

Advent and Christmas 2009

The Sundays in Advent

Each Sunday at the beginning of worship we will place Advent symbols in the sanctuary, and will light the Advent candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.



November 29

- 10:45 am Prelude: Bach Chorale for organ
- Lighting the first candle

December 6:

- 10:40 am Prelude: Special music by the Neo-Black Society Gospel Choir of UCCG (also during the service)
- Lighting the second candle, Holy Communion

December 13:

- 10:45 am Prelude: Bach Chorale for organ
- Special music from Susan Hayes, Clif Karnes, and Bill Herndon
- Lighting the third candle

December 20:

- 10:45 am Prelude: Bach Chorale for organ
- Musical presentation from our Chancel Choir
- Lighting the fourth candle



Blue Christmas Service:

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 7:00 pm

Join us for a calm, reflective service specially designed for those needing

a respite from the exuberance of the season, and for those who may be in a time of grieving or loss.



Christmas Eve Services

- **5:00 pm:** Our family-oriented service will include music from our Children's Handbell Choir, our Chancel Choir, and a special rendition of Silent Night.
- **11:00 pm:** This service of candlelight and communion will include music from our Handbell Choir and from other members of our congregation.



And For Your Spiritual Nurture Throughout The Season . . .

We have Advent devotional booklets available for all ages, and we will also have an interactive online weekly devotional for all who would like to participate. Go to: www.tinyurl.com/CUCCFacebook and click on "Discussions."



Christmas Sock Tree

Our Christmas Sock Tree is waiting to be covered with socks of all kinds and all sizes for Greensboro Urban Ministry. Last year we gave 495 pairs of sock! The tree will be up December 13, 20 and 27. Fill our tree with socks of all kinds and all sizes to help keep feet dry and warm during these cold winter months.



Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Worship Schedule

General Assembly: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Refreshments: 12:00 p.m.

Our Mission

As people of Congregational United Church of Christ, we seek to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, accepting God's call to be a true community of love, compassion, and nurture.

Visitors

Congregational United Church of Christ is a warm, welcoming congregation that is always happy to receive visitors. To help you feel as comfortable and at-home as possible when you visit us, we've put together some information on what the Congregational experience is like. For details, check out our Visitor Page at www.congregationalucc.com.

CUCC is on Facebook!

Check us out at the following site: www.tinyurl.com/CUCCFacebook.

Our Next Newsletter

Deadline: Friday, December 11
Publication: Tuesday, Dec. 16

News and events can be sent to office@congregationalucc.com.

Can't wait for news? Check out the Congregational UCC web site at www.congregationalucc.com. It is up-to-date, relevant, interesting, lively, and available 24 hours.

Lectionary Readings

December 6, 2009

Malachi 3:1-4 or Baruch 5:1-9
Luke 1:68-79
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6

December 13, 2009

Zephaniah 3:14-20
Isaiah 12:2-6
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:7-18



Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Drop-In Hours: 4th Sun. of the month,
10:00-11:00 am
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Ms. Evelyn Blane
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Ms. Judy Page
Office Manager
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Office Hours: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Monday thru Wednesday & Friday

Ministries

- Bible Study
- Children & Adult Choir
- Handbell Choir
- Youth Programs
- Women's Fellowship
- Adult Fun Club

Outreach Programs

- Greensboro Urban Ministry
- Mobile Meals
- Habitat for Humanity
- Potter's House
- Higher Ground
- and many more . . .

Congregational News is published by
Congregational United Church of Christ,
Greensboro, North Carolina

From the Pastor

Your Advent Gift Awaits . . .



A young child and a teenager recently gave me two of the most wonderful gifts: the little girl ran up to me in coffee hour after worship with a bright smile on her face, and handed me two colorful autumn leaves from her yard. I thanked her and told her how much I love looking for beautiful leaves like this, and that I would keep them where I could see them.

The young man gave me something he had made – a beautiful pen made of turned walnut. I marveled at his skill, and will treasure the gift.

What gifts have caught you by surprise of late? What unexpected joy has bounced in upon your day, or slipped in while you were expecting business-as-usual?

