



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!! November

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

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

NOVEMBER 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 . . . Investing in the Futures Market

What does it look like to be engaging in a stewardship campaign in the midst of all that is happening nationally and globally? That question begs attention as we are saturated with political ads, both positive and negative, and a severe change in our economy with the stock market plunge, the credit market crash, foreclosures, etc. The government's attempt to address the economic issues puts the onus on all of us as we seek answers to complicated issues that include a large amount of greed and avarice. How does our faith and the church's role in our society play out in this scenario?

I remember hearing about the futures market when serving in Iowa. It works something like this. You can invest your money now to buy the option to buy a farmer's grain in advance, gambling on the chance that its price will increase by the time it is harvested and you can sell at a profit. Most of us do not play the futures game. It is too risky and too specialized. But it is a law of life that we all get a return on any investment we make. And the kind of return you get depends on the kind of investment you make. Sometimes it's double or nothing.

Jesus' story of the five, two, and one talent persons is one of his many stories about money and its use. It's a lesson about the use of our present capabilities and monies to ensure a productive tomorrow. It is about people who are lively and risky and adventuresome as opposed to those who are fearful, defensive, and self-righteous. And the stakes are high because often it's a case of double or nothing.

But there is more to this matter of investing. If the word "talent" originally meant measure or weight and then money, in the Middle Ages it began to represent abilities and natural endowments as well as special gifts of the spirit given to individuals for the good of the church.

How many talents have you been given? Five? Ten? Two? One? The various gifts and abilities we possess must be used not just for ourselves and our private paradises. Singing, teaching, fund-raising, cooking, visiting, mentoring!

All these are gifts we can use for the future of the church.

ADULT FORUM NEWS

The Adult Forum is now into its sessions on "Faith and Politics: Liberty and Justice for All." The sessions have involved study, discussion and reflection on the value of faith in the exercise of our citizenship. Through the use of videos and readings, this theme is developed by examining:

- * our founders' understanding of liberty and how their founding documents seek to protect our liberty within the government they created to serve the people;
- * the call of Jesus and the prophets for just societies;
- * diverse Christian responses to these ideas.

A key feature of the program is to build small-group learning communities that practice civil discourse -- through group exercises and one-on-one conversations, group trust develops as participants help identify behaviors that promote common understanding and respectful dialog. Rev. Jerry Eslinger and Rev. Tamara Boynton facilitate the sessions at 8:45 a.m. on Sundays in the Sunshine Room. Coffee and donuts are always available.

FALL STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN BEGINS

Once a year we each stop to evaluate "how much does Christ Church mean to me?" We think about the gifts of God:

- To worship in a very beautiful, special place;*
- To receive messages of hope and love every week;*
- To hear music that lifts our souls;*
- To enjoy friends all around;*
- To learn the traditions of our faith;*
- To help one another in trials and rejoicing;*
- To work for justice and peace.*

And we think about our own contributions to this fellowship -- our money and our time. We ask ourselves: "Where do I place my priorities? What is priority number one? Is it me? God's work? Family? Food, shelter, clothing? Work? Entertainment? Travel? Possessions? Paul said, "God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8.

We will celebrate Thanksgiving Stewardship Sunday on November 23 with songs and praises for God’s gifts to us.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

An excerpt from Anne Lamott’s Traveling Mercies
Why I Make Sam Go To Church

Sam is the only kid he knows who goes to church – who is made to go to church two or three times a month. He rarely wants to go. This is not exactly true: the truth is he *never* wants to go. What young boy would rather be in church on the weekends than hanging out with a friend? It does not help him to be reminded that once he’s there he enjoys himself, that he gets to spend the time drawing in the little room outside the sanctuary, that he only actually has to sit still and listen during the short children’s sermon. It does not help that I always pack some snacks, some Legos, his art supplies, and bring along any friend of his whom we can lure in to our churchy web. It does not help that he genuinely cares for the people there. All that matters to him is that he alone among his colleagues is forced to spend Sunday morning in church.

You might think, noting the bitterness, the resignation, that he was being made to sit through a six-hour Latin mass. Or you might wonder why I make this strapping, exuberant boy come with me most weeks, and if you were to ask, this is what I would say.

I make him because I can. I outweigh him by nearly seventy-five pounds. But that is only part of it. The main reason is that I want to give him what I found in the world, which is to say a path and a little light to see by. Most of the people I know who have what I want – which is to say, purpose, heart, balance, gratitude, joy – are people with a deep sense of spirituality. They are people in community, who pray, or practice their faith; they are Buddhists, Jews. Christians – people banding together to work on themselves and for human rights. They follow a brighter light than the glimmer of their own candle; they are part of something beautiful. I saw something once from the Jewish Theological Seminary that said, “A human life is like a single letter of the alphabet. It can be meaningless. Or it can be a part of a great meaning.”

May we continue to strive to be part of a great meaning as we follow the path of light that God offers us in commitment, community, and Christ.

More from the Desk of Jerry . . .

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The glory days of the ‘50’s and ‘60’s were “bull market” times for mainline churches. It was relatively easy to “make money” on investments in those days. But these are “bear market” days for mainline churches. We need the successful, risk-taking, courageous, wise, incisive, intelligent, five and two talent types to give leadership and to “make money” in these times.

We need the several-talent persons and the one-talent persons to step forward in leadership. We need people who will risk their many abilities and their God-given gifts, their unusual and usual skills to invest, to take a risk, to earn a return for the church.

