

CALLER

NOVEMBER
2007



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.....Dealing with Abundance

Anthony Robinson states in the preface to the stewardship devotional by the Rev. William Green entitled, "The Big Secret of Giving: Hidden Treasures in Life and Church," that "Ours is a new time. No longer do we live in the world of American Christendom where the mainline Protestant churches were the established church. Today we must be at the work of spiritual formation, working with the Spirit to make and sustain disciples of Jesus Christ." In this new time, stewardship cannot be "paying our dues," or simply "supporting the institution." Today, we seek to reclaim stewardship as a spiritual practice of an abundant and faith-filled life. As Robinson states, "Our overall aim is that of the Apostle Paul, 'to equip the saints for ministry.'"

Green states in one of his devotionals, "Jesus sums up the purpose of his ministry this way: that we 'may have life, and have it abundantly.'" This "abundant life" is not just for the religious people of that day, but for "Gentiles" too, meaning anyone, including those at odds with conventional norms and expectations.

The Stewardship Ministry is asking our members to reflect on the word "abundance" in their lives, mark on the colored slips that were sent (with a penny) and then they will be placed on a poster, quilt-type effect, (collage), to show how abundance plays out in our lives.

William Green says the abundant life, freed from the grip of fear and rejection, is about sharing the sheer joy of being alive, the assurance of welcome and the acceptance of our differences. This sharing is what stewardship is all about. It's also what salvation means.

"Salvation" in Hebrew comes from a root that suggests space, freedom, and security which is gained by the removal of restriction. This means release from whatever threatens the promise of God's love. God creates life, gives us our first breath, and enables us to breathe again amid all that would stifle us. How

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOLIDAY MART BRINGS CRAFTERS, ARTISTS, VENDORS TO CHURCH

The Third Annual Holiday Mart will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, November 17, at Christ Church. This popular event has brought dozens of quality crafters, vendors, and home-based business owners to our church. And, it is a perfect opportunity to begin your holiday shopping! We are looking for volunteers to help prepare for the event by assisting with set up, distributing flyers, and helping with a variety of jobs on the day of the event. If you would like to help, or know of a vendor who may like to participate, please contact Sidney Nelson at 303-988-5031 or svnels@hotmail.com. Be sure to stop by and peruse the variety of items that will be on sale!

WEBCAST TO CLOSE UCC 50TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR. The UCC will close its 50th anniversary observance with an exuberant year-in-review webcast at <ucc.org> on All Saints Sunday, Nov. 4, at 5 p.m. (MT). The Rev. J. Bennett Guess, the UCC's acting director of communications, says "it's important that we take a look back at the tremendous events, projects and resources that helped us remember and honor the 1957 union that brought the UCC into being." The hope is that the online 20-minute program will inspire churches and members to look forward to its 51st year. This might be an occasion to gather and watch communally or simply to participate from a personal computer.

CHURCH CREATES NEW PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

Sign up in the Fellowship Hall for a date and time on either November 23 or 24 to have your picture taken by Olan Mills for the new Church Directory. If you cannot come on either of those dates, an appointment can be made for another church site at which Olan Mills is taking pictures.

Southwest Community Ministry Food Bank

The food bank has asked our church to donate CRACKERS for the month of November. Of course, any other donations (food, children's clothes, children's undergarments, personal care items) are always appreciated.

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH MINISTRY

I admit it. I came to Christ Congregational Church three years ago because of the banner, “Progressive, Inclusive, Caring Church.” I’ve been a member of churches that would have described themselves this way, but, at CCC, I have really found this community. This is why I said “yes” when asked if I would serve as coordinator of the Evangelism and Church Growth Ministry. It was, and is, a scary prospect for me, and I do not feel in the least up to this task. But I have a magnet that has been on my refrigerator for a very long time with a quote attributed to author Kobi Yamada that says, “Sometimes you just have to take the leap, and build your wings on the way down.” So (deep breath) here we go.

If you have also recognized the gift that Christ Congregational Church is to your life, won’t you think about joining this ministry and building our wings together? We need to figure out how to best let the world know what a great church family we have here. The new website is a wonderful springboard. What else works? Yellow pages? Direct mail? Door hangers? One-to-one invitations? And what kind of budget do we need? Our first meeting will be at 6PM on Tuesday, November 6, at the church. I’ll bring a pot of chili, medium spicy. Even if you want to come for just this one brainstorming session, please join us. Questions? Call me at 303-914-0031.

Sandy Maben, Coordinator

GIVE A LIFT/NEED A LIFT. Several members of our church family would love to attend our Sunday Services but have no way to/from the church. The Church Council is hoping that members of our church will volunteer to provide rides to those who need them. If you have a vacant seat or two in your car and would like some company for the ride, please call the church office to volunteer. We also need a “matchmaker” to coordinate these services.

