



**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 to 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*

This year's "kick-off" weekend (9/10-9/11) brought us a beautiful snapshot of our community in the fall of 2016, and at the center of it all was a simple symbol... the "peace pole." You've all seen these before, and in many ways ours is no different. With a little help from resident carpenters Joe Becker and Doug Mella, our peace pole was made for this year's Family Camp, and our kids and our parents all helped to decorate it. But following this last year, where we have all been witnesses to so much violent speech and behavior around the world and here in the United States, our simple peace pole took on new meaning for me.

Peace is one of those words that gets thrown around a lot, maybe so much that it tends to lose its meaning. To my mind, peace is more than just the absence of strife, disagreements, or war. Peace is a positive force in the world that must be grown in the body – one person at a time – before it can flourish in our wider communities. Jesus said this was the chief gift he would leave each of his disciples through the power of the Holy Spirit. But 2,000 years later, do we actually have that peace? If our sense of peace depends on people agreeing with us, or with getting our own way, I'd say no. This is peace "as the world gives," and not the true calm abiding, "that passes all understanding." But I believe a deeper spirit of peace is continuing to bubble up more clearly, and here are a few examples of it that I saw over the "9/11" weekend.

## **THE ORDINATION OF REV. ELIZABETH DURANT**

If you weren't able to make it to this celebration, you missed out on a beautiful gathering of our Central Pacific Conference. Churches from all around the area - many of which Elizabeth had worked closely with - gathered to witness this outpouring of the Spirit, and the room seemed to hum with potential and possibility. Not only did we officially recognize the work of one of the greatest peacemakers I've had the pleasure to meet in a long time (I hope you're all as grateful as I am that she chose to continue her work here at a First), but there were special reflections on what it means to be the Christian church here in the Pacific NW. These reflections centered on an acknowledgment of (and a pledge of responsibility taking for) the indigenous people we displaced here in Oregon. This was a moment of genuine and prophetic truth telling - in the great tradition of our United Church of Christ - and it made me especially proud to be part of such a denomination that would acknowledge its own shadow even in the midst of such a moment. Kudos to Rev. Elizabeth, and welcome to First!

*Continued on next page*

## **OUR SUNDAY SERVICE, AND THE BLESSING OF THE PEACE POLE**

The next morning we shared some stories from Family Camp, and described how our children helped design and bless this symbol of our mission in the world. It was especially meaningful to me to remember that serving and guiding our youth is central (not peripheral) to this pledge of intention - not just because our children are our investments for the future - but because they offer us a glimpse of that deeper peace in the here and now. As Jesus taught us, we must become “like little children,” and as we all gathered around them in a ritual blessing that Sunday, I believe everyone present felt the power of the Spirit through their presence and example.



## **OUR 9/11 FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY INTERFAITH GATHERING**

Later that same Sunday, faith leaders and their communities from around the city gathered in our sanctuary to look back on 9/11, to recognize the division and discord that has grown up around this traumatic event, and to recommit ourselves to the hard work of peacemaking. In conjunction with the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and the Muslim Educational Trust, this evening of worship and reflection drew a far greater diversity than I had ever hoped for. Both the service itself and the communal meal in our Fellowship Hall afterwards was not only inspiring, it gave us all a chance to actually practice the most essential element of peacemaking: making friends. It was an evening I won't soon forget, but if you weren't there for it, or if you didn't see the coverage in the Portland Tribune on 9/13, make sure to save the date on October 30th. More details will follow, but this is the date of our next follow up event, and it will build on the city-wide relationships we have started in the name of peace. Special thanks to all the volunteers who made this evening of hospitality ministry a success, and especially to Rev. Hector Lopez (our former UCC conference minister) who helped me with the planning and the outreach.

All these examples of God's peace are just outward signs - traces of the true peace in our midst. But the real thing cannot be experienced second hand or at a distance - the real thing is something that must grow up inside you. This, of course, is the real work (and the real reward) of Christ's Church. It isn't about being right or wrong on this or that debate, it is the larger experience of God's Presence which we must all choose to ignore or embody. But make no mistake: God is real. God's peace is real. And as we start a new church year together, this is both our calling and our inheritance as Jesus' disciples.

