

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JULY

CALLER

JULY 2009

02 *Tom Reid*
03 *Bill Greene*
06 *Marilyn Petrik*
08 *Todd Bruskiewicz*
09 *June Plourde*
11 *James Duncan*
11 *Pauline Muzzy*
11 *Steve Nelson*
12 *Len Ewald*
13 *Samantha Schonberger*
18 *Renee Schonberger*
19 *Ken Miller*
19 *Thea Rock*
21 *Nick Nicholson*
22 *Howard Taborsky*
24 *Kathryn Crawford*
28 *Steven Schonberger*

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.



CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



United Church of Christ
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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.

SUNDAY, JULY 26 -- COME JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE JERRY ESLINGER'S TIME HERE AT CHRIST CHURCH AS OUR PASTOR, PREACHER AND FRIEND, BID HIM A LOVING FAREWELL AND GIVE HIM OUR BEST WISHES IN HIS RETIREMENT. ATTEND THE WORSHIP SERVICE AND FESTIVITIES AFTERWARD.

From the Desk of Jerry Eslinger . . . SOME FINAL REFLECTIONS

I want to use this opportunity to share some thoughts about my time here at Christ Church, a period of 23 years and nine months. My family and I have shared this time with you, and for this we are grateful. I am especially thankful for the friendships I have made, for the mission and the ministry we have shared together, and for the dedication and volunteerism of many who have made our ministry possible. There has been a cadre of volunteers who have labored countless hours on behalf of our church, and their work is often unseen by many, but greatly appreciated. From yard work to interior decoration, from changing light bulbs to serving coffee and dinners, the dedication of people has served the church so well.

Much has changed in the time I have served. The neighborhood has changed, our constituency has changed, the average age of our congregation has changed. Much of this reflects the culture and society we live in, and change will be the uppermost challenge for the church as it seeks to re-define itself for this new age. No longer is the church a major player in our increasingly secular society. It has been reflected in our discussions on a relevant worship style and music style; it has been reflected in our outreach and evangelism, as we seek to find a way to reach the unchurched and the people who might be attracted to a church like ours. Mainline Protestantism is in crisis, and we find ourselves a part of that.

I have especially enjoyed my participation as your pastor in adult education. There has to be increased attention and participation, in my mind, to this program. Biblical illiteracy needs to be addressed, as well as increased attention to spirituality and spiritual practices. We are seeing a major growth in other religions and religious expressions in our country, and we need to find a clarity of expression and mission for our own faith.

MISSION OFFERING FOR JULY – THE SECOND WIND FUND

In the 2001-2002 school year, there were 4 suicides by students at Green Mountain High School. Sixty-six members of a church that shares a property line with GMHS responded, raising \$4,000 by holding a small walk/run event. In consultation with counselors from Green Mountain High School, the Second Wind Fund was formed. That \$4,000 was used, as it is today, to provide counseling by licensed therapists to students who are identified as being at risk of suicide, but who are uninsured or whose insurance does not cover the critically needed mental health counseling.

Beginning in 2007, Christ Congregational Church, through the Mission & Outreach board (now the Social Justice and Missions Ministry), decided to become a Faith Partner with the Second Wind Fund. To fulfill our commitment as a Faith Partner, we will raise funds through this month's mission offering and we will assemble a team of at least 15 participants for this year's walk/run/bike event that will be held on Sunday, September 20, at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. Please mark your calendars now!

The services of the Second Wind Fund are provided primarily to high school students but also to an alarming number of middle and elementary school students. Second Wind now provides services throughout the entire Denver metro area, but has operated for the longest in Jefferson and Adams Counties. The coroners of both counties have stated that there has been a clear and measurable decline in the rate of youth suicides, and they both attribute the decline to the services provided by Second Wind. Please give as generously as you are able to this month's mission offering.

AUGUST 2ND TIME TO SHARE THOUGHTS ABOUT MUSIC AND THE WORSHIP SERVICE. The Worship and Music Ministry invites you to join us SUNDAY AUGUST 2ND for the worship hour followed by an important time of LUNCH and conversation.

A picnic style lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. The conversation part, of course, needs you to make it happen. We will gather in small groups with W&M members to lead each group. We need you to share your thoughts and ideas on our worship service, music and what is important to you. Let's share our knowledge of Traditional, Contemporary, and Praise Music. Your input will help us as we search for a new Music Team Coordinator. The conversation time will last approximately 45 minutes.

