



First Congregational Church Highlights Newsletter December 2018

“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High. for you will go before the Holy One to prepare God’s ways, to give knowledge of salvation to God’s people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” – Zacharias, “filled with the Holy Spirit,” blessing his child who was to become John the Baptist, from Luke 1:76-79

Our church has received an early Christmas gift. Well, even as I write that I can’t help checking myself with the thought of all the gifts and all the forms of gifting that are always moving through this community of faith. But there is a particular gift this month I would like to lift up. Something to help us shine forth and share the light of God’s love: A new church logo.

This gift is courtesy Brenden Koch, who volunteered his creativity and savvy to create it. He worked closely with a logo design committee, comprised of Emily Asmus, Lydia Caudill, Melissa Webster, and myself. The Board of Deacons commissioned this effort. And your Moderator J.R. VanSlyke and your Church Council helped guide and approve the outcome.

What do you see and feel expressed in this image?

For what it’s worth, let me share a few of my reflections and impressions:

You will notice our decision to incorporate the sanctuary steeple, rather than using another kind of central image for our community of faith. This is to honor the church’s history and to lift up the church’s public face in the Walla Walla community. Brenden positioned the steeple to convey vision, openness, hope for the future - to be a beacon, a witness. “Let your light so shine,” as Jesus said.

The blue mountains place the church in the Walla Walla valley, on the earth in our precious corner of God’s creation.

The sunrise conveys God’s life-giving Love Supreme as it shines on us and through us.

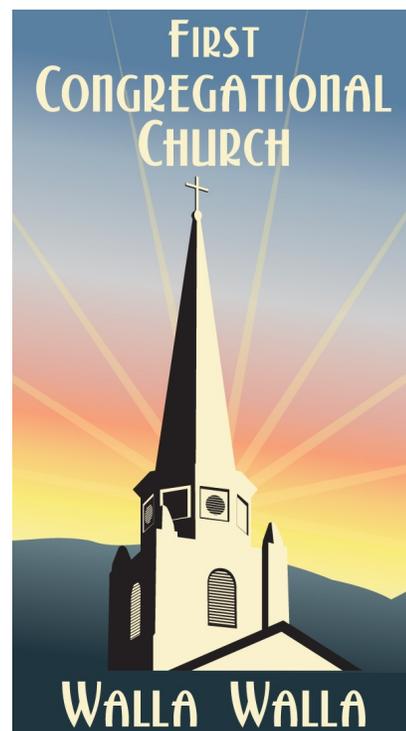
The rich colors of the new dawn suggest a rainbow, a reminder of God’ promise of mercy, and a signal of the church’s open and affirming welcome and embrace of all God’s diverse children.

The font is from the 1930s, when the sanctuary was built. We felt it has a kind of fresh retro feel that says something about the church’s balance between tradition and the new creative urgings of the Spirit at work in our time.

Many people are excited about this new logo, yet no logo will work for everyone who cares deeply for First Congregational Church. I want to honor those who feel like this logo misses something. If this is so for you, I would like to know what it is about this community of faith that you would like to see better communicated. This logo project is part of a larger effort to be clear about what is vital in how God is at work in this church, so we can be generous in welcoming others to join in sharing their lives and spirits with this community.

This Advent season, as we await the birth of the Christ child, I thank God for how God is continuously dawning anew.

