

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

MARCH

01	Tom Kovacs
02	Randy Arnold
05	Shana Fasick
08	Lori Worthman
10	Lucas Sanchez
12	Gladys Lansing
14	Randy Marble
16	Mary Lou Martin
17	Helen Poynter
17	Roy Canfield
17	Penny Evers
18	Rosemarie (Schwindt) Applegate
20	Mark White
21	Janet Canfield
21	Athena Lansing
22	Maxine Willingham
27	Robert Reid
28	Bob Petrik
29	Audrey Vestel
30	Amy Vannier

We are sorry if your name was omitted or if the date of your birthday is incorrect; please call the church office so that we may add or correct your information on our Birthday List.

CALLER

MARCH 2008



CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



United Church of Christ
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Christ Congregational Church Identity and Mission Statement

Christ Congregational Church is a progressive, caring, and celebrating Christian Congregation of the United Church of Christ. We are a serving, learning, and worshipping community of faith. We welcome and care for one another. We desire to be diverse, justice-promoting, tradition affirming, future directed, and multi-generational. The focus of our ministry is on our neighborhood and to the larger Metro area, with ongoing attention to the needs of the global community.

From the Desk of Jerry Eslinger . . .

Easter Experience

As we approach Holy Week and Easter, I read once again John 20:1-9. This Easter Gospel records a relay race. Mary runs to Peter and John to report a theft. “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him!” Peter and John “race” back to the tomb to examine this case of the missing body.

The results of that race still have to be considered an upset. I have always pictured impetuous, impulsive Peter as a rough and tough fisherman, swarthy and strong. John, on the other hand, seems more passive in his caricature as the beloved disciple. But the Gospel record says, “The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.” (John 20:4) Whatever the case, we read that John arrived first and Peter behind him, a badly beaten second.

At the tomb, however, Peter more than made up for his mistake. When John arrives first and fastest, he timidly bends over, looks at the evidences of Easter, but does not go in. Peter comes huffing up and without hesitation, hustles inside the tomb and experiences the event of Easter.

What this says to me is that there is a world of difference between looking at the evidence of Easter and having the experience of Easter.

Most people assume that with a larger congregation, lovely lilies, and wonderful music, Easter must be a pastor’s favorite day on which to preach. That has not been my experience! I would much rather preach on the ordinary Sundays where I can deal with practical and everyday life – what we see and what we touch. I would rather appeal to the listener’s common sense and attempt to persuade them of faith’s reasonableness.

It is tempting to believe, conditioned as we are by science, that if only we could uncover evidence of Easter, we could somehow ensure that others would have

the experience of Easter. Why do you think there was so much interest in possible proof with the Shroud of Turin, and, consequently, so much disillusionment with the final findings? I have used every illustration from nature



Going My Way ?

? Do you or anyone you know ever need a ride to church or a church activity? The need for a ride may be a one-time occurrence (car breakdown, temporary disability) or it may be a long term need.

OR

? Would you be willing to provide transportation for people needing a ride?

If you would like to be a part of this “transportation group,” please complete this form. You can return it to the church office or talk with Virginia Black (303 734-2853), Joie Schiefelbein (720 962-4760) or Sandy Selzer (303 935-5808). These folks have volunteered to coordinate the chauffeurs and riders.

☐ I need a ride occasionally ☐ I can provide a ride occasionally
☐ I need a ride most of the time ☐ I can provide a ride frequently

Riders: Do you have special needs (i.e., wheelchair/walker/visual or hearing problems)?

Name: _____
Phone #: _____
Address: _____ Zip Code: _____
Area in which you live: _____
Approximately _____ miles from church
Comments:

OWD DABAR NEWS. There have been a number of things that have happened over the past month with Owd Dabar that we are quite excited about.

The Friday night song service continues to grow. We had a fantastic Friday night service on January 25th at which we welcomed several visitors! If you have not yet attended one of our Friday night services, please plan to visit one soon. The services are held on the last Friday of the month, so the next one is scheduled for Friday, March 28th at 6:00 pm.

We have welcomed our newest member, Joanne Broten to the group. As a reminder, our membership is open to anyone who would like to join us. You needn't be able to read music (several of us can't), you simply need to appreciate music and its ability to speak to and express your faith! Our practices are every Thursday at 6:00 pm at the church.

Finally, we are very excited that we have been invited to join the Northglenn United Church of Christ's Song of Joy Band for their Friday night service on April 25th at 7:00 pm. As you may remember, we joined them for one service at their church and they joined us at our church for one service last year. They will also be welcoming Christian Recording Artist Elizabeth Montgomery for this service. Please pencil in the date to join us for an evening of wonderful music and then look for more information in the April Caller.

