



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

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

December 21, 2011
Volume 15, Issue 26

WORSHIP AT FIRST CHURCH

SUNDAY WORSHIP

December 24
10:30 AM
Christmas Day

January 1
10:30 AM
New Year's Day



Portland First United Methodist Church declares that we will be an advocate for peace in our local communities and world. 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 SERVICES

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2011



FAMILY SERVICE ... 5 PM

Join the First Church children for this special service with music from our children's choir and a presentation of the nativity story by the children of First Church.

CANDLELIGHT SERVICES ... 7 & 9 PM

Experience the wonder of Christ among us in the glow of our candlelit sanctuary with music from the Chancel Choir and a message of hope.

COMMUNION SERVICES ... 11 PM

Bring in Christmas day with an intimate communion service in the chapel ... celebrating the Word which has become flesh and dwells among us.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

From the Staff of Portland's First United Methodist Church

The staff of Portland's First United Methodist Church would like to wish you a blessed Christmas and a wonderful New Year! Thank you for all your expressions of good cheer throughout the Advent season ... you have truly made "Christmas Count!" And we look forward to another year of service together.

Walking into the sanctuary here at First United Methodist Church on this last week before Christmas, 2011, you might be tempted to break into this song. For standing in the corner of the Chancel is the most beautiful evergreen. It is a tall tree (I'm guessing about 22 feet), nicely shaped and naturally unadorned. The idea was that this year we would use the Chrismon decorations on the other trees – in the Chapel and in Collins Hall – and just put a few white lights on the Sanctuary tree to remind us of Jesus, the Light of the world.

It was a good idea. But those lights turned out to be a little more challenging than we expected. Before the Shovel & Rake crew lifted the tree into its base and secured it for the season, the first strand of lights was strung at the very top of the tree. We figured those five feet at the top would be hard to reach, so we were prepared.

However, who would have imagined that five feet down from the top would still be about three feet higher than our tallest ladder could reach?! Maybe this is the way it was supposed to be this Christmas, after all.

You see, as I have gazed upon this beautiful tree I have found the lesson in its branches. As the carol puts it:

*O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
Your boughs can teach a lesson
That constant faith and hope sublime
Lend strength and comfort through all time
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, your boughs can teach a lesson.*

I have found the lesson in its branches. But also in those unlit lights at the very top of the tree. Because they are a great reminder – a metaphor, really – for our calling to make Christmas count.

We can all experience the wonder and the beauty of carols and candlelight, the gift of inspiration and joy in our fellowship and our worship. We can celebrate Christmas for all we are worth, but if we then do not *do anything with it*; if we do not let the light of Christ or the love of God change us in any way ... we end up like those unlit lights, disconnected and unable to fulfill our purpose.

So maybe this year we could sing a new verse ...

*O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
Your lights can teach a lesson.
That the Light of Christ is ours to share
In loving actions everywhere.
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, your lights can teach a lesson.*

Okay, so I should probably keep my day job and not try song writing for a living ... but you get the drift. Merry Christmas! Let's make it count!

Rev. Donna



**a message
from our
pastor
Rev. Donna
Pritchard**

*O Christmas Tree,
O Christmas Tree,
How steadfast
are your branches!
Your boughs are green
in summer's clime
And through the
snows of wintertime.
O Christmas Tree,
O Christmas Tree,
how steadfast
are your branches!*



**SUPPORTING THE
BLESSED COMMUNITY**
An Update

Currently we have 277 responses of Estimates of Giving for 2012. Our goal is: \$881,360 and currently we are 85% there with \$746,289! Please return your Estimate of Giving card to the church office as soon as possible.

T.A.G. (THE ADULT GANG)

T. A. G. is a group of adults that enjoy getting together for fellowship and fun. Any adult is welcome to join us. Our next event will be January 7, 2012 at 6:00 PM. (Location to be announced.) It will be a baby shower to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and the proceeds will be given to families at the Goose Hollow Family Shelter. Since we Methodists do like to eat, dinner will also be included. If you would like more information about this event or about the T.A.G. fellowship group, please email Jeanne Teisher at jeanne.teisher@gmail.com or call her at 503/574-4557.

PRIMATE RESEARCH CENTER & WASHINGTON COUNTY MUSEUM

On Tuesday, January 10, 2012 the First Church Travelers will visit the Oregon National Primate Research Center and Washington County Museum Tour. This event will take place at the Oregon National Primate Research Center in Beaverton, a cutting edge facility, one of eight nationwide supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). We meet at the church at 9:00 AM and carpool to both sites, returning to the church by 3:45 PM. Registration is limited to 25 with a deadline of December 27, 2011; the cost is \$12.00/person including lunch and museum fees. Register with Christine Bostick in the church office. 503/228-3195 ext 222 or cbostick@fumcpdx.org.

A SHORT-TERM ADULT CLASS: READING & USING THE BIBLE

Rev. Dr. Tom Rannells will lead a four-week class entitled: *Reading and Using the Bible*. This class will begin Sunday, January 15, 2012 at 9:00 AM in the Fireside Room and continue through February 5. Those who are newer to the faith or those who would like a "refresher course" on the Bible are encouraged to attend. This is a place to get a new start with the Bible in a community of seekers. Over the four weeks we will ask together: What is the Bible? How did we get the Bible? How Shall We Live Through the Bible?

