

The Link

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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Volume 37 No. 11

God is Still Speaking,

June 11, 2015

One of Our Greatest Strengths

Dear Church Family,

Many of you have no doubt read my letter from earlier this week in which I announced my departure to become the National Minister of Environmental Justice for the UCC. As I now reflect back on my eight years of ministry in our church, I would like to share with you what I see as one of our church's greatest strengths. When one thinks of what defines the Body of Christ, it is easy to first think of the common values that we hold: love, justice, peace, service, etc. However, this church has repeatedly demonstrated to me another defining characteristic and that is our collective wisdom. We could say that our common values represent the heart of our body, while our collective wisdom represents the head.

I have come to appreciate that our church has an incredibly big head, and I mean that in the best possible sense. During the past eight years, we have at times faced significant challenges. Our cracking skylight might come to mind. With each of these challenges, I had a reoccurring experience. When I at first considered the matter alone, I would feel overwhelmed. How are we ever going to fix that skylight?! After worship or in the hallway, a few of us would talk about the issue at hand and commiserate. I would still feel overwhelmed, but I would feel better. Then, we would have a meeting, and it would be at this gathering that the gift of collective wisdom would arrive. All sorts of ideas would fly through the air. Some would quickly plummet like a wingless bird while others would flap a little and soon begin to soar. Especially tricky issues might require more than one meeting, but eventually, we would get to a place where each of us would leave the meeting feeling like we were ready to conquer whatever lay before us. We will get that skylight fixed! And, we would do just that.

I hope this church feels proud of the extraordinarily large head on its shoulders. It has repeatedly bolstered my faith and given me inspiration. May it do the same for each of you!

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Brooks

WORSHIP IN JUNE

June 14 Teacher and Graduate Recognition

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: Haydn And Leslie Chapman
Worship Leader: David Harrington
Ushers: Carol Pendergraft, Dwight Chapman
Darrell and Shirley Brandenburg

June 21, 2015 Father's Day

10 a.m. Worship Service. Rev. Walter John Boris, preaching. Infant and Toddler Care available.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters:
Worship Leader: Carole Greenauer
Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King and Ray Jones

June 28, 2015

10 a.m. Worship Service. Rev. Aric Clark, preaching. Infant and Toddler Care available.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters:
Worship Leader: Dwight Chapman
Ushers: David Macko and David Harrington
Sue Rush

With Love from the Ross Family

A special word of thanks to all who have shared in the Memorial Service for Gloria. Thanks to Richard Trefren for putting the service together and leading it. To Virginia Dunbar, Christopher Schindler and the choir for providing beautiful music. To Kathy Woolley for being the coordinator and general organizer of the day. To the Deacons, choir members and others who prepared the reception and did the clean-up (many who worked from early morning for the Capital Fund event and through early evening hours). Everyone did a super job. Our family is so grateful to everyone for your support, love and prayers for Gloria and our family through the last three years. God bless you all. Sincerely, Charlie and Family

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
Ken Kerr
Betty Ferner
Jean Mathews
Dorothy Mathews
Sue Benson

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

Link Deadline
Link Mailed

June 21, 2015
June 23, 2015

Congratulations to our Graduates

Leslie Wu, daughter of Karen Kulm and Nathen Wu, will graduate from the University of Washington with honors in Philosophy, and Law, Societies & Justice. While in school Leslie interned at a local law office and at the King County Bar Association. Leslie was also active in the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority. She will continue her studies this September at the University of Washington School of Law.

Sabrina Mauke-Wiswall, daughter of Seeseei and the late Larry Mauke-Wiswall graduated from Mt. View High School on June 10th. She will continue her studies at Western Washington University in September.

WELL DONE!





**God makes no mistakes.
You are wonderfully made.
Happy Pride Month.**



"I will give thanks to YOU, for I am
fearfully and wonderfully made..."
-Psalm 139:14

No Pride Without YOU!

Join the churches of the Central Pacific Conference UCC as we show an extravagant welcome during the Portland Pride Festival June 13-14. Sign up here to help at our UCC booth G – 4 near the Pine St. Festival Entrance.

<http://pridenw.org/downloads/sitemapfinal.pdf>

We are using VolunteerSpot to sign up for the booth. Just follow these easy directions. We especially need more volunteers on Sunday.

Here's how it works in 3 easy steps:

1. **Click this link** to go to our invitation page on VolunteerSpot: <http://vols.pt/aTStZF>
2. **Enter your email address:** (You will NOT need to register an account on VolunteerSpot)
3. **Sign up!** Choose your spots - VolunteerSpot will send you an automated confirmation and reminders. Easy!

Join us for the parade on Sunday. Step off time for the parade is 11AM, but we are number 40 in the parade so plan to arrive by 10:45. Our line up spot is on NW Park between NW Flanders and NW Everett. (Exact location is subject to change, so just look for the UCC banners and signs.)

<http://pridenw.org/downloads/paradesetup2015.pdf>

We will have two vehicles in the parade, so limited seating for those unable to walk is available.

Please contact Karen Kulm at .360-991-5774 if you have any questions.

Thinking About Becoming A Member?