Peace,
Pastor Nathaniel





Moderator's Missive

Dear Church Family,

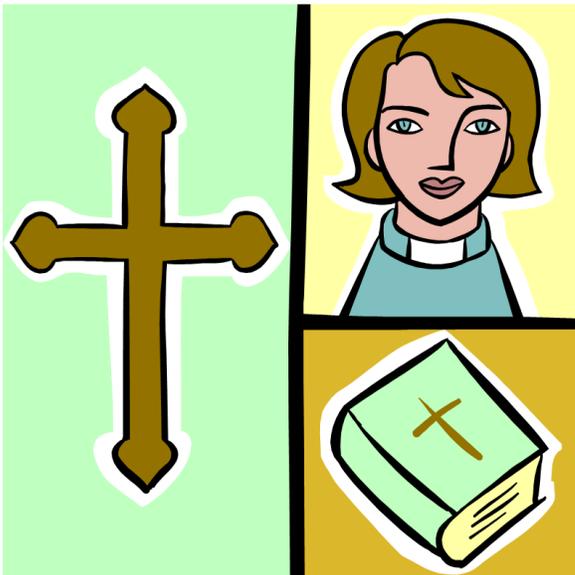
The chilly gray of winter is once again upon us as I write on Thanksgiving Eve. While the change of season is requiring some adjustment from all of us, I can't help but feel blessed to have such a wonderful church family. I shared clean up tasks with a good dozen people in the church kitchen following the Thanksgiving Potluck that the Mission and Social Concerns committee put on last Sunday. It made me especially proud to be a part of this faith community. I suspect a lot of us are grateful for this special gift this Thanksgiving season. Thanks to all of you for helping this wonderful thing to happen.

I am happy to report that we have formally concluded our stewardship campaign for 2019. If you were hoping to hear more stewardship moments or campaign updates from your moderator, you will have to wait until next year. Sorry. People came through rather big for our church. We asked and many responded. Thank you. We did not quite reach our goal; however, we have completed about 95 % of the \$130,000 goal we presented back in September. It is not too late to pledge. Some of you mentioned an interest in giving, but had difficulty tracking down pledge cards, etc. If you have intent to pledge feel free to reach out to me, the church office (office@fccchurch.net), or just place a notice in the offering plate. The remaining margin of our unmet goal will go toward implementing the more robust youth ministry program that the Church Council has identified as a strategic priority for 2019.

My hope for all of you this holiday season is that you will give and receive the hope, joy, peace and love that Jesus taught us to share with our neighbors, both near and far.

Blessings,
JR





Deacons Corner

Greetings from your Deacons!

Our hands are busy, our hearts are hopeful this Advent season. May the awe of this season bring anticipation, joy, healing and light to each of our lives.

Praise be to God!

Thank you to the Mission and Social Concerns Committee for an amazing Thanksgiving Potluck! To all who took part, we are so very blessed!

Dec 02 First Sunday of Advent

Church Tour—Join after the church service at the back of the sanctuary. Stephen Wilen will guide a tour of the church and give a bit of church history!

Dec 08 Join us Saturday at 10am. We will decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season.

Dec 09 Second Sunday of Advent

Everyone is invited to bring a decoration to church to place on the Christmas tree as you enter the sanctuary. A word of caution: while you are welcome to reclaim your decoration after the hymn singing on December 30th, decorations may get lost or broken. You might consider a handmade decoration!

Dec 15 The silent night premier performance at 4pm, Saturday, Pioneer United Methodist Church. Our own choir, together with the Methodist church choir (directed by Terry Koch) and Julie Jones' WWCC choir will perform the work, supported by local musicians. This work was co-commissioned by FCC and PUMC, composed by Kristen Vining, text by River Low. This is a co-sponsored work and the goodwill donations will support the Free Soup Lunch programs of both churches.

Dec 16 Third Sunday of Advent

Christmas Pageant Service 10am. This will be a special joy to watch our children re-enact the Christmas story!

Dec 23 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Dec 24 Christmas Eve Service at 7pm. We await the birth of the Christ Child! Invite your friends and join us in this moving service, worthy of being a family tradition.

Dec 30 Hymn Singing Service 10am. No sermon but much singing!

Come, join in these many activities. Enjoy the fellowship. Share in the joy of working and worshipping together.

At this time of giving, please consider this special request:

*Flowers.

Christmas flowers to adorn the sanctuary will be purchased in memory of, in honor of, or in celebration of the person or event you wish to designate. A list of the names and events will be inserted in a Sunday Bulletin this Christmas season.

Make your checks payable to First Congregational Church, then earmark it with the specific fund's name.





