

The Link

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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Volume 35 No. 3

God is Still Speaking,

February 11 , 2014

Come Down, O Love Divine

Dear Church Family,

As I insulated myself in the cozy confines of my home office Sunday morning during the time I normally would be worshipping in our church, I came across the story of a Lutheran minister named Joel Kurz. As a seminarian intern, he served at a Lutheran mission in an inner-city area. It was there that he encountered an alcoholic who encouraged him to learn hymn # 123 in his hymnal. Ralph Vaughan Williams composed the tune for this hymn. The words that accompany it come from a 15th-century text that reads, "Come down, O Love divine, seek thou this soul of mine." Vaughan Williams was fond of the hymn and requested that it be sung at his own funeral.

As Kurz came to know the alcoholic man, he learned that he had once been a doctoral student in music. It was during this time that tragedy struck. His wife and son died in a car accident. One can imagine the former doctoral student longing for God's love to descend as he carried the heavy weight of grief. As Valentine's Day approaches, I am struck by all the many different times and places we can feel love descending upon our lives. From the peaks of joyful ecstasy to the depths of unbearable despair, love is the saving grace of life. Wherever you find yourself this week, may you feel love's warmth and be convinced of its enduring power.

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Brooks

WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY

February 16, 2014

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: Anne and Wayne Kamp
Worship Leader: Dwight Chapman
Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King and Duke Charpentier

February 23, 2014

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: Harriet Anani
Ushers: David Macko and David Harrington
Tom Renner

Welcome To Our New Nursery Attendant

Beginning this Sunday, February 16th, we will have a new Nursery attendant with a very familiar face, Angie Wasson Hill. Angie has been active here for some time serving as a Pre-School instructor and VBS helper.

Be sure to drop in and give her a huge welcome to the staff of First Congregational UCC.

Share the Real You!

Our Christian Education Ministry is organizing a Lenten luncheon speaker series with a theme entitled "The Real You." The ministry is asking for people to share a story about themselves that reveals a dimension of one's life that might normally be unknown to others. Please speak to Kristin Martindale or email her at kristinmartindale@msn.com to let her know of your interest in sharing your story.

Feminine Faith Formation Book Group

We will be meeting this Thursday (2/13) at 7pm at Pam Osborne's home to discuss the first half of Sue Monk Kidd's *Dance of the Dissident Daughter*. You are welcome to join us for a lively conversation, even if you're not caught up on the reading. Please RSVP with either Pam Osborne or Kristina (kristina@vanucc.org).

REMEMBERING OUR FAMILY IN PRAYER

Prayer requests for:

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

CONTINUING PRAYER
REQUESTS FOR:

Farley Maxwell
Joan Blair
Yahriel Harrigan

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

<u>Link Deadline</u>	<u>February 23, 2014</u>
<u>Link Mailed</u>	<u>February 25, 2013</u>

Celebration of Life for Kathleen New

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, February 15th at 1:00 PM for beloved member, **Kathleen New**. For the celebration, everyone is invited to wear colors of celebration such as red and purple. A catered brunch will be served following the service. In lieu of flowers, people are invited to plant a tree in Kathleen's honor.

VBS Task Force

The CE Ministry is looking for 2-3 volunteers to participate in a task force to review our Vacation Bible School (VBS) program and make recommendations on what kind of offering we put forward in 2014. We are looking for folks with a fresh perspective and great ideas! It is anticipated that this task force would meet approximately once a month for the next few months, and may require some research on various programs and offerings available. If you are interested please email the CE Ministry Chair, Kristin Martindale, at kristinmartindale@msn.com. Thanks!

UCC to Host Local Environmental Conference

"If we don't act on climate change now, every sermon we give in ten to 15 years will be on grief."
—Jim Antal, Massachusetts Conference Minister, July 2013.

The Central Pacific Conference of the UCC will have the opportunity to hear what else the inspiring Massachusetts Conference Minister and climate activist has to share when we gather at Camp Adams, March 7-9, 2014. The desire of this gathering is that the CPC can become a nexus of leadership and activism in responding effectively to our changing climate. Register for the gathering by clicking on the red CPC Registration tab on the left side of the Central Pacific Conference website: www.cpcucc.org.

A Call for Photos

Our church is going to begin Lent with an Ash Wednesday art display that will *Blow Your Mind!* For this art display, we are inviting church members to submit photos that represent how they do not conform to a particular stereotype that others might often have of them. Please submit to the main office your photo along with a paragraph explaining the photograph and the stereotype to which you do not conform by Sunday, March 2nd.

Dessert of the Month for February...

... is Cherry something made by Connie Opal. Tickets will be on sale as soon as the weather lets up. We still need sign-ups for the Dessert of the month, so let get signed up soon to continue with another successful year.

CPC Spring Fling

The teen retreat had to be rescheduled due to inclement weather which means you still have time to register if you missed it before! Open to all middle schoolers and high schoolers, Spring Fling is a great opportunity to have lots of fun and learn more about media and advertising in our lives. Led by Jeanne Randall-Bodman and Kristina Martin, the "Two Truths One Lie" retreat will be a great weekend! The cost is \$60 and you can register at cpcucc.org. Contact Kristina Martin (kristina@vanucc.org) if you have any questions!