With great gratitude for all we get to experience together,

*Rev. Michael Ellick*

## RAISING RACE CONSCIOUS CHILDREN

A group of 5 parents gathered on Tuesday evening, August 30th, for a workshop-webinar about talking about race with kids. The webinar was hosted by RaceConscious (<http://raceconscious.org/>), an organization of concerned parents and educators. We learned that research shows that infants as young as six months old can categorize by race, and that talking explicitly about race with children creates more positive attitudes about people of different races. By using explicit language about race (seeking to be race-conscious rather than color-blind), we can help our children to challenge and change racism.

We practiced naming race in the workshop and talked about concerns and challenges that we face as parents. One of our hopes is that our church can be a place where we practice being race conscious, even though we don't have all the answers and might make mistakes. Pastor Elizabeth will be looking at the books and stories that we use in our children's curriculum, and create future opportunities for parents to meet and encourage one another.

## SWIMMING, SMORES AND MORE AT S'MORE FAMILY CAMP 2016

Over two dozen of us gathered at Camp Adams for a fun time on the last weekend in August. The youngest campers went on a nature scavenger hunt (across the floating bridge outside Waverly cabin...a huge hit!), while all of our children and youth enjoyed swimming in our beloved Camp Adams swimming hole.

Continuing our summer theme of peace and love, we decorated the peace pole hand-crafted by Doug Mella and Joe Becker and painted by Pastor Michael, Batya Podos and Portland First parents. Pastor Elizabeth shared the story of the "Breathing Room" by Thich Nhat Hanh (a way for creating a space for peace in our houses), while Batya led us in an Interplay session about how we make peace in our families.



After our evening program on Saturday, we gathered around the campfire to toast marshmallows, make S'Mores, and sing both hymns and silly camp songs. The magic of Camp Adams definitely came alive in the dark night around the fire's glow, and we know that our children made memories that they'll treasure forever.

On Sunday we gathered with many church members who came out to camp just for the morning, in the outdoor pavilion for a camp worship service. Several of our children led a peace blessing using our hands and arms, while a few of our youth acted out a skit about a wisdom teaching about peace. Then we all blessed the peace pole we had created, glad to carry back home, where it will find a permanent place in our church building. We concluded our time at camp with a big lunch provided by Camp Adams.

Many thanks to all of the families who joined us for Family Camp this year, and gratitude to our staff who worked hard to make this a memorable event for our children.





## SIERRA SERVICE PROJECT

As we do each year, our youth participated in a summer service project. This year, Christina, Vanessa, Zak, Celeste & Keelin joined other regional youth at the Sierra Service Project on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Keep reading to hear more from Keelin about her experience on this youth trip:

*I probably had the best time I have ever had at a camp at SSP. At first I was really mad at my mom for signing me up, but the morning I met everybody and got in the van, I felt like I was going to be OK and have fun. Once we got there I made a lot of friends. We got into the work groups that we were going to build with. I liked my team a lot. My work group was working on Mr. Abernson's stairs. My favorite part was probably destroying the old stairs and my least favorite part was taking out all of the nails in the wood (there were a lot). Everybody in one group had a job. My job was getting the ingredients from the lunch room and making the lunch. It was really easy, though, because every day we had PB&J. We met Mr. Abernson twice. He seemed really happy that we were there and building his stairs. In conclusion, I had a lot of fun at SSP.*

- Keelin

## THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL OLIVER LECTURE!



On Sunday, September 25th, we were thrilled to host yet another wonderful addition to our Oliver Lecture series filled with lively discussions, good food and, of course, our special guest Colin Woodard author of *American Character: A History of the Epic Struggle Between Individual Liberty and the Common Good*!

A very special thank you to Colin for making the trip to Portland and taking time to speak with attendees and sign copies of his book, as well as for presenting an informative and thought-provoking lecture.

We also cannot forget our dozens of volunteers who put together this event. Thank you for your enthusiasm, skills, and determination to bring this successful event to life!

## YOUTH SERVE AT HARD TIMES SUPPER

Our middle and high school youth recently served at Hard Times Supper, a ministry to people experiencing homelessness. Hard Times Supper, a ministry of Metanoia/Peace House, is directed by Pat Schweibert and hosted at the former Sunnyside-Centenary United Methodist Church building at SE 35th and Yamhill. Volunteers prepare and serve a free, family-style meal every Wednesday evening. They have been offering this meal for 35 years!

