

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

FEBRUARY

02 Carolyn Tegeder
02 Suzy Hiskey
03 Scott Gomer
03 Jeanna Johnson
04 James Rogers
04 Ginny Bodemann
09 Ginny White
12 Anthony Medina
13 Marjorie Alexander
17 John Murphy
19 Mary Jo Bruskiewicz
25 Edith Graf

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

JANUARY/
FEBRUARY
2009



CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



United Church of Christ
2500 South Sheridan Boulevard
Denver, CO 80227
(303) 935-8350

WEBSITE: www.visitchristchurch.org

E-Mail: christcongregationalchurch@hotmail.com

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 .

. . Prayer: What Good Will It Do?

Having been immersed in Inauguration activities the last several days, I was especially taken by the fact that the President-elect went to church early on Inauguration Day and then attended the National Prayer Service on Wednesday, the day after his Inauguration. Probably, given the formidable and almost intractable problems facing us today, prayer, meditation, and reflection seemed the better course, especially since President Obama was probably saying to himself, “What did I get myself into?”

There are many people who question the efficacy of prayer. Have you ever thought what a mess this world would be if every prayer were answered? Just consider the spectacle of all sorts of people bombarding the Divine with their various and often contradictory requests. Some are silly, some vain, some blasphemous, most unaware of their own profoundest needs. The most merciful answer God could give to a whole host of prayers is a gracious deafness.

But there definitely is a need for prayers for peace, for instance, whether it be recovery in Gaza and Iraq, or some kind of solution in Afghanistan. The story of the woman from Canaan asking for help for her daughter is an example of persistence in awakening a response. Perhaps sincerity in prayer is proven by persistence until the prayer becomes indeed your “soul’s sincere desire.”

But persistence not only in the asking but in thinking and working too. Peace, the freedoms we cherish, and a government that works were correctly pointed out by the President to be our responsibility as well as elected leaders. Have we failed to submit to the necessary discipline of thinking and working? Will the answer depend on the depth of our sincerity? There is not much sense in praying for peace while we look down our noses at “inferiors” or sit comfortably in our standard of living with rarely a thought to those living on a bare subsistence level.

There is gratefulness for the fact that our leaders are looking to prayer as a

means to strengthening their leadership abilities. Let us hope that it will translate into a government that is responsive to the needs of all the people, that it will aid them in the process of discernment, for “heaven” knows that our problems are such that it will require the very best of all of us.

BELATED HAPPY BIRTHDAY JANUARY

01	<i>Brad Bern</i>
01	<i>Bill Oliver</i>
03	<i>Maiya Otsuka</i>
03	<i>Betty Sanders</i>
04	<i>Betty Clark</i>
09	<i>Beverly Fox</i>
10	<i>Charles Scott Duncan</i>
10	<i>Morgan Romine</i>
15	<i>Mary Lee Kuttler</i>
17	<i>Katie Renee Overman</i>
28	<i>Scott Marble</i>
29	<i>Chris Anderson</i>
30	<i>Connor Rock</i>
30	<i>Alan Kovacs</i>

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TREASURER’S REPORT
For 2008

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total Income	\$224,477.00	\$226,673.00	99.0%
Total Expenses	\$214,443.00	\$226,673.00	94.6%
Net Income	\$ 10,034.00	\$ -0-	
2008 Pledges	\$202,854.00	\$212,603.00	95.4%

MISSION OFFERING FOR DECEMBER

Community Ministry of Southwest Denver	\$1,450.00
1,773 lbs. of food	\$3,440.00

MISSION OFFERING FOR JANUARY

Water for People	\$897.00
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ADULT FORUM NEWS

The Adult forum is completing its schedule for the next several months. The Forum, which meets on Sunday mornings at 8:45 a.m., is considering an earlier start time of 8:30 a.m. to accommodate choir members who might want to attend. The sessions these past several weeks have centered around learning about the United Church of Christ. Dr. Phil Campbell was a guest leader on January 25. Dr. Campbell teaches the United Church of Christ polity course at Iliff School of Theology, where he is Director of Ministry Studies. The sessions on the UCC will continue until the middle of February. Dr. Seichi Otsuka and Diane Otsuka will be leading two sessions in February on “dialogue,” which they have been leading at various venues around the city for Interfaith Alliance. The sessions help improve your communication skills as well as listening skills, but also assist in dialoguing with persons with whom you might disagree.

