

The Link

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



Volume 37 No. 1

God is Still Speaking,

January 13 , 2015

Point Us Toward God: Thoughts on Poetry and Art

Dear Church Family,

If life is lived on the thoroughfares and byways that take us from birth to death, then our faith so often depends upon those signposts that point us toward God. Amid the sometimes confusing and sometimes strenuous stretches of our journey, these signposts direct us toward what is truly meaningful and important. In the coming month, our church will look to poetry and art as we direct our hearts and minds toward the divine.

Poetry

On Sunday, February 8th, we will devote our worship service to poems of faith and love that have the power to help us through the thicket of life. Members of the church are invited to submit poems that have sustained them on their own journeys. Have you ever read or written a poem that contained an insight, an image, or a word that enabled you to find your way? If so, consider submitting and reading that poem.

While the submission of original works is 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 1st, poems can be either put in my office mailbox or emailed to me at brooks@vanucc.org. Please keep the poems relatively short: nothing longer than 35 lines.

Art

Each year our Ash Wednesday Service features art that guides and inspires us as we focus on turning our lives toward God. The theme for this year's Ash Wednesday art display is "Gifts." As people of faith, we often seek to view the world through a lens that perceives the blessings all around us. Such blessings might be a friendship, a newborn grandchild, a special moment with family, or an awe-provoking sunset. Gifts such as these can turn us toward God with a spirit of gratitude.

Members are invited to submit a photo, painting, or other work of art that represents a gift that they have received in their lives. By Sunday, February 15th, please submit your artwork to the main office along with a sentence or two about the gift and your experience of it. The art will then be displayed from Wednesday, February 18th until Sunday, March 22nd when people can take their art home after worship.

Through the contributions and talents of our church members, the coming month promises to be a time of spiritual renewal and uplift as the power of poetry and art point us toward the divine present in our lives.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Brooks

WORSHIP IN JANUARY

January 18, 2015

10 a.m. Worship Service. Rev. Brooks Berndt and Arun Gandhi 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:

Greeter: John Fite
Worship Leader: Pam Osborne
Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King

Gandhi Reception and Presentation In Bradford Hall

January 25, 2015

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 Fully and Shibley Burnett
Worship Leader: Laurie Parafinczuk
Ushers: David Harrington and David Macko

Congregational Meeting on the Budget Immediately following Worship

Congratulations and Felicitations!

Wayne and Doris Fletcher are celebrating **64 years of marriage!** Love and Best Wishes to them!

New Address:

**Bert and Kristina Martin
Isaac, Amelia and Elias**
6622 NE 52nd Ave
Vancouver, WA 98661

Kristina Cell: 360-635-1075
e-mail: bkmar1192@gmail.com

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

Link Deadline
Link Mailed

January 25, 2015
January 27, 2015

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
Gloria Ross
Verna Myers
Abigail Fazio

Our thoughts and prayers go out to **Irma Slocum and the entire Slocum family** following the death of Irma's beloved sister, **Hazel.**



Arun Gandhi, Grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, to Speak at Church

[Arun Gandhi](#) is an internationally renowned nonviolent activist and scholar. On Sunday, January 18th, he will visit First Congregational United Church of Christ in Vancouver as we celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday. During our 10 am worship, Arun Gandhi will join Pastor Brooks in a dialogue sermon that focuses on the nonviolent philosophies and practices of Mahatma Gandhi and King. From 11 am to 11:30 am, we will transition to a presentation by Arun Gandhi by having refreshments and breakfast breads in our fellowship hall. At 11:30 am, Arun Gandhi will speak on the subject "Stories About My Grandfather Mahatma Gandhi and Educating for Peace." At the end of his presentation, he will sign copies of his books, including his new children's book [Grandfather Gandhi](#) and his autobiographical [Legacy of Love: My Education in the Path of Nonviolence](#). To attend the presentation, a \$15 donation is requested of adults. Children are free. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Agnes Alexander

It is with a profound sense of loss that we announce the death of Agnes Alexander. Agnes and Charlie (d. 1994) joined this church in 1937 which made her a member here for 78 years?

