



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

PORTLAND FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1838 SW JEFFERSON, PORTLAND, OR 97201
the E edition

December 12, 2007
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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 23, 2007



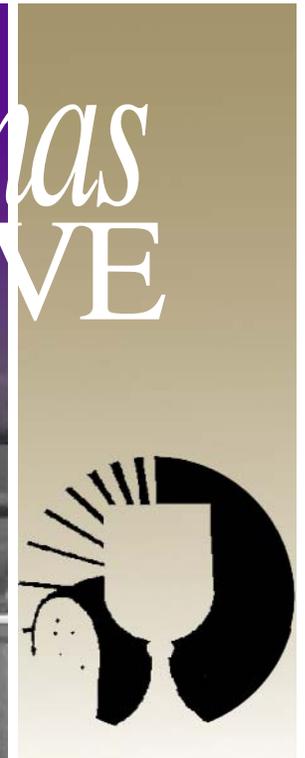
- Lessons and Carols
- The Oregon Renaissance Band (featuring period instruments and alp horns)



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.

LIVING A VIBRANT FAITH

BELIEVING THINKING ACTING



Christmas EVE

- 5:00 PM Family Service - Words and Music
- 7:00 PM Candlelight Carol Service
- 9:00 PM Candlelight Carol Service
- 11:00 PM Communion Service

The 5:00 PM Family Service will be a service of words and music and will feature the Cherubs and Soundseekers Choirs.

At 6:30 and 8:30 PM, Jonas Nordwall will be playing prelude music on the newly rebuilt Mary L. Collins Pipe Organ.

At the 7:00 and 9:00 PM services, come and 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 5:00, 7:00 & 9:00 PM services.

DEC. 30

A SERVICE OF CAROLS

On Sunday, December 30, 2007 the 10:30 AM service will be service of carols. There will be special music by the First Church Quartet and celebrate in the sacrament of baptism and a message from our pastor.





memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin R. Luchs

Richard Dawkins is no stranger to controversy. His recent argument against the existence of God, *The God Delusion** has stirred up such a dust storm that the 30th anniversary of his first publication, *The Selfish Gene*, ** almost passed under the radar.

His initial book wasted no time raising hackles. The opening paragraph still reverberates: “We are survival machines—robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes.” For three decades the outspoken researcher has been explaining that evolutionary mechanics do not involve moral choices—and that the book is more about altruism than selfishness. To be fair, Dawkins is a keen thinker, and his arguments deserve careful analysis—way beyond a short column.

It’s hard to avoid the cynical scientist’s point: the fundamental building blocks of life, our genes, are programmed to assure their own survival at the expense of anything else— even the welfare of the larger organism in which they live. But, the biologist is quick to add, that the evolution of human brains make it possible for us to rebel against our selfish genes and act out of unselfish motives.

Indeed we can—and, thankfully—we do. I am touched by the reports of so many Oregonians rallying to the support of the families whose homes and livelihoods have been damaged or destroyed by the recent storms and floods.

I am repeatedly moved by unselfish response when this congregation hears of someone who is ill, grieving or in need: telephone calls, cards, visits, gifts of food, transportation to doctors, help with daily tasks, the list could go on and on. It’s astounding!

Though Dawkins would dispute me, I’m convinced that any genetic ‘selfishness’ pales in light of the spirit of a God whose essential nature is to give—not for selfish gain—but out of love. And that’s what Christmas is all about!

Find out for yourself.

We’ll be celebrating the gifts of God as we worship together the next two Sundays. They will be events you won’t want to miss.

Sunday, December 16, our Choir, with orchestra, will present J.S. Bach’s wonderful *Magnificat*. I have heard a preview—don’t miss it!

On Christmas Sunday, December 23, we’ll remember the nativity story in word and carol and rejoice with the music of the Renaissance Band, complete with period instruments and alp horns.

And on Christmas Eve we’ll rejoice with four festive services.

Everyone is welcome—be sure to invite your neighbors and bring all your family!

And, we give thanks for a generous God with a generous response. Our mission to offer the grace and love of God to our community and the world needs our help. Along with all the gifts we will be giving this Christmas, I hope you will consider a special second mile gift to extend Christ’s compassion. An envelope is enclosed for your special gift.