We need people to come out of withdrawal, to come back from bitterness and disenchantment, to come from anger with forgiveness, to come out of the spectator bleachers into the playing field. We need our top-talent and our one-talent person to invest in the future, and like the Lord’s servant, “double our money.”

The talent and ability represented in our church is most impressive. What we need to do is fire it up and get it running harmoniously. When we do, there will not be much that can stop it.

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SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MISSIONS MINISTRY.

Missions Ministry. Our November mission offering is the Christ Congregational Church Foundation. The goal of the CCC Foundation is to distribute income to the various categories of mission and ministry in which the congregation is engaged that is not underwritten by annual giving and will serve as a means of extending and enhancing the church’s mission beyond the regular budget. We can do this through monthly gifts, yearly estate planning or an outright gift on a special occasion. The church through its teaching, preaching and counseling enables its members to become better stewards of their assets for the sake of themselves and their families.

We must establish an ongoing financial program of endowment. The foundation establishes a sole and exclusive purpose of soliciting, receiving and

administering funds for the benefit of our church from time to time. We have given several gifts to individual members and contributed money for new book shelves in the library during the past three years.

The foundation suggests you can be part of the church work by giving a gift now for a special occasion, a monthly pledge or through your will.

Members of the Foundation are Bill Bell, Steve Nelson, Bill Greene, Ken Miller and Sue Duncan.

HOLIDAY MART CANCELLED! Due to lack of vendor participation, the economy, time and energy (mine), this year’s Holiday Mart scheduled for November 22nd has been cancelled. Sid Nelson

TREASURER’S REPORT
For 2008 to date

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Year-to-Date Budget</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total Income	\$179,157.45	\$189,336.00	94.6%
Total Expenses	\$177,658.90	\$188,545.76	94.2%
Net Income	\$ 1,498.55	\$ 790.24	
2008 Pledges	\$162,583.58	\$177,170.00	91.8%

MISSION OFFERING FOR SEPTEMBER
Neighbors in Need \$859.00

Christ Congregational Church Website – www.visitchristchurch.org

Our website is open to the general public and we also have a “Members” section on this website. Our Church Council intends to post a few documents in this area of the website, so all our members are encouraged to request a username/password for our site. (Please be patient while your request is processed.)

To be assigned a username and password for our Members section of our website, send an email to webmaster@visitchristchurch.org (this is Sue White). Website login accounts require a unique email address – so each person in your family who wants a login should send a separate email. Include your first and last name in your email. Church membership will be verified in the membership directory and you will receive an email with the login and “how to” information. If

the person(s) is/are not in the member directory, Sue will forward the request to the church office to verify membership.

WOMEN’S STUDY GROUP will meet on Thursday, November 13, 10:00 a.m., at the home of Midori Abe, 4561 Christensen Cir., 303-347-8306. The discussion book is *The Knitting Circle* by Ann Hood.

CELEBRATION of ADVENT EVENTS

Guess what? Advent is coming!!! Remember that important season in which we wait for, prepare for, and welcome the Christ child into our lives again by repeating the sounding joy? It is coming and we will celebrate it with bold belief and voracious vigor this year!!! Here is what is happening, where we need YOU and how you can plug into the celebration.

November 30th - 1st Sunday of Advent

- **Advent Invites:** Family Day – Since the holidays are a time with family, we are inviting everyone in the congregation to kick off the Advent season by bringing their family with them to worship. Kids, grandkids, cousins, siblings – the more the merrier! We will have plenty of worship, education, crafts, and food for everybody.
- **Advent Formation** – Christian Education time for youth ages 6-12 during the second half of the worship service will offer a great curriculum that focuses on the spiritual meaning of Advent and Christmas. Have you felt the call of teaching? This season is a great opportunity to try it out for a few weeks. We need eight volunteer teachers for the four weeks of Advent. Trust me, your Advent experience will spiritually deepen by sharing it with the children.
- **Advent Festival** – Hanging of the Greens, Gift Making, Skyline Chili Lunch. In these difficult economic times, it is often the gifts of the heart and hands that are so much more meaningful than their purchased counterparts. So, COME to the Advent Festival and MAKE something cool for Christmas gifts this year! We have some ideas (wine cork boards, candles, gourmet olive oil, painted terra cotta pots, bead necklaces) but we need more from YOU. We would like to offer 10 craft stations at our Advent Festival. Thus, we need 10 crafty volunteers that

would like to share their crafty skills and teach some friends how to make the gift. Crafts can be easy or complicated. We want to offer something for all skill sets. Contact Tamara (720-530-6573 or tamaraboynton@msn.com) with your ideas and craft so we can start previewing the gift options this month in preparation.

COMING UP – “SERVICE AUCTION.”

When? A convenient date after a Sunday service next 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

THE FAMILY OF DEB SANCHEZ is deeply grateful to all the members of Christ Congregational UCC for the outpouring of love, caring and hard work put into Deb's memorial service. Special kudos go to the Fellowship Ministry and especially to Sue Duncan for her amazing (but entirely usual) largesse. And, for all the incredible things you did for Deb throughout her life and ministry, especially in the past two years. Recently, Deb wrote this to you: "This is the church where I was ordained on June 3, 2007. As most of you know, my parents founded this church and I have attended here since I was five years old. I have been formed, raised and held by this church community. The members of this community have shown me the face, grace, love and generosity of God throughout my whole life and I am exceedingly grateful to all of them - both those currently living and to all the saints who have passed on from this physical plane....Reverend Eslinger has been my pastor for the past 20 years and I am grateful for his friendship, guidance, support and leadership."