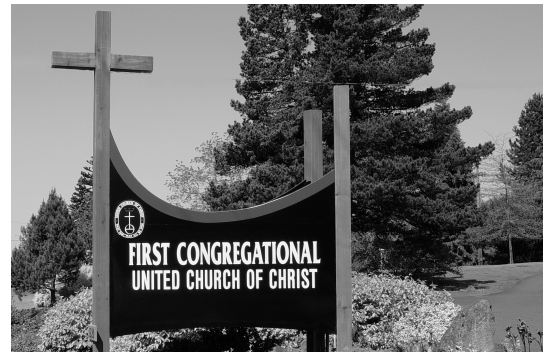


The Link

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Volume 34 No. 16

God is Still Speaking,

August 28, 2012

Dear Church Family,

In many ways, our lives are defined by both the questions we ask and the questions we answer. To be sure, life can unload on our plate its fair share of relatively inconsequential questions as when the voice from the drive through speaker asks, "Do you want fries with that?" While your waistline and heart might find this a pertinent question, life also has more hefty questions like the down-on-the-knee-will-you-marry-me kind of questions. What you ask and how you answer particular questions can have a significant impact on your life. This is true not only for our romantic lives but for our spiritual lives as well.

For this reason, our church will be taking a serious look at questions next month. Beginning on September 9th, we will start an advertised worship series entitled "A Church That Loves Questions." Over the course of five weeks, each sermon will consider one question in depth. Here is the lineup of questions:

September 9th: How Can a Church Love Questions?

September 16th: How Can a Church Embrace Science?

September 23rd: How Can a Church Find Spiritual Growth in Social Justice?

September 30th: How Can a Church Think Critically about the Bible?

October 7th: How Can a Church Support Marriage Equality?

To complement this worship series, we will begin on September 16th an adult education series entitled "Living the Questions." This is a DVD-based series that explores topics relevant to the formation of a progressive Christian faith. It features acclaimed thinkers like Marcus Borg, Helen Prejean, and John Shelby Spong. Our church is fortunate to have the Rev. Dr. Ed Martin help lead this series.

It would be great to see our church launch itself into the fall season with as much energy and vitality as we can muster. For this reason, every church member is being asked one simple question: Can you help us pack the church on September 9th? More specifically, can you not only bring yourself on this Sunday but bring a family member or friend who does not normally attend? Challenge yourself and ask if you can think of someone you know who might enjoy visiting our community of faith for the first time. Next, see if you can ask them a simple question and invite them to join you.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Brooks

WORSHIP IN SEPTEMBER

September 2, 2012 Communion

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: Ed and Ruby Frank
Worship Leader: Alice Rowe
Ushers: Aaron Cushing and Rory Martindale
Wayne and Doris Fletcher

September 9, 2012 CE Kickoff Sunday

10 a.m. Worship Service. Infant and Toddler Care available. 10:20 a.m.: Christian Education for children 3 yrs. - Grade 7. No Youth this Sunday.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters: Ruth Hammer and Joy Gerlitz
Worship Leader: Marilyn Jones
Ushers: Carol Pendergraft, Dwight Chapman
Darrell and Shirley Brandenburg

September 16, 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.

Worship Volunteers:

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

September 23, 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: Anne and Wayne Kamp
Worship Leader: Cory Saum-Blystone
Ushers: John and Joe Eckroth
Tom and Josiah Renner

September 30, 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 Kerry Lambert
Worship Leader: Bert Martin
Ushers: John Bradley and John Hannon

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>September 9, 2012</u>
<u>Link Mailed</u>	<u>September 11, 2012</u>

<u>Link Deadline</u>	<u>September 23, 2012</u>
<u>Link Mailed</u>	<u>September 25, 2012</u>

Come Celebrate Ruth Craford

A Celebration for the Life of Ruth Craford will be held in the sanctuary on Saturday, September 8th at 2:00 p.m.

You are all invited to come and celebrate how lucky we were to have had her in our church family.