TREASURER’S REPORT. Our total income for September through October 21 was \$172,448 and our expenses for the same time period were \$176,521, leaving us with a net loss of \$4,073. Our pledges paid as of Oct. 21 were \$157,441. The budgeted amount for the same time period was \$169,989 – a shortage of \$12,548. Of those who made a pledge for 2007, 53 out of 155 are behind on their pledges. Third quarter pledge statements have been printed and can be picked up in the narthex. If you have fallen behind in your pledge payment, please help us provide the resources needed to support our many church ministries and programs. Thank you for your gifts and generosity to Christ Church!

More From the Desk of Jerry

different that meaning from how some churches interpret the word “salvation,” which is to say that they regard salvation as a once-and-for-all experience of accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, which places them in a superior position in regard to God’s favor but also puts others outside the pale. Instead of “release” this understanding narrows the scope of God’s love to a favored few, who apparently have a corner on what they consider the “abundant life.”

Green goes on to say that ...”oppression and injustice, selfishness, indifference to others and to the environment -- these arise from the burden or boredom of feeling hemmed in, as though we don’t have enough room, enough of what we need.”

God supplies everything we need and gives humanity ability to create more than we can ask or imagine. (Ephesians 3:20) We often waste that power, distracted by the things we don’t have in hand right now.

God’s love is sometimes hard to handle. It inspires more than we think we can do and makes it harder not to do it. It deprives us of excuses which keep us from putting forth much effort. As long as we doubt that what we do makes much difference, we don’t have to do much, or give much. But assured that the guiding power of God’s love is greater than our greatest problem, we open up and get moving.

That to me is what makes for the “abundant life.”

NOVEMBER MISSION OFFERING – The Social Justice and Missions Ministry has selected the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network (RAIN Colorado) as the recipient of our church’s November mission offering. RAIN Colorado provides non-medical, non-judgmental, compassionate care for people living with HIV/AIDS in the Rocky Mountain Region. Trained and experienced staff, individual volunteers and teams of volunteers offer daily living assistance and ongoing support. Some of those support services include: transportation and shopping, housekeeping and meal preparation, child and pet care, respite care, and friendship and listening. The Christ Church Youth Group even helped a RAIN client with some yard work this past spring. It was a wonderful service event!

RAIN enlists all faith communities to ensure spiritual support for people affected by HIV/AIDS. RAIN values a holistic and integrative approach to well-being with attention to the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of each person’s life. Thank you in advance for supporting this ministry of compassion, encouragement, and friendship!

The Rev. John H. Thomas, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, reported in a letter dated Oct. 18, 2007, that nearly 64,000 UCC members had co-signed the Pastoral Letter of UCC's Collegium of Officers indicating public commitment to joining protest to prayer to end the Iraq War. He and the Rev. Linda Jaramillo delivered this statement to the offices of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reed, House Minority Leader David Boehner and the White House. The UCC campaign will not end until the war ends; therefore, he requests that you add your signature to this petition in support of legislation before the U.S. House that could affect hundreds of thousands of refugees now fleeing war-torn Iraq by adding your signature. They are still actively collecting signatures and would like to reach 100,000 by the end of the year. To add your signature on the UCC website, go to www.ucc.org and then place the cursor on the category "Big Things" at the top of the page. A menu will appear and you can select "100,000 People for Peace," which will guide you through the steps.

Christ Church Hosts Growth Workshop. Sunday, Nov. 4, our church will host a workshop entitled, "Growing Your Church By Reaching Your Mission Field." The Rev. Paul Nickerson of Nickerson Coaching will be the workshop leader. He is an ordained UCC pastor of 27 years. He is on the staff of the Massachusetts conference, has his own coaching company that works with churches all over the country, and is a Senior Associate with Griffith Coaching of Denver. The workshop begins at 3:30 p.m. with check-in and concludes by 9:00 p.m. The cost is \$50 per team – a team being one or more from the same congregation. Please let Jerry know if you can attend; registration is online at www.rmccucc.org. Click the "Education and Workshops" link. Under "Growing Your Church" click the "Register Here" button. We need to "Add Guests" on the registration form, so please let us know if you can attend. It is especially important for "Evangelism and Church Growth Ministry" as well as Fellowship, etc.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY. Sunday, November 11th, will be Stewardship Sunday at Christ Church, and you are asked to bring your pledge cards for dedication during worship. A letter will be sent in the next week with information about the campaign. Pledge cards will also be distributed to our membership prior to Stewardship Sunday. Following worship on the 11th, the Stewardship Ministry is sponsoring a luncheon in the Fellowship Hall to celebrate our gifts. (The Broncos will be on TV in the Fellowship Hall.)

Social Action Gazette

On Sunday, Oct. 14, Jeremy stated how simply we could impact the world's energy needs by purchasing one compact fluorescent light bulb. If all of the US households purchased one bulb, it saves the equivalent of 800,000 car emissions.