May the joy and peace of Christmas be in your hearts and fill your lives.

See you in Church!

Arvin

*(Bantam Books, 2006)

** (Oxford University Press, 30th anniversary edition, 2006)



adults at first sunday classes

FELLOWSHIP OF SEEKERS

The Fellowship of Seekers meets each Sunday at 9:15AM in room 134. The Fellowship of Seekers is an on-going adult class that seeks spiritual growth through study and discussion of writings by current and historic religious thinkers. During December the class will complete its study of *Inscribing the Text: Sermons and Prayers of Walter Brueggemann*. On January 6, 2008, we will begin reading *Creation to Revelation: A Brief Account of the Biblical Story* by James O. Chatham. Books will be available in the classroom. Lively discussions are led by a different class member each week.

CHANGING CHRISTIANITY

Join as the Changing Christianity Class studies *The Powers that Be* by Walter Wink in room 202 from 9:00-10:15 AM.

longest night a service of hope



THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE: A SERVICE OF HOPE

There will be a Longest Night Service, Wednesday, December 19, at 7:00 PM at First Congregational, 1126 SW Park Ave, Portland, OR 97205, 503/228-7219. 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. Portland First UMC, First Christian and First Congregational churches gather for a quiet, meditative worship service that makes time for remembering and for sharing our hurting places with God. This service will include music, scripture, a time to remember and share. Following worship, cookies and tea will be served for all who wish to linger and continue to share stories and to be with others who are finding the season a challenge. This service seeks to express the message of God's unconditional love which is at the heart of this season.

GREETERS NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Greeters are needed for all services on Christmas Eve. There will be sign up sheets on the windows on the long hall by the office. Eight to ten people are needed for the 5:00, 7:00, and 9:00 PM services and two or three for the 11:00 PM service. Thanks for your help in making our Christmas Eve services welcoming for our many visitors and members. Pat Rieke, Greeting Coordinator

umw women of first church

All women are invited to the following activities. Pat Brockman, president, 503/292-6270.

RUTH CIRCLE

The Ruth Circle will meet Wednesday, December 19, 2007 for a luncheon at Albertina Kerr restaurant. (Note the change of time.) Meet in the church parking lot at 10:15 AM. We are leaving earlier in order to visit the shops before lunch. Hundreds of volunteers operate the Albertina Kerr restaurant and the three gift shops housed in the Historic Old Kerr Nursery Building at 424 NE 22nd, Portland. All proceeds go to the Albertina Kerr Centers, which aid hundreds of needy children and their families each year. For information contact: Betty-Lou Hare at 503/292-1773.

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

The Circle of Friends will meet Tuesday, December 19 at 11:30 AM. (Note the change of date.) We will meet at the home of Trudy Kayser, 7755 SW Westmoor Way (503/292-7528). Trudy will host a luncheon followed by a cookie exchange. New members and visitors are always welcome. Please bring 36 cookies for the exchange. Also, bring new underwear and socks for Goose Hollow Shelter guests. For carpool information call Hazelee Stevenson at 503/283-0041.

UNIT GATHERING FOR JANUARY 2008

Coming soon! The first Unit Gathering for 2007 will be January 2, at 11:00 AM. in the Fireside Room. Start out the New Year right! On Wednesday, January 2, an exciting program will give you new insights into how life is lived in rural Guatemala. Ellen Urbani shares the amazing story of her year long sojourn in the guerrilla-infested mountains of Guatemala. Immersing herself in the culture and the struggles of the poorest villagers, her presentation will center on her recently published book, *When I Was Elena*. She reveals the resilience of the human spirit when encountering danger and oppression, and also will highlight the plight of families as they are affected by the economics, health care, and political issues in this small Central American country. Ellen will bring copies of her book for sale at the discounted price of \$22. Check her website: www.ellenurbani.com.