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.

"Like" Us on Facebook

Facebook is a great way to let your friends and acquaintances know about our church and its events. Find us at:

www.facebook.com/vanucc

Living the Questions

In trying to describe my faith, I have now erased and started over this letter 6 times. Here goes: I believe in God. The God I believe in is an energy that I sense flows within and between all creation living, dead and inanimate. I would almost describe God as a verb instead of a noun. I believe in the power of prayer, as this is focused positive energy that flows toward the need. As a Christian, I believe this means I follow the teachings of Christ, not Paul, not Peter, or others. I consider the Bible as a source of inspiration and lessons, but not a literal "how to" book with rules and regulations that are frequently up for interpretation. The basis to my faith is "Love God and Love your neighbor as yourself." All other thoughts and considerations must first pass the questions "Is this loving God? Is this loving my neighbor? Is this loving myself? My faith has grown and changed as have I. I hope to be forever evolving in my faith journey.

In support of all of our faith journey's the CE ministry will be offering "Living the Questions," a 2 DVD series beginning Sept. 16th. Our committee knows that many members of this church hunger for the opportunity to explore their faith within a safe environment, explore what it means to be a UCC member, and to have the opportunity to question. I greatly look forward to this learning opportunity and faith growth event. I hope you will join me! Mark your calendars.
Lynn Renner

Worship This Sunday September 2, 2012

This Sunday, in commemoration of Labor Day, we will look at issues of fairness and justice for workers from the perspective of the longstanding commitments of our faith and our denomination. Mission and Outreach has invited a local worker from Fred Meyer to speak briefly for our Moment for Mission that Sunday.

Attention Choir Members

We begin our "singing-year" on Wed., September 5th at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. It will be fun to see "you-all" as many of you took a break this summer! I have several surprises up my sleeve for you so you won't want to miss the first rehearsal.

After singing our hearts out, we will enjoy some carrot-cake together. See you soon!
Virginia

Bible Adventures Kicks Off!

Fall is quickly approaching, which means it is time for our church kids to get back to church school! Bible Adventures classes will resume on September 9th. During the children's sermon, Kristina Martin will recognize all the children who are "flying up" to the next grade level. An exciting change to Bible Adventures is the that we've added a grade level to best suit the needs of our children. This next year there will be the following classrooms: preschool (ages 4-Kindergarten), primary (grades 1-2), intermediate (grades 3-5) and middle (grades 6-8).

Please stay after church and celebrate with the CE ministry the kick-off for children's religious education with our annual Kick-Off lunch of BBQ sandwiches and lemonade. If you'd like to donate a crock-pot of pulled pork or chicken (or vegetarian option) please let Kristina Martin know by September 2nd.

Spectacular Hike for the Whole Family

On Saturday, September 22nd, all are welcome to join our hiking group for one of the most scenic hikes on the Columbia River. We will do the Wahclella Falls hike that day. It is an easy two mile hike that leads to a beautiful waterfall. We will meet in the church parking lot at 9 am to carpool. The hike is less than an hour away. After the hike, we will go to Edgefield McMenamins for lunch. If you are interested in joining us, either sign up in the narthex on Sunday morning or email Aaron Cushing at fishguyac@gmail.com.

September 9th: Pack the Church Sunday!

On September 9th, we want to Pack the Church! Bring yourselves, bring your friends, bring your neighbors. We want to feel as much energy and vitality in our church that Sunday as we can possibly muster, because we will be kicking off our fall programming on that day. On September 9th, we will be starting our fall education programming for our children, and we will also be starting a five week worship series that we will be advertising to the broader community. Please come and invite others to come.

