



The Communicator

December 2011

The Little Lent

By Rev. Benjamin Broadbent



I loved learning a few years ago that the season of Advent has been referred to by the Christian tradition as "The Little Lent." The season of Lent is the 40 day period of fasting and preparation leading up to Holy Week and Easter (also known as The Feast of the Resurrection), the "high holy days" of the Christian liturgical year. Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas, also known as The Feast of the Incarnation.

The symbols of these two periods of preparation are rich and moving.

- ✦ A fast before the feast.
- ✦ A time of intentional preparation.
- ✦ The liturgical purple; a color both somber and royal.
- ✦ The lighting of candles.

During Advent, we light one more candle each week, kindling the light against the gathering darkness. One Lenten tradition was to snuff out one more of seven candles leading up to Good Friday.

As a pastor and a Christian, each year I notice the dissonance between the Christmas celebrations of the wider culture and the practices of our church. Sometimes these harmonize and cohere; other times they are discordant and even harsh.

- ✦ We express our hope in the coming of Emmanuel, God with us; meanwhile we run ourselves ragged shopping, traveling, and going to Christmas parties.
- ✦ We read and hear and sing scriptures about trusting in God and God alone; meanwhile we buy and wrap and give and unwrap to keep the economy going and to please our expectant family members, including our children.
- ✦ We hold our candles against the dark and speak of hope and peace and joy and love; meanwhile we start to look forward to the holidays being over so that life can get back to normal.

Whether in harmony or dissonance with the world around us, the church has a particular role to play in the world, a role that is perhaps especially crucial during the season of Advent. While the church is certainly an institution in the world, its message is meant to be spoken from the vantage point of an outsider. Think John the Baptist.

We the church, are the voice of "yes, but..."

- ✦ Look at all the despair in the world! "Yes, but... Hope!"
- ✦ Look at all the violence in the world! "Yes, but... Peace!"
- ✦ Look at all the suffering in the world! "Yes, but... Joy!"
- ✦ Look at all the hate in the world! "Yes, but... Love!"



We can provide this response to despair, violence, suffering, and hate because we are the ones who bear witness to Emmanuel, God with us. God is not aloof. God is not forever absent. God is not vindictive. God is not indifferent. God is with us. With the church. With humanity. With creation. There is no one else to bear this witness to the world, including our children. We are the ones. This is our calling. This is our unique work.

So get prepared to light candles in the dark, to read text that imagine newness, to welcome Emmanuel, God with us, then, now, and forever.

Our Ministry . . .

extravagant

Welcome,

openness to

Wonder,

positive and

proactive

Witness to the

possibility of a

just world.



LEAD MINISTER
COMMENTARY

CENTENNIAL MYSTERY PERFORMANCES



Christmas Mystery Celebrating its 100th Year!

By Mike Matthews, Communications and Marketing Committee Chair

The Christmas Mystery Tradition, this year celebrating its 100th anniversary, runs like a thread through the very fabric of the congregation's history, uniting generations and kindling memories of peace, joy, family, and community.

"This is the longest surviving tradition in our church," said **Nancy Forgy**, Mystery Committee chairperson for about the past five years. "The committee, made up of past years' Marys and Josephs, is devoted to maintaining the Mystery just as it always has been. It's a wonderful family tradition." The Mystery, the church's annual Christmas pageant, is a centuries-old musical drama, complete with cherubs, angels, a seraph, wise men, and of course, Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. Based on biblical accounts, church legends and beloved Christmas carols, the Mystery began in 1912 with a script by Helen Street Ranney, the wife of the Rev. William Watson Ranney, the fifth minister of the church.



*TWO Presentations:
Dec. 17th & 18th
at 4 p.m.,
followed by a traditional
wassail reception.*

"In the drama, the angel choir is composed of high school and college-aged women," Nancy explained. "One of the church's excellent female voices takes the part of the seraph or lead angel. The shepherds' roles are taken by male singers and the wise men's solo parts are carried by baritone voices. Cherub-children come forward and present a gift of song before the manger."

In a sermon on Oct. 23, Lead Minister **Benjamin Broadbent** noted that Helen Ranney may have gotten the idea for such a pageant from a church in New York City. "I don't know what inspired her," Benjamin said, "but she knew that the story [of the Christ Child] needed to be told again, in this place, in a way that would speak to this community, and the story still speaks to us as we present it each year."

The Christ Child, or ceramic "Bambino," came to the church from Italy around 1900 and was lent to the church each year by the **Haney family**, who donated the piece permanently to the church in 2009. The next year the Mystery Committee had the "Bambino" restored to its original integrity.

The identity of who is to portray Mary and Joseph is a closely guarded secret of the Mystery Committee until the actual presentation. Their selection is a way of honoring a man and a woman for distinguished service to the church. "The Christmas Mystery is aptly named," recalls **Nancy Malitz**, an angel for several years. "With the singing, the darkness, the candles, and the close gathering, it is such a beautiful, timeless way of telling and showing what the 'mystery' of Christmas is all about, while making the congregation a part of that story."

An aspect of this year's special celebration is a **reunion reception** for as many past participants of the Mystery as possible. The committee has sent out nearly 300 invitations to the reception, which is to take place on **Saturday, Dec. 17, at 5:30 p.m.** in the **Gates Common Room of Palmer Hall** at Colorado College.

