

CHURCH AND HOME

UNIVERSITY CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



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Congregation Prepares for the Homeless Encampment in Lot C

At a specially-called congregational meeting held Sunday, Nov. 30, the congregation members present voted to invite the encampment for the homeless currently located at University Christian Church to move to our parking lot at the corner of NE 45th and 15th Ave NE. The move will be for a maximum of three months, and will begin later this week.

The reasons for saying yes to the request from the encampment are primarily religious ones: the Christian gospel calls us to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, help the poor, and welcome strangers. The gospel teaches us that the hungry, the poor and the strangers are also our neighbors. There are also social and moral reasons. As a church we have endorsed the "Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness," and we take seriously the plan's intention not only to end homelessness at some future date but to address the current need for "immediate survival mechanisms," to use the plan's language. Our offer to this encampment is a way for us to address this need. We are not endorsing any specific political position as we make this offer of space for safe shelter.

We acknowledge our action causes challenges and concerns for neighbors in the University District, and for the variety of other people who use our facility for other important programs. We will continue to work together to respond to those concerns and to make this temporary situation work. There are also risks and costs for the congregation, and we will address and ameliorate those as much as possible.

We welcome your support and partnership as we embark on this ministry. We desire to be agents of reconciliation, hope and action. And we will continue to be guided and bound together in the Gospel's call to love and justice.

—Your Leadership Team: Catherine Foote,
David Anderson, Peter Ilgenfritz and Jim White



Annual Offering of Gifts Sunday

Don't forget! Our annual **Offering of Gifts** is coming up on **Sunday, Dec. 14!** You are invited to bring to worship a gift for someone in need

in the greater Seattle area. Gifts are brought to the front of the sanctuary during the time of offering. It is always an amazing sight to see the number of gifts collected! The Mission Board has selected ten nonprofit agencies to be the recipients of these gifts. A flier listing the agencies, their work, and their gift "wish lists" was included in the Nov. 30-Dec. 7 issue of *Church and Home*. A copy of the newsletter including the wish list, can be found in the "events" section of the church website:

www.universityucc.org. Additional copies of the flier are also available from the church office or the narthex kiosk

Volunteers are also needed! If you have a few moments to spare after the service, please consider bringing an armload of gifts down to Ostrander Hall for sorting. Extra hands really help the sorting process to flow smoothly—and it's a lot of fun!

—Carol Fleagle

Inquirers/New Member Class

A class for those who wish to know more about UCUC and/or those who are considering membership will be held on **Saturday, Jan. 10** from **9 a.m. – 1 p.m.** Topics presented will be "What We Believe—and How" as well as "Where We Came From—and Now Are." There is no obligation to join, but those who choose to may do so on **Sunday, Jan. 18.**

Sign up by calling the church office at 206-524-2322 or by e-mailing Kathy Kripps at kkripps@cbcccomputer.com. Childcare is available upon request. Please let us know if you will be coming since the church doors are locked but we will be opening them for participants. Come hungry. Brunch will be served!

Children and Youth

Youth News

**Dec. 12 7 p.m. Friday Lost and Found
Christmas Concert**

Youth and families are invited to a concert by Lost and Found, a Congregational band that we fell in love with at the National Youth Event. They will be performing along with a couple other bands. It is a Christmas-themed show and sounds like it will be a lot of fun! Please call Carol Coleman at 206-365-4663 if you would like to come, and tell her how many tickets you would like to purchase. She will also help in coordinating transportation.

Dec. 14 9 a.m. Sunday Confirmation

The confirmation journey continues for our 8th and 9th graders! We'll meet in the middle school room.

9 a.m. Youth Group

Youth in grades six through 12 are invited to join us in the Pilgrim Room. See you there!

10 a.m. Worship

Youth in grades six through 12 are invited to join us in the youth pew. It's on the right side of the sanctuary (as you face the pulpit).

Dec. 21 9 a.m. Sunday Youth Group

Youth in grades six through 12 are invited to join us in the Pilgrim Room. See you there!

