

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

MAY

01	Rob Overman
02	Gina Balagot
03	Sidney Nelson
04	Mary Bindner
07	Hank Edwards
08	Mark Murray
11	Babette Larson
12	Nancy Elofson
13	Audrey Murray
15	Roger Richter
17	Teresa Crawford
17	Irene Wogrin
17	Gerald Eslinger
18	Connie Leberer
22	Erik Adcock
24	Ray Schwindt
24	Judy Johnson
25	Sandy Naatz
26	Joanne Eslinger
27	Eugene Vinsonhaler
29	Amy Smith
30	Diana Bern
30	Debbie Kovacs
31	Trevor Larsen

*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

MAY  
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 . . . What is Worship?**

I want to continue this two-part series on the question, “What is Worship?” using Talitha Arnold’s book, Worship for Vital Congregations. Worship is the primary act of a Christian congregation, and it is imperative that we focus on the “what” and the “why” of worship. So I continue with this book review from the pen of Talitha Arnold in the hope that it may help every one of us to understand that the time spent in worship may be the most vital time of our week.

Arnold describes worship as a “communal act.” No one individual can embody the Divine Image in which we were all created. Evelyn Underhill wrote, “The worshipper, however lonely in appearance comes before God as a member of a great family; part of the Communion of Saints, living and dead.” The hymn in our New Century Hymnal, a Mexican folk song entitled “De Colores,” tells us to sing of colors. “Sing of colors that shine from God’s face, many colors that tell us God’s love to recall. There are many Biblical models that speak of the communal nature of worship.

Secondly, Arnold speaks of worship as a “covenantal act.” Covenant-making is a prominent act of worship – baptism, confirmation, receiving of new members, installation of officers. They all involve saying “yes” to questions about people’s faith and life as Christ’s disciples. We share tangible symbols of God’s new covenant in the bread and the cup. We participate in covenant at the time of offering our gifts and our prayers of commitment to be a people of love and justice.

Finally, worship is a “cultural act.” It seeks to connect us to the eternal and transcendent God. But it is as well a human creation, developed and experienced by a particular group of people in a specific time and place. It takes place within a culture, and thereby expresses the limits and differences within the human community. “The varied songs, prayers, and rituals of biblical worship represent such differences,” as Arnold says, “whether in the assembled tribes of Joshua’s time of Exodus, the exiled nation of Israel in Isaiah’s age, the Jewish community under Roman rule in Jesus’ day, or the Greek and Roman world of John’s Revelation.”

## **YOUTH NEWS FOR MAY!**

**Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup>: YOUTH SUNDAY** at the 10:00 Worship Service. Come join our youth as they lead us in an intergenerational worship service for the whole congregation!

**Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup>: Youth Group 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm.** We’ll celebrate Youth Sunday with some much deserved time together for relaxation, fellowship, and games together, and look toward the upcoming months of Sunday School on the Road and our Youth Group plans for the coming months.

**Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>: Youth Group 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm.** Imagine what would happen when you put 8 high school and college age people from different faith traditions together, fly them to Hawaii, and video tape them 24/7 for 8 days as they embark on amazing adventures and challenging discussions about faith, religion, and today’s world. Join us for a very special youth group with Jasser Mohammed, a Black Muslim student from Thomas Jefferson high school, who will share his incredible life-changing experience as part of a unique faith-based Live-TV show. You won’t want to miss this!

### **Join us for “Sunday School on the Road” in May and June!**

What’s this? Three Sundays in May and June we will be taking our Sunday School program “on the road” to worship with other congregations in our local Denver community – to experience the Christian tradition as it is lived out in its broad range of experience! Sunday School on the Road dates are:

**Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>: Sunday School on the Road at the Catholic Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.** We will be worshipping at the Catholic cathedral downtown. All youth and children meet at CCC at 9:30 am. We will attend the 10:30 am mass at the cathedral. We will return to CCC following the service and expect to be back by 12:15 pm.

**Sunday, June 8<sup>th</sup>: Sunday School on the Road at All Saints of Russia Orthodox Church.** All youth and children meet at CCC at 9:15 am. We will attend the 10:00 am worship service at All Saints of Russia Orthodox Church. We will return to CCC following the service and expect to be back by 11:30 am.