This illustrates in a concrete way what little each of us would have to do to make changes in the world, if we all participated. This applies to our interactions with each other as well.

It is easy for us to see our own truth and view of the world, but often difficult to see the impact of our biases on others. It is easy to believe that we are not part of the problem. If I am part of the problem, you may ask, "How am I part of the problem?" or "How can I be part of the solution?"

The Social Action Ministry would like to inform you of the opportunities to help answer these questions and to help each of us move toward a better understanding of diversity.

"One Nation, Many Faiths: a Forum on the Intersection of Faith and Politics" at 3 p.m. Sunday, November 18, at Cameron United Methodist Church, 1600 S. Pearl St., Denver. Ms. Anne Sclater, Deputy Director of Voter Education with The Interfaith Alliance, will facilitate this forum, open to all candidates running for elected office in Colorado in 2008 and representatives from area faith communities. The forum will provide critical training for candidates running for office in a multi-faith state and will help faith communities better understand what types of advocacy they may engage in during election cycles.

2007 interfaith dialogue series: **"Birth and Death – Living and Dying" held from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 25, at B'nai Havurah, 6445 E. Ohio Ave., Denver.**

Participants in this facilitated dialogue will participate in a ritual or the sharing of sacred music from the host tradition, will enjoy a fellowship time with refreshments, and will engage in small-group dialogue. B'nai Havurah is an inclusive, participatory Jewish Reconstructionist community that is passionately committed to experiencing Judaism by infusing tradition with renewed meaning in a contemporary American context. The event is open to all and there is no charge.

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, 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 me at 303-979-0046 and leave a message or email me at al_ots@hotmail.com. The registration for this event will be \$50 for the four days.

Alvin Otsuka
Social Action Ministry

YOUTH GROUP CORNER

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!

GENERATION GAP GOES TO WORK RAKING LEAVES

Christ Congregational Church's Generation Gap group – a fellowship and service group for individuals in their "middle years" – will host its annual leaf raking party at church on **Sunday, November 11**, after the Stewardship Sunday luncheon held after worship in Fellowship Hall. I know, I know, there is a Broncos' game on that Sunday morning. But ask yourselves, "How often do I get to spend quality time with my Christ Church friends, sharing conversations and getting my exercise at the same time?" OK, that may not be enough to entice some of you, but this is always a fun time and usually takes about two hours to complete. Plus, the television will be set up in Fellowship Hall if you just have to sneak a peek now and then. If the weather is too bad to work outdoors, we will gather after worship on Sunday, November 18 and try it again. So, wear your work clothes to church, bring a pair of gloves, bring a rake, and bring a smile. Hope to see you there! See Jeremy Shaver, Director of Education and Family Ministries, for more information.

CHECK US OUT ON THE WEB. Have you recently visited Christ Congregational Church's new website? If not, log on today to www.visitchristchurch.org

REVIEW OF STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGNS – 2006 and 2007

As Church Treasurer, I was asked by the Stewardship Ministry to review the past two years of pledges. I would be remiss if I did not compliment the church members on three very important positives: (1) 97% of pledges are met; this is excellent; (2) we respond generously to the special mission offerings – in 2006-07 we gave \$13,600; (3) we are in the upper 10% of all UCC churches for OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission).

Report on Pledges

<u>Budget</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
	\$ 210,537	\$ 196,259
Number of pledges	113	121
From \$5,000 and up	3	2
From \$4,000 - \$4,999	6	4
From \$3,000 - \$3,999	9	10
From \$2,000 - \$2,999	13	11
From \$1,000 - \$1,999	40	40
Under \$1,000	42	54

New pledges in 2007	4 (total \$5,764)
Increased from 2006	55
Pledged same amount as in 2006	42
Decreased from 2006	17
No pledge in 2007	12 (\$7,306)

- * Top 10 pledges contributed \$ 83,500 – 39% of budget
- * Top 20 pledges contributed 16,038 – 55% of budget
- * 93 pledges contributed 94,500 – 42% of budget

Good news is that 55 people increased their pledges and that our membership increased. However, 8 fewer people pledged in 2007. The other news is that we are heavily dependent on the higher givers.

We all love Christ Church; we are all stewards. I hope this year we can increase the number of pledges and increase the amount given.

Ken Miller
Treasurer

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

November

03 Marjorie Flannery
05 David Rutledge
07 Stephanie Larsen
10 Janet Burns
13 Les Hendry
13 Jim Beall
14 Betty Burritt
15 Amanda Higgins
16 Cathy Eslinger
17 Kelly Walker Haley
17 Jill Warren Carl
20 Garret Michael Jordan
25 Jeff Eslinger
26 Kay Waggoner
27 Shirley Hendry
29 Camille Smith
29 Diane Otsuka

We are sorry if your name was omitted; please call the church office so that we may add your information to our Birthday List.