Agnes' Memorial service will be at **1:00 pm Sat., Jan. 17th at the Portland First Congregational United Church of Christ at 1126 SW Park Ave. between Main St. and Madison St.**

Due to parking limitations in Portland, Pam Osborne has been busy arranging carpool rides for those who would like to attend Agnes' service. We will be meeting here in the parking lot of the church at noon to travel together to Portland. If you would like a ride, please contact Pam Osborne at 360-750-1353.

Coconut Cream Pie Anyone?

We seem to have an errant pie in the refrigerator in the kitchen. If you seem to be missing a pie or more importantly a good Corning Ware pie tin, please claim it.

New Photo Book of Prayers by Pastor Brooks

Pastor Brooks just published a new book entitled Gratitude for a Daughter: *Fifty Pictures and Fifty Prayers of Thanksgiving*. The book can be viewed in the narthex at the Welcome Table. The book can be ordered for \$33. Payments are to be made upon ordering. Proceeds go to the church.

Pastor Brooks' Office Hours

Pastor Brooks' normal office hours are: Monday, 2PM – 4PM; Tuesday, 2PM – 4PM and Saturday, 3PM – 5PM. Because of occasional commitments, please call 693-1476 in advance to schedule an appointment.



JANUARY UPDATES

The cold, rainy weather has kept the WHO shelters full with overflow beds. Please continue to donate men's socks, gloves, hats, thermals and underwear to the big yellow basket in the narthex.

Sign up now for our WHO week March 1-7.

Once again we are partnering with our friends at Kol Ami. Volunteering is easy 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 1-7.

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.

Church Restructure

Contributed by Sandy Mathis

Many of you reviewed a summary of a proposal to change the governance structure of our church and a Question and Answer document (still available from the church office, electronic or hard copy). A dozen people attended a meeting on November 16 to provide suggestions or learn more. It was decided that one or more UCC churches with structures similar to the one proposed will be invited to speak at our church. This will help us learn more about their experience before proceeding. We expect this will be scheduled in February. The dates/times time will be published as soon as available. Thank you for your continued interest.

**Mission & Outreach
Special Offering
For January is
Community of Welcoming
Congregations**

The Community of Welcoming Congregations (CWC) engages in advocacy and education, providing resources to congregations & individuals. They have helped coordinate a public religious voice in support of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender (LGBT) legislation in past years and will continue this important work. Over 100 different faith communities in SW Washington and Oregon comprise the CWC and our congregation is a member.

Recent attempts by businesses to discriminate against LGBT people in the name of "religion" have shown that progressive Christians need to be more active!

To donate to this important work, write your check out to our church, but designate "CWC" in the memo line and place in the offering plate any Sunday in January.

Love in Las Vegas!

Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 8th! After worship, we will be doing things Vegas style! Before Valentine's Day, we will celebrate love in its many forms—from the budding love of new sweethearts to the enduring love of those long united in holy matrimony. Like Vegas, we will have a fabulous buffet. Like Vegas, we will have high stakes excitement in the form of bunco. And, finally, like Vegas, we will have Elvis! Elvis will be present to bless and renew vows. You won't want to miss it.

Congregational Meeting

There will be an Annual Congregational Meeting immediately following worship on Sunday, January 25, for the purpose of voting on the budget for 2015.

**2015 Lenten Series:
Communication Rooted in
Our Values**

Contributed by Kristina Martin

For our Lenten luncheons this year, we will have an adult education program entitled "*Communication Rooted in Our Values.*" In addition to Pastor Berndt, FCUCC members Alice Rowe, Carole Greenauer, and Kristina Martin will lead sessions each week on topics such as Non-Violent Communication, communicating with children and grandparents, and communicating to foster community. The Lenten Series will begin on February 22nd and go through March 22nd. Parish Life will provide a soup luncheon and all sessions will meet after church in Bradford Hall. If you have questions, please contact Rev. Berndt.

