



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

United Church of Christ - Portland

The Pilgrim

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A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." – John 14:27



Preparing salad for attendees at the "We Refuse To Be Enemies" interfaith event at Neveh Shalom synagogue on May 21, 2017

So much is happening right now in our city and our country – so much that has many people feeling anxious, afraid, and isolated – that I wanted to share some good news with you on the "peacemaking" front. A few weeks back we co-hosted an event with Neveh Shalom Synagogue, the Muslim Educational Trust, and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. Many of you attended this interfaith gathering called "We Refuse to Be Enemies," but for those of you who weren't present, this was also the kick-off for an ongoing youth program that we helped design with the Multnomah County Library System. Our basic premise was the opposite of fear is friendship, and so

we curated ongoing events for teenagers from many different faith backgrounds to gather, get to know each other better, and start building bridging one friendship at a time. We are hopeful that this is just the beginning of an ever-widening circle of compassion between First Congregational and other faith communities here in town, and I hope you will all join me in supporting this important peacemaking work in the months and years ahead.

But shortly after our kick-off event, the murders of Rick Best and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche rocked our whole country, and revealed (for some) just how much violence has been building up beneath the surface of our public conversation. This was further demonstrated by an alt-right rally the following week, where the hatred and implicit violence of both the Right and the Left seemed to reach a kind of fever pitch. Naturally, I believe we have a mandate from the prophetic tradition we inherit to stand against the racism and the white supremacy represented by the alt-right. But given the current emotional climate of our country, in which both the Right and the Left have been infected by the very same hatred we would hope to oppose, we Christians have a special calling as peacemakers, and I don't remember a time when this has been more needed.

Peacemaking does not mean we skim over our differences, or suppress confrontation in an effort to maintain the false peace of a status quo that empowers some but not others. This is the opposite of peacemaking. Instead, the Way of Jesus demands that we take personal responsibility for ourselves, and learn how to starve the seeds of hate in us, even as we learn how to water the seeds of peace in us. As a "Priesthood of All Believers," this is not work that can be farmed out to someone else – this is a calling

to each and every one of us who take the Gospel seriously.

To help us think about new ways of doing this, I've started a church-wide reading and practice series on Thich Nhat Hanh's book "Creating True Peace." Starting Thursday June 22nd from 6:30p-8:30p at Peace House (2116 NE 18th Ave.), our ongoing Meditation and Prayer Group will be gathering each week to discuss these peace practices, and I'd like to welcome everyone to either join us as you are able, or to start your own conversation group on a night and time that suits you better (to coordinate with others who might be interested in meeting up with you, reach out to me by email: ellick@uccportland.org). But however you do it, find a way to take peacemaking seriously this summer. True peace cannot be legislated in the courts or congress, but only takes root when each of us truly sees that all humans are part of a larger body, and that whatever happens to one of us happens to all of us. As Thich Nhat Hanh says so well:

*You are me, and I am you.
isn't it obvious that we "inter-are"?
You cultivate the flower in yourself,
so that I will be beautiful.
I transform the garbage in myself,
so that you will not have to suffer.
I support you;
you support me.
I am in this world to offer you peace;
you are in this world to bring me joy.*



In faith,
Rev. Michael Ellick

Thank You to Our Teachers & Volunteers

Many thanks to our teachers and volunteers for a great school year! Nell Egan took care of our nursery, along with volunteers Layne Young, Karen Horn and Frankie Johnson. Batya Podos managed our Godly Play classroom, along with volunteers Karen Horn, Anne Sullivan, Daniel Hunter, Doug Mella, Chris Clark and Rev. Amanda Guthrie. Rev. Elizabeth led our Youth Group, along with volunteers Gabriel Trainer, Judy Bishop, Shaun Short, Terry Voss, Jim Sikkell, and others. Your work with our children and youth is deeply appreciated...thank you!

Family Ministries News



First Congregational youth and adults joined thousands of others in advocating for climate justice at the People's Climate March in North Portland on April 29, 2017.

