



NewsNotes

Christ Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
A Just Peace and Open and Affirming Church
Becoming an Anti-Racist Church

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In Search of Our Kneeling Places

By Ann Weems (1987)

*In each heart lies a Bethlehem
an inn where we much ultimately answer
whether there is room or not.
When we are Bethlehem-bound
we can no longer look the other way
conveniently not seeing stars
not hearing angel voices.
We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily
tending our sheep or our kingdom.*

*This Advent let's go to Bethlehem
and see this thing that [God] has made know to us.
In the midst of shopping sprees
let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.
Through the tinsel
lets look for the gold of the Christmas Star
In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,
let's listen for the brush of angels' wings.
The Advent, let's go to Bethlehem
and find our kneeling places.*

In preparation for an event with our Senior Adults I came across this poem. It beckons us into the Advent season with humbleness and curiosity, hope and joyful anticipation! May God's blessings enrich each of us as we journey towards Bethlehem! *With joy, Susan*

Advent Opportunities

✧ An Advent Journey of Dialogue and Contemplative Worship ✧

For many of us, the months of September through December are filled with beginning, empowering, scheduling, and maintaining rigorous and fast-paced lifestyles: jobs, children, personal agendas, all call us in multiple directions with a mandate of "multi-tasking" at all levels. While nature offers us its grandest splendor in diminishing and resting; most of the time, our feelings of diminishment and exhaustion are seldom splendid.

The season of Advent can speak a word to this. It is "taking a breath" time. It is a time of waiting in assurance of that which is to come. This year during Advent, Christ Congregational Church will offer three contemplative prayer and quiet meditation opportunities each week. Additionally, two of the sessions each week will be accompanied with the option of a shared meal and discussion around a seasonal topic. Gordon Forbes and Nae Pearson will be the conveners and leaders. We invite you for some quiet and mediation, with prayer and contemplation in an otherwise busy season. The schedules for the sessions follow on page 2.

(continued from page 1)

Sunday evening sessions (November 30, December 7, December 14, and December 21) A brown bag meal (bring your own meal, beverages provided), at 6:00 PM, followed by an open forum discussion around a selected topic at 6:15 PM and Contemplative worship/music/prayer in the Chancel 7:00 – 7:45 PM.

Wednesday noon sessions (December 3, December 10, and December 17)

Contemplative worship/music/prayer in the Chancel from 12:00 noon – 12:45 PM followed by a brown bag meal and open forum discussion (bring your own meal, beverages provided).

Wednesday evening sessions (December 3, December 10, and December 17)

Contemplative worship/music/prayer in the Chancel from 7:30-8:15 PM. There will be no meal or discussion at the Wednesday evening session.

✧ BEING LIGHT: An Advent Silent Retreat ✧

Monday, December 15th 9:30 – 3:30. You are invited to beautiful Dayspring Retreat Center for a day of communal silence led by Sarah Anders. A nutritious lunch will be served. Brochures are available on the bulletin board by the church office. This event is limited to 15 participants, the cost is \$10/person

✧ Advent Reading Suggestions from Peggy Meltzer ✧

HE is the reason for the season. Books on Jesus in the adult library include:

Jesus In The Gospels, by Edward W. Bauman, 1982, 162 pp. And, by the same author, *The Meaning Of Christ Jesus*, 1985, 152 PP. These are paperback study guides.

Jesus And The Word, by Rudolph Bultmann, 1934, 226 pp., paperback.

THE ESSENTIAL JESUS: Original Sayings And Earliest Images, 199 pp., and *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, 209 pp., both by John D. Crossan, in 1994, hardcover.

Studies In The Life And Ministry Of The Historical Jesus, by Raymond A. Martin, 1995, 161 pp., paperback.

The Complete Jesus, by Ricky A. Mayotte, 1997, 169 pp., hardcover.

THE GOD OF JESUS; THE Historical Jesus And The Search For Meaning, by Stephen J. Patterson, 1998, 305 p., paperback.

THE SEARCH FOR JESUS, Modern Scholarship Looks At The Gospels, Stephen Patterson, Marcus Borg, and J.D. Crossan, a symposium at the Smithsonian on Sept. 11, 1993, 152 pp., paperback.

JESUS THROUGH THE CENTURIES: His Place In The History Of Culture, by Jaroslav Pelikan, 1985, 270 pp., hardcover.

JESUS CHRIST: The Jesus Of History, The Christ Of Faith, by J. R. Porter, 1999, 240 pp., hardcover, many color illustrations.

Jesus: A Life, by A. N. Wilson, 1992, 269 pp., paperback.

