

HAPPY BIRTHDAY APRIL

03	Kelsey Anderson
06	Alan Willyard
09	Danielle Worthman
11	Judy Jacobs
14	Sherm Higgins
14	Liana Lansing
14	Gina Neptune
15	B.J. Bell
16	Donn Bruskiewicz
17	Hart Axley
27	Tom Arnott
27	Roy Jones

CALLER

APRIL 2009



CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



United Church of Christ
2500 South Sheridan Boulevard
Denver, CO 80227
(303) 935-8350

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.

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... Catch 22 or Catch 97

I've watched The Wizard of Oz many times over the years, and many of the encounters Dorothy and the Lion and the Scarecrow and the Tin Man have along the Yellow Brick Road – with the growling wicked witches, their foreboding castle, the Haunted forest, and the screeching winged monkeys – are pretty hair-raising. When they finally get to the wizard they're fairly sure he will grant their wishes. They plead their case to the wizard who is hidden behind a screen, but all they get are smoke belches and a loud, booming voice. Then, in a scuffle the screen gets knocked over, and the wizard gets exposed as only a little bald-headed man whose power is all smoke and mirrors.

In frustration Dorothy screams at him, "You're a very bad man!" The little man replies, "Oh no, my dear. I'm really a very good man, but I'm a very bad wizard." In that moment our fears get knocked down a little.

... Jesus' resurrection knocks over our screen and exposes us to ourselves, if we look off to the side. The truth is that we're bad wizards, bad gods, but good human beings – or "pretty good" ones. More importantly, we're loved human beings. That's the secret, and it's a saving and liberating one. We don't need to pretend to be wizards, or angels, anymore. Life with the feel of eternity about it isn't anything we can give to anyone, including ourselves. But it's a gift that comes anyway, and keeps coming. It's something to accept, to point to, to share, to rejoice in, and that's the wonder.

So the liberating mystery is that we can only begin living as very good human beings when we accept that we are very bad wizards, even worse gods. But never mind. Today -- every day – is a gift still and all to us very human beings. This day, all days, this life, forever and the living of it.

"If it is my will ... what is that to you?" (John 21:22-23) Which is to say that nothing happens God can't handle, even with wounded hands. We can let go of ourselves, our lies and illusions and pretenses. We can dare to love just for the joy of it, love because deeper than anything else, we're lovers, and not to love is to deny our lives. We can let go of those we've loved who have died, for they are in God's hands. In the letting go, there's something of peace and healing. We

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 9, COMMUNION AND TENEBRAE. A soup supper at 6:30 p.m. begins our Maundy Thursday events. At 7:00 p.m. we gather in the sanctuary for the Sacrament of Communion and the Service of Tenebrae, a service which symbolizes the flight of the disciples and ends in darkness. The Chancel Choir will provide music and readers will recount the story of the last days.

GOOD FRIDAY PROTEST-VIGIL AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE at Washington Park UCC, 400 W. Williams St., 12:00 noon – 3:00 p.m. We remember Jesus' death on the cross by traveling to sites in the Metro Denver area where people have been killed by guns. The vigil is based on the observance of the Stations of the Cross, which re-enacts Jesus' journey to Golgatha.

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 12, will feature a breakfast served by the Fellowship Ministry from 8:30-9:30 a.m. Tickets are \$4.00 for adults over age 13; \$2.00 for children and youth 6-12; and those 5 and under are free. Please sign up on the sheet in the narthex.

EASTER LILIES! Easter Sunday just wouldn't seem right without lilies. Please help us make the Sanctuary a festive place by bringing your lilies to church that Sunday morning. Be sure to label your lily so that you can take it home to enjoy after the Easter service. Thanks for your help, The Decorating Committee.

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE will feature our Chancel Choir, Owd Dabar, and Bell Choir, with brass. The service will end in the sanctuary with the "Hallelujah Chorus." Balloons will be distributed for those who wish to take them.

EASTER EGG HUNT. The Christian Education Ministry is planning an Easter Egg Hunt following the Easter Sunday service and would appreciate donations of Easter candy, stickers and other small items to fill the Easter eggs. All children are invited to participate in the Easter Egg Hunt, which will be conducted in the church yard, weather permitting.

ADULT FORUM NEWS. The Adult Forum is presently engaged in a video/discussion series of 12 sessions entitled, “First Light: Jesus and the Kingdom of God.” This series features Dr. John Dominic Crossan and Dr. Marcus Borg, world-renowned Biblical scholars, on location in Galilee and Jerusalem. The series elucidates primary Biblical themes in the time and place of Jesus’ life and teachings. It also will present latest scholarship on themes such as the Atonement, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. The Forum meets on Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m. in the Commons Room. Coffee and donuts are available. Leadership is provided by the two pastors. You are invited to join in at any time during the series.

