

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## December

01 Lee Greene  
02 Vi Engelking  
03 Grant Neptune  
03 Susan White  
05 Donna Green  
05 Allen Marble  
06 Bill Martin  
08 Gloria Medina  
08 Charles Grosshans  
10 Floyd Kerr  
10 Georgia Bachmann  
18 Sandy Selzer  
18 Betty Walker  
20 Jack Collins  
22 Bob Wogrin  
23 Mildren Edlun  
23 Deborah Contreras  
23 Ryan Matthew Applegate  
27 Nathan Otsuka  
29 Mark Pleuss  
29 Michael Larsen  
30 Don Kennedy  
31 Shannon Worthman

*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

## DECEMBER 2008



### CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



United Church of Christ  
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(303) 935-8350

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E-Mail: [christcongregationalchurch@hotmail.com](mailto: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 . .**

**. The Message in the Means**

Wouldn't it have made sense for Jesus to be born into the house of Annas, who became the High Priest of Israel? That way, Jesus would have a ready-made platform when he began his ministry.

Instead, look at the way he came into the world. According to the scripture stories, the baby's mother was a plain village girl, betrothed to a simple carpenter. He was born, not in one of the world's great metropolitan areas, but in an obscure village in an obscure nation, a small, dusty corner of a vast and powerful empire.

He wasn't born in a gold-plated bed in the palace nursery, but among the destitute and homeless on the outskirts of town. The manner of Jesus' birth takes everything the world values and everything we may have assumed about God and turns it upside down.

There is a message in the means by which Jesus Christ was born. He came to us in poverty, that we in this world might give up our joyless obsession with wealth and things, finding that less is more, that giving is receiving, that to live more richly is to live more simply.

He came to us as a servant, that we in this world might give up our ceaseless grasping for status and prestige, power and dominion, and see our own good in the good of others – in our families, our friendships, and even in the world.

And he came to us as a sign of God's love, that we in this world might finally overcome the alienation and separation which have poisoned for so long our relationships to each other and to God. The example of Jesus from our scriptures is of one who indicated that we might be freed from the stifling shackles of bitterness, envy, and hatred, and live instead in the liberating luminance of love.

All of that is the message of Christmas!

\* \* \* \* \*

**TREASURER'S REPORT  
For 2008 to date**

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Year-to-Date Budget</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total Income	\$205,155.00	\$208,102.00	98.6%
Total Expenses	\$195,993.00	\$206,746.00	94.8%
Net Income	\$ 9,162.00	\$ 1,356.00	
2008 Pledges	\$184,599.00	\$194,887.00	94.7%

**MISSION OFFERING FOR NOVEMBER**

CCC Foundation \$3,950.00

**COMING UP – “SERVICE AUCTION.”**

**When?** A convenient date after a Sunday service this winter.

**What service could you provide?** A ride? Cook a dinner? Yard work? Voice or painting lessons? Shopping trip? Babysit or pet sit? A weekend at a mountain condo or cabin you own?

**Why a service auction?** Promote fellowship. Learn more about each other through sharing. Raise funds for the church and those in need both in and out of the church.

**What can you do?** Donate a service; bid on and then buy a service or two.  
Fellowship Ministry

**BOOKKEEPER HIRED.** Sid Nelson, our bookkeeper for the past four years, resigned this past month to take a position with longer hours. After advertising the position on Craigslist and receiving over 70 applicants, the position was offered to Michelle Drayson. Michelle will begin her work with us this coming Monday and begin officially on December 1<sup>st</sup>. She was most recently employed at Bree's Event Planning, where she was Business Manager/Bookkeeper. We welcome her to her new position!



**Congratulations and Thanks!**

- Congratulations to Stephanie Larsen and Matt Gomer who are National Honor

- Society members at Kennedy High School. We're proud of you.
- Thanks to Hank Edwards for his work on the flower beds.

## ADULT FORUM NEWS

### Adult Education Series for Advent, 8:45 a.m. on Sundays: While We Wait

Advent is about preparing ourselves to give attention to God's great gift, Jesus Christ. Sometimes we have difficulty believing we will see anything new. How many times have you heard the story? "While We Wait" will approach the story from some new perspectives. We will meet some Biblical characters that will help us ask, pray and live the questions of Advent in new ways. Being part of a small group study during this very sacred time of Advent presents a special opportunity to come to God in gratitude for God's coming to us. This study offers a chance to explore your questions and the questions of your Biblical brothers and sisters in company with other believers and let God speak to us While We Wait.

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

**Teachers Needed.** We have a fabulous new Sunday School curriculum called "One Room Schoolhouse." It is lots of fun and VERY user-friendly for teachers. As we kick off the church calendar (which begins with Advent), we are looking for folks who are willing to teach Sunday School. You might volunteer to do it on a time-by-time basis, for a couple weeks, for a month, or for the whole semester. Please talk to Tamara or sign up on the CE Ministry bulletin board.

### Advent Education Series for Children K-6th grade

November 30: Preparing our Space

December 7: Preparing our Expectations - Angels

December 14: Pageant - No Sunday School

December 21: Preparing our Hearts - Jesus

December 28: Preparing our Lives - Shepherds (Teacher needed)

### Youth Ministries for December

Sunday Dec. 7: Shopping for Good(s). We will spend our time together going to a couple of non-profit, fair trade craft markets. During our travels, we can pick up some gifts (bring shopping money), support good causes, and discuss the theology of consumer justice. Extra driver might be needed.

