

# *The Link*

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*God is Still Speaking,*

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## **A MYTH SO PROFOUND**

“Why,” asks modern myth-maker Madeline L’ Engle, “are we so gullible when it comes to promises about floor waxes which are better than other floor waxes, or pain killers which will remove all our physical ills, or all the other false promises which are constantly being offered a credulous public, and yet are afraid of the myths which will give meaning to our lives?”

When you hear someone say “it’s a myth” they usually mean that it’s a made-up story. But in modern times it’s becoming clearer that myths are an important part of the human experience – giving meaning, distilling big concepts into palatable information, and providing a way to pass wisdom from generation to generation. Myths are in fact the opposite of lies - truths so profound, so compelling and so universal that they can’t even be described – we just have to tell stories about them.

I talked to someone this week who, having found out that Jesus may or may not have been born in Bethlehem, said she felt like she’d been duped her whole life. I didn’t want to break it to her that December 25 is probably not the actual birthday of Jesus either. Most likely, this date was chosen because it fell close to winter solstice, or to a Roman holiday celebrating the sun.

As we tell one of the greatest story of our faith to one another in the days and weeks to come – that of a babe born of a woman in humble circumstances and attended by an unlikely cast of characters - we are sharing a myth. This is not to say that our Christmas stories are lies designed to dupe you, but that they are super-truths – truths about the human need for love and hope so deep, so profound and so universal that we can only understand and share them by telling stories about them.

In these sad and violent days, when we seem as if we are just barely recovered from the news of one act of police or terrorist violence before another one strikes, we need myths more than ever. Not to escape the reality of life, but to sink more deeply into the truths that give us hope and strength in difficult times.

Advent blessings,

Jennifer

## WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

### 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.



## DECEMBER UPDATES

Every year thousands of people in Clark County experience homelessness. During the cold winter months their need for shelter is even more important, so in 2003, the 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.

Our church volunteers at the men's shelter located at the St. Paul Lutheran church in downtown Vancouver. The WHO guests are offered not only a warm place to sleep, but a hot shower, meal, and the welcome and warmth of a caring community working to address the most basic of human needs.

Although our church volunteer week is March 6-12, **you can help now** by donating men's socks, gloves, hats, thermals, and underwear. Just place your items in the big yellow basket in the narthex.

If you would like to donate food for the weekend meals at the shelter, please contact Dave Slocum at [dslocum72@aol.com](mailto:dslocum72@aol.com).

## 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

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## UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

Link Deadline  
Link Mailed

December 20, 2015  
December 22, 2015

Link Deadline  
Link Mailed

January 10, 2016  
January 12, 2015

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## Worship Leader Training

Have you considered being one of our worship leaders on Sunday morning? If you would like information about participating in this vital part of our worship service or would like to be a leader in 2016, you are encouraged and welcome to participate in a short training on Sunday January 10<sup>th</sup> immediately after worship.



## Mission & Outreach Special Offering for December

The United Church of Christ Christmas Fund (formerly Veterans of the Cross) has been helping retired clergy and lay workers for decades. One of the unique aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees – the funds do not support programs or institutions, but people. With your continued generosity, more individuals will receive the support of the church in their time of need.

Our retired clergy/lay employees relied on this income supplementation for basic needs such as food, utilities, and living and medical expenses.

Christmas “thank you” gift checks were given to 510 retired UCC clergy/lay church employees last year. This special gift at Christmas time reminds these Veterans of the Cross that they have not been forgotten and that the Church is grateful for their service.

**Please support this important UCC fund by writing a check to our church and putting “UCC Christmas Fund” in the memo line.**

## Have You Seen the Light?

When you have the opportunity, poke your head into Bradford Hall and check out the new and bright lights that have been installed. Many thanks to John Greenauer, Tom Renner, Scott Jones, Ken Rowe, Ed Martin, and Bert Martin. Please let them know this hard work is appreciated.

