



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

December 3, 2008

Volume 12, Issue 25

THE SECOND SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 7

*We Light the Candle of
Bethlehem*

- Worship at 10:30 AM
Communion
World AIDS
Awareness and
Offering
- Children's Church
at 10:45 AM
in the Chapel
- FISH Sunday
at First Church
- All-Church
Conference
at 5:00 PM
in the Chapel

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

Merry Christmas from the Church Staff





memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin R. Luchs

Canadian Jim Taylor is a successful writer, editor, and publisher. His credits include more than a dozen books, 14 years as editor of a large-circulation magazine and the creation of an internationally known progressive church school curriculum, “The Whole People of God.” In his ‘spare time’ he leads “Eight-Step Editing Workshops” across Canada.

He also struggles with seasonal depression during the long, gloomy winter months. A few years ago—on December 21—he wrote in his journal:

Tonight is the longest night of the year.

Some find these shortened days give them the blues. Certainly, the shortage of sunlight afflicts many people who live with Seasonal Affective Disorder.

But other factors can also make this time of year less than joyful.

It’s supposed to be a time for togetherness, of family gatherings.

But many find themselves alone.

It’s supposed to be a time of generosity and sharing.

But many find they have little to give, and less to receive.

It’s supposed to be a time of joy and celebration. But many find themselves mourning losses, afflicted by pain, worn down by stress.

Taylor didn’t just brood—he did something. He helped launch a “Longest Night” service in his church. It caught on. Now “Longest Night” or “Blue Christmas” services are held in churches worldwide—including Portland.

On Christmas Sunday, December 21 (winter’s longest night) we will host the annual service in our Chapel. It is an effort of the Downtown Minister’s Association in cooperation with the Samaritan Counseling Centers.

“Longest Night” a simple and meditative time for people struggling with grief, loss or seasonal depression to share together with others who also find the season difficult. Prayers, scriptures, hymns and music bring us closer to one another and to God. During worship there will be an opportunity to light a candle and name—either verbally or silently—a person or situation you hold in special memories. While the mood is quiet and reflective the experience is affirming and hopeful. In past years, some of the most powerful moments happen after the benediction when worshippers gather over a cup of coffee and share with one another.

I am grateful to Jim Taylor—and his friends who started this rich tradition. The “Longest Night” experience has lifted sagging spirits and connected so many with the deeper meaning of Christmas: God is with us, even when our spirits are low. Maybe it can help you—or someone you know, as well. Each season it lifts my soul just to participate.

Hope to see you there!

Arvin



The Chapel First United Methodist Church

*An informal reception
will follow.*

Sponsored by
The Downtown Ministers’
Fellowship
in cooperation with
Samaritan Counseling
Centers of Portland

adults at first

sunday morning classes

CHANGING CHRISTIANITY:

Escape from Nazi-Occupied Norway

by Leif Terdal

The class meets each Sunday from 9:00 to 10:15 AM in Room 202 and has begun a study of our own Leif Terdal's book: *Our Escape from Nazi-Occupied Norway*.

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

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!)

umw

united methodist women

President, Melba Rizzo, 503/635-6716

THE CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

The Circle of Friends will meet Wednesday, December 10, at 11:30 AM at the home of Trudy Kayser, 7755 SW Westmoor Way, 503/292-7528. Bring two dozen cookies for our cookie exchange. Also, bring HUGS (Hats/caps, Undies, Gloves, Scarves) for our guests at the Goose Hollow Shelter. Chair: Ruth Green.

THE RUTH CIRCLE

The Ruth Circle will have lunch together on Wednesday, December 17, at the Albertina Kerr Restaurant, 424 NE 22nd Ave., Portland. Meet at church at 10:00 AM to carpool to the restaurant. Bring a small item for our gift exchange. Contact: Marilyn Weber, 503/241-4081. Chair: Betty-Lou Hare

THE READING GROUP

The Reading Group will meet Thursday, December 18, at 10:00 AM at the home of Sue Fisher, 3648 SW 60th Place, Portland. 503/203-1445. NOTE CHANGE OF DATE. We will continue the discussion of Thomas Friedman's book, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*. A delicious lunch will follow.

MANY THANKS

Many thanks to all who made the High Noon Tea a great success, particularly to those who bought tickets to help support UMW mission projects at home and abroad. Also, thanks to the youth who helped serve and to those working with food preparation and clean-up. A special thank you to Marion Hollenberg for the tea cozies and to Colleen Foster, our emcee. Chair: Trudy Kayser.

please take note ...

items of interest

THE PARKER GROUP - NOTE TIME CHANGE

The Parker Group will meet Saturday, December 6 at 11:30 AM 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.

