



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

PORTLAND FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1838 SW JEFFERSON, PORTLAND, OR 97201

the **E** edition

December 13, 2006
Volume 10, Issue 23

**THIS
SUNDAY**

DECEMBER 17, 2006

**WORSHIP
10:30 AM**

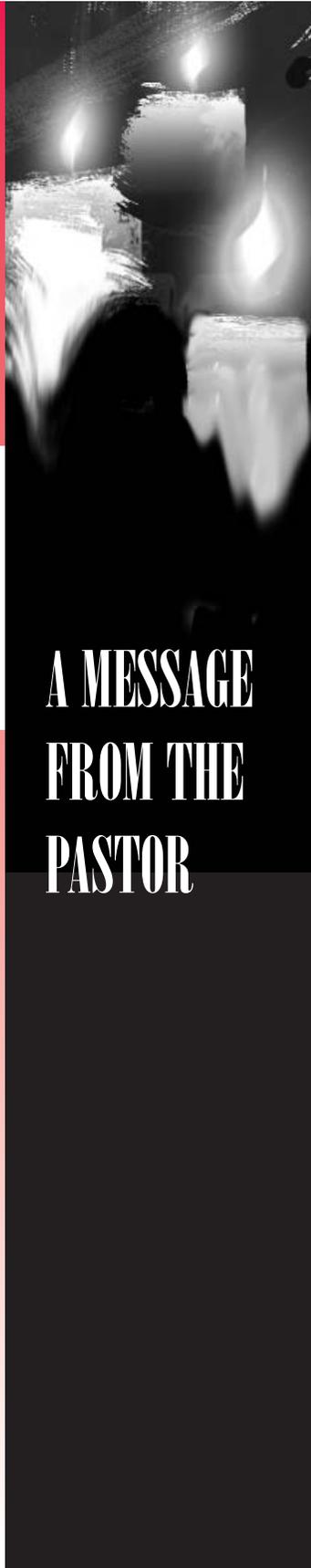


Gloria

by John Rutter
presented
by the
Chancel
Choir



As a Reconciling
Congregation, members
of First United Methodist
Church have pledged to
welcome and
support all who want to
worship with us,
regardless of race,
gender, class or sexual
orientation.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Each of us have a favorite Christmas song. My wife, Sue, and I both favor the same carol: In the *Bleak Mid-Winter*. The haunting melody that underscores Victorian English poet Christina Georgina Rossetti's lyrics tugs at my heart with wonder at the God's greatest gift—the Christ child—and the invitation to give to him our hearts.

Won't you, your family and friends join us to experience the wonder for yourself?

This Sunday, at 10:30 AM the Chancel Choir will present the powerful *Gloria* by John Rutter. I heard a preview last Sunday afternoon—it's a 'don't miss' event!

Christmas Eve at our 10:30 AM service we'll our children's choirs will help us retell the nativity story in word and song that will entrance everyone—young and old alike.

Traditionally our most popular and meaningful worship is the "Candlelight and Carols" on Christmas eve at 7:00 and 9:00 PM. Twinkling candlelight, familiar carols, our chancel choir and a message of hope and love will make this a memorable night.

Cap it off with a gentle, meditative time of "Candlelight Communion" at 11:00 PM..

It's the perfect way to welcome Christmas Day!

Be sure, as well, to discover that the true meaning of Christmas is found in giving to others.

An envelope is available in the church office for a special Christmas offering to support and extend the ministries of compassion and outreach in our congregation.

"Alternative Christmas" offers four opportunities to make a difference through second-mile gifts to mission in our community and around the world.

In the days to come, may you and yours encounter the gentle presence of grace filling your soul with joy and peace. And may you find in your hearts God's richest blessings.

Merry Christmas!

Arvin

DECEMBER AT FIRST CHURCH



PARENTS' DAY OUT FOR THE HOLIDAYS:

There are two remaining Parents' Day Out programs: Saturdays, December 16 and 23 from 9:30 AM -1:00 PM. Children from newborns through age 11 are welcome for crafts, activities, snacks and a Christmas movie. Reservations are required as we have a limit of 12 kids each Saturday. Cost is \$5.00 per child with scholarships available. Reservations can be made at the sign-up sheet at the nursery or by contacting Agnes Zach at 503/228-3195, ext. 227.

ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE WHO ARE GRIEVING

There will be a Longest Night Service, Wednesday, December 20, at 7:00 PM in the Chapel. Christmas can be a bittersweet time of year-especially if you are grieving. It is a time for remembering both persons and events that have been a part of our lives in the past, but that are now changed or gone. December 20 is one of the longest nights of the year. We will join with First Christian and First Congregational churches to offer a quiet, meditative worship service that makes time for remembering and for sharing our hurting places with God.

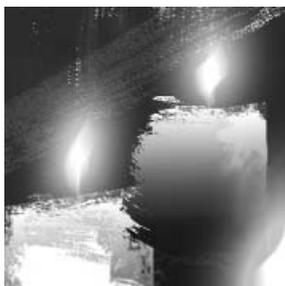
MIXED-AGED ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

On Sunday, December 31, we will have nursery care available for children age four and under. A special movie/craft time will be available for children in kindergarten through 3rd grade. 4th/5th graders will be in worship.'

Christmas Eve



**SUNDAY,
DECEMBER
24**



Morning Worship

With Christmas Eve falling on a Sunday this year, the 10:30 AM service will showcase the children's choirs, Genesis Ringers, and the families of First Church. No Sunday School will occur, though the nursery will be open. This service will focus on the Christmas Story with participation from the congregation and the children.

Candlelight Services

- 7:00 PM Candlelight Carol Service
- 9:00 PM Candlelight Carol Service
- 11:00 PM Communion Service

At the 7:00 and 9:00 PM Services, enjoy the music of the Chancel Choir, the carols of the season, and a Christmas Eve message from Rev. Dr. Arvin R. Luchs. At the 11:00 PM service experience the intimacy of communion by candlelight and a message from Rev. Tom Foster. Child care will be available at the 7:00 & 9:00 PM services.

CHRISTMAS EVE GREETERS NEEDED

Greeters are needed for our Christmas Eve services at 7:00, 9:00, and 11:00 P.M. and Sunday Dec. 31 at the 10:30 AM service. Sign up sheets are on the long hall window by the office. Please help make our services warm and welcoming by volunteering a half hour of your time to this important service to our church. -Pat Rieke, Greeting Coordinator.

adults at first

sunday classes

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SEEKERS

Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:15 AM in Room 134
Using Harold Kushner's book, *The Lord Is My Shepherd: Healing Wisdom of the Twenty-Third Psalm*, this class is discovering what it has to teach about living our day-to-day lives. Everyone is welcome at any time during the course of the class.

CHANGING CHRISTIANITY

Sunday mornings 9:00 -10:15 AM in Room 202.
We are studying the book: *Honest to Jesus* by Robert Funk.

FAITH & PUBLIC LIFE SERIES

This adult class series will explore various public issues through the lens of our faith life. Each session will meet in the Fireside Room from 9:15 to 10:15 AM. Upcoming topics include:

December 17 *The American Experiment: Emerging Movements - Where Do We Go From Here?* (Rev. Dr. Greathouse)

COMING IN JANUARY

A short-term adult class will be offered Sundays, January 14, 21, 28, 2007. Join Dr. Lane McGaughey from Willamette University for a special three-part series: *The Legends of the Apostles*. These classes will be offered Sundays from 9:15 to 10:15 AM in the Fireside Room.

- January 14 Thomas Tradition
(Gospel of Thomas, Acts of Thomas,
Infancy Gospel of Thomas, and Thomas the Athlete)
- January 21 Paul Tradition
(the Acts of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles)
- January 28 Gospel of Judas and the Gospel of Mary.

adults at first

learning and growth

WEEKDAY SPIRITUALITY CLASS TO BEGIN

A weekday Spirituality Class will begin Wednesday, January 10, 2007. Join Rev. Lowell Greathouse on Wednesday mornings from 9:30 to 10:30AM in the library for this new class on Christian Spirituality. We will be using two books: *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings* edited by Richard Foster and James Smith, and *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time* by Robert Ellsberg. We will look into the lives and writings of the great witnesses within the Christian tradition.

