



FOREST GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Messenger

December 2008

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Rediscover Christmas:

Advent & Christmas at FGUMC

- November 30th First Sunday of Advent
10:00 a.m. Worship
 Before Rudolph Guided the Sleigh
11:15 a.m. Advent Festival: Bring a potluck dish and make an Advent wreath for your home.
- December 7th Second Sunday of Advent
10:00 a.m. Worship & Communion
 The Gospel According to Elf
- December 13th Caroling with the Choir
2 - 4:00 p.m. cider at the church afterward
- December 14th Third Sunday of Advent
9:00 a.m. "A Night in Bethlehem I"
10:00 a.m. Worship
 Before the Grinch Stole Christmas
11:15 a.m. "A Night in Bethlehem II"
- December 21st Fourth Sunday of Advent
10:00 a.m. Worship
 Before Frosty Danced Around
- December 24th Christmas Eve
6:30 p.m. *A Light in the Darkness*



Advent Movie Nights and Popcorn

In preparation for the sermon each Sunday in Advent, you are invited the Friday night beforehand, to watch the movie that will be referred to in the sermon. The movies are at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. The youth group will be selling popcorn as a fundraiser for the youth group.

- Friday, November 28th *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer*
Friday, December 5th *Elf*
Friday, December 12th *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*
Friday, December 19th *Frosty the Snowman*

THE PASTOR'S PAGE

The Rev. Frederick Buechner, Presbyterian pastor and author, writes the following about the feeling of Advent. It is one of the most apt descriptions I have ever read or heard of what this season is all about.

The house lights go off and the footlights come on. Even the chattiest stop chattering as they wait in darkness for the curtain to rise. In the orchestra pit, the violin bows are poised. The conductor has raised the baton. In the silence of a midwinter dusk there is far off in the deeps of it somewhere a sound so faint that for all you can tell it may be only the sound of the silence itself. You hold your breath to listen. You walk up the steps to the front door. The empty windows at either side of it tell you nothing, or almost nothing. For a second you catch a whiff in the air of some fragrance that reminds you of a place you've never been and a time you have no words for. You are aware of the beating of your heart. The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment.

These next four weeks mark in the church year the season of Advent, a time of waiting, a time of expectantly watching out for something unexpected, a time of hope. We have all lived through or lived with people who have lived through such times:

- the time between conception and the water breaking
- the time between the starting of labor and delivery
- the time between election day and inauguration day
- the time between lab tests and diagnosis
- the time between diagnosis and treatment
- the time between the approval of the loan and the signing of the papers
- the time between taking the exam and receiving your score
- the time between the arrival of the bride and the words "Dearly beloved..."
- the time between December 26th and December 25th, for some children
- the time between standing up and taking off your cap, and the first note of the National Anthem
- the time between your Good Friday and Easter morning
- the time just before dawn
- the time between the closing bell and the opening bell
- the time between exile and return
- the time between smelling the homemade meal and the first bite
- the time between the first brush and the first kiss

There is, in some of these and other examples each of you can think of, a moment when you approach the precipice, a point-of-no-return, an expectation so great of something so wonderful, that your heart just about beats right out of your chest. In these times, the baton is raised, along with our expectations, and we can barely tolerate the waiting.

One can only let those moments go on for so long. There is such anxiety, such anticipation, and while we are fine living that way for a time, and there are amazing gifts to be found in such times, there does come the moment of truth where you have to step out, wave the baton, start singing, welcome the dawn, or cry at the tragedy or beauty of what is taking place. You have to move on, because once the baby is born, or the body is resurrected, it changes everything. You live in a new world now, and there is work to do, tasks to accomplish, new life to live.

I believe we're all waiting for something. These next four weeks is your chance to discover or rediscover that as you come to worship, ponder the wonder of such Advent moments, and await that new life which will be yours shortly.

May such Advent moments of amazing expectation and hope be abundant in your life in these days.

In Great Expectation,

Pastor Dan



FROM THE ALTAR TO THE WORLD

Our education committee recently took a good look at how it's doing in the area of ministry to and with children. This is a "state of the union" type message.

We looked at 9 components that make up a strong children's ministry and felt pretty good about all of them. Here's what we learned.

Children need a sense of belonging in the church. FGUMC children are clearly welcomed in worship and engaged through the children's time with Pastor Dan, the children's choir and chime choir. Bringing the youngest of our children in for the children's time has been wonderful. Our children all have name tags that are just like the adults. We'd like to see more use of the older elementary children as liturgists.

