



# THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

November 19, 2008  
Volume 12, Issue 24

## LIVING A VIBRANT FAITH

BELIEVING THINKING ACTING



the  
*Word*  
became  
*flesh*  
and  
*dwelt*  
among  
*us ...*

John 1:14a

ADVENT  
2008  
Being There

### THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**November 30 ... Being There for Peace**

*We Light the Candle of the Prophets*

Worship at 10:30 AM

Forum: What Is a Peace Church? at 12:00 PM  
(in the Fireside Room after the worship service)

### THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**December 7 ... Being There for Love**

*We Light the Candle of Bethlehem*

Worship at 10:30 AM

Communion

World AIDS Awareness and Offering

### THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**December 14 ... Being There for Joy**

*We Light the Candle of the Shepherds*

Worship at 10:30 AM

The Chancel Choir presents:

*Terra Pax* by Gerald Finzi with harp & organ

### THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**December 21 ... Being There for Hope**

*We Light the Candle of the Angels*

Worship at 10:30 AM: A Lessons and Carols Service

Worship at 5:00 PM

Longest Night Service (Chapel) and Reception (Room 202)

### CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

**Wednesday, December 24 ... Being There with Jesus**

*We Light the Christ Candle*

5:00 PM Family Service of Lessons & Carols

7:00 PM Candlelight Carol Service

9:00 PM Candlelight Carol Service

11:00 PM Communion Service

### ALSO THIS ADVENT SEASON

#### Alternative Christmas

Each Sunday in the  
Commons in  
Collins Hall after  
Worship

Sunday, November 30  
**UM Student  
Recognition &  
Offering**

Saturdays,  
December 6, 13 & 20  
**Parents' Days Out**  
10 AM to 2 PM  
(the church nursery)

Sunday, December 7  
**Children's Church  
FISH Sunday**

Sunday, December 28  
Special Christmas  
Music with  
**John Nielson**  
at the 10:30 AM  
Worship Service

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.



## memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin R. Luchs

It started right here in Portland—but is infiltrating churches worldwide. It’s the brainchild of Rick McKinley, founding pastor at the nearby “post-modern” Imago Dei Community (a non-denominational Christian fellowship.) McKinley, his wife Jeanne, and a few friends discovered their disgust with the “Empire of Christmas”— i.e. consumption. They are calling on Christians everywhere to conspire to restore “the scandal of Christmas by substituting compassion for consumption.”



“Advent Conspiracy” is not just another version of the time-worn “Keep Christ in Christmas” campaign or simply the promotion of simple Christmases. McKinley put it this way in an interview with NPR’s Michel Martin, “Anyone can spend less and give meaningful gifts and use their money for charity but that is not what Advent Conspiracy is. All of those things are just small signs of the main thing, which is our worship of Jesus, and His coming into the world as a baby to bring salvation. That is our story to tell and it is a very different story than simply celebrating Christmas differently.”  
(*Tell Me More*, broadcast Dec. 25, 2007)

The movement encourages conspiring congregations to embrace four themes during the Advent season:

*Worship More:* Worshiping Christ can become the greatest and most enjoyed focus of the season. Take every opportunity—in your homes around an Advent wreath or with others in the church sanctuary—to worship joyfully!

*Spend Less:* Decrease the volume of purchasing and receiving costly Christmas gifts. Set a lower budget for gifts this year. Talk it over with your family—decide to limit the number of ‘purchased’ gifts and increase handmade gifts—or gifts of time.

*Give More:* God gave the Son as a relational gift; Christians can try to give more meaningful, relational and experiential gifts instead of just costly ones. Consider gifts of compassion, for example, a gift of time volunteering in the Goose Hollow Family Shelter, at FISH, the Oregon Food Bank, or the Cascade Aids Project.

*Love All:* In his Advent, Jesus enters our poverty so we will no longer be poor. With savings from giving relationally and resisting consumerism, people can redirect some of that money to the “least of these” in their communities and the world.