Seeking God

Pam Osborne will again be leading two small groups at church this year called "Seeking God Together." They are designed to help participants see and recognize the movement of God's Spirit in their day-to-day lives. The groups will provide each member with discerning, caring, empathetic companions to walk with on their spiritual journeys and to have this time set aside on a regular basis to reflect on God's presence in their lives. The majority of the content will come out of issues and experiences that individuals bring to the group when we will listen for God's voice and look for God's leading. Each session may begin with a short visualization, theme, poem, etc., or we might explore spiritual exercises such as centering prayer, walking meditation, connections with nature, etc. to deepen our relationships with God.

Each group will meet once a month (October to May) for two hours and be limited to seven participants so that each person has time to share. One group is already full, so don't delay if you're thinking about signing up. Talk to Pam in the Narthex after church, call her at 750-1353, or send email to posborne430@gmail.com. The deadline for committing is September 23rd.



Saturday, September 8th
Esther Short Park
9 am to 5 pm ~ free!

SAVE THE DATE! Activities include music, poetry, vendors, and children's activities. Food of all kinds is available next door at the Farmer's Market.

Our church is again sponsoring a table and we would love to have your help in telling the community about how we are involved in peace, justice, and trying to make our world a better place. Join us in the park for a fun day!

To volunteer for our table, call Karen at 991-5774 or email at: lk.kulm@gmail.com. A sign-up sheet will be available in the narthex later this month.

New Running Group and Walking Group

Our new running and walking groups are off to a great start! Both groups meet at 9 am on Saturdays near the entrance to the Salmon Creek greenway next to the Felida Bridge and NW 36th Avenue. Some of our runners who do distances over 6 miles in length will start earlier in the morning and then join the others when they arrive.

Let Pastor Brooks know if you are interested in joining either the runners or the walkers.

Organ Repair - Funds Needed

Our beautiful Johannus organ, which is over 20 years old, is badly in need of attention. Ed Frank has started a fund of \$500 and some of the choir members, as a group, have promised another \$500. Now, we need some help from the congregation. We know the cost will be over \$1400. Can you help? We are hoping to get the repair done during the summer. Please call Virginia Dunbar at 360-573-0353 or e-mail her at vehonda@comcast.net or speak to her at a worship service if you can donate. Thank-you for your interest.

Central Pacific Conference Women's Retreat

"Listen!! God is Speaking!!"

October 12-14

Camp Adams, Molalla, Oregon

This year's Women's Camp will focus on how to listen for the voice of God. So, plan to learn some new spiritual practices and why "God is Still Speaking" to us!

Join us at Camp Adams to worship, discuss, meditate, sing, and play together. Total retreat Fee is \$105.00 which includes a \$65.00 pre-registration fee. The pre-registration is transferrable but not non-refundable.

The Rev. Lea Mathieu will serve as resource leader for the retreat.

Registration forms are available in the office, and the Narthex. Scholarship information is included in the brochure.



Mission & Outreach Special Offering For September is JUBILEE USA

Jubilee USA Network is an alliance of churches, labor, environmental, solidarity, and community organizations. They aim to build a grassroots movement to achieve the cancellation of debt owed by countries with high levels of human need, the cancellation of odious debt, and an end to the imposition of economic policies as a condition for debt relief. Jubilee USA promotes its mission through public education, grassroots organizing, policy analysis and advocacy. In addition, Jubilee USA is also part of a global partnership, with Jubilee organizations in more than 50 countries.

Our church voted to become a Jubilee Congregation several years ago. As part of our commitment, we take an annual offering, educate ourselves on debt issues, and conduct post card campaigns.

Portland area Jubilee Congregations meet monthly on the 2nd Wednesday at 7PM at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1624 Northeast Hancock Street. Visit the Jubilee Oregon website at: www.jubileeoregon.org for information.

You can learn more about Jubilee USA's international and national work by going to their blog at www.jubileeusa.typepad.com and signing up for updates.



Signs – Signs – Signs!

Show Your Pride With This Attractive Sign!

This sign is available for a \$5.00 donation. It would look great in your yard next to your "My Church Supports Marriage Equality" yard sign!

