

The Link

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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Volume 37 No.22

God is Still Speaking,

November 24, 2015

Simple Gifts

Advent, the liturgical season between Thanksgiving and Christmas, is also a secular celebration that might be called Drink-Shop-and-Eat-All-You-Can. Meanwhile, here at Vancouver UCC, we are celebrating the **Simple Gifts** of the season. During worship in the weeks to come, we will share with one another the simple gifts of music, prayer and presence. I'm looking forward to each of these weeks with you as we unwrap these simple gifts together.

Sunday, November 29

First Sunday of Advent – Peace

During worship, we will explore advent practices of prayer and preparation.

Sunday, December 6

Second Sunday of Advent - Hope

A hope-filled communion service, with a sermon for all ages, followed by an edible advent fest and potluck.

Sunday, December 13

Third Sunday of Advent – Joy

Rejoice as the children lead us in worship. There will be an extremely special guest joining us this day!

Sunday, December 20

Fourth Sunday of Advent – Love

We will worship in music this day. Celebrate with a Christmas Oratorio led by our choir and special guests.

Thursday, December 24 8:00 pm

Festival of Lessons and Carols with candle lighting. Followed by wassail and cookies.

Sunday, December 27

I look forward to joining you for the traditional Vancouver UCC brunch and simple service in Bradford Hall.

Blessings,

Pastor Jennifer

WORSHIP IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

November 29, 2015 First Sunday of Advent

10 a.m.. Rev Jennifer Brownell, 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: Daryl DeSilva and John Bradley
Worship Leader: Dwight Chapman
Ushers: John Hannon and John Bradley

DECEMBER

December 6, 2015 Second Sunday of Advent

10 a.m. Communion Service. Rev Jennifer Brownell, preaching. Infant and Toddler Care available. 10:20 a.m.:

Greeters:

Worship Leader: Leslie Chapman

Ushers: Trent Corey and Rory Martindale
Wayne and Doris Fletcher

**Advent Festival/Hanging of the Greens,
Potluck, immediately following worship**

December 13, 2015 Third Sunday of Advent

10 a.m. **Children's Program.** No Bible Adventures or Youth Group today. Infant and Toddler Care available. 10:20 a.m.:

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters:

Worship Leader:

Ushers: Dwight Chapman and Carol Pendergraft
Darrell and Shirley Brandenburg

December 20, 2015 Fourth Sunday of Advent

10 a.m. **Choir Program:**

Saint Saens Christmas Oratorio

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters:

Worship Leader: Melanie Handshaw

Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Ray Jones

December 24, 2015 Christmas Eve Service

8:00 pm . Worship Service.

December 28, 2014 Family Christmas Brunch

10:00 AM in Bradford Hall. No Bible Adventures, Youth Group or Nursery this morning.

REMEMBERING OUR FAMILY IN PRAYER

Prayer requests for:

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

CONTINUING PRAYER REQUESTS FOR:

Joan Blair
Ken Kerr
Betty Ferner
Dorothy Mathews
Nita Calvert
Irma Slocum
Cordelia Rush
John Priel
Harriet Anani

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

Link Deadline

December 6, 2015

Link Mailed

December 8, 2015

Birthdays in December

December 02	Nancy Woodworth
December 03	Carol Fish
December 04	Christina Kenoski
December 06	Norma Priel
December 08	Olivia Martindale
December 11	Chloie Chronister-Brittain
December 13	Judy Walter
December 13	Andy Allensworth
December 13	Jack Melton
December 14	Will Lowe
December 24	Dana Wise



Tuesday Morning Scripture Bible Study

The Tuesday morning weekly scripture bible study group will be on hiatus during December.

After the first of the year, a decision will be made as to whether they wish to continue on Tuesdays.



ADVENT 2015: An Edible Advent and Cookie Exchange

Contributed by Kristina Martin

The Advent Festival Potluck will be December 6th and you don't want to miss it. Bring a potluck item and an appetite for your holiday spirit.

After we eat lunch together, we will decorate and bake cookies as well as some other activities. When you go home, you'll take a plate of cookies and a great start to your Christmas season.

If you'd like to donate your favorite Christmas cookie to the cookie exchange, please let Kristina know. You can call her or Kathy in the office with your cookie donations.



Annual "Adopt A Family" Gifts Due December 6th

We have "adopted" a family through SHARE and will be collecting gifts as requested by the family. We will also give them grocery store gift cards so that they can have a nice holiday meal. **All gifts must be new and must be unwrapped.**

Look for the Giving Tree in the narthex with gift tags. Take a tag, purchase your gift or gift card, tape your tag to the **un-wrapped** gift and return it to church by the 6th. We will then take your gifts to SHARE where they will be wrapped and distributed to the family. December 6th is the absolute cut-off date per SHARE.

Questions? Contact Karen Kulm at 360-991-5774 or lk.kulm@gmail.com.

ACOLYTE TRAINING December 13th after Worship

Rev. Jennifer will be leading an Acolyte training session for all children grades 4 and up immediately following worship on December 13th. Please come!

Memorial Service for Vicky Koffel

There will be a Memorial Service for **Vicky Koffel** on Sunday, November 29th at 1:30 in the Sanctuary.

Vicky and **Frank Koffel** joined our church family in July and have been faithful attendees over the summer and autumn months.

*Seeing is believing,
but sometimes the most real things
in the world are things we
can't see.
The Polar Express*

Hello and Season's Greetings!