Our youth jumped right in and enjoyed serving and meeting people. We saw first hand how a hot shower, hair cut and a meal with friends makes the difference between despair and hope for people surviving on the street. Your spare change donations for the fourth quarter of 2016 will be used to support this important ministry.



## October 2016 Moderator's Moment

DEAR FRIENDS,

Here are a few things that have been going on around the church recently:

**UPDATE ON CHURCH SAFETY:** To improve church safety, the Council approved the purchase of radios for use by custodians and ushers. These radios will allow a quicker and better response to a variety of safety issues within the church. The staff is also finding the radios very helpful for day-to-day communication in our large, multi-level building.

This summer the Safety Team put on a safety training focused on people-related problems for our ushers, greeters, and Council members. More recently, Cara Rothe and I attended a very informative Active Shooter Training put on by the Portland Police. We plan to incorporate this information into future trainings for ushers and Council members soon. Later, as we further develop our safety plan, training will be offered to the wider congregation.

The next phase of the Safety Team's work will focus on medical problems in church. The Team has already received helpful information and ideas from several members. If you would like to contribute to this effort or just have questions, please contact Cara ([cara@uccportland.org](mailto:cara@uccportland.org)) or me.

**DELEGATES TO THE CENTRAL PACIFIC CONFERENCE MEETING:** Many thanks to Grant Helbley, Alice Forsythe, Michael Overman, Bob Olsen, and Alison Killeen for representing First Congregational at the Central Pacific Conference Annual Meeting in Pendleton in September.

**BUDGET DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:** The 2017 Budget Development Committee is hard at work. The Council has asked the Committee to begin developing a strategy to incorporate our Reserve Fund into a multiyear budget plan to 1) grow the church's ministry and 2) help pay for large building maintenance projects. This plan will include setting a Prudent Reserve amount for the Reserve Fund, i.e. the minimum amount we should keep in reserve for unexpected needs and opportunities.


If you have comments about the 2017 budget, please contact Treasurer, Bill Sweeney.

**CHURCH COUNCIL POLICIES:** The Policy Development Team [Karen Hurst, Margaret Baldwin, Peace Young, and me] have been developing church policies to work with our new bylaws. Our first product, [Church Council Policies](#), was approved by the Council at our September meeting. They are available in the church office or at [uccportland.org](http://uccportland.org).

**CHURCH ARCHIVES:** Did you know that First Congregational has Archives dating back to the church's founding in 1851? These documents are currently stored in filing cabinets in the church office, an environment that does not protect them from deterioration. The Council will be making a decision at our October 18 meeting about donating the Archives to an organization that can protect them in a climate controlled environment, catalogue and digitize them, and make them available to historians and others in the wider community.

As always, if you have any questions or comments about the activities of the Church Council, please let me know.

Peace,



Al Horn,

**MODERATOR**

[ach.3@comcast.net](mailto:ach.3@comcast.net)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **THE CINEMATIC ELECTORAL COLLEGE: FOUR VISIONS OF AMERICAN POLITICS**

Wednesday, October 19th , 26th, and November 2nd - 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

*Fellowship Hall*

A personal selection of American films that depict the good, bad, and very ugly realities and sometimes jarring paranoia that characterize recent elections, these depictions of the men and women who drive political agendas and manipulate public opinion are sometimes almost prophetic visions of today's reality. Each presentation starts at 7:00 PM and ends by 10:00, with time for discussion. Dean Sigler will introduce the films and help moderate discussions afterward. We will serve popcorn! Bring your beverage of choice. Showings will take place each Wednesday until November 2nd. Our features will include:

**October 19th** - *The Best Man* (1964)

**October 26th** - *Network* (1976)

**November 2nd** - *A Face in the Crowd* (1957)

### **ATTENTION MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH!**

Saturday, October 22nd

*Eloheh Farm*

Join us for a day trip to Eloheh Farm on Saturday, October 22nd. Please RSVP so that we can coordinate transportation. Contact Pastor Elizabeth ([edurant@uccportland.org](mailto:edurant@uccportland.org)) or Pastor Michael ([ellick@uccportland.org](mailto:ellick@uccportland.org)) for more details.

