

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

January

01 Brad Bern  
03 Maiya Otsuka  
03 Betty Sanders  
04 Betty Clark  
09 Beverly Fox  
10 Charles Scott Duncan  
15 Mary Lee Kuttler  
17 Katie Renee Overman  
26 Helen Wiedenfeld  
28 Scott Marble  
29 Chris Anderson  
30 Connor Rock  
30 Alan Kovacs

*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.*

Happy New Year!

# CALLER

JANUARY  
2008



**CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**



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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 . . . New Year Under Construction**

Every person that reads this was given, as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 8,760 of them. Are you wealthy? No difference there; you will get no more than the poorest among us. Time makes up the building blocks of this new year now under construction, and we are all absolutely equal in what we have been given: 8,760 hours, to do with as we will. The only difference is what we choose to do with them.

The story from a generation or so ago tells of two fellows who were sent out into a remote part of the Ozarks to sell shoes. Almost immediately, one of the salesmen sent a telegram back to the home office: "Am returning at once," he wired. "Can't sell shoes here. Everyone goes barefoot." No word came from the other fellow for a few days and then a letter arrived at the home office. It came in a bulky, bulging envelope. The letter said: "Fifty orders enclosed. Prospects unlimited. Nobody here has shoes!"

Same situation, different interpretation. The annual coming of a new and fresh year highlights our assignment for us: to take this unused year now under construction and build something lasting and worthy from it. That is God's assignment to you and to me. There are dangers involved in such an effort. Hard hats are required! Falling debris is frequent and mistakes are easy.

Danger Number One: An excessive determination to hold on to the past and let it have too much voice. In his parable of the builder (Matthew 7:24ff.) Jesus' main point is the good builder's awareness of what the future might bring, and the foolish builder's disinterest in this. In the original Greek of this passage, the language conveys the understanding that the foolish man not only built his house on the sand but that he KEPT ON building it there, a stubbornly continuing action. It is this ghastly hand that reaches out from the past and knocks down everything we try to build. It may represent loved ones we have lost; places we've lived that

we like better than the present one; jobs we've had that have been taken away; children who have gone with the wind. Dathane Stanley writes about her

## GLOBAL PARTNERS 2008

### Venezuela and the United States

Join a mission trip to Venezuela with the Global Partners program. The purpose of these trips is to provide cultural exchanges between the Evangelical Pentecostal Union of Venezuela (UEPV) and the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ in the United States. There are three trips a year, with each trip centered on a project. The process of relationship building, however, is more important than what we do. Therefore, you do not need specific skills for any of these trips. Please fill out an application for one of the following trips. YOUR LIFE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME!!!!

*Now taking applications for:*

**Intergenerational Construction trip ---- April 13-20, 2008. Rev. Jeff Scott and others will lead.** This team will work to enlarge the existing kitchen and library at the Pacto Offices in Maracaibo. The UEPV are hoping that as usual we'll provide some funding for this project as well as labor. The funding for the project comes from a grant written to the Global Ministries in Indianapolis. Apply ASAP for this trip.

**Youth trip (for ages 15-18)---July 20-28, 2008. Rev. Chris Gilmore, Nathan Thrasher and others will lead.** July 21 the youth will work in Maracaibo on a project with their youth and do a cultural reality exchange. Tue July 22 they will travel to Barquisimeto for a National gathering of the UEPV Youth. The UEPV know that our youth like to do work projects while there and they plan to start construction on an auditorium at the UEPV camp in Barquisimeto. This youth experience will also include music, sports, reflection, and worship. They will return to Maracaibo on July 27.

**Medical mission trip ---October 12-20, 2008. Diane Otsuka and Dawn Nottingham will lead.** This team will work with the Wayuu one day. The remainder of the time they will go to Portuguesa, a medically underserved state further south and conduct clinics with the people there. Possibly an eye specialist could be included, as many people have poor vision. *Spanish translators are needed on all trips!* For an application and contact information with the leader of a given trip, go to [rmcucc.org/outreach/globalpartners/gpappply.htm](http://rmcucc.org/outreach/globalpartners/gpappply.htm) or contact Alice Silver, 9845 Poppy Ct, Highlands Ranch, CO 80129, 720-344-6947 home, 720-219-0316 cell, [agsilver@pair.com](mailto:agsilver@pair.com).

This global partnership between UCC, DOC, & UEPV started in 1998. *Our church's Wider Mission* donations supported the creation of this relationship and

continue to fund technical and coordinating assistance.

### COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS OF DECEMBER MEETING

A variety of issues were considered:

1. Formulation of the budget for next year is a top priority and an issue of concern.
  - Our expenses have increased. Approximately 50% of our members increased their pledges.
  - We expect a few more pledging units to respond, but currently it looks as though we will have a \$20,000 shortfall on our anticipated budget.
  - The proposed budget is for \$230,000, and we project we will collect \$210,000.
2. The Personnel Committee, comprised of Stan Elofson, Georgia Bachman and Len Ewald, has begun rewriting job descriptions for church employees and will soon follow with new contracts for staff.
3. We explored possible procedures for securing a new Director of Christian Education.
4. We discussed how the church can begin to “actively” implement our Long Range Plan and suggestions we have received from Dr. Hal Youngblood and Phil Nickerson.
5. We are looking at the possibility of painting and updating the Commons Room, and our youth are finalizing plans for a “Youth Room” downstairs in the Jubilee Room.

### DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION POSITION

Rev. Eslinger has met with the Christian Education Ministry to discuss procedures for the replacement of Jeremy Shaver in that position. We are presently working with Iliff School of Theology, and we will be placing ads with other agencies in our effort to secure candidates for the position. Jeremy Shaver has also worked with the Ministry in helping to secure an area for a Youth Room, which the Ministry is working on at present. We will keep the congregation informed as to our search process; hopefully, this will culminate in a candidate in the near future.

***More from the Desk of Jerry . . . .***

daughter who came down the stairs one evening and said, “Have you ever pushed and pushed on a door, and then discovered it was a wall?” She had turned off the light in her bedroom and in the darkness tried to force open what she had mistakenly thought was a door.” Doesn’t that little story cause a spark of recognition? Pushing on walls! Stubbornly trying to make life something it isn’t and can never be! Playing games with ourselves about the realities of life. The door is THE FUTURE, and if we can realize this, we will have dodged one real danger.

Danger Number Two is that we will be satisfied with too little as we build this new year. Who says we have to build our house on sand? We do the choosing! Who says life has to be so constricted and narrow? Circumstances may choose the frame of the day, but you paint the picture that goes with it. If you choose nothing but blacks and grays, that’s the picture you’ll paint. But you do the choosing! It runs like a thread through all the teachings of Jesus. You are in charge of your life. You are not a helpless victim of circumstances; you are in charge. The good Samaritan chose to stop alongside that road. The wise builder decided to build his house on a rock. Each person is in charge of his or her life. Why is this such a hard fact for us to understand and accept? So many of us are standing waiting for life to happen to us. We are waiting for something to happen to make us happy. We are waiting for someone to make us happy. We are waiting for that perfect set of circumstances to come along, people and places and things, and then life will be complete and full. Don’t you believe it! Life is going to be just what you decide to make of it.

One year from now we’ll be looking back on this year, used up and discarded. What do you want to see there as you look back? What goals and accomplishments do you want to have achieved? Robert Sharpe has a poem that sums it up:

Isn’t it strange	Each is given a bag of tools,
That princes and kings,	A shapeless mass
And clowns that caper	A book of rules;
In sawdust rings,	And each must make
And common people	Ere life is flown,
Like you and me	A stumbling block
Are builders for eternity?	Or a stepping stone.

What will it be for you this year?

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE HOSPICE OF SAINT JOHN VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT.** Hospice of Saint John is a non-profit organization that provides alternative, loving, and supportive care for the terminally ill and their families, with an emphasis on life and living. They are currently accepting volunteer application for the Winter Training Program to be held on Friday and Saturday, January 25-26. Both days are required for volunteers who would like to work with residents. Opportunities to serve as a companion to residents in nursing homes, the hospice residential facility or in the patient’s home are available. Those with professional training such as beauticians, massage therapists, etc., are also needed. Clerical volunteers are always welcome and are not required to participate in the two-day training program. Extensive training is provided for volunteers enabling them to be well prepared to assist in the area of their interest. Volunteers are asked to make a one-year commitment of at least 3 hours per week. For information call: Diane Eberle or Rosemary Slevi, Activity/Volunteer Co-coordinators at the Hospice of Saint John, 303-865-7235.

**COMING SOON AN ITALIAN FUNDRAISING DINNER FOR OUR CHURCH.**  
Watch for upcoming details!!

**2008 OFFERING ENVELOPES** will be available January 6, 2008.

**A Happy New Year**

Grant that I may bring no tear to any eye.  
When this New Year in time shall end  
Let it be said I’ve played the friend,  
Have lived and loved and labored here,  
And made of it a happy year.

