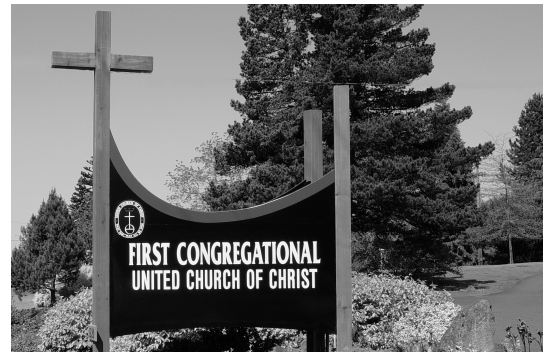


The Link

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
1220 NE 68th Street
Vancouver, WA 98665-0508
360.693.1476
Website: www.vancouverucc.org



Volume 35 No. 17

God is Still Speaking,

September 10 , 2013

Photos, Memories, and the Practice of Gratitude

Dear Church Family,

As I mentioned on Sunday, during my sabbatical, I focused my thoughts on the subject of gratitude. The principal means by which I did this was through two projects involving photographs. For the first project, I selected 50 pictures that I had taken of Danalyn during our month in Europe. I then wrote a prayer of thanksgiving to correspond to each one of them. For the second project, I combed through my parents' old photographs and slides to make both a video of photos for their 50th wedding anniversary and a professionally printed photo album.

Both of these projects demonstrated for me the truth of a statement I read in a book by Robert Emmons called *Gratitude Works!* Emmons writes, "Gratitude is about remembering." The photos I saw encapsulated memories, and these memories filled me with gratitude in innumerable ways. I found myself wishing that I had made a habit of looking at old family photos earlier in my life. Especially when I was younger, my memories of childhood seemed to dwell on playground bullies rather than on all the good times I had with my family.

In setting goals for my sabbatical, I wanted it to be more than a self-contained period of relaxation and reflection. I wanted it to be a period in which I would cultivate habits and outlooks that would spill over into my post-sabbatical life and thereby become a continual source of revitalization. I feel that I accomplished this. As a practice of thanksgiving, I heartily recommend taking the time to appreciate the spiritual wealth found in the old and new photos documenting your life.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Brooks

WORSHIP IN SEPTEMBER

September 15, 2013 CE Kick-off Sunday

10 AM Worship Service. Kristina Martin and the children of the church preaching. Infant and Toddler Care available. 10:20 a.m.: Christian Education for children 3 yrs. - Grade 7. Kick-off Luncheon following Worship.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters: Harriet Anani and Gail Schmitt
Worship Leader: The Youth and Children of the Church
Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King and Duke Charpentier

September 22, 2013

10 AM 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 Carol Pendergraft
Worship Leader: Jerry Mathis
Ushers: Tom and Josiah Renner

September 29, 2013

10 AM 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: Wayne and Doris Fletcher
Worship Leader: Alicia King
Ushers: John Bradley and John Hannon

Doug Smith Concert: Please put this date on your calendar: October 12, 2013 (Saturday night)

Yes, we are having Doug Smith return to give us a concert which is a big fund-raiser for First Congregational. This time Doug will be joined by Don Mitchell on guitar and Judy Koch Smith on vocals and flute. The trio is called Three Together. They are wonderful musicians and very entertaining, especially with Don Mitchell's humor thrown in the mix. You will hear more about this concert as time goes on, so please mark your calendars so you won't miss out on this fabulous concert.

--Jean Beary Stolle and Nancy Fite
(concert co-chairs)

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
Farley Maxwell Joan Blair

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

Link Deadline
Link Mailed

September 22, 2013
September 24, 2013

Link Deadline
Link Mailed

October 6, 2013
October 8, 2013

CE News:

Bible Adventures:

If you are interested in teaching for Bible Adventures, please let Kristina Martin know. We have 4 teaching teams: preschool (ages 4-Kindergarten), primary (1st & 2nd graders), intermediates (3rd - 5th graders), and middle school (6th - 8th graders). Teachers typically teach 2 Sundays in a row (one lesson) and then have several Sundays off. An orientation in mid-September is being planned. If you'd like to attend, please let Kristina know.

