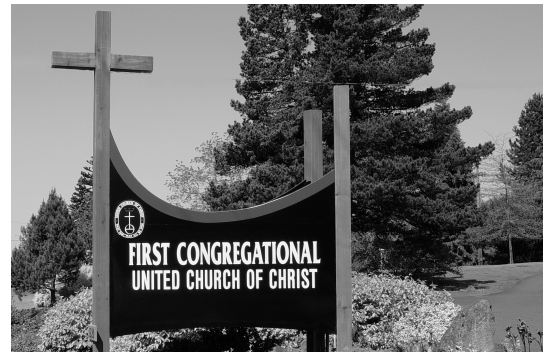


The Link

First Congregational
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Vancouver, WA 98665-0508
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Volume 34 No. 11

God is Still Speaking,

June 12, 2012

Our Church and Marriage Equality

Dear Church Family,

For the third time this year, our church was featured in print and television news stories last week. In this most recent set of stories, our marriage equality yard signs made us newsworthy. While what is most important is that people know there are Christians who support marriage equality and are willing to bear public witness as a result of their values, a potential side benefit of the signs is more visitors to our church. Despite this, a few may have concerns about our recent public advocacy.

Some may be in favor of marriage equality but nevertheless question whether we are spending “too much time on a single issue.” While I would agree that there are many worthwhile causes that deserve our attention and concern, I also believe that there are good reasons for why we should be particularly active on the issue of marriage equality. The first is that there is a **unique need** for Christian witness in support of marriage equality. Opposition to marriage equality has been waged primarily by Christians in the name of Christianity. The media has generally encouraged this view, and as a result, many in our society equate opposition with the Christian faith. Some are not even aware that Christians can think and act differently. These people need to know we exist, and they need to know why we believe what we believe. If churches like ours don’t stand up and speak out, then Christianity as a whole may well deserve blame for the denial of rights to LGBT persons.

A second reason for our continued activism on marriage equality is that we are in a **unique historical moment**. Over the course of history, there are periods in which conditions make it possible for movements to arise and win substantial changes. This was the case with the civil rights movement and the women’s rights movement, and I believe it is now the case with the marriage equality movement.

A third reason is that for the last 20 years we have had a **unique calling** as an open and affirming church. Through congregational meetings and through our on-going ministries, we have collectively discerned that our church has a special calling when it comes to issues of inclusion and equality pertaining to LGBT persons. This calling is part of our core identity as a congregation.

Undoubtedly, we have other callings. While we lacked volunteers this year to continue our focus on children’s issues, some of us are beginning to explore ways in which we can address child hunger next fall and winter. In the end, I believe there is no reason for us to place worthy causes in competition with each other. All of it is holy work. All of it is an opportunity to live out our faith.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Brooks

WORSHIP IN JUNE

June 17, 2012 Father's Day

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: Dwight and Opal Chapman
Worship Leader: Rory and Olivia Martindale
Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King and Duke Charpentier

June 24, 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: John and Ellie Bradley
Worship Leader: Joy Gerlitz
Ushers: John Bradley and John Hannon
Tom and Josiah Renner

Movie Screening Scheduled

Our church will have a free public screening of the documentary "For the Bible Tells Me So" on Saturday, June 16th at 7 pm. This award-winning documentary that features Bishop Desmond Tutu and others challenges the abuse of the Bible in condemning gay and lesbian persons. It also looks at how five Christian families responded to the realization of having a gay child.

Pastor Brooks Office Hours

My weekly office hours are at the following times:

Tuesday 11 am to 1 pm
Wednesday 4 pm to 6 pm
Saturday 3 pm to 5 pm

If possible, please contact me before visiting. I occasionally have irregular meetings, events, and emergencies that take me away from the office at these times.

Easter Honorariums

Thanks to all you generous people, we made \$735.00 towards the Capital Campaign from the Easter Sunday honorariums (special insert in the bulletin.)

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 Clarice Fossen
Tyler Corey

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

<u>Link Deadline</u>	<u>June 24, 2012</u>
<u>Link Mailed</u>	<u>June 26, 2012</u>

<u>Link Deadline</u>	<u>July 8, 2012</u>
<u>Link Mailed</u>	<u>July 10, 2012</u>

Welcome Heather Wicks!

Contributed by Kristina Martin

If you stop by the nursery on Sundays, you will see our new Nursery Attendant, Heather Wicks. We are thrilled to have Heather working with our children in the nursery. She is a junior at Union high school where she is very busy with Running Start, as well as their Chambers Choir. She plans on becoming a pediatric oncology nurse and loves children, especially small children. Welcome to First Congregational UCC Heather! We're glad you're here.