Having faith examples is important to children's faith development. We're small enough yet that children do truly know many adults and teenagers at a personal level. We're hoping to put a more intentional plan in place to nurture those relationships.

Knowing that God has created each of us with special gifts to share and enjoy is important. We like seeing our children blossom and sharing their abilities and gifts with the whole congregation. We're thinking of sponsoring a children's art show at the end of the school year. Parents might start thinking about pieces that are brought home they would like to see on display.

Children are part of our hospitality team. Children bring and introduce friends. Bibles are given to every child first grade and older that comes into our church family. We'll continue to strengthen the two-way street called hospitality.

Serving others begins young and enriches the lives of both the recipient and the server. We like seeing children helping to serve dinner, hosting and staying overnight for Family Bridge. Children participate with their families in providing Christmas baskets. Children have led the way with our loose change offering for hunger and for UNICEF. They have also had small parts in care of the garden. We're hoping to have the children bring the contents of the food box forward to the altar on communion Sundays.

We believe our children are full of thanksgiving, but we're not so sure we're doing a good job of teaching how to express thankfulness. We'll be working on that in the introductory moments of each class time with simple prayers and songs.

Our Safe Sanctuary policy is a big part of trusting. Children and their parents know that FGUMC is a safe place. There is a good community feeling and we look out for one another of all ages. Children are also trusted with important tasks such as serving as acolytes and playing the bells and chimes. We will keep on doing what we are doing well.

Last is understanding. This is where our curriculum comes in. Live B.I.G (Belief in God) is a curriculum that is strong in telling the Biblical stories of faith and helping children (and teachers) relate Biblical learning with actual day to day living. We like the way Pastor Dan usually connects the children with the sermon theme of the day in his time with the children. We will continue to be sure that learning the content of faith and relating it to lives is first in our use of classroom time.

Your servant in Christ,
Deacon Rhoda Pittman Markus

CHRISTMAS BASKETS

Donations have begun coming in for the Christmas Baskets. Bob Francis reports that we have already received 36 cans of cranberry sauce, 36 cans of yams, and 40 boxes of stovetop stuffing! We still need donations of other items listed below:

- 1) **FOOD:** Donate non perishable food items such as potatoes, flour, sugar, rice, masa harina, canned vegetables, canned fruits, etc.
- 2) **GIFTS:** Donate new pajamas of varying sizes, or other new or slightly used items such as socks, gloves, warm hats, shirts, sweaters etc. Also, new toys, games, and gift cards to Safeway, Target, Fred Meyer or other stores are great gifts. Bring donated items to the Church and place them in front of the Altar or directly into the Christmas Basket container.
- 3) **MONEY:** Donate money. You can write a check to the church and designate it for Christmas Baskets. The sooner checks come in the sooner we will know how much money we have to spend.
- 4) **ADOPT A FAMILY:** On November 30th, paper ornaments with information about families that are available for you to adopt will be posted. You may pick the size family you are able to help and then register the family on the sign-in sheet. Please record which family you have chosen and if you will supply all the items in your basket or if you want to use some items from the church i.e. turkey, ham, chicken, side dishes etc. If you do a basket all on your own, plan with the family what they want and when to deliver your basket. The last date to adopt a family will be December 14th.

5) **COME TO THE PARTY!** Saturday, December 20th, at 9 am we will have food items available for Christmas Baskets. Help fill baskets, wrap presents and/or deliver baskets. We hope to begin delivering by 11 am, then clean up and be out the door by 1 pm.

Questions? Contact

Joan Bolen 503-359-0858 or
Anne Hall 503-357-3055 or
Ken and/or Elizabeth Larsen 360-421-0819
Chuck and/or Betty Pritchard 503-359-9340

COME TO A NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM AND SEE...

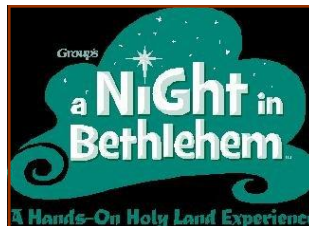
A Hands-on Holy Land Experience

**Sunday, December 14, 2008,
9 A.M. and 11:15 A.M.**

Caesar Augustus has issued a decree! All citizens must report to the Fellowship Hall at the time and location listed above for the census. While in Bethlehem, you will have the opportunity to visit various market stalls, participate in activities and learn about life in Bethlehem. You can visit with the Holy Family, see shepherds, and encounter the tax collector and a Roman soldier. You will see beggars and other citizens of Bethlehem. You might even hear the angels sing. Bring a gift for the baby Jesus. Food for the food box would be just right!

See you there. You won't want to miss it.

Rhoda Pittman Markus



SANTA'S ELF

An elf in Santa's kitchen is waiting to help out if you would like some holiday baking done, but no longer feel able to do it yourself. Is there a special baked treat you haven't tasted for a long time, or do you want to give a gift of cookies to your friends? We specialize in sweet breads, tea rings, cakes, pies, cookies, fudge and caramel corn.

This is Santa's gift to you by calling Liz Swenson in the church office, 503-357-2689, for this "taste of the holidays."

Submitted by *Elf Dept., S. Claus Ent., North Pole*

POINSETTIAS

Purchase a poinsettia and help decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas! Dedicate one or more in memory of a loved one or in honor of someone special. The price is \$7.50 each. Please see the Bulletin insert for more details.

A YOUTH MESSAGE

Walking through shopping centers, I am surprised to see Christmas decorations and advertisements for the perfect Christmas gift already. The youth have begun their preparation for Youth Sunday in December and are finding parallels between the movie Elf and the story of Jesus' birth. The season of anticipation is in full swing.

Bobby and I have been eagerly waiting to be homeowners. The process has taken much longer than expected and the wait has been almost unbearable. Emotionally it has been exhausting. I was talking with my dad about feeling overwhelmed with all the what-ifs and should-have-beens and he gave me some advice I want to share with you. He asked me what my life was lacking right at this moment. I thought about it and realized I am loved, I have a beautiful son and amazing husband, the Roses who graciously opened their home and hearts to us; I have enough to eat, clothes to wear, and a God who loves me - I am lacking nothing in the present. This seems simple but to a person who is constantly living in the what-ifs of tomorrow and the should-have-beens of yesterday, this was a profound revelation. I am missing the blessings of today. My dad also encouraged me to meditate on the scripture from Psalm 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God" and each time I say the phrase leave a word off until I get to just "Be", then work my way back up to the entire phrase. This will clear my thoughts and help me live in the moment.

In this time of expectation of the Christmas season, I challenge you not to overlook the joys and miracles of this moment right now. I urge you to be still and live for the present because Jesus is alive and doing miracles all around you.

In Christ's love,
Emily

THOUGHTS FROM A NEW MEMBER

I see you at the meetings,
But you never say hello.
You're busy all the time you're there
With those you really know.
I sit among the members,
Yet I'm a lonely gal.
The new ones feel as strange as I,
The old ones pass us by.
Darn it, you folks urged us to join
And talked of fellowship,
You could just cross the room, you know,
But you never make the trip.
Can't you just nod your head and smile
Or stop and shake a hand,
Then go sit among your friends?
Now that I'd understand.
I'll be at your next meeting,
And hope that you will spend
The time to introduce yourself,
I joined to be your friend.

(an anonymous source taken from the website of Debra Fine, author of "The Fine Art of Small Talk". Delva Johnson recently led a discussion on this book and will do so again early next year.)

Church Bus Fund

As we are increasingly aware of the necessity of replacing our church bus, the Trustees would like to bring you an update on our bus fund and a reminder of the value of the church bus to our congregation.

Each Sunday this church outreach brings anywhere from 5 to 13 church members to our worship service.

As one of these riders mentioned recently, this is a transportation service that allows them to be a part of our weekly congregation.

We are continuing to explore a future bus purchase through several providers. The new bus would include a lift in order to accommodate those members of our congregation who are wheelchair bound or unable to climb the steps leading into the bus. When the wheelchair section is either partially filled or not in use, seats fold down to accommodate two more seated passengers. This brings the complement of available passenger spaces to 15. Additionally, we hope to purchase a vehicle which is powered by environmentally friendly fuel. The cost of such a bus is in the range of \$50,000 at this time.



The bus fund is held through the Trustees in interest bearing accounts; currently the fund holds \$16,302.

We want to keep this project before the congregation with the hope that some of you will be moved to include this fund in your contribution list as the year draws to a close. For more information, you are invited to speak with Nancy Bond or Dan Wilson-Fey.

HOLIDAY BAKE SALE & MORE

The Wesleyans will hold a sale of baked goods and other items **Sunday December 21st**, immediately after the church service. Get your baked goodies and simple gifts for the holidays! Proceeds will go to the Wesleyan budget for kitchen supplies, etc.