TREASURER’S REPORT
For 2009 to Date

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total Income	\$102,496.98	\$105,547.50	97.1%
Total Expenses	\$111,728.69	\$113,744.20	98.2%
Net Income	(\$ 9,231.71)	(\$ 8,196.70)	112.6%
2009 Pledges	\$ 90,557.51	\$ 93,047.48	97.1%

JUNE MISSION OFFERING

Three Cups of Tea \$982.18

REMINDER: The electronic giving program is still available through Christ Church UCC in partnership with Vanco Services, LLC. If you wish to avail yourself of this easy way to donate and/or pledge, please contact the church office for a form.

LAFORET SUNDAY WILL BE ON AUGUST 16, 2009. Please mark your calendars. The LaForet worship service will begin at 11:00 a.m. (at Taylor Chapel), lunch at 12 noon and some planned activities during the afternoon. Cost is \$12/person with \$40 maximum for families (includes lunch). We need at least 30 people to attend or our contract will be cancelled. Sign up at church in the Fellowship Hall or call the church office (303-935-8350). Payment would be appreciated when you sign up and also please indicate if you wish to carpool or drive on your own.

More from the Desk of Jerry

Our church has always had a major focus on missions, and our support of our monthly offerings and OCWM has been noteworthy. I hope that we will continue to support our denominational offerings, as well as the local projects which have been generously supported over the years. There is truth in that saying, “The church exists for those outside its doors.”

As I have served in various positions in the Metro Association and the Rocky Mountain Conference, I am especially concerned that the church maintains a healthy relationship with the wider church. Churches can, without intentional effort, become ingrown and parochial.

Music is such an important piece in our life together, and I have been so grateful for the wonderful talent of our Choirs and Owd Dabar. As was reflected in our two-year consultation with Dr. Graham, we need to find a healthy balance between contemporary and traditional musical expressions. I hope this can be addressed in the interim.

Finally, on a personal note, I have not found this to be an easy transition for me. The range of emotions that I have experienced attests to the fact that my love for this congregation and its people has contributed so much to my personal growth and my faith. You have nurtured me as well, and this will stand me in good stead in my separation. I hope to retain your friendships in my retirement, even though I will strictly abide in absenting myself in my role as pastor so that new leadership can establish itself. I will not be available for funerals or weddings, except by invitation of the interim pastor. I will not interfere when a permanent pastor is called.

God has been present with us, not only in our worship, but in our struggles to find our way together in our various ministries, in our fun activities, and in our conversations. As Jesus has been called “the man for others,” I hope that our church can become, with him as our model, a “church for others.” If we believe that “God is still speaking,” I hope the church can keep eyes and ears open for the Words we need to hear.

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to us so that we can really see ourselves as we truly are, and then help us move to who we truly want to be.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Sandy Maben

About 20 folks attended the June 9 Council meeting – my thanks to all who came out. We discussed some routine items at the outset. Our finances are tight and we have had a couple of extraordinary expenses. The release mechanism on the door by the fellowship hall broke and had to be replaced – at a cost of \$1,700! And we had some water damage in the basement from the heavy rains in May – another \$1,150! Pledges are a little bit behind, but loose offering is ahead of budget. And MANY thanks to Sandy Selzer, Karen Bickett and Charles Grosshans for all of their work in raising close to \$5,000 from the service auction held in March. Of the \$10,000 that we put in savings at the end of 2008 to get us through 2009, we have only needed to use \$1,000 so far. Our bookkeeper extraordinaire, Michelle Drayson, is a diligent money manager.

Council then selected the interim pastor nominating committee, consisting of Georgia Bachmann, Len Ewald, Sherm Higgins, Don Kennedy and Thea Rock. These folks have a variety of experience on the worship & music, stewardship and Christian education ministries, as well as the personnel and pastoral relations committees of council. Our hope is that this committee will be able to complete its work over the 5 weeks between the June and July council meetings, and be ready to bring a recommendation to council on July 14.