- ★ On Sunday, December 9th, the Primary and Intermediate classes and older youth, who would like to participate, are invited to make Christmas cards for the members of our congregation who we miss seeing on Sunday. This service project will bring our spirits into the Christmas season by sharing our love.
- ★ On Sunday, December 16th, after the completion of the Kid's Pageant, there will be crafts for all children up in their usual Sunday School rooms, offered until church is out and parents come up to collect them.

OUR WHOLE LIVES (OWL)

Sunday, December 2, 1:30-5:00 pm

- ◆ Personal Concerns about Puberty
- ◆ Body Image

Friday, December 7 6:00 pm through

Saturday, December 8 12:00 pm

- ◆ Gender Identity
- ◆ Gender Expression, Roles & Stereotypes
- ◆ Sexual Orientation

Sunday, December 16

- ◆ LGBTQ Guest Panel



Annual Children's Christmas Pageant Sunday, December 16th

Rehearsals will be Saturday, December 15th and Sunday, December 16th ~Times to be announced.

Would your child like to participate? Please contact the church office at 525-8753 or Emily Asmus at: emily@welcometablefarm.com

Youth will be asked about their preferred pageant roles during Sunday school on the 2nd and 9th of December.

It promises to be a jolly good time for all!

silent night

*a tapestry of music
and poetic prose*

a collaborative work by River Low and Kristin Vining

Saturday, Dec. 15 • 4 p.m.

Pioneer United Methodist Church

featuring the

First Congregational Church Choir

Pioneer United Methodist Church Choir

Walla Walla Community College Vocal Ensemble

free community event; monetary donations accepted for
First Congregational and Pioneer Methodist free lunches

12/12



Decorating for Christmas



Saturday, December 8
10:00 am - Sanctuary

You are invited to join the festivities as we decorate for this Holy season.

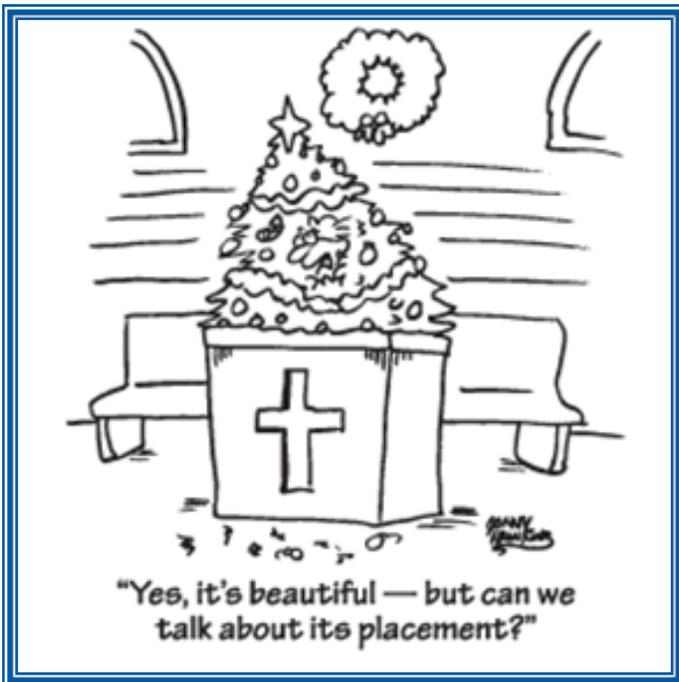
ALSO



Sunday, December 9

Bring an ornament to put on our tree. It may be made by hand or store bought.

You are welcome to reclaim your ornament after the hymn singing on December 30th, you might consider choosing an ornament that you are willing to give away as the decorations may get broken or misplaced.



The Reason For The Season

What is an optimist?

An optimist is someone who plants two acorns and then buys a hammock.



Something to ponder....

Thanks Lee!



Joy to the World

CHRISTMAS BASKETS

For many of us at First Congregational Church, one of the real highlights of the Christmas season is participating in our Christmas Baskets program. We have continued this outreach for over thirty years, and each year seems more magical. Here's how it will work this year.

We have adopted twelve families through the family health and preschool coordinator at Blue Ridge School. There are 20 adults and 24 children this year. Each child will receive at least two gifts: one needed and one wanted. Adults get at least one.