Many “conspirators” are uniting to provide clean-water for those in need around the world. It’s estimated every person on earth could have access to safe water for about \$10 billion dollars. Lots of money—but small in comparison to the approximately \$500 billion Americans normally spend on gifts each year. (At First UMC we’ll include an opportunity to contribute to water well drilling in Liberia among our Alternate Christmas Giving options this year.)

May we count you in? We’ll start conspiring on Sunday, November 30 as we gather for morning worship and light the first Advent candle.

See you in Church!

Arvin

## adults at first

sunday morning classes

### **CHANGING CHRISTIANITY:**

#### **The Bible: A Biography**

by Karen Armstrong

The class meets each Sunday from 9:00 to 10:15 AM in Room 202.

### **FELLOWSHIP OF SEEKERS:**

#### **The Haunt of Grace: Responses to the Mystery of God's Presence**

by Theodore Loder

Lively discussions are led by a different class member each Sunday at 9:15 AM in Room 134.

### **HOLIDAY STRESS SURVIVAL SESSION**

Sunday, December 7, 2008

9:00 to 10:15 AM in the Fireside Room

How long has it been since you felt at peace and worry free during the holidays? Imagine if this year less of your energy went toward holiday stresses and more went to what really matters—being thankful for your blessings and spending positive time with your family and friends? Join Samaritan Counseling Center therapist Mike Boyd for a time of education and support in how to cope with stress during the holidays. Learn stress reducing tips. Discover how to take care of yourself in new and important ways. Explore ideas for strengthening your relationships, managing your time, and even staying within your budget (both financially and calorically!)



**serving  
hospitality**

### **COFFEE HOSTS AND HOSTESSES**

The ministry of hospitality we offer during Coffee Hour following worship is very important ... and we need your help! Please sign up with Erin Riley during Coffee Hour or contact the church office at 503/228-3195 if you would be willing to be a Coffee Hour host or hostess.

## umw united methodist women

President, Melba Rizzo, 503/635-6716

### **DECEMBER UNIT GATHERING**

The last Unit Gathering of the year will be held Wednesday, December 3, at 10:00 AM in the Fireside Room. We will have a business meeting the first hour, but during the second hour we will celebrate with the sounds of Advent and Christmas. Beautiful music will soothe our souls and brighten our spirits. A holiday luncheon will be served at noon in Room 202. First Church staff is invited to join us. As is our Advent custom, bring a gift for a child, or bring wrapping paper, or a donation. Contact: Trudy Kayser, 503/292-7528

### **PLANNING TEAM**

The November 26 meeting of the UMW Planning Team meeting has been cancelled.

## please take note ...

items of interest

### **THE PARKER GROUP**

The Parker Group will meet Saturday, December 6 at 12:30 PM in room 202 for a potluck luncheon and program. Bring a dish to share. Our speaker will be Dr. Ross Miller. For more information contact Evelyn Casey at 503/775-9356.

### **CHURCH CONFERENCE DECEMBER 7, 2008**

First UMC's annual Church Conference has been rescheduled for Sunday, December 7 at 5:00 PM in the Chapel. At that time we will be presenting annual reports of our ministries and setting pastoral salaries for 2009.

### **PHOTOGRAPHERS: AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW YOUR WORK**

The artwork display in The Commons in Collins Hall, from December 7-28, 2008 will be photographs taken by members/attendees. If you have a photograph you wish to share with the congregation, please contact Larry Sawyer by November 24, 2008. Suggested maximum image width is 20 inches. Larry may be contacted at 503/771-1616 (cell with voice mail) or by e-mail at [larry\\_sawyer@comcast.net](mailto:larry_sawyer@comcast.net). Pictures must be framed.

### **GRIEF/LOSS SUPPORT GROUP**

Coping with Grief and Loss during the Holidays: Taking Care of Yourself. First United Methodist and Samaritan Counseling are offering an eight week grief support group to be held in the First Church Library on Sundays from 1:00 to 2:30 PM beginning on November 23, 2008. The group will be facilitated by Lynn McDowell, MS, NCC, LPC. The group's purpose is to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere for those who are experiencing grief after the loss of someone or something significant that is exacerbated during the holiday season. The cost is \$10.00 per session, or \$50.00 for all eight sessions. Some scholarships are available. Please call Lynn McDowell at 503/281-3318 X53 to register or to get further information.