THE AUCTION – A GREAT SUCCESS

A fabulous time was had by all at the “Live” Auction on March 15. Donna Green, our auctioneer, kept the momentum going and the bids rising! The offerings included use of vacation homes, an art museum tour, wine, golf, computer help, wonderful meals, lessons, home decorating and home services.

The “Silent” Auction was completed the following Sunday with wonderful offerings: dance, foods, flowers, books, fishing, services, kitchen design, painting, entertainment (including Colorado Ballet tickets).

The Auction was a fantastic group effort with over 50 different contributions, 85+ bidders and 40 lucky winners contributing a total of \$4,789 to the church. We want to thank all the contributors and buyers for their generosity, all the “worker bees” for their help, and all the participants for the fun and fellowship. Oh, yes, you lucky winners, we hope to have all the monies in soon!

How fortunate we are to be in this church community.

Karen Bickett, Charles Grosshans, Sandy Selzer

RECYCLING TO BEGIN SOON.

Recycling of paper plates, napkins, cans, bottles, jars, etc., will begin soon with the placement of blue bins with circling arrows in the kitchen and Fellowship Hall.

Stewardship and Fellowship Ministries are together in this venture – placing and emptying the bins. Styrofoam is still NOT accepted for recycling. Let’s see if we can make a start in Greening the Church and in greater stewardship of the earth.

More from the Desk of Jerry

can even let go of enemies. We can love them because they're just "human merely beings," as e.e.cummings puts it, as we are. And not to see that is to miss a resurrection or 2, or 3, or 4 . . . let go and forgive and feed sisters and brothers the world around in the freedom of it; 10, 11, 12 . . . share with them for the joy of it; 77, 78, 79 . . . bad wizards but good human beings, matched with a kingdom . . 97, 98. 99 . . .

The Haunt of Grace: Responses to the Mystery of God's Presence
Ted Loder pp. 166-167

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SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MISSIONS MINISTRY, APRIL 2009

Missions Ministry. The mission offering for April is for financial assistance to elementary, junior and senior high youth who are interested in attending a conference camp at LaForet in the Black Forest. This year there are seven different camps divided into age groups, each scheduled for dates during Spring, Summer and Fall. Rocky Mountain Conference Summer Camp Registration Deadline is EARLIER this year: April 30! If you are considering attending summer camp yourself or registering a family member, you have to get going fast! This year, the early bird registration (\$375) ends on April 30. From May 1- May 30, registration costs \$50 more. After May 30, YOU CANNOT REGISTER! So check your summer calendars and start lining up your plans. As you know La Foret is one of the most sacred places on earth. CAMP changes lives. Scholarship funds will be coming in during this month. Please talk to Tamara about your specific needs.

- The camp dates and age groups are as follows:
- Grandparent & Me Camp, Grandparent & Child(ren) 5-11 years old, June 28-30
 - Pioneer Camp, Children entering Grades 2-4, July 5-11
 - Explorer Camp, Children entering Grades 4-6, July 5-11
 - Voyager Music Camp, Children entering Grades 6-8, July 5-11
 - Explorer Music Camp, Children entering Grades 4-6, July 12-18
 - Voyager Camp, Children entering Grades 7 & 8, July 12-18
 - MADD Camp, Youth entering grades 9-12, July 26-August 1

For more information as to what each camp session offers, contact Tamara Boynton. Thank you for helping to support our conference camps.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NOTES AND NEWS

"Maybe when Jesus was hanging on the cross, God was raising up a community that would resist crosses and become committed to taking people from them for all eternity. God was not waiting to act until Jesus was dead. God was acting throughout Jesus' ministry in ways that would ultimately raise up a community of people who would refuse to abandon life. God was raising up that resistant community in the very moments of Jesus' death....God actively raised up a resurrection community in Jesus' lifetime, and God is able to do the same in our generation." from *Risking the Terror* by Christine M. Smith

Thank you so much for your congregational support in March as three middle schoolers (Josh Augustine, Bryanna Augustine, and Makala MacLagan) and Tamara went to La Foret for the middle school spring retreat. We had a blast, met new friends, smelled some trees, saw a squabbit, and deepened in our spiritual lives. The topic of the weekend was "Conflict" and we experienced a real-life conflict situation, tried to solve the problem, learned about power / voice / and feeling silenced, and then discovered some new methods like consensus, collaboration, and compromise. We put together our own powerful worship service on Saturday and shed tears of joy and tears of pain in a safe community of love and acceptance. It was a fantastic weekend. We have turned three new young people into La Foret / God junkies. Praise the Lord for Camping!