These books are found on the 4th shelf of the bookcase on the second floor. In addition, we have books on the individual Gospels, the parables of Jesus, and other related topics. *Peggy Mentzer, CCC's Librarian*

❖ Come Share the Peace, Hope, Love and Joy ❖
Orchestral Playing Opportunities-Advent and Christmas 2008

1. Many Moods of Christmas-Christmas Music Sunday, Dec. 21-Advent IV

Intermediate-Advanced Players

Performances: Sunday, December 21 at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. (Identical Services)

Prior Rehearsals: Thursdays, December 4, 11 and 18 at 6:30 p.m./Sanctuary
and Saturday, December 20, 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m./Sanctuary

Final warm-up: Sunday, December 21; 8:00 a.m./Sanctuary/Concert attire*

(Unless arrangements have been made with the Director of Music, orchestral personnel for *The Many Moods of Christmas* should be able to attend at least 2 out of the 3 prior rehearsals and the mandatory final rehearsal on Saturday, Dec 20th.)

2. Christmas Eve-December 24th, 9:00 p.m. Service

Intermediate-Advanced Orchestra

Performance: December 24; 9:00 p.m.

Prior Rehearsals: Schedule same as above (*See Many Moods schedule*)

Regular church attire/no concert attire required

Final Warm-up rehearsal: Dec. 24th at 8:00 p.m./Sanctuary

3. Christmas Eve-December 24th, 5:00 p.m. Service

Intergenerational Orchestra (Beginning to Intermediate players)

Performance: 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Family/Children's Service

Regular church attire/concert attire not required

Prior rehearsals: Sundays, December 7, 14, and 21

11:45 until 12:15 p.m.-immediately following church/Sanctuary

Final rehearsal and warm-up: Wednesday, December 24

at 4:15 p.m./Sanctuary

Repertoire available at first rehearsal!

Contact Nae Pearson at 301-585-8010, ext 224 or email Nae at Holymusic@aol.com for further information!

The Mitten Tree collection for Broad Acres Elementary and White Oak Middle Schools will begin Sunday November 30th and conclude Sunday December 21st. We are collecting gently used or new winter clothing articles such as: hats, mittens, gloves, coats and boots for boys and girls ages 5-14. We will collect the winter clothing on and around the Christmas Tree which will be put together in the church entrance way by our Middle School church school class on Sunday November 30th. Thank you in advance for your contribution to this local service project. Any questions? Contact Kristen Brown at 301-460-1806.



**Christmas Caroling
December 21!**

On Christmas Sunday, December 21, the altar will be filled with Christmas poinsettias. Following the service the Deacons will take the plants to those who are in the hospital, home bound or grieving a loss. Donate a plant in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a special person or an event. The cost is \$10 per plant. Complete the form below and return to the church office by Sunday, December 14. The information will be included in the list of donors printed in the bulletin on the 21st. Checks may be made out to Christ Congregational Church with "Christmas Plants" noted on the memo line.



In memory of _____

or

In celebration of _____

Given by _____

Number of plants _____ Amount of check _____

CCC's Latest News and Updates

Celebrate the 64th Anniversary of CCC

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, December 7th! This will be our time to celebrate the founding of Christ Congregational Church. All of our past ordained clergy will be honored during the second service. Revs. Bob Marston, Shirley Coll and Jim Todhunter will take part in the service. After the 10:30 service we'll gather in the Social Hall to celebrate this 64th anniversary, with reminiscing, special treats and merriment.

Pulpit and Pew Bridge

Pastor-Parish Relations Committees bridge pulpit and pew. Thirty people from CCC and other ministries in the metropolitan area gathered on Saturday, November 15 to learn about the purpose and formation of Pastor-Parish Relations Committees from the Rev. Richard Sparrow of the UCC's Local Church Ministries office in Cleveland, Ohio.

Throughout a lively question and answer training format, Dick emphasized the key concept of Pastor-Parish Relations Committees (PPRCs): they are a bridge from pulpit to pew. When a PPRC works well, across that bridge flows "clear, healthy and honest" communication between and among pastors and congregation. Distinguishing between *minister* and *ministry*, Dick emphasized the role of a PPRC in encouraging ongoing and regular evaluation of the church's *ministry*. Evaluation of ministers is a

Personnel Committee function. The PPRC's task is to side with the church's *ministry*, not with individuals, be they parishioners or pastors.

Churches may use the model of a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee to form Staff-Parish Relations Committees to foster communication between other church staff and the congregation. One function of these committees is to provide a safe place in which ministers and other staff can be completely honest about themselves and their ministries.

Other topics of the training session included the formation of PPRCs and how they fit into the overall structure of the church. The Executive Council will consider what it learned from the training session at its December meeting.

