



Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Corvallis, Oregon

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December 12, 2008



This *Saturday, December 13*, decorating of the church begins at 4:00 p.m., with the making of swags, wreaths, and garlands, as well as the trimming of four trees throughout the church. **Maria Wright** and her creative crew will direct activities for young children in Gatton Hall while the "older youth" among us are decorating the sanctuary. You are all welcome to participate whether you signed up or not. There will be a job for you, and fun activities for your kids.

Fellowship continues with the chili and cornbread meal in Gatton Hall for all volunteers, following the completion of the decorating.



BRIGHT GIFT SUNDAY IS HERE!

Please bring your new, unwrapped Bright Gifts, with tags attached, for Vina Moses recipients this Sunday. The gifts will be placed in front of the Communion table during the opening hymn.

The gifts for those served by **Janus**

House, a Corvallis residential facility for adults with mental illness, should be gift-wrapped, with the round tag attached. These may be brought this week or next.

If you did not pick up a bright gift tag or would like to do something more, additional children's gifts are welcome.

CALLING ALL PLEDGES

We are doing a final wrap-up of our 2009 stewardship campaign. However, there are still a number of pledges out there. Stewardship callers, please return any pledge cards you have to the church office. Those of you who are returning

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THIS SUNDAY

December 14

Adult Forum: **Aleita Hass-Holcombe** will present this week's "Faith Journey" at 9:30 in the Meeting Hall.

Scriptures: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sermon: "Reclamation Projects"
Elizabeth Oettinger

Dear Friends,

As many of you know, Kristin Rorrer, our church organist, suffered a bicycle accident last Thursday afternoon. She was hit by a car while pedaling down Walnut Blvd. She is now at home recovering from a broken vertebra in her back and a broken pelvis. She will be on indefinite leave of absence from the church while she recovers. Please keep her and Greg, Julie, and Chris in your prayers. For those of you who want to help in more concrete ways, Pat Johnson is coordinating meals for the Rorrers, and if you want to be added to the list of transportation helpers or visiting with Kristin and helping out when Greg and the kids have to be other places, please call the church.

At times like this, when trouble strikes and a variety of needs have to be filled, I am so grateful to be part of this church community. We are so blessed. Nicki Zielke has stepped forward to direct the children's choir for the Christmas pageant and Myles Criss will be returning as organist until Kristin is well again. So many of you have already volunteered to help out the Rorrers in whatever ways they need. I am reminded of the apostle Paul's words: whenever one part of the body is hurt, we all suffer; when one celebrates, we all celebrate. It matters that we are here for each other.

I also know that when an event such as a chance accident strikes so close to home, it makes many of us ponder the fragility of all life. We are none of us immune; our lives can change in an instant. That truth is always there, though often we choose to ignore it. From my perspective, our best option is simply to live our lives as aware as possible, to live our lives as appreciatively as we can, to make our lives count for something every day. Whether that "something" is simply being true and kind to those we love, or doing well at a job important to us, doing a favor for a friend, or giving beyond ourselves: we try to make it count.

Finally, and I know I'm moving here from the big picture to the smaller picture in one sense, but... in these days of health awareness, exercise awareness, environmental awareness, we encourage people to bike rather than drive. But I don't think that most of us, as drivers, have truly embraced that we share the road with our cycling friends. In the past few years, I have been aware of too many accidents that perhaps could have been avoided if drivers thought more about cyclists. More than once, I have been guilty of not looking hard enough and so not seeing. I hope that in the days and years to come, more and more of us think twice about driving and sometimes choose alternative transportation. That's going to increase our road sharing responsibility -- one more way to increase our awareness.

All that said, I wish you all peace and much joy in this season.

Liz



The youth groups will be making Christmas ornaments this *Sunday, December 14.*

Middle School will meet from 5:00-6:30 p.m. and the **High School** group, from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Bring your favorite Christmas CDs and join us! As always, friends are welcome!

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal Schedule

Sunday, December 14 -- 1:00 p.m.
Thursday, December 18 -- 6:00 p.m.
Saturday, December 20 -- 9:15 a.m.
Tuesday, December 23 -- 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, December 24 --TBA

WELCOME HOME, YOUTH GROUP ALUMS!

Youth group alumni are invited to gather in the youth room on Christmas Eve from 10:00 (until the 11:00 service) for an informal gathering with your youth group friends from the past. Cookies and cider will be provided! Plan to join us as we celebrate Christmas and reconnect with one another. Questions? Contact **Ryan** at church or via e-mail.



WE STAFF THE COLD WEATHER SHELTER, JANUARY 4-10

The Cold Weather Shelter opened on November 15 at the Westside Community Church with the help of

many volunteers. This shelter provides a safe and warm place for homeless men to stay on cold winter nights. Once again local churches and civic groups are sharing the volunteer staffing duties. Our church is responsible for staffing the shelter the week of *January 4-10.* Each night we need 2-3 people for the 6:30 p.m.-11:00 p.m. shift which entails opening the shelter, doing intake, and welcoming the men in for the night. Additionally, each night we need someone to staff the overnight shift from 11:00 p.m.-7:00 a.m. as assistance for the paid staff. Please sign up with **Ryan Lambert** if you are willing to take one of the shifts.

BELL CHOIR TO PLAY SUNDAY

Unlike the postman, the Bell Choir doesn't always ring twice, but this month we will enjoy bell music during worship two Sundays: *December 14* and *28.* The Bell Choir, under the direction of **Kim Thackray**, will play this Sunday's offertory: "A Prayer to Jesus" by Judy Hunnicutt; and the postlude: "Entrada" and "Exuberance" by Margaret R. Tucker.



ALL THINGS FINANCIAL...

