

The Link

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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Volume 35 No. 1

God is Still Speaking,

January 8, 2013

"A Look at What's to Come"

Here are some important dates to put in your calendar for the months to come:

January 13th, 14th, and 15th: Faith Formation Groups Begin

January 20th: Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday

January 27th: Congregational Meeting for Finalizing Budget

February 3rd: Souper Bowl Sunday

February 10th: Poetry Worship Service

February 13th: Ash Wednesday—Soup Supper at 5:45 pm and Worship at 6:30 pm

February 17th: First Sunday of Lent

February 19th and 20th: Sundown to Sundown Fast Focused on Child Hunger

February 24th: Second Sunday of Lent
Lunch with Special Guest from the Faith Action Network

March 3rd: Third Sunday of Lent
Lenten Luncheon

March 10th: Fourth Sunday of Lent
Lenten Luncheon

March 17th: Fifth Sunday of Lent
Lenten Luncheon and Youth Potato Bake Fundraiser

March 24th: Palm Sunday
Pancake Breakfast

March 28th: Maundy Thursday—Lamb Dinner at 6 pm and Worship at 7 pm

March 31st: Easter

April 14th: Bunco Party after Worship

April 28th: Congregational Meeting to Elect Officers and Committee Members

May 19th: Pentecost Sunday

June 2nd: Choir Concert

WORSHIP IN JANUARY

REMEMBERING OUR FAMILY IN PRAYER

January 13, 2013

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: Joy Gerlitz and Sandy Mathis
Worship Leader: Jerry Mathis
Ushers: Carol Pendergraft, Dwight Chapman
Darrell and Shirley Brandenburg

January 20, 2013

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: Rachel and Trent Corey
Worship Leader: Marilynn Jones
Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King and Duke Charpentier

January 27, 2013

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: Joan Blair and Norma Priel
Worship Leader: Barb Harlan
Ushers: Joe and John Eckroth
Tom and Josh Renner

Congregational Meeting on the Budget
Immediately Following Worship

A Call for Poetry

Submitted by Pastor Brooks

For our worship service on February 10th, members are invited to submit and read poems that celebrate the divine in our lives. While original works would be wonderful, you do not necessarily have to submit a poem that you yourself wrote. You can submit a poem written by someone else, a famous poet perhaps. If you are too shy to read a poem in worship, another person can read your poem for you. By February 3rd, poems can be either put in my office mailbox or emailed to me at brooks@vanucc.org. Please keep poems short: nothing longer than 35 lines.

Prayer requests for:

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

CONTINUING PRAYER
REQUESTS FOR:

Kathleen New
Glenwood Place, 5500 NE 82nd Ave. #109L,
Vancouver, WA., 98662 until the 1st of Feb.

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

<u>Link Deadline</u>	<u>January 20, 2013</u>
<u>Link Mailed</u>	<u>January 22, 2013</u>

The Dessert of the Month

This new fundraiser will start in January and we will be selling tickets for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Each month a special Dessert will be made and the ticket winner/winners will be drawn on the last Sunday of the month. The first dessert to be made will be Teresa's "Chocolate Peanut Clusters" there will be 6 dozen made and they will go to two winners of 3 dozen each. There will be another announcement in the Link for each month on what the dessert will be and who will be making it. So keep your eyes open and be ready to be a winner on one of these fun and great desserts made by our church members.

If you want to sign up to make a dessert, please see Teresa Everist or call her at 921-0611 or email teresa@nw4sale.com

Teresa Schwark-Everist

Mary Jo Ebel Circle

Contributed by Nancy Woodworth

The *Mary Jo Ebel Circle* will meet at the church in the Plymouth Room at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, January 16th.

If you wish, bring something short to read; a poem, letter, etc.

Youth Group!

Contributed by Kristina Martin

Don't forget that one of our on-going projects serving breakfast every 3rd Saturday at the Men's Breakfast unless it is canceled. You can plan on being at the church by 7:45 am and staying until approximately 10:30 am. Projects such as this fund our Activities account which pays for our fun activities -- so get involved and lend a hand!

