



Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Corvallis, Oregon

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December 26, 2008

CHRISTMAS STILL RINGING, SINGING

Worship this *Sunday, December 28*, features our **Bell Choir**, who will play a prelude of carols and the postlude: "Ding, Dong, Merrily on High." **Adam Grieve**, tenor, will sing "O Holy Night" as our musical offering.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEW YEAR NEWS!

During January and February the **Caring for Creation** team will be leading several Adult Forums and offering an intergenerational education event on *January 4*. Stay tuned for more details about the January 4th event, but put it on your calendar NOW!



PLEDGE PREPAYMENT POINTERS

Prepaid contributions for 2009 can be made in 2008; they 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. The office is open on the 31st. Contributions brought to the church need to be there by noon on the 31st; those mailed need to arrive by Tuesday's (post office is closed on the 31st) delivery.

GATTON HALL FLOOR TO BE REFINISHED

From *December 29* through *January 9*, there will be **no access** to Gattton Hall so that the floor refinishing can happen.

THIS SUNDAY

December 28

NO Adult Forum

Scriptures: Luke 2:21-40

Sermon: "Christmas
Remembered"
Elizabeth Oettinger

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK*Ryan Lambert*

Dear Friends,

The cold and snowy weather over the past few days has filled me again with an abiding sense of thankfulness for the warm and comfortable spaces where I spend much of my time. Over the last week I have found time to pick out a Christmas tree, play in the snow with Grace and Marin, shovel the sidewalks at our home, travel around town for various appointments, and time generally to go about my life impeded by the snow only minimally, and all of this was made easier because I could count on a warm and dry place upon my return.

As we prepare to staff the cold-weather shelter over the week of January 4-10, I would like to encourage us all to be especially mindful of our own warm spaces as we enjoy them during the cold weather and our Christmas and New Year celebrations. This is an opportunity to take special notice of all the people who gather in the warm and protected spaces of your home. It is an opportunity to notice that our church calendar shows a busy building that serves as a gathering place for many in the greater-Corvallis community. It is likewise an opportunity to take note of how inviting our spaces are when we return to them after being out in the elements *and* how our spaces provide a place for us to feel at home with our families and friends.

Finally, after taking note of how important our warm spaces are to each one of us, I would invite you to think about helping to staff the cold-weather shelter. *We still need volunteers for several of the overnight shifts and some additional people to sign up for the opening shifts. We are also still in need of snacks for several of the nights. If you can help, please contact Ryan via e-mail or via his home phone.* However, even if you are unable to help with staffing there are things that all of us can do. We can all pray for those who find themselves living in the shelter this winter. Although we don't all know their names, God does, and I am convinced that our prayers make a difference in their lives. Additionally, most of these men have no form of health insurance and thus find themselves without a way to get much needed medicines. Their stories underscore the need for better options for insurance coverage and medical care in this country and thus I would invite you to take time during the week of our shelter staffing to contact our elected officials to ask them to work to address the health care needs of every person. By tackling this one issue we can eliminate one key factor in the puzzle that is homelessness. Thank you for your help and your prayers!

Blessings,

Ryan



The youth groups will not be meeting over the holiday break. Enjoy your time off from school! Youth groups will resume in the New Year.

PARTNER CHURCH GREETING

Our brothers and sisters at First Congregational UCC in Corvallis:

Christmas greetings from Takarazuka, Japan. We are most grateful to you for your remembering us always in your prayers. Two thousands years ago, Joseph heard God's voice, saying "Do not be afraid to love," when he was alone in worry and suffering. Child Jesus was then given to Joseph as testimony to "God be with us at all times," and he persisted in true love with the aid of God's love. The same God has inspired us through you.

Though it is not very cold here in Takarazuka this year, the coldness of the world is severe, and there are many people who lost their jobs and places to live. Hard work of some people has resulted in despair. However, Christmas is not the time of despair. Christmas is the time for joy, because God is with us, who better understands our suffering than anyone else. Christmas is the time of hope that helps us live through despair with joy.

Knowing that you remember us in your prayers and keep us in your hearts

is our hope and joy. Your prayers encourage us to start walking again along a new path towards peace and justice.

We always remember you and desire to live together with you in this world made by God. We are sure our savior of peace and hope is born among us again this year.

We hope you will have a wonderful Christmas. May each of you and your family be filled with hope of redemption.

The Rev. **Masato Tsukuda**

and the Rev. **Harumi Ishikawa**

All the members of

Takarazuka Church, UCC in Japan

2009 MOVIE SERIES ON HEALTHCARE REFORM

A movie series on healthcare reform, with local resource people, will be presented on Sunday evenings in January and February at the First Presbyterian Church, 8th and Monroe. The films begin at 7:00 p.m. in Education Hall.

January 11 "Health, Money and Fear"

January 18 "Unnatural Causes - In Sickness and in Health"

January 25 "Critical Condition"

February 1 "Sick Around the World"

February 8 "The Unfinished Business of the Baby Boom

Generation: Health Care

for the 21st Century"

(Gov. John Kitzhaber

speech in March 2008)

Check out the events bulletin board for details about each program.



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Copy deadline for next issue of newsletter is Sunday, December 28.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Friday, December 26

Office closed

7:30 p.m. Badminton

Saturday, December 27

10:00 a.m. Bell Choir

Sunday, December 28

10:30 a.m. Worship

Tuesday, December 30

9:00 a.m. Staff

3:00 p.m. Stone Soup (with help from Troop 1)

Thursday, January 1

Office closed

Friday, January 2

7:00 a.m. First Friday Forum



... to all our wonderful Christmas musicians and worship leaders, and to all the pageant participants particularly **Lauren (Esary) Hurt**, pageant director, and **Susan Wickes** and **Rachell Carlisle**, who provided costumes.

Our Thoughts and Prayers

... are with **Mike Osheroff**, former member of this church, recovering at home from nine days in the hospital with pneumonia.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Mary Bolton 1/1, Bill Buckley 1/1, Isaac MacLean 1/4, Gregg Smith 1/5, Kim Thackray 1/5, Alessandra McCann 1/6, Marilyn Starker 1/8, Nancy Orcutt 1/12, Jim Ballard 1/13, Kaye McCluskey 1/13, Ed Henderlite 1/13, Doris Sherry 1/16, Sara Fisk 1/24, Gretchen Morris 1/26, Myron Cropsy 1/29, Carol Huntington 1/29, Sarah Thornton 1/29



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Kim and Mark Thackray 1/9
 Beth and Wally Christianson 1/14 64th
 Alan and Aleita Holcombe 1/17 33rd
 Karen and Rowland French 1/30