As we begin Advent, our season of preparation and waiting for the coming of God's redeeming presence in our world, a season of giving to others, I invite all to consider carefully a gift we can actually give ourselves. Soon, very soon, we will get caught up in the blur of tasks, social engagements, and good efforts. Our attention will be drawn from the sacred to the shopping. Our bodies and spirits will grow frazzled! What to do??

Over the years I have read many books and articles on how to keep a spiritual focus during these days, how to simplify. Much of it comes down to three fundamental choices, three areas where a few simple changes can help us create a season that centers us in grace, brings clarity to our priorities, and invites the true Spirit of the season to be known in powerful ways. These are:

- **Set limits.** Stick to a budget, let go of events that hold no meaning for you. Acknowledge the limits

of your time and energy. Simplify the gift-giving. Schedule in some stay-at-home evenings for hot chocolate and Charlie Brown.

- **Slow the pace.** Catch yourself when you are rushing about, and physically, mentally, slow down. Each time you get in your car, pause, take a deep breath, say a quick prayer. Add in extra time to go from one activity to the next. Stop and admire the poinsettias, the lights, the trees. Write the words, "Breathe, Slow Down" on five post-it notes and place them where you'll see them throughout the day.

- **Feed the spirit, starve the guilt.** Go for a walk, putz around the yard, sit in a quiet place. Listen. Read a passage of Scripture or poetry or use a devotional guide. Light a candle. Come and worship with other seekers. Let go of the guilt over not being super-mom or the Christmas wizard. If the holidays are likely to be especially difficult for you, think through what might help. Hospice, The Women's Resource Center, and other good agencies offer supportive services during this time in addition to our church. Give to someone in need. Go beyond writing a check. You'll be amazed how this lifts the spirits of both receiver and giver. Laugh as often as possible.

I also invite you to take part in a new effort: an interactive devotional guide. Each week I am offering a brief Advent meditation and will invite your reflections. For those not online, we can make hard copies available. You can participate anytime by going to "Discussions" on our church Facebook page: www.tinyurl.com/CUCCFacebook.

What surprising gift might the Spirit be offering you this season?

—Julie Peeples

Stewardship Update, Christmas Post Office & More



As of this writing, we have received 93 pledges for a total of \$232,341. This includes 16 new pledges, which is very good indeed!

Last year at this point we had 83 pledges totaling \$217,592, so we like our position so far!

To date we have also received 28 Pledges of Time, for which we are very grateful. Our Board chairs will receive this material this week and will be in touch with you on how you can give to our church. Also, look on the next page at the info on Ministry Teams. There are many ways for us to give back!

I would like to share three thoughts with you:

1. It is always a good time for you to make a pledge – of money or of time. Pledge materials are in

the Sanctuary and outside the church office.

2. It is always a good time for you to make an electronic pledge; again, materials are in the Sanctuary and outside the church office (or be in touch with Pam Aldridge). With an electronic pledge, you can make your gift on a schedule that suits you.
3. Our Budget Hearing will be on Sunday, December 13th, beginning at 9:00 am.

Again, our thanks!
—Paul Davis



Parent's Time Out

We invite parents of our children to come for a time of quiet conversation, coffee cake and coffee or tea, the morning paper, and Wi-Fi access on Sunday, December 20th at 10:00 am. We'll meet in the parlor.



Christmas Post Office

The Jordan/Wiseman Class Post Office will be in operation through Sunday, December 20. Bring cards that you would normally send to local church members to the "Post Office" in the back of the Fellowship Hall. You can then deposit the money that you would pay for postage with any class member. And, be sure to check with the "Post Office" for cards that may be sent to you!



Meals at the Manger

First Lutheran Church, Greensboro, has launched *Meals at the Manger*, a campaign encouraging North Carolina churches to collect food for the needy on Christmas Eve.

The church is calling on congregations across North Carolina to ask worshipers to bring at least one canned good or food item per person to Christmas Eve services. CUCC will participate in this effort by providing a collection area in the narthex near the manger scene.



