



**FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL**
United Church of Christ - Portland

The Pilgrim

October-November 2017 Vol. XVII, Issue 5

A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.”
—Jeremiah 29:11-12



Hi church family,

As the nights grow longer and we feel the change of seasons in the air, we look ahead toward the holidays with anticipation. All of our cherished First Congregational traditions, along with new friends (and new babies!) to celebrate them with, are waiting for us.

Yet while the change to cooler weather is a welcome one, other changes in our world are not. In the past two months, we have watched in horror as wildfires, hurricanes and earthquakes have claimed lives and destroyed so much of the natural beauty we cherish. As we pray for the recovery of our beloved Gorge, we also pray—hard—for the rebuilding of Puerto Rico, Mexico, Florida, Houston. We continue to seek ways to address climate change and its effects on our planet, as well as the systems of oppression that keep nations and states in poverty.

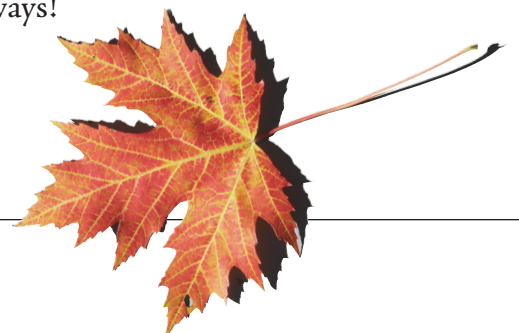
Even as we lament these natural disasters, our hearts are heavy with news of the mass shooting in Las Vegas. We feel a too-familiar fury at the lack of compassionate, meaningful response from our elected leaders. We mourn both the deaths from gun violence and the political divides that prevent us from enacting solutions.

On Sunday, October 8, we wrote letters to our Congressional representatives and engaged with “prayer-in-action” stations in different corners of the sanctuary as a way to shift some of our anger and grief toward positive action. We know that we must continue to sustain our hope and work for the future we imagine. The interfaith fourth Sunday “Beloved Community forums” are an ongoing opportunity for us to engage in this work. I’m so grateful for the leadership of our Rev. Michael Ellick and Rev. Hector Lopez as they extend the reach of friendship in our city.

It has been my pleasure to serve as your acting Senior Minister these past 10 weeks. Thank you for your support, caring, and encouragement during this time. With much joy, we welcomed Rev. Michael back on October 15, to lead us in a new sermon series on the Gospel of John. We are also entering our stewardship season, so watch your mailbox for more information about the exciting ways we plan to celebrate that “We Are Generous!”

May the Holy One increase our imagination and sustain our courage as we seek to bring healing change to our world. May the peace of Christ surround and fill you, now and always!

In faith and hope,
Rev. Elizabeth



Moderator Note

Peace Young



Dear Friends,

My *Moderator Note* begins with a question: How many people took the time at 10:18am, Monday, August 21, to see the solar eclipse instantly turn our sunny day into night?

I sure did! In fact, I'm one of the crazy people who joined the

thousands near Bend, Oregon to see the eclipse in the line of totality. If you didn't take the time to see it, your next chance to see a total eclipse in Oregon will be 70 years from now. I'm sure we will all be here in 70 years from now to see it too. Even though the traffic was extensive, I would not have traded the experience for anything.

Secondly, my heart for the past couple of weeks has been going out to members of our congregation that have been affected by the Eagle Creek fires. I have had conversations with affected congregation members and have spent some time reassuring them that our church community is here to provide them with assistance and support. My prayers have also gone out to Mother Nature's healing. I pray that all the lands burned by fires this year will, in due time, heal and spring forth with new growth and life.

As I organize my outdoor fall and winter sports trips in Oregon, I plan to witness, first hand, how these fires have changed our lands. I also plan to take some time to reflect on this thought: when our earth hurts, we hurt as well, and when our earth heals, we heal as well.

We've had some exciting and sad events take place in

church these past months. Below are the church Life and Church Council updates that I have to share.