Our youth continue to meet monthly during worship with Rev. Elizabeth for "Youth Lounge" in the Kiva. We hosted our first ever movie night and tested out the new couches and curtains in the Kiva space. In addition to marching in the Climate March and rallying for an end to deportations at the Tacoma NW Detention Center, we also met Muslim and Jewish youth during the interfaith event "We Refuse to Be Enemies" on May 21 at Neveh Shalom synagogue.

Our curriculum this summer will focus on the theme of compassion. We look forward to our annual Family Camp on August 26th at Camp Adams!

This has been a busy Spring for our children and youth! Our children enjoyed a festive palm-waving processional on Palm Sunday, a lively egg hunt on Easter, and helped to wave fiery "Spirit" banners, pass out "tongues of fire," read the scripture and serve communion on Pentecost. We continued our Godly Play Spring series on "Knowing Jesus in New Ways" and welcomed two new teachers and two new doorkeepers at our Godly Play training in early May.



First Congregational youth and adults rallied for an end to deportations at the 9th Annual Mother's Day Vigil at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington on May 13, 2017.

Eve's Circle



Eve's Circle "Desert Mothers" Retreat at Camp Adams on May 20, 2017

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WESTSIDE CLUSTER: "a group of similar things or people positioned or occurring closely together"

WHEN: Saturday July 15 @ 6:00 PM

WHERE: @ the home of Ron and Cheryl Clevenger

For those of you who live on the West Side of the Willamette River please come to a potluck dinner hosted by Ron and Cheryl. We will gather at 6:00 for appetizers and socializing. Dinner will be at 7:00. Bring your own beverage plus an appetizer, salad, main dish or dessert to share

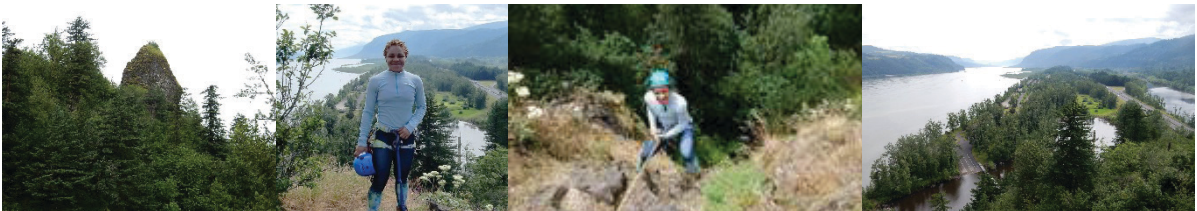
Please RSVP to Judy Bishop @ judybnorthwest@gmail.com or 503-292-1637. It would help if you would let me know what you are bringing so we can balance the menu. Parking is limited so we will be carpooling from the church. Specifics will be available upon your response.

Moderator Note

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the longest days of the calendar year. This summer is starting off with warmth and continual sunshine throughout the day. The trailing end of the summer will have in it a total solar eclipse. This will be my first time taking part in viewing parties for a solar eclipse. My partner and I look forward to camping out in Bend, OR to see the once in a lifetime solar eclipse.

Another one of my adventures this summer has taken place closer to Portland, OR. I had a great time rocking climbing the famous Rooster Rock at Rooster Rock State Park in Corbett, OR. The climb up and rappel down were breath taking. Here are some pictures from my climb:



In my endeavor of making open communication and accessibility a key characteristic of my tenure as Moderator, I've decide to attend as much of our New Member Breakfasts as I can. Getting new members (and current members) immersed into our church life and opportunities is something that I think will prove fruitful to our church and to our new members. After attending one of the New Member Breakfasts recently, I noticed how much we all come to this church seeking community and various forms of acceptance.

