

The Link

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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Volume 34 No. 22

God is Still Speaking,

November 27, 2012

The Meaning of Advent

Dear Church Family,

Whether it is my collection of wood carved Santas, my fondness for gingerbread houses, or my annual trip to see the Christmas lights of Peacock Lane, I have a deep love for all the Christmas joys that December brings. However, I also know there is a distinction between these holiday traditions and Advent. While Advent has its feelings of hope and gladness, it also comes with a longing and a tension. The party has not yet truly begun. We acutely feel that all is not right with the world, and we yearn for God to come into our midst. We feel the contrast between the night that *is* and the light that *ought to be*. We wait for the light. We watch for it. We may even ache for it. This is not the stuff of plum fairies and gingerbread men. This is the stuff of suffering met with prayer.

I mention all of this not because I want more December rain to fall upon the Christmas parade. I mention all of this because I think Advent is what makes the joy of Christmas day real and authentic, deep and profound. With that said, I will not be doing away with any of the traditions that I observe in the days leading up to Christmas. They still have an important place in my life. They bring delight to my family and me. They stir cherished memories. For me, Advent and the Christmas traditions of December are not mutually exclusive. They simply serve different purposes.

While I encourage everyone to continue holiday customs and activities in the month to come, I also invite each of you to make the most of Advent as well. Take note of the wrongs and injustices of the night hour, but, as one writer puts it, also anticipate that “burning fire whose light chases away every shadow, floods every corner, and turns midnight into noon.”

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Brooks

WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

December 2, 2012 First Sunday of Advent

10 a.m. Communion 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: Nita Calvert and Daryl DeSilva
Worship Leader: Cory Saum-Blystone
Ushers: Aaron Cushing, Rory Martindale
Wayne and Doris Fletcher

3:00 PM

Advent Festival in Bradford Hall

December 9, 2012 Second Sunday of Advent

10 a.m. **Children's Pageant**. No Bible Adventures or Youth Group today.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters: Aaron and Lisa Cushing
Worship Leader: Jerry Mathis
Ushers: Carol Pendergraft, Dwight Chapman
Darrell and Shirley Brandenburg

December 16, 2011 Third Sunday of Advent

10 a.m. **Choir Program**. 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: Gail Schmidt and Charlotte Warren
Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King and Duke Charpentier

December 23, 2012 Fourth Sunday of Advent

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: Karen Kulm and Leslie Wu
Worship Leader: John Fite
Ushers: Joe and John Eckroth
Tom and Josiah Renner

December 24, 2012 Christmas Eve Service

8:00 pm . Worship Service. Rev. Brooks Berndt preaching. Infant and Toddler Care available.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters:
Worship Leader:
Ushers:

December 30, 2012 Christmas Brunch

10:00 AM in Bradford Hall. No Bible Adventures or Youth Group this morning.

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

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family of longtime member, **Grace Brandis** who passed away this week. A celebration of her life will be held this Saturday, December 1, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

December 9, 2012
December 11, 2012

Link Deadline
Link Mailed

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.

Birthdays in December

December 2	Nancy Woodworth
December 3	Carol Fish
December 6	Agnes Alexander
December 6	Norma Priel
December 8	Olivia Martindale
December 11	Duke Charpentier
December 11	Brenda Charpentier
December 13	Judy Walter
December 16	Gwen Moscoe
December 22	Tracey Flynn
December 27	Tim Ralph

Happy Birthday to You-oooooooooooo

Advent Festival

Contributed by Kristina Martin

Please plan on attending the annual Advent Festival on Sunday, December 2, 2012 from 3-5 pm. This is a fun holiday activity for the entire family which includes Christmas crafts such as making a gingerbread house, frosting cookies, making an ornament, et cetera. Hosted by the Christian Education ministry with snacks provided by the Parish Life ministry, the Advent Festival is a church family favorite!

Christmas Cookie Bakers Needed

Contributed by Kristina Martin

It is our tradition to set out cookies for the coffee hour following the Choir's Christmas Festival. The children of the church bake some cookies to serve but we always need more cookies than what the children can make during the service. Please consider bringing some cookies on December 16th. Tables will be set up in the narthex for you to leave your plate of cookies on. **Please contact Kristina Martin if you can donate some snicker doodle cookie dough for the children to bake. Thank you!!!**

Christmas Baskets Raffle Fund Raiser

Contributed by Kristina Martin

For the month of November, the Youth Group has been selling raffle tickets for NINE lovely baskets donated in support of the Youth Group's Youth Fund. This fund provides monies for registration and travel expenses for conference, regional, and national youth events.

There are THREE Youth Fund fundraisers planned for the 2012-2013 year:

- Christmas Baskets, raffled off at the Advent Festival on December 2, 2012
- Baked Potato Bar, after church in Bradford Hall, St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2013
- Pancake Breakfast, Palm Sunday, on March 24, 2013

Thank you so much for supporting the Youth Group! Your support means the world to us!