10 a.m. Worship

Youth in grades six through 12 are invited to join us in the youth pew. It's on the right side of the sanctuary (as you face the pulpit).

11:30 a.m.—1 p.m. Lunch

High school youth and college students are invited to have lunch together in the Pilgrim Room. We want to hear from our college students on how the year is going.

Dec. 24 5 p.m. Wed. Christmas Eve Pageant

Join us for the Christmas pageant in the sanctuary! The pageant is directed by Bob Perkins and performed by youth of all ages.

11 p.m. Candlelight Service

Join us for a beautiful worship service filled with candles and songs.

Dec. 25 Thursday

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Elementary News

Thank you to Sally Bjornsen, Ron Wilkowski, Lisa Coleman, Jeff Coleman and Tina Michalak for leading our elementary Christian education unit in Nov. entitled "Tools for the Work: Prayer, Bible Study and Worship."



Sing Christmas Carols!

Please join the preschool and elementary program with your family on **Dec. 18** for the second annual night of Christmas caroling. We will meet in the church lobby at **4:15 p.m.** and drive to a local

retirement home where families and young children will carol for the elderly who wouldn't otherwise get out to hear the joy of Christmas. For more information contact Neil Wiegand at 1-360-668-0472 or nwiegand@comcast.net, or Mary Kay Westmoreland at 206-524-2322 or MKWestmoreland@universityucc.org

Looking Ahead to January Retreat

Middle school retreat Jan. 9-11

High school retreat Jan. 16-18

Find information about signing up for these retreats on the most recent youth e-mail newsletter or on the youth page of the church web site at www.ucucc.org.

A copy of our pastors' weekly schedule is posted in the church office. **For pastoral emergencies**, please call a pastor at **206-541-7984**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. **Please call the church office at 206-524-2322 to report any illness, accident, or other situation of concern in our church family that needs pastoral attention.**

CHURCH AND HOME

Submissions are due before:

Noon, Monday, Dec. 15 (Dec. 28 – Jan. 4 issue)

Noon, Monday, Dec. 29 (Jan. 11 – 18 issue)

Place in *Church and Home* box in the church office, fax to 206-524-0602 or e-mail to:

ChurchandHome@universityucc.org

Guidelines: *Signed* submissions must have a contact phone number and adhere to length guidelines (100 words for notices of events; 350 words for articles). Articles may be edited for length and style. Please put *Church and Home* in the subject line.

Our Church Family

Advent Adult Christian Formation

Jim White, our feisty transitional minister, will offer an Advent Adult Formation course on *The First Christmas* by Marcus Borg and John Dominick Crossan on **Dec. 14 and Dec. 21 at 9 a.m.** Books are available in the church office. Come and engage Jim's mind and spirit, and Marc and Dom's words, for your Advent.

—Greg Turner

Make Music With Christmas Band

It's time again for that rootin', tootin', blowin' and bowin' Christmas band! We will gather in the lounge after worship on **Dec. 14** and make some extremely joyous music. The parts are very easy and accommodate an extraordinary range of instruments—and any combination works. It's a great chance to contribute your skills—any level of skills—and have a blast! Come and join us! Questions? Phone or e-mail Ginger Warfield at 206-525-0175 or warfield@math.washington.edu.

Mix-Sups Sign Up Has Started

Sign up for mix-sups has started and will go on until **Dec. 21** in the narthex. At mix-sups you will meet with three other couples (different each month) to share dinner and conversation starting in Feb. and continuing through May. This is a great way to get to know others in the church and it's great fun! Want more information? The friendly person at the mix-sups table in the narthex will answer your questions.

Advent Workshop Thank You's

The story that stands out for me about the Advent workshop this year is that of one of our youth, Michael Boston. With adult interest riveted on the meeting upstairs, Michael selflessly agreed to be drafted on the spot to be the responsible adult who would open the painted glass Christmas balls craft table for our elementary students. He did an excellent job. He spent several hours kindly and carefully guiding a full table of young folks and adults do one of their favorite workshop crafts that needed supervision to be available. A few young adults also helped out.