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:

- ✦ Congregation member and Hospitality Core Ministry Facilitator, Alison Killeen has been working as chair of our Church's Welcoming Team. The Church's Welcoming Team has created a welcoming and church opportunities table. The table will be permanently located in the Fellowship Hall, to the right of the Fellowship Hall landing steps. Please make sure to visit the table. The table will be continually stocked with Church community information and new opportunities to get involved with the church and a two feet tall pencil. We can use the pencil to sign up for all church activities at the same time! The pencil stands out and is now become a church landmark. Thank you to the Welcoming Team's work on this new aspect of our church.
- ✦ Ten congregation members of our Congregation and I attended the 9th Annual Mother's Day Vigil in Tacoma, WA. At the vigil, we placed flowers on the gates of the Tacoma Northwest Detention Center, which is one of the largest detention centers in America. Our flowers where blessed by a local Native American tribe, which added to our prayers for immigration reform in our country. Thanks to Stephanie Mullen and members of our Immigration Task Force for organizing our church for this Vigil. Here are some photos from the Vigil:





- ✦ Five congregation members and I supported our Muslim Community at the Muslim Education Trust annual fundraiser. We, as a church, made contributions and helped to raise \$205,000 for Muslim education for students attending the center and for our Oregon community.
- ✦ The Park Blocks Bluegrass Festival and Fundraisers that took place at our Church, was nothing short of a fun night. There was great music and wonderful food. I hear that this event may be coming back next year. The event raised about \$8,000, which will go to supporting, a possible overnight shelter for women at our Church. Thank you to staff members, Steve Eggers and Cara Roth for creating this night and opportunities for our church.
- ✦ Our recording and publishing of video sermons has proved to be a success. With our YouTube website view counts going up, we have decided to create a little more structure in the way we format our description section of the videos and the way we format our videos. If you haven't seen these fantastic video publications, which we are sending to our wider community through YouTube and Facebook, please take the time to go to our Church's YouTube website page and experience something great! Go to YouTube->Search->First Congregational UCC Portland->Sermons. I would like to give a special thanks to the following members of our Congregation that have been working with our Church Staff to create this aspect of our church life: Ross Runkel, Ruth Ann Barrett and Ed Granshaw.
- ✦ Our church represented well at the 2017 Pride Parade. We showed that love always wins. Remember to continually hug and show some love to your close LGBTQ friends and family, the more we share love, the less hate there is in this world.

CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATES

- ✦ We discussed and found a path of opportunity to help financially support a trip to the 2017 UCC General Synod in Baltimore, Maryland for our church's Members in Discernment, Grant Helbley and Michael Overman.
- ✦ We approved the addition of congregation member Patty Hammond and Kathy Sheibley into our Church's Selection Committee.
- ✦ We decide to have our Business Manager, Cara Roth, look further into Video Camera equipment purchase for our Church's regular Sunday video recording of Sermons. These videos can be found after each Sunday on our Church's website as well as on YouTube.
- ✦ We were provided an update from our church Safety Team Chair, Sarah Vasquez. I'm glad to say that our church community and leaders are going to be given many opportunities, in the near future, to experience and learn the most effective response when faced with a safety situation in our church and community. Safety is important to us here at First Congregational Church. Thank you Sarah for taking the Chair position for the team.
- ✦ One of our visioning portion of Council these past months focused on one thought pertaining to church Safety. The thought was as follows: if you feel that our church is your sanctuary, then do you feel that you are safe at the church? This is a critical question that some of us are still pondering.
- ✦ We reviewed the mission statement and budget for the Do Good Multnomah's Women Shelter that is

proposed to take place at our church. This night shelter is very similar to the Do Good Veteran Men's shelter we had in the previous years. Presently, we are in the grant review process for the City and Care Oregon. After this process, we will know more about being able to start the Do Good Shelter in our church again.