THEATER PARTY TICKETS

Wicked, the Grammy and Tony award winning Broadway show is coming back to Portland! We have group tickets available for the March 29, 2009 matinee at 1:00 PM. Group-rate tickets may be purchased now, with excellent center Orchestra seats (\$85.50 each) or 1st Balcony seats (\$61.50 each) reserved. Call or email Cheryl Luce at 503/380-8604, cheryl.luce@gmail.com to reserve your seats, and payment information. Final purchase deadline is December 23, 2008.

GROCERY SHOPPING

Did you know that grocery shopping can help the church balance its budget? First Church has signed up with e-script Safeway and Albertsons programs that allow the church to receive a small portion of your grocery bill to benefit the programs here at the church. Participation by you is seamless once you register. If you are a Safeway or Albertsons customer please stop by the table in Commons on Sunday December 14 with your Safeway and/or Albertsons card to pick up register or pick up additional information so you can register at home. Thank you for your help to support the church.



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. The cost is \$5.00 per child.

Christmas Eve Greeters Needed

If you have a smile to share and a handshake to lend then you meet all the criteria for serving as a greeter at one of First UMC's Christmas Eve services. If you plan to attend church on Christmas Eve, please sign up to take a shift. All that's required is that you arrive 30 minutes before worship, smile and shake hands. Greeting is a lovely way to lend cheer to our wonderful members and guests. Sign up sheets for this important function are located in the windows outside the church office. We have multiple openings for the 5:00, 7:00, 9:00 and 11:00 gatherings, so space is *not* limited! You may also call Nancy Bartow at 503/297-1255 to sign up. Your help is greatly appreciated!

Shelter at Christmastime

As winter sets in and the shelter hums along, there are a number of scarce items we would be happy to receive as donations.

- Family friendly DVD's (e.g. Pixar and Disney movies)
- Fresh fruit and breakfast foods
- Trimet and bus passes
- \$25 Fred Meyer Gift Certificates
- Travel-sized toiletries (deodorant, toothpaste, etc.)
- Monetary donations

For more information on the Goose Hollow Family Shelter and how to volunteer visit their website at:

www.goosehollowfamilyshelter.org

food stamp challenge

reflections from participants

Reflections from the Food Stamp Challenge

From November 9 through the 16, 2008 First Church members engaged in various stages of success, struggle, and frustration with the Food Stamp Challenge. By living on just \$1 per meal (or trying to), participants gained a deeper appreciation of the plight of over 27 million Americans who live on the budget every day. Some of you took public transportation, bought in bulk, shopped the sales, and even went hungry in order to try to make ends meet. At the end of the week, a number of you shared your reflections. Here is a sample of what you said:

"It was good to focus on how much things really cost. I eat a simple breakfast, but add orange juice and you're over your dollar."

"Your night feels so long when your dinner is too small."

"I managed to do it, but if I'd had to feed children it puts things in a different perspective. Then you're jeopardizing their future health and their academic performance."

"These are working people living on food stamps. These aren't lazy people."

"Free samples at WinCo were my lunch today!"

"What about ice cream and coffee? Where's the money for those!?"

"I talked with my family members about it, and they didn't understand the point. There's a lot of misinformation about who really is poor. Maybe this is a way to share with others about the realities that are out there."

"I've been eating so much now that I'm off the challenge. It's like I'm making up for that whole week!"

human rights

celebration

Human Rights Day

The United Nations Association Oregon Division invites you to the 60th Anniversary Celebration of Human Rights Day on Sunday, December 7, 2008 from 3:30 to 5:00 PM in Collins Hall at First UMC. The Keynote Speaker will be former Governor Victor Atiyeh: *Renewing America's Commitment to Human Rights, Do We Really Mean It?* There will be a special tribute to Eleanor Roosevelt by The League of Women Voters, a proclamation by Mayor Tom Potter and remarks David Leslie, Executive Director, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. For more information visit the website: www.una-oregon.org. For more information contact: Gwen Barnard at 503-228-0116 or email her at: GwenBrnd@cs.com.

the edge

thoughts
for the journey



Alternative Christmas 2008 - Being There

Lowell Greathouse, Minister of Discipleship

Here are some more, thoughtful words to consider as Christmas approaches. This time they come from Edmond McDonald:

“When God wants an important thing done in this world or a wrong righted, God goes about it in a very singular way. God doesn’t release thunderbolts or stir up earthquakes. God simply has a tiny baby born, perhaps of a very humble home, perhaps of a very humble mother. And God puts the idea or purpose into the mother’s heart. And she puts it in the baby’s mind, and then-- God waits. The great events of this world are not battles and elections and earthquakes and thunderbolts. The great events are babies, for each child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged with humanity, but is still expecting goodwill to become incarnate in each human life.”