The end of the year is accompanied by a flurry of financial activity. Pledges are made, pledges are completed, and other giving opportunities abound! Please keep the following in mind as the

year draws to a close.

Do your finance officers a favor and submit 2008 reimbursement requests as soon as possible!

Prepaid contributions for 2009 can be made in either 2008 or 2009. Those paid in 2008 will be credited for 2009 as far as the church is concerned, but for tax purposes they will appear on your 2008 giving records.

If you are considering prepaying your pledge, you might be interested to know that prepayments are very helpful in maintaining cash flow during the year, and we prorate them out over the year. As always, thank you for your generosity.

Contributions to be included in 2008 giving statements need to be at the church by the end of the year. Contributions brought to the church need to be there by noon on Wednesday, the 31st; those mailed need to arrive by Wednesday's delivery.

Verlyne Phillips, Treasurer

CYS WINTER CONCERT

The **Corvallis Youth Symphony's** Winter Concert is on *Sunday, December 14*, at 3:00 p.m. at LaSells Stewart Center. This concert features CYS alum and Colorado Symphony violinist **Erik Peterson**, pianist **Monica Ohuchi**, and composer and violist **Kenji Bunch**. Advance-sale tickets are \$10; \$12 at the door. Students (through high school) are admitted free when accompanied by a paying adult. Tickets are available from

CYS musicians and at Gracewinds Music. CYS musicians in this church are **Julie Rorrer, Patrick Yun** and **Gavin Milligan**.



This busy month also includes two Stone Soup Tuesdays for our church, but what better time to help feed the hungry than during the Christmas season? Please sign up Sunday to cook, serve and/or clean-up on *Tuesdays, December 16* or *30*. "Veterans" and newcomers are all welcome.

GET SOME NEEDED WORK DONE AND HELP A TEEN GO TO GUATEMALA THIS SUMMER

Tim Thornton, Laurel Goldner, Julie Rorrer, Carl Lucker, and Jenny Koch have decided to go on our Guatemala pilgrimage this summer. One of the ways the teens will be raising money for the trip is by selling Work Vouchers. Here's how it works.

1. You have a job you need help with.
2. Find a teen who can do the work.
3. Pay for the job and get a work voucher.
4. Find a time when the teen can do the work. It's easy and helps a deserving teen.

There will be a table in Gatton Hall after church each Sunday to make it easy for you to make your work purchases.

Charles Helsabeck

FELLOWSHIP HOUR IS COFFEE PLUS!

To encourage all of us to remember to come to Gatton Hall after worship, homemade cookies will be part of the fellowship time for Sundays in December. Sign ups and other informational tables will be there, instead of in the entry. It's a great place for kids and adults to eat, drink and be merry!



Dear friends at
First Congregational UCC,

Thank you for your continued generosity to Senior Meals / Meals on Wheels.

With the downturn in this economy, we are learning that more seniors have to choose between paying for medical help, in home assistance, or food. Since we ask only a donation from our clients, the "have-to-be paid" bills are taken care of first; the donations are left for a "hopefully" better day. Your gifts in their behalf, totaling \$1022.50, will go a long way toward helping our homebound and frail clients stay in their homes longer, whether recovering from surgery or long term issues with declining health and vigor.

I'm always touched by your kindness and generosity.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Janes
Corvallis Meals Site Manager



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WRITE-A-THON FOR PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE WORLDWIDE

Corvallis Community event honoring
UN International Human Rights Day
Sunday, December 14,
2:30-4:30 p.m.

Martha Room B-19,
1st United Methodist, Monroe at 11th St.

2:30 p.m.—VIEW FILM
'CONFRONTING the TRUTH' — Since 1983 Truth Commissions have been established in over 20 countries that have experienced massive human rights violations, including South Africa, Peru, East Timor & Morocco. A discussion follows.

Then, WRITE LETTERS--Write brief, encouraging, 1-2 sentence notes to a dozen Prisoners of Conscience around the world. Materials will be provided.

The event is free and all are welcome. Refreshments will be served.

Event sponsors are Corvallis Amnesty Writers, and Active for Peace and Justice. For more information, contact
LoErna 619-1379



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Copy deadline for next issue of newsletter is Tuesday noon, December 16.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Saturday, December 13

4:00 p.m. Hanging of the Greens

Sunday, December 14

- 9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Choir
- 9:30 a.m. Christian Education
- 10:30 a.m. Worship
- (following) Children's Choir
- (following) O. C. Orchestra
- (following) Soup 'n' Bread
- (following) Sanctuary Choir
- 1:00 p.m. Pageant rehearsal
- 5:00 p.m. Middle School Youth
- 6:30 p.m. High School Youth
- 6:00 p.m. Read & Feed potluck, deLespinasse**

Tuesday, December 16

- 9:00** a.m. Staff
- Noon Lectionary class
- 3:00 p.m. Stone Soup
- 7:15 p.m. Church Council
- 7:30 p.m. Spirit Quest
- 7:30 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 1

Wednesday, December 17

- 6:30 p.m. Advent worship
- 6:30 p.m. Bell Choir
- 7:00 p.m. Advent class
- 7:15 p.m. Sanctuary Choir

Thursday, December 18

- 11:45 a.m. Lunch Group
- 6:00 p.m. Pageant rehearsal
- 7:00 p.m. Girl Scout Troop 142

Friday, December 19

- 7:30 p.m. Badminton

CHRISTMAS READ & FEED

As usual, no reading, but lots of feeding at the December meeting of Read & Feed. **Doris** and **Paul deLespinasse** are hosting the potluck and game night at 6:00 on *Sunday, December 14*.

PLEDGES from page 1

your pledges yourselves, we'd like to hear from you as well. Very soon we will be constructing our final 2009 budget. We want to do that with the best information possible. Thanks for your help.