

The Link

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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Volume 34 No. 7

God is Still Speaking,

April 10, 2012

Pastor's Annual Report: A Strong and Vibrant Community

When it comes to the collective life of congregations, one might say there are three types of churches:

1. Movie theater-style churches in which people come and go on Sunday like individuals going to a show. There is not much interaction, and there is no working together in ministry.
2. Royal rumble-style churches in which members are perpetually in a state of unresolved conflict. There is a lot of interaction, but it is not pleasant interaction, and the church's ministries suffer as a result.
3. Healthy family-style churches in which members are connected to each other and committed to common endeavors. There is a lot of interaction, and while there may at times be conflict, the connections and the commitments are far stronger. The end result is that ministries flourish.

During my nearly five years at our church, I have always known we are a healthy family-style church. What has increasingly impressed me, however, is just how strong and vibrant our community is when we act as a unified whole in an endeavor. This is especially the case as I look back on 2011. The Moses Project was a compelling example. Not many churches can come together on an advocacy issue that involves going to meet with lawmakers at their state capitol. We not only did it, but we did it with enthusiasm and excitement. I believe such successes have paved the way for even more success in our collective efforts. We have already seen this in the marriage equality march, and we are currently seeing this in the way our church is coming together for a second capital campaign.

We are a church in which members know how to work well with each other. While each member deserves much credit for this, I want to use this opportunity to shower appreciation on our staff members who contribute a lot of time and effort to making our church such a healthy community. Consider just a few of the signs of their accomplishments. With the energetic leadership of Virginia Dunbar, we have a choir that keeps on growing and keeps on tackling new compositions with aplomb. With the virtuoso skill of Christopher Schindler, we hear an accomplished talent on Sundays that inspires applause at the end of postludes. With a keen intellect and lots of passion for her ministry, Kristina Martin guides us in implementing a progressive Christian curriculum while also doing the difficult organizational work required for events like our Camp Adams retreat and Camp Earthwalkers. With an affable personality and a deep sense of commitment to our church, Kathy Woolley does the behind the scenes work for everything ranging from the weekly bulletin to attentive preparation for memorial services. With a caring and nurturing presence, Sara Beckman provided a safe and loving environment for children in our nursery.

A healthy church is a community with a boundless amount of potential. We are blessed to have each other as members of the body of Christ. I am eager to see what more we will accomplish in 2012.

WORSHIP IN APRIL

April 15, 2012

10 a.m. Worship Service. Rev. Roger Fuchs 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: Norma Lee Priel and Joan Blair
Worship Leader: Tracey Flynn
Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King and Duke Charpentier

April 22, 2012

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: Gertie Hettman and Ruth Hammer
Worship Leader: Leslie Wu
Ushers: John Bradley and John Hannon
Tom and Lynn Renner

April 29

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: Kathleen Williams and Doraine Kohler
Worship Leader: TBA
Ushers: TBA

Time To Celebrate Our Graduates!

If you have a graduate you would like recognized at our Graduates and Teacher Appreciation service in June, please submit to the office his/her names and graduation information. Please have this information turned in no later than May 20th so it can be included. Thank you!

THANKS TO ALL!

Gloria is doing much better in recuperating from her stroke and is looking forward to being back in church soon. The family wants to 'thank' everyone in the congregation who offered prayers and help. We thank Pastor Brooks for his visits, the Deacons for their concern, the Prayer Shawl Ministries for the beautiful prayer shawl, folks who have given us food and helped 'sit' with Gloria while Charlie was away from the home. All have shown such concern and care for Gloria and for the whole family. We are blessed to be a part of this caring congregation. Thank you, everyone! Sincerely, Gloria, Charlie, Tammy, Valerie and our grandkids.

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
Chad Laskey

Clarice Fossen
Gloria Ross

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

April 22, 2012
April 24, 2012

Link Deadline
Link Mailed

May 6, 2012
May 8, 2012

Link Deadline
Link Mailed

Mary Jo Ebel Circle

Contributed by Joanie Nelson

All women of the church are invited to attend the Mary Jo Ebel Circle at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 18. We will meet at the home of Joanie Nelson; 2859 SE Village Loop.

For directions, please call 360-254-5419. An interesting program is guaranteed.