Even more, you're getting a two-in-one program! Linda Monk, who has led yearly Volunteer in Mission teams to Guatemala with her husband Larry, will describe the church's work among the indigenous people. Linda will also display some of the Guatemalan women's hand-woven fabric and beaded craft work, which provides a means of support for themselves and a local child care center. This is our opportunity to help the women and children of Guatemala. All invited, both men and women. Information: Colleen Foster, 503/641-3479.

A brown bag lunch will follow in Room 202. Gathering time is 10:00 AM for the regular UMW January meeting.



Rev. Lowell Greathouse, Minister of Discipleship

Here is something to think about during this “Season of Giving”:

“Why is it so difficult to acknowledge a gift as a gift? Here is the reason. When I admit that something is a gift, I admit my dependence on the giver. This may not sound that difficult, but there is something within us that bristles at the idea of dependence. We want to get along by ourselves. Yet a gift is something we simply cannot give to ourselves—not as a gift, at any rate. I can buy the same thing or even something better. But it will not be a gift if I procure it for myself. I can go out and treat myself to a magnificent treat. I can even be grateful later for the good time I had. But can I be grateful to myself for having treated myself so well? That would be neck-breaking mental acrobatics. Gratefulness always goes beyond myself. For what makes something a gift is precisely that it is given. And the receiver depends on the giver. This dependence is always there when a gift is given and received...Gift giving is a celebration of the bond that unites giver and receiver. That bond is gratefulness.”

(The Monastic Way, edited by Hannah Ward and Jennifer Wild, page 192)

a report
our giving

**2007 YEAR-TO-DATE
PLEGGED GIVING**

As of December 11, 2007

Goal:	\$815,347.00
Received:	685,200.00
Deficit to Date:	120,147.00

We are at 85.% of our goal.

The Finance Committee

AN EXPANDED ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS

Excitement is in the air as we approach our annual Alternative Christmas giving! Each Sunday of Advent you will have an opportunity to choose from one of the following projects:

- The Audubon Society of Portland
- Cambodia Garbage Dump Ministry
- Friends of the Columbia Gorge
- Friends of Zenger Farms
- Goose Hollow Family Shelter
- Heifer International
- The Oregon Environmental Council
- Sabeel
- Salud y Paz (Health and Peace)
- Wallace Medical Concern

A printed “gift card,” describing the project you have chosen will become a meaningful and ongoing gift for those you wish to honor in this season of giving. What better way to portray the spirit of the Christ Child than to give to others whose needs are great!

INDIGENOUS CRAFTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

December 16: Sabeel (The Way)

Purchase olive wood crèches and other hand-carved objects from the Holy Land, funding Palestinian Christians working through Sabeel (The Way), an Advance Special project.

December 23: Planet Church

Purchase Chinook Books, light bulbs and fair-trade chocolate to make this Christmas a truly “green” season.

goose hollow
family shelter



HELP KICK HOMELESSNESS OUT OF GOOSE HOLLOW

In the next week or so, Oregon taxpayers will receive the largest “kicker” refunds ever, getting back nearly one-fifth of their 2006 personal income taxes in checks totaling \$1.1 billion. We ask that you consider donating all or a portion of your Kicker Refund to the Goose Hollow Family Shelter to help our homeless families who are staying with us right now! Your contribution will be tax deductible and greatly appreciated. Please make checks out to the Goose Hollow Family Shelter. Some other items that the shelter needs right now include flashlights, deodorant, coffee, and hair brushes.

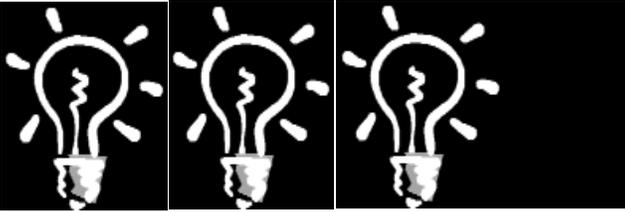
Don’t forget that you can check out volunteer opportunities at the shelter by visiting the shelter website at:
www.fumcpdx.org/GooseHollowFamilyShelter.

planet church

a green Christmas

children & family

date night



*Tw'as the night before Christmas,
when all through the states
Lots of holiday lights were on
at unreasonable rates.
The members of First Church
made a change in the masses,
In hopes that they could reduce
their output of greenhouse gases.*

Take the Planet Church One Bulb Challenge! (or one more bulb)

Sunday, December 23 come to the Commons in Collins Hall. As a gift to you and your family this holiday season, Planet Church would like to give you the gift of an Energy Smart CFL bulb for free. The challenge is to replace one light bulb in your house with an Energy Smart CFL bulb.