Nancy Malitz, now a third/fourth-grade teacher in Mosier, Oregon, is one of a number of past participants who are contributing to a commemorative booklet of Mystery memories. The booklet, to be published in early December, will be available in the Founders' Room between services and at the church office. **Carol Fields, Gayle Jordan, and Ceil Malek** are producing the booklet.

Nancy wrote that during one of her early years as an angel, her halo kept slipping to one side. A week or two later, she was surprised to discover that the title of the sermon was something about angels with slipping halos.

Another recollection came from **Marge Murray**, whose husband, **Bob**, was Joseph 40 years ago. Honoring the secrecy of the role, Marge and Bob didn't tell their children that their father was playing Joseph. "About half way through the pageant, Michele noticed Bob's hand on the staff and said, 'Joseph is wearing Dad's ring.' Then they knew. They didn't recognize him in the red beard.

"The Mystery has been a wonderful tradition for us at First Congregational Church," Marge Murray added. "I am glad that other families will have the opportunity to enjoy it in future years."



Members of the Mystery Committee gather during a recent meeting.

Back row: Marci McNeill, Lori Goodwin, Lee Lehmkuhl and Richard Grebenstein;

Front row: Nancy Forgy (**chairperson**), Chris Hall and Susan Holman.

Not pictured: Chuck Benson, Jim Bramwell, Bill Poulson and Paul Schwotzer.

NEW MEDITATION OPPORTUNITY

New Contemplative Prayer and Meditation Group meets
Tuesday mornings
from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.
in the Carey Chapel.

-God's first language is silence; everything else is a poor translation."

-Thomas Keating

If you have ever felt the call of the deep silence of contemplation, you know the truth of Keating's words. You now have a new opportunity to experience that deep silence with this new Tuesday morning prayer group.

If you haven't experienced that deep silence, I invite you to come and try it. Quakers have practiced silence for many years and know the great value of stillness and simplicity in their lives. Psalm 46:10 states, "Be still and know that I am God." Perhaps you would like to have a prayer practice during Advent.

Please, come and try this out.

If you have any questions or need more information, please call Jerusha Goebel at 579-8748 or email JerushaGo@msn.com.

PLYMOUTH CIRCLE

Plymouth Circle will meet on Wednesday, December 7th, at 1 p.m. in the Founders' Room.

Hostesses will be Miriam Giese and Marilyn Johnson. Devotions will be given by Karen Miskel.

The program will include the collection of filled Christmas Stockings and sharing members' family traditions.



ADVENT KITCHEN KITSCH SALE



It's coming back again during Advent Sunday fellowship times!

Look for the table with dishcloths and other crafted items available for purchase to **support our kitchen's renovation.**

Thanks!



POPS PARTY

Take a Break and Leave the Kids at Home!

What:

Pooped-Out Parents (POPs) Annual Christmas Party

When:

Saturday, December 10th at 6:00 p.m.

Where:

Hosted by Jane and Eric Ridings

- Please mark your calendars and await an electronic invitation.
- All parents with children at home are welcome.
- For more information and/or to be added to the distribution/invitation list, please contact janeridings@hotmail.com.



EARLY COMMUNICATOR DEADLINE !!

December 12th is the deadline for submission of articles and letters **for the January Communicator.**



Please send **ASAP** to: communications@fucc.org

Remember to keep articles **BRIEF** (one page **max** including photos, logos, clipart, etc.).

Short articles (1/3 to 1/2 page) are greatly appreciated.

Include the author's name, committee and position, suggested article title and photos or clipart.

Short notices and reminders should be sent by the deadline.

Late articles may be placed in the next edition or may be sent out via e-blast.



Don't Be Late!

HEIFER PROJECT SALE

What do you buy the person who has everything? How about a goat, a llama or some chickens? Animals like these can provide food and income for hungry families through Heifer International.

"Purchase" animals as an alternative to commercial gifts and help needy people around the world. You get a handsome card to give to your friend, and a hungry family gets hope and possibilities.



Visit the Heifer table in the Founders' Room from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 4, 11, 18.

For more information, contact Ann Brown at pbrown@comcast.net.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



Teachers Needed for Winter and Spring Sunday School Sessions

By Del Hokanson, Children's Ministry Coordinator



Deepen your Faith Journey by working with the spiritual journey of children; volunteer as a Sunday School teacher.

- ♥ Sunday school is short, running only from the end of the children's message until the end of the sanctuary service (about 40 minutes).
 - ♥ Teaching materials, supplies and support are provided, so you don't have to invent activities.
 - ♥ Teaching is done in pairs, so you are never alone with all the responsibility.
 - ♥ Winter session runs from January 8th thru February 26th (*no Sunday school on Feb 5th).
 - ♥ Spring session is from March 11th thru May 20th (*no Sunday school on April 1st or May 6th).
- * No Sunday school on "first Sundays" as older children are encouraged to stay in the sanctuary with parents those days. For children in pre-school thru first grade, an age-appropriate worship experience is provided.*

Check out these testimonials and please consider teaching one session.

Testimonial 1: "The curriculum has lots of great ideas for the lesson, usually 2-3 times as many as we can use. I also love the exegesis on the first page of each lesson. Sometimes I use it in the lesson, but I always learn something that makes the text come alive for me.

Each time I work with someone new, it is a wonderful experience. Each session has been different, and it's very interesting to me to see how many ways two people can approach the same process. A different partner changes the process entirely, and it's always fun to see how our interests and talents mesh. I also love the connection with various families in the congregation.

Sunday School is the only time in my week that I have real contact with children any more. Even as I love this stage in my life, I miss their laughter, their energy, and their insights."

