



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

United Church of Christ - Portland

The Pilgrim

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A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.” – Galatians 5:22

For those of you who don't already know about it, I'd like to catch you up on some of the “Beloved Community” work happening behind the scenes here at First Congregational UCC. What follows is a brief description on how it started, where it is now, and where we hope it might be headed.



This last fall, former Central Pacific Conference Minister Rev. Hector Lopez and I started a conversation about interfaith organizing here in Oregon. Both of us recognized that critical connections were missing between our various faith communities, and that there was much to gain from re-establishing these relationships through a commitment to deeper engagement in the public square. Rev. Lopez harkened back to the good work done after the 9/11 attacks, when the interfaith community rallied to support one another and eventually formed the Interfaith Council of Greater Portland (ICGP). Using this as our inspiration, we reached out to one of the other ICGP co-founders Wajdi Said (Executive Director of the Muslim Educational Trust), Jan Elfers (Executive

Director of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon), Rabbi Michael Cahana (Congregation Beth Israel) and current ICGP co-chair Liathana Dalton to form an initial think tank on the issue.

In order to chart the waters and figure out who else might be interested in such work, we decided to host three events under the name “The Beloved Community of Oregon,” invite everyone we could think to invite, and see who showed up and showed interest. The first gathering was a 15th Anniversary Memorial of 9/11, held right here at First Congregational, which gave space for faith leaders and their communities to look back on 9/11, to recognize the division and discord that grew up around this traumatic event, and to recommit themselves to the hard work of peacemaking. The second event was held at the Muslim Educational Trust in Tigard, and not only featured a panel of elders reflecting on their own “beloved community” work here in Oregon, but curated a community conversation on what a more robust interfaith engagement in the public square might look like. Our third event, called “Silent Prayer in the Public Square” was held in January shortly after the Presidential Inauguration, and literally walked us from Congregation Beth Israel in a candlelight vigil of solidarity and resistance to Pioneer Square.

What these three events demonstrated to us confirmed our initial thinking: that there remains a

deep desire for communities of faith here in Oregon to stand with each other on the issues that most impact the common good.



So our initial think tank has now expanded to include others we have met along the way, and we are now exploring how this work might grow and flourish here in Portland and throughout Oregon. In addition to curating more events that bring our various communities together (expect more of these in April and in May, with fledgling conversation groups hosted by the Multnomah County Library System) we see the possibility of building robust movement of social change focusing on 1) civil and human rights, 2) restorative justice, and 3) environmental integrity. To this end, Rev. Hector Lopez will continue to work with me here at First as we continue to move forward with our “Beloved Community” partners. We will continue to keep you posted as this work develops, but if you have deeper questions, or if you have suggestions that might further such important work, please don’t hesitate in reaching out to either Rev. Lopez (hecklopez@msn.com) or myself.

In faith,
Rev. Michael Ellick

Shrove Pancake Breakfast Fun!

Our middle and high school youth, together with their very hard-working parents, provided pancakes for the entire church on the Sunday before Shrove Tuesday. The youth served regular and gluten-free pancakes with lots of butter and syrup, plus sausages.

The younger kids (and the young at heart!) enjoyed festive Mardi Gras decorations on the tables. Big thanks to all everyone who helped setup, cook and cleanup, especially coordinator Chris Clark and family, Anne Sullivan, Jesika & Enrique Gavilanes, Donna Hellums, Patty Hammond & Doug Mella, and Kari Powers.



The youth raised almost \$400 for their summer service trip. Thanks to the congregation for your generosity!

Mid-Winter Middle & High School Youth Adventures at Camp Adams

First Congregational high school youth attended an ecumenical Youth Collective Summit weekend at Camp Adams in early March. Organized by Rev. Ron Werner, Jr. and Rev. Sara Rosenau, the weekend was attended by over 60 youth from United Church of Christ, Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA), United Methodist and Presbyterian (PCUSA) churches in the Portland area. Together with a team of global musicians, the teens gathered for worship, friendship, and courageous conversations about identity, race, power, and difference. Many thanks to Gabriel Trainer, youth leader and chaperone, who went with our high schoolers.