December 13-14, 6:00 pm: Sleepover at the Church followed by a 5:00 a.m. service project at the Crossings (Denver Rescue Mission's transitional housing unit and long term rehab program). We need eight participants for the service project. We will return to church and lead worship through our super cool Christmas Pageant called "Through the Eyes of a Child."

December 21: No formal youth group. However, after church we will be preparing the luminaries.

December 24: We need a few hands to set out and light the luminaries before the 6:00 Christmas Eve service. Let Tamara or Mary Bindner know if you are available.

December 28: No youth group.

## ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Sunday, November 30 – First Sunday in Advent

8:45 a.m. Adult Forum – "While We Wait" – Bible study and discussion

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship with music by Chancel Choir and trumpet

11:00 a.m. Advent Festival with crafts and "hanging of the greens"

(A thank you to Marbles and Overmans as well as our crafters -- Sid Nelson, Joie Schiefelbein, Tamara Boynton, Lori Worthman and Georgia Bachmann. Thanks to all who participated by bringing chili, doing a craft, enjoying the fellowship together.)

Saturday, December 6

6:00 p.m. Generation Gap Christmas party at the Rocks residence,  
2353 S. Harlan Court

Sunday, December 14

8:45 a.m. Adult Forum – "While We Wait"

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship – Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 21

8:45 a.m. Adult Forum – "While We Wait"

10:00 a.m. Morning Worship – special music by Owd Dabar

5:00 p.m. Christmas caroling on shut-ins with supper following

Wednesday, December 24

6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service of carols and candle lighting; the Chancel Choir will be performing "The Song of Christmas" by Roy Ringwald with narration.

**LOOKING FOR CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS??** (And who isn't at this time of the year?) KING SOOPERS AND SAFEWAY GIFT CARDS MAKE GREAT STOCKING STUFFERS! Charitable groups like Southwest Community Ministries and Jeffco Action Center welcome them to use in food baskets at ANY time but especially this time of year. And – they make handy tips for your newspaper delivery person or mail carrier. Buy your King Soopers and/or Safeway cards after the church service on any Sunday. Mary and Joyce await you in the Fellowship Hall!!

**CHRISTMAS CAROLING.** Our traditional Christmas caroling on the shut-ins is scheduled for Sunday evening, December 21, at 5:00 p.m. We hope to carol at a

number of shut-ins and at several of the senior homes in the area. A chili supper is planned for afterwards. Everyone is invited, even if you can't hold a note. Bring your good cheer!

**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**, through a UCC partner (Vanco Services, Minnetonka, MN) without having to write a check or reach into your purse or wallet for cash!

It helps the church with a steady and dependable flow of dollars and it saves you time and money. It's a **WIN-WIN** situation.

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 of course 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.

Stewardship Ministry will have a person in the Narthex in December with more information and Authorization Forms to help you



Christ is always with us, always asking for room in our hearts. But now it is with the voice of our contemporaries that he speaks, with the eyes of store clerks, factory workers and children that he gazes: with the hands of office workers, slum dwellers, and suburban housewives that he gives. It is with the feet of soldiers and tramps that he walks, and with the heart of anyone in need that he longs for shelter. And giving shelter to anyone who asks for it, or needs it, is giving to Christ.

~Dorothy Day

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MISSIONS MINISTRY.**

**Missions Ministry.** We have two mission offerings for December.

The first is the Community Ministry of Southwest Denver, which helps to meet the basic needs of qualified people in Southwest Denver who are experiencing economic hardships and related problems. This organization has been caring for the southwest area since 1968. Our church was one of the beginning churches that funded and started this organization. For a couple of years, CCC housed the executive director in what is now the bookkeeper's office.

The client services here are many: groceries, children's clothing and baby supplies, utility assistance, baskets and gifts for children and other assistance to those in need connecting them with other outreach community programs. There are requirements of how often assistance can be provided and proof of residence in the service area.

Our church gift is to bring food items to refill their pantry shelves and dollars to help as needed. We will be passing out a list of items to bring for the Holiday Food Drive.

The second mission offering for December is the traditional Christmas Fund Offering (formerly the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross) that will be collected at the Christmas Eve Service. This Fund administered by the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance (UCBMA) of the Pension Boards on behalf of the UCC. The economic climate of the past year has exacerbated the financial stresses on those with the most limited resources. There have been nearly 1,500 clergy and lay individuals and families who received some form of Ministerial Assistance since the last Christmas Fund offering. The Christmas Fund Offering helps provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants each year. The theme for the 2008 Offering is "Don't Be Afraid – Shout!" Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to "SHOUT" in God's name, to participate in God's promise of renewal by supporting this vital ministry of compassion and care.

There will not be a Social Action Committee Meeting for the month of December, due to the holidays.

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING.** A congregational meeting was called for Sunday, October 5, to consider the architectural plans submitted by Bob Saas and Eidos, Inc. The plans had been displayed for some Sundays before and the renovation of the sanctuary and narthex area was submitted at \$1.2 million. A revised plan came in at considerably less. After much discussion the congregation voted to table the plans. There was some discussion about a much simpler plan to re-work the chancel area. The Church Council will determine whether to ask the building Committee to consider any future renovation.

### **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 6<sup>th</sup> 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. Come see Diane or Seichi Otsuka and let us know how you can participate.

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