Memorial Service for Al Ebersole

We will be *Celebrating the Life* of **Al Ebersole** on Saturday, April 21, 2012 at 11:00 a.m.

You are invited to join in remembering this wonderful member of our church family.

Thank You!!

Dear Friends,

I want to thank the people in the church for all the beautiful cards. This was a very special birthday.

When I attend church on Sundays, it is to hear Brooks plus to see my friends.

Sincerely,
Dorothea Johnson

Save The Date: May 18-19 Central Pacific Conference UCC Spring Assembly

Take a trip around the world at the 2012 Central Pacific Conference Spring Assembly on May 18-19 at Hillsdale UCC in SW Portland. In addition to voting for new officers at a brief business meeting, the assembly will include opportunities for service, fascinating workshops about the UCC presence in the four corners of the globe, and, in celebration of our new partnership with the United Church of Christ in The Philippines – Northwest Mindanao Jurisdiction, an opportunity to welcome Bishop Melzar Labuntog.

We will also welcome Jim Moos, Executive Minister for the UCC's Wider Church Ministries. Additional guests include Xiaoling Zhu, UCC Area Executive for East Asia and Pacific Partner Relations Ministry Team and Jan Aerie, UCC Mission Education and Interpretation. If you are interested in how the church has an impact locally, regionally or globally, you will find something of interest.

Everyone is welcome and invited to attend; however, if you would like to be a voting delegate representing our church, please contact Karen Kulm.

Our Guest Preacher This Sunday

The Rev. Roger Fuchs is an ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He serves as the chaplain for Operation Nightwatch, an ecumenical ministry that offers hospitality, hope, and healing to the street population of downtown Portland. He received his theological education at Western Seminary in Portland and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California. Writing, motorcycling, photography, and hiking are his favorite pastimes.

Calendar Information

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.

Adult Education

Eunita Rankins and Greg Blystone-Saum will be leading a two-part Adult Education session based on the film "Food Inc." on April 22nd and May 6th. Over the two Sundays we will view the film and discuss it. Please come for the great film, a lively discussion and some healthy snacks. You won't be disappointed!

Coffee News

Contributed by Marnie Wright

The company we get our coffee from, Equal Exchange, has decided to raise its prices tremendously. Because of this, we would have to charge \$12.00 a bag. Mission and Outreach felt that this was too high a price and so decided not to order more sale coffee.

We can now find Fair Trade, Organic coffees in the stores for less than this price. We will still be getting the coffee packs for making Coffee Hour coffee, for this price has not risen at the moment. We'll also continue to have chocolates for sale, for these prices have remained the same.

Mission and Outreach thanks you all for your support. Because denominations across the country have supported the Fair Trade, Organic sales, they have demonstrated to the stores that there is a strong customer support for this coffee product. Hooray!!

Adult Education Offering:

Continuing the issues raised in Bonnie Hennessey's "Inspired Aging" Adult Ed series, Kaye Kipp will be presenting a one-day session titled: "Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others: the Unique Needs of the End-of-Life Journey". This session combines general end-of-life information with ways you can care for yourself while you help another person through the end-of-life journey. This informative and helpful session will be on April 29th, in the Plymouth Room immediately following the congregational meeting. We hope you can come and learn more about this valuable topic.

Book Reading & Discussion God vs. Gay? The Religious Case for Equality

**April 17, 2012 7:00-9:00 pm
Q Center, 4115 N. Mississippi Ave, Portland**

Jay Michaelson is a writer, scholar, and activist whose work addresses the intersections of religion, sexuality, spirituality, and law. His newest book is God vs. Gay? The Religious Case for Equality (Beacon Press, October 2011).

Invite your friends, neighbors, fellowship groups, etc. and make a night of it at one of the many great restaurants or cafes near the Q Center.

Jay is the author of three other books and over 200 articles, essays, and works of fiction. He is the Associate Editor of Religion Dispatches, a Contributing Editor to the Forward newspaper, and Founding Editor of Zeek magazine. His work on behalf of sexual minorities in religious communities has been featured in the New York Times, CNN, and NPR, as well as several anthologies.

Jay has held teaching positions at Boston University Law School, City College of New York, and Yale University. Questions? Contact Karen Kulm.