Testimonial 2: "Sometimes I don't know what I have inside to give? ... I find myself being humbled a lot. I am thankful for this opportunity to teach Sunday school. With what is going on in my life right now I don't think I have it in me to sit in church. But when I do Sunday school, I remember ... what I was given, from my mother mostly ... this love and faith. I see these totally innocent children and I want to give them that feeling of being safe in God, with God. I am humbled and broken and beaten down at times. But I still really love God. And teaching reminds me of who I am ... and brings me peace, and it makes me whole, and healed, and that's all I need."

To volunteer or for more information, contact Del at del@fcucc.org.

Expanded Third Grade Bible Study in 2012

In 2012, third graders will receive their Bibles upon completion of an eight week study led by the very Reverend Jerry Jordan and the very Creative Wilma Steenbergen.

The course will substitute for the third grade Sunday School during the winter session which begins on Jan 8th from 11 a.m.-noon.

Any Grade 4 or 5 children who have missed receiving a Bible will be invited to join in with this opportunity. The curriculum will include fun, hands on, creative and theologically grounded activities.

Bibles will be presented on Sunday, March 4th.

More information to come.

Any questions please contact Del Hokanson at del@fcucc.org.





Family & Youth Ministry Activities

By Marta Fioriti, Youth and Adult Ministry Coordinator

Family Advent Rituals ...

On Sunday, November 20th (the Sunday before Advent) an Advent Workshop Ministry Team came together and created an All-Church Advent Workshop that specifically targeted our families with children and youth. The event took place after church. We provided a "stone soup" lunch, blessings of our food, education about Advent and the experience, for each family, of making an Advent Log with traditional Advent candles.

Families had the opportunity to take home an Advent Ritual book and their very own Advent Log to use throughout the season of Advent. **The booklets are still available at the Children, Youth and Family Welcome Center.** The booklet includes a definition of the meaning of Advent, how to use your Advent Log (or wreath), what the five candles (3 purple, 1 pink and 1 white) symbolize and a weekly family ritual.

We realize that doing weekly ritual with your whole family will add time into your already-busy schedule. However, we are encouraging our families, especially during this season, to slow down together, spend time together, pray together, celebrate together and be open to God. It is a great way to make your child/teen think more about what Christmas means and why we celebrate this holiday. Our hope is that families at FCC will become more and more "counter-cultural;" more focused on giving and the ways our faith inspires us to action and less focused on the gifts we receive at Christmas. By providing an inclusive environment for learning, our young people's experiences at church will be strengthened by the support of their family and the stories of the whole church family.

Advent at Church ...

During the four weeks of Advent (**beginning on November 27th**) our children and youth (pre-K through grade 12) are invited to be a part of a Christmas Pageant that will be performed at the **4 p.m. Christmas Eve Service.**

Rehearsal and education will take place on **Sunday at 9 a.m.** every week of Advent: December 4, 11 & 18.

This will be a time of ritual, story, costume making, and prop creating.

Children and youth at the 9 a.m. service may bypass the sanctuary and go directly to Classroom BC.

Youth Ministry ...

Following the Reverend Benjamin Broadbent's sermon a couple of weeks ago on *Moralistic Therapeutic Deism* (the noted religion of all youth in America today), our Middle School youth had an exciting discussion. I noted some of the things that they said during our discussion. I was impressed and wanted to share some of their thoughts:

- ◆ There is a higher something that has impact on our lives.
- ◆ God is not a person.
- ◆ Elements in life are God.
- ◆ God is kinda there but does not affect everyone.
- ◆ God is all the things you cannot see.
- ◆ Resurrection is the spirit living on.
- ◆ Other things can be resurrected and come back.
- ◆ We don't talk about Holy Spirit enough.
- ◆ We should look inside and find the stories we need.

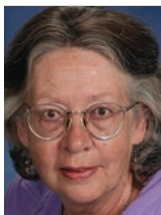
Youth Worship Information

All program details and events are posted on the church website at www.fcucc.org and are available at the church Welcome Center on Sunday mornings.

Regular Weekly Youth Programs: Resume in January...

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Marta at marta@fcucc.org or at 719-306-4037.

KNITTING CONNECTIONS, PRAYER SHAWL PHOTOS



Connecting with Caps and Scarves

By Anne Brown, Close Knit Group Member

The caps and scarves kept coming and coming and coming, a veritable deluge. My final count was approximately 275 caps and 125 scarves. They came from two groups, the knitters and crocheters at our church and those at Green Valley Weavers and Knitters. The project held a wide appeal. New knitters, friends, and neighbors also joined in.

If this is our year to make connections, our project certainly did that. **Angie Adams**, church member, told **Kathleen Orr**, the owner of **Green Valley**, about it. Kathleen is a big supporter of veterans' causes and involved many talented people from her newsletter list. She chose to let our church group distribute their contributions.

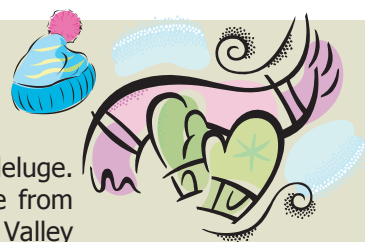
As **Mary Jane Ray** reported last month, we handed out 65 caps and 51 scarves to homeless veterans at the annual **Stand Down** at the City Auditorium. That was the original purpose of the project. **The Crawford House**, which provides shelter, meals and programs for homeless vets, received a big container, probably close to 50 caps and 25 scarves. Through a contact at the Crawford House, I learned about the **Street Church**, a ministry for the homeless run by Robert and Brenda Moran. They hold Sunday services in Antlers Park followed by a hot meal. They also have a Wednesday afternoon service and hand out personal care items, food, and clothing in the park on Saturdays. We were able to give them about 50 caps and a few scarves.