CONFIRMATION SUNDAY: Our 2009 Confirmands and their mentors. Row one: Beth Magyar & Beth Hoagland, Eric Magyar & Clif Karnes, Grace Allen & Barbara Rice, Paul Davis. Row two: Julie Peeples, Lynn & Brian Magyar, Mike Allen & Beth Kuoni.

Put Your Gifts to Work on a Ministry Team!

A few months ago a newsletter article described the ministry teams being formed by the Board of Deacons. These teams, led by deacons, provide opportunities for you to share your gifts with our church. There are a variety of teams, and you can choose to give the amount of time that works best for you. In this issue, you can learn more about the Ministering Meals, Handy Hands, Congregational Life, and Spiritual Connections teams. In the next issue of the newsletter, you can learn about opportunities on the Visitation, Ushers/Greeters, Hospitality, and Worship teams.

Ministering Meals

Good food is not only nourishing to the body, but also provides unique comfort to those who are recovering from illness or dealing with difficult situations. The caring preparation and accompanying love which are part of the gift of food is added support to those in special need. This team coordinates, prepares, and delivers meals to those in special need. All you need for this team is the ability and desire to prepare and deliver meals to members in need on a rotating basis. Please contact Susan Lane if you are interested in this team.

Handy Hands

There are times when we all could use a helping hand with day-to-day activities—help with yard work, minor home repairs, or a ride to the doctor’s office. Handy Hands offers assistance and/or resources for various small jobs for those who need such assistance. Such assistance may include such things as giving a ride to a doctor’s appointment, changing light bulbs, light maintenance, dog-walking, and computer/DVD/VCR help. The group will also maintain a referral list for

professionals who offer services beyond what the Handy Hands can provide. We are looking for volunteers with a willing and friendly attitude, skills for light home repair and/or technological know-how. To help with this team, please contact Milton Shaw.

Spiritual Connections

In addition to worship and fellowship, many of our members are also seeking ways to grow in their understanding of scripture and strengthen their relationship with God through prayer, study, and exploration. This team helps identify and plan activities to help members nurture their spiritual growth. These activities may include prayer groups, book study groups, and other programs to support our members along their spiritual journeys. Join this team if you have a desire to help all grow spiritually. Experience facilitating small groups is particularly helpful. For more information about this team, contact Robin Dorko.

Congregational Life

Many of us in the congregation, both new and longtime members, seek a deeper involvement in the life of the church. This team will encourage connections between members outside of worship, welcome new members, and discern people’s gifts. Possible activities include sponsoring events and activities that bring people together and maintaining ways of identifying and drawing upon people’s gifts. This is the team for those with a desire to welcome all into the life of our congregation. Contact Bob Williams for more information.

Annual Budget Hearing Set for December 13

Our budget hearing will be Sunday, December 13 at 9:00 am. At this meeting, we will review the proposed budget for the coming year (a final vote is taken at the annual meeting in January). We will also vote on new board and church council members. All members are asked to attend; visitors are welcome.



Boards & Council

The next meeting of the Boards and Council will be Tuesday, Jan. 12.



CUCC Business

Volunteers

December 6

Lay Reader: TBA
Nursery: Jon & Marie Nance
Coffee Hour: D. Humphrey/ D. Brewer

December 13

Lay Reader: TBA
Nursery: Krista & Tina Kolphenson
Coffee Hour: Milton Shaw/ Bill Guill

Ushers

B. & M. Mackenzie, S. Hall, K. Schleunes



Financial Reports

Weekly Income	11/15/09	11/22/09
Pledged Offering	\$3,644.00	\$1612.00
Unpledged Offering	409.50	610.00
BRAG Trip Deposits	20.00	---
Miscellaneous	55.00	---
Poinsettias	8.00	72.00
Total	\$4,136.50	\$2,294.00

Budget Income/Expense Summary

	November	YTD
Income	\$23,615.82	\$290,403.04
Expense	30,884.42	301,913.60
Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$7,268.60)	(\$11,510.56)



Grace Community Church, Living Gift Market & More

The Montagnard Grace Community Church has invited our congregation to join them for their annual Christmas Celebration on Saturday, December 26. The festivities begin at 2:30 pm, with dinner at 5:00.



