



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

November 25, 2009

Volume 13, Issue 22

UPCOMING EVENTS

Come to the Alternative Christmas each Sunday of Advent in The Commons in Collins Hall following the worship service.

Dedicate your *presence* this Christmas on the *Giving Presence Tree* located in the narthex.

For more advent activities of First Church see page 4 of the *Circuit Rider*.



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

THE SUNDAYS OF

ADVENT

“And it came to pass in those days...” Luke 2:1

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, NOVEMBER 29

Worship and the Lighting of the First Advent Candle at 10:30 AM

After worship, come to The Commons in Collins Hall for the Advent Wreath-Making Party and Youth Chili Feed. The Sanctuary Bells will be playing Christmas music and you can explore Alternative Christmas ideas.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, DECEMBER 6

Worship and the Celebration of Holy Communion at 10:30 AM

World AIDS Day Sunday and Forum following worship.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, DECEMBER 13

Worship at 10:30 AM with the Chancel Choir singing the *Gloria* by Francis Poulenc with brass and organ

At 3:00 PM come to the Holiday Pops Concert in the sanctuary with Jonas Nordwall and the Chancel Choir (Requested donation: \$10 adults and \$5 for children)

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, DECEMBER 20

Worship at 10:30 AM will be a service of Lessons and Carols service

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

- 5:00 PM Family Service & Children's Pageant
- 7:00 PM Candlelight Carol Service
- 9:00 PM Candlelight Carol Service
- 11:00 PM Communion Service





memo

Rev. Dr. Arvin R. Luchs

Advent is a time to anticipate the coming of God's vision of a new creation. Earlier this month, at the urging of the church, United Methodism's Council of Bishops issued a pastoral letter to be shared with all congregations calling us to work toward God's vision. The well-researched and carefully composed letter includes specific commitments for Episcopal action and was accompanied by a "Foundation Document" further elaborating and documenting their concerns.

Unfortunately, its length prohibits publishing or reading the entire letter. What follows is a radical abridgment that, hopefully, offers a taste of their message. I urge you to access the full documents at www.umc.org and discover this rich communication (or let me know and I'll provide a full copy for you.)

See you in Church!

Arvin

GOD'S RENEWED CREATION: CALL TO HOPE AND ACTION A Pastoral Letter from the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church

God's creation is in crisis. We, the Bishops of The United Methodist Church, cannot remain silent while God's people and God's planet suffer. This beautiful natural world is a loving gift from God, the Creator of all things seen and unseen. God has entrusted its care to all of us, but we have turned our backs on God and on our responsibilities. Our neglect, selfishness, and pride have fostered:

- pandemic poverty and disease;
- environmental degradation, and
- the proliferation of weapons and violence.

Despite these interconnected threats to life and hope, God's creative work continues. Despite the ways we all contribute to these problems, God still invites each one of us to participate in the work of renewal. We must begin the work of renewing creation by being renewed in our own hearts and minds. ***We cannot help the world until we change our way of being in it ...***

We all feel saddened by the state of the world, overwhelmed by the scope of these problems, and anxious about the future, but ***God calls us and equips us to respond ...***

We, your bishops, join with many global religious leaders to call for a comprehensive response to these interrelated issues. We urge all United Methodists and people of goodwill to offer themselves as instruments of God's renewing Spirit in the world.

First, let us orient our lives toward God's holy vision.

Second, let us practice social and environmental holiness.

Third, let us live and act in hope.

We beseech every United Methodist, every congregation and every public leader: "Will you participate in God's renewing work?" We are filled with hope for what God can accomplish through us, and we pray you respond: "We will, with God's help!"

May God's grace purify our reason, strengthen our will, and guide our action ... so that you may be a blessing to all creation and to all the children of God, making peace, nurturing and practicing hope, choosing life and coming to life eternal. Amen.