SAVE THE DATE For the Winter Hospitality Overflow Shelter (W.H.O.)



**This year we are teaming up with
Congregation Kol Ami Feb 24- March 2.** Sign
up sheets will be available soon.

We need YOU to volunteer at the men's shelter located at St. Paul Lutheran Church. The "work" is easy, but rewarding. Never volunteered before? No worries: "newbies" can be paired with veterans and you can read the orientation book, as well as receive on-site orientation nightly. You can also view the orientation book on-line at:

<http://whoprogram.org/volunteer/volunteer-resources/> (click on "St. Paul" under Host Manual)

A SHARE social worker is on-site nightly to manage who is admitted and to assist the men with accessing services that will, hopefully, help them get off the streets. Our job is simple: to provide snacks, a friendly, caring environment, assist with showering, laundry, wake-up calls and help clean the facility in the morning. However, the men at the shelter are deeply appreciative of us sharing our time and hospitality with them.

If you are unable to volunteer at the shelter, we ask that you donate food, clothing, C-Tran tickets, etc. Place these items in the yellow container in the narthex marked "WHO." If you have any questions, please contact Karen Kulm 991-5774 or email at lk.kulm@gmail.com.

Get Out your Dictionaries And Join the New Scrabble Club

The newest entry to our continually growing Social Activities will begin on Wednesday, January 9th at 3:00 p.m. in the Plymouth Room.

Everyone is invited to play regardless of your experience or ability. If you've never played, Carole will teach you and she's really good!

For more information, call the church office: 360-693-1476 or Carol Elizabeth at 360-904-6753.

Our Church Becomes a Facebook Sensation

On December 19th, a photo from our marriage equality march was posted on a Facebook page called "The Other 98%." So far, this is the attention the photo has received:

8,896 people have clicked that they like it
1,552 people have shared the photo with other people
558 have posted on comments on it

We are not sure who posted the photo on this Facebook page, but we are glad they did!

Souper Bowl Sunday

Contributed by Kristina Martin

The Youth Group will be collecting cans of soup during the month of January to be donated to F.I.S.H. Beginning Sunday, January 13th and ending on February 3rd a table will be set up in the narthex where you can leave your donations. Please consider donating a can of soup, cash, or other non-perishable food item for this church's annual tradition. Thank you!

Styrofoam Recycling

We no longer are able to accept Styrofoam here at the church for recycling.

Please take your Styrofoam to

**Enforce Up,
Habitat for Humanity
5000 Fourth Plain Blvd**

Thanks from Parish Life

Submitted by Nancy Fite, Parish Life

First of all, thanks to the people who beautifully decorated the Christmas tree with the new Chrismon ornaments: Marilynn and Scott Jones, Marnie Wright, Daryl DeSilva, Carole and John Greenauer. The Chrismon ornaments were made by Marilynn's art group, members of Parish Life and other clever volunteers. Also, kudos to those who undecorated the tree: Marilynn Jones, Carole and John Greenauer and Jackie Vane.

Secondly, thanks to Sandy Mathis and Molly Fite who served the wassail on Christmas Eve and to Molly and John Fite for the clean-up. And to everyone who brought Christmas cookies that evening, a big thank-you!! They were delicious!!

Virginia Dunbar and Patti Yates put together the Christmas Eve candles. Thank you!!!!

The Christmas brunch on Dec.30 was well attended and the variety of food that people brought that morning was wonderful. A great team of people worked at the brunch and they were: Greg Saum, Cory Saum-Blystone, Jackie Vane, Kelli Waldo, John Fite, Susan Ross, Andy Allensworth and their daughter Shelby.

Thank you all for making Christmas memorable!

A Call for Art

Submitted by Pastor Brooks

Ash Wednesday is on February 13th this year, and our worship service on that day will once again feature art by church members and friends. We are inviting members to submit photos and other works of art that focus on the love we experience in our families. For example, one might submit a photo of your family at Christmas time or your family building a sand castle on the beach. You are encouraged to think of family as being broadly defined, so it could be a family whose ties are of birth and marriage or a family whose ties are of close relationships and deep care. Similar to last year, our Ash Wednesday service will give people an opportunity to reflect upon works of art with the accompaniment of music.