YOUTH GROUP EVENTS

- April 5 - Palm Sunday - Stay after church and fill Easter eggs for the Easter Sunday Easter Egg Hunt!
- April 12 - Easter Sunday - Come early for brunch and to play "Easter Bunny." After church, we will host the Easter Egg hunt for the kids.
- April 17-19 RMCUCC Senior High Spring Retreat at La Foret. The theme is "BREATHE" and the retreat will find youth and adults alike connecting with the breath of God and how God's breath moves through us in our life of faith. Cost is \$135. Registration deadline is April 6. Talk to Tamara for more information.
- April 18 - 9News Health Fair at the church from 7am - 12noon.
- April 19 - Creation Creation Part 1: In celebration of Earth Day this week (April 22), we will spend these next two weeks talking about creation. "The Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it." (Psalm 24:1)
- April 26 - Creation Creation Part 2.

MORAL ISSUES IN HEALTH CARE – A Public Forum Presented by The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado, Sunday, April 26, 2009, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at St. Anthony Central Hospital, Conference Rooms A and B, 4231 W. 16th Ave.

Panelists will include: **State Rep. John Kefalas** of Fort Collins; **Donna Marshall**, Executive Director, Colorado Business Group on Health; **Dr. David Munch**, Chief Clinical and Quality Officer, Exempla Lutheran Medical Center; and **Debra Bennett-Woods**, Chair & Associate Professor, Department of Health Care Ethics and Director, Center for Ethics and Leadership in the Health Professions, Regis University.

The U.S. is struggling with a healthcare system that has become complex, confusing, unaffordable and unresponsive to the needs of society. Our country and the world are facing the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. The financing of health care looms large on the horizon. Businesses indicate that the U.S. health care system is the most expensive system in the world and creates a significant burden on their ability to be competitive. In addition, the U.S. healthcare system is ranked as one of the lowest quality healthcare systems in the world as compared to other developed countries. With these realities, what are our ethical and moral roles and responsibilities as healthcare professionals, faith leaders, community leaders, and concerned citizens to address these issues? What will we need to do differently? Come, join us in a dialog to understand and provide direction to those who have the power to create an ethical health care system.

The event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments and conversation will follow an interactive discussion and question period. For information, call 720-524-1100 or send e-mail to info@interfaithallianceco.org.

9HEALTH FAIR ON APRIL 18. 9Health Fair provides low cost health screenings and is invaluable to our community and throughout communities in Colorado as a health care awareness resource. Christ Congregational Church will serve as a health fair host site on April 18 for the sixth consecutive year. This is a wonderful opportunity for our church to reach out to those in need. Volunteers are needed to help set up on Friday, April 17. Set-up will start at 4:30 p.m. and will take approximately 2½ hours. Please contact Joyce Blubaugh (303-989-4484) if you are able to help.

Money Counters Wanted

We are seeking volunteers who would be willing to count the cash in the offering one Sunday each month, right after the worship service ends. It is a pretty quick

task – only the cash needs to be counted, not the checks. We have 4 volunteers and a couple of substitutes, but we could use 4 more volunteers. If you can commit to this one Sunday per month task, please speak with Kathy Hicks or Sandy Maben.

HOSPICE OF SAINT JOHN IS RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM. Hospice of Saint John is a non-profit organization which provides alternative, supportive and loving care for the terminally ill and their families, with an emphasis on life and living. They are currently accepting volunteer application for on-going training throughout the year. Training is held once a month on a Monday and Tuesday for volunteers wishing to work with patients and families. 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(s) of their interest. Volunteers are asked to make a one-year commitment of at least 3 hours per week. For information call: Jennifer Spaeth, Volunteer and Activities Manager at the Hospice of Saint John, 303-865-7235.

ELECTRONIC GIVING PROGRAM RE-EMPHASIZED. Several people began “electronic giving” in January and are very satisfied with the program. It enables a pledge to the church to be automatically deducted from your checking or savings account on whatever dates you choose – weekly, monthly or yearly. StillspeakingMoney is the UCC's automatic giving program using Vanco Services as the technology partner. The fee is 25¢ per transaction, and the church pays that fee. This is a very effective way to keep your pledge UP-TO-DATE and reduces bookkeeping for the church. Authorization forms are simple and need only a voided check. The church office will handle it from there. Vanco forms and more information will be available in the Narthex during April or from Len Ewald.

THANK YOU. The CCC youth group and the Denver Inner City Parish wish to thank you for your fantastic support of the Annual DICP Bowl-a-thon. We raised \$232 for the parish and enjoyed ourselves immensely! We were able to bowl two games, play some great video games, eat a VERY greasy lunch, and celebrate our bowling prowess (yea for bumpers!).

mourn the loss of many, too.
Thank you for the many transforming musical moments and memories, and blessings to all,
Liana Lansing 3/29/09

REPORT FROM STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

Stewardship Ministry congratulates the congregation on pledging a very large commitment to OPEN THE DOORS TO THE FUTURE this year. In spite of the “downturn,” “difficult times,” and “recession,” together we promised to move Christ Church ahead into an uncertain future.