**Sunday, June 15<sup>th</sup>: Sunday School on the Road at Shorter Community African Methodist Episcopal Church.** All youth and children meet at CCC at 9:15 am. We will attend the 10:30 am worship service at Shorter Community AME. After services we will have a picnic lunch in City Park and go to the IMAX Theater at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. We will return to CCC by 2:30 pm.

**Help Needed: Sunday School on the Road Adult Chaperones/Drivers.** Are you interested in joining our young people for Sunday School on the Road? Contact Amy at 303-906-7508 or just sign up on the sheet on the Christian Education board outside the Fellowship Hall!

**TREASURER’S REPORT . . .** Our total income for January through March was \$54,053, and our expenses for the same time period were \$52,800, leaving us with a net income of \$1,253. However, our pledges paid as of March 31 were \$47,168. The budgeted amount for the same time period was \$53,151 – a shortage of \$5,982. As you can see, we are operating at 88% of the budgeted amount for pledges. If you have fallen behind in your pledge payment, please help us provide the resources needed to support our many church ministries and programs. Thanks you for your gifts and generosity to Christ Church!

**YOGA CLASS**

The yoga class ended in April and there will be no yoga class May through August. Class will begin again in September and up-to-date information will be available then.

**DOES YOUR FAMILY HAVE A GRADUATE THIS MAY?** Please contact Amy if your family is celebrating a member’s high school or college student graduation this May! We want to honor their accomplishment!

**ALL CHURCH PICNIC: SUNDAY, JUNE 1<sup>st</sup> FOLLOWING THE 9:30 AM WORSHIP SERVICE:** Get out your sunscreen and flip-flops! Join us at Wolcott Lake and the home of Sandy Selzer and Karen Bickett for a potluck and intergenerational kick-off to summer! All are welcome! Invite your friends and neighbors to join us for a fun day on the lake! Pick up our flier with more information and directions available at church services during May!

**9HEALTH FAIR.** For the fifth consecutive year, our church has been host to the 9Health Fair. Over 100 volunteers helped make this year’s health fair possible for 371 participants. Two new screenings, lung function and osteoporosis, were added making eight health stations available at our site. I want to thank all of the volunteers who donated their time and efforts from setting up on Friday, arriving early on Saturday morning to help at all the various stations all the way through to packing everything up Saturday afternoon. Special recognition goes to Karen Bickett, Medical Coordinator, Bill Bell, Non-medical Coordinator and Thea Rock, Publicity Coordinator, who made everything run so smoothly. Your support in making this event so successful is greatly appreciated!

-Joyce Blubaugh, Site Coordinator

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

Arnold quotes from the Nairobi Statement on Worship from 1996, coming out of the World Council of Churches, which affirmed four aspects of worship’s expression in culture: transcultural, contextual, countercultural, and cross-cultural.

Worship is transcultural because God as Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit transcends all cultures and human disagreements about the where, when, and how of worship.

At the same time, a community’s worship takes place within the context of a particular culture, be it first century or twenty-first century U.S. Rocky Mountains, in an “Emerging Church” of twenty-somethings or an established church in a city suburb. Arnold raises the question as to whether Christian worship in this century should accommodate the dominant culture, as many contemporary and seeker churches do, incorporating the architecture of sports stadiums and food courts and eliminating symbols like the cross because they are “off-putting” to many people? Or should worship be radically different from the world around it, like the Greek Orthodox or Amish traditions that separate from the dominant culture in both liturgy and language in worship?

In the U.C.C. we include congregations of many different cultures and countries. Do we simply want to reflect local culture or the global Christian community?

Worship is also countercultural, whether it’s Joshua telling the tribes to choose amongst the gods surrounding them, or Jesus associating and choosing to teach, touch, and eat with women, tax collectors and other sinners. Gathering for worship as a community runs counter to our culture’s emphasis on individualism and personal spirituality.

But Arnold indicates that worship is also cross-cultural and intercultural. Our hymnal, for instance, incorporates songs from around the world and across the ages, and not only prayers for the members but also for God’s people around the globe.

To quote Arnold, “A conscious, concrete, communal, covenantal, and cultural act that seeks to connect us to the eternal power and mystery we call God.” That’s the understanding that Arnold brings to the “What is Worship?” question.”