CHAUTAUQUA TALK: THE IDEA OF JUSTICE

The Chautauqua Talk: *The Idea of Justice* will be offered: Sunday, January 14, 2007 from 12:00 to 1:30 PM in the Fireside Room. This forum is made possible through the funding of the Oregon Council for the Humanities, will explore various aspects of justice. Lani Roberts, from Oregon State University, will be the presenter.

umw

united methodist women

WOMEN OF FIRST CHURCH: UMW

All women are invited to the following meetings. Note that the Unit Gathering is the first Wednesday of each month. President: Pat Brockman, 503/292-6270

FAITH CIRCLE

The Faith Circle will meet Wednesday, December 20, at 10:30 AM for a Christmas brunch will be hosted by Eleanor Stubbs, 12236 SE 31st Place, #75, (off Lake Road) in Milwaukie. The program will involve a variety of activities. For information call Eleanor at 503/659-9024.

RUTH CIRCLE

Wednesday, December 20, 12:00, Room 204
Ruth Green will lead us in making "Gems of Christmas" and Hazel Balcomb will entertain with Christmas carols on her soprano saxophone. A special time will be given to honor the memory of our dear member, Rose Pfozter, who died on November 19, 2006. Florence Snyder will lead the devotions. Bring your sandwich. Dessert will be served by Melba Rizzo and Dora Luckert. Thanks to Evelyn Casey who always provides the coffee and tea. Chair: Betty-Lou Hare, 503/292-1773.

CHOCOLATE FOR A GOOD CAUSE

You can have your chocolate and send a message that you support social justice. By choosing fairly traded products you help create a more just and equitable economy. United Methodist Women will be selling fairly traded organic chocolate and tea during Coffee Hour in December. As consumers in a global economy, you can change some of your buying habits and make a world of difference for many third world families. Learn more about Equal Exchange and Fair Trade during December Coffee Hour.

NO UMW BOARD MEETING

There will be no UMW Board Meeting in December.

fellowship

dining out

FOOD AND FRIENDS IN JANUARY

All parents and people that enjoy good food, the next Food and Friends event is January 12, 2007. The church nursery opens at 6:00 PM for childcare. Dinner reservations are for 6:30 PM. The nursery accepts a \$5.00 donation per child for childcare. David and Susan Kenney are selecting January's restaurant, so it is sure to be terrific. Questions or more information: contact Agnes Zach, Children/Family Ministry Coordinator at 503/228-3195 ext. 227 or azach@fumcpdx.org.



alternative
christmas
2007

missions
an outreach concert

Christmas (the alternative kind) is Coming! Do you dread all those Christmas jingles suggesting you "buy this, buy that. . ." Well, does Global Missions have the answer for you! Yes, the most important gift of the season is, as you know ... love. We have meaningful ways for you to channel that love to five different places around the globe. Stop at the Alternative Christmas table in the Commons on November 26, December 3, 10, or 17 to do your shopping for:

- 1) Salud y Paz in Guatemala
- 2) Shade & Fresh Water in Brazil
- 3) Garbage Dump Ministry in Cambodia
- 4) Goose Hollow Family Shelter
- 5) Bread for the World.

Your gift is a complete package which goes a long way,-- feeds the hungry, relieves suffering and gives hope, and honors and pleases your friends and family as well.

Remember to mark Tuesday, January 30, 7:00 PM, on your 2007 calendar, to hear the Watoto Children's Choir in concert at First Church. The perfect remedy to lift your spirits on a dark, cold night, they'll share with us their message of hope and light. Three overnight hosts are still needed. Please contact Global Missions Chair, Dee Poujade, at 503/243-3337. All are invited to a 5:00 PM potluck preceding the concert. Plan to come and bring a friend.