### **EVE'S CIRCLE OCTOBER MEETING: A MOUNTAIN OF ART**

Saturday, October 22nd - 10:00 AM to Noon

*Fellowship Hall*

Our October Eve's Circle meeting will be a mountain of fun -- and art. Find out what an artist-in-residence does from Emmy McGowan. Hear about her adventures at Mt. Rainer this summer and make your own art project at this hands-on get-together! If you think a group of interesting women of all ages is your kind of crowd -- come along and join us! Members and friends of the church, alike, you are welcome. No need to RSVP.

### **INTERFAITH COMMUNITY BUILDING**

Sunday, October 30th

10330 SW Scholls Ferry Road, Tigard, OR

Following up on our interfaith gathering on the 15th Anniversary of 9/11, the wider interfaith community of the greater Portland area will be gathering again on Sunday evening October 30th. Please mark your calendars, and plan on joining us at the Muslim Educational Trust (MET) Community Center in Tigard. This won't be an evening to miss - good food, good conversation, and a chance to celebrate the beautiful diversity of our city. See you there!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **HALLOWEEN PIPE ORGAN "SPOOKTACULAR"**

Monday, October 31 - 7:00 PM

*Main Sanctuary*

Our ongoing music and poetry series, Locus Iste, continues this Halloween with a "spooktacular" organ concert by Grant Edwards. The hour-long program includes the famous Gothic Suite by Leon Boellmann and of course Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor. The eerie selections will be paired with equally haunting poetry. Costumes encouraged!

### **EVE'S CIRCLE NOVEMBER MEETING**

Saturday, November 26th - 10:00 AM to 1 PM

*Fellowship Hall*

In November, Eve's Circle will gather on Saturday, the 26th, from 10 AM to 1 PM in the Fellowship Hall. We will put up the Eve's Circle Christmas tree and decorate it to kick off our annual clothing drive. Rev. Elizabeth will lead us in a short time of meditation and sharing to help us enter the holidays with a sense of calm and ease. We'll share a potluck lunch; please bring a dish to share.

### **ARTREACH!**

All Church members and friends are invited to participate in the first ArtReach exhibition of the new year: "I FIND MYSELF THINKING WHILE LOOKING AT. . . " January 8-22, 2017. Choose, from your home, something "that makes you think..." and loan it to the exhibit for three consecutive Sundays in January. You don't need to be the one who made the work. Your contribution can be a photograph, work of art, cloth, or crafted object. Please submit the work along with the application information. Questions about the exhibit? Contact Sheldon Hurst at [drsheldonhurst@gmail.com](mailto:drsheldonhurst@gmail.com).

### **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](mailto:jrodriguez@uccportland.org)*

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## DAILY EVENTS

### SUNDAYS

Bible Study - 9:00 AM  
Worship Service - 10:30 AM  
Fellowship Hours - 11: 45 AM  
Potluck in the Park - 1:00 PM

### MONDAYS

S.A. Meetings - 12:00 PM  
Senior Yoga - 1:15 PM  
Way of the Rose - 6:00 PM

### TUESDAYS

Spiritual Path Group - 12:00 PM  
S.A. Meetings - 1:00 PM

### WEDNESDAYS

A.A. Meetings - 7:00 AM  
S.A. Meetings - 1:00 PM  
Healing Through Yoga - 5:00 PM (2nd / 4th Wednesdays)

### THURSDAYS

S.A. Meetings - 12:00 PM

### FRIDAYS

Weight Watchers - 12:00 PM  
Senior Yoga - 1:15 PM

## NOTABLE DATES

### October 19th

Film Screening: *The Best Man* (1964)  
7:00 PM - Fellowship Hall

### October 22nd

Trip to *Eloheh Farm* (Middle/HS Youth)

### October 22nd

Eve's Circle - October Meeting: A Mountain of Art

### October 26th

Film Screening: *Network* (1976)  
7:00 PM - Fellowship Hall

### October 30th

Interfaith Community Building  
Muslim Educational Trust, Tigard, OR

### October 31st

Halloween Pipe Organ Spooktacular  
7:00 PM - Main Sanctuary

### November 2nd

Film Screening: *A Face in the Crowd* (1957)  
7:00 PM - Fellowship Hall

### November 3rd

ArtReach Gallery Reception  
*Emerging Printmakers Show of Print Arts Northwest*  
5:00 PM - Fellowship Hall

### November 24th

Thanksgiving Day - Church Office Closed

### November 26th

Eve's Circle - November Meeting  
10:00 AM - Fellowship Hall