During fellowship hour at our Mission and Outreach Sunday, I talked with the representative from **La Puente**, whose staff and volunteers serve the poor in the San Luis Valley. They received about 70 caps and 35 scarves. Finally, we gave 40 caps to **Westside Cares**, a faith-based, nonprofit organization that helps the poor and is headed by FCC's **Steve Brown**. Since these two groups serve men and women and all ages from newborn to great-grandmothers, their selection included lots of bright and pastel colors in caps and scarves of all styles.

Ours were small gifts; caps and scarves to give a little warmth with a touch of hope knit into each. A greater gift to me was getting to know some of the dedicated people who work and volunteer for these groups that do so much to help those in need. From shelter and meals, financial help, substance abuse programs, and clothing to worship services, they represent the best that we are as Americans. They care and they turn their caring into doing every day.

I also got to know our church knitters and crocheters better. It is a pleasure to be part of such a wonderful and fun group. Perhaps the connection that surprised me the most was with my neighbor, Gina. She and I have lived across the street from one another for thirty years. It was only through this project that we got to know each other and work together.

It was a special project where many came together and all parts meshed perfectly. We want to do it all again. Next year's kick-off comes in April. For more information, contact Anne Brown at 630-0504.



Prayer Shawls designed by our children were blessed at November 6th services.



Left:
Prayer Shawls for CHOA Clinic patients with their designs attached.
(see Prayer Shawl article)



Right:
Sylvie Robinson modeling her shawl design.





Annual Campaign Rituals

By Lori Pinello, Stewardship Committee Chair

Each year, about three weeks into our annual campaign, the Stewardship Committee and the Church Council get together to call members who are regular givers but who have not yet gotten pledge information back to the church office.

This year, we started with a chili dinner supplied by **Polly Strovink**. **Nancy Henjum** joined us by conference call from Chicago where she was working that day. Before we began making our calls, we took a moment to connect, in appreciation, for both those who had come to make calls and for the congregants we would be calling.



As we picked up phones in the church offices or used our cell phones, friendly conversation and laughter could be heard. When we gathered back together, our group seemed to be energized, animated and a bit surprised by the (extravagant) welcome offered by the people we called. I was left with a sense of gratitude for being a part of this spirited and gracious community that is FCC.

Then, the Stewardship Committee stayed to write notes on the thank you letters we sent out to those who had pledged the previous week. **Ruth Roland** had prepared about fifty letters for us.

I love the thank you note ritual we share before the letters are mailed. Envelopes are divided among those at the table and, after a moment of silence, we say the name on each envelope aloud and a sense of recognition and appreciation for each person is generated around the table. After the names are spoken, we pray. As **Benjamin** leads the prayer, we are moved with a sense of deep appreciation for all those who support FCC: the new widow who now sits, without her husband, in their regular place at Sunday service; the family whose husband is now home from Iraq; an elderly woman on fixed income; a leader at the university in our city and so many others.

When we finish, I am left with a deep sense of the spirit, richness and commitment each member brings to our church. I always get more from my service to FCC than I expect.

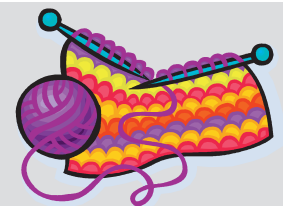
Thanks to all who have pledged and to those who will be pledging. For more information, or to receive a pledge form, please contact Ruth Roland at ruth@fcucc.org or call the office at 719-635-3549.



The Prayer Shawl Ministry

By Julie Jones-Eddy, Prayer Shawl Ministry Committee Member

As this year comes to an end, we celebrate our 6th year as a Ministry with over 1300 shawls and other items made by our group of knitters and crocheters in contemplative prayer and blessed by the congregation in Sunday services. The CHOA (Children's Hematology and Oncology Association) Clinic project was new this year, and it will be ongoing. At the services on November 6th you helped us celebrate the completion of about 90 shawls in several sizes for those children, some of them designed by our own Sunday school children.



We will gather on December 10th for our annual potluck brunch and "bagging" of the shawls that we donate to TESSA. TESSA's mission is to help women and children achieve safety and well-being while challenging communities to end sexual and family violence. This year we are putting the shawls in see-through decorated Christmas bags so that the TESSA women and their children can see the color of the shawl most appropriate for them. Each year we give 20 to 40 shawls to TESSA.

We who make these shawls and blankets do so with prayers that God's love, hope, care, and concern will wrap around those who receive them and bring them comfort. If you know of someone who needs a shawl, please email Jane Gazal at jane.gazal@yahoo.com or call her at 719-685-5367 or contact Jacque Franklin at 719-635-3549.



The Moving Word

Sat., Dec 3rd, 8:45-10:15 a.m.

(First Saturday of each month thru May)

Childcare provided.

Contact **Jenny Finn** at 291-3120.

Sponsored by the Movement Ministry.

Deepening into the love of God within us through movement, scripture and prayer.

Every breath is a sacrament, an affirmation of our connection with all living things, a renewal of our link with our ancestors and a contribution to generations yet to come.

-David Suzuki

Humans have loaded the Bible with baggage that does not serve body and soul; dogma that does not grow Love.