Camp Earth Walkers, 2012

Camp Earth Walkers (VBS) will be held on August 15th – 17th from 9 am until 1 pm. The cost is \$15 per child (preschool through middle school). The theme for this year's Camp Earth Walkers is "Feeding the Spirit" and looks at how nourishing our physical body nourishes our spiritual bodies as well.

Spring has returned!

The Earth is like a child who
knows poems.

~Rainer Maria Rilke

Women's Breakfast Group

Contributed by Connie Oppel

The two round tables near the window are reserved for us at 9:30 on April 14th at the Red Lion at the Quay.

Last month, 16 of us enjoyed good fellowship and good food. It was a great morning, but there's plenty of room for more.

There's no need to call for reservations, but if you have questions, you can call me, Connie O. at 360-573-8997 or my cell at 360-600-1098.

Hope to see you there!

All-Church Retreat, 2012

This year's church retreat will be held Friday, August 17th through the evening of August 18th at the church. We will gather on Friday night for a meal and activities, people will "camp" on the church property, spend Saturday in fellowship, and end the retreat with a vespers service Saturday night. More information will be coming, but please plan on participating. We love our church family!

Princess Pals!

The girl's mentorship night (Princess Pals) will be Friday, May 18th from 6pm until 9am on Saturday. It is open to all girls in the church grades 1-12. Invitations will be mailed out to the girls in early May. Hope to see you there!

Save the Date!!!

Contributed by Nancy Fite

October 20th is a special date you need to circle in red ink on your calendar. We will be having a special concert by **Grammy** award-winning guitarist, Doug Smith. This is a good fund-raiser for our church. You will be getting more details very soon. If you have questions before that, contact Jean Beary-Stolle or Nancy Fite.



CAMP ADAMS CAMPER-SHIPS

Mission & Outreach Special Offering for April

Camp Adams is a 210-acre, forested recreational retreat center located 35 miles south of Portland near Molalla. Camp Adams provides a spiritual haven from the hectic pace of everyday life. Many of you may have fond memories of summers spent at church camp and then finally becoming a counselor when you were older.

We would also like to send as many youth as possible to the various youth camps throughout the summer. **Please consider making a donation** to our camper-ship fund by writing "Camp Adams" in the memo line of your check and placing it in the offering plate throughout April. Craving more camp for yourself? Consider volunteering to be a counselor, recreation leader or camp nurse; sponsor your kids, grandkids, neighbor kids, etc to go to camp; volunteer to drive a carpool down to camp. Registration for summer camp is now open, and you can contact Kristina Martin, CE Director for more details.

It's spring fever. That is what the name of it is. And when you've got it, you want —oh, you don't quite know what it is you do want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so!

—Mark Twain

Welcome to Our Visitors!

We are glad you have joined us this morning. We are a church committed to supporting each other in leading lives full of meaning and purpose. Through our ministries, we provide opportunities for enrichment, service, and action. If you are interested in becoming a member or have questions about us, please let Pastor Brooks know. By becoming a member, you can affirm that this is a community to which you belong. Pastor Brooks enjoys meeting one-on-one with prospective members if they are interested. He can be reached at brooks@vanucc.org or 693-1476. We will be having a New Member Orientation Dinner on Sunday, June 3rd from 5 until 7 PM. Childcare will be provided if needed.

Social Groups at UCC

Listed below are our social groups this year with their primary contact person so you can see what is being planned for each group.

Group Contacts

Hiking Group	<u>Aaron Cushing</u> 716-864-1789
Women's Sat Breakfast	<u>Connie Oppel</u> 573-8997
Ultimate Frisbee	<u>Trent Corey</u> 600-1086
Friday Night Movies	<u>Barb Harlan</u> 574-5870
Men's Breakfast	<u>Ed Frank</u> 573-3848
Sunday Brunch	<u>Carol Pendergraft</u> 993-0483
Prayer Shawl Ministry	<u>Joanie Nelson</u> 254-5419
Spirituality Group	<u>Kathleen New</u> 694-3682
Daytime Cards	<u>Joan Blair</u> 573-6505
Pinochle	<u>Darrell Brandenburg</u> 693-7981
Pinochle Subs	<u>Nancy Phelps</u> 576-0302
Bread Baking	<u>Bonnie Hennessey</u> 699-1766
Evening Book Club	<u>Ed Martin</u> 624-0038