Church Life Updates:

- Our church camera, which will be primarily used for Sunday sermon recording, has arrived and is available for church community members who would like to help with recording our Sunday sermons. The camera comes with instructions and is very user-friendly. Video recording of Sunday sermons will now be done from the balcony floor of our sanctuary. If you are interested in providing your time to record Sunday sermons with our church's camera, please contact our Business Manager, Cara Rothe (cara@uccportland.org).
- Our next Oliver Lecture event will take place October 29 at 3:00 at the church. The speaker is Khalil Bendib, world-renowned political cartoonist whose work is now on exhibition in our gallery. This is an event not-to-be missed—look for further information in this *Pilgrim*. Thank you, Sheldon Hurst, for taking your time to provide this connection for our church and community.
- Because the number of people staying on our front porch has risen to an unmanageable number (and because of limited staff availability), we have, for an extended period of time, decided to suspend the practice of allowing people to sleep there.
- On Saturday, Sept 9, in our church classroom, I attended "I Love You, So Make Me Happy: Insecurities, God, and How Non-Monogamy Changed My Life." The Storylab was led by our Community Core Ministry Facilitator, Grant Helbley. In the lab, I got to hear the stories of a few folks in our Congregation. I shared my story as well. The biggest take away, for me, was that we all have in us immense amounts of love that

can be shared over and over again. Sharing your love with one person doesn't mean that you don't have enough love to share with others. Thank you, Grant, for opening yourself to our Congregation in such a meaningful way.

- ✦ On Sunday, Sept 10, in our church fellowship hall, I attended a presentation given by our church's investment company, United Church Funds. The presentation was on sustainably responsible investing. I learned all the methods United Church Funds has taken to ensure our church investments are used to provide support for companies who are morally sound, who care for the environment, and who do their best to keep human rights at the forefront.
- ✦ On Sunday, Sept 10, in our church sanctuary, I attended Bob Larsen's funeral. Given that I was a newcomer to our church after Bob had been home ridden, I had not had the opportunity to meet him in person. I did, however, feel the effects of Bob's work in relation to this church. At the funeral, I got to meet Bob's family and let them know how thankful our church community is to have had Bob in our presence. I also let them know how often we give church newcomers Bob's book, *The Church with the Tower*. The book is a great source and archive of our church history and is a testimony of the love our past Church Historian, Bob Larsen, had for this church.

Church Council Updates:

- ✦ We approved the appointment of Hector Lopez, Lesley Sepetoski, and Paris Hancock to the Stewardship Captains team for 2017. Hector will lead the team this year. The Stewardship Captain team will coordinate all of the efforts of the fall 2017 pledge drive. The work of the captains will be from early October to mid-November.
- ✦ We approved the partnership between our church and the organization *Street Roots*. First

Congregational Church is now one of the many churches that are a part of the *Street Roots* Community of Faith Partnership. Our church will be working with a *Street Roots* vendor each Sunday. When you see the vendor at our church, introduce yourself and get to know them. They are, like you, a part of our community.

- ✦ We took in another wonderful visioning session during our August 2017 Council Meeting. Our main questions during this session were, how do we at First Congregational Church retain our church volunteers, and how do we continually acknowledge the work that our church volunteers perform? We gave answers such as having a quarterly volunteer recognition hospitality hour celebration, having a volunteer spotlight e-mail blast, and having a volunteer recognition points system which will allow for redemption of free, church-themed apparel and items.
- ✦ We approved the appointment of Alice Forsythe, Patty Bonney, Amanda Guthrie, Alison Killeen, and Bruce Bishop as First Congregational delegates to the Central Pacific Conference.
- ✦ We are getting closer to the final approval of our church's *Open and Safe Emergency Response Plan*. We plan to approve the response plan by mid-October, 2017.
- ✦ We unanimously voted to recommend Grant Helbley for ordination, pending call to the Central Pacific Conference Committee on Ministry. Grant is currently our Community Core Ministry Facilitator and one of our church's *members in discernment*. With the recommendation, Grant will now be one step closer to being able to officially receive a call to ministry from congregations under the United Church of Christ umbrella. Congratulations Grant!
- ✦ We finalized Church Council's visioning retreat. Instead of our normal October 2017 council

meeting, council will have a 2-hour vision retreat in October. The topic of the visioning will be on how our church community builds community internally. The topic of the retreat is a rich one and we are looking forward to diving into the aspects of this topic with our ministers and Core Ministry Facilitator team.

- We approved revisions to our church's *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual* and to our *Sunday Offering Counting Policy and Procedure*.
- We started our work on creating what our church's evaluation method will be for our Senior Minister and for our church ministry. As we develop these methods, we hope the results will give us a full view of how our congregation and ministry are doing.

