

5:30 p.m. 40+ Basketball

7:00 p.m. Holy Sox practice

Friday, July 6

7:00 a.m. First Friday Forum,
 Shari's

Saturday, July 7

2:00 p.m. Seeman-Hall wedding

Sunday, July 8

9:30 a.m. **Worship in Hanson
 Grove**

7:00 p.m. Read & Feed, Wickes

7:20 p.m. Holy Sox, E. Sunset

Monday, July 9

5:30 p.m. Basketball

7:30 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 1

Tuesday, July 10

9:00 a.m. Staff

6:30 p.m. Worship Committee

7:30 p.m. Diaconate

Wednesday, July 11

7:00 a.m. Breakfast Group

5:30 p.m. 40+ Basketball

7:00 p.m. Holy Sox practice

LOOKING AHEAD: *Sunday, July 15:*
 Special musical guest **Garth Greenup**,
 principal trumpet of the New Jersey
 Symphony and featured performer this
 June's Chintimini Festival, will play for
 worship on Salmon Barbecue Sunday.

READ & FEED THIS SUNDAY

On *Sunday, July 8*, Read & Feed will
 discuss John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* at
 7:00 p.m. Hosts are **Bill** and **Susan
 Wickes**.