- ✦ We discussed and voted on our next steps forward in relation to our search for a new much needed Youth Leader/Teacher. Our previous decision in relation to our Youth ministries was to combine our Youth program with First Christian Church's Youth program and place one Youth teacher as leader of both programs. This would have meant that there would have been a combined financial contribution from both First Christian and First Congregational to support one Youth Leader. Since, the stepping down of Amy Piatt as Senior Minister at First Christian, we have been asked by First Christian to determine a solo Youth leader plan. We have done just that by approving in Council to utilize the bequest given generously by Bud Shafer to help fund our much-needed Youth leader for our growing Youth Program.
- ✦ Another one of our visioning portion of Council this past months focused on looking more at our Church logo. Our current church logo is a picture of our bell tower. We are thinking of making a change to this logo in order to reflect that we are a church open to all and positioned in a city that needs our interaction. We talked about what representation of our church the new logo drawings were evoking. We gave some suggestions of design revisions. We look forward to taking the leap into a new logo design for the church in the near future.
- ✦ At Council, we discussed Michael's Paternity leave. We talked about Michael's backup support for Pastoral Care duties and backup support for Supervision/Management of all staff and core functions. Our own Elizabeth Durant will be our acting Senior Minister while Michael is away. Michael's leave estimation is for two months, from mid-August to mid-October.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

- ✦ I'm looking for someone in our community who would like to participate in our 2017 Budget Development Committee. The purpose of the committee is to work together to create the 2018 church budget. The team meetings are monthly from July 2017 – November 2017. This one position was created for anyone in our community and there is no financial experience needed for this position.
- ✦ I'm looking for people in our community would like to be a part of the Fundraising Committee. The Committee is a new committee to the church. I'm looking for people who would like to plan fundraising events and help with grant writing for our church. The members of this Committee will meet as needed.
- ✦ If you or someone you know would like to participate in these opportunities, please let me know.

In closing, it is going to be an amazing summer with you all!

Peace,

Peace Young

Moderator

peace.ehibor.young@gmail.com

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 catch up with you.

Welcome New Members

We are so honored to welcome the following new members who joined First Congregational during worship on May 7th and June 25th, 2017.



Tony Ludlam

Tony Ludlam is originally from Sherman, Texas. He moved from there to Henderson, Texas and then to Portland, Oregon. Tony loves to be helpful in church. He likes to travel when possible and is a movie buff!



Gerry Casteel

Gerry and his husband moved here from Texas to be close to the coast and the mountains and Portland is in the middle and a beautiful city.



Ed Grenshaw

I was born at Good Samaritan hospital and grew up in Gresham. I studied engineering and love to fix things. I enjoy photography and hiking and have a passion for sound recording. I worked as a sound engineer. In 1992, I joined the Catholic Church which led me to appreciate church community. Martha and I enjoy our community garden.



Martha Grenshaw

I was born in Baton Rouge and grew up near Houston, where I worked for H.U.D. In 1985, I visited a farm community in Oregon. Four months later I received a transfer to work in Portland, with the guidance of Higher Power. It changed everything. I study genealogy. I learned that I am a direct descendant of five Methodist preachers, which perhaps explains my outspoken manner. I enjoy sharing history with my family and on line. I am most passionate about writing and self-publishing books about local history.

Ann Prudence Narayan

As a Lutheran, my spirit was killed. God saw what had happened so directed me to UCC. Here I was reborn in the loving arms of Christ. Two weekends ago, I met someone whom God had intended me to meet. He spoke through her. I cried three times when talking to her. And I cry for no one! It was as if my whole life...the despair I experienced from birth, constantly being helpless, was released. He said, "Take a vacation with me...anything in your life...imagine it as thread going up to Heaven. And next to it, but don't touch or look at it. Let me take care of it. I want you to take a vacation with me." In this Church, God has spoken to me plainly. I know where I belong now.

Celebrating our School Year

"We celebrated the end of the school year and graduations in worship on Sunday, June 12, 2017. Third graders Miley Minor, Cassidey Minor and Mezmur Lapour received bibles, elementary and middle schoolers received journals, and our high schoolers received outdoor survival kits. Please hold all our graduates (and their parents and grandparents!) in prayer as they advance to new schools, head off to college, and tackle new adventures.

HONORING OUR GRADUATES

Elementary School Graduates:

ANNABELLE GAVILANES is going to Ockley Green Middle School next year. She likes soccer, reading, art and playing video games with friends.

JoJo MELLA will be going to Rowe Middle School next year and is looking forward to meeting new people & joining the track team.

Middle School Graduates:

ELI GAVILANES will be a 9th grader next year at Jefferson High School. He is a fast runner and likes electronics, soccer, drawing and playing video games with friends.