Lois Oakberg

SMALL TALK

Pastor Dan has challenged all of us to remember to be welcoming to our visiting guests, and I had found that request just a touch daunting. Walking up to a perfect stranger and striking up a conversation just did not come naturally to me. Now, when I have a specific task or class to discuss, I have no trouble visiting with friends and I do not even mind companionable silence, but talking to strangers whom I know nothing about actually scared me.

Last month, I picked up an audio CD called "The Fine Art of Small Talk" by motivational speaker Debra Fine. I found it so helpful and interesting that I felt the need to share it with my church family. On Saturday November 15th, six of our church members attended a discussion group at my

house about Small Talk. We learned so much that I think all of us who attended feel more confident in taking up Dan's challenge.

If you feel uneasy at our fellowship hour and other networking events, and want to learn how to engage people in conversation with poise and confidence, please let me know, and we can schedule another discussion group.

Delva Johnson

503-992-0267 or 971-409-0441, or
e-mail delvadj@hotmail.com

PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

The Pastor's Discretionary Fund assists people who come to our church asking for help. In the last few months, the fund has:

- bought prescription drugs for patients who could not afford them;
- paid utility bills for two families whose water service had been disconnected;
- helped a disabled woman pay the move-in fees for a subsidized apartment;
- helped buy a Greyhound bus ticket to return a mentally ill man to his family;
- bought a motel stay for an ill homeless woman.

At this time the need is high, and the fund is almost dry. If you would like to contribute, mark your check "Discretionary Fund."

Pastor Dan

CHRISTMAS COOKIE DECORATING PARTY

Come one, come all, to the Christmas Cookie Decorating Party, Saturday, December 20 from 2-4 PM. Bring your aprons and decorating sugar; cookies will be provided. Cookies, and other treats, will be shared with the congregation on Sunday, December 21 and you'll be able to take some home too! Contact **Janet Hummel** at 503-341-2182.

P.S. Anyone who would like to bake sugar cookies to contribute for decoration is welcome to join in!

FESTIVE COOKIES AND DESSERTS

Do you have a special cookie you love to make at Christmas, or a special dessert you serve only on special occasions? You are invited to participate in the 1st annual Christmas Cookie and Fancy Dessert Fellowship Time on Sunday, December 28. Bring one special tray of cookies or a special dessert (cheese cake, trifle, pie,) and share it with your church family in honor of Christmas and the New Year. Bring along the recipe too for a fun recipe exchange.

Contact **Janet Hummel** at 503-341-2182.

UNICEF THANK YOU

Thanks to everyone who stuffed UNICEF Trick or Treat boxes so generously. Our offering was a little over \$200. It is my understanding that Proctor and Gamble will match that \$200. Here are some examples of what our dollars will do.

\$60 provides 60 packets of high-energy biscuits specially developed for malnourished children.

☐ \$100 provides almost 250 packets of ready-to-eat therapeutic nutritional supplement to nourish children suffering from acute malnutrition.

\$150 provides emergency health supplies to cover the basic health needs of more than 375 children for three months

\$10 provides a mosquito net for a whole family protecting them from malaria and other mosquito borne diseases.

This is important work!

Rhoda Pittman Markus
503-357-3998; 503-201-1233 (cell)

PEW POLISHING PARTY

Plenty of Pew Pixies pleasingly polished pews and then partook of pizza, punch and pieces of cake. I am pleased to announce that 15 people joined me this year in polishing our pews in anticipation of our holiday season. The ages ranged from 7 up to 70. It was a fun time and the task was completed in a record time of just one half hour! I'd like to thank everyone who helped. Polishing the pews twice a year keeps the wood healthy and beautiful. Our next polishing event will be sometime prior to Easter; however, I hear that our pixies will have another opportunity for service after our Christmas candlelight service!

Delva Johnson

NEW ADDRESS FOR RICHELLE

Richelle has graduated from her training and has been transferred to Mississippi. She would love to get letters. You may write to her at:

YNSA Johnson, Richelle
NTTC
740 Fletcher Rd. Ste 100
Meridian, MS 39309-5040

BUS TRIPS THIS MONTH

We are considering the following trips:

A trip to ZOOLIGHTS. We would take the bus to MAX, then MAX to the zoo. Barring a blizzard or ice storm, weather should not interfere with this one.

A trip to The Grotto, possibly with a stop at Peacock Lane. The date for that would depend on weather. Peacock Lane doesn't open until December 15th.

Another trip for which weather is a factor would be to the Pittock Mansion.