Adult Ed Session II - UCC: Who We Are...As a Conference

The Christian Education ministry has put together a three-part series on who we are as a church, nationally, as a conference, and as a local church. On **February 16th**, we will have the second of the *UCC: Who We Are* sessions. Former CPC moderator Corliss Marsh, Conference Outdoor Ministries Director and Education Ministries Task force Leader Natalie Becker, and active Conference Justice and Witnessing Ministries member, Joyce Liljeholm will share with our church how we the conference is working to better the lives of UCC members and communities. A soup lunch will be served by CE immediately after worship that day and the panelists will present afterwards.

Spiritual Growth Audio Book Club

This month we are listening to a book by Peter Rollins entitled *The Idolatry of God: Our Addiction to Certainty and Satisfaction*. According to the publisher, this book shows that we must lay down our certainties and honestly admit our doubts to identify with Jesus. Rollins purposely upsets fundamentalist certainty in order to open listeners up to a more loving, active manifestation of Christ's love. In contrast to the understanding of the "Good News" as a message offering satisfaction and certainty, Rollins argues for a radical and shattering alternative. We will be meeting at Tommy O's in downtown Vancouver on March 4th at 6 pm to discuss this book. Call or email Pastor Brooks if you would like to join us!

Mary Jo Ebel Circle

Mary Jo Ebel Circle will meet Wednesday, February 19th at 10:30 in The Plymouth Room. Our guest speaker will be Rev. Carole Elizabeth.

All women of the church are invited to attend. For more information, please call co-hosts Connie Oppel, 360-573-8997 or Ruth Hammer, 360-574-7359.

MAZI and the SOLV Beach Clean-up near Lincoln City, OR

If you are planning on joining MAZI on the weekend of March 21-22nd, the deadline has passed to register through Kristina for housing, so you will need to make your own arrangements for this great opportunity to clean-up our beautiful beaches.

Mission & Outreach Special Offering for February: Winter Hospitality Overflow (WHO)

Every year it takes thousands of dollars to support the winter overflow shelters known as WHO. Our church will be sending volunteers to be hosts at the shelter March 16-22; but financial and material support is also needed.

If you are unable to physically volunteer at the shelter, please consider making a cash donation or bring the following needed items to the church to be delivered to the shelter: Warm clothing such as sweatshirts, socks, jeans, underwear (M-XL), and raingear can be placed in the big yellow barrel in the narthex.

To make a cash donation, simply make your check out to our church with "WHO" in the memo line and drop in the offering plate any Sunday in February.

Sign up now for our WHO week March 16-22.

Once again we are partnering with our friends at Kol Ami. Volunteering is easier than ever this year by using Volunteer Spot.

Here's how it works in 3 easy steps:

1. **Click this link** to go to our invitation page on Volunteer Spot: <http://vols.pt/cbdRWF>. **Advance the calendar** to March to find the shifts available during our shared week shifts, March 16 – 22.
2. **Enter your email address:** (You will NOT need to register an account on Volunteer Spot)
3. **Sign up!** Choose your spots – Volunteer Spot will send you an automated confirmation and reminders. Easy! Note: Volunteer Spot does not share your email address with anyone.

If you have any questions or problems with the sign up, contact Karen Kulm at 360-991-5774.

"Homelessness is a moral indicator of how we are doing as a society. As long as men, women and children are forced out on the streets, we have a responsibility to build a better world. Societies that do not care for the 'least of these' always crumble." ~ Rev. Chuck Currie, UCC Pastor.

Loving-Kindness –

A Spiritual Discipline that Works

A New Way to Use an Old Tool

When emotional fatigue makes us snappy, this Discipline can make us kinder and help us live with more joy.

Although it comes from a Buddhist tradition, it transcends both religious beliefs and professional practices.

- Explore deeper aspects of loving-kindness
- Gain understanding of gentleness as strength
- Learn new ways of dealing with inconvenience
- Build mental smoothness, encouragement and trust

Who should attend?

nurses, social workers, clergy, community organizers, everyone who interacts with another person

An Introduction to Loving Kindness

Lecture/Experience

Friday night, February 21

7:00-9:00 pm

\$25 for professionals

love offering for all others

Nursing CE – 2 hrs

An Exploration: The Discipline of Loving Kindness

A 4-Hour Workshop

Saturday, February 22

11:30 am to 4:00 pm

Includes lunch of Soup and Bread

\$65 for professionals

love offering for all other

Nursing CE – 4 hrs



Presenter: Mitzi Forbes, PhD, RN
(Buddhist name: Ngawang Thekchen)

Mitzi Forbes, PhD, RN, is on the faculty of Chamberlain College of Nursing. She is an ordained Buddhist monastic from Joyful Path Monastery in Blue Mounds, Wisconsin.