In closing, I wish all good things to you and your loved ones as we move into fall.

Peace,

Peace Young
Moderator
moderator@uccportland.org

P.S.: Please join me for either 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 Sunday after publicized church council meeting.

Moderator Table: Staying at a table during hospitality hour (in Fellowship Hall) in order to listen to your ideas, concerns, or even just to catch up with you. Takes place after service on Moderator Moment Sundays. P

Summer Service Trip at Chiloquin, Oregon

Three members of our church—college student Christina Hellums and eighth-graders Vanessa Hellums and Eli Gavilanes—participated in this year's summer service trip from August 6-13. Christina, a sophomore at the University of Puget Sound, attended as a counselor for the first time. Here are some thoughts from our youth:

"So, how long till the next trip, was pretty much my first thought on the drive home. Sierra Service Project is by far the best way to spend a mission trip! Not only do you help and get to know people, but you have a spectacular time doing it. This year my group helped finish an awning for our homeowner, Shannon, who was the best. She made us very delicious snacks—scrumptious cheese biscuits, salivating raspberry muffins, and spectacular garlic sourdough bread! Not only was she an amazing cook and wonderful person, she also had many sweet animals that we would spend quite a bit of time petting (though the neighbor's dog Rambo/Marshmallow peed on Eli). :}

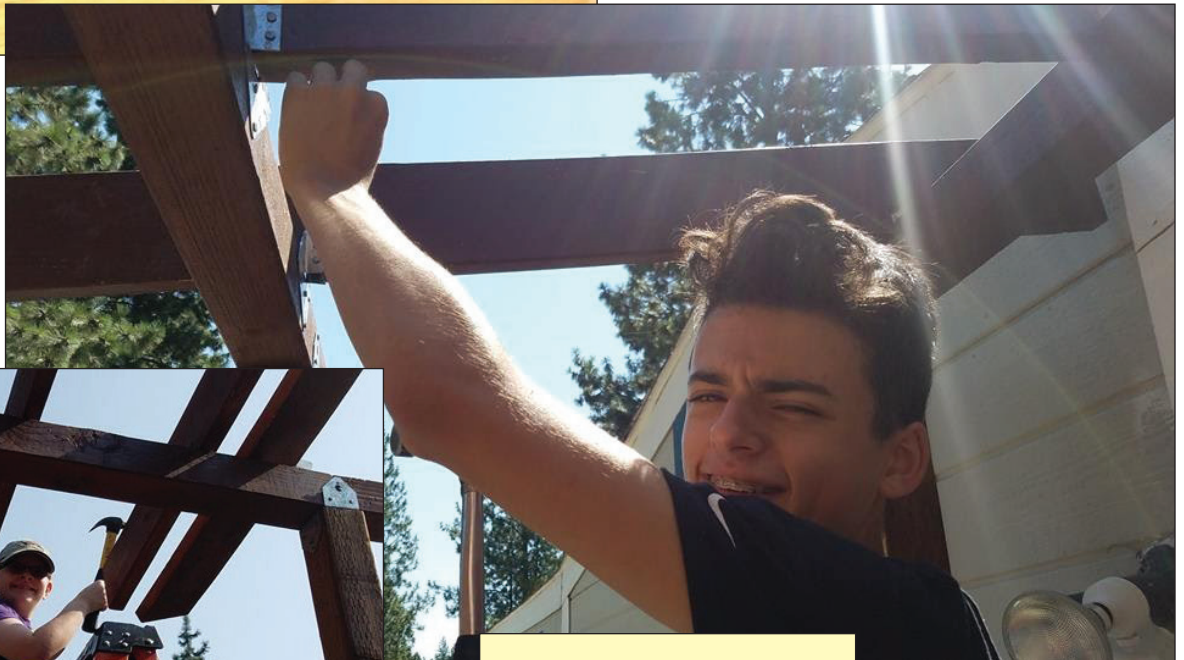
Besides the awesomeness of our homeowner, working was tough but very fun, and so was spending time with the other church groups such as Edmonds and Salem. Though there were a few problems, the Sierra Service staff cleaned them up quickly and made each day amazing. This year was awesome and I can't wait until next year!! Thank you to First Congregational Church for giving me this great opportunity to spend a week with Sierra Service Project."