**Adopted and issued November 3, 2009
The Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church**

adult sunday classes

Changing Christianity

How to Win a Cosmic War, God, Globalization, and the End of the War on Terror by Reza Aslan

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

Fellowship of Seekers

This class meets each Sunday from 9:15 to 10:15 AM in Room 134

Christmas Music

On Sunday, November 29, 2009 Chuck Klang will play music from his collection of Christmas CDs in the Fireside Room from 9:15 - 10:15 AM. This will include music from the Renaissance on up to contemporary works. Special Christmas treats will be provided.

First Church Reads

The Places in Between by Rory Stewart

Join a discussion of *The Places in Between* by Rory Stewart in the Fireside Room, Sundays, December 6 and 13, 2009 from 9:15 to 10:15 AM. The book tells the story of Stewart's 36-day walk across Afghanistan in 2002. On December 6, Gene Gregory will show a video of Bill Moyer's interview with the author on PBS. On December 13, Doug Force will lead a discussion of the book.

coffee hosts needed

PICKING COFFEE BEANS IN COLUMBIA

Worship and fellowship are two of the richest blessings on Sunday mornings. Our Coffee Hour is a vital and meaningful element of our time together. Currently families, classes or committees host Coffee Hour and use the opportunity to display their areas of interest in The Commons.

It takes four or five people to put all the elements together. Lately we've had trouble finding enough people willing to sign up as hosts. If that happens, you'll see a friendly sign at the tables saying, "We've gone to pick coffee beans. Be back next Sunday." We know you'll be disappointed, but we hope you'll understand. We can avoid that if your family or your group can sign up now. Call Jeri Shumate at 503/228-3195, or send her an e-mail at jshumate@fumcpdx.org.

world AIDS day forum

On Sunday, December 6, 2009, First Church's Reconciling Ministries, along with other congregations in Oregon, will pause to join others around the world in prayer and reflection on World AIDS Day! Join us and Public Policy speaker, BJ Cavnor from the Cascade Aids Project, in the Fireside Room at noon. Lunch and child care will be provided!



umw

united
methodist women

All women are invited to attend the following activities. We strive to develop a supportive fellowship as participate in mission with women, children, and youth at home and abroad. President, Melba Rizzo. 503/635-6716

DECEMBER UNIT GATHERING

On Wednesday, December 2, 2009 the Unit Gathering will meet at 10:00 AM in the Fireside Room for a short business meeting. Again, this year we are given the opportunity to help the Metro Foster Parent Holiday Project with our gifts, wrapping paper, and/or money. This Holiday Project began in the late 1980s and continues to make sure that foster parents in the Greater Metro area can provide gifts for children in their care. Over 400 families caring for foster children are served each year through this project.

JOYOUS CHRISTMAS MUSIC

The United Methodist Women invite all, men and women, to join them on Wednesday, December 2, at 11:00 AM in our sanctuary for a Joyous Christmas. Jonas and Christopher Nordwall will be featured at two organs. 4 hands + 4 feet + 7 keyboards = JOYOUS CHRISTMAS MUSIC. A luncheon to follow. If you plan to stay for the luncheon, you will need to register today at the UMW table in the Commons in Collins Hall. A \$5.00 donation is requested. Luncheon Co-chairs: Trudy Kayser and Melba Rizzo.

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

The Circle of Friends will meet on Wednesday, December 9, at 11:30 AM at Trudy Kayser's home, 7755 SW Westmoor Way, Portland. We will do our annual cookie exchange and HUGS (hats, underwear, gloves, and socks) gift collection for the Goose Hollow Family Shelter. Lunch will be provided. Chair: Alyson Inouye, 503/224-9103.

fellowship

THE PARKER GROUP

The Parker Group will meet Saturday, December 5, 2009 at 12:30 PM in Room 202 for a potluck luncheon and program. Bring a dish to share. Our speaker will be Vernon Groves. For more details contact Evelyn Casey at 503/775-9356.

MORE ADVENT EVENTS AT FIRST CHURCH



ADVENT WREATH MAKING & CHILI FEED, NOVEMBER 29

You are invited to create an Advent Wreath for your home Advent celebration. We will gather in Collins Hall after worship. Materials and supplies will be provided. An Advent Wreath can be made for your home with a supply donation of \$5. Join the youth group following worship for annual chili feed lunch. There will be traditional chili, vegetarian chili, cornbread, and dessert. Each meal is \$5 or \$15 to feed the family. Come and share a meal with friends and family.