CREATED BY GOD

Created by God, a sex education curriculum for 5th and 6th graders will be offered on Saturday, January 12 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. *Created by God*, will be taught by Josh and Jen Martin. It utilizes a Christian perspective to provide children a healthy attitude toward sexuality.

A class for 3rd and 4th graders, using the same curriculum, will be offered on Saturday, January 19 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

A class for parents will also be offered on January 12, 2008 at 10:00 AM. This will provide parents an opportunity to discuss health attitudes and practice talking about a sensitive topic.

To sign up, please contact Arden Bryce at 503/228-3195 ext 227 or abryce@fumcpdx.org.

FAMILY DATE NIGHT

On Friday, January 18, 2008 meet us at CeramiCafe in Beaverton on Murray Rd. in the Murray Hills Shopping center. Come enjoy a time of creative expression with your family. A wide variety of ceramic items are available to paint. To sign up please contact Arden Bryce at 503/228-3195 ext 227 or abryce@fumcpdx.org.

christmas faire

a look back



2007

CHRISTMAS FAIRE

Thank you to everyone who made this year's Christmas Faire a huge success! It was a fun activity for the whole church family ... craft projects were a hit for children ... and the chili provided by our First Church youth hit the spot.

The Commons in Collins Hall was also buzzing with people deciding which Alternative Christmas Gift to give this year ... choices, choices, choices!

We want to thank especially those from the First Church staff who coordinated many of the events that day: Arden Bryce with Children and Family Ministries, Paul Adams with Youth Ministries and Matt Webber with Outreach and to the many, many volunteers who help each year!

Publication Deadlines

Articles for *The Circuit Rider* are due no later than 4:45 pm on the Thursday before publication the following Wednesday. The next *Circuit Rider* will be published on **January 9, 2008**.

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

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

E-mail: office@fumcpdx.org or bring to the church office

The Circuit Rider Online or by E-Mail

See the latest and past issues of *The Circuit Rider* in color at <http://www.fumcpdx.org/newsletter>

Have the link to the latest issue of *The Circuit Rider* e-mailed to you and be up-to-date fast and first! Sign-up at the church office, or call 503/228-3195 or e-mail at office@fumcpdx.org

**Christmas Offering Envelopes
are available in the church office.**

our prayers

prayers and concerns

PRAYERS OF SYMPATHY FOR ...

Heidi Foster & Mark O'Neal, Mark's father, Sonny O'Neal, passed away in Wenatchee, WA ...

The Rev. Asa Mundell, in the death of his wife, Gwen, in Salem.

They were active at First UMC after retirement, prior to declining health ...

PRAYERS OF CONCERN FOR ...

Nell McManus, who is at Legacy Mt. Hood Hospital following a stroke ...

Douglas Stearns, who is recovering from heart surgery at St. Vincent Hospital ...

Patrick O'Brien, on upcoming surgery ...

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING FOR ...

Race Wilson Martell, who was baptized on December 9, 2007. Race is the son of Julie Martell and the grandson of Robert and Joann Cannon

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

<i>Dick Clark</i>	<i>Mary Bywater Cross</i>
<i>David Edson</i>	<i>Douglas Eberwein</i>
<i>Betty Hager</i>	<i>Jim Jozwiak</i>
<i>Judy Rogers</i>	<i>Callie Templin</i>
<i>Sadame Tsunenaga</i>	

take note

items of interest

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING

The First Church Leadership Council will meet on Wednesday, January 16, 2008 at 7:30 PM in the Fireside Room.

PRAYERS FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY ABROAD

Jared Bomberger

Michael Panck

Karl Alger

Vanessa Walton

Craig Kubala

Steven Johnson

John Lemmon

Ryan Martin