Blessings,
Randy Arnold

We invite YOU to join our USHERS MINISTRY for Sunday morning worship service plus other occasions. Everyone is welcome to serve as an usher – men, women and YOUTH. A training session will be held to inform you of what is involved and the IMPORTANCE of ushering at our worship services. If you are interested in ushering, please contact Betty Sanders (303-986-3475) or the Church Office, 303-935-8350. Please consider serving on this important ministry. Thank you.

NEEDED: A Few Good Painters, Preppers Or Movers Of Furniture. We are planning to paint the commons room. On Thursday, March 13, we will be removing some of the furniture and prepping the room for painting. We plan to paint the room on Friday, March 14 (and maybe on March 15 too). Come help a bit or stay for all the fun. If you can help, please let Jim Lynch, Sandy Selzer or Jerry Eslinger know. Thanks.

More from the Desk of Jerry

that I can think of. I have described butterflies coming out of cocoons, chicks out of eggs, and spring out of winter – reasons for resurrection – but have not found them to be particularly convincing.

Easter faith calls us beyond evidence to experience – beyond proof to a presence and power. The writings of Paul predate the Gospels by a generation. He never saw the empty tomb. He had no “Polaroid” pictures of it. He had no physical proofs and evidences of Easter. Paul simply says, “He appeared to me,” and after his Damascus Road experience, lived his life in that presence and power. Easter has less to do with what happened to the corpse of Jesus than what happened in the life of Paul, and John and Peter, and what happens in you and in me.

It is not the evidence, but the experience, of Easter that pulls us into the possibilities of the future. “He is not here, he goes before you into Galilee.” Easter happens whenever and wherever the followers of Christ plant seeds and signs of his Kingdom to bring resurrection and new life to others. The wisdom of the world cynically says, “the poor are always with you,” and with a shrug of the shoulder, walk away to make a down payment on another possession. Easter people, however, sacrificially share themselves warmly and generously. Some simply parrot that there will always be “wars and rumors of wars,” while Easter people pray for peace, work for peace, and live as the makers of peace. They have experienced Easter, and share the signs of new life, and promise, and hope wherever they can.

Let this happen for you anew this Easter. Do not stop and merely look for the evidence of Easter. Go all the way in with Peter, that you may have that experience as well.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

YOGA CLASS

Enjoy classical hatha yoga, the Day-Star method, to build strength and flexibility both inside and out. Day-Star Yoga is gentle enough for beginners and yet challenging for the more experienced. If you have never done yoga before, this is the perfect opportunity for you to try it! Students are encouraged to work at their own level. Please wear comfortable layered clothing and bring a mat to class. Class is held in “sessions”; however, you may begin at any time. The next session dates are March 3 – April 28 (with no class on March 24). The cost is \$50 or \$10 “drop-in.” Payment for the session can be made the first night of class or on a drop-in basis. Your first class is free. If you decide you love the class, you can register for the session or pay the drop-in fee. If not, there is no obligation.

A COLORADO WITHOUT POVERTY

The 2008 Faith Advocacy Day will be held on Tuesday, March 4th, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Building, 1370 Grant Street in Denver. Plenary speakers are Bishop Allan Bjornberg of the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA, Bishop Warner Brown, Jr., of Rocky Mountain Conference, United Methodist Church, Dr. Steven Foster, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Emmanuel, and Imam Ibrahim Kazerooni, Imam to the Muslim Community in Denver. Breakout sessions will be held on the following topics: Advocacy 101; Affordable Housing; Colorado’s Economy after Referendum C; Health Care in Colorado; and Predatory Lending. Hunger for Justice: Interfaith Voices against Poverty and Lutheran Advocacy Ministry are issuing the invitation. The costs are \$20 if registered by February 29 and \$25 after that date.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MISSIONS MINISTRY – MARCH MISSION OFFERING:

The Social Justice and Missions Ministry has selected One Great Hour of Sharing as its March mission offering. This is part of our Churches Wider Mission for the United Church of Christ that carries God’s message of love and hope to people of more than 80 countries throughout the world. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, educational health care, small business micro-credit, emergency relief, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. OGHS also supports domestic and international

ministries for disaster preparedness and response. Nine church bodies work alongside Church World Service transforming lives in this country and around the world. We are a part of those 9 churches and our goal is to share resources and change lives.

YOUTH NEWS FOR MARCH!

SUNDAY MARCH 2nd: Youth Group at 3:30 pm. “*The Questions*” at *Stella’s Coffeehouse*. Meet at the church. We’ll be heading to Stella’s on South Pearl Street to hang out and enjoy some beverages, fellowship, and conversation.

SUNDAY MARCH 16: Youth Group at 3:30 pm. “*Live Theology*”. What do you believe? What are you sure about and what are you not so sure about? How can you begin to work out your own theology (ideas about God)? Get ready to engage your minds, bodies, and creativity exploring together our diverse ideas and images of God.

