

The Link

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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Volume 37 No. 3

God is Still Speaking,

February 10, 2015

Lenten Worship Series: Directed toward the Divine

Dear Church Family,

Occasionally, my three year old daughter can see when I am lost or in need of direction in the grocery store. With an encouraging voice and a nodding head, she will say, "Ask someone." More often than not, I realize she is right, and I do ask someone. In the spiritual landscape of life, perhaps each of us occasionally needs to seek help and direction. With this in mind, I will be beginning a new six-week sermon series on February 22nd that will look for guidance from prominent Christian thinkers who can help point us toward God. Each Sunday we will focus on the wisdom and insight of notable figures, including Henri Nouwen, Gustavo Gutierrez, Dorothee Sölle, and Marcus Borg.

With theologians and writers as our companions, we will journey together through Lent, a time of turning toward God. During this reflective season, may we pause to ask for direction. May we pause to renew and deepen our faith.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Brooks

WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY

February 15, 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

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters:

Worship Leader: David Harrington

Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King

February 22, 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. Adult Education in Bradford Hall following worship.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters

Worship Leader: Joan Blair

Ushers: David Macko and David Harrington

Ash Wednesday Dinner and Worship

Before our Ash Wednesday Service on February 18th, we will gather for a soup dinner in the Plymouth Room, the room on the first floor at the far end of the education wing. The dinner will begin at 5:45 pm. The Ash Wednesday service will begin at 6:30 pm. The service will feature an art display, a brief reflection period led by Pastor Brooks, special music, and the imposition of ashes upon the forehead.

Women's Breakfast Group

All women of the church are invited to celebrate sisterhood, fellowship and friendship when the **Women's Breakfast Group** meets at 9:30 AM Saturday, February 14, at the Red Lion Inn at the Quay. Oh yes...and Happy Valentine's Day!

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.

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
Abigail Fazio
Gloria Ross
Verna Myers
Betty Ferner

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

Link Deadline
Link Mailed

February 22, 2015
February 24, 2015

MISSION & OUTREACH FEBRUARY SPECIAL OFFERING IS Winter Hospitality Overflow Shelter (WHO)

In 2003, Council for the Homeless and Share partnered with the Greater Vancouver Interfaith Association to create the Winter Hospitality Overflow (WHO), a program committed to providing safe shelter during the winter months to families and individuals experiencing homelessness.

Our church will volunteer to staff the shelter March 1-7th (see related article). Even though WHO is a volunteer-driven program, the WHO incurs expenses for utilities, groceries, volunteer training materials, and salaries for professional case management staff.

Please consider giving generously to support this example of love in action by writing a check out to our church any Sunday in February and noting "WHO" in the memo line.

Mary Jo Ebel to Meet

Contributed by Connie Oppel

The Mary Jo Ebel Circle will gather for a "Happy Birthday to the Church" meeting Wednesday, February 19th at 10:30 a.m. in Bradford Hall. In anticipation of the 125th anniversary in 2016, we're getting an early start.

Longtime member, Ruth Hammer, (she joined when she was 13), will share some of the church history she and others have saved over the years focusing especially on the women's role.

All women are invited – we'll be having cake and ice cream and presents for the church. If you would like to bring something, here are some suggestions:

- Toys and supplies for the nursery.
- Dish towels for the Kitchen
- Coffee for the office for meetings

These are just a few. Be creative. If you would like more information, you may call Connie Oppel, 573-8997 or Ruth Hammer, 574-7359.

See you on the 19th!

2014 Year-end Contribution Statements

Submitted by Jeff Osborne

Year-end contribution statements for 2014 were handed out after the service on February 1st. The remaining statements were mailed to homes on February 3rd. Your statement should accurately reflect all of your giving during 2014.

Please review your statement against your own records and contact me if anything seems incorrect.

Jeff Osborne, Financial Secretary
email: jeffo@vanucc.org
phone: 360.904.5910.

Faith Formation Groups

Contributed by Pam Osborne

During the Lenten season the church will be starting a new Faith Formation group that will follow a curriculum designed to introduce concepts and practices that will enrich one's daily spiritual life. The group will explore ways to make meaning out of life and get connected with God. This six-week program involves meeting with a small group of 8 to 10 persons that is led by a skilled facilitator. The group will meet on Tuesday evenings February 17- March 31 (no meeting March 17th). New members and others who are new to our church are especially encouraged to join. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex, or contact Pam Osborne at 360-750-1353; posborne430@gmail.com.

Altar Flowers

A new year...a new chance to honor loved ones. A new flower chart has been hung in the narthex. Parish Life commission is now filling the chart for 2015. Please consider honoring a loved one, an anniversary, in memory of a family member or friend, or "just because celebration" by providing a bouquet or arrangement for Sunday worship services. Choose a date/s on the calendar, sign up and the reason for your donation. Honors will be included in the Sunday bulletins. Thank you!