Welcome New Members

Please add the following new members to your directory:

Joseph Stradley and Janessa Ortwine

Jayden Marshal, Evan and Lenna Stradley
10107 NE 142nd Ave
Vancouver, WA 98682
Janessa cell: 503-697-8720
Joseph Cell: 503-522-9481
E-mails:
Janessa: jmobug77@yahoo.com
Joseph: Jo Jo Stradley@yahoo.com

Allison Kocher

Ethyn McLaughlin, Rowan McLaughlin
8711 NE 107th Ave
Vancouver, WA 98662
360-521-2781
ilvkids@gmail.com

Kimberly Kangas and Sharie Lewis

Grace Gatlin
10611 NE 112th Place
Vancouver, WA 98662
Kimberly: 360-281-0473
Sharie: 503-516-0693
sharielewis@comcast.net
kimberlykangas@comcast.net

Susan Ross and Andy Allensworth

Shelby Allensworth, Sarah Allensworth,
Sheila Schrieber
11217 NE 110th Ave
Vancouver, WA 98662
360-975-2028
susanm.ross@gmail.com

CHRISTMAS PARTY YOUTH GROUP

The annual Youth Group and Families Christmas Party is December 16th, at 11:30 at Kristina's home. (2212 D Street, Vancouver 98663) Kristina will provide pulled pork BBQ sandwiches (veggie option available) and drinks. Bring a potluck item and a **WRAPPED White Elephant gift – one per person wanting to participate**. If you have questions, please call her at (360) 695-4545.

Hugs for Hailey

Contributed by Doris Fletcher

Wayne and Doris Fletcher's 4 year old Great-Granddaughter, Hailey Gaston, was diagnosed with a genetic neurological brain disease, Leukodystrophy, in 2011. There is no cure...there is no treatment. But, there are medical bills, prescriptions and supplies not covered by insurance. There are out of state doctor's appointments and surprise expenses that would take a toll on any family.

A fundraiser to assist in these expenses will be held in Bradford Hall, December 8, 2012 from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. All you can eat spaghetti dinner, Silent Auction, Raffle and more. Tickets are \$12.50 in advance for adults, \$6.00 for 5-12 year olds and under 5 are free. Slightly more at the door.

For tickets in advance call Doris Fletcher, (360) 574-7698 or Brenda Fletcher Gaston, 360-901-4595. Hugs for Hailey necklaces made by Hailey's Mom, Jessica Gaston, will be on sale for \$10.00. Each necklace sold represents a Hug for Hailey.

This is an event for friends and family...YOU are both!

Christmas Concert, December 16th

Beautiful Christmas music is in store, for you, when you attend the choir's Christmas concert during worship on Sunday, December 16th. You will hear familiar carols such as: I SAW THREE SHIPS, TOMORROW SHALL BE MY DANCING DAY, STILL, STILL, STILL. There will be a lovely arrangement of the tune, SCARBOROUGH FAIR, with an advent theme called ENGLISH ADVENT CAROL. Cary Pederson opens this carol with the haunting sounds of his clarinet. Soloists will include Linda Wear singing THE WEXFORD CAROL and Richard Trefren beginning the morning with OF THE FATHER'S (CREATOR'S) LOVE BEGOTTEN.

Narrators will be in costume depicting: Isaiah, the prophet; Elizabeth; a shepherd boy; and the inn-keeper's wife. Invite your family and friends to this heart-warming event.

A REMINDER ABOUT CHURCH PLEDGES

As the end of 2012 approaches, please remember your 2012 church pledge. At this point the payment on 2012 church pledges has fallen behind. Please check your own payments and, if you are able, please end the year with your 2012 pledge paid in full.

Thank you,
Richard Trefren, Treasurer

Mary Jo Ebel Circle Annual Christmas Luncheon

The annual Christmas Luncheon and meeting for Mary Jo Ebel Circle will be held Wednesday, December 19th, 11:00 A.M. at the home of Ellie Bradley.

Bring a salad to share and a donation of warm socks for the children at the YWCA Safehouse. Please RSVP to Ellie at 360-944-7838



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO ASSIST WITH SAME GENDER MARRIAGE LICENSES – DEC. 6TH-9TH

Same gender couples can begin applying for marriage licenses in Washington State on December 6th. The Clark County Recording and Marriage License Department has asked for volunteers to assist with the high volume of applicants expected. Volunteers will assist with directing people to the wait line, maintaining the line, making sure people have pre-registered on-line (Clark County is on-line registration only), and maintaining a festive, welcoming atmosphere for applicants.

Equality Southwest Washington will be coordinating the volunteer efforts including procuring vendors to donate wedding cake, photography, etc. December 9th will be the first day applicants can have marriage ceremonies, so we are also looking for volunteers for that day as the City of Vancouver is hoping to offer a large space where couples can marry.

To volunteer please contact Karen Kulm at: lk.kulm@gmail.com. Updates will also be posted on Equality SW Washington's Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/EqualitySouthwestWA>.



Performance of Little Women Nov. 29th through Dec. 9th

Our members receive a special discount (Promo Code: Christmas) when ordering tickets for Little Women at brownpapertickets.com. If buying at the door, mention the code for a discount from \$22.50 to \$18.00. Seniors, students, or military, your ticket will already be \$18.00. **IMPORTANT:** Little Women plays at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Theatre in North Portland.

Help Vancouver Mark the 24th Annual World AIDS Day



“Remembering with Hope”

Friday, November 30, 2012
beginning at 7:00pm

The Center for Community Health
Building #17, 2nd Floor
1601 E. Fourth Plain Blvd
Vancouver, Washington

This program will feature opportunities to remember family, friends, and neighbors and a presentation on breakthroughs in AIDS vaccine research by Dr. Nancy Haigwood.

“Jingle All the Way” to Benefit Kiwanis

The Salmon Creek Kiwanis is sponsoring **The Trail Band**, performing their Christmas music program, “*Jingle all the Way*”, Saturday, December 1st at 3:00 p.m. in the Camas High School Performing Arts Center. This group is well known throughout Oregon and Washington. All proceeds will go to a variety of needy causes in Clark County.

Tickets are \$20.00 presale and \$22.00 at the door. You may call Darrell Brandenburg, 693-7981 or Ed Frank, 573-3848 for tickets or more information.