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

Our New Member Orientations are a great way to get to know more about First Church and are especially helpful if you are considering joining the church. Our next New Member Orientation will be Sunday, January 15, 2012 at noon in Room 110. Contact Rev. Donna Pritchard if you are planning to attend: dpritchard@fumcpdx.org or 503/228-3195. A light lunch will be provided.

UMCOR WEST TRIP INFORMATIONAL MEETING

The Global Missions committee invites you to travel to UMCOR West, the Methodist supply depot that operates out of Salt Lake City, Utah. A group from First UMC, led by Dee Poujade and Sarah Baker, will spend June 3-9, 2012 working in the supply depot, packing health, layette, and sewing kits as well as taking some time to explore the cultural attractions of Salt Lake City. The cost of the trip will be approximately \$600. An informational meeting will be held at noon on Sunday, January 15, 2012 in the Fireside Room. Also, watch for details on an upcoming mission trip to Cambodia in February, 2013.

A FORUM WITH DR. DAVID POINDEXTER

The United Methodist Women are sponsoring a forum on Sunday, January 22, 2012 at noon in the Fireside Room. Dr. David Poindexter will be speaking on the issue of: "What do women have to do with population?" David is known internationally for his work in entertainment-education broadcasting and his creation of the Population Communication Center. He has served as convenor for UN International Conferences on Population in Mexico City and Cairo. He still continues his work throughout the world and serves as President of the Portland Chapter of UNA-USA. David, who is an ordained United Methodist pastor, will also autograph copies of his recently published book, *Out of the Darkness of Centuries*. David and his wife Marion are active members of our congregation.

CHURCH LIBRARY BOOK SALE

The First Church Library will have a Book Sale on Sunday, February 5, 2012 in Collins Hall after worship. Proceeds from the sale will benefit the growth and expansion of the library and its services.



PREACHER'S PUB

Back by popular demand! Join Rev. Donna for a discussion of the following week's Scriptures in this relaxed, informal setting on two Wednesdays in February: Wednesdays, February 1 & 8, 2012 at 7:00 PM at Goose Hollow Inn.

YOUTH GROUP LOCK-IN

There will be a Youth Lock-In on Saturday, January 14, 2012. We will meet at 8:00 PM in Room 202 and pick up will be a noon on Sunday, January 15, Sign up with Megan by January 8, 2012, mhumphreys-loving@fumcpdx.org.

CONFIRMATION CLASS ORIENTATION FOR YOUTH & PARENTS

There will be a Confirmation Orientation on January 15, 2012 at 11:45 AM in Room 160 (near the MAX entrance). This is an important meeting for both youth and parents to attend. We will be reviewing the schedule and discussing what Confirmation means for your family. Classes will run January 22- April 22, 2012. Confirmation Sunday is scheduled for May 20, 2012.

LEADERSHIP LAB FOR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

Leadership Lab is a four month process for youth leaders in the church focusing on the Five Principals of Transformational Leadership. Youth from our congregation will be invited to join in this District wide event. Dates are as follows: 1/28, 2/25, 3/24, 4/28.

LAST SUNDAY YOUTH GROUP

On **Sunday, January 29**, 2012 the youth group will have its Last Sunday of the month adventure, lunch at the Sushi-Go-Round. Bring \$10 for lunch. Meet after worship in Collins Hall. On **Sunday, February 26**, meet in the Youth Room after worship for pizza lunch and games.

FAMILY MINISTRY SUPER SUNDAY NIGHT

On Sunday, January 22, 2012 at 5:00 PM in Collins Hall we will have our first Super Sunday Night! This is an expansion of what was previously called Food and Friends. It will feature games, crafts, activities, and story telling at the church for kids, as well as the nursery, while parents go out for dinner together on a Sunday evening.

FRIENDS OF MUSIC TO HOST MARDI GRAS

There will be an all-church Mardi Gras Party on Saturday, February 18, 2012 at 6:00 PM in Collins Hall. It will feature a New Orleans Cajun Dinner and music by the Swing Street Dixieland Band. Seating is limited and reservations will be required. Tickets will be available beginning January 29, 2012 in Collins Hall. For more information contact Kelly Qualls at 503/228-3195 or kqualls@fumcpdx.org.



A special service on **ASH WEDNESDAY**

Ash Wednesday Service
on February 22, 2012 at 7:00 PM
in the Chapel.

Watch for details on our upcoming **LENTEN SUPPERS**

each Wednesday night beginning in March.
2012. Dinner is at 5:30 PM and the program
at 6:30 PM. Watch for more details.



LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FIRST CHURCH SPRING RETREAT

April 13, 14, and 15, 2012

Suttle Lake Camp, outside of Sisters, Oregon

Families of all shapes and sizes are invited to join us for this wonderful event!

Space is limited. Contact Megan Humphreys-Loving for more details.

mhumphreys-loving@fumcpdx.org or 503/228-3195 ext. 227

PRAYERS & CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF SYMPATHY FOR ...

