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First Christian *Chimes*

**A WELCOMING, COMPASSIONATE, SPIRIT-LED PEOPLE OF FAITH
SHARING THE LOVE OF GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST**

Advent in Action: Let's Make a Difference

**An intergenerational gathering of action for the world
Sundays through Advent at 9:45 am**

In 2006, for the four Sundays in Advent leading up to Christmas, our Sunday School classes left their classrooms behind and came together for our first Advent in Action. Side by side, male and female, young and old worked on projects to support ministries in Puyallup and beyond.

Together we collected personal care items and assembled care kits for folks served by the Puyallup Freezing Nights program and the Tacoma Rescue Mission. Some created blank greeting cards to be sent in packages for use by troops serving overseas. Others wrote letters to congressional leaders advocating justice issues such as poverty-focused international developmental assistance. Door hangers announcing our congregation's Christmas services and events schedule were created and distributed door to door. Soup mixes were assembled and sold to raise funds for the Puyallup Food Bank.

This year we are continuing the intergenerational activities of Advent in Action. All—not just Sunday School students—are welcome to join us in the narthex at 9:45 am for one or all of the Sunday mornings leading up to Christmas. We'll learn a bit, sing a few Christmas carols, and work on ministry projects together.



Photo by Jason Huang
Used with permission

So come on, pull up a chair, and try something a little different this December!

Care Package Items Needed:

New socks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, soap, shampoo, combs, razors, shaving cream, feminine care items, hand towels.

Another Kind of Conspiracy: leaving the media war on Christmas behind

By Pastor Nancy

Ever since John Gibson of Fox News published his book, *The War on Christmas* in 2005, the American media has had a feeding frenzy with endless debates on the proper way of greeting shoppers during the holidays. Should store clerks say Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Seasons Greetings, Happy Hanukah, or just give up and simply say Hello? Should public places such as airports and shopping malls have Christmas trees, giant menorahs, or Kwanzaa candles? Religious leaders get exhaustive print space in newspapers and magazines, not to mention hours of television time, protesting this supposed secular assault on Christmas.

Enough already.

The true meaning of Christmas has nothing to do with pleasant greetings offered by harried store clerks. The marvelous story of God's grace given to us in the person of Jesus does not depend upon the presence of Christmas trees at SeaTac airport.

What if this December those of us who are trying to walk the way of Jesus took the time to examine what we've allowed our holy season of Christmas to become? Would we live our lives differently over the next few weeks?

There's a growing movement among churches to discover anew the countercultural message of Christmas. This year several churches and Christian mission organizations are inviting Christians to participate in an *Advent Conspiracy*.

Conspiracy, you ask? What kind of conspiracy?

Simply put, it's a call to put Christ back in Christmas. Think about it for a moment. What if this year was different? What if you and your family experienced a Christmas that put Christ's story at the center of your celebrations? What if the gifts we give this Christmas didn't get returned or shoved into the closet, but actually lived on after December 25th?

This December we could choose to:

Spend less. We all know that we give and receive things at Christmas that aren't needed. Somehow we've allowed the culture of the mall to turn gift-giving into an endless cycle of purchasing. "Is the Advent Conspiracy against gift giving? No way (your kids can breath a sign of relief now)." Some of the best gifts can't be wrapped up in a box.

Give More. If we make the decision to spend less this holiday season, it opens up marvelous opportunities to give more of ourselves to each other. Pictures, poems, the gift of time and talents to each other last long after the gift box of aftershave lotion has been put away under the bathroom sink. Get together with your family now and make alternative gift-giving plans.

Worship More. Attend worship as a family, if possible. Include special worship services in your holiday plans such as our Prayers for Healing service on December 16th or the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. We spend much of our holidays together with others. This year pay attention to the holy times in the midst of celebrations with family and friends. Our word holiday comes from the much older phrase, Holy Day. In what ways are our celebrations "holy times"? Enjoy and celebrate the holy moments of Christmas in our homes and in times of communal worship.

Love all. Together as a family or with your close friends, commit to making a difference in the world. Perhaps volunteer some time together at the Salvation Army

Giving Tree or adopt a child with our congregation's Giving Tree. Support the Freezing Nights program by volunteering or with a financial gift. Give generously to support ministries making a difference in the lives of people around the world, such as World Vision, Heifer International, or Church World Service. What need is God placing on your heart? How can you best share the gift of hope this Christmas season?