During Lent we will be engaging in a video/discussion series entitled “First Light: The Historical Jesus and the Kingdom of God.” Dr. Marcus Borg and Dr. John Dominic Crossan, world renowned Biblical scholars, will take us through

various Biblical sites in Galilee and Jerusalem, where the whole series was filmed.

The pastors lead the discussion and coffee and donuts are always available.

Ahhh, February. It is the month of sweet longings for spring, cozy nights curled up by the fire, and Valentine's Day. February is the month of love. In the English language, we have only one word to describe all the layers and meaning of love. In Greek, there are three: filios, eros, and agape. FILIOS speaks to the idea of brotherly love or friendship love. EROS describes physical, sexual love. The meaning of AGAPE evokes the image of a broader, more communal love in which the existence of that love identifies and even defines the nature of the community. The love of God is central to and is woven throughout each of these meanings. We will spend the month in youth group exploring these different loves through Bible Bursts, movie and music clips, candid conversations, and worship.

Youth Group Schedule

February 1 - SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY right after worship and Youth Group at 11:30 a.m. Topic: What's LOVE got to do with it?

February 8 - Youth Group at 11:30. Topic: EROS - The R-rated Biblical Passages

February 15 - No youth group scheduled

February 22 - Youth Groups at 11:30. Topic: AGAPE - Love in Community. (Possible volunteer field trip to 9Health Fair Offices to set up medical kits for 9Health Fair sites around Colorado. Details to be announced.)

- * Youth Group Needs:
1. Volunteer drivers to be "on-call" for off-site events Tamara schedules. I never know if I will need an extra driver and would love to have a list of ones who could be available at the last minute if needed.
 2. Chefs / Lunch deliverers who would be willing to provide lunch for the group on an occasional basis. Sometimes we go out for lunch which is fun, but also can get expensive. We usually have about 5 or 6 of us and would welcome simple lunches a few times a month. Call Tamara (720-530-6573) if you are interested in offering this meal ministry.

Peace,

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NOTES AND NEWS

In many ways we are like the busy man who walks up to a precious flower and says, "What for God's sake are you doing here? Can't you get busy some way?" and then finds himself unable to understand the flower's response: "I am sorry sir, but I am just here to be beautiful." How can we come to this wisdom of the flower that being is more important than doing? How can we come to the creative contact with the grounding of our own life? Only through a teacher who can lead us to the source of our existence by showing us who we are and, thereby, what we are to do.

Henri Nouwen, Creative Ministry

First, a huge THANK YOU goes out to our first teaching volunteers: SANDY SELZER, BILL OLIVER, and THEA ROCK. We still need more folks who are willing to spend a Sunday morning deepening in their own spiritual life while delighting in the perspectives of the children. You will always be working with a teaching partner and will be able to use the versatile One Room Sunday School curriculum to explore and discover with the kids. You all might think that Children's Church is only home to Tamara's two kids, CJ and Morgan. But there are lots more children and young people who participate each week. Our core group is growing and learning. One Sunday, there were eight of us in class! It is such a delight to meet your grandchildren, neighbors, friends, and visitors. Thank you for bringing them each week. We love every minute with each and every one of them.

Teachers, parents, grandparents, mark your calendars for a fabulous CHILD SPIRITUALITY SEMINAR in Longmont on FEBRUARY 28 from 9-2:30. The cost is \$5 and will be led by Rev. Leanne Hadley, United Methodist elder, who did her thesis on Child Spiritual Development. It is sure to be an educational and playful seminar that will help us in our own journeys as well as help us foster the journey with the precious children in our lives. Call Tamara (720-530-6573) to register and set up carpooling if you are interested.

Youth Group Notes

* We sent two of our favorite youth, Amanda Higgins and Samantha Shonberger, to La Foret for the Senior High winter retreat in January. They had a blast and as usual have returned with deeper spiritual understandings as well as new friends. Ask them to tell you about the DUST.

* February 1st is Super Bowl Sunday, but more importantly, it is SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY. We will be collecting cans of soup for Community Ministry and will be collecting dollars and change in our SOUP POTS after the service, too. This money will join money from groups all over the country who want to eradicate hunger one BOWL OF SOUP at a time. Please bring your change to join the movement!

STILLSPEAKINGMONEY -- ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS NOW POSSIBLE

Save time, simplify your life and support Christ Church ministry and missions with **electronic contributions** available as of **January 1, 2009**, though a UCC partner (Vanco Services, Minnetonka, MN) without having to write a check or reach into your purse or wallet for cash!