Supplemental Pledges Due This Sunday

At our last congregational meeting, our church voted to undertake a supplemental campaign to cover the existing shortfall of \$16,817 in our annual budget for 2015. As a sign of strong leadership, our Council members collectively pledged \$3,525 to this second effort. This leaves us with \$13,292 to be raised. We are appealing to the rest of the congregation to help shoulder the load. If you are able to contribute, please submit a pledge card by this Sunday. You can mail your card to the church or leave it in the offering plate on Sunday.



YOUR HELP NEEDED NOW

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> **Make sure the calendar is on 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.

You can view the shift details and description before you sign up, but **sign up early** to get your preferred shift!

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

Do You Need Health Insurance?

The Washington Health Benefit Exchange is urging 2014 Qualified Health Plan customers who have not yet renewed their coverage for 2015 to return as soon as possible to continue their health plan this year. The open enrollment period ends on Feb. 15, 2015. An enrollment event is taking place on Friday, February 13th at Fort Vancouver Regional Library from 11 am to 2 pm. Enrollment in Washington Apple Health (Medicaid) is year-round. Residents interested in signing up for health coverage may visit www.wahealthplanfinder.org. If you are unsure of your current enrollment status, you can call the Customer Support Center at 1-855-923-4633.

You can also request an appointment with a certified enrollment assister to complete your application. Jessica Almroth is an assister working with Planned Parenthood to assist people with Apple Health and Qualified Health Plans. You can call (503) 278-2215 or email jessica.almroth@ppcw.org to set up an appointment to find out what you qualify for.

Organ Recital – Save the Date!

Submitted by Jeff Osborne, Chair, Organ Committee



March 21st marks the 330th birthday of Johann Sebastian Bach. Our organist, Dr. Christopher Schindler, will mark the occasion with a special organ recital as part of the international Bach in the Subways movement.

This free recital, which begins at **3:00 PM**, also celebrates our new 3-keyboard Johannus Opus 370 organ. Pastor Berndt will lead a short dedication for the organ. The recital will be open to the public.

See Christopher's program at www.bachinthesubways.com/events/christopher

2015 Lenten Series: Communication Rooted in Our Values

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, crucial conversations between grandparents and adult children, healthy and constructive confrontation, and communication that fosters 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

As a way of connecting all levels of religious education with the 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 communicating with one another in ways that reflect our values as Christians. During the traditional Bible Adventures time, children in grades 1-8 are welcome to stay in the service. Children from birth through preschool are welcome to visit the nursery.



Interfaith Advocacy Day February 19th in Olympia

Register now at <http://bit.ly/15-ifad-olympia> for Faith Action Network's Interfaith Advocacy Day on February 19, starting at The United Churches of Olympia, 110 11th Avenue SE, near the Capitol campus. Check in begins at 8am, and the program begins at 9am, with the day ending around 3pm. The day's agenda includes: Multi-faith reflections on advocating for justice; caucus meetings by legislative district; workshops on FAN's five policy areas (see our [legislative agenda](#)); presentations by a Senator in the morning, with other electeds and the Governor's budget director joining us in the afternoon.

Appointments with your elected officials will be scheduled for you if you register by February 12. Lunch is provided. Cost is \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door.

Your voice needs to be heard in Olympia! Come join other advocates from your area to support economic justice, a sustainable state budget, criminal justice reform, protection of affordable housing, and a sustainable environment. You can follow the progress of bills on our [Bill Tracker](#) which is updated weekly; and you can prepare for the day by reading [background information about most of the issues](#) at the Advocacy Toolkit on our website. If you have any questions please contact FAN at fan@fanwa.org, or [206-625-9790](tel:206-625-9790). Be part of the movement for the common good!

IT'S TIME FOR A NEW PICTORIAL CHURCH DIRECTORY!

We are making appointments now for photos for our new church directory and hope everyone will be able to fit into the time schedule. The appointment dates are Thursday, February 19th from 1:00 pm to 8:30 pm, Friday, February 20th from 1:00 pm to 8:30 pm and Saturday, February 21st from 10:00 am to 5:30 pm. Each family will receive a complimentary professional 8 x 10 portrait and a copy of the new church directory.

After you are photographed, you will be able to view your images immediately and choose one for the directory. There will be an opportunity to purchase additional portraits if you wish, but there is no obligation to do so. Extended family members or friends are welcome to have a portrait taken even though they will not be in the directory. Also, you may include pets or props to make your photos more meaningful.

Our church will receive extra directories for our own use if people outside the church come for portraits, even if they don't make a purchase. They will also receive a free 8 x 10.

If you are unable to have your portrait taken, you may submit a photo of your own (in a vertical shape). Professionally taken photos cannot be used because of copyright laws, so we will need a photo taken with a digital camera that we can transmit to LifeTouch, the company that is doing our directory.

If you have a family member age 60 or older, all members of your group will receive a 20% discount on photo orders.

There is still time to sign up to be included in the directory. Call Ellie Bradley at 360-944-7838 or Joan Blair, 360-573-6505 to make an appointment.

What Music Inspires You?

The Music Director Search Committee would like to know what kind of music you would like to incorporate into our services.

First UCC has been known for its excellent music program and this is your chance to let us know what inspires you. The survey sheets are available on the Welcome Table in the narthex.