(Guide My Feet
by Marian Wright
Edelman,
page 7)

Please pick up an Alternative Christmas form and select the projects and amounts that you wish to support through the 2008 Alternative Christmas. Return the form with a check made out to “First UMC” (write Alternative Christmas in the “memo” portion of the check). Leave this form and your check at the Alternative Christmas table in the Commons in Collins Hall or the church office. This year’s projects are:

Goose Hollow Family Shelter

Located at First United Methodist Church, the Goose Hollow Family Shelter provides a safe environment for homeless families with children as they transition to more permanent housing.

UMCOR Sager Brown

Located in Baldwin, Louisiana, UMCOR Sager Brown serves as a center for recovery efforts and is a permanent location for United Methodists to respond to disasters both within the United States and internationally.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns (INEC)

The INEC supports a variety of environmental concerns, including Oregon Interfaith Power and Light and a Food and Farms program.

Sabeel

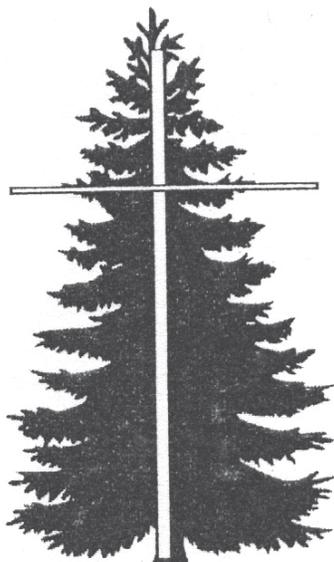
Sabeel is located in Israel/Palestine and works to empower local youth through workshops to develop leadership skills and discuss issues of peace and justice, human rights abuses and other relevant issues

The Liberia Well/Water Hand Pump Project Advance Special

This project assists in providing safe drinking water for seniors living in this African nation, which is still recovering from a devastating civil war.

Wallace Medical Concern

This nonprofit organization is volunteer staffed and provides a free health clinic for people without health insurance and/or money to pay for care.



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.

Go to the Giving Presence Tree, located in the narthex, to discover ways to make this a relational Advent season for you and those you love.

Commitment and Gratitude

Your Finance Committee wants to say a special “thank you” for all you do for First Church. In the face of extremely challenging times, you have helped keep First Church a vibrant place with strong ministries and a place where we can follow our spiritual journeys.

As the end of 2008 approaches, we ask you to look at your financial commitment for this past year and if necessary please bring it up to date. We are aware that this is a difficult economic time for many of us, but your dedicated gifts make it possible to be able to sustain a vital ministerial staff, on-going mission activities both in country and out of country, nurturing youth education programs, adult study and fellowship groups, a music program that enhances our worship of God, a family shelter, member visitations for those who are housebound or in the hospital, and our commitment to be a significant voice confronting the issues of our time: environment, poverty, hunger, peace and justice, reconciling ministries, and support for those in need of comforting.

As we approach the Holiday season let us also remember this is the season of giving. We so appreciate you giving of time, talents, tithes and your treasures. During this season I am drawn to this poem by Kahlil Gibran:

*“And there are those who have little and give it all.
These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty.
There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward.
And there are those who give with pain, and that pain is their baptism.
And there are those who give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy,
nor give with mindfulness of virtue;
They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space.
Though the hands of such as these, God speaks,
and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth.”*

May you be filled with the Light of Christ during this wondrous season.

Yours in Christ,
Pamela Anderson, Chairman of Finance and your Finance Committee

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 17, 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

thanks

to the congregation

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING FOR ...

Betty Hager, recuperating at home following a heart attack ...

PRAYERS OF SYMPATHY FOR ...

The family and friends of Sadame Tsunenaga, Sadame passed away on November 29, 2008. Her service will be Saturday, December 6, 2008 at 2:00 PM in the First Church sanctuary ...

Bill & Cheryl Myers, on the sudden death of Bill's nephew ...

Bob & Patricia Meyers, in the recent death of Bob's mother in California ...

PRAYERS OF CONCERN FOR ...

Dick Clark, who is back at his care home following hospitalization ...

Heather Peterson, daughter of Marty & Holly Martin,
is at Kaiser Sunnyside Hospital ...

Thelma McGill, now in rehab following a stroke ...

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR ...

Joan Hill, Carol Howard, Rosalie Humphrey, Jim Jozwiak, Nell McManus, Mary Pennicook, Marilyn Ringquist, and Michael Whipple

PRAYERS FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY ABROAD ...

Jared Bomberger, Daniel Bomberger, Craig Kubala, Mike LeClair

“Thank you, thank you, thank you! I can't say it enough to my wonderful First Church friends who cheered and comforted me with cards, visits, food and prayers while I was recovering from recent surgery. This church is truly a caring community!”

Joanne Weiss

Dear Church Family,
Thanks to all of you for your prayers and other expressions of support. It meant a lot to me. The heart pacer/defibrillator are doing their job, and I am stronger. God bless you.

Marilyn Rinquist