Thanks to *everyone* for all their hard work on the Advent workshop, especially Diane and Mike Zevenbergen. Please remember to save your used Christmas cards for next year's workshop.

—Anita von Oppenfeld

NOTE: The Wednesday evening Taizé service is cancelled for the dates of **Dec. 24** and **Dec. 31**.

We Remember



Frank Herstin

Born: September 8, 1918

Died: November 17, 2008

Frank Herstin and his wife, Alice, became members of UCUC in June of 1990 and continued their membership after moving to Florida. Alice Herstin passed away on March 29, 2008. Condolences may be sent to Scott W. Herstin, 1590 Clermont Dr., #101, Naples, FL 34109.



Constance Jean Sherman Newell

Born: December 10, 1941

Died: November 20, 2008

Constance (Connie) Jean Sherman Newell was surrounded by family and friends when she passed away after a 27-year battle with cancer. A memorial service will be held at UCUC at **2 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7**. Send condolences to the family in care of Mary Sherman Wood, 7712 Dayton Ave N., Seattle, WA 98103.



Sherwood Eliot (Woody) Wirt

Born: March 12, 1911

Died: November 8, 2008

Dr. Sherwood Eliot "Woody" Wirt served as assistant pastor at UCUC from 1947-1949. A memorial service will be held on **Friday, Dec. 5 at 2 p.m.** in the Westminster Chapel at 13646 NE 24th St., Bellevue, WA.

(Find the complete notices on the church web site under "Events" at www.universityucc.org.)

Peter's Sabbatical Starts in Jan.

I will be on sabbatical from Jan. to March and return on Wednesday, April 1—just in time for Holy Week and Easter! Every five years pastors at UCUC are given a three month sabbatical for personal, spiritual and educational renewal; this is my 15th year at UCUC. I, with the church, applied for a grant last spring for my sabbatical with the Lilly Foundation. We found out late last month that our proposal was not accepted. However, the grant provided me the opportunity to do some intentional sabbatical planning and the church to look carefully at staffing needs during a pastor's sabbatical.

The Personnel Board allocated some funds from their 2008 budget for pastoral support including youth ministry. In addition, during these three months, Jim White will pick up my responsibilities with worship and music. Catherine will provide supervision for Margaret Iribarra and Tina Michalak in youth ministry, and David Anderson will be the leadership staff liaison with the church council. I am deeply grateful to the church, my colleagues and the church leadership for all they have done and will do to enable me to have this sabbatical time. Thank you!

—Peter Ilgenfritz

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Visit our web site: www.universityucc.org

Sunday Worship Service

10 a.m.

† December 14

Preacher: Peter Ilgenfritz
Scriptures: Luke 2:1-7

† December 21

Preacher: Jim White
Scriptures: Luke 21:1-20

† December 24

Preacher: Catherine Foote

Wednesday Service

Taizé-style worship, 6 p.m.
Chapel

*No Taizé services on
Dec. 24 and Dec. 31*



*Church and Home is published biweekly by University
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Sunday, December 14

Third Sunday in Advent

Offering of Gifts and Christmas Families' Sunday

Sermon: Gifts

It is a Sunday of Gift Giving. One of the most joyous, exuberant Sundays of the year. We pour forth gifts of all kinds and shapes to show our love, our care, our passion for justice. Gifts for Christmas families. Gifts for organizations and ministries that serve our communities in abundant, life-giving ways. It is a Sunday not to be missed. And a story not to be missed. For it's a story all about gifts, and how we are carried by them in life. Gifts of grace, care, honesty, accountability. Don't miss out. Come and remember the gift we need so that may become the gift others need.

*The chancel flowers are given by
Shirley Fox and her children, Sally,
David Jr. and Nancy in loving
memory of David Fox.*



Sunday, December 21

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Sermon: Have Yourself an Apocalyptic Christmas

It means something that at the manger are the babe plus Mary and Joseph and added to the crèche scene are shepherds, magi, animals, stars, and angels. In this sermon Dr. White suggests such scene has almost nothing to do with the birth of Christianity at all and everything to do with "vision of the end of the world in fulfillment." Carl Jung approves this message.