A Special Gathering

On Sunday, November 22nd, we joined with members of Montagnard Grace Community Church for a covered dish luncheon. Close to two hundred people came and we all had a lovely time. Thanks to Bob Williams for drawing us together, and to a number of others for set up and clean up help.



Living Gift Market

Sunday, Dec. 6 • 5:30-7:30 pm
Peace United Church of Christ
2714 West Market Street

Make this a memorable Christmas and take part in a growing Christmas tradition by giving gifts that help those in need.

Instead of material gifts, choose to honor your friends, family or business associates with gifts that help struggling families the world over lift themselves out of poverty. Alternative gift giving through Heifer International is the perfect way to share the true meaning of Christmas with the special people in your life.

The Living Market at Peace UCC will provide the opportunity to purchase gifts of animals (or shares of animals) from this program. Donors will receive cards that may be given to friends or loved ones, letting them know that a gift has been made in their honor.

Help to end hunger and poverty, one family at a time. Your gift will go a long way toward helping that family create a bright, promising future!

Light Up A Life

You are invited to attend the 25th annual *Light Up A Life* service on Sunday, December 6 at 5:00 pm at West Market Street United Methodist Church, 302 West Market Street, in downtown Greensboro.

This meaningful interfaith service is a time to honor the memories of special friends and family members. Serving as this year's guest speaker is the Rev. Michael Moulden, Rector at St. Francis Episcopal Church in Greensboro.

Musical selections will be provided by William Allred, organist, the First Korean Presbyterian Church Men's Choir, directed by Jung Sun Park, West Market Street United Methodist Church's Hand Bell Choir, directed by Alice Ann Johnson, and Nancy Pitkin, singer/songwriter.

After the service, you are invited to view the HPCG Tree of Remembrance, also in downtown Greensboro. This tree, known for its extraordinary number of tiny white lights, serves as a wonderful symbol of hopefulness. It will be lit during the Festival of Lights on Friday evening, December 4 and remain lit through December 31.

You are encouraged to place a light on the HPCG Tree of Remembrance by making a contribution of \$10 or more in honor or in memory of a special friend or loved one. Your tax-deductible gift will help Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro provide care and support for children and adults in our community. A *Light Up A Life* gift is a wonderful way to recognize friends, neighbors, co-workers, teachers, and babysitters during the holiday season. We will acknowledge your gift and notify the person or family you are remembering with a lovely seasonal card.



Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Congregational United Church of Christ
400 West Radiance Drive
Greensboro, NC 27403

December 2, 2009

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Congregational Nurse Notes

Newsflash: H1N1 Vaccination Clinic on December 9th!



CUCC will host an H1N1 Vaccination Clinic on Wednesday, December 9th from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon (no appointment is necessary). The clinic is

open to **EVERYONE over the age of 18**. There is no cost and the clinic will be open to the public.



Annual Winter Walk for AIDS

**Sunday, December 6 – 2:30 pm
War Memorial Stadium**

Registering is easy – simply go to www.winterwalkforaids.kintera.org.

December Birthdays

- 5 Harrison Simpson
- 12 Claire Anderson
- 13 James Aldridge
- 15 Ellen Essick
- 16 Betty Gibbs
- 17 Uldine Duckworth
- 18 Ella Heil
- 19 Arnold Humphrey
- 19 Norman Swanson
- 19 Susan Cromartie
- 20 Helen Reed
- 25 Richard Humphrey
- 28 Henrietta Ingram
- 29 Debra Hertlein
- 30 Elizabeth Mulberry



Notes from Our Music Director

December 6th Choir Luncheon Update

Our original plans have changed; food donations will *not* be needed for the visiting choir. Alternate off-site plans have been made. Please check your e-mail for further information or call Jimmy Buchanan at 828-443-7056.

Attention Children's Choirs! Bowling Outing on December 6

The Children's Choir and Handbell groups will be going bowling on Sunday, December 6th. Please meet at the church at 4:00 pm and we will carpool over.