If people are interested in any of these trips, let me know. I will make an announcement on a Sunday morning after having checked the forecast for the coming week. I'll also call anyone who has indicated interest in that trip.

Marilyn Carr
503-357-2622

HAVE YOU MOVED?

Please be sure that the church office has your new address as soon as possible. Thank you.

Liz Swenson
Church Administrative Assistant

EARLY MESSENGER DEADLINE

(Special: January issue only)

The cutoff for the January Messenger is December 16th. Late items will be carried over to the following month's issue. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Patty Davie, editor

Grant Request Pending

The Grant Committee will be reviewing a request for \$3,150 from the Trustees at the December meeting (12/11). If you have comments or concerns regarding this request, please drop a note in the Grant Committee box in the Fellowship Hall, or let Ted Oakberg or Alisa Hampton know. We'll need your input before the December 11th meeting.

Grant Request Summary: The Trustees have requested a grant in the amount of \$3,150 for the installation of an additional 80 gallon hot water heater in the church (\$2,600) and to replace the 30 inch electric range in the parsonage (\$550).

Thank you for your input on this grant request! A copy of the request will be posted on the Grant Committee bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall, also.

Ted Oakberg and *Alisa Hampton*
co-Chairs, Grant Committee

WESTERN DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

You can read the United Methodist Western District Newsletter in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings. But did you know you can also read it on the web? Go to www.westerndistrictumc.org to view it complete with beautiful color pictures and everything!

Submitted by *Liz Swenson*

BIRTHDAYS

Sally Green	December 4 th
Christina Cortez	December 5 th
Angela Horton Gapay	December 6 th
Alia Marie Gapay	December 6 th
Ron Ray	December 7 th
Carolyn Ashton	December 10 th
Erma Heisler	December 10 th
Fred Brewer	December 12 th
Billy Tveit	December 12 th
Lois Oakberg	December 19 th
Alexis Gardner	December 20 th
Ella Mae James	December 21 st
Doris Traub	December 24 th
Betty Ludlam	December 26 th
Bryan Gamble	December 26 th
Patti Rose	December 26 th

ANNIVERSARIES

Buzz & Anne Brown	December 3 rd
Chuck & Betty Pritchard	December 12 th
Harry & Diane Long	December 14 th
Calvin & Beth Hall	December 31 st



SERVING IN DECEMBER

Liturgist	Patti Rose
Altar Guild	Margaret Hoerber
Bus Coordinator	Linda King, cell: 503-522-1215
Bus Driver:	<i>Volunteers needed</i>
Ushers:	Margaret Hoerber & Ralph Paradis Morris & Jacquie Haney
Greeters	
December	Wesleyans Month
Coffee Coordinator	
Team: *December	*Carole Heun, Delva Johnson & Janet Hummel
Fellowship Time	
December 7 th	LeRoy & Shirley Gamble
December 14 th	Clarisse & Terry Vogel
December 21 st	Youth
December 28 th	The Hummel Family
Nursery Attendant	Lindsay Marsh
Childcare Coord.	Delva Johnson
Web Master	Jenny LaCombe
Kitchen Elves	Linda King Erma Heisler
Sound and Media	Steven Wong
Tape Ministry	Media team
Parish Nurse	Patti Rose

CHOIR CORNER – ANNE HALL

Retired now after serving as school librarian in North Plains for 22 years, our gracious new alto chuckles that she and her husband moved to Forest Grove in 1982 so that their children could have the benefit of the F.G. school system – but only the youngest actually did.

However, all four daughters did enjoy the small town atmosphere as much as their parents. Two daughters live near Seattle, and two others live in the area around Forest Grove. Although her husband passed away in 1997, Anne loves the fact that their home near the center of town is a great “way station” for their grandchildren. All are busy in school, but the commute home to Glenwood can be long if they are scheduled for evening activities. So Anne gets to host and love the kids a couple times a week or more, which is her joy.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Forest Grove United Methodist Church is to welcome all people, wherever they are on their journey of faith, into nurturing relationships with Jesus and with one another, through worship, small group fellowship and service to others.

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

Volume 2008, **December**, Issue No. 12.

Messenger monthly.

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1726 Cedar Street, Forest Grove, OR 97116-2434

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Rhoda Markus	503-357-3998	Deacon
Bobby & Emily Tabb	503-357-2689	Youth Pastors
Liz Swenson	503-357-2689	Administrative Assistant

Church Office Hours, Monday through Friday

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Patty Davie 503-357-3185 Messenger Editor

e-mail: plc2fd@verizon.net