The Moving Word meets on the **first Saturday** of the month. In this monthly class, we dance back to the beauty that is alive and well in the wisdom traditions of old.

Through prayer, dance and breath we reclaim the ancient wisdom of scripture. Breathing Love into the darkest places is where we come alive.

Unfortunately, Christianity has been pushed so far up in the head, many of us either reject it or have no connection to it anymore.

In a city where Christianity has been deadened with the misuse of scripture, this is a relevant and important place to reconnect with wisdom that is as ancient as the breath.

No Charge or Pre-Registration.

Come, let us breathe new life into these ancient words. Shalom

Yahweh Yoga for Kids

Sat., Dec 3rd, 9-10 a.m.

Children Grades 1 and older are invited to attend yoga class in Room EF.

Same time as Moving Word.

Contact Del Hokanson at
del@fcucc.org



Adult Faith Formation Activities

The Forum

Sunday mornings from 9 to 10 a.m. in Carey Chapel

Dec. 4: Steve Kern - *An Update on the God-in-the-Gaps Theory: Moral Intuition From a Modern Perspective*

Steve directs the Diploma Program in the International Baccalaureate Program at Palmer High School and teaches a class called "The Theory of Knowledge." Always warmly received at the Forum, Steve will talk about recent developments in cognitive neuroscience, evolutionary psychology, and comparative anthropology that have shed new light on the question of the source of our ethical codes. He will use the work of contemporary researchers (e.g., Steven Pinker, Jonathan Haidt, and Sam Harris), to explore the hypothesis that there exists something we might call "moral intuition," a capacity, much like language, which human beings have evolved in order to survive and thrive.

Dec. 11: Bruce Sage - *A Minority Report—Learning from Numbers 13 & 14*

Bruce has taught numerous biblical survey and theological-based classes for many years. He has a deep interest in Christian education, graduated from UCLA, and has a Masters in Divinity from the Iliff School of Theology. Bruce was a Methodist minister as well as a hospice chaplain. He graciously led the Forum from Sept. 2010 through May 2011.

For more information, contact Howard Ray at 599-7976 or howardray@usa.net.

Bible Study

Wednesday mornings from 9:30 to 11 a.m. in the library.

Soul Feast

Thursday mornings from 9 to 11 a.m. in the Carey Chapel. Currently studying Bishop Spong's Book: *A New Christianity for a New World: Why Traditional Faith is Dying & How a New Faith is Being Born (2002)*

Book Club

No Meeting in December. Contact Linda Boles for info.

Friends of Emerson

1st & 3rd Thursday in December from 4 - 5 p.m. in the library. [Most months, are 2nd & 4th Thursdays; watch the bulletin.]

For more info, contact Lucy Bell at lucybell@comcast.net.

Meditation & Contemplative Prayer

Centering Prayer:

Monday from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. in the Carey Chapel.

Contemplative Prayer:

Tuesday from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. in the Carey Chapel.

Labyrinth Walking:

Thursday from 4:30 - 7 p.m. in the Founders' Room.







Healthy Snacks for the Holiday Season

By Peggy Weissman, Retired RN, Health Ministry Committee Member

With Thanksgiving just past and Christmas soon to follow, the whirlwind of the holiday season can be overwhelming. Staying on a healthy diet for three meals a day can seem to be unrealistic as we rush from one store to the other, trying to buy everything on our list in one trip. Lunch is often sacrificed, and then big-time hunger sets in, with just one more stop to make. Do you ever say to yourself, "I'll get those Reese's Cups at the check-out. At least they have peanut butter in them!"

Yes, there is a better way, although it does take a bit of planning ahead. While they don't take the place of a healthy lunch, there are portable healthy snacks that you can package up in snack or sandwich bags ahead of time. Having something with you can tide you over until you get home and have something more substantial. And don't forget to take that bottle of water with you!

Here are some portable healthy snacks to carry:

- ☞ a **small fruit**, such as a clementine (a mini-tangerine that is easy to peel) 
- ☞ your favorite **apple** or a small bunch of unseeded **grapes** 
- ☞ a handful of **nuts** (almonds, walnuts, peanuts, or cashews, preferably unsalted) 
- ☞ a **home-made granola bar** made of healthy ingredients (think unsaturated fat, low in sugar and sodium) 

Have simple, healthy snacks on hand at home too!

Healthy snacks are not only needed on the road, but at home, too, with all that there is to do, like planning for meals, decorating the house, wrapping presents, etc. Having some **carrot and celery sticks** cut and ready in a glass of water in the refrigerator increases the probability that you will reach for a couple of those rather than that calorie-laden cookie. Dipping them in a favorite **hummus** (there are many flavors available or you can make your own) is more filling, and that extra fiber doesn't hurt, either. Celery has the unique ability to pair with a variety of fillings, such as **peanut butter**, or a **low-fat cream cheese**.



Check out these books!

There are some great recipes for snacks that are not labor-intensive to prepare. Some of them have a fairly long shelf life if stored as recommended in the recipe. Due to copyright laws, the recipes could not be duplicated in this article, so the following books, all available at Amazon.com, are worth considering:

Grazing, by Julie Van Rosendaal.

There are two editions, one published in 2005, and the latest one in January, 2011. Some of the recipes call for sweeteners, but there are plenty to pick from that are low in sugars.

The Ultimate Healthy Snack List by C. Elias.