Bible Adventures Is On Hiatus for the Summer

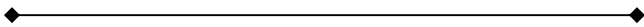
The CE ministry, after getting feedback from families and teachers, has decided that Sunday, June 16th is the last Sunday of Bible Adventures before we break for the summer. During the summer, all children preschool through high school will stay in the service with their families. Nursery care for children birth - age four is still provided as usual. Bible Adventures will resume on September 9th for Fall Kick-Off. There will be some activity sheets and pencils available in the narthex for children to complete during the service if they want one.



**JUNE 16-17
FESTIVAL AND PARADE
Waterfront Park, Portland, OR**

Our conference is once again sponsoring a booth at the festival on June 16-17, and all the conference churches will be marching together in the parade. We are allowed one vehicle in the parade, so there is limited seating for those unable to walk.

Please contact Karen Kulm lk.kulm@gmail.com to volunteer to host our booth (D-9) or if you plan to march in the parade. We will be carrying our church banner in the parade. Step-off time for the parade begins at 11:30 am, but we do not yet know our line-up position in the parade. Information about the festival, parade route, etc can all be found at www.pridenw.org.



Fun Ideas from Membership



Join us for Hawaiian Sunday at worship on **July 1st** (note the change in date). Wear your Hawaiian shirts, muumuus and flip flops and come join our fun trip to Hawaii. There will be Hawaiian treats and leis for all.



Join us for Sports Sunday at worship on **July 29th**. Wear your sports shirt/jersey or logos and come root for your favorite team. It will also be Olympics time so red, white and blue are among the options and treats will reflect the sports theme.

Mission & Outreach June Special Offering **TRIPLE POINT YOUTH GROUP**

Contributed by Gwen Moscoe and Karen Kulm

Triple Point is a local youth group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and straight ally youth, ages 13-21 years old. They provide a safe space, support, education, and information and referral services through Children’s Home Society of Washington (CHSW.) Triple Point also provides youth with a meal and structured activities during each meeting. The Vancouver chapter currently meets at the CHSW building at 1112 Columbia St, downtown Vancouver, but they are actively looking for their own building where they will be able to provide expanded services and hours for the youth.

Triple Point meets every Tuesday from 3:00 – 6:00pm for Drop-In, and the Support Group meets in the evening from 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Volunteers provide a meal for the kids and mentoring. If you are interested in volunteering or helping to provide meals, please contact Gwen Moscoe, who is currently an active volunteer, or Spring Dowse, Triple Point Program Coordinator, at 360 695-1325. You can also check out: <http://childrenshomesociety.org/triplepoint.html>

Please consider making a donation to this wonderful group of youth by writing a check to our church and noting “Triple Point” in the memo line.



Welcome New Members

Here is the information for our New Members who became a part of our church family on June 10. Please update your directories.

Tom and Patty Yates

3111 NE Edelweiss Ave
Vancouver, WA 98682
360-281-3729

thomas.a.yates@gmail.com
phunnygurl07@yahoo.com

L. Marilyn Ross

2911 SE Village Loop #372
Vancouver, WA 8683
360-433-6677

Youth Group Baked Potato Bar

The Youth Group is excited to announce the return of the Baked Potato Bar luncheon on June 24th following the service. Please come have lunch and say goodbye to Malthe Barrett who leaves for Denmark at the end of June. The cost for lunch is \$5 for adults, \$20 for a family. Many thanks to Greg Saum for helping the Youth Group bring back this fun First Congregational UCC tradition!

New Running Group and Walking Group

For the rest of this month, our new running group will meet at 9 am on Saturdays near the entrance to the Salmon Creek greenway next to the Felida Bridge and NW 36th Avenue. We also now have a walking group that will meet at the same time in the same location. Feel free to invite others. Let Pastor Brooks know if you are interested or want to be placed on the group's email list.

Doug Smith Preview & Concert:

Contributed by Nancy Fite

On **Sunday, Aug. 12th**, you will get a **preview** of the Doug Smith concert when Doug will play guitar at our Sunday church service. But the **big concert** is on **Saturday, October 20, 2012**. It will be a finger-pickin' great time with Doug and **Three Together**. Doug is a Grammy-award winning artist, and amazingly talented. Everyone who buys a ticket will have a chance to win an airplane ride around Mt St Helen's for 3 people with pilot John Fite. Tickets are \$15.00 each and will be available soon. Doug and **Three Together** are not charging us anything. They only ask that we sell their CD's at the October concert. It will be a good fund-raiser for our church!! Be there or be square!! Any questions? Ask Jean Beary Stolle or Nancy Fite.

Flowers

If you would like to provide flowers for a Sunday church service, please sign up in the narthex (chart is on the wall.) Flowers from your own garden are perfect. Thank you from Parish Life.