GIVING PRESENCE TREE

Christmas has gotten a bad rap, and for many of us it seems next to impossible to reclaim it. Rather than adding one more item to your Christmas lists, First Church is joining a growing number of churches in trying to reimagine how we celebrate Christmas. 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.

PARENTS DAY OUT, DECEMBER, 5, 12, AND 19

Our annual Parent's Day Out dates are: Saturdays, December, 5, 12, and 19, 2009. Bring your children and their lunches to the nursery for some all ages fun from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. There will be opportunities for crafts, music, reading, napping, and movie watching while you relax, clean the bathroom, or spend some time Christmas shopping. The cost is \$5 per child. Sign up now as space is limited. You can sign up in the nursery on Sundays, or contact Megan Humphreys-Loving at 503/228-3195 ext. 227 or mhumphreys-loving@fumcpdx.org

FISH SUNDAY IS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

Help families have great meals during this holiday season.

CHRISTMAS EVE NATIVITY PAGEANT REHEARSAL, DECEMBER 6

The Family Christmas Eve service is at 5:00 PM on December 24. We will have one run through rehearsal following worship on Sunday, December 6, 2009. If you have questions contact Sharon Toncray at Sharon.toncray@providence.org Or Megan Humphreys-Loving at Mhumphreys-loving@fumcpdx.org

THE MUSIC OF CHRISTMAS, DECEMBER 13

The Chancel Choir, organ and brass will present Francis Poulenc's *Gloria* during the 10:30 AM worship service on December 13, 2009. The work was written between May and December, 1959 and was premiered in 1961 in Boston MA. It was last performed here for worship in 1985. Please plan to come and listen to this glorious 20th century music.

Friends of Music is presenting "The Pops of the Season" concert on Sunday, December 13, 2009 at 3:00 PM, featuring Jonas Nordwall at the Mary L. Collins Pipe Organ. Last April's concert displayed the classical side of our rebuilt organ. This concert will show off the bells and whistles of the organ including the orchestral/theatrical organ in the middle chamber. You will hear everything from *Sleigh Ride* to *White Christmas* and other memorable Christmas songs. The Chancel Choir soloists and our music interns are the "friends" that will help Jonas make the concert one that you will not want to miss! It will be a wonderful chance to hear the largest organ in the northwest and some of your favorite Christmas Pops played and sung. A donation of \$10.00 at the door is requested.

GIFT WRAPPING PARTY FUND RAISER, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

The middle school youth group is happy to provide gift wrapping services to the congregation. Bring your gifts and gift boxes if you have them to the wrapping table in Collins Hall following worship, and we will wrap it for you. All donations will go to the youth group fund.

LET'S MAKE CHANGE, SUNDAY DECEMBER 20

Let's Make Change will go to Operation Night Watch in downtown Portland.

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE, MONDAY, DECEMBER 21

A Longest Night Service will be held Monday, December 21, 2009 at 5:00 PM in the Chapel. It is a time of worship and support for those whose lives have been touched by grief and loss.

the edge

thoughts
for the journey

Lowell Greathouse, Minister of Discipleship

In recent years, as the holiday seasons approach, it has become customary in religious circles to focus as much attention on what to avoid as in what to enjoy and celebrate. This has become a reality because the consumerism and commercialization of traditional spiritual celebrations has increasingly pushed aside the essential meaning of what we are celebrating in the first place. In fact, during this time of the year, we can hardly catch our breath from season to season. This is well reflected in a recent "Bizarro" cartoon that depicted several pilgrims standing in front of their log cabin with guns in their hands, greeting Santa Claus with the caption: "Who are you and what are you doing here before Thanksgiving?"