This book shows a lot of promise as it has over 130 healthy snack recipes for adults and kids, and many are gluten-free. There are valuable tips included as well. Also, it has received rave reviews.

So, snack on healthy foods, and feel better this holiday season!

For more information, contact Peggy Weissman at peggyw776@gmail.com.

Cooking School Series a Success

By Christine Hall, Health Ministry Committee Member

The "Cooking School" series of presentations ended for the season with a lively demonstration by Dave Petersen of "The Art of the Hand-Built Tamale." He taught us how to blend masa flour by hand with garlic, chili powder, warm broth, corn oil, and roasted cumin seeds, then fold the mixture into water-softened corn husks and spread it with a generous layer of shredded pork. We then rolled, tied, and stacked the tamales vertically in a steamer for a 45-minute steam bath. The side dishes we made included black beans with onion and cilantro, and a butternut squash casserole recipe that had been featured in the *Gazette* that week.

There were about 15 enthusiastic participants with flour to the elbows and satisfied looks on their faces following the feast. We will resume cooking classes next Lenten Season in pursuit of our goal, which is to find our way back to the center of a well-lived life which includes the exploration of fresh, whole foods, new recipes, different cuisines, and sharing time around the table with family and friends. There are great health benefits that result from such a life-style.

For more information, contact christine_c_hall@msn.com.



Congregational Life: October 23rd-November 20th

By Rev. Jacque Franklin, Associate Minister

Thank you ...

Lee Lehmkuhl, Lori Pinello, Sara Wilkerson, Jane Ridings and **Liz Arnold** were liturgists for Sunday service. Annual Stewardship messages were presented by **Lori Pinello, Jennifer Malenky, Jane Ridings,** and **David Nath**. Musical offerings were given by **Lyn Boudreau** who led music for the Capital Campaign Celebration; **Cyndy Nath, David Nath, Pam Lehmkuhl** and **Lee Lehmkuhl** of the Colorato Quartet sang for Acapella Sunday. The Capital Campaign concluded with a beautiful lunch celebration thanks to the **Celebration Committee**. Other thanks include **Bridget Duffy** and **Kathy Beck** for substituting for Sunday School; **Lori DiPasquale** for leading Kid's Yahweh Yoga; **Jennifer Ross** for Nursery donations and for art work in the Children's hallway; **Kelly Smith** for donating "healthy" toy food for the Nursery; and **ALL the Fall Sunday School teachers**.

Congratulations to ...

Deidre and **Sam Schoolcraft** who endured a long court battle over their foster son **Xavi**. We are all grateful to God that Xavi has a home with the Schoolcrafts. **Linda LeMieux** received the NAACP Presidential Award for her service as chapter treasurer. **Kate Holbrook** was promoted from Assistant Chaplain to Chaplain of Colorado College. Several **members of FCUCC** sang in the Theatreworks production of "Church."

Prayers for ...

We sent prayers on behalf of **Nancy Wenzlau** who struggles with arthritic pain in addition to other acute health concerns. **Lee Kelly** lost her long time Yellow Lab companion, **Will. Frank** and **Elfriede Jopp** have been in contact since their trip to be with their daughter **Johanna Olson**. She is undergoing cancer treatment after surgery. **Frank Shelton's** father, **Frank Shelton Sr.** is now in hospice care. **Hope Woodhead** requests prayers for her cousin **Galen Stone** in ICU with pneumonia that is not responding to antibiotics.

First Congregational UCC Women's Winter Retreat January 14-15, 2012

Check-in 10:00 a.m. on Saturday
Adjournment at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday

at La Foret Conference & Retreat Center
6145 Shoup road, CS/CO 80908

Retreat Theme – Renewal and Realignment

Start the New Year off right with a time to relax in the warm and inviting meeting spaces of the Ponderosa Lodge. Break out sessions will be brought to you by talented local women who specialize in reflection and relaxation.

Cost \$75 (includes cabin Sat. night and three meals)

To register or for more information,
please contact:

Liz Ryan at 594-6540 or ebryan57@msn.com
Sheryl Cline 641-2912 or sageart7@gmail.com

First Congregational UCC's 3rd Annual Men's Midwinter Retreat February 3-4, 2012

Check-in at 4:00-6:00 p.m. on Friday,
Adjournment at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday

at La Foret Conference & Retreat Center
6145 Shoup Road, CS/CO 80908

Retreat theme: "The radical, transformative, and challenging message of the Hebrew prophets."

**Retreat Facilitator: Roger Butts, Senior Minister,
High Plains Church, Unitarian Universalist**

**Suggested preparatory reading: Walter
Brueggemann's: *The Prophetic Imagination***

Plan to join us for our third annual Men's Retreat – a gathering of personal reflection and discernment, group discussion and fellowship, song and contemplative walks on the beautiful grounds of La Foret.