The family and friends of Karen Smith, Karen died on Saturday, December 10, 2011. Her memorial service will be Saturday, January 21, 2012 at 2:00 PM at First UMC. The family has suggested that donations be made to the Hulse Fund, which is used for church landscape maintenance.

The family and friends of Rev. Wayne Hill, Wayne died on Sunday, December 11, 2011, at his home in Oregon City.

Frey Stearns, in the death of her mother ...

We recently learned of the death of the father of Callie Templin's children, we ask that you keep those children in your prayers; *Alexandria, Zachary & Isabella Cribbs*.

PRAYERS OF CONCERN FOR ...

Don Riggs, who was hospitalized following a heart attack on December 26, 2011 ...

Kitty Riddle, who is hospitalized ...

Marilyn Rinquist, as she deals with heart problems and an infection in her back ...

Adam Guiewosz, who is undergoing chemo therapy He is the brother of Aaron Leatherwood ...

Makenzie Abby, who will be undergoing knee surgery ...

OUR PRAYERS CONTINUE FOR ...

Virginia Bender, Judie Carpenter, Doris Lavelly, Olive Pomeroy, Al Snyder, and Kyong Vaandering ...



A REMINDER ...

Remember Christmas Day is the last Sunday of 2011 for contributions to support your church.



Many thanks to all who participated in the Making Christmas Count Holiday Meals for Friendly House. 24 individuals/families provided a Holiday Meal Bag. The donations were overflowing. People were asked to donate a ham, sweet potatoes, regular potatoes, rolls, corn, green bean casserole fixings, cookies, pie, coffee or tea. As people selected and shopped for their donations, the spirit of generosity was abound. The Friendly House was so thrilled to receive this donation. They said that we have no idea how happy this will make many people this holiday season. Keep these people in your hearts and prayers. May God bless this food to the bodies of those who will receive it, and may the spirit of Christ illuminate Christmas for those who search for that light. Merry Christmas, indeed!

Adult Sunday School Classes

CHANGING CHRISTIANITY

This class meets each Sunday morning at 9:00 AM in Room 202. The class is currently discussing *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*, by Karen Armstrong.

FAITHLINK

This class meets each Sunday from 9:15 to 10:15 AM in Room 134. This weekly study analyzes current events from a Methodist perspective. FaithLink is a study for individuals or groups who want to apply their United Methodist beliefs to current faith issues and world events. This essential guide motivates Christians to consider their personal views on important contemporary issues. FaithLink also encourages action for beliefs. Please join us each Sunday for lively discussions and inspiration.

United Methodist Women

All women are invited to participate in the following activities. We strive to develop a supportive fellowship as we promote concern for women, children and youth at home and abroad. President, Marion Hollenberg. 503/640-3270

UMW UNIT MEETING

In lieu of the regularly scheduled meeting for January 4, 2012, a Sunday Forum by David Poindexter is planned for January 22 after church service at noon in the Fireside Room. For more information see the Winter Program Guide included in this Circuit Rider.

Our February Unit Meeting will be February 1, 2012 at 10:00 AM in the Fireside Room and feature guest speaker, Marilyn Outslay. Marilyn will present a program on the relationship between Women's Division and the work of the United Nations.

TABITHA CIRCLE

The Tabitha Circle will not meet in January but will resume in February.

UMW PLANNING TEAM

The UMW Planning Team will not meet for December.

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 January, 2012.

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

Address Service Requested



from

the

FRONT

DESK

The front desk is a mixed blessing at Christmas time ... on one hand, the front counter overflows with all sorts of holiday goodies and treats, baked goods and candy ... on the other hand, the front counter is overflowing with all sorts of holiday goodies and treats, baked goods and candy. My rule of thumb is moderation in all things ... except at Christmas!

For many years I served as pastor of a small church in Donald, Oregon ... by small, I mean really small. I served as pastor, janitor, church secretary, preacher and pianist in Sunday services. On average about twenty adults occupied one side of the sanctuary and twenty scruffy children occupied the other side. A deacon in the congregation made it his role to round up all the children in our small community to attend services, even if their parents did not.

One Christmas, I was “inspired” to produce the church’s first all-children’s Christmas pageant. The Saturday before Christmas I gathered my motley crew in the sanctuary for rehearsal. I had no problem recruiting shepherds and angels ... boys were shepherds, girls were angels. However, finding someone to play Mary and Joseph was more challenging. Eventually, a gangly, shy boy agreed to be Joseph, as long as there was no kissing involved. And the town’s meanest, dirtiest girl agreed to be Mary. The rehearsal was chaos, but by the time we got to *Away in the Manger*, things took on a certain flow and Mary looked almost teary-eyed as she cradled the Betsy-Wetsy Jesus.

However, during the Sunday morning performance things went awry. As I was lining up children at the back of the sanctuary for their entrances, Mary yelled out in a piercing tone, “Where the hell is Baby Jesus?” Someone had wandered off with Jesus.

Moderation in all things ... except love at Christmas!

Dave Jenkins, Administrative Assistant