



# Shalom

First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
700 Marion Street NE, Salem, Oregon 97301  
503-363-3660 [www.uccsalem.org](http://www.uccsalem.org)

Reverend Dr. Janet Parker, Senior Pastor  
Reverend Emily Goodnow, Associate Pastor

Rick Bingham, Moderator  
December 3, 2014



## Advent Fest 2014 This Sunday, December 7, immediately following worship

- \* Award-winning potluck sandwich buffet and cookie dessert
- \* Story time with Mrs. Lyndsey Houser-Claus & Caroling
- \* Advent wreath decorating with fresh greens and candles
- \* Card making—Cookie decorating—Cool crafts galore
- \* Christmas sweater contest: Grand prize for the ugliest!
  - \* Fill SIHN's stocking:  
Bring 1 (new) stocking stuffer  
See SIHN article inside.

Bring a book or CD and exchange it for one new-to-you.

- \* Fair trade shopping with One Fair World

### THINGS TO BRING

- ◇ A platter of sandwiches
- ◇ A platter of cookies  
(there are 2 grand prizes for most festive platters—label your creations!)
- ◇ A new stocking stuffer
- ◇ Greens (fir) from your yard
- ◇ Last year's Advent wreath
- ◇ X-mas book/CD to swap  
(Bring some or all of the above.)

◇  
**Wear Christmas sweaters!**

Christmas Media Exchange:



## OUR RAW AND TENDER ADVENT

In the world of shopping malls, nostal-

gic Christmas music, and Hallmark cards, we are entering the sweetest and brightest time of the year—a time of jolly elves, generous spirits, loving families, time-honored traditions, and a license to enjoy an extra helping of frivolity. It's a world that, when we have the good fortune to get caught up in it, can for a time bring us comfort, warm hearts and something approaching happiness. Who wouldn't want to be in that world?

I have my own list of must-have and must-do Christmas traditions. For me, it's not Christmas if I don't put up a tree and watch the following *every year*: Rudolph, A Charlie Brown Christmas, The Grinch Who Stole Christmas, and A Christmas Carol. And of course, see family and friends. And that's not even to mention the importance of daily Advent devotionals and the extra spiritual warmth I feel this time of year in church.

And yet, the first Advent and Christmas bore virtually no resemblance to the Christmas that centuries of Christendom, married to commercialism, cooked up. The first Advent and Christmas was a raw and tender time. This coming Sunday, we'll hear one of the familiar stories about John the Baptist, that fiery-eyed prophet who prepared the way for the One who was



Coming. John, as far as we can tell, was not very sweet or jolly. In fact, John was

the anti-Santa. Dressed in rough garments, this insect-eating prophet of repentance seems about as unlikely a herald for the sweet baby Jesus of our Christmas cards as one could imagine. And yet, John lived in raw and tender times. Under the boot of the Roman Empire, John channeled the fierce urgency of the earlier prophet Isaiah who cries in Is. 64:1, "Oh that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence." Like the ancient prophet, John cried for God's justice and deliverance from forms of oppression that rubbed people raw and made them tender from wounds that would not heal.

Today, when we look behind the pretty worlds that peddle a sentimental Christmas on sale for those who can get it, we find that our real world is still raw and tender. As our society reels from the pain caused by the entire tragic tale of the shooting of Michael Brown and its aftermath, and confronts painful questions about another police shooting of black teenager Tamir Rice, we find that old racial wounds are being rubbed raw again. As our nation's universities and fraternities are forced to confront years of shocking and unaccountable violence against young women on campus, we ache for the trauma visited upon tender youth and

cry out for real change. And in our own hearts, for reasons both private and shared, many of us carry burdens that weigh us down and rub us raw. And so, with the prophet, we may also cry to God, “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down!” During your own raw and tender Advent, I invite you to ponder the words of Matthew Laney, one of the contributors to the UCC Advent Devotional (which is still available for those who want one): “Advent is our opportunity to cry out for deliverance and celebrate the answer to that cry. God did tear open the heavens and come down, but not in the way anyone predicted: in vulnerable flesh to love, heal, and suffer with us as one of us....It may not be the gift we expected, but it is the one we need.” May you find that the Christ child brings you the gift you need to receive this Advent, and may it bring you not just fleeting happiness, but a deep and abiding joy.

~Pastor Janet Parker



**IN OUR PRAYERS**  
We give thanks for all of those who are living vibrant and rich lives with HIV/AIDS, especially for those in our congregation who have beaten extraordinary odds, kept the faith,

and continue to thrive!....We give thanks and ask for continued prayers for healing for **Melvin Stewart**, whose knee is improving and who hopes to avoid more surgery to clear up an in-

fection....We invite prayers for **Martha Wells** who recently had another bout of fainting and who is undergoing more tests to try to determine the cause—we pray for strength, healing and a clear diagnosis....We lift up **Rebecca Ralston** and her parents, **Ted and Donna Braun**, in our prayers as Rebecca goes to spend time with them at their retirement community in TN and help them with health challenges and a possible move. Continued prayers for recovery from chronic headaches are also invited for **Avery Oelhafen**. And as we go through this year’s holiday season, we are especially mindful of all those for whom this is a difficult time of year, especially those who have been recently bereaved. We pray God’s comfort and strength will carry them through and that they will also be blessed with moments of laughter, love, and joy during this holy time.

**WEDDING BELLS**

Ken Cook and Jeff Standy are cordially inviting you to their wedding on Sunday, December 14 at 3 p.m. at our church. RSVP 503-505-8935. Please, no gifts; bring food for the potluck reception to follow. Attire: ugly Christmas sweater.



Pastor Janet is pleased to announce that she and her fiancée, Robyn Hartwig, have set the date for their wedding. It will take place on August 15 at 1:00 p.m. To accommodate the num-

ber of people who may wish to attend, the service will be held at St. Mark Lutheran Church, and the reception will be in Talkington and Huntington Halls. Members of both Janet's and Robyn's churches are invited!



**STEWARDSHIP:  
Last Call  
and First Calls**

We're off to a fine start with financial pledges as well as Time and Talent commitments for 2015. We are encouraging everyone to turn in their pledges by Monday, December 8 if at all possible. The Trustees need time to consider the pledge income to create the church budget that we will vote on at Annual Meeting in January. It's a busy time of year for all folks, but we need all possible responses from our community. Mail in your card...or drop it in the collection plate on December 7...or email or phone your commitment to the church office, and Annemieke will complete a pledge card for your signature. After December 8, we will begin follow up phone calls to all those we haven't yet heard from. Many thanks!

**TRUSTEES CORNER**

The Trustees have been working with the Stewardship Committee to establish a budget for 2015. At this point we have received pledges from about 78 people or families out of about 130 potential pledge sources. We are hoping that over the next few weeks we can complete the pledge drive. We

may need to come back to the congregation if pledges do not provide at least the level of support received last year.

The security system has been installed and will be activated when all with entrance keys provide a personal code that can be used to deactivate the system if needed. The system will automatically activate at 11:00 p.m. and deactivate at 7:00 a.m. If the system alarms then the security company will call the church and ask a responder for a numerical, 4-digit code to clear the system. If there is no response then the police are notified and one of four designated church members are called to respond and open the church for the police. Hopefully this will be a very rare event.

In October, the Trustees authorized the hiring of a bookkeeper. We have contracted with Steve Pruett who works through his corporation, Sandals, Inc. Steve will be working about 3 hours weekly to reconcile accounts, write checks and provide backup to the Office Manager when she is on vacation. Steve has a degree in accounting and he has worked as an accountant and bookkeeper in the Salem area for 18 years. Steve will be doing some of the duties the Treasurer has done in the past so we are hoping that the Treasurer's job will become more appealing and we can fill that position for 2015.

**CHURCH HYGIENE**

While there are many ways to support our effort to work with our homeless neighbors this is an opportunity you

won't want to miss. We need to expand our team of folks who check the areas around our church once daily and clean up after anyone who has used the area as a toilet. Sadly our fair city has not provided public restrooms through the night that would then be used instead (most of the time). We have decided that this should not be a job for paid staff, but that we handle this as a congregation. We have all the needed equipment and will provide the training. Ideally we'd have one person for each day; that person could check at the most convenient time for them. One particularly important time we need to have covered is a check 30-60 minutes prior to Sunday morning worship (or even before the earlier activities if possible). This is not an open-ended commitment. Please contact Rick Bingham or Rick O'Grady. Thanks in advance.

### **ADULT EDUCATION**

December 7 @ 9 a.m. (note earlier start time) "Discovering Practices for Awakening Leadership: For the Recovery of Human Life and the Healing of God's Creation. Led by Sue Koger and Janet Parker in the Adult Education room upstairs. Come and join Sue, Janet and others who will share with you a new approach to cultivating sustainability, sanity and integrity in our daily lives and in our communal lives with Practices for Awakening Leadership developed by EcoFaith Recovery.