The opponents to marriage equality are gearing up for a media campaign designed to frighten and confuse voters. One of their main talking points will be that "Christians oppose 'gay marriage.'" So come out as a person of faith for marriage equality. Post a yard sign. have conversations with your friends, family and co-workers telling them your personal story about why, as a person of faith, you support marriage equality.

Contact Karen Kulm for your yard sign or to get involved in phone-banking for marriage equality at lk.kulm@gmail.com.

Keeping You e-Posted

Our denomination has a weekly email newsletter with articles, feature stories, resource listings, and justice-action items. It is called "Keeping You e-Posted" or simply KYeP. A recent issue featured information on a new initiative in the UCC that invites congregations "to green up, power down, and shout out for the environment" over the course of the 50 days that extend from Easter to Pentecost next Spring. Other articles and commentaries discussed everything from Planned Parenthood to an annual holy smoke barbeque event at a UCC church in Utah. You can sign up for the newsletter at <http://www.ucc.org/news/keeping-you-eposted>

Tickets Now Available For Doug Smith Concert

Once you hear Grammy-Award winning Doug Smith play guitar, you will become a groupie. You will have an opportunity to do that on Saturday, October 20, 2012, at our own Vancouver First Congregational Church. 7:30p.m. Tickets are \$15. This concert also includes a set by Three Together with Doug and wife Judy Koch plus Don Mitchell. All the profits of this concert go to our church, a very generous arrangement by this group. All they ask is they we sell their CD's. We will also be selling refreshments at intermission, so if you are interested in donating your favorite fancy cookies or dessert, please contact Joan Blair. For tickets and further information, please contact Nancy Fite 696-0380 or Jeanie Beary Stolle 360-574-9011 .

Men's Breakfast to Resume

The *Men's Breakfast Group* is set to resume on Saturday, September 15th at 8:30 a.m. in Bradford Hall.

Once again, the men will be served a wonderful breakfast by our youth led by the incomparable Tom Renner.

The program for the gathering will be announced in the next Link. Be sure to mark the date!

Honoring our 'Senior-Seniors'

On August 19th we honored our 90 + year old members of our church family by *Celebrating the Saints Among Us*.

Our family members honored were:

Agnes Alexander

Ed Frank

Ruby Frank

Grace Brandis

Carolyn Hatfield

June Lasher

John Priel

Cliff Boydston

Irma Slocum

Charlotte Warren

Al Duvall

and

Dorothea Johnson

Thanksgiving for Generosity

Recently, a former member and longtime friend of the church named Beverly Doty contacted the church to make arrangements for including our church in her estate planning. Doty's generosity in thinking of our church was gratefully received and acknowledged. Doty mentioned with fondness the helpful ministry of Farley and Mary Maxwell as a motivating factor in her planning. She also cited an appreciation for the many UCC ministers who had helped her and her family over the years as they moved from one place to another.

Women's Saturday Breakfast

Contributed by Connie Oppel

Remember ladies, our tables will be ready for us the 2nd Saturday of each month at 9:30 a.m. at the Red Lion Inn at the Quay.

All are welcome for a great time of fellowship and good food. Just show up.

Questions? Call Connie at 573-8997 or 600-1098.

Mark your calendars now for September 8th!

You're Invited to a Garden Hat Party

Every year David and I do a fundraiser for different non-profits, and this year we have chosen our church and Altrusa of Clark County. On September 15th, we will be hosting a Garden Hat Party for our fundraiser! Those who attend must wear a garden hat. There will be a contest for best hat. Three prizes will be given to those who win. Last year our hat winner made her hat out of duct tape, and it was so cute we all wanted one. As part of the festivities, we will have a "very large" salad bar. In the past, our guests have ranged in age 15 to 100. The event is \$15.00 per person, and we will split the proceeds between the two non-profits. Please RSVP by September 10th and pre-pay to Teresa Everist. You can mail checks to 12610 SE Angus St, Vancouver, WA 98683. The party starts at 11:00 am.

Theresa and David Everist

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO BRING A FRIEND