

The Link

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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Volume 34 No. 4

God is Still Speaking,

February 28, 2012

Pastor Sabbatical in 2013

Dear Church Family,

In September of this year, I will have been at this church for five years. I am grateful to the congregation for including in my contract a provision for a three month sabbatical after having served the church for this period of time. To some, a sabbatical might sound like a fancy word for what might otherwise be described as “a really long vacation.” However, the purpose of a sabbatical is different. Sabbaticals are meant to be a time for intentional exploration and reflection that renew and rejuvenate one’s ministry. In doing research on sabbaticals, I learned two important things: (1) the practice of sabbaticals is highly valued by both the pastors and the congregations that have experienced them and (2) there is substantial grant money available to help make a positive sabbatical experience happen for both parties.

The principal source of grant money is the Lilly Foundation. This foundation awards sabbatical grants of up to \$50,000 each year. Up to \$15,000 of this grant can be used for congregational expenses and renewal activities. In 2011, 158 congregations were selected as grant recipients. The average size of the grants was \$43,177. In reading about the sabbatical projects of past grant recipients, one gets a sense of the creative nature of some of the proposed projects. One took a photo voyage through the Arctic wilderness. Another visited sites associated with the “three B’s”—Bach, Beethoven, and the Beatles. Some have done all or part of the 500-mile walking pilgrimage in Spain known as Camino de Santiago. (After having walked to Olympia, I think I will pass on that idea.)

At the last Council meeting, it was voted that our church apply for a sabbatical grant from the Lilly Foundation. A task force is being formed to work on this application. One of the jobs of the task force will be to incorporate the input of the congregation in developing a plan for renewal activities for the congregation during the sabbatical period. In the coming weeks, you will learn more from the task force about how this will happen. Task force members are still being recruited. If you are interested in joining the task force, please contact John Fite. The application is due May 11th, so we will be moving quickly in putting together the application.

Other UCC churches in our conference have received sabbatical grants from the Lilly Foundation in recent years, and I believe we have a good chance of being awarded this grant money that would serve as a tremendous boost to our resources. Your input in the coming months will be greatly appreciated.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Brooks

WORSHIP IN MARCH

March 4, 2012 Second Sunday in Lent

10 a.m. Worship Service. Rev. Brooks Berndt preaching. Infant and Toddler Care available.
10:20 a.m.: Christian Education for children 3 yrs. – Grade 7. Youth Group Meets at 11:30 a.m.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters: Judy Dahlen and Jean Matthews
Worship Leader: Bert Martin
Ushers: Aaron Cushing
Wayne and Doris Fletcher

Lenten Lunch Series

March 11, 2012 Third Sunday in Lent

10 a.m. Worship Service. Rev. Brooks Berndt preaching. Infant and Toddler Care available.
10:20 a.m.: Christian Education for children 3 yrs. – Grade 7. **Worship Volunteers:**

Greeters: Rick Dahlen and Nancy Herr
Worship Leader: Michael Torres
Ushers: Carol Pendergraft, Dwight Chapman
Darrell and Shirley Brandenburg

Lenten Lunch Series

March 18, 2012 Fourth Sunday in Lent

10 a.m. Worship Service. Rev. Pat Ross preaching. Infant and Toddler Care available.
10:20 a.m.: Christian Education for children 3 yrs. - Grade 7.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters: TBA
Worship Leader: TBA
Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King and Duke Charpentier

Lenten Lunch Series

March 25, 2012 Fifth Sunday in Lent

10 a.m. Worship Service. Rev. Brooks Berndt preaching. Infant and Toddler Care available.
10:20 a.m.: Christian Education for children 3 yrs. - Grade 7.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters: Mike and Alicia King
Worship Leader: Kim McNally
Ushers: John Bradley and John Hannon
Tom and Josiah Renner

Lenten Lunch Series

REMEMBERING OUR FAMILY IN PRAYER

Prayer requests for:

Our sons and daughters overseas, and the people of the Middle East;

CONTINUING PRAYER REQUESTS FOR:

Yahriel Harrigan	Al Ebersole
Martha White	Clarice Fossen
Emma Holden	Gloria Ross

UCC Weekly Email a Source of Great Information

Every week the UCC national office sends out an email entitled "KYE: Keeping You e-Posted." KYE is similar to a newsletter or magazine that contains news from the denomination and the broader faith communities as well as feature stories and social justice items. You can sign up for KYE at www.ucc.org/keeping-you-eposted.

Birthdays in March

March 02	Bob Schmidt
March 08	Irma Slocum
March 09	Garrett Ralph
March 11	Patty Ralph
March 12	Kristin Mauke-Wiswall
March 21	Alice Rowe
March 21	Connie Oppel
March 23	Ed Frank
March 28	Dorothea Johnson
March 30	Kathleen Williams



Happy Birthday

Community Garden Workshop

Dear Friend:

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns is pleased to invite you to attend our upcoming *Community Gardens for Congregations Workshop*. This workshop will explore how to improve the stewardship of congregation lands, build community, improve nutrition, and address hunger by using creating, expanding or improving community gardens. If your congregation is already undertaking a garden project please consider attending the workshop to share about your project and get tips on any challenges you might be facing. There will be time to network with others at the end.