Watoto, in the children's native language of Ugandan, means "the children." Since 1994 this choir, accompanied by a small team of adults, has regularly toured the U.S., Canada, Europe and Australia. Watoto's performances are a soulful blend of native African rhythms, contemporary gospel music and ethnic dance. These children, ages 6 - 16, are among the more than 880,000 children in Uganda who have had the tragic and life-altering experience of losing one or both parents to HIV-AIDS.

music notes
music at first church

crafts
from Guatemala

JONAS NORDWALL

Jonas Nordwall just got back from Atlanta, Georgia where he played a concert on the Fratelli Ruffatti Albert Schweitzer Memorial Organ at Clayton State's Spivey Hall. Jonas was joined by Kurt Alexander Zeller for two numbers. Kurt will be here visiting his family and will sing the offertory on December 31, 2006 for our worship service.

DEBBIE BENKE

Debbie Benke is traveling to Moscow, Russia with her husband and Gill Seeley, the conductor of the Oregon Repertory Singers. She will be the guest soloist of the Moscow State Choir performing in the Moscow Conservatory of Music, and will be singing *A Spiritual Reflection* arranged by Moses Hogan, and selections from *Porgy and Bess*. She will be gone for 12 days. While she is away, Stephanie Kramer will add her voice to our soprano section.

THE CHANCEL CHOIR

The Chancel Choir, conducted by Gary St. John, sang a concert of John Rutter repertoire on December 10 at Willamette View Manor in the afternoon. Besides the *Gloria*, they sang *The Candlelight Carol* and *A Gaelic Blessing*. There was also a time of audience participation singing Christmas carols. After the performance, the choir enjoyed their annual holiday potluck at the home of Nancy and Jonas Nordwall.

JUBELLATION

The juBELLation ringers played at Canfield Place, Raleigh Hills, and Alterra Heights retirement centers on December 10, 2006. We are fortunate to have this group of youth bell ringers.



STOCKING STUFFERS

For the last-minute shoppers still looking to stuff a few stockings, Guatemalan craft items will be available next Sunday at the Commons in Collins next to the Alternative Christmas table. These items, which included beaded jewelry, clothing and other woven items, are made by indigenous crafts-people who are paid a fair wage, and are sold to benefit Los Romeritos, a child-care center for street children in Guatemala City.

financial update

by Frank Hodapp, Chair of the Finance Comm.

In the stations of the London Underground (aka “the tube”) there are signs warning passengers to “Mind the Gap.” The “gap” referred to is the distance between the station platform and the door of the waiting car. Failure to “mind the gap” can have painful and even fatal consequences. Gaps also occur in First Church’s financial life. To understand how this happens, let’s take a short walk through the 2006 Budget and find out what it costs to run the church.

The church receives 79% if its annual operating funds for the budget from pledges and annual offerings, 16% from the Board of Trustees and 5% from other sources. The total revenue budgeted for 2006 was \$1,110,513. The Gap this year occurs because we budgeted \$8,853 more in expenses than we did for revenue receipts.

Additional gaps in the budget increasing expenses have occurred throughout the year because of significantly higher utility costs.

I think the most important GAP occurs when pastors and program directors, fired by the love of Christ, see their goals thwarted by a lack of funds. And let’s face it, the need will always exceed the resources until the world changes dramatically. In the meanwhile, all we can do is what our senior pastor suggested on Commitment Sunday: “Do all that you can, and trust God for the rest.” Mind the gap!

HOLIDAY VOLUNTEERING

Take time to volunteer for a good cause this holiday season. Visit www.volunteerhere.com, the wonderful website for Hands on Greater Portland. If you are interested in special Holiday Volunteering Opportunities, go to this site and then click on the Holiday Volunteering Opportunities link on the right side of the homepage. This website also allows you to look for a variety of volunteer opportunities throughout the year by interest area, region of the community, and you can even sign up for regularly scheduled volunteer programs as an individual or family. One final note: Our church’s Goose Hollow Family Shelter is always in need of volunteers as well. Simply go to the church website at www.fumcpdx.org and click on the shelter link.