Christian Education and Lent

Contributed by Kristina Martin

As a way of connecting all levels of religious education with the very exciting Lenten Series, "Communication Rooted in Our Values," **Bible Adventures will be held at the same time as Adult Education.** Children and their parents will gather for lunch in Bradford and then the children will attend Bible Adventures classes that emphasize ways to communicate with one another in ways that reflect our values as Christians. During the regular Bible Adventures time, children in grades 1-8 are welcome to stay in the service. Children birth through preschool are welcome to visit the nursery.

**Souper Bowl Sunday
February 1, 2015**

MAZI, our Youth Group, will be collecting non-perishable food and cash donations from now until February 1 for Souper Bowl Sunday. Donations may be brought to the narthex any time. All proceeds will benefit Martha's Pantry.

This is a revised calendar due to additions since the last Link.

January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 4:00 Pantry 6:00 Planned Pthd NFL 7:30 Fireside PLY	2	3
4 Communion 10:00 Worship SAN 10:20 Bible Adv CL 11:15 MAZI TRI 11&1 MCC PLY 4:30 Fireside PLY	5 6:00 VANUSA BRD 7:00 Spirituality NFL 7:30 Fireside PLY	6 9:00 WW BRD 9:30 Bible St. PLY 10:30 Staff PLY 12:00 Martha's Pantry 5:30 Conservation PLY 6:30 Sierra Board PLY 6:30 CE CL2	7 4:00 WW BRD 7:00 Choir SAN	8 10:00 Prayer Shawl NFL 4:00 Pantry 7:30 Fireside PLY	9	10 9:30 Women's Bkfst Group Quay
11 10:00 Worship SAN 10:20 Bible Adv CL 11&1 MCC PLY 4:30 Fireside PLY	12 1:00 Membership PLY 6:00 VANUSA BRD 7:00 Pastoral Relations 7:30 Fireside PLY	13 LINK 9:00 WW BRD 9:30 Bible St. PLY 10:45 Staff PLY 12:00 Martha's Pantry 6:30 Parish Life NFL	14 4:00 WW BRD 7:00 Coal Free PLY 7:00 PC Board NFL 7:00 Choir SAN	15 10:00 Memorials PLY 4:00 Pantry 7:00 Book Club NFL 7:30 Fireside PLY	16	17 1:00 Agnes Alexander Memorial-Portland UCC
18 MLK Sunday 10:00 Worship SAN 10:20 Bible Adv CL 11:15 MAZI TRI 11:00 Gandhi Recept. Bradford Hall 11&1 MCC PLY 4:30 Fireside PLY	19 Office Closed for MLK Day 6:00 VANUSA BRD 6:30 CRC SAN 7:00 Spirituality NFL 7:30 Fireside PLY	20 9:00 WW BRD 9:30 Bible St. PLY 10:45 Staff PLY 12:00 Martha's Pantry 6:30 PCUsers BRD 7:00 Diaconate NFL	21 10:30 Ebel Cir offsite 4:00 WW BRD 6:00 M&O CL2 5:30 P&F PLY 7:00 Choir SAN	22 1:00 Arts and Crafts Woodworking PLY 7:00 Council CL2 7:30 Fireside PLY	23	24 9:30 CCMTA Meeting and Workshop NFL & SAN
25 10:00 Worship SAN 10:20 Bible Adv CL 11:00 Cong. Meeting SAN 11&1 MCC PLY 4:30 Fireside PLY	26 6:00 VANUSA BRD 7:30 Fireside PLY	27 LINK 9:00 WW BRD 9:30 Bible St. PLY 10:45 Staff PLY 12:00 Martha's Pantry 7:00 Communications	28 4:00 WW BRD 7:00 Choir SAN	29 4:00 Pantry 7:30 Fireside PLY	30	31