ANNA MELLA will be entering 9th grade at Milwaukie High School & is looking forward to playing in the high school symphonic band & the jazz band.

VANESSA HELLUMS will be entering 9th grade at Parkrose High School. She continues to dance ballet and other dance styles (flamenco, modern, hip hop, tap, and more).

High School Graduates:

CHRISTIAN R. BENGEL, grandson of Norman and Barbara Bengel, graduated from the School of Science & Technology (Aloha High School) on June 10, 2017.

NELL EGAN is graduating from West Linn High School and will be attending University of Oregon in the fall. She is hoping to study Biology and pursue a career in the medical field.

COLIN HORN graduates Corbett High School having taken AP courses & played three sports, Cross Country, Basketball & Baseball each year. This summer he plans to attend the full week of Exodus at Camp Adams. This is his 11th year attending Camp Adams, starting after 2nd grade. He will also take a trip with his "bros" with whom he's done a backpacking trip for the past 4 summers. At the end of August he'll move onto campus to attend Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington. Colin is eager to explore environmental science and biology (and, his parents' hope, teaching).

ZAK JOHNSON is graduating from Grant High School, where he has been active on the Grant Generals Constitution Team which took second place in the national competition in Washington D.C. this Spring. Zak plans to attend Central Oregon Community College in Bend, Oregon.

LOGAN MINOR graduated from Hawaii Preparatory Academy (HPA) where he played Lacrosse, helped build the school's HPA Outdoor Program, and coached kids lacrosse in his spare time. He also helped build the school's web presence through special projects for credit at HPA. Logan was involved in a play writing and performing group this last year of school and was an integral part of developing the plays. He was a dorm prefect this last year and a role model for fellow students and ambassador for the school. This fall, Logan will attend Chapman University's Dodge College of Film. He was accepted into the screenwriting program there. Logan will be receiving the Chapman Grant, the Disciples Day Award and the Chapman Disciples Match Grant, both through the United Church of Christ.

College Graduates:

BLAKE OLIVER, grandson of Phil Oliver, graduates on June 18, 2017 with a Bachelor of Science in Community Health from Portland State University. Blake works as a CNA2 at Good Samaritan Hospital and plans to go on to nursing school.

KOLBI E.TREBBIEN, grandson of Norman and Barbara Bengel, graduated on May 27, 2017 with his Juris Doctor degree from Lewis & Clark Law School.

ELIZABETH ANNE LEVY graduated with a Masters Degree from Portland State University in Conflict Resolution.

Upcoming Events

JULY

SUNDAY, JULY 9TH

Let's Celebrate! Honoring Michael, Alana, and Forthcoming Baby Girl
Fellowship Hall

The Celebration: We will share hearty hors d'oeuvres and plenty of pie. For the program, we will be welcoming people to share a personal blessing for the family in celebration of the journey they are embarking on.** Let us joyfully honor our friends as new parents!

Ideas for a personal blessing:

- ✦ Share a poem
- ✦ Write the baby a letter to be read at a later age
- ✦ Make the baby a mixed tape/cd/mp3
- ✦ Give your favorite children's book with an inscription
- ✦ Share a tender memory or wisest insights about parenting
- ✦ Perform a song that means something special to you

Please note: If you would like to share a blessing up front please contact hartman.ellick.baby.fete@gmail.com to save a slot!

There are many ways you can contribute to this celebration! Please be in touch to let us know how you'd like to take part.

- ✦ Share a personal blessing (written or spoken)
- ✦ Bring a pie or a savory hors d'oeuvres to share
- ✦ Assist with set-up or clean-up
- ✦ Assist with food prep and buffet upkeep

AUGUST

SATURDAY and SUNDAY, AUGUST 26TH-27TH
S'Mores Family Camp

Camp Adams

Mark your calendars and plan to join us for our annual S'Mores Family Camp at Camp Adams in Molalla, less than an hour's drive from Portland. Swimming, hiking, games, campfire and, of course, S'mores! Registration details coming soon....see Rev. Elizabeth for more information.

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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