## CELEBRACIÓN DEL CORAZÓN (Celebration of the Heart)

Celebrate Community Ministry's 40 years of service to Denver's Southwest Community on Sunday, May 18, 2008, 2-5 p.m., at the El Jebel Shrine Center, 4625 W. 50<sup>th</sup> Ave., Denver. There will be Latin Dance Demonstrations, Mexican "Appertivo", Silent Auction and Children's Activities. Cost is \$40/person, \$75/couple, \$125/family (family=2 adults + 4 children (under 18)). Purchase tickets at [www.comministry-denver.org](http://www.comministry-denver.org) or call 303-935-3428, ext. 102. Your donation will help feed and clothe economically challenged families in the Southwest Denver area!

## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS FROM APRIL MEETING

1. Treasurer Ken Miller reported that 88% of pledges are up-to-date. Monthly reports on income/expenses are important in CALLER. Sid will alert those in arrears, and calls will be made if situation continues.
2. Insurance will soon be paid from break-in robbery in November.
3. Considerable discussion on decision making, especially library relocation. With the help of Brad Bern, Renee Schonberger, Diane Otsuka, and Sandy Selzer a final decision will be made.
4. Jan Burns brought up the New York Times ad from UCC. The office is printing the full statement in Sunday Reflections 4/13; Sue White could print on Website; our front sign will be enhanced with PROUD TO BE UCC. Discussion will follow on Justice Sunday – May 18<sup>th</sup> - Jerry welcomes input on service.
5. All Ministry Reports for the Annual Meeting on May 18<sup>th</sup> are due on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**"WE DO NOT HAVE TO CROSS THE BORDER; THE BORDER IS HERE!"**

**-Rev. Malcolm Himschoot**

Do you have a passion for issues regarding immigration or Latino/a ministry? Are you interested in an inter- and multi-cultural learning opportunity? Do you want to vision for how your church can address and take action on these issues within your own community?

Rev. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi, of Colorado Springs, is organizing a conference-wide delegation of clergy/laypeople/young adults to spend a week at Centro Romero, the UCC's newest national transformation center in San Ysidro, CA to pray, learn, and envision what could be possible in our churches and in the Rocky Mountain region. The dates for the delegation are June 23-27, 2008. If you are interested in learning more or desire to be a part of this group, please contact Kristina at [k\\_lizardy@yahoo.com](mailto:k_lizardy@yahoo.com) and check out Centro Romero online at <http://www.ucc.org/justice/centro-romero/>

## SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MISSIONS MINISTRY. STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH.

The mission effort for May is dedicated to the larger mission of the United Church of Christ. Strengthen the Church is UCC's annual offering to contribute to the enrichment and growth of our denomination. Funds will go to our Church Conference, to Local Church Ministries and to The Stillspeaking Ministry. Our gifts will help create vibrant church communities as the offering funds new congregations and nurtures and renews existing ones including programs for youth and leadership.

The Stillspeaking Ministry is an ad campaign which emphasizes the relevance of the church and its teachings in our secular world. Frank and Richard Kiraly of Columbia, South Carolina, were members of a small congregation. Their church family was captivated by the Stillspeaking Ministry's announcement:

"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here."

Today in 2008, Frank and Richard's congregation, Garden of Grace United Church of Christ, is entering its third year of affiliation with the UCC as a place of love and warmth and welcome for all people.

Since the initiation of the Stillspeaking Ministry four years ago, 90 churches representing 8500 members have experienced re-energized membership. Please give generously in May to the transformational ministry of Strengthen the Church.

**Social Action.** The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado will be presenting a series of dialogues. The first will be held May 15<sup>th</sup>, Thursday at 6:15 PM at the First Unitarian Church on 1400 Lafayette St., Denver, Colorado 80218. The first will be **"Dialogue on Dialogue"**.

"Come now, let us reason together..." Isaiah 1:18 is an ancient call for dialogue. *Dialogue* is about a shared inquiry, a way of thinking and reflecting together. The purpose of this first session is to teach and model "the dialogue way." It is an interaction between people who bring fundamentally different assumptions to the table, with reasonable differences of view, and deep investments in getting what they want and creating a new thought and a new solution for the important questions in our lives and our church's life. It is the **language of the heart**. Please join us in learning to effectively bring new life to the church by creating new ideas that embrace the principles and foundations of our lives.

**ANNUAL MEETING OF CHRIST CHURCH.** The Annual Meeting of Christ Church will be held on Sunday, May 18, following morning worship. The meeting includes the election of officers and Ministry Coordinators as well as hearing the reports of Ministries and other activities throughout the program year of 2007-2008. There is a possibility that Dr. Hal Youngblood may be able to address the congregation around church growth issues.