CONFIRMATION CLASS IN 2007

Confirmation Class for 7th and 8th graders will run from January to March in 2007. Beginning January 7, 2007, those in the 7th and 8th grades (and those who are older and have not participated in confirmation will participate in six sessions of First Church’s 2007 confirmation program. In this program, participants will explore their understanding of God, discuss their experience of faith, and move toward membership in the life of the church. Each participant will be assigned a mentor to work with at the close of the program. Contact Lowell Greathouse at 503/228-2895 x224 or lgreathouse@fumcpdx.org for more info or registration. ***There will be a Confirmation Orientation on Sunday, December 17, at noon in the Fireside Room.***

EPIPHANY SUNDAY & CHILDREN’S PROCESSIONAL

Children’s Processional is scheduled for January 7, in conjunction with the Epiphany Service. Each child, age 2 through 5th grade, is asked to bring an item for a child to that service. Children will meet in their Sunday School classrooms as usual, but will process to the sanctuary, with their item, during worship. The items will be donated to the West Women’s Shelter. Things such as sippy cups, diapers, diaper wipes, small toys, books, bottles, pacifiers, etc. are always greatly appreciated. We use this processional as a time to share with our community on Epiphany Sunday.

Rev. Lowell Greathouse, Minister of Discipleship

During this time of the year, it is good to remember the gift of friendship...

A Friendship Blessing (from *Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom*, by John O’Donohue)

May you be blessed with good friends.

May you learn to be a good friend to yourself.

May you be able to journey to that place in your soul

where there is great love, warmth, feeling, and forgiveness.

May this change you.

May it transfigure that which is negative, distant, or cold in you.

May you be brought in to the real passion, kinship, and affinity of belonging.

May you treasure your friends.

May you be good to them and may you be there for them;

may they bring you all the blessings, challenges, truth, and light
that you need for your journey.

May you never be isolated.

May you always be in the gentle nest of belonging with your “soul” friend.

the edge
thoughts
for the
journey

our prayers

prayers and concerns

PRAYERS OF THANKFULNESS ...

James Barnes, who has now been moved to the Rehabilitation Institute of Oregon (RIO) at Good Samaritan Hospital.

He is very happy to be there and continues to make remarkable progress.

Leif Terdal, was able to go home Saturday following hip replacement at St. Vincent Hospital on Thursday.

Bryan Smith, was discharged from OHSU and is now back at his apartment at Rose Villa.

PRAYERS OF SYMPATHY ...

Violet Ricci, whose mother, Opal White, died in Moscow, ID on December 12, 2006 at the age of 99.

PRAYERS OF CONCERN ...

Louise Jorgensen, who is recovering from open heart surgery at St. Vincent Hospital.

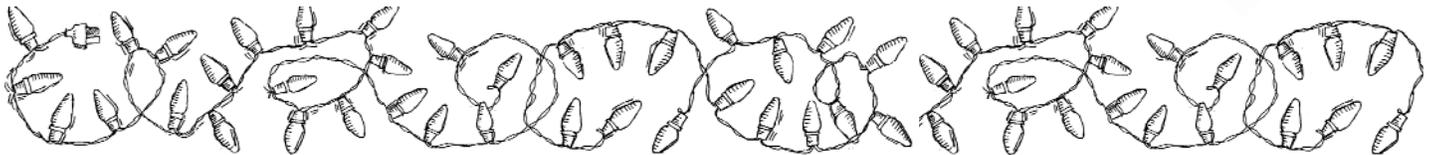
Jane Baker, now back in her apartment at Willamette View and doing considerably better.

Mildred Divisson, the mother of Bob Myers, who broke her hip. She lives in Riverside, CA

Jennifer Cies, who has gone to be with her father who has been hospitalized

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

Al Leonard, Dick Clark, Jim Fowells, Lettie Schulz, Mike Rogers, and Tom Iverson



Publication Deadlines

Articles for *The Circuit Rider* are due no later than 4:45pm on the Thursday before publication the following Wednesday. The next *Circuit Rider* will be published on **January 10, 2007**.

Bulletin insert information is due no later than 4:45pm on **Wednesday**.

Sunday service participant information for the Sunday bulletin is due no later than noon on **Wednesday**.

E-mail: office@fumcpdx.org or place in the *Circuit Rider* box in the office.