

The Link

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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Volume 35 No. 2

God is Still Speaking,

January 22, 2013

Board That Old Greyhound

Dear Church Family,

With my digital music library of songs, I am able to keep track of how many times I listen to each song. Not surprisingly, the song that I have listened to the most the past couple of years is a song that has proven to be effective in distracting Danalyn from tears and lulling her to sleep. The song, however, has other merits. Many of you may be familiar with this classic folk hymn popularized in the civil rights movement. It is entitled "Eyes on the Prize." I had heard the song in the past, but until I purchased it as a song sung by the Southern Gospel group "The Freemans," I don't recall ever hearing some of the verses that they sing:

Only chain that a man can stand
is the chain of hand on hand.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

I'm gonna board that old Greyhound
And carry his love from town to town.
Keep your eyes on the prize and hold on.

The only thing I did was wrong
Was staying in the wilderness too long.
Keep your eyes on the prize and hold on.

The only thing we did was right
Was the day we started to fight.
Keep your eyes on the prize and hold on.

I have a great fondness for the lyrics because they are a reminder to keep one's focus and sense of purpose in life. I additionally like how they contain both a *seriousness* with strident lyrics of struggling for freedom and a *whimsicalness* with colorful lyrics of riding a Greyhound bus to spread Jesus' love from one town to the next.

As we approach the "Fast for the Children," I hope we have both seriousness and whimsicalness. Child hunger is as serious as it gets, but a cause like this also deserves to have a burst of childhood delight in the form of a Mac and Cheese Explosion. All are invited to join us for this community potluck on February 19th at St. Andrew Lutheran Church. The next day we can then get on the bus (or van as the case may be) to spread the love of Jesus in Olympia.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Brooks

**WORSHIP IN
JANUARY AND FEBRUARY**

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: Barbara Harlan
Ushers: John and Joe Eckroth
Tom and Josiah Renner

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

FEBRUARY

February 3, 2013 COMMUNION

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

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: Dwight and Opal Chapman
Worship Leader: John Eckroth
Ushers: Aaron Cushing, Rory Martindale
Wayne and Doris Fletcher

February 10, 2013

10 a.m. Worship Service. Poetry Reading. Infant and Toddler Care available. 10:20 a.m.: Christian Education for children 3 yrs. - Grade 7.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters: Shirley Coffman and Doraine Kohler
Worship Leader: Kimberly Kangas
Ushers: Carol Pendergraft, Dwight Chapman
Darrell and Shirley Brandenburg

Wednesday, February 13 Ash Wednesday

**Soup Dinner at 5:45 PM in the Plymouth Room
Distribution of the Ashes at 6:30 PM**

February 17, 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

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters: Jim and Beverly Crossman
Worship Leader: Trent Corey
Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King and Duke Charpentier

**REMEMBERING
OUR FAMILY
IN PRAYER**

Prayer requests for:

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

**CONTINUING PRAYER
REQUESTS FOR:**

Kathleen New
Mary Craford
Charlotte Warren
Farley Maxwell

On January 17th, Jeanie Stolle's mother Bonnie Warren Beary died in Hardin, Montana. Please keep the Stolle and Beary families in your prayers.

**UPCOMING PUBLICATION
DATES FOR "The Link"**

Link Deadline

February 10, 2013

Link Mailed:

February 12, 2013

February Birthdays

February 12

Gail Schmitt

February 12

Carole Greenauer

February 16

Lenna Stradley

February 25

Don Walter

February 27

Lee Shefchek



February 24, 2013

10 a.m. Worship Service. Rev. Paul Benz guest preacher. Infant and Toddler Care available. 10:20 a.m.: Christian Education for children 3 yrs. - Grade 7. First Lenten Luncheon in Bradford Hall following Worship.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters: Ed and Ruby Frank
Worship Leader: TBA
Ushers: John and Joe Eckroth
Tom and Josiah Renner

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

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.

Souper Bowl Sunday

Contributed by Kristina Martin

The annual Souper Bowl Sunday is coming very soon! From now until February 3rd bring your canned soup, money or non-perishable food to the narthex to help support the youth group's annual **SOUPER BOWL** food drive to support F.I.S.H. Thank you!

With Deepest Thanks

Dear Ones,

Thank you for the cards, love and prayers sent our way during the recent loss of my mother (otherwise known as Carmencita or little Mithers). We love you and appreciate so much your support during this difficult time. Our faith, family and friends have made all the difference. We are so grateful.

Lovingly,
Carolyn and Ed Evans

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!

Wanted: Hiking Group Leader

With the departure of the wonderful Aaron Cushing, the hiking group is looking for a new leader to take charge of deciding hiking locations, dates, and times. Please contact Pastor Brooks or Rachel Corey if you are interested. At a minimum, it is great to do at least one hike a summer, but one could also organize monthly hikes throughout the non-rainy season.

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 are available in the narthex.

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.

Palm Sunday

Contributed by Kristina Martin

As you look ahead for your Easter season, please note that the Youth Group will be serving pancakes on Palm Sunday. The funds raised will go towards their next conference events.

Lenten Series: **"Discovering God: A Lenten Series** **On Finding God In** **New And Creative Ways"**

The Lenten series this year will be a short and creative approach to finding God in our lives via a variety of artistic outlets. Even people who don't think of themselves as artistic will find this series to be a fun way of finding God in our lives. The series will culminate in interested people sharing their products with others.

The Lenten series will begin on the third Sunday of Lent, March 3 and end on the first Sunday of Lent, March 17th. On the 17th, lunch will be the Youth Group's annual Potato Bake Bar so please plan on coming down to Bradford Hall and celebrating how we have found God in our lives!

Hot Cocoa Bar after Worship

On February 10th, we will have a hot cocoa bar in Bradford Hall after worship. All are invited to come and enjoy a cup. Warm your tummy and your heart before Valentine's Day!

This is an event hosted by the Membership Committee.

Special Guest Preacher and **Adult Ed Presenter**

On Sunday, February 24th, we will have special visit from the Rev. Paul Benz of the Faith Action Network (FAN). Paul is one of the organizational directors at FAN, and he will be driving down from Seattle to be with us. He has been instrumental in helping us organize the Fast for the Children. Among his many accomplishments, Paul was honored with an award from the Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network for his work in getting the "Local Farms Healthy Kids" bill passed and signed into law as one of the first in the nation to establish a Farm to School program that brings locally grown food into the public schools.

Good News for People Age 70 ½ or Older

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 provides the opportunity to take advantage of the old "IRA Charitable Rollover" which has now been extended through 2012 and 2013.

This provision allows a donor to make a tax-free distribution from a traditional IRA or Roth IRA provided that money is transferred to a charitable organization, including your church.

If you wish to transfer a December 2012 IRA withdrawal to a charity, you may still do so, but you must act quickly and ensure the contribution is made by January 31, 2013.

If you made a charitable gift from their IRA last year in the hopes that Congress would extend the IRA charitable rollover, you are in luck! Your tax benefit is retroactive to January 1, 2012.