Bible Adventures Resumes 9/22

We will resume Bible Adventures on 9/22. On 9/15, many children have volunteered to participate in the Kick-Off service. If your child wants to participate, please let Kristina know no later than 9/8.

Small Spiritual Transformation Groups Starting Up

Contributed by Pam Osborne

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. We will focus this year on spiritual transformation through our desire for God, solitude and silence, Lectio Devina (a way of reading scripture), honoring the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, the examen or daily review, and the rule of life.

Other 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. The groups 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. Because of the depth of the sharing time, the groups are only open to new members once a year.

Each group will meet once a month (October to May) for two hours and be limited to eight participants so that each person has time to share. One group may meet in the evening and the other in the daytime. If you have questions or would like to sign up, talk to Pam in the Narthex after church, call her at 750-1353, or email posborne430@gmail.com. The deadline for committing is September 27th.

Good News!

Contributed by Marnie Wright

There is now a place you can take your used clothes that will give them away. Giving Grace Ministries - 1101 West 13th St - Telephones: 360-433-9217 or cell: 360-524-1316. They primarily serve women transients, but also work with men transients. They are right next to Share House (just to the east).

Dessert of the Month for September

Ruby Frank's two delicious apple pies brought in \$86.00 for our August Dessert of the Month. Thank you Ruby for your wonderful support! The Dessert of the Month for September is Chocolate Mint Brownies, made by Carole Greenauer; this drawing will be on September 29th. Thank you for your support. Teresa Everist

WE HAVE FAITH,
in our CPC
God is still speaking,

Annual Meeting
September 27-29
Pendleton OR

You Are Invited to Annual Meeting

Our church is one of the 47 churches in Oregon, southern Idaho and southwest Washington that comprise the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ.

We all get together annually to celebrate, worship, learn at great workshops, and install new officers and ministry team members. Our keynote speaker this year is the Rev. Dr. Susan Thistlethwaite, former president of the Chicago Theological Seminary, and noted author. Her most recent book: *#Occupy the Bible: What Jesus Really Said (and Did) about Money and Power*, is a no-holds-barred look at the real message of Jesus and a call to people sincerely committed to confronting the rising poverty and economic inequality in our country.

Everyone is invited to attend, but if you would like to be a voting delegate from our church, please contact Karen Kulm immediately. To learn more about the workshops, registration, etc. go to: <http://cpcucc.org/> and click on "CPC Annual Meeting". For information about car-pooling, etc. contact Karen Kulm at lk.kulm@gmail.com.



All-Church Book Groups Starting Soon. Sign up now!

Start your reading now! From mid-September to mid-November, our church will have book groups for three different books. Sign-up sheets are in the narthex now. These are the books that were decided by a planning group at our church:

Beyond the Bullet: Personal Stories of Gun Violence Aftermath by Heidi Yewman

The Rich and the Rest of Us: A Poverty Manifesto by Tavis Smiley and Cornel West

Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet by Bill McKibben

Each of these books relates to one of the three areas of focus for the Faith Action Network in the coming year: poverty, environment, and gun violence. The Faith Action Network (FAN) is a state-wide coalition of faith communities seeking social change.

All books are available at Powell's Books or from Amazon in new or used. In addition, *Eaarth* is available for Kindle and in audio format, and *The Rich and the Rest of Us* is available on Kindle. Book groups will be offered at several host locations with day and evening groups available so that **everyone can participate**. Please contact Karen Kulm 360-991-5774 with any questions.

Women's Breakfast Group

Our wonderful *Women's Breakfast Group* will continue to meet on the second Saturday of the month at 9:30 a.m. at the Inn at the Quay. The next gathering will be Saturday, Saturday, September 14th.