The annual Central Pacific Conference Mid-Winter Retreat for Middle School youth was held the second weekend in March. Rev. Elizabeth and middle schoolers from First Congregational joined youth from First Congregational UCC in Salem, Cedar Hills UCC, and Bethel UCC. Rev. Tara Wilkins of Bridgeport UCC led the youth in exploring diverse images of God and examining issues of bias and difference. We enjoyed the quiet of Camp Adams in winter, muddy trails beside

the creek, and time in the cabin playing games by the fireplace.

Camp Adams Scholarships Now Available

Is your child headed to a UCC Summer Camp this year? Registration for Camp Adams in Molalla, Oregon (less than an hour's drive from Portland) is due by June 1, 2017. If your family is in need of a financial boost to send your child to camp, there is help available. First Congregational UCC of Portland hopes all kids who are able can experience the magic of campfire under the stars, swimming in the creek, hiking in the old growth forest, and making new friends. To apply for a Camp Grandma Agnes Scholarship, please contact Ann Laskey at annlaskey@ymail.com before May 24th (families will be notified by May 27th). For more information about Camp Adams, visit <http://campadams.org/>.

The dates for 2017 are as follows (campers must have completed the grade listed):

- ✦ Taller & Smaller (K-3rd w/ Adult): July 5- July 8
- ✦ Exodus (9th-12th): July 9- July 15
- ✦ Sojourners (6th-8th): July 16- July 22
- ✦ Discoverers (4th-5th): July 23- July 29
- ✦ Genesis/Seekers (2nd-3rd): July 30- August 5

Moderator Note

Dear Friends,

I want to start off by wishing you a very warm and bright Happy Spring! As I stated in my last Moderator Note, I will be making open communication and accessibility a key characteristic of my tenure as Moderator. In my past three months as Moderator, I hope you have felt the effects of my open communication and accessibility practices.

We've had some exciting items take place in church this past months. Below are the items and updates on various activities.



CHURCH LIFE UPDATES:

- The Cambodian Resiliency Art Reach Opening Night that took place on February 18, 2017 was a wonderful success. Our Congregation members, Muslim leaders, interfaith leaders, new individuals to our church, and our Cambodian neighbors were present to have dialogue and learn from each other. None of this would have been possible without the hard work of two of our Congregation members, Shelton and Karen Hurst.
- Congregation member Sahni Denton has volunteered to become our new Church Historian. Sahni is excited about the position and looks forward to connecting our congregation members with our church history.
- Congregation member and Hospitality Core Ministry Facilitator, Alison Killeen has been working as chair of our Church's Welcoming Team, as chair she has lead the team in focused efforts in reviewing how we as a congregation welcome people into our community. Creation of the following items is in the works: a new member orientation, new member packets and creation of added signage to our physical space. By addressing these and many other items in relation to welcoming at our church, Alison and her team are showing our new comers who we are as a church community.
- Congregation members Stephanie Mullen (Peacemaking Core Ministry Facilitator), Grant Helbley (Community Core Ministry Facilitator), Carole Scholl, Jesika Gavilanes, Enrique Gavilanes, and Rachel Short have joined the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice Sanctuary Cohort on behalf of our congregation. This Immigration Task Force Group, will regularly join with other churches (in the Cohort) in order to get resources on the important topic of church Sanctuary.
- Visible signage for how to operate the Fellowship Hall elevator lift has been created and placed on the entry and exit locations of the lift. A Sunday training session is being created with our Church staff in order to show Congregation members how to operate the lift. More information on this training session will be provided in the upcoming weeks.

- At Church Council in March, we held a Thank You celebration for Bill Sweeney for all his hard work over the years. Bill has been in our church Treasure/Secretary position for more than 2 years. As of April 1, our Church's Secretary/Treasurer position will be filled by Belinda Moos. Below is the Thank You cake that Bill had to finish on his own as his wife is gluten intolerant.



CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATES:

- The contract to have our Churches current and future archives taken care of by the Oregon Historical Society has been signed. Any First Congregation member can go to the Oregon Historical Society to gain access to our church's archives. The Oregon Historical Society has decided to not take some of our archives, those items have been stored in the church.
- Two members of our church have been appointed to our Financial Oversight Committee. Vacancies in the Financial Oversight Committee have now been filled. Thank you to all who reached out to me for this position.
- We reviewed and completed our approval of the Core Ministry Policies and our support for the removal and disposal of the Church's Espresso Cart and support for the fixing of the Espresso Machine that we currently have in the Fellowship Hall.
- Our March visioning portion of Council was around the topic of worship and worship experience. We addressed three key questions. One of our most insightful comments was acknowledging to our Ministers that their vision for our church worship is important and supported. We also acknowledged that we all, as a community, can work to find a common ground where each of us can feel the uplifting impacts of our worship services. This is keeping in mind that this uplifting impact takes place for each of us at different times and different worship services.
- We completed the review of the goals that we have set forth for the Church's Safety Team. In the coming months, we look forward to seeing the Safety Team provide learning sessions and more information about church safety topics to our congregation.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

- I'm looking for individuals who would like to be a part of our church's Selection Committee (2 individuals), Safety Team (2), and Oliver Lecture Committee (2). If you would like more information on these groups, please contact me (see contact information below).
- We are looking for individual(s) who would like to help with recording videos of church sermons. Recording videos of church sermons is a fairly new avenue that our church is going into and

having some in our congregation help with this endeavor would be great.

- ✦ If you or someone you know would like to participate in these opportunities, please let me know.

In closing, it is going to be a beautiful spring with you all!

Peace,

Peace Young

Moderator

moderator@uccportland.org

P.S.: Please join me for any of these two monthly activities:

Moderator Moment: Providing descriptions of the latest and most salient activities relating to Church Governance during the church service every third Sunday.

Moderator Table: Staying at a table every third Sunday during Hospitality Hour (after service in the Fellowship Hall) in order to listen to your ideas, concerns, or even to just check in with you.

Welcome New Members

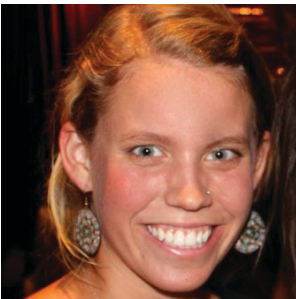
We are so honored to welcome the following new members who joined First Congregational during worship on March 5, 2017. Please give a big welcome to Linda McKim-Bell, Rev. Amanda Guthrie, and Elizabeth Tomlinson.



Linda McKim-Bell, a lifelong Portlander, is a retired English as a Second Language, Bilingual and Migrant Teacher. She is a human rights activist who has served as regional coordinator for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and on Portland's Human Rights Commission. She has been an advocate for the Education Civil Rights of immigrant students and a peace activist with her husband. Linda enjoys traveling to learn and broaden perspectives, gardening, painting, photography, swimming and cooking for friends. Her husband, Curtis C. Bell, Curtis attends First Unitarian Church and is the national president of Unitarians for Justice in the Middle East for Palestinian human rights. They have a daughter in Seattle and they are soon expecting their first grandchild.



Rev. Amanda Guthrie moved to Portland about a year and a half ago from Chicago. She is an ordained UCC pastor currently serving as a hospital chaplain. She lives with her husband, Andrew (who is a Disciples of Christ pastor in East Portland), and with two beloved animals. For fun, she likes to learn new skills (like improv) and sing karaoke.



Elizabeth Tomlinson is a born and raised Southerner from Starkville, Mississippi most recently living in Bloomington, Indiana where she got her MA in Russian and East European Studies. In the fall Elizabeth was led to Portland with her partner Sam, a born and raised Portlander, who is a high school English teacher. Elizabeth works at a local refugee resettlement agency. Elizabeth and Sam live in Goose Hollow and together enjoy exploring the city by bike, roaming the outdoors, and cooking up feasts of the former Soviet Union.

Upcoming Events

APRIL

THURSDAY, APRIL 13TH

Maundy Thursday Communion Worship Experience

Chapel

Join us for an evening with Jesus as we, his disciples, ask questions and try to understand His Message. The dramatic script for this mystical experience, like last year, draws on the various Gospel accounts of Jesus' last supper with his friends. Our present-day celebration of that first century evening in the upper room includes simple food, wine, juice, teachings, prayers and music. Rather than focus on Judas' betrayal or Peter's desertion, Jesus gives us his final commandment: That we love one another deeply and fully, as he has loved us.