YOU select tags from our tree, better hurry, there are only three left! There is a part of each tag to record your name and phone number and leave in the basket for our records. Please include a receipt with your wrapped gift in case the sizes, etc. are not right. Wrap the gift, tape your tag on the gift (VERY important). Make sure to bring it to the church no later than mid-day **Wednesday, Dec. 12.** Another part of this program includes providing food for our families. We hope you will donate a bit of money to the Christmas Baskets program. Some of you have farms and we love including fresh produce. Just let us know if you want to do this.

We will need help on **Saturday, Dec. 15**, when the families come to pick up their gifts.

8:00 am Meet at Rose Street Safeway with a car/van to pick up food, (we need just a couple cars.)

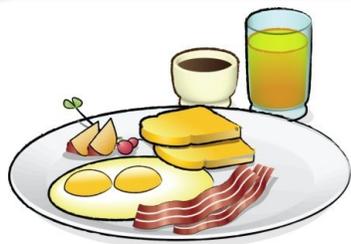
8:30 am Meet at the church to help sort food and gifts.
We need lots of folks ...**all** ages!

9:15-10:30 am Help greet families and load food into cars.
Spanish speakers are very valuable!
A few families might need delivery, so we need a few volunteer drivers.

There will be a sign-up sheet in the Atrium, after Church. If you have any further questions, please contact Lee Coleman at (971) 235-8796.

As we give presents at Christmas, we need to recognize that sharing our time and ourselves is such an important part of giving.

Gordon B. Hinckley



Men's Breakfast

Saturday, December 8 at 9:00 am

All the men (members, friends, and visitors) in our church family are invited to share breakfast on the second Saturday of each month. All you have to do is show up and be ready to enjoy the fellowship.



Dances of the Universal Peace

Thursday, December 13th
7:00 pm—8:00 pm
Chapel

Everyone is invited! The Dances are simple, and easy-to-learn circle dances. We use sacred phrases, chants, movements, and music from the world's wisdom traditions.

~ Led by Rena Coon

**Open Coffee With the Rev.
Tuesday, December 4th
8:00am-10:00am
Olive Restaurant**

Pastor Nathaniel is looking forward to visiting with whomever wants to drop by and talk about life, God, the universe, everything, or nothing special



In order to protect the privacy of our members and friends, we do not display personal information in the web version

♥ *Remember in prayers, those we do not know, but who are in need and are struggling. Remember also those who are alone and lonely during this season.*



VOUCHERS

Please have your vouchers turned in by the dates indicated below.
Thanks!

December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	6	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, December 12, 6:00 pm

Council Meeting
Sunday, December 16, 11:30 am

Deacons Meeting
Wednesday, December 12, 6:30 pm

NewsLetter
DEADLINE

Tuesday, December 18th

Again, we have a short month when it comes to getting the next month's edition of the Highlights formatted and published.

My hope is to have it all done by Friday, December 28th.

Save The Date



Church Vitality Retreat
Saturday, January 12th, 2019
10am - 2pm~Fellowship Hall

All are welcome to a church retreat to explore together our vitality, vision, and growing edges as a community of faith.

Facilitated by Pastor Nathaniel.

Should be an opportunity for fun and fellowship as well.

Lunch Served

We've been busy!
The office is in need of stamps and copy paper. Your donation, if you are able, would be very much appreciated.
Thank You!



Tuesday, December 25th
Wednesday, December 26th
&
Tuesday, January 1st

Have a blessed and joyous
Christmas and a very Happy
New Year!

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.*

Howard Thurman

PEACE PEACE PEACE

~Treasure Sale~

The results of the recent Treasure Sale are in, \$1,100 (plus some) was raised!
All of the proceeds will go to the Board of Mission & Social Concerns,

Many, many thanks go out to; Sue Gillespie (who headed this event), the members of the Board of Mission & Social Concerns, Judy Chacon, Linnea Keatts, Linda Schopp, Jane Drabek, Dorothy Knudson, Jeff Gillespie, & Art and Carmen Davila.