Art submissions can be drawings, paintings, photographs, sculptures, collages, quilts, carvings, or almost anything you feel called to create. Members of all ages, including kids, are welcome to participate. Please bring your artwork to the office by February 10th. Don't forget to put your name on it!

Improve Your Spiritual Health in the New Year

If you would like to participate in the Faith Formation small groups beginning this Sunday, it's not too late. There are four groups that will be meeting. Ed Martin will lead one Sunday after worship in the Nettie Fries Lounge. Kimberly McNally will lead one at Latte Da Coffee House on Monday at 7 pm. Pam Osborne will lead one at her house on Monday at 7 pm. Barbara Harlan will lead one at her house on Tuesday at 7 pm. The series will conclude by February 19th.

Call the church office at 360-693-1476 or e-mail Pastor Brooks at brooks@vanucc.org **this week**, and we'll find a slot for you.

Social Action Focus for 2013

Contributed by Pastor Brooks

To build on the incredible success of the Moses Project in 2011 and the Marriage Equality March of 2012, Mission and Outreach has been busy laying the groundwork for our church to participate in a social action in 2013. The action this year will be to do a 24-hour fast to call for a state budget that feeds our children. Last year our state cut in half a program that helped feed 12,500 children in our state. This year we want our state to recommit itself to our children. Join us for fasting from sundown on February 19th to sundown on February 20th. More information will be distributed in the coming weeks on how people can participate in events on those two days.

Child Hunger Prevention Agenda for 2013

State Food Assistance Program

This program provides assistance to families in need by ensuring the reach of food stamps to very low-income families. Despite the myth that “illegal immigrants” receive this, that is not the case. Many who receive assistance are green card holders who have been in the US less than five years. Others include: domestic violence or crime survivors assisting local law enforcement, applicants for asylum in the U.S., temporary residents like citizens from countries with natural disasters that prevent a return home, and citizens of Micronesia or the Marshall Islands who are allowed to live and work in the U.S. Last summer, the program was cut by 50 percent. ***Before the cut, 12,500 children benefited from this program.*** Our state budget needs to fully restore funding to this program.

WSDA Emergency Food Assistance Program

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) provides crucial funding to local food banks around the state. Food banks depend on EFAP to pay for food, transportation, and operational costs. There are 325 food banks statewide that receive EFAP funding to distribute food to households who can't afford to put food on their tables. ***During the last fiscal year for our state, over 3 million children were served by food banks receiving EFAP funding.*** EFAP also funds the Tribal Food Voucher Program. Nearly every tribe in the state receives EFAP funding to provide members with food vouchers used at local grocery stores, for tribe operated food banks, or both. Our state needs to continue to invest in local hunger programs.

Farmers Market Nutrition Programs

In 2012, the state of Washington cut funding to the Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP). This funding provided vouchers to low-income mothers, children, and seniors so that they could purchase healthy food from local growers at farmers markets. ***In 2011, 76,000 children and adults benefited from this program.*** With only \$100,000 in state funds, FMNP leveraged more than \$894,000 in federal dollars in 2011 to support local farms and healthy food for poor families. This funding needs to be restored.

School Meals

A mix of federal, state, and local funds helps provide children with meals at school. State funding ensures that schools receive federal reimbursement for school meals. ***During the 2011-2012 school year, 326,174 children ate a free or reduced price lunch on an average day while roughly 143,500 ate a subsidized breakfast.*** Children who eat breakfast are more likely to score high on standardized tests, get better grades, maintain a healthy weight, have healthier nutrient levels, complete complex tasks, and be able to concentrate. Children who eat breakfast are also less likely to miss school, go to class late, go to the nurse's office, be obese, be hyperactive, behave badly and act out, and be frustrated by difficult tasks. Our state needs to fully invest in the health and wellbeing of our children.

This document was prepared using fact sheets provided by the Children's Alliance and the Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition.