



# Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Corvallis, Oregon

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November 30, 2007

## Advent Festival



The Christian Education Board is hosting the annual Advent Festival in Gatton Hall during the CE hour and the fellowship time after worship, *December 2*. Plan to join us for family and intergenerational activities including: card stamping, making advent wreaths, cookie decorating, ornament making, and more. There will also be tables set up to support the Heifer Project [see page 3] and the CAAIR project. Join us as we kick off Advent in a “craft-tacular” fashion!

### PICK UP A BRIGHT GIFT TAG

Our annual Bright Gifts tree will be up this Sunday, with gift tags for Vina Moses families and residents of Janus House. Vina Moses has been distributing toys to needy children in our community for many years. Janus House is a residential facility in Corvallis for adults with mental illness. These populations are easily forgotten during the holidays.

Please select a tag or tags on Sunday. Gifts for Vina Moses need to be returned

unwrapped on *Sunday, December 9*. This is early, but in order for them to be sorted and available for families, this much lead time is required. Gifts for Janus House may be wrapped, but please include the original tree tag to identify the recipient.

### HANGING OF THE GREENS

This year the Hanging of the Greens will be on *Saturday, December 15*.

This is a great community activity to help us all get into the holiday spirit, with something for everyone: from gathering the greens and trees in the morning, to setting up to make the church ready for the decorators, to making  
*(continued on page 2)*

## THIS SUNDAY

*December 2*

### NO Adult Forum

**Scriptures:** Isaiah 2:1-5  
Matthew 24:36-44

**Sermon:** "Awaiting the  
Unexpected"  
Ryan Lambert

Dear Friends,

Advent has sneaked up on me this year. I'm not prepared to prepare! Some years I find myself anticipating Advent's call and themes of yearning. I'm ready to let my heart enter that anticipatory space. This year, however, I feel like I need to stand still a moment--or many moments--and will myself into awareness of the sacred. I confess this to you because I would guess I'm not alone in sometimes being unready to conform myself to the rhythm of the liturgical calendar.

When that happens, I take it as a reminder that spiritual life is rarely a spontaneous gift, but instead a discipline. If it were always easy, if we could always feel "Advent-y" or Christmas-y" or even thankful on demand, we wouldn't need the church; we wouldn't need the calendar; we wouldn't need worship and music and a community around us to support us in the faith remembering which is also our becoming. I was walking around the office like a liturgical Scrooge this morning, and one of my colleagues (who must be in a more Advent-receptive zone than I) began humming "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." Part of me wanted to run and flee. But when I stopped to listen, I was for the moment captured by that familiar haunting melody. It tugged at me. Whenever I hear it, I am immediately connected to 50+ Advents past, and while I struggle to find anew this year's hope-filled watching and waiting, I can fall back on the memory of how it's felt before, and the whisper of that memory moves me one step closer to where I want to be.

So, whether this year Advent catches you eager or reluctant, I invite you to come to church in this season. Enjoy the Advent Festival; hear individual faith journeys; hang the greens; sing the music; listen to a story of miracles told again. Watch and wait for stars and angels, prophets and Wise Ones. And trust that the God of all life will in time come to you and touch your yearning heart again.

Keep Advent.

**Liz**

### **GREENS *from page 1***

swags, wreaths and garlands (beginning at 4:00 p.m.). There are activities for the younger members in Gatton Hall. If cooking is your thing, help prepare the meal for the helpers. And, as always, we need people willing to clean up. Sign-ups continue in Gatton Hall this Sunday.

### **LAST DAY FOR SHOPPING AT GIFTS FOR A BETTER WORLD**

The last Gifts For A Better World shopping opportunity for this year is *Sunday, December 2*, and many lovely items remain. The store, located in the upper part of our Christian Education wing, is open after worship.

## JOIN THE OCCASIONAL CONGREGATIONAL ORCHESTRA!

Orchestral instrumentalists, young and old, are invited to play Christmas carols from 5:00-5:30 on Christmas Eve, under the direction of **Jeffrey Larkin**, Assistant to the Music Director. Rehearsals will be in the Fireplace Room after worship *December 9, 16, and 23.*



## HEIFER ANIMALS FOR SALE THIS SUNDAY

During the Advent Festival, Heifer alternative gifts will be available in Gatton Hall. We will have donor cards and animal inserts for you to send to folks on your gift list. Prices begin at \$10 for a share of rabbits, tree seedlings, pig, sheep, or goat. \$20 will buy a flock of chicks, a flock of ducks and geese or a share of a llama. A share of a water buffalo costs \$25 and a hive of honeybees is \$30. \$50 will pay for a share of a heifer or a share of animals for a knitting basket. For \$60 you can purchase a trio of rabbits, tree seedlings, or a flock of hope (chicks, ducks, and goslings). \$100 will buy a share of a milk menagerie. A pig, sheep, or goat costs \$120 while a llama or a share of "Joy to the World" is \$150. \$250 will buy a water buffalo and \$500 will pay for a heifer or a "Knitting Basket." A "Milk Menagerie" will cost \$1000 and "Joy to the World" will be \$1500. An ark filled with an assortment of animals plus camels, oxen, donkeys, and guinea pigs is worth \$5000. (Last year the combined

purchases from our congregation equaled an ark.) If you have any questions, or will not be in church on Sunday but want to make a purchase, please contact **Nancy Klingeman** (753-3350).

## *December Mission Offering* THE VINA MOSES CENTER

The person who comes to the Vina Moses Center has to prove only one thing--that she or he lives in Benton County. The person may be a low-income person, a newly employed person waiting for the first pay check, a family or individual who has lost possessions in a fire, a young widow waiting to receive death benefits, a person with disabilities who always has more expenses than income, a homeless person.

The Vina Moses Center receives donations of money and no-longer-needed clothing, household supplies, and toys from the community. Vina volunteers sort items and put them on the racks and shelves at the Center – a store with no cash registers. During a year over 3,000 families will "shop," some once or twice, some every month.

Special Programs are: The Back to School Program in August which provides clothing and school supplies to about 900 children; The Christmas Program in December which provides food and gifts. In 2006 the program served 3925 people in 1151 families; and The Infant Layette Program which provides layettes for 100 newborns each year.

If you would like more information,

would like to visit the Center, or would like to volunteer at this year's Christmas food and gift program, call **Alice Morrow** (752-3541).

### **DECEMBER 1: WORLD AIDS DAY**

In 1988, in an effort to draw attention to the needs of people living with AIDS and in an effort to raise awareness about the causes of AIDS, the World Health Organization set aside December 1 as World AIDS Day. An estimated 38.6 million people worldwide are living with HIV and more than 25 million people having died of AIDS since 1981. In the United States more than one million people are living with HIV/AIDS and there are approximately 40,000 new cases of HIV/AIDS every year. Although AIDS is not front page news, the AIDS crisis is not over!

Youth, young adults, and people of color are disproportionately effected by HIV/AIDS, but people from all demographic categories are at risk for infection. People are living longer and healthier lives even after an AIDS diagnosis, but more can be done and education is the key to ending transmission of this disease. In recognition of World AIDS Day do something—get an appointment to be tested, talk to your friends/children/grandchildren about AIDS, sign up for the UCAN (United Church of Christ AIDS Network) newsletters, and most especially, **pray** for those living with HIV/AIDS.

If you would like resources about

talking to children or youth about HIV/AIDS or about local HIV/AIDS resources, please contact **Ryan** at the church or via e-mail.

### **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BRUNCH**

Celebrate December at the annual Woman's Fellowship Holiday Brunch at 10:00 on December 5. Two speakers will give short presentations of local ministries: We Care and CAAIR. Holiday breads and fruit will be served. We will also be collecting unwrapped gifts for children served by Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence and cookies for Jackson Street Youth Shelter. For toy ideas see the bulletin board in the church hallway or contact Susie Nelson (752-1278). Sign up Sunday or call the church office.