# advent activity

wreath making



## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23 - FAMILY ADVENT FESTIVAL WREATH MAKING

A new spin on an old favorite: On Sunday November 23, 2008, after worship, we will gather with our friends and families for a chili lunch and advent wreath creation. Materials will be provided for making advent wreaths and advent projects. Chili Lunch: \$4.00 each/ \$10.00 family. Advent Craft Donation: \$2.00



# A PEACE CHURCH



## a forum November 30, 2008

Join us in the Fireside Room after worship on Sunday, November 30, 2008 from noon to 1:30 PM as we begin our exploration of

what it would mean for First Church to become a "peace church." At this forum, we will hear representatives from the Mennonite Church, the Church of the Brethren, the Society of Friends/Quakers, and Metanoia Peace Community (a United Methodist church) discuss various aspects of their peace traditions. This will be a special opportunity for us to consider how the Christian practice of peace has been a part of the Christian experience over the years. There will be a light lunch. Child care will be available.

# flower arranging

holiday arrangements

## CHRISTMAS FLOWER ARRANGING

A Christmas Flower Arranging class will be offered December 7, 2008 in Room 204 from 11:45 to 1:00 PM. Join Marty Martin for this class focusing on holiday arrangements for your table or mantel. Please bring a sack lunch, any greenery from your yard and \$5.00 as a donation towards flowers. Marty and crew will provide red/white flowers and containers. Come learn as fun tips and tricks for making your arrangement unique. Please RSVP to the church office, 503/228-3195 by December 1, 2008.

# goose hollow family shelter

First Church at the Shelter

## FIRST "FIRST CHURCH AT THE SHELTER" NIGHT: DECEMBER 4, 2008

Interested in volunteering at the Goose Hollow Family Shelter while meeting other First Church members? Whether you're a new volunteer, an old pro, or returning after a long absence, you are invited to volunteer on our first "First Church at the Shelter" night on Thursday, December 4, 2008. We hope to make these nights a meaningful and fun way for First Church members to connect regularly with the shelter while spending time with other members of the church. All positions have been held for First Church members, so in order to sign up just send an email to Adam at [aortman@fumcpdx.org](mailto:aortman@fumcpdx.org) or talk with Brandi Tuck during the Commons in Collins Hall.



## POINSETTIAS



It is time to order plants to prepare our sanctuary for the Christmas season. This year poinsettias or azaleas are \$15.50 each. Use this form to indicate if the plant is in memory or honor of someone and return the form to the church office with your check for \$15.50 by **Monday, December 8, 2008**. Indicate POINSETTIA in the memo portion of the check.

Also indicate if you are picking you plant up after the 9:00 PM Christmas Eve Service. Please note that the earliest that plants can be picked up is after the 9:00 PM Christmas Eve Service.

- POINSETTIA
- AZALEA
- I will pick up plant

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Name  In Memory  In Honor



**the edge**  
thoughts  
for the journey

**Lowell Greathouse,  
Minister of Discipleship**

As Advent approaches and we hear the story once again about a specific birth, in a specific place, at a specific time...in the life of a specific family, it would be good to consider these words from Brian McLaren's book, *A New Kind of Christian*:

"Remember, modernity only wants abstract principles, universal concepts, and disembodied absolutes. So we take an expression like 'the kingdom of God' and try to give it meaning without any context. Postmodern theology has to reincarnate; we have to get back into the flesh and blood and sweat and dirt of the setting, because ... all truth is contextual. If the Bible teaches anything, it teaches that. After all, there's no 'First, Second, and Third Trinity' or 'Book of Moral Absolutes' or anything like that. Instead, there are letters and prophecies, all with a specific address, a specific time, a specific context. The word of the Lord always comes to a specific somebody, in a specific somewhere, at some specific time." (*A New Kind of Christian*, page 152)



**BEING THERE FOR FAMILIES ... Parents' Day Out**

Parents, do you need some time to get ready for Christmas? Then you should take advantage of Parents Day Out here at First United Methodist Church. The nursery will be open from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM on the first three Saturdays of December (December 6, 13, and 20). Activities, games, and a movie will be provided for the older kids and plenty of attention and fun for the younger ones! Kids should bring packed lunches, some snacks will be provided, and lots of fun should be expected! Spots are limited so sign up today in the Church Nursery or contact Megan Humphreys-Loving at 503/228-3195 ext. 227 or [mhumphreys-loving@fumcpdx.org](mailto:mhumphreys-loving@fumcpdx.org). The cost is \$5.00 per child.

**BEING THERE FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER ... A World AIDS Day Offering**

In observance of World AIDS day there will be an offering collected on December 7, 2008. There will be a local recipient and an international recipient of this special and important offering.

The first is the Cascade AIDS Project- Kid's Connection, based in Portland. The second recipient is the AIDS Orphans' Project at Maua Hospital, Kenya. You are encouraged to think about those living with AIDS during December, a month of reflection and anticipation. Please give what you can to these vital organizations.

**BEING THERE IN PERSON ... The Giving Presence Tree**

Christmas has gotten a bad rap, and for many of us it seems next to impossible to reclaim it. Underneath all of the wrapping paper, gift receipts, traffic jams, and shopping lists, we can rarely find time for the people with whom we share our Christmas. Rather than adding one more item to your Christmas lists with the traditional 'Giving Tree,' First Church is joining a growing number of churches in trying to reimagine how we celebrate Christmas. The story of Christ's birth is the story of God's presence with us – the present of God's Self. Therefore, we encourage you to give the gift of your presence – being there for your family and friends rather than forking over yet another pretty box.

On this year's Giving Presence Tree, you will find relational giving ideas – things like showing someone how to make a favorite recipe of yours, and then eating it together; sending a long-distance friend a classic book the two of you can read and discuss together; or inviting a friend or a family member to volunteer with you at a family shelter. Pull an idea from the tree, or grab an empty tag and come up with your own way of "being there" with your friends and family this Christmas, just as, in Jesus, the Word becomes flesh for us.

**BEING THERE IN OUR LOSS ... A Longest Night Service**

There will be a Longest Night Service, Sunday, December 21, 2008 at 5:00 PM at First Church 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. We will 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 in the Fireside Room 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.

### Publication Deadlines

Articles for The Circuit Rider are due no later than 10:00 AM on the Thursday before publication the following Wednesday. The next Circuit Rider will be published on December 3, 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

### 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>

**The Circuit Rider** can be e-mailed to you. E-mail the church office at office@fumcpdx.org to request it by e-mail.

## our prayers

prayers and concerns

### PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING FOR ...

*Joan Hill*, now home after an extended recovery following heart surgery ...  
*Ann Lindgren*, who has made remarkable recovery from a stroke and was able to be in worship recently ...  
*Marilyn Rinquist*, who has made remarkable recovery from a stroke and was able to be in worship recently ...

### PRAYERS OF CONCERN FOR ...

*Rosalie Humphrey*, who is now in rehab at Providence Portland Hospital following a minor stroke ...

### CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

*Carol Howard*, *Nell McManus*, *Sadame Tsunenaga*, *Mary Pennicook*, and *Michael Whipple*

### PRAYERS FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY ABROAD ...

Jared Bomberger, Daniel Bomberger, Craig Kubala, Mike LeClair

## thanks

to the congregation

### LOWELL & SUSAN GREATHOUSE

Dear First Church Friends,  
We would like to thank everyone in the congregation for your very gracious, thoughtful reception, words and cards to help us celebrate our 25th Wedding Anniversary. We really appreciated all your kind greetings and regards on that special Sunday. It was a great send off prior to our brief time away! Thank you once again.

*Lowell and Susan Greathouse*

2009 giving campaign  
things keep looking



AMT-TO-DATE	GOAL	ACTUAL
As of 11.17.08		
Number Resp.	360	330
Est. of Giving:	\$893,000	\$782,427