SATURDAY, APRIL 22ND

Eve's Circle "Get Organized & Clothing Swap"

Fellowship Hall

Well Spring has sprung and its time to clean those winter dust bunnies and clear out those closets. Just in the nick of time Eve's Circle is hosting a "Get Organized & Clothing Swap" party! We are hosting this event on Saturday April 22nd from 10am-12pm in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to this event. The first part of the event will include Organizational techniques and fun facts. The second half we are going to have some fun and swap with each other items each of us are bringing that we no longer want or need. So please bring any of your gently worn clothing items, accessories, jewelry, stationary and lets see if somebody else can claim it as their treasure! We do plan on having a potluck brunch so please let us know if you would like to attend by emailing Belinda Moos at msbmoos@gmail.com.

SUNDAY, APRIL 23RD

Info for New Visitors & Potential New Members

Library

If you are a new visitor to First Congregational and you'd like to get to know our Ministers better, and/or ask anything about our church and our faith tradition, please consider joining us for our New Visitor Breakfast before church at 9 AM on Sunday, April 23rd in the library. Old members are welcome to join as well, as this is an excellent opportunity for us to get to know each other better.

Also, if you are someone who is interested in becoming a formal member of our faith community, please note that our next New Member Joining Sunday will be in service on Sunday May 7th. If you want to join on that Sunday, please be in touch with one of our Ministers if you haven't been already, and note that we need a brief bio/introduction (about a paragraph) for our bulletin no later than Wednesday May 3rd. These can be sent directly to our Communications Coordinator Joey Rodriguez (jrodriguez@uccportland.org).

APRIL

SATURDAY, APRIL 29TH

People's Climate March

Join Rev. Elizabeth as we march in the People's Climate March on Saturday, April 29th. This is a family-friendly event. OPAL and their partners in the Oregon Just Transition Alliance are calling on Oregon's Environmental Justice communities and anyone who stands with people of color and low income people to join the movements for racial, social, and economic justice as pathways to climate action. Meet at Dawson Park (N Stanton St & Williams Ave, Portland, Oregon 97227). See <https://www.facebook.com/events/1250735871647787/> for more information.

MAY

THURSDAY - SATURDAY, MAY 4TH-6TH

Embrace Festival

Sanctuary

On May 4th through 6th, people from all over the world will gather to share knowledge and wisdom, learn from each other, celebrate, be inspired, and find the tools needed to create and enliven local movements within our communities. There will be exploration of Christ Consciousness, Buddha Nature, Eco-Spirituality, social justice and the way of universal and personal transformation that honors the Divine in all.

The Portland Art Museum, Eliot Center, and First Congregational will all be taking part in this event! Congregants and staff will receive a 25% discount. When purchasing tickets, use this coupon code: INNERDIVINE

Information and ticket sales at embracefestival.com

SATURDAY, MAY 13TH

Park Blocks Bluegrass Festival

Sanctuary/Fellowship Hall/Chapel

The Park Blocks Bluegrass Festival is a charitable event with proceeds going towards starting an overnight shelter specifically for women at First Congregational Church in partnership with Do Good Multnomah. The event will bring together bluegrass and folk musicians for a day of stellar performances by over fifteen bands, craft beer and cider, great food and of course tons of jamming! This event is being organized by our own Facilities Manager, Stephen Eggers, and we invite all of you to attend!

Tickets are available now at www.parkblocksbluegrass.com/

ARTREACH GALLERY PRESENTS



CELEBRATION OF CALLIGRAPHY

Sacred Words in Art

The Art of SALMA ARASTU

APRIL 2 - MAY 28, 2017

Including Words of Quran and Rumi

STORY LAB: Saturday April 8, 9 AM to Noon
led by SALMA ARASTU at First Congregational UCC

ARTREACH GALLERY
at First Congregational UCC
1126 Park Avenue
Portland OR 97205
www.uccportland.org/artreach

MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL TRUST
10330 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Tigard OR 97223
www.metpdx.org

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Our calling is to live into the kingdom of God more fully by cultivating community, practicing hospitality, and publicly demonstrating and advancing God's peace.

Rev. Michael Ellick, **Senior Minister** | Rev. Elizabeth Durant, **Assistant Minister**

Joey Rodriguez, *Communications Coordinator*, jrodriguez@uccportland.org

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