All women of the church are invited to celebrate sisterhood, fellowship, friendship and family

Save the Date The UCC Northwest Regional Women's Conference

NOVEMBER 1, 2 and 3, 2013

At Kah-Nee-Ta in Warm Springs, Oregon

Theme: **Celebrate the Joyful Journey**
Keynote Speaker: Rev. DaVita McAlister
A variety of workshops will be offered.

Go to nrwr.wordpress.com for workshop descriptions, price and online registration or contact the registrar at 541-554-8501 (nrwrregistrar@gmail.com). Forms are also available in the narthex and the church office.

Vancouver UCC Women's Fellowship has three scholarships available of \$75 each. For more information, contact Beverly Crossman 694-3837 or Ellie Bradley 944-7838.

Mary Jo Ebel Circle

Contributed by Beverly Crossman

The Mary Jo Ebel Circle will gather for its
Annual Picnic on the Labyrinth
Wednesday, September 18th
11:00 a.m.

Everyone is reminded to bring a sack lunch, beverage and a lawn chair.

All women are welcome to come for this fun gathering.

Pack the Church Sunday

On September 22nd, we will be having our second annual Pack-the-Church Sunday. For this Sunday, we make a concerted effort to invite friends and neighbors to worship at our church. This year it will be even easier to invite people because we will have a special guest who will be addressing an issue close to a lot of people's hearts: gun violence and how we can help prevent it. See the announcement about guest preacher for more info!

HEAR YE, HEAR YE!! All Church Retreat Oct 18-19

Contributed by Trent Corey

What is our church about? What do you want people who visit our church to know about us? What can we do specifically today to make our church grow in the next decade and beyond?

Everyone in our congregation is invited to join in the discussions and activities that will help us move forward with a collective vision as a church. It will begin Friday evening on October 18th in preparation for a day of presentations and discussions on the 19th. It will be held at First Presbyterian Church, located at 45th and Main St, across from Kiggins Bowl.

The members of the Long Range Planning Committee have worked to put together a program involving church members, as well as a special guest speaker and facilitator. It should be a great time for us to come together as a church family with a common vision and purpose.

Mark your calendars, and RSVP Trent Corey at trentcorey@yahoo.com or 360-600-1086 by October 4th. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted to help defray the costs.

Kick-Off Sunday's Service and Luncheon

Next Sunday, September 15th, we will again 'kick-off' the new Christian Education year with special service and luncheon. Many of our MAZI (the chosen name for our Youth Group), Bible Adventures kids and Adult Education participants have volunteered to help lead the service, so this will be a real treat.

The menu for the luncheon includes shredded meat (like pulled pork or BBQ chicken), a vegetarian option, coleslaw, potato chips, buns, and cookies.

Please come ready to celebrate the beginning of the new year for all the levels of Christian Education!

Upcoming Dialogue Sermon with Special Guest

Contributed by Pastor Brooks

On Sunday, September 22nd, Pastor Brooks will be joined by author and advocate Heidi Yewman for a dialogue sermon. Yewman is the Washington state president of Million Mom March/Brady Campaign. She is the author of one of the books featured in one of our upcoming book groups: *Beyond the Bullet: Personal Stories of Gun Violence Aftermath*. Newman is on the board of the Trauma Intervention Program (TIP), a group of 160 volunteers who provide "emotional first aid" to people in the Portland-Vancouver area who have just experienced a trauma or the death of a loved one

Announcing: MAZI

Contributed by Kristina Martin

The youth group spent last spring brainstorming ways to better market itself to other teens. They wanted a name that reflected what they do and who they are. Youth group will now be known as MAZI: a service and social group for teens. (MAZI means "together" in Greek.) They have chosen quarterly service projects, and smaller on-going service projects which they can use towards mandatory service hours for middle and high school.

Our Fall Lock-In was a fun night and included 3 guests who all expressed interest in coming regularly. If you know a teen 7th - 12th grade, please encourage them to check out MAZI. It's a great way to connect with other teens and have a great time at the same time. MAZI meets at 11:15 am - 1pm on the first and third Sundays in the Triangle Room.