This may explain in part what Diana Butler Bass is getting at in her book, *The Practicing Congregation*, when she says: "Much of what is happening in American religious life today is a natural and normal response to living in a time of rapid social transformation. To live in our own time wisely—intentionally, spiritually, and with the eyes of discernment—might be considered one of the most important practices of the Christian life."
(The Practicing Congregation, p. 33)

As the coming seasons unfold before us, may we practice well the disciplines of the spirit.



Portland's First
United Methodist Church
2009
*Alternative
Christmas*

At the heart of Christmas is GIVING! And you'll find it's very easy to give the gift that keeps on giving, through First Church Alternative Christmas Projects. For the next four Sundays your Outreach committees will staff tables in the Commons, to assist you in finding the perfect gift those you care about. You can select from any of six carefully chosen areas of need. In return for your contribution, you will receive a beautiful, descriptive gift card to send, or to tuck under the tree for your loved ones. How's that for simple!?

Projects selected from which you may choose this year include:

Goose Hollow Family Shelter, which provides a safe environment here at our church, for homeless families with children

The Ganta United Methodist School in Liberia, serving war-affected children in Liberia. This project is also featured for our Sunday School giving.

Manaus, Brazil United Methodist Church Project, Manaus is an isolated area on the Amazon, where our First Church Volunteer in Mission Team will be working in June, 2010

Advent Conspiracy Youth Corps Project, is an ecumenical project reaching out to at-risk students in Portland Public Schools.

Church World Service Tree Planting, reforesting areas throughout the world which are threatened with becoming deserts. \$35 plants 200 fast growing seedlings.

Sisters of the Road, serving nutritious meals in an atmosphere of caring and nonviolence

In addition to these wonderful choices, you may wish to shop for various unique items. Profits from the sale of these items assist people in need around the world:

November 29, Palestinian Treasures, including fresh olive oil

December 6, Crafts from 10,000 Villages, dedicated to self-help and fair prices for goods

December 13, Guatemalan Gifts, benefiting Los Amigos de Los Romeritos, a childcare center in Guatemala City

December 20, Planet Church will have Chinook Books, fair trade chocolate, energy efficient light bulbs-- items that help our environment and our neighbors

Check the Narthex Bulletin Board for further information. Alternative Christmas shopping starts Sunday, November 29.



CALLING ALL ARTISTS!

All First United Methodist Church artists are invited to show their work in the January 2010 All-Church Art Show. Paintings will be hung at 10:00 AM. Saturday, January 9, 2010 for two months. Bring one or two paintings to be hung, as there is room. Two dimensional art only. For more information call Sandy Wood at 503/203.1359 or e-mail to spwood@comcast.net.

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 9, 2009.

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 CELEBRATION FOR ...

Tim Unger and Paul Adams, upon their recent wedding ceremony at Old Church ...

Andrew Folsom and Emily Bailey, upon their wedding on Saturday, November 21, 2009. Emily is Jim McManus' granddaughter ...

PRAYERS OF CONCERN FOR ...

Kristin Allan, in the death of her mother, Judy Valjean ...
Nancy Nordwall, who is recovering from a broken wrist sustained in a fall ...

WE CONTINUE OUR PRAYERS FOR ...

Bill Hill, Marilyn Rinquist, and Jay Stewart ...

PRAYERS FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY ABROAD ...

Karl Alger, Jared Bomberger, Daniel Bomberger, Steven Johnson, Ian Kalgren, and Michael Panck

thank you

expressing our gratitude

FROM PAT RIEKE

Thank you for the lovely cards, and your thoughts and prayers on the death of my father, Donald Paul. They were a great comfort to me. My parents were members of First United Methodist Church in Hendersonville, NC, and are interred in their church's beautiful columbarium.

Pat Rieke

greeters needed

for Christmas Eve

Please sign up to serve as a Christmas eve greeter. Services will be held at 5:00, 7:00, 9:00 and 11:00 PM and your help is greatly appreciated. Greeting is a wonderful way to spread the joy of the season as we welcome our members and guests to these special worship services. Sign up sheets are located on the church office windows. Contact Nancy Bartow at 503/297-1255 or nancy_bartow@yahoo.com with any questions. Thank you!