I am writing today to share some news that applies to the families of Vancouver UCC. As you know, we have lost our paid Nursery Attendant due to some changes in Angie's schedule. This means that until the position is filled, we need to use church volunteers to help with the children who use the nursery.

Pastor Jennifer and I have decided that while this time of transition may be stressful, it is also a great opportunity for Vancouver UCC. She and I both have been reading lots of information on church development and growth, as well as best practices for children. Based on that data and our current needs, some exciting changes are going to happen at Vancouver UCC.

1. Because there isn't any Sunday school in December (due to communion, the Children's program, the Choir Christmas program, and the Christmas brunch) we are reorganizing the back of the sanctuary a bit to add a small couch, rocking chair, rug, and a small collection of books/quiet toys. We are thinking of it as a "baby friendly" area. The furniture will be on loan from the youth group room and I'm working on getting a tasteful rug.
2. The nursery will be relocated to classroom 3. We will go through the toys and furniture in the nursery to decide what needs to be brought up. If you'd like to be part of the process, let me know. (For example, if you know your little one loves a certain toy, let's make sure it stays!)
3. "Grade levels" may be adjusted in January to reflect our current population's personalities and needs. For example, some of our older elementary kids could join our middle schoolers for discussions and our youngest preschoolers could have access to the nursery if needed. I will keep you posted on this as we move forward.
4. Pastor Jennifer will be leading an acolyte training after the Children's Christmas program on December 13th. Any interested child in grades 4 and up is encouraged to go to the training. **BRING YOUR CALENDARS** as Jennifer will assign Sundays at that time. If you can't attend, please talk to Jennifer about an alternate training option.
5. Looking ahead to key dates:
 - November 29: SOCKS service project during church.
 - December 6: Advent Festival and Cookie Exchange Potluck, bring a potluck item and/or baked cookie to share with the congregation. Go home with a plate of cookies! The piano will be available for anyone who wants to play Christmas carols.
 - December 13: Children's Christmas Program during church; any children who want to participate can have a role. Acolyte training after the service – meet in the sanctuary.
 - December 20: Choir Christmas Program – celebrate the season by listening to the gorgeous music program put together by Sterling Roberts for his Master's program at PSU.
 - December 24: Christmas Eve Service, 8 pm.
 - December 29: Christmas Brunch potluck, Pastor Jennifer leading it in Bradford.

Thank you for being a part of the life and future of Vancouver UCC. With you and the excitement of the children, it seems like all things are possible!!!

Blessings!

Kristina Martin
CE Coordinator/Youth Director

December 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 World AIDS Day 9:00 WW BRD 9:30 Bib. Study PLY 5:30 Conservation PLY 6:00 Day of Rememb SAN 6:30 Sierra Board PLY 7:00 VUSA BRD	2 10:00 Bible 101 PLY 10:45 Staff 4:00 WW BRD 7:00 CoalFree CLC 7:00 Choir SAN 7:00 Bible 101 PLY	3 4:00 Pantry 6:00 Planned Pthd NFL 7:30 Fireside PLY	4 10:00 Pantry	5
6 2nd Sunday of Advent 10:00 Worship 11:00 Potluck and Advent Festival BRD 11 & 1 MCC PLY 4:30 Fireside PLY	7 6:30 VANUSA BRD 7:00 Spirituality NFL 7:30 Fireside PLY	8 LINK 9:00 WW BRD 9:30 Bib. Study PLY 6:30 CE CL2 6:30 Parish Life NFL	9 10:00 Bible 101 PLY 10:45 Staff 4:00 WW BRD 7:00 Choir SAN 7:00 Bible 101 PLY	10 10:00 Prayer Sh. NFL 4:00 Pantry 6:00 M&O NFL 7:30 Fireside PLY	11 10:00 Pantry	12 9:30 Women's Bkfst 10:00 Samoan Adv.SAN 1:00 Lena Recital SAN
13 3rd Sunday of Advent 10:00 Children's Worship SAN 11 & 1 MCC PLY 4:30 Fireside PLY	14 1:00 Membership PLY 7:30 Fireside PLY	15 9:00 WW BRD 9:30 Bib. Study PLY 6:30 VANUSA BRD	16 10:00 Bible 101 PLY 10:45 Staff 4:00 WW BRD 7:00 Choir SAN 7:00 Bible 101 PLY	17 4:00 Pantry 7:00 Council CL2 7:30 Fireside PLY	18 10:00 Pantry	19 10:00 Samoan Adv.SAN
20 4th Sunday of Advent 10:00 Choir Oratorio 11:00 Reception BRD 11 & 1 MCC PLY 4:30 Fireside PLY	21 6:30 VANUSA BRD 7:00 Spirituality NFL 7:30 Fireside PLY	22 LINK 9:00 W. Watchers BRD 9:30 Bible St. PLY	23 . 10:45 Staff 4:00 WW BRD 7:00 Choir SAN	24 Office closes at 12:00 noon 4:00 Pantry 7:30 Fireside 8:00 Christmas Eve Service SAN	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS!	26 10:00 Samoan Adv.SAN
27 10:00 Brunch Worship in Bradford Hall 11&1 MCC PLY 4:30 Fireside PLY	28 7:30 Fireside PLY	29 9:00 W. Watchers BRD	30 4:00 W. Watchers BRD	31 4:00 Pantry		