—Vanessa Hellums

"It was a really fun experience and I hope I can do something like that again. If I could have stayed all summer, I would have...I made great friends!"

—Eli Gavilanes

Our summer service trip is made possible by generous contributions from our church family. Thank you for supporting our youth! P



*Clockwise, from top left:
Group activities, Christina
Hellums, Eli Gavilanes, and
Vanessa Hellums*

Welcome Reverend Amanda Guthrie!

Our Church Council was pleased to review and approve a covenant between First Congregational and Rev. Amanda Guthrie this year. This covenant is an agreement between Rev. Guthrie, our church, the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ, and Providence Portland Medical Center, where Rev. Guthrie works as a Clinical Chaplain.

You might recognize Rev. Amanda from the times she has led worship and worked with our children. She is an active member of our Family Ministries team and regularly participates in our church life. While her primary work location is Providence Portland, as part of her four-way covenant with our church, Rev. Guthrie will preach once a year and share updates about her work as a chaplain in our newsletter.

Rev. Amanda writes:

"I grew up in West Chester, PA and attended a house church of about 12 people who sang, prayed, and ate together every week. I studied math and public policy in college, thinking that I would become a teacher who knew a little something about education policy. But, my sophomore year, I felt strongly that God was calling me to talk to people about God. I listened to that, and I went on to pursue a Master of Divinity & Master of Public Policy at the University of Chicago. Gradually, my call became clearer. After grad school, I worked at a church that had a relationship with a small community hospital on the south side of Chicago. I did some training at that hospital and went on to volunteer there.

When my partner was called to serve a Disciples of Christ church in Portland, I took the opportunity to apply to chaplaincy residency programs in

the city. I was fortunate to do my training and then be asked to stay on as a Clinical Chaplain at Providence Portland Medical Center.

At Providence, I work primarily with adults with mental illness. I love so much about my work, including that the patients I meet are asking what I call "the big questions" about life's meaning and God's role in their lives and in the world. I love most working with patients in group settings, because it's in those conversations that everyone has a chance to learn from one another and to have their own wisdom affirmed. I currently lead four group conversations about spirituality each week, and I have just begun to host a kind of inter-faith worship service called "Connecting with the Sacred" once a week.

My work is incredibly rewarding but also quite challenging. I am grateful to be a member of First Congregational, where I feel so supported and cared for by the pastors and by the community. I feel that there are so many opportunities to be fed and filled by the Spirit at First, which is exactly what I need so that I can continue to share that Spirit with all those I encounter. I look forward to growing in faith and in community with all of you. I love most talking about "the big stuff," which is why I so enjoy working with children and youth whose questions and observations are so profound. I hope that you and I can engage in this kind of conversation, too!"

Please extend a warm welcome and offer your encouragement, gratitude and support to Rev. Guthrie as she continues her ministry of care and compassion. Welcome Rev. Amanda Guthrie! **P**

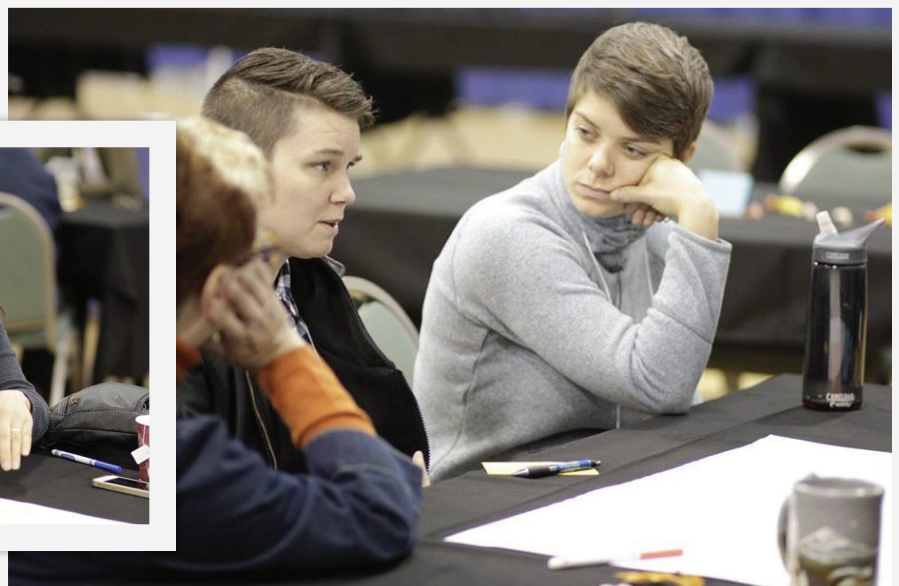
Central Pacific Conference Annual Meeting 2017