If you have decided that we are the church family for you, you can attend this two-hour orientation today, **5:00 p.m.** at the home of Ken and Alice Rowe; 1710 NW 10th St Vancouver, 98685. You may call the office, 693-1476 for directions.

If you are interested in attending, let Pastor Brooks know as you leave the sanctuary today.



Mission & Outreach June Special Offering

Friends of the Carpenter is a faith-based Day Shelter that provides safety and a sense of purpose to members of our community. It began in 1998 as a vision of simple welcome and personal interaction between volunteers from the church and those in the community who are disadvantaged. Wood devotional items are made at the shelter, but the main product is relationships--helping the disadvantaged see themselves as people of worth.

The Friendship Center is located at 1600 W 20th Street in Vancouver. It is open from 9 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday. Volunteers are always needed to provide welcome and to help with activities, staff the reception desk, lead devotions or singing, and more. The 2nd Chance Thrift Store, located at 3414 A NE 52nd Street (52nd & St. Johns Blvd.) in Vancouver needs volunteer workers, donations, and shoppers.

The ministry is growing. The number of hours clients spent at the Friendship Center increased 60% during the first quarter of 2015 compared to the first quarters of 2012-2014.

You can learn more at <http://friendsofthecarpenter.org/>. Your donation will help meet the growing needs of this wonderful ministry. **You may write a check to the church and note "Friends of the Carpenter" on the memo line.**

Teacher & Graduate Recognition Sunday

On Sunday, June 14th, the Bible Adventures teachers and our congregation's graduates will be recognized in the service. We are blessed to have such wonderful people in our congregation!

Pulpit Guest for June 28

Aric Clark is a writer, a speaker, and Presbyterian minister who lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife and two gremlins pretending to be his sons. He is the co-author of *Never Pray Again: Lift Your Head, Unfold Your Hands, and Get To Work*, a book which challenges readers to embrace a concrete other-centered spirituality. When he is not writing, preaching or parenting, Aric can be found engaging his tabletop gaming hobby, or cooking for a crowd of random strangers he invited home without his wife's permission. He is a pacifist and he still can't grow a beard.

Worship and Transition Meeting on June 21st

On Sunday, June 21st, our conference minister Walter John Boris will preach and lead a one-hour meeting following worship about the transition process.

Bible Adventures Will Be On Hiatus

Summer is very nearly upon us, which means that our children's religious education (Bible Adventures) will be on hiatus from June 28th until September 20th. Sunday, September 13th will be Kick-Off and children will be offered the opportunity to participate in the service. On the 20th, Bible Adventures will resume and will be introducing the new BA curriculum.

New for 2015-2016: Faith Practices

The Christian Education ministry is excited to be purchasing a new curriculum for use in the fall with our upper elementary youth and possibly the middle school youth. The curriculum is Faith Practices produced by the UCC. It utilizes 6 areas of study: discovery, scripture, discipleship, Christian tradition, context & mission, and future & vision. The Faith Practices curriculum will expand the broad, peace and compassion based Joyful Path curriculum used with the younger youth and will also provide a strong Biblical understanding

VBS

As previously noted, First Congregational UCC Vancouver will not be offering VBS this year. However, many area churches are beginning to post their VBS offerings. Some are:

First Methodist of Vancouver (33rd and Main)
June 22-26, 5:00 until 7:30 PM

First Presbyterian Church (43rd and Main)
June 22 -26, 9:00 until 11:30 am.

Northside Baptist Church
(55th and Minnehaha)
June 22-26, 9:00 am until 12:00 pm

For additional resources, The Fish has posted a summer-long list of area VBS offerings: <http://www.thefishportland.com/content/station-events/vbs-day-camps-2015>

we must be
willing to let go
of the life we
have planned,
so as to have
the life that is
waiting for us
joseph campbell

Honoring our Past, Securing Our Future

Phase III of our Capital Campaign came to an official, glorious end with the well-attended, well received and well-enjoyed Italian Dinner on May 31st. Special thanks to Joan Blair and Leslie Chapman and their team for making the dinner a most extraordinary and enjoyable event.

The campaign commitments have been extraordinary as well. Our original goal was to obtain pledges over the next three years (January 2015 – May, 2018) of \$300,000. As these pledges were paid, we expected to use \$183,000 of the collected funds to make mortgage payments over the next three years and accumulate \$117,000 to reduce our mortgage principal in 2018. To date, we have received pledges and donations of over \$204,000. Though this is just 2/3 of our goal, the impact of the campaign is greater.

As we initiated Phase III, many of your generously completed Phase II commitments and made additional pledges to Phase III. This eliminated a short-term cash-flow problem. Thanks to a generous cash donation of \$50,000 at the beginning of the campaign, we made a mortgage reduction payment in April of 2015 instead of June of 2018 maximizing the impact of that donation. That leaves us with \$154,000 of a needed \$168,000 for mortgage payments over the next three years.

This sum represents the pledges of 56 households within our church community and we expect there will be a few more over the coming weeks. Also, many of you have expressed a desire to consider additional contributions over the coming years. I believe we are on secure financial ground and thank you all for your generosity.

John Fite, for the Capital Campaign Leadership Team.