Here's how it works. You authorize a specified amount of money to be electronically transferred directly from your checking or savings account to the church account. It's safer than checks, and it costs you NOTHING. The church will pay 25¢ per transaction and will issue quarterly statements as usual. You can change or cancel at any time. We believe that once you have enjoyed the benefits of **StillspeakingMoney** you won't go back to the "old-fashioned" way of contributing to our church.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MISSIONS MINISTRY.

Missions Ministry. The mission offering for February is The Denver Rescue Mission. For many years now, Christ Church has contributed mission offerings to The Denver Rescue Mission because we want to support programs that provide meeting people at their physical and spiritual points of need. They see single men and women, working poor, families, women and children desperately looking for help. It is their aim to return the poor, needy and homeless to society as self-sufficient, productive citizens.

For over 116 years, Denver Rescue Mission has ministered to the homeless, the hungry and the needy. They do this through providing meals, shelter, food and clothing and medical care. In addition, they provide Christian counseling, transitional housing, assistance for permanent housing, case management and work disciplines. In recent years the Mission has been able to expand its emergency services in an effort to provide more people with food and shelter than ever before. In addition, through transitional housing, substance abuse and rehabilitation programs, the Mission has supplied families and individuals with

counseling, academics, Bible studies, work therapy, life skills classes and caring relationship studies. People with histories of abuse, addiction and homelessness are becoming self-sufficient, productive members of society! In addition to the Lawrence Street Shelter, they have opened a transitional living facility at 6090 Smith Road.

The face of homelessness is changing. Before, the Denver Rescue Mission used to see mostly men crowding Denver's sidewalks and wandering the streets. Today, they see single men, the working poor, families, women and children desperately looking for help. Let's continue to be partners with them. Thank you in advance for your generous support of this outstanding organization.

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A small group of us from Christ Congregational Church had a meeting recently with the owners and lead staff at Children's Haven. These are some thoughts I have about the day care program.

- A program that partners with its parents to help provide educational, nutritional, and emotional care for the children when the parents are unable to be with them.
- Within a warm caring environment, the center works to teach children to be respectful and responsible.
- Works to enable young single mothers to finish high school.
- Proactive in obtaining monies through grants and subsidized programs to provide care for about 200 children.

This impression came not only from what we were told, but what I observed when we toured the center and observed their program in action.

This is what we heard to be a need of theirs, and how you can be involved. You can volunteer once weekly from 4:30-5:30 PM to assist children with their homework. (If you've ever helped your kids with their homework, or feel your knowledge base covers material through the 6th grade, then you're qualified.)

We plan to start implementing this program in January. Our goal is to have 1-2 volunteers per day cover Monday through Friday, with flexibility as needed for volunteers. Contact Diane or Seichi Otsuka and let us know how you can participate. Seichi Otsuka: al_ots@hotmail.com phone: 303-912-6626

Diane Otsuka: di_ots@hotmail.com phone: 303-912-6627

The Social Action Committee is developing a questionnaire for understanding the needs of parents for a parenting class.

FEBRUARY 22, 2009, 11:30 A.M. AFTER THE WORSHIP SERVICE, Lisa Durán, Executive Director of Rights for All People, will be speaking regarding many of the ethical, moral, legal, and public policy issues surrounding the current immigration debate in the United States. Lunch will be provided.

SERVICE "PLUS" AUCTION

Sunday, March 15

Following the Worship Service

The event you've all been waiting for is coming soooooon!

Mark your calendars! Decide what item or service you want to donate!

Who's invited? Members and friends

Why do it ? To promote fellowship, learn about each other through sharing and ... raise some money!

Here's some services to consider: babysitting, tutoring, loaning your cabin or condo, lessons (painting, singing, bridge,...), providing or arranging a meal, landscaping, yard work, driving someone to and fro, household services (handyman, painting, ...), Murder Mystery evening, golf, flower arrangement for a special occasion, entertainment for a gathering.....the list is inexhaustible!

Some items to consider donating (hence the name, Services "Plus"): case of wine, home made desserts (oh, Georgia), event tickets (Rockies, theater...).

We have some sign-up lists just waiting to be completed. Please think about the estimated value and a minimum bid. And if you are interested in helping (calling folks, cashiering, setting up, etc), let us know. This will be fun! And be sure to invite your friends!

Charles Grosshans, Sandy Selzer,
Karen Bickett 303 935-5808; kbick@netscape.net