Our church was fortunate to have 5 delegates to our wider church's annual meeting in Pendleton, Oregon on the weekend of September 24-26, 2017. Representing our church were: Alice Forsythe, Rev. Alison Killeen, Rev. Amanda Guthrie, Bruce Bishop, and Patty Bonney. Member-in-Discernment Grant Helbley also attended. The theme of this year's meeting was "To the Well, To the Edge." The annual meeting format was participatory and invited a high level of dialogue among participants.

Our delegates met our new designated term conference minister (Rev. Molly Carlson),

participated in lively small group discussions, voted on the annual budget and slate of officers, and spent time enjoying fellowship with members from UCC churches across Oregon, Southwest Washington and Idaho. Rev. Alison was an integral part of the annual meeting planning team. Bruce Bishop garnered support for a new project for our friends in Southern Arizona, the Green Valley-Sahaurita Samaritans. The "LifeStraws" fund will enable them to provide long-lasting portable water filters to migrants making dangerous desert crossings over the border. Thank you to all our delegates for representing us in the wider church! **P**

Below, clockwise, left to right: Rev. Allison Killeen; Rev. Amanda Guthrie; Grant Helbley (center); Alice Forsythe (right) speaks with Hilary Himan.





Summer of Compassion and Family Camp!

Our theme for this summer's church school was "Compassion." We heard stories of compassion from both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures about people who made peace, showed kindness, shared generously, and helped others. Batya Podos led our children in making banners with these themes for our sanctuary, which we unveiled on our homecoming Sunday on September 10.

We continued this theme at our awesome Family Camp the last weekend in August. We enjoyed swimming in the very cold, very clear Mill Creek, playing games, making arts and crafts, sharing a tasty potluck, and, of course, gathering for songs and S'mores around the campfire. A big thank you to our Family Ministries team for making this possible: Chris Clark, Anne Sullivan, Daniel Hunter, and Rev. Amanda Guthrie. We love our First Congregational families! **P**



Care Packages for College Students

Do you remember your first year away from home? Let's send our college students some love! From now through October 22, bring in your donations to the box on our welcome table. (Rev. Elizabeth and Anne Sullivan will box the items and send them on to our students). If you can't bring a donation, stop by the table and write a note of encouragement and support.

Needed: laundry detergent, dryer sheets, tissues, ear buds, air freshener, microwave oatmeal/ramen/popcorn, cookies, lip balm, lotion, nuts, crackers, mints, toothbrush, toothpaste, scarf/mittens, socks (size 11-13, black), gum, mouthwash, games, gluten-free snacks, power/energy bars, healthy snacks, non-healthy snacks (chocolate, candies—including gluten-free types), and quarters for washing machines. Thank you for caring for our college students! **P**

Community Warehouse: Furniture/Household Goods Drive

Wondering about those bins in the Fellowship Hall? They are there to remind you to donate furniture and household goods you no longer use. Community Warehouse is a local nonprofit that collects and redistributes donated household goods and furniture to people in need.

This nonprofit is a unique organization that gives furniture and household goods to people who have been victims of domestic violence, homelessness, or who are struggling to make ends meet for one reason or another.

Find giving and tax receipt information on the bulletin board in the Fellowship hallway. Please bring in your donations before November 12. **P**

Upcoming Events

OCTOBER 28

Eve's Circle: Jewish Museum Tour

724 NW Davis St, PDX, 12:30pm (Meet at 12:15pm)

Meet at the museum at 12:15pm for a docent-led tour. The tour will begin at 12:30pm. Those who wish will go for a bite to eat afterwards. Hosted by Nanci Tangeman.

OCTOBER 29

Halloween Party!

(Immediately after worship), Classroom

Wear your costume to church and join us in the downstairs classroom immediately after worship for games and treats. The Youth Group will be transforming the Kiva into a Haunted House, so be prepared for some spooky fun!