## **Thanks**

... to **Frank Hall, Dale Kirk, Pete Klingeman, Arne Larson, Liz Oettinger, and Susie O'Shea** for leaf raking and general ground beautification services last Saturday.

## **Our Thoughts and Prayers**

... are with **Beth Riley** and her family, following the recent death of Beth's mother, **Lois**;

... and with **Josh Mater**, grandson of **Jean Mater**, posted to Iraq;

... and with **Emilie Goodling**, currently serving in Iraq.

## Advent, Christmas & Epiphany 2007



**Sunday, December 2: Advent Festival** for all ages in Gatton Hall at 9:15 and after worship. Activities include cookie and card decorating, Advent wreath making, face painting, and bird feeders. Heifer Project alternative gifts and CAAIR gift cards will be available. There are no C E classes this Sunday.

**Tuesdays in Advent:** The noon to 1:00 informal Lectionary classes this month will look at the Advent and Christmas texts. Bring your lunch, if you like, and join us in the church library when you can.

**Sundays, December 9, 16, and 23: The Adult Forum** offers "Faith Journeys" by members of the congregation at 9:30 a.m. in the Meeting Hall. December 9: Mark Thackray; December 16: Cynthia Janes, and December 23: Ted McCann.

**Sunday, December 9: Bright Gifts** will be brought forward during worship. Remember to bring your new, unwrapped gift to the worship service, or drop it off in the church office by the 12<sup>th</sup>. Soup 'n' Bread will be served following the service.

**Saturday, December 15: Hanging of the Greens** – a fun event for the whole family! 4:00 p.m. Come decorate the church for the Advent and Christmas season. There will be activities for adults and children (making paper chains, graham cracker houses, etc.). A chili and cornbread supper follows.

**Sunday, December 16:** The Bell Choir will play for worship.

**Sunday, December 23: 10:30 a.m. worship** --- "Christmas Cantata" by Daniel Pinkham, with Sanctuary Choir and brass

**Christmas Eve:**

5:00 p.m.	Instrumental carols by the Occasional Congregational Orchestra
5:30 p.m.	Family worship
10:00 p.m.	Reunion for youth group alumni, Fireplace Room (until 10:45)
11:00 p.m.	Communion service of lessons and carols with Sanctuary Choir and instrumentalists

**Sunday, December 30**

10:30 a.m. Ryan Lambert offers "The Ten Most Significant Religious Event of 2007." The Willamette University Chamber Choir will sing for worship. After the service, greens are "unhung."

**Sunday, January 6:** Epiphany Art Festival begins in sanctuary



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Copy deadline for next issue of newsletter is Tuesday noon, December 4.

**WEEKLY CALENDAR**

*Friday, November 30*

7:30 p.m. Badminton

*Sunday, December 2*

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Choir

**9:30 a.m. Advent Festival**

10:30 a.m. Worship

**(following) Advent Festival**

(following) Children's Choir rehearsal

5:00 p.m. Bell Choir rehearsal, Music Room

5:00 p.m. Middle School Youth

6:30 p.m. High School Youth

*Monday, December 3*

5:30 p.m. Basketball

*Tuesday, December 4*

9:00 a.m. Staff

Noon Lectionary class

6:30 p.m. Worship Committee

7:30 p.m. Diaconate

7:30 p.m. Personnel Committee

7:30 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 1

*Wednesday, December 5*

10:00 a.m. Women's Fellowship brunch, Fireplace Rm.

5:30 p.m. 40+ Basketball

7:15 p.m. Sanctuary Choir

*Thursday, December 6*

7:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 142

7:30 p.m. Badminton

*Friday, December 7*

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

**CYS CONCERT CELEBRATES 25 YEARS**

There will be a Corvallis Youth Symphony 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert on *Sunday, December 16*, at 7:30 p.m. at the LaSells Stewart Center. This concert features the Amelia Piano Trio. The tickets are \$10 for adults from a CYS member, or \$12 at the door. Children are admitted free with an adult. The CYS musicians in this church are **Justin Chi, Robin Miller, Chris Rorrer, Julie Rorrer, and Patrick Yun.**