Would you like your life to feel more in sync with the rhythms of God's Cre-

ation, and would you like to feel more like a part of the solution rather than a contributor to ills like climate change and environmental injustice? Come and see what this emerging initiative at FCUCC is about.

Note: Adult Education will be on hiatus for the rest of December and will resume on January 11 with an exciting new offering "Lessons of the Spirit from Our Church Mothers" by our own Rev. Dana McBrien at our normal start time of 9:15 a.m. You may have heard of the "Church Fathers," those church leaders, writers and theologians from the first four centuries like St. Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory of Nyssa, or Ignatius of Antioch. You may have heard of St. Jerome. But what do you know about the women of the early church, our "Church Mothers?" Come to Adult Education hour January 11, 18, 25, and Feb. 1 to find out. Rev. Dana McBrien will share their stories, then we will talk about our own lives in light of themes in theirs. Jan. 11: Helena; Jan. 18: Macrina and Nona; Jan. 25: Marcella and Paula; and Feb. 1: Monica.

### **CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER GROUP X 2**

Anyone who is interested in joining a contemplative prayer/meditation group but cannot attend the ongoing 8:30 a.m. Sunday sessions should contact Judith Taussig at 503-581-8983.

### **LGBTQ Group Meeting**

LGBTQ group meets @ 6 pm on **Friday, Dec. 12th** at Table Five 08 (corner of State & High) for dinner and

then plans to attend the Confluence concert following at 7:30 pm at the church. Contact Bev & Jenny @ 503-507-0229 or [bevnjenny@comcast.net](mailto:bevnjenny@comcast.net) so we can make reservations for all who plan to join us.

**CONFLUENCE CHORUS  
“Winter Wonder” Concert  
December 12 at 7:30 p.m.**

Confluence Chorus, under the artistic direction of “our own” Ray Elliott, performs their Winter Concert in our church on Friday, December 12 at 7:30 p.m. Advance tickets cost \$15 (\$12 seniors/students) and are available from choir members Susie D’Anna, Melvin Stewart, Lyndsey Houser or Chris Sproul. At the door, the ticket price is \$18 (\$15 seniors/students). No one is turned away for lack of funds.

**CAROLING, DECEMBER 13, 3 P.M.!**

Come join us for an intergenerational extravaganza to spread Christmas Cheer! Gather at the church, and we’ll head out together to sing, visit, share candy canes, and bring joy to some members of our congregation who might need a little extra Christmas spirit this winter. Then return for a potluck chili dinner in Talkington Hall. Not up for the drive? Join us for the chili, and we’ll tell you how it went! All are welcome at this joy-filled event.

**INSTA-PAGEANT, TO BE PERFORMED DURING WORSHIP DEC. 21**

Calling all angels and shepherds, wise people and singers – we’re doing a pageant! In an effort to balance the joy

of a pageant, and the busy-ness of our FCUCC families’ lives, we’re doing a quick, 3-rehearsal pageant to be shared during worship on Dec. 21. This pageant (details on pageant to come soon) will be rehearsed during Learning Hour on December 7 and 14, and before worship on December 21. We will find roles for all children who would like to be involved – please try to get your young disciples to worship each of these three days, so we can rehearse and put together the pageant of all pageants! And prepare to be wowed and spirit-filled on the 21<sup>st</sup> for our interactive, intergenerational worship service that includes beautiful music, a pageant of fun and joy, and our whole church family together as we anticipate the birth of the Christ Child!



**ADVENT YOUTH GROUP**

**OPPORTUNITIES:**

**Dec. 7, Advent Fest!**

Come help out with Advent Fest, after worship. Wear a festive Christmas sweater, help little ones with their crafts, participate in the dessert contest if you like. Youth are an essential part of this community event – please come!

**Dec. 13, Caroling! 3 p.m.**

Come bring Christmas Cheer to mem-

bers of our church who might need a little extra joy this winter. Join us for this intergenerational event of traipsing around Salem together to sing to members and friends of our church, followed by a potluck chili dinner back at the church. Starts at 3 p.m. at the church.

**Dec. 14, Paint Day in the Youth Room! 12 p.m.-2 p.m.**

The Youth Room has bright new colors, but the walls are blank! Bobby Brewer-Wallin sketched the outlines of our designs in pencil on the wall, and now we get to paint them in! Come finish the project we started this summer, and make the youth room awesome. Wear clothes that can get painty!

**Dec. 21, Pageant during worship**

Come help out, cheer on, or even participate in this year's pageant! If you'd like a part, please come to rehearsals during learning hour on December 7 and 14. After worship, help wrap stocking stuffers and presents for the SIHN Christmas party the following night.

**Dec. 22, SIHN Christmas Party, 7 p.m.!**

We're hosting the Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network families this year over Christmas, and we're coming together on the 22<sup>nd</sup> to throw them a party! All hands are needed to come give out stockings, sing Christmas carols, decorate the tree, eat cookies, paint ornaments, and make the season bright for the families staying with us. Volunteer opportunities also available on the evening of December 23, if you'd like

to come back – contact Pastor Emily if you'd like to come make gingerbread houses with our guests.

**HOSTING SIHN CHRISTMAS WEEK**

Please visit with the good folks at the SIHN sign-up table in the McDougale Narthex before and after worship on Sundays in Advent to find out what their needs are for hosting the SIHN families in our church during Christmas week. There are many opportunities for you to be part of this ministry. Read on...

**CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER @ 1 P.M.**

All are invited to a Christmas meal with the SIHN families on Christmas Day at 1 p.m in Talkington Hall. The turkey and ham are provided. There are signup lists in the McDougale narthex for sides and desserts, before and after worship on the Sundays before Christmas.

**SIHN STOCKING STUFFER**

About the SIHN stocking stuffers to bring to Advent Fest: there are three kids ages 3 through 9, and three single parents in the network at the moment. We'd love to have stockings, too; so, if you have extra, please consider donating them to the church.



**MONDAY NOON BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP CHOOSES "ZEALOT" AS ITS NEXT BOOK**

Starting Monday, January 12, the group will discuss Reza Aslan's book "Zealot". Controversial and challenging, this book will push us to consider a new approach to Jesus' life. From an interview with the au-

thor. Preaching the sole sovereignty of God, zealous Jews wanted to throw off the yoke of Roman occupation and cleanse the Promised Land of all foreign elements. Although there is no evidence that Jesus of Nazareth was himself a violent revolutionary, Aslan asserts that Jesus' actions and his teachings about the Kingdom of God indicate that he was a follower of the zealot doctrine, which is why he, like so many zealots before and after him, was ultimately executed by Rome for the crime of sedition. Sign up in the Church office to order a book (\$18.00 from Book Bin) and join us. We will place the order on December 22.

### **SUMMARY OF FCUCC CHURCH GOALS SURVEY – 2014**

The Peace and Justice committee is pleased to share this summary of results of the Church Goals Survey which took place last summer. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the response of the congregation to the three priorities for 2014-2015 that Council adopted for its work and recommended to the congregation last spring. Those priorities included extending our extravagant welcome and nurturing our members; becoming leaders in our community in addressing homelessness; and becoming leaders in our community and Conference on climate change. The full report will be available on the website and in the church office.

**Number of Respondents:** 73 people took the FCUCC church goals survey between June and September, 2014. This report analyzes the responses of 70

of those who took the survey.

**Gender:** 58% of those who took the survey were female and 42% were male.

**Age:** 45% percent were age 61 or over, 47% were between the ages of 41 and 60, 6% were between ages 26 to 40, and 2% between 19 and 25.

**Time at FCUCC:** 38% had attended FCUCC for more than 10 years, 26% attending between 6 to 10 years, 16% between 4 to 6 years, 2% between 1 to 2 years and 9% up to 1 year

**Agreement with the three goals:** The vast majority of respondents (94%) favors or strongly favor the three goals: 1) developing our extravagant welcome/nurture; 2) taking a lead on homelessness; and 3) taking a lead on climate change. Only 6% are neutral on the goals.

### **Importance of Goals and Confidence that We Can Achieve Them**

People rated all three goals fairly high (between 7.2 and 9.1 out of 10) both in terms of how important the three goals are and how confident they are we can make progress on them. The extravagant welcome/nurture goal came out as the highest in importance overall, followed by homelessness and then by climate change. Oftentimes people feel a goal is important but have low levels of confidence around achieving that goal. So the relatively high levels of confidence around achieving these three goals are encouraging. It means that people are keen to act on them.

## Christmas Eve 2014

5:30 p.m. child-friendly  
Lessons and Carols  
Service

\*\*

9:30 p.m.  
Wassail & Cookies  
Reception

\*\*

10:30 p.m.  
Lessons and Carols:  
a Candlelight Service

\*\*

This year's 5:30 p.m. service is child-friendly and open to all. It's a Lessons and Carols service that is geared more towards our children, with stories and child-friendly carols, and maybe a costume or two for the daring angel or shepherd who wants to bring the story alive. If children are interested in being readers for this service, contact Pastor Emily for a role!

## Poinsettia Order Form

Please fill out this form if you wish to order a poinsettia to grace the sanctuary during Advent. Place the form (with payment attached) in the offering plate or put it in the file on the office counter.

They are \$10 each and may be taken home after the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

—

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Number of poinsettias: \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of:

In memory of :

Check/Cash enclosed in the  
amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Weekly Recurring Events

### **Sundays**

8:30 a.m.

**Contemplative Prayer Group,**  
Conference Room

9:15 a.m.

### **Adult Learning Hour,**

Adult Education Classroom

(Note: on December 7, this class starts at 9 a.m., not 9:15 a.m.)

10:30 a.m.

**Worship Service & Children's Learning Hour**

11:45 a.m.

**Fellowship Time,** Talkington Hall

### **Mondays**

12 noon

### **Adult Book Study meets in Parlor**

The group is reading: *A People's History of Christianity* written by Diana Butler Bass. Don Lundberg facilitates. Join us! Last meeting in 2014 is on December 15; group resumes on January 12 with a new book. See article.

7 p.m.

**Bell Choir rehearsal,** Huntington Hall Stage--until 8:30 p.m.

### **Tuesdays**

3:30 p.m.

**Meet up with Pastor Emily at the Ike Box** until 5 p.m.

### **Thursdays**

7:15 p.m. **Chancel Choir rehearsal with Ray Elliott, director.** New voices are always welcome. Join!

## Monthly Recurring Events

Third Mondays at 6:30 p.m. **Woman Spirit** [bevnjenny@comcast.net](mailto:bevnjenny@comcast.net) for more info.

2nd Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. **Reiki Share Circle** until 8:30 p.m. Talkington Hall.

4th Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. **Taizé Prayer Service** in the Mayflower Chapel (Not in December)

1st Saturdays at 8:05 a.m. **Men's Breakfast** at McGrath's Restaurant (downtown location)

*You are invited to join any group at any time. All are welcome!*



## Calendar

Wednesday, December 3	12:15 p.m.	Women's Fellowship luncheon and Central HS Choir performance
	6:30 p.m.	Emergency Warming Shelter training
	7:30 p.m.	Sound system training
Thursday, December 4	4:00 p.m.	Homelessness Task Force meeting
	6:15 p.m.	Mission and Outreach meeting
Saturday, December 6	8:05 a.m.	Men's Fellowship Breakfast @ downtown McGrath's Restaurant
Sunday, December 7	9:00 a.m.	Adult Learning Hour with Sue Koger and Pastor Janet Parker
	10:30 a.m.	Worship Service
	11:45 a.m.	Advent Fest: see front page
Tuesday, December 9	6:30 p.m.	Trustees meeting
Wednesday, December 10	7:00 p.m.	Council meeting
Thursday, December 11	1:00 p.m.	Personnel meeting
Friday, December 12	6:00 p.m.	LGBTQ Group dinner at Table 5-08
	7:30 p.m.	Confluence Chorus Concert
Saturday, December 13	3:00 p.m.	Caroling & potluck chili dinner
Sunday, December 14	10:30 a.m.	Worship Service
	11:45 a.m.	Fellowship Time
	12 noon	Youth paint youth room
	3:00 p.m.	Wedding Jeff Standy and Ken Cook
	12 midnight	deadline last Shalom of 2014
Wednesday, December 17	1:30 p.m.	Women's Fellowship Circles meet
		Day Circle at Marge Covey's
		Former Evening Circle at Louise Putman's
	7:00 p.m.	Christian Education Board meeting
Thursday, December 18	7:00 p.m.	Pastoral Relations Committee meeting
Sunday, December 21	10:30 a.m.	Worship & Pageant
	11:45 a.m.	Fellowship Time
	5:00 p.m.	SIHN families arrive for a week's stay
Monday, December 22	7:00 p.m.	SIHN Christmas party
Wednesday, December 24	5:30 p.m.	Child-friendly Lessons & Carols Service
	9:30 p.m.	Wassail & Cookies reception
	10:30 p.m.	Lessons & Carols: a Candlelight Service
Thursday, December 25		Christmas Day — Office closed
Friday, December 26		Office closed
Sunday, December 28	10:30 a.m.	Worship Service
	11:45 a.m.	Fellowship Time
Thursday, January 1		New Year's Day — Office closed

First Congregational Church  
700 Marion Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301-3829

Non-Profit Or-  
ganization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Salem, OR  
Permit No. 28