Most of the meeting was spent discussing the priorities for both the interim pastor and the congregation during this interim period. Pastor Eslinger reminded us that this will be a very important period of discernment for our church family and, although he left the meeting in order to allow us to consider the future without him, we were guided by his wisdom as we engaged in dialogue. At the end of the meeting, I realized that the priorities did not look the way that I thought they would going in to the meeting that night. I am sure that my summary will fall short of relating all that we discussed, but here goes. Please remember that these priorities apply to both the interim pastor and the congregation during this interim period.

- We want an interim pastor who will help us to develop our vision for the future as we write a church profile that can adequately describe who we are to potential candidates for the called pastor position. I was especially struck by Donna Green's comment that we want an interim pastor who will hold a mirror up

Many facets of health care reform were discussed and there are many resources for health care reform education and action in Colorado. Information regarding the advantages of a single-payer plan of universal health insurance are available in the church office as well as information regarding myths and facts of financing single-payer national health insurance.

Boundary Training for Lay Leaders and Retired Ministers presented by Sara Weatherman and The Rev. George Worcester, a retired minister who lives in Longmont and recently served as Interim Conference Minister while Dr. Tom Rehling was on a sabbatical. A large group of participants gathered together and then later broke into the two categories: lay leaders and retired ministers. Jerry Eslinger attended the latter session. The total group centered on “touch,” and we offered examples of “good touch” and “bad touch.” The “retired ministers” section dealt with issues of separation and ethics and appropriate and inappropriate behavior after the cessation of a ministry in a local parish.

**35th ANNUAL MEETING ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE UCC
BOULDER, CO, JUNE 12-14, 2009**

Jerry and Carolyn Eslinger, Joanne Broten and Kay Waggoner attended the 35th Annual Meeting of the RMCUCC. On Thursday evening there was a Clergy Appreciation dinner; on Friday there were various workshops, worship services, business sessions and association meetings; and on Saturday there were morning prayers, a business session, lunch, and a Keynote Speaker, Paul Borden, in the afternoon. The keynote speaker, The Rev. Paul Borden, spoke about church growth and the way churches can grow. He differentiated between churches that saw themselves as an “organization” first and those that saw themselves as a “missional entity” first, where they were centered on the Great Commission.

La Foret Unveiling of the Master Plan presented by Ralph Townsend, the current director at La Foret. Joanne Broten, Carolyn Eslinger and Kay Waggoner attended this workshop. A ten-year, long-range plan has been developed that is expected to cost between \$10-12 million. A brief synopsis of the plan includes (among other things) a new entrance with relocation of the road, a new welcome and reception facility that will house the office and a gift shop. Three more lodge-style buildings will be constructed, each two stories with 12 bedrooms with private baths on each floor. Grants have been applied for to improve and update the Ponderosa. The existing cabins will be remodeled and the bathrooms updated. The pool and sports courts will be updated and perhaps moved. Many more changes are planned that are too extensive to discuss in this report.

Finding our Voice for Comprehensive Health Care Reform presented by Linda Mahan, Elinor Christianson, M.D. and Nancy Niero. Joanne Broten and Kay Waggoner attended this workshop. Legislators at the state and national level are bringing all parties to the table to discuss health care reform. Based on the belief that health care is not only a basic human right but also a basic human need and our belief that it is a moral imperative to transform health care so that it is inclusive, accessible, affordable and accountable, our Rocky Mountain Conference UCC voted to endorse the General Synod Healthcare Resolution and encourage the General Synod Delegates to be in support of said Resolution.

The Twenty-seventh General Synod calls upon the United Church of Christ in all its settings: to endorse and support Congressman Conyers’ legislation, H.R. 676, “Expanded and Improved Medicare for All” with the goal of obtaining legislation that enacts single-payer (a publicly funded, privately administered) national health insurance

as the program that best responds to the moral and justice imperatives of equal access for all people in the United States.

- We want to develop a true sense of unity and teamwork as a church family. One of our new members, John Rea, remarked on the difficulty of this task when we are also a church body that values an incredible amount of diversity. How do we make sure that we include everyone and create a safe environment for discussion? How do we facilitate dialogue and truly listen to each other? How do we create unity in the midst of diversity?
- In spite of the inherent scariness, we want an interim who will move us out of our comfort zones – shake us up – while also helping us to build a consensus.

Sounds almost impossible, doesn’t it? But, as we must always keep in mind, WE can’t do this. WE can’t accomplish this. But GOD CAN accomplish this through us if we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us. Blessings on each of you, my family members.