Photo by Ilja Klutman, Creative Common License

Less Stress This Christmas

Preparing for Christmas tends to be a time of stress... scurrying, shopping, worrying. Opt for *peace instead* this season with our new Advent devotional booklet, *Whose Birthday Is it, Anyway?* Designed for individuals, families, or small groups, the booklet includes stories, biblical reflections, services for special times (such as decorating and cooking), a Christmas game, an Advent-Christmas calendar, and suggestions for remembering those in need. Pick up your complimentary copy of *Whose Birthday Is it, Anyway?* in the church narthex.



A Service of Healing - JOIN US ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16TH AT 5 PM

WHAT IS A HEALING SERVICE?

Our Advent service of healing is modeled after the weekly prayers for healing service in the Iona Community in Scotland. As a time of prayer, the service on the island of Iona reflects the “belief that God’s purpose for us all is a life of wholeness, as expressed in the life and teachings of Jesus. The ministry of healing is an integral part of our Christian witness.” This service is not intended as a substitute for modern medicine, but rather the prayers are to be understood as “complementary to the work of medicine and other forms of healing.”

In the weeks before the service, we will gather prayer petitions from individuals within our own community in addition to prayers of those outside our congregation. A prayer station in the narthex will provide opportunity for those who wish for us to pray for their concerns. During the service, those prayers will be included in the communal prayers for healing.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Everyone. After we gather together with music, scripture, and the written prayers have been given, those who wish to “receive or share in the ministry of the laying-on of hands” will be invited to come forward. During that time individuals may be silently praying for themselves, someone else, or a situation. Others who remain seated will participate with supportive prayers.

Through this we affirm that healing is “a corporate, inclusive process—the work of the whole Christian community in which we all have a part to play.... Whether we choose to come forward or remain seated in prayer and concern, God can use our presence in this service.”

“God's purpose
for us all
is a life of
wholeness.”



WHO IS IN NEED OF HEALING?

In our broken world, we all experience the need for healing. This prayer ministry is open to many different dimensions of healing, both individual and social. “The healing of divided communities and nations, and the healing of the earth itself, have their place alongside the healing of broken bodies, hurt minds and wounded hearts, and of the hurts and divisions within ourselves.”

Excerpts from the Iona Abbey Worship Book

Building a Future Together

ALL-CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
SUNDAY, DEC. 16TH AFTER WORSHIP

All members of FCC Puyallup are invited and encouraged to attend the annual Congregational Meeting at which three important issues will be posed. Here's your chance for your voice to be heard in the planning of our future together.

2008 BUDGET - The Finance Committee has been hard at work preparing a balanced budget for 2008. Treasurer Sharon Yanasak will present the proposed budget for congregational approval.

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS AMENDMENTS -

A revision of office terms for Congregational Chair, Congregational Vice Chair and Church Clerk has been proposed to the Board by the Nominating Committee. The amendment has been approved by the Board for presentation to the congregation. The change would shorten the term length for those positions from three years to one year in response to a concern voiced by previous nominating committees.

A second proposed amendment to the Bylaws will be a change of membership requirements for the Nominating Committee itself in order to better reflect the membership of the FCC Puyallup community.



Photo by
Robert E. Blaisdell

PATH GUIDING VISION - After introducing the draft Guiding Vision in several venues including small groups, studies, and Worship, the PaTH Teams will present the draft for affirmation and ownership by the congregation. Be on hand to mark a significant and unifying leap into the future of our church!

First Christian Church of Puyallup is a gathering of diverse individuals called by God to live as a blessing in our own neighborhoods and in the world.

We dream of being a faithful community of God's people whose spiritual practices of worship, prayer, study, and ministry nurture those who are seeking to live in the way of Jesus.

Believing that every follower of Christ is gifted by God, we dream of being a family in which each person discovers their gifts and is supported in sharing those gifts with the world.

We experience God's welcome in our celebration at the communion table and dream of being a reflection of that welcome in our acts of acceptance, forgiveness, generosity, and peacemaking.



It's a Wonderful Life!

POTLUCK DINNER & A MOVIE
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8TH AT 6:30 PM

Join us Saturday, December 8th at 6:30 pm for another feature in the Dinner and a Movie series. We'll come together to enjoy good food, fellowship, and an all time Christmas classic, *It's a Wonderful Life*.

Please bring a favorite holiday dish to share. Contact Katie Peterson for more information.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service

December 24, 4:30 pm

The soft glow of candlelight, the sound of beloved Christmas carols, the welcome of Holy Communion... all this and more await you with our traditional Lessons and Carols Candlelight Service. The Nine Lessons and Carols service originated in late 19th century England and was popularized by the well known King's College Choir in Cambridge which continues to be broadcasted annually by the BBC. For the past seven years we have adapted this service to fit with the traditions of our own congregation.

The power of the service comes not only from the music, but primarily from the Scripture readings. These offer a glimpse of the loving purposes of God at work in the world from the beginning of time and made flesh in the person of Jesus.

Make your Christmas Eve even more meaningful this year by including our Lessons and Carols Candlelight Service in your Christmas plans.



FCC Puyallup Advent Wreath 2006

Planned Giving: Blessings That Live On

In 1990, Dora Brown, a long-time member of First Christian Church, sat down with Ray Heckendorn to establish endowment funds for the congregation through the Christian Church Foundation as part of her estate planning. With two initial gifts of \$10,000 each, two funds were created: one to benefit worship and education programs, and the second, as a music endowment.

In the past the interest from the music endowment purchased the grand piano that is currently in our sanctuary. Last year the Worship and Education endowment's interest underwrote the acquisition of the soft-sided Chalice Praise hymnals, a digital camera and video camcorder, and our new audio-visual sound and projection system in the sanctuary.



Dora's foresight and planning have allowed our congregation to enhance our ministries of worship and education. The cameras have already been used by the Faith Trek Sunday School class project exploring the congregation's understanding of mission. The new audio system and video projector not only replaced an aging sound system, but also provide us with opportunities to broaden our worship experiences.

If you would like more information on planned giving options including gift annuities and charitable trusts offered by the Christian Church Foundation, please contact the church office or you may visit the foundation's website at www.disciples.org/ccf/.

Calling All Talent!

POTLUCK & TALENT SHOW Sunday, January 20th following Worship

Last year's talent show featured
a reading, singing, video, music, a comedy skit... and more.
Start your planning, rehearsals, costumes, and warm-ups now!

For potluck information contact Bonnie Goddard
To join the talent show, contact Tasha Parker



And the Chili Champ is...

CHILI COOK-OFF FOLLOWUP



Seven chefs entered their favorite chili recipes to vie for this year's coveted chili championship title. Nancy Durrant, Terry Forslund, Ron & Jayne Isch, John Pasola, Anastasia Patterson, Lisa Peterson, and Ray Smith gave their best efforts as a good crowd of chili munchers sampled, tasted, deliberated, and voted.

During announcement time during the worship service prior to the cook-off, 2006 Chili Champ Ray Smith admonished the congregation, "No hanging chads!" And yet, when the votes were counted, a tie was at hand! Nancy Durrant and Ray Smith were in a dead heat and a revote was ordered. And the winner was... reigning champion Ray Smith! Congratulations, Ray!

The Youth groups' biggest fundraiser of the year, this year the Chili Cook-off garnered around \$175 which will help to seed many youth-sponsored activities, outreach, and ministries.

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First Christian Church of Puyallup (Disciples of Christ)
Pastor Nancy Gowler Johnson
623 - 9th Ave. SW
P.O. Box 516
Puyallup, WA 98371
(253) 845-6232

life of the church

December Mission: Giving Tree Gift Items

Worship with us - Sundays at 11 am

Advent Sermon Series: *All I Want for Christmas Is...*

- 1 Advent Festival - 10 am
- 2 Advent in Action - 9:45 am
- 5 Elders Meeting - 7 pm
- 7 Freezing Nights if 32 or <
- 8 Potluck Dinner & a Movie - 6:30 pm
- 9 Advent in Action - 9:45 am
- 11 Board Meeting - 7 pm
- 14 Youth (5th-12th) Movie & Dessert
- 14 Freezing Nights if 32 or <
- 15 Lunch with a Friend - 10 am
- 16 Advent in Action - 9:45 am

- 16 Congregational Mtg. after Worship
- 16 Youth Mtg. (1st-4th) after Worship
- 16 Healing Service - 5 pm
- 20 Disciples Women - 11:30 am
- 21 Freezing Nights if 32 or <
- 23 Advent in Action - 9:45 am
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 24 Candlelight Service - 4:30 pm
- 25 Christmas Day
- 28 Freezing Nights if 32 or <
- 31 New Years Eve

birthdays

- 5 Gail Ackerman
- 5 Harold Phillips
- 6 Nancy Johnson
- 6 Stephanie Leale
- 6 Sandra Stroud
- 7 Norene Romjue
- 8 Bonnie Goddard
- 10 Tasha Parker
- 10 Rachel Schmidt
- 15 Erchie Borrowman
- 17 Wolfram Patton
- 19 Delbert Stack
- 20 Emma Forslund
- 22 Sara Pasola
- 22 Terrie Maas
- 26 Sherman Squires
- 27 Ben Smith
- 28 Betty O'Brien
- 29 Corky Peterson
- 31 Ginny Docker

anniversaries

- 12 Bonnie & Ron Goddard
- 14 Bunnie & Joe Stanton