Jackie Walters, Communications Officer

Town Hall Meetings Feature Status on Interim Tasks and Senior Minister Search ~

Short- and long-term staffing plans and the search for a new Senior Minister dominated the town hall meetings held following both worship services on November 16. Moderator Trish Esposito framed the discussion around two themes she's been contemplating: (1) Who would have ever thought . . . ? and (2) What a golden opportunity!

Under "Who would have ever thought?", Trish outlined her expected logical sequence following Jim's announcement of his retirement: interim in tandem with search and then call of new senior pastor. But other events intervened, notably the inevitable result of a successful interim pastorate: the lifting up of the carpet to find the dust bunnies and pebbles underneath.

In CCC's 64-year history, these include issues of mistrust, abuse of authority, grief, and loss. These issues take time to resolve and heal. The Rev. Sandy Dodson's decision to resign and relocate was another unplanned event of the interim that will need time and attention to absorb and cope with.

Thus, without planning for it, CCC has also been given a golden opportunity. There is time to explore what type of church we are and want to be as we embark on the next 64 years. Susan Henderson observed that CCC is, by definition if not by self-identification, a corporate church. A corporate church simply means a church has more than 350 active members and requires multiple staff to support the four pillars of church ministry: worship, mission, pastoral care, and education.

There is the opportunity to explore and examine a variety of staffing positions and develop a long-range staffing vision for the future. Past Moderator and Rev. Gordon Forbes spoke to the blessing CCC would bestow on a new senior pastor to have an interim associate in place and a staffing vision to

work on and help implement. Susan Henderson added, "CCC is in the midst of a positive, exciting sea change, and we need to watch every wave to see what they mean."

Trish reviewed the short-term staffing plan to get CCC through the remainder of the fiscal year (*see* related article in this issue). On a long-term basis, CCC will undertake a search for an interim associate position with a goal of hiring in late spring 2009. In January, the Profile Committee will begin compiling the church profile, which is the

tool the Search Committee uses to market CCC to prospective candidates. Thus, the Search Committee for the Senior Minister will begin its work in earnest in April, and that search process may take 12-18 months. The current Associate Minister and Director of Senior Adult Programming positions (which will be vacant

following Sarah Anders' announced resignation effective June 2009) will be evaluated within the context of a long-term staffing plan. A subcommittee of the Council is working on developing a plan to recommend to the Council and the congregation.

In the meantime, Deacons and Called to Care will assist Susan Henderson in providing pastoral care, and Susan is extending invitations to guest preachers who will preach once a month.

The other major topic was an update on the Retreat House. Rick Sniffin, chair of the Retreat House Task Force, reported that several architectural firms in the Winchester area are interested in submitting proposals that reflect CCC's vision for the property and the values it cherishes by having the Retreat House. The Task Force is soliciting proposals that contain broad outlines for three options, including costs, and the successful architect will present those to the congregation in the spring.

Jackie Walters, Communications Officer



Intermediate Staffing Plan Takes Shape ~



Over the last several months, the Executive Council held a series of meetings and retreats for the purpose of crafting an intermediate staffing plan to take CCC from the end of October (when Sandy Dodson departed) until the end of the current fiscal year. Using the Strategic Goals adopted in January 2007, the Council identified four key overarching and intergenerational areas of church ministry: worship, music, social witness and Christian education.

This intermediate staffing is intended to sustain and grow vital programs of our faith community. Some cover elements of Sandy's portfolio: Youth Program Coordinator (Kristen Brown will develop programs for youth in 5th-12th grades and will coordinate with youth leaders and parents), Camping Ministry (Anne Nicotera will coordinate and develop 2009 summer camp programs, recruit and train camp staff, and advertise camp programs), and Church School. Currently, there is no-one identified for the Church School position. CCC is seeking someone with ministerial training and

church experience for this 15-hour per week position. Primary duties include working with the Youth Program Coordinator and the Board of Christian Education to sustain and grow the church school and youth programs; providing support, training and guidance for church school teachers, volunteers and youth leadership; and cultivating a sense of community for teachers/leaders and among church school and youth parents.

Nae Pearson will take on an additional 10 hours per week to sustain and grow an intergenerational music ministry. Two positions of Adult Education and Social Witness are new areas of focused work and leadership that will allow us to explore new staffing options. Gordon Forbes will assume responsibility for developing a multi-focus adult education program. The Social Witness position will work with the Board for Social Witness on developing and engaging the congregation in intergenerational social justice projects and events.

All of these positions are stipend positions, at \$20 per hour, with no benefits. It is expected that the number of weekly hours will be equivalent to a 40-hour-per-week full-time position. The remaining staff positions are unchanged.

