



Congregational News

From FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Corvallis, Oregon

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December 25, 2009



On the third day of Christmas, *Sunday, December 27*, our worship service will again be filled with lovely music. We will begin with carol singing so come prepared to request your favorite one!

Then, **Myles Criss** will be joined by guest musician **Lara Wickes** for two oboe and organ duets: *Où S'en vont Ces gais bergers* by Claude Balbastre and "In Thee Is Gladness" by Dale Wood.

Lara grew up in our church and is currently living in Los Angeles, where she is the principal oboe in the Santa Barbara Symphony and the New West Symphony.

INTERGENERATIONAL ICE SKATING -- JANUARY 3



Plan to join us for the 2:00-4:00 p.m. session of ice skating at the Lane County Events Center in Eugene on *January 3*. The session costs \$4.00 for students and seniors, \$5.00 for adults, and \$3.00 for skate rental. We will set up carpools after worship and plan to leave

the church by 12:45. Please bring a sack lunch to eat after worship and join us! Questions? Contact **Ryan** or **Molly** at the church or via e-mail.

Ryan Lambert will be away from Christmas Day until *January 1*. **Charles Helsabeck** will be available to provide pastoral care during this time.

CHECK YOUR CLOSETS

Our first through third grade Sunday School class continues to collect coats, gloves, scarves, socks, and blankets for less fortunate children and adults this winter. The collection box will be located in the foyer through *January 10*. Please check your closets, plan a shopping trip, and donate those items to help keep others warm through these long winter days and nights.

THIS SUNDAY

December 27

Scriptures: Luke 2:41-52
Sermon: "Parents and Children"
Elizabeth Oettinger

Dear Friends,

First of all, I want to thank the "elves" of the Women's Fellowship who were responsible for organizing and constructing the wonderful quilt given to me last Sunday and the almost equally wonderful bag it came in. And thank you to all who made quilt squares, signed the quilt, and sent your messages of good will. Added to this most recent gift are all the other thoughtful cards, letters, cookies, meals, prayers, and healing messages so many of you have sent to me over the past three months. I realize that since I told you all of my cancer diagnosis, I have not given you any formal updates. Thank you for respecting my privacy. Thank you as well for caring. So this is my official "mid-term" update.

I am 3/4 of the way through my chemotherapy. I've had four rounds of adriamycin and cytoxan and two of taxol. There are two rounds of taxol left. I saw the doctor two weeks ago; the tumor has shrunk dramatically! There was such excitement in the office at this news that I dared to ask if I could forego some of this delightful treatment. No such luck... I anticipate receiving my last dose on January 15th.

After the chemo is done, I will have a few weeks to recover and then will have surgery around the beginning of February. The surgery will require a couple of weeks of recovery time, after which I will return to work and begin radiation therapy. The radiation is, I think, a five-day-a-week process over several weeks, but it's only a few minutes per day and should not be particularly taxing. So once the surgery is over, things should get easier pretty quickly.

But I don't want you to think that my treatment up to this point has been terrible. Certainly it isn't fun, and I do have my low days, but they have become predictable, and I have an entire arsenal of strategies to deal with the less pleasant side effects. Mostly I have been able to live my life pretty normally and comfortably. More than anything else, this has been a time of counting my blessings. I have good health insurance. All the people involved in my treatment--doctors, nurses, office staff, cancer educators--have been kind, helpful, and competent. My children, my friends, my staff colleagues, and all of you have been steadfast in your support and willingness to help. All things considered, I would prefer not to have cancer, but this illness and its treatment are not without their attendant gifts. By necessity I am learning the spiritual discipline of living each day as it comes. I don't take feeling good for granted. Patience has never been my long suit, but I think I'm becoming better at it. Some amazing people have shared stories of remarkable courage and persistence with me. And, of course, I have developed a great hat collection (!) through the kindness of both friends and knitters unknown who make hats for all patients at the cancer center.

In almost every way, this experience has been less difficult than the months I spent watching Jessie wrestle with the intensive part of her cancer treatment. By the way, Jessie is doing well, loving graduate school at Berkeley, and will be having the last of her two-year course of chemotherapy on January 13th. Now that will be a celebration!!! And having a daughter who has dealt with cancer has its moments of blessing. Jessie and I have "bonded," sharing some good laughs over the more humorous indignities of this illness.

All in all, I enter this Christmas week filled with eagerness and hope. I'm ready to hear again the story of the child in the manger, ready to be reminded of a God who is constantly working miracles, both large and small, in the world. Sometimes, though, we have to be reminded to look. Sometimes we have to be reminded that believing is a choice.

You all help me make that choice every day. Thank you.

And may the blessings of Christmas be many in your homes and in your hearts this year.

Liz

SEND A NEW YEAR'S GREETING!

Steve Milligan, one of our congregation's young adults, is currently in basic training in preparation for service in the Navy. Although he won't be home for the holidays we can send him letters at:

Milligan, Steven
Ship 06 Div 907
3510 Illinois St
Great Lakes, IL 60088

This address is good through *January 7*, and we will update his address when he moves to his next post.

NEW ORLEANS DINNER

The Methodist Church is sending a team of adult volunteers back to New Orleans for their third year of helping restore Katrina-damaged homes. You can help support their efforts by attending a buffet dinner in the First United

Methodist's Community Center on *Saturday, January 9*, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Featured will be traditional foods from New Orleans and the Gulf Coast!

Doors will open at 5:30 and the buffet dinner will begin at 6:00. The cost is \$10 for adults and teens; children (12 and under) are free! Purchase tickets at the door or respond on this eVite link: <http://tiny.cc/2jAZ9>

Questions? Call **Elizabeth Nielsen** at 757-0057 or **Daryl Monk** at 753-1042.



Tim and Susan Cowles are delighted to report the safe arrival of grandson **Oliver Robert Owens**, born November 19, 2009 in New York City to **Anna** (Cowles) and **Fritz Owens**. (Tim and Susan will be celebrating Christmas in New York!)



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Copy deadline for next issue of newsletter is **Monday noon, December 29.**

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Friday, December 25 - Christmas

Office closed

**7:00 p.m. Christmas vespers,
Chapel**

Saturday, December 26

3:00 p.m. Badminton

Sunday, December 27

10:30 a.m. Worship
(following) Unhanging of the
Greens

Monday, December 28

9:00 a.m. Staff

Tuesday, December 29

3:00 p.m. Stone Soup

Friday, January 1

Office closed

Thanks

... to church "utility player" **Joe Chambers** for building the set for the early Christmas Eve service and generally doing what's need doing around here.

YOUNG ADULT GATHERING PLANNED FOR JANUARY 24

Are you between 19-30 and looking to connect with other young adults? Please set aside *January 24*, at 6:30, for an informal dinner and gathering at the church. Look for more details in coming weeks! Questions? Contact **Ryan** at the church or via e-mail.

Thanks much, to our Ryan's Carolers (of UCC), who kindly interrupted our Sunday routine at our Regency Park Place abode yesterday (where we two are thriving in our elderly years of 87 and 91). We welcomed your friendly and melodious voices--and the gorgeous Christmas basket of pink mums and green "buds-for-tomorrows," set amid green evergreen sprigs of needles--a very tasteful holiday greeting, indeed, for a couple of old coots. Everybody should be so fortunate! See you at church, as the spirit moves us.

Allen and Frances Agnew