OCTOBER 29

Oliver Lecture

Khalil Bendib: The Pen is Funnier Than the Sword

Sanctuary, 3:00pm

Khalil Bendib's political cartoons are on exhibition in the ArtReach Gallery through November 26. In his Oliver Lecture the artist will discuss his work related to themes of Islamophobia and Racial Justice in America. He will accompany his remarks with a visual presentation of his recent cartoons and there will be a question and answer period after his remarks. A reception will follow in the ArtReach Gallery. This lecture is co-sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Oregon, the Muslim Educational Trust, and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. It is part of the First Congregational Church Oliver Lecture Series and is free and open to the public.

NOVEMBER 5

We Are Generous! Stewardship Celebration

Fellowship Hall

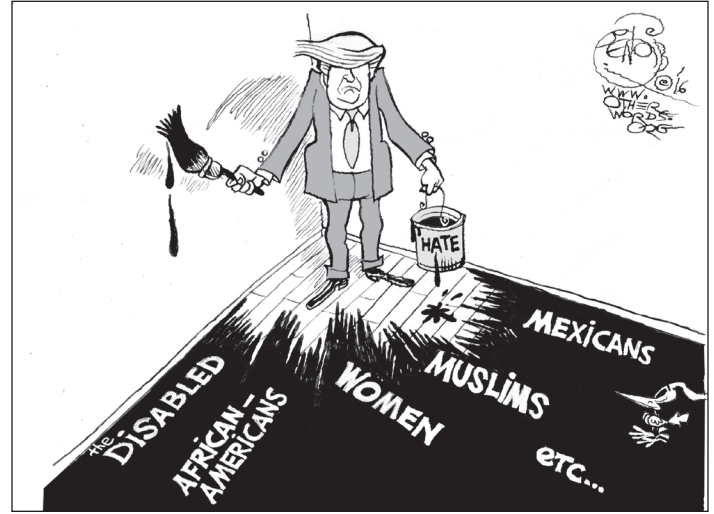
Join us for a special sermon by Rev. Hector Lopez and a delicious catered lunch immediately after worship in the fellowship hall.

NOVEMBER 25

Eve's Circle: Undies the Tree

Fellowship Hall, 10:00am to Noon

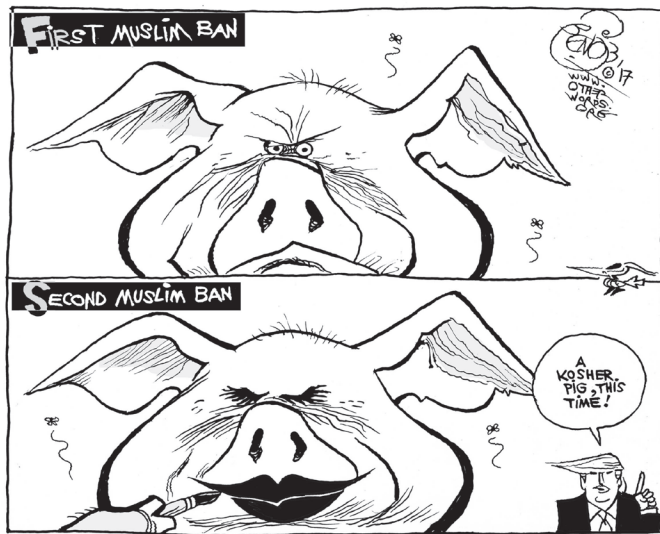
Bring in your donations of new children and youth underwear and decorate the tree in the fellowship hall. Mary Maxwell will discuss and display some of her newest art quilts, which often speak to the social issues of our time.



OLIVER LECTURE

KHALIL BENDIB: THE PEN IS FUNNIER THAN THE SWORD

Sunday, October 29, 2017 | 3:00pm | Sanctuary



In his Oliver Lecture the artist will discuss his work related to themes of Islamophobia and Racial Justice in America. He will accompany his remarks with a visual presentation of his recent cartoons and there will be a question and answer period after his remarks. A reception will follow in the ArtReach Gallery. This lecture is co-sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Oregon, the Muslim Educational Trust, and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. It is part of the First Congregational Church Oliver Lecture Series and is free and open to the public.

The exhibition of Bendib's work will continue in the ArtReach Gallery through November 26.

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**

Communications Coordinator, communications@uccportland.org

Church: 1126 SW Park Ave. Office: 1137 SW Broadway Portland, OR 97205

P: (503) 228-7219 F: 503-228-6522 W: uccportland.org