SATURDAY MARCH 29th: Youth Group at 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm. *Lunch at the SAME Café*. The SAME Café on East Colfax is “Wonderfully Different” – who could imagine a restaurant with no prices and no cash register? Brad and Libby Birky — the young entrepreneurial owners of the SAME Café — that’s who! We’ll discover how the SAME Café (which stands for So All May Eat) is making a difference in our local community through the Birky’s commitment to making healthy, organic food available to all.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Saturday, April 12th 7:00 pm - 8:00 am Sunday, April 13th YOUTH NIGHT @ FATCITY & OVERNIGHT LOCK-IN!

HELP WANTED: Drivers/Chaperones for Youth Group!

Would you like to help the CCC Youth Group by providing transportation to some of our off-site activities, have an opportunity to join us for some of our special programs, and get a great chance to spend some time getting to know our CCC youth? See the **sign-up sheet** on the Christian Education bulletin board for upcoming off-site activities, dates and times!

March 12th Lenten Supper Potluck, 6:30 pm:

“*Reading the Bible from the Margins*” with Dr. Miguel De La Torre.

As much as we do not want to admit it, we all read biblical texts selectively. Most of us simply choose to ignore or outright disobey those passages that question or challenge our power and privilege. But what if we were to read the text from the perspective of the marginalized? This Lenten evening potluck, presentation, and discussion will read segments of the Bible through the eyes of the disenfranchised.

Copies of Dr. De La Torre’s book, “Reading the Bible from the Margins” are available for \$20 from the church office.

Dr. Miguel De La Torre: Dr. Miguel De La Torre, author of “*Reading the Bible from the Margins*,” is the director of the Iliff School of Theology’s Justice and Peace Institute and serves as Associate Professor for Social Ethics. The focus of Miguel’s academic pursuit has been social and political ethics, specifically how religion affects race, class, and gender oppression. Miguel joined the Iliff faculty in 2005. Prior to coming to Iliff, Miguel taught at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. An ordained Southern Baptist minister, he also previously served as pastor for Goshen Baptist Church in Glenn Dean, Kentucky.

Born in Cuba months before the Castro Revolution, Miguel De La Torre and his family came to the United States as refugees when he was six months old. At the age of nineteen, he began a real estate company in Miami, Florida and became active in local politics -- at one point a candidate for the Florida House of Representatives. The company was a financial success; however, compelled by the biblical passage concerning the “Rich Young Ruler (Luke 18),” De La Torre dissolved his thirteen-year-old firm and attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in order to obtain a Masters in Divinity and served as pastor to a rural congregation. However, lacking opportunities within the church structure due to ethnic discrimination, De La Torre continued his theological training and obtained a doctoral degree..

Dr. De La Torre has authored numerous articles and over thirteen books, including the award-winning Reading the Bible from the Margins (Orbis, 2002);

Santería: The Beliefs and Rituals of a Growing Religion in America (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004); and Doing Christian Ethics from the Margins (Orbis, 2004). He is a director to the *Society of Christian Ethics* and the co-chair of the Ethics Section at the *American Academy of Religion*. A scholar-activist, Dr. De La Torre has written numerous articles in popular media and has served on several civic organizations.

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday, March 16

8:45 a.m. Adult Forum

10:00 a.m. Palm Sunday worship; we will gather on the patio for the Blessing of the Palms, the Palm Sunday scripture and a parade around east side to the sanctuary; Owd Dabar will provide the music for this Sunday

Maundy Thursday, March 20

6:30 p.m. Soup supper followed by Table Communion and the Service of Tenebrae; the Chancel Choir will participate and provide special music.

Good Friday, March 21

12 noon to 2:00 p.m. The sanctuary will be open for prayer and meditation; the office is closed

Easter Sunday, March 23

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast served by the Fellowship Ministry; tickets are \$4.00 for adults over 13; \$2.00 for children and youth 6-12; and those under 5 years old are free.

10:00 a.m. Festival of Easter; worship with special music by Chancel and Bell Choirs. Balloon release for those who choose on the patio area following the service in the sanctuary

Visions Course

A number of Christ Church members have been participating in a “Visions” course, a once-a-month for four months course held here at Christ Church on January 5th and March 1 and at Washington Park UCC on February 9th and the concluding session on April 5th. The lead trainer is John Ferguson, a staff member for “Visions,” and Al Otsuka, Rev. Emily Hassler of Washington Park UCC and Diane Otsuka, assisting. Members of Christ Church participating are: Mary Bindner, Marv Evers, Sandy Maben, Nancy Pleuss, Betty Sanders, and Rev. Jerry Eslinger. The course considers a number of “isms,” including racism, classism, and sexism, among others.