Cost: \$75 (includes cabin Friday night and three meals)

*Registration forms are available at the Church
website and in the Church office.*

*For more information, please contact Dave Seyfert at:
473-5126 or daveseyfert1@msn.com*

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



12/1 Cody John
 12/1 Jim Matson
 12/3 Jenny Glick
 12/3 Karen Greco
 12/3 Trish Thornton
 12/3 William Tynan
 12/4 Gretchen Howard
 12/5 Garrett Dawson
 12/5 Chloe Kemp
 12/5 Eliot Laffely
 12/5 Andrew Malek
 12/5 Rick Purinton

12/6 Adam Freeman
 12/6 Erik Henriksen
 12/6 Linda Seyfert
 12/7 Jessica Cameron
 12/7 Carol Emmer
 12/7 Richard Hall
 12/7 Jesse Jordan
 12/7 Carol Keenan
 12/7 Anthony Parker
 12/7 G.L. Scarborough
 12/9 Anthony Nelson
 12/10 Jim Bramwell
 12/10 JoAnne Henjum
 12/10 Lea Qualls

12/11 John Boles
 12/11 Matthew Gorges
 12/11 Andy Kort
 12/11 Phil Tate
 12/12 Jack Barber
 12/13 Pat Dolin
 12/13 Vanessa Hopkins
 12/14 Michael Anderson
 12/14 Mike Matthews
 12/14 Andrew Moore
 12/15 Don Drake

12/15 Alex Lindberg
 12/15 Al Skinner

12/16 Jimmy Sue
 Guggenhome
 12/16 Ken Smith
 12/16 Scott Smith
 12/16 Eli Wright
 12/18 Ethan Horne
 12/18 Mary Jane Ray
 12/18 Samantha Stearns
 12/20 Brooke Brown

12/21 Logan Bennett
 12/21 Nancy Briley
 12/22 Aiden Eslinger
 12/22 Victoria May
 12/22 Lee Tatum
 12/23 Anton Akse
 12/23 Erma Chappell
 12/24 Drew Getty
 12/24 Julia Getty
 12/25 Harper Pfender
 12/25 Sydney Sandberg

12/26 Zach DeBacker
 12/27 Anna Adams
 12/27 Britton Ciampa
 12/27 Carrol Loveless
 12/28 Skip Cochrane
 12/29 Brian Hofflander
 12/29 Lorelei Vollmar
 12/30 Tori Anderson
 12/30 Ann Benson
 12/30 William Jun
 12/30 Natasha Walker



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES



12/01 Patti & James White
 12/4 Marianna & Truman Fox
 12/9 Ruth Roland &
 David Petersen
 12/10 Wilma & Christiaan
 Steenberg
 12/12 Kris & Ed Doerffel
 12/20 Jean & Lew Archer
 12/20 Elfriede & Frank Jopp
 12/22 Janet & Paul Carpenter
 12/22 Lynn & Ben Young
 12/28 Nancy Henjum &
 Steve Kern
 12/29 Casey & Rock Welch
 12/30 Promis & Nate Hoffman



**Merry Christmas
 to All!**





December Worship

Services in the Sanctuary at 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.

Christmas and New Years Day, only ONE service, at 11 a.m.

ADVENT means "coming." The season of Advent is a time when Christians prepare for the Feast of the Incarnation; the coming of Christ on Christmas Day. Advent has been called "the little Lent," a sober time to prepare in the gathering darkness for the Light that is coming into the world.

Sunday, December 4 – 2nd Sun. in Advent: **Peace**

Today we continue in the season of Advent, lighting the second candle on our Advent wreath, the candle of Peace. Holy Communion is shared and celebrated at both services. The Joyful Noise Children's Choir and the Chancel Choir sing at the 11:00 service. **Rev. Broadbent** preaches on Isaiah 40:1-11, the prophetic passage beginning with the beloved words, "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God."

Sunday, December 11 – 3rd Sun. in Advent: **Joy**

Today is known traditionally as "Gaudete Sunday," *gaudete* meaning "joy" in Latin. We light the third candle on our Advent wreath (the pink one!), the candle of Joy. **Rev. Jacques Franklin** preaches on Psalm 126 and its proclamation of joy: "The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced."

Sunday, December 18 – 4th Sunday in Advent: **Love**

Today we light the fourth candle on the Advent wreath, the candle of Love. **Rev. Broadbent** preaches on the story of the Annunciation found in Luke 1:26-38, the scary and wonderful words of the angel Gabriel to Mary that begin with, "Greetings, favored one..."

Christmas Eve Services

Saturday, December 24th

- ♥ **4:00 p.m.**– Family Service including Christmas Pageant (with Children & Youth)
- ♥ **6:00 p.m.**– Traditional Service of Lessons & Carols (Chancel Choir Sings)
- ♥ **11:00 p.m.**– Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols (with Holy Communion)

Christmas Day—One Service

Sunday, December 25 – One Service at 11:00 a.m.

We gather on Christmas Day to tell the Christmas story and sing carols.

Special Children & Youth Schedule for Advent Sundays

9:00 a.m. service, Children and Youth meet in **Classroom BC** (no need to come to the sanctuary first) where they are invited and encouraged to participate in preparations for the 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service. This includes young people who will be traveling on Christmas Eve.

11:00 a.m. service, there will be a Children's Message followed by Sunday School.

Weekly Advent Taize Services

Come & Experience Silence ...

Taize Services will be held on **Tuesdays** during Advent (December 6th, 13th and 20th) at **7 p.m.** in the Sanctuary.



Coming in January ...