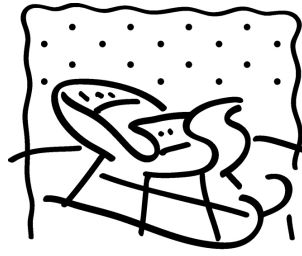
Trish Esposito, Moderator

CCC Weather and Emergency Information ~

Weather, traffic and our close proximity to Washington DC cause us to be mindful to conditions, out of our control, that could possibly impact our participation in worship and activities at CCC. In the event of a weather emergency or other emergency conditions which may affect worship services and activities at CCC, please either check the CCC web site at christ-ucc.org, call the event line at 301-585-4640, extension 333, or listen to WTOP 103.5 FM for information.



The decision to cancel worship services will be made by the senior minister, in consultation with the church administrator, the moderator and the Chair of the Board of Deacons by 7:00 am on Sunday morning. For other church activities, it is the responsibility of the event leader or coordinator confer with church office about building access, to decide whether to cancel or not, and to contact participating members. If board meeting night is canceled, board chairs are responsible for notifying their members and rescheduling the meetings, as needed. If board or committee meeting needs to be reschedule, please contact the church office to confirm the availability of space for date and time. If you call the church and cannot reach the event line or answering machine, that is an indication that there is no electricity in the church. The church phones do not work during a power-outage.



★ Winter ★
Weekend

Join the Fun!

President's Day weekend (February 13-16, 2009)

Looking for the perfect winter break? Check out **Winter Weekend!** It's a warm wintry gathering of friendly folks in a cozy environment, held again this year with the good people at the Washington Ethical Society. Past attendees rave about this annual tradition. It's a great place and time to relax and socialize, with sing-alongs, board games, ping-pong and crafts. There's sledding and tubing down the big hill outside the main lodge, and cross-country trails right outside your door. In short, there's plenty of fun for grown-ups and kids alike.

For between \$99 and \$140, you can spend 2 or 3 nights in a heated cabin with hot water showers, with hot and hearty meals served in the main lodge. (You can even pack your own bag lunches for a day on the slopes!) Children aged 3 to 6 pay a reduced rate (between \$55-\$75 depending on your length of stay). Children under 2 are free, and all snacks and a Saturday night square dance with live band and caller are included!

This memorable getaway will take place at the Camp Soles YMCA, not far from Somerset PA, overlooking a picturesque lake among wooded hills in south central Pennsylvania. That's about 3-1/2 hours from the DC area, but only minutes from Seven Springs and Hidden Valley ski resorts, several state parks, and the town of Somerset. And though it's too late for Somerset's annual Fire & Ice Festival in January, mid-term exams for High Schoolers will be *over!*

It's hard to imagine a better way to spend a long winter weekend. Feel free to invite your friends, neighbors, or relatives; all are welcome! For more information, contact first-time organizer Anne Nicotera at 240-669-8141 or email her at anne.nicotera@comcast.net. (Anne's husband Greg Maydan will be helping with coordination for this trip.) PS – Sign up early to pick your cabin and bunkmates. To register, fill out a form available in the Church lobby.



Deadline for the next NewsNotes is 5:00 PM Wednesday, December 10, 2008
Send articles to Susan Gray cccoffice@christ-ucc.org or leave them in the NewsNotes Box

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Mailed November 25, 2008

HAPPENINGS In November and December

"Winter Waiting" Sunday evenings and Wednesdays during Advent

Sun., November 30 ~	First Sunday of Advent, Advent Wreath Workshop
Mon., December 1 ~	Executive Council
Sat., December 6 ~	Decorate the Sanctuary
Sun., December 7 ~	Second Sunday of Advent, 64th Anniversary of CCC
Wed., December 10 ~	NewsNotes Deadline Senior Adult Christmas Party CCC Volunteers at Shepherd's Table
Sun., December 14 ~	Third Sunday of Advent, Fair Trade Coffee Sale
Mon., December 15 ~	Silent Retreat Board Meetings
Fri., December 19 ~	Parent's Night Out
Sun., December 21 ~	Fourth Sunday of Advent, Worship at 9 and 11 AM Christmas Caroling
Wed., December 24 ~	Christmas Eve Services
Thurs., December 25 ~	Christmas Day

**CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH, UCC**

Phone:
301-585-8010

Email:
cccoffice@christ-ucc.org

Rev. Susan A. Henderson,
Interim Senior Minister
Nae Pearson,
Director of Music
Sarah Anders, Director of
Senior Adult Programming
Dianne Abraham,
Church Administrator
Susan Gray,
Support Administrator

At CCC, we honor and celebrate
people of all races, cultures, ages,
abilities, sexual orientation, and
gender identity.

www.christ-ucc.org