*Edgar Guest*

A New Year’s resolution is something that goes in one Year and out the other.  
Anonymous

Many people look forward to the New Year for a new start on old habits.

Anonymous

## **SOCIAL ACTION MINISTRY**

**Visions – a workshop on recognizing, understanding, and valuing differences among people.** This will be presented in four days, one Saturday a month, from January to April. Dates: January 5, February 9, March 1, and April 5. Lead facilitator will be John Ferguson. To read more about this, go to [www.visions-inc.org](http://www.visions-inc.org), click on Resources and then articles and read the article by Valerie Batts on Is Reconciliation Possible? This workshop is not a typical workshop and to register, call Al Otsuka at 303-979-0046 and leave a message or email him at [al\\_ots@hotmail.com](mailto:al_ots@hotmail.com). The registration for this event will be \$50 for the four days.

**JANUARY MISSION OFFERING:** The Social Justice and Missions Ministry has selected Water for People as its January mission offering. This organization was formed in 1991 by the American Water Works Association to address a World Health Organization announcement that 6,000 people, mostly children, were dying from bad drinking water, water contaminated by human pathogens. Water for People is actively working in four countries and has completed more than 700 water improvements to bring safe drinking water to villages willing to help build their own water systems. Water for People's vision is a world where all people have access to safe drinking water and sanitation, a world where no one suffers or dies from water or sanitation related illness.

### **Water for People's Guiding Principles**

- **We believe in people.** We believe in the dignity of all people and that access to safe drinking water and effective sanitation are basic human rights.
- **We keep it local.** We believe that drinking water, sanitation and hygiene problems are most effectively solved using local resources. Local communities must be the driving force in all of our programs to make sure solutions are sustainable.
- **We keep good company.** We believe in the power of partnerships. We search out trusted partners who share our vision and work together to build long-term relationships based on trust.

- **We keep our promises.** We believe we owe it to the communities we serve, our volunteers, staff and donors to keep our promises and manage our resources effectively and efficiently.

## **CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH FOUNDATION**

The Christ Congregational Church Foundation was established in 1998 to support the mission of the church. The Foundation can receive bequests, legacies, bequests of property, transfers and gifts that are deductible for federal and state gift tax purposes. The Foundation has offered education programs and made gifts to support the needs of the community and church members.

In addition, the job of the Foundation is:

1. Help people prepare a will and let them know the consequences of not having a will.
2. Keep people aware of the value of a contribution to the Foundation. (Living legacy . . . keeps working for all because of your grant.)
3. Prepare articles for the Caller and weekly bulletin to keep people aware of the Foundation and its benefits to all.
4. Be knowledgeable regarding how the money is used – scholarships, needs of the community, assistance to church (when warranted).
5. Keep members aware of the various ways that they can contribute and the reasons they might want to contribute money to the Foundation.  
Ways to contribute: (a) cash; (b) monthly commitment; (c) yearly contribution; (d) owner assts (when there is no one else left to receive them), e.g., stocks, property.  
Reasons to contribute: (a) in honor of a loved one; (b) anniversaries; (c) birthdays – recognition; (d) charitable giving (tax write-off).
6. Ensure that all members know that the church has a Foundation and what its purpose is.
7. Be certain that Foundation money is invested in best yield funds.
8. Work toward attaining the goal that funds are increased to an amount that would be large enough to have money accessible to all of our causes.

## **YOUTH GROUP CORNER**

### **CONFERENCE HOSTS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL WINTER RETREAT**

The Rocky Mountain Conference UCC will host the annual Senior High School Leadership Retreat from January 25-27 at the La Foret Conference and Retreat Center in the Black Forest near Colorado Springs. The retreat is open to youth in grades 9-12. The theme of the retreat is “Just Be, Just Journey!” Participants will discover what it means to describe life as a process – a journey – and not a destination. The cost of the retreat is \$130 and the registration deadline is January 14. All participants must register through the church office because the registration process has changed. Scholarships are available, so don’t let cost keep you from attending. For more information, or to register, please contact the church office.

### **CHILDREN, YOUTH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AS ACOLYTES**

One of the most important and visible ways our church’s children and youth participate in the worship service is to serve as acolytes. Acolytes light our altar candles at the beginning of the worship service to remind us that we have entered into a sacred time and space. The act of candle-lighting also reminds Christians that we are each called to be a light in the world. Two volunteers are needed each Sunday morning to serve as acolytes. Children ages seven and older, as well as high-school age youth, are invited to volunteer. If you are interested, please sign up on the acolyte chart located on the Education Bulletin Board outside of Fellowship Hall. Thank you in advance for your help and participation!