The *Community Gardens for Congregations Workshop*, organized by our Interfaith Food and Farm Partnership project, will be on March 3rd from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Tualatin United Methodist Church, 20200 SW Martinazzi Ave, in Tualatin.

Please consider adding the blurb below to your upcoming bulletin or newsletter. Attached you will also find a brochure for the workshop. If you are interested in attending please fill out the registration form found in the brochure or call 503-221-1054 x210.

We hope to see you at the workshop!

Sincerely,

Jenny
Holmes
Environmental Ministries Director

P.S. For more information about IFFP, go to www.emoregon.org/food_farm.php. We have handbooks and resources available online to assist congregations in their food and farm ministries. We also have a quarterly newsletter with stories of what congregations are doing, new resources, events and more. Send an e-mail to awarren@emoregon.org with your name and affiliation to get signed up.

New Members Orientation Dinner Planned

If you are considering joining our church family, then come to Bradford Hall on Sunday, March 4th for a New Members Orientation Dinner from 5 until 7 p.m. Childcare will be provided if needed.

SMAC! Boys Mentorship Night on March 23rd

Contributed by Kristina Martin

This year at the Youth Group's boys' mentorship night, the boys will begin the evening by putting together the start of an emergency preparation kit for their homes and discussing why every home should have one. Invitations will be mailed out in early March, but boys grades 1-12 should start getting excited for a fun and Super Mega Awesome Cool night at the church on March 23!

Calendar Information

It's really easy to keep up with what's happening at First Congregational, Vancouver. We have a virtual calendar on the website.

To view the calendar, go to www.vancouverucc.org and click on the church calendar link. From the list version you may then click on Google Calendar and view the next few months.

Marriage Equality March

Contributed by Kristina Martin

My family and I marched on February 11th and it was a wonderful experience. Many things made it wonderful, but what I will long cherish was the opportunity the March gave myself and my kids to talk about marriage, family, and equality. As a parent and as an educator I want to thank Pastor Brooks Berndt, Karen Kulm, and Rev. Tara Wilkins for all their hard work in organizing and bearing to fruition the March. You gave the children of the church, both young and old, a chance to be in conversation about our faith and what it means to love. I can think of nothing more important in the Christian Education ministry than that gift. Thank you!

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

March 11, 2012
March 13, 2012

Link Deadline
Link Mailed

March 25, 2012
March 27, 2012

Link Deadline
Link Mailed

Mission & Outreach Lenten Focus “Drink Water for Life”

The “Drink Water for Life” idea originated as a Lenten observance of the 1st Congregational United Church of Christ in Salem, Oregon, which is committed to serving the poorest of the poor by funding community water and sanitation projects. The idea is simple: covenant to “give up” all pricey beverages during Lent (lattes, soda, etc), and drink water instead. Then donate all the money you have saved to a water project (wells, purification, etc) in a needy part of the world. Salem’s first year of the project raised \$3,500. Since then, their idea has spread to other churches, high schools, and universities.

We invite you to participate in “Drink Water for Life” and turn your beverages into clean drinking water to save lives in Haiti. You can learn more at www.drinkwaterforlife.org.

Lenten Luncheons Continue

We will be holding our annual Lenten Soup Luncheons in the Plymouth Room following worship through March 25th.

We will be honoring the following people for their long term contributions and dedication:

March 4	Wayne Fletcher Ed Frank
March 11	Opal Chapman Dwight Chapman
March 18	Shirl Zent Beverly Boydston
March 25	Dorothy Mathews Doraine Kohler

New Flower Chart

We have a new flower chart up just waiting for you to sign up for Sundays. It’s a perfect way to celebrate that special birthday, anniversary, memorial or just because you want to.

Be sure to sign your name and help make our sanctuary even more beautiful

Attention Ladies...

Don’t forget our breakfast scheduled for Saturday, March 9th. We’re meeting at the *Inn at the Quay* as usual, but in a different spot. The two round tables in the Southeast corner will be reserved for us under my name. This should be better for visibility (which is our main purpose). We have a good time whether there are 6 or 16. Everyone is welcome at 9:30 AM.

Hope to see you there!!

Blessings.

Connie Oppel

360-600-1098

Maundy Thursday Dinner and Service

Contributed by Virginia Dunbar.

Be sure to reserve the evening of Thursday, April 5th for our Maundy Thursday lamb dinner and service.

The dinner will begin at 6:00 and the service at 7:00. The choir will begin the service with a cantata, entitled “*Whispers of the Passion*”.

Be sure to sign up in the narthex after worship for the dinner.

Thank You

We just wanted to say thanks again to everyone for their gifts and fellowship at Tyler's celebration on January 15th. Also, a special thank you to Kristina Martin, Claudia Martin and Gina Marquardt for organizing this special event. We also look forward to making many of the tasty family recipes you shared with us. Trent and I feel so blessed to be a part of this church and have truly found our family away from home. Thanks for everything,
Rachel, Trent and Tyler Corey

“Oh my friend, it’s not what they take away from you that counts. It’s what you do with what you have left.”

~ Hubert Humphrey