Some time has passed since the 2009 budget was adopted on January 25. Pledges were \$187,415 from 92 contributors. More pledges have been received since then.

Our annual AVERAGE pledge is \$2,037, but the MEDIAN is \$1,222. That is only \$100 per month -- \$25 per week. What would another \$10 per week mean?

A breakdown of figures reveals a fundamental truth – a few people bear a large part of the burden

:	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
	Over \$5,200 per year	\$53,200	28.0%
	Over \$4,000 per year	\$27,200	14.0%
	Over \$2,500 per year	\$24,208	12.9%
	Over \$2,100 per year	\$18,300	9.7%

Twenty-six pledges supply \$122,908 – 64.6%

What is our response to this dilemma? Can we raise our MEDIAN CLOSER TO THE AVERAGE? A second look at automatic giving could be part of the answer.

Stewardship Ministry

To: Christ Congregational Church Worship and Music Ministry,
Georgia Bachmann, Chair; Council; Pastor Gerald Eslinger;
All Music Participants, Choirs and Congregation

I hereby submit my resignation from the position of Music Coordinator and Chancel and Bell Choir Director, effective June 15, 2009.
I have served this congregation to the best of my ability, and have led many meaningful musical worship, educational and fellowship experiences. I feel a fifteenth anniversary departure is appropriate for me at this time. (I believe 15+ years is the longest tenure of any Music Director at CCC, including my father’s.) I cherish the friendship and support I’ve received over these years (and even before) from the CCC Chancel and Bell Choirs, Congregation and Clergy, and I

The Nominating Committee Wants YOU!
The Nominating Committee has begun the task of seeking the leadership team that will be elected at the annual meeting of Christ Congregational Church on May 17. Our bylaws define the Nominating Committee as the vice-moderator and one member from each of the ministries, as well as Pastor Jerry in an ex-officio capacity. So far, we have commitments from the coordinators of most of the ministries to serve on the Nominating Committee. **We will be seeking the following officer positions:**

- Moderator
- Vice Moderator
- Clerk
- Treasurer
- Immediate Past Moderator (OK, Randy Arnold is the only shoo-in!)

And we will be seeking coordinators for the following ministries:

- Worship and Music
- Christian Education
- Social Justice and Missions
- Evangelism and Church Growth
- Fellowship
- Stewardship
- Facilities & Grounds

Some of the folks who currently hold these positions may be willing to continue for another year. That is one of the first questions that we will be asking. Our first meeting will probably take place during the last week of March (so we may be underway by the time you read this!) but most of our work will continue through the end of April. If you feel God’s call in your heart to serve CCC in a leadership capacity, even if you don’t know quite what that might be, please express your interest to me (Sandy Maben, current vice moderator) or Pastor Jerry.

And One More Nominating Committee Task!
One of the goals of the Nominating Committee this year will be to ask every member to strongly consider serving as a member of one ministry. Some of the ministries are doing pretty well with membership, but some struggle to find

enough volunteers so that – well – tasks and programs that we would like or need to accomplish can be shared by a wealth of volunteers. If a member of the Nominating Committee calls you this month, please pray or meditate on the request made, be brave, and try your best to say yes. We really NEED you in church year 2009-2010.

Parish Resource Center of Colorado
303-756-9099
infocolorado@parishresourcecenter.org

Parish Resource Center®

Dear Subscribing Congregation,

Retirement isn't what it used to be! Join us for a workshop sure to help us think anew about ministry with older adults.

Spiritual Eldering: A Fresh Perspective on the Later Years

Presented by Sister Macrina Scott, OSF

Saturday, April 25, 2009 at Calvary Presbyterian Church, 1420 S. Holly St.

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Inspired by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, author of *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*, this workshop will offer all members of the congregation a perspective of the later years as a time of spiritual growth and new ways of service. Explore the vision of conscious aging and resources for challenging seniors in your congregation.

Sister Macrina Scott directed the Catholic Biblical School for the Archdiocese of Denver for twenty years and now directs Wisdom Center, offering programs for spirituality in the second half of life. She is author of many articles and two books of biblical reflection written especially for seniors: *Bible Stories Revisited: Discover Your Story in the Old Testament* and *Bible Stories Revisited: Discover Your Story in the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles*.

\$15 for members of subscribing congregations, \$40 for a group of three or more.

\$25 for non-subscribers.

Please register by April 18, 2009 by calling or emailing the Center.

We look forward to seeing you!

Teresa Campbell