- ♦ NY Day - only one (Very Special) Service at 11 a.m. (Look for info.)
- ♦ Epiphany Day
- ♦ Baptism of Christ Sunday
- ♦ Annual Meeting of the Congregation

CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator—**Nancy Henjum**
 Vice Moderator—**Sid Shelton**
 Treasurer—**Polly Strovink**
 Secretary—**Pete Hokanson**
 Care & Fellowship—**Connie Raub**
 Outreach—**Deidre Schoolcraft**
 Worship & Spiritual Life—**Jenny Finn**
 Education—**Beth Garrison-Kemp**

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Membership Clerk—**Lois Benson**
 Historian—**Wil Green**

VOLUNTEER STAFF

Communicator Editors—
Ardith Hanson (layout) &
Jane Warren (text)
 Communion Coordinator—**Peggy Weissman**
 Fellowship Coordinator—**Lori Goodwin**
 Flowers Coordinator—**Ann Benson**
 Flute Choir—**Phyllis White**
 Head Ushers—**Rick Purinton & Oscar Ridings**
 Lay Representative to ESM—**Laura Pfender**
 Liturgist Coordinator—**Marsha Garrett**
 Parish Nurse—**Nancy Lippincott**

ASSOCIATED IN MINISTRY4-Way Covenant:

Rev. Darlene Avery
Rev. Lyn Boudreau
Rev. Stephen Brown
Rev. Pat Dolin
Rev. Derek Krehbiel
Rev. Patty Walker

Seminarians:

Jeff Dodson
Kelly Ryan
Deborah Saxon
Mandy Todd Moore
Cathy White
Samantha Garrett

In-Care:

Jocelyn Bakkemo

CHURCH CONTACT INFO

20 East Saint Vrain Street
 Colorado Springs, CO 80903
 Office Hours: **M-F / 9a-5p**
 Voice: **(719) 635-3549**
 Fax: **(719) 633-4715**
 Email: *office@fcucc.org*
 Website: *www.fcucc.org*

PAID STAFF

Lead Minister—**Benjamin Broadbent**
 Associate Minister—**Jacque Franklin**
 Business Administrator—**Ruth Roland**
 Office Administrator—**Christy Kessler**
 Administrative Assistant—
Richard Grebenstein
 Guest Organist—**Roger McCormick**
 Temporary Music Coordinator &
 Chancel Choir Director—
Mandy Todd Moore
 Handbell Choir Director—**Carol Fields**
 Children's Ministry Coordinator—
Del Hokanson
 Youth & Adult Ministry Coordinator—
Marta Fioriti
 Nursery Attendants—
Spencer Kellogg
Jo Baum
Kiara Nath
Kayla Schroeder
 Custodians—**Bob Scheafer & Randy Goodwin**
 Sunday Sexton—**Teri McCabe**

PASTORS EMERITI

Rev. Dr. Jerry Jordan
Rev. Dr. James White

AD HOC STAFF

Wedding Coordinator—**Gail Rogers**
 Funeral Coordinator—**Carol Fields**

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audio / Visual—**Paul Schwotzer**
 Bereavement Receptions—**Karen Miskel, Sharron Waterhouse & Sandy Wolczak**
 Bldg Conn Proj Mgr—**Kirk Wohlheuter**
 Clergy/Congregation Relations—
Liz Arnold & Wil Green
 Community Life—**Lin Luinetti Quinlan**
 Faith Formation—**Sara Doud & Tom Francis**
 Finan Minist Table—**Nancy Henjum**
 Financial Advisory—**Polly Strovink**
 Health Ministry—**Nancy Lippincott**
 Historical—**Karol Finch**
 Human Resources—**Gordon Riegel**
 Ministry Discernment—**Steve Brown**
 Justice & Peace—**Jerry White**
 JWW Lectureship—**Sue Scott**
 Kitchen Witches—**Lois Benson & Dolly Eager**
 Library—**Jeanie Tate**
 Comm & Marketing—**Mike Matthews**
 Membership—**Jean Hall**
 Mission Giving & Outreach—
Angie Adams
 Movement Ministry—**Jenny Finn**
 Music & Arts—**Dave Nath**
 Mystery Tradition—**Nancy Forgy**
 Nominating—**Sue Scott**
 Open & Affirming—**Trey Austin**
 OWL Steering—**Sara Qualls**
 Planned Giving—**Jennifer Malenky**
 Plymouth Circle—**Marilyn Johnson**
 Prayer Shawl Ministry—**Jerusha Goebel**
 Risk Reduction & Response—
Nancy Dawson
 Sanctuary Arts—**Thom Andreas**
 Stewardship—**Lori Pinello**
 Taizé Planning—**Karin Henriksen**



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UCC IS AN "OPEN AND
AFFIRMING"
CONGREGATION. WE INVITE
PEOPLE OF EVERY AGE,
RACE, MARITAL STATUS,
SEXUAL ORIENTATION,
GENDER EXPRESSION,
MEANS, ABILITY, AND
SPIRITUAL TRADITION TO
JOIN US IN THE LOVE OF
GOD AND NEIGHBOR
THROUGH CHRISTIAN
WORSHIP, DEDICATION TO
EDUCATION, AND
COMMITMENT TO SERVICE.

Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado memory and appreciation

By Lynn Young, Capital Campaign Co-Chair

"Do Justice, Love Kindness, Walk Humbly."

At First Congregational United Church of Christ, we sing these words from Micah 6 at the end of each service. The Gay and Lesbian Fund and all who gave it life and breath are shining examples of these words!

We've been so honored to be recipients of your grants over the years—funds that have made it possible for our "Dwelling Place" to pulse with community groups; our youth to go beyond the walls of the church for service experiences; a retirement celebration for our long-serving, justice-oriented minister; the launch of our Endowed Lectureship Fund. Quietly, consistently, you were there making all the difference: inspiring, granting, leading. Without big fanfare. With love for the possible. With inclusion of all. You showed up every day, and made our community shine more brightly. Your presence will be greatly missed ... but your legacy will live on forever!

With Love & Gratitude, First Congregational United Church of Christ