## ACOLYTE TRAINING This Sunday after Worship

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

## 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.



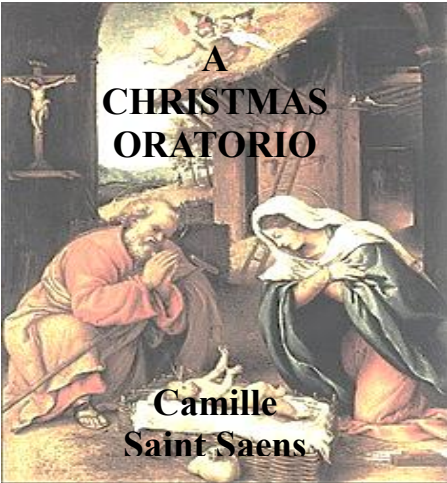
## SPECIAL OFFERING: Discretionary Fund

On Christmas Eve we will take our annual special offering that helps those in our church family and community with emergency needs. Our ability to help those in hard times is a true blessing to those who receive it.

## From Lynn Renner

I am now home after my 2 month road trip traveling and living out of my car. I drove over 9,000 miles, traveled in 21 states and enjoyed incredible parks, museums, historic sites and special people along the way. I felt safe, warm and supported especially knowing my church family was praying for me. I want to thank you all, but especially my choir family who gave me a hands on prayer blessing led by Pam Osborne prior to my departure. I was feeling a little shy about asking for this prayer, but received such warmth, love and power from it. Thank you all for helping me on my journey. I hope to put together a slide show to share down the road.

Love  
Lynn Renner



Join us on at worship on December 20<sup>th</sup> as we present "*Christmas Oratorio*" (*Oratorio de Noël, Opus 12* by Camille Saint Saens, a work for choir and soloists.. Written in 1858 when Saint Saens was only 23, the piece opens with a Prelude which sets the scene for the Christmas story and it's pastoral quality creates images of the shepherds tending their flocks. In the remaining movements, the choir and vocal soloists take turns representing different characters in the beloved story, culminating in the final movement; a virtual hymn of praise of all creation in the presence of God.

## Mary Jo Ebel Circle Tea

Hope you will join us at 1 PM on Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> for our Christmas Luncheon at **Sweet Peas Tea Room, 5206 NE 78<sup>th</sup> Street.** We must have firm reservations by Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>..

The venue offers several options and information is available from any circle member. Members and friends are encouraged to look at the menu and choose your favorite. Please call Connie Oppel, 573-8997 or Ruth Hammer at 574-735 .for more details and/or to R.S.V.P.

## Some signs and symptoms of The Advent Virus:

- \* A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- \* An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- \* A loss of interest in judging other people.
- \* A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- \* A loss of interest in conflict.
- \* A loss of the ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom.)
- \* Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- \* Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
- \* Frequent attacks of smiling.
- \* An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- \* An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

## THANK YOU FOR THE SOCKS!

As a service project in their religious education classes, the children of Vancouver UCC collected socks during November. Arlene Arnold and the kids attending church on November 29<sup>th</sup> had a fabulous and fun time folding the donated socks into pairs and attaching sweet notes to them. An entire laundry basket of socks were delivered to Martha's Pantry on November 29<sup>th</sup> and have already started warming feet in our community. This church has a warm heart for others!



## ADVENT THANK - YOUS!

Thank you so much to all of you who brought cookies to the Advent Festival. Your generosity allowed everyone in attendance to take home a variety of Christmas cookies and our shut-ins got a sweet surprise of cookies and Christmas cards.

Also, a huge thank you to members of our youth group (MAZI), and Carole Greenauer and Bert Martin for baking and decorating several dozen cookies so the children could have the Christmas memory of making cookies.

May this Advent season be a very sweet one for all of our church family!



## The Bright Star

Come and learn about the most famous star in the world from our precious children of the church. With narration by Amelia Martin and Emma Schnabel; written by our own Kristina Martin, and featuring all the joy and celebration the children of the church can muster, this Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 will make your heart shine as bright as the Christmas star.



## Wassail and Cookies on Christmas Eve

A favorite tradition at our church following our wonderful Christmas Eve service is to serve wassail and enjoy our favorite Christmas cookies. There will be a sign up sheet in the narthex on Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> if you would like to share your favorite cookies with us. Parish Life will prepare the wassail. Thank you



## LOOKING AHEAD TO SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY!

It's hard to believe but Super Bowl Sunday is in only a few short weeks which means that SOUPER BOWL is also coming soon. MAZI will be collecting non-perishable food and cash donations for the entire month of January. All donations will be given to Martha's Pantry as a way for Vancouver UCC to support the very needed work Martha's Pantry does in our community. Find the table in the narthex in January - and let's see just how much we can collect this year!