There is still one item for sale. It's a 5 piece, grey leather sectional, with two electric reclining end pieces. The asking price is \$1,000 and it's currently in the Church Atrium if you would like a closer look.

If you have any questions or would like to speak with someone, please contact: Sue Gillespie at 540-9813 or the Church office at 525-8753.





Christian Aid Dinner

Sunday, November 18, 2018



Carol Blue Jill Juers Lee Coleman Josh-CA Center Brian-CA Center

There were just three of us to cook and serve dinner at the Christian Aid Center on our regular date ... the third Sunday in November. When we arrived, we were greeted by Josh and Brian, kitchen supervisors for the Center. They happily assisted us with every task, both cooking and serving. Carol Blue, Jill Juers and I worked hard and had such a good time teaming with Josh and Brian.

We pieced together a potato bar. The convection oven was working again (last month it was not, and we forced into a Plan B.), so the 100 potatoes baked in an hour. There was no chili to go with the potatoes (an essential for this group of guests), so we used every can we could find that might look and taste like chili ... and it was a hit. Carol did a lot of crying while chopping onions, and Jill made a wonderful salad out of hidden ingredients in the fridge. We served canned peas and corn, a big green salad, sliced garlic bread and plenty of cakes and pies.

About 50 guests arrived, in good spirits to be out of the cold frosty evening, and left well-fed and thankful for the hot meal.

Our next CAC dinner will be **Sunday, Dec. 16**. Sign up to help and be a part of the crew. We always have a wonderful adventure!

Lee Coleman



Willing to Serve

A Great Way to Serve

Liturgist

December 16	Jen Rickard
December 23	Cheryl Pira
December 30	Laurie Logsdon
January 06	Open
January 13	Open
January 20	Open
January 27	Open

Coffee Hour

December 16	Linnea Keatts & Kari Miller
December 23	Dorothy Knudson & Melanie Plantaric
December 30	Laurie & Marty Manahan
January 06	Open
January 13	Open
January 20	Open
January 27	Open

Sign-up sheets are available in the atrium & each Sunday following worship or you may call the office at 525-8753.



Volunteer Opportunities

Providence St. Mary's Hospital

There are many ways to make an impact:

- Cancer Center** : Deliver meals, pick up and deliver medications from the hospital pharmacy for patients.
- Gift Shop**: Cashier in the hospital gift shop to provide funding for important projects that would not otherwise be possible.
- Comfort**: Visit patients and offer comfort items, assist with menus, or someone to visit with.
- Rehabilitation Department**: Support patients who are participating in Physical or Cardiac Rehabilitation
- And Many More.

Please call Patti Lennartson
(Volunteer Coordinator)

897-2072





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Congratulations and Abundant Blessings in the coming year!

First Congregational Church United Church of Christ

Ministerial Leadership

Minister Rev. Nathaniel Mahlberg

2018 Church Officers

Moderator	J. R. Van Slyke
Past Moderator	Mary Wilen
Vice Moderator	Emily Asmus
Clerk	Larry Frank
Treasurer	Kim Croft
Financial Sec.	Bernie Newman
Asst. Fin. Sec.	Jonathan Webster
Head Usher	Sam Kirtley
Diaconate	Judy Chacon
Christian Ed	Dot Willis
Trustees	Dana Taggart
Mission/Social Concern	Heidi McFarley
Music	Open
. . . and Affirming	Open

Staff

Office Manager	Gayle Kubrock
Bookkeeper	Kim Croft
Custodian	Irina Kostenko
Organist	Jackie Wood
Choir Director	Julie Jones
Webmaster	Parke Thomas

Church Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday
9 am - 2 pm

Pastoral Assistance

Church Office 525-8753
Rev. Nathaniel Mahlberg
(608) 469-1406

We celebrate our diversity as an expression of God's Creative love. We welcome persons of all age, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, and physical and mental ability.

You can read Pastor Nathaniel's sermons in his online blog at:
<https://thedandelionwayblog.wordpress.com>
Or hear them on our website at:
www.firstchurchuccww.org.