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve

5 p.m. Christmas Pageant

The Christmas pageant is led by our children. Many thanks to Bob Perkins who wrote this year's pageant "Emmanuel."

11 p.m. Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols

Catherine Foote will offer a Christmas Eve meditation entitled "Joy, Joy, Joy." We will celebrate our traditional Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols. Many thanks to our chancel choir for leading us in song.

As I See It

Feel Like This Is the End? Write Yourself a New Beginning

By Donna Freedman

✠ Not long ago I had about \$130 to my name and struggled to balance several part-time jobs with re-entry into college at 47. The idea terrified me. But I'd left a long-term marriage and run through my savings supporting myself and my disabled adult daughter. Why *not* go to college? If I didn't do it then I'd never do it.

I got through logic and algebra, won a full scholarship to the UW and last year was hired to write a personal finance blog for MSN Money. What I've learned might help those affected by economic turmoil:

- Stability is a story that we tell ourselves so we feel good about staying right where we are in our lives.
- Security doesn't always last. Sometimes it's taken away, and sometimes we decide we can live without it.
- What looks like the end of the world can actually be the beginning.

We cannot affect the economy, but we *can* make smart financial choices. I'll be frugal through school, and through the rest of my life.

Years ago, would I have chosen this level of asceticism? Maybe not. But there's nothing like a good scare to

POINTS OF VIEW

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show you what's really important. Ten years ago I lived in hospitals for several months while my daughter fought a rare disease that nearly killed her. I had a few T-shirts, a pair of jeans and a pair of sweatpants, a jacket, a cup and a bowl.

My sleep was fragmented. I did laundry in a hospital sink. I ate spartan meals. And it was all enough. The only thing I really wanted—really *needed*—was for my daughter to survive. She did.

These days I'm thankful for "enough." I'm even more thankful that I have *enough* enough—so *much* enough that I can share it. No matter how things change we have the ability, and the responsibility, to change right along with them.

Change is scary, but sometimes it's not the end of the story. It's the chance to write our own sequels.

From the Staff

Theology in Season

By Jim White

✠ Hooray for Christmas with its crazy materialism. Hooray for New Year's football and bodies colliding.

Hooray for "The Church of 3 B's": bodies, buildings, and budgets.*

"Hooray."

And your point is...?

My point is that Christianity is not a very spiritual religion. Never has been, never will be. It can't be. Jesus guaranteed it.

Dang, Jesus, for messing up trendy modern Gnostic escapisms!

To the spiritualists' constant chagrin, Jesus was a human being, and in that fully human one the fullness of God came to dwell (though I prefer to say, "God-consciousness emerged fully").

However we say it, we're talking about the **doctrine of the incarnation**, the idea that God-Who-Is-Spirit should come/be "in the flesh/body/meat/carne" of a

human being. And what that means is profound. We can't disregard the body, the material, the real world, Christmas presents, physical contact (intimacies not excluded), and B/B/B* organized religion. Such "stuff" is affirmed. It has to be because

God in creation (Genesis 1) said **things** of earth are "good, very good" and

God by The Word (John 1) is **embodied** in Jesus.

So, dear friends, be of good cheer when you gather with the shepherds and the magi near the manger. It isn't nuthin' (that is, etherealness) you're looking on but the Eternal One manifest-yet-hidden who loves the stuff of earth and a little baby "who came for to die...for you and for I" in all our un-spirituality.

Pass the eggnog, please!

Blessed Christmas and New Year

*Come the second week in January "budgets" come under consideration in the stewardship drive. "Fitting lucre" will be asked of each of us.

The Wider Community

Thank You for Supporting Rabuor Village Project's Christmas Tree Sale!

A special thank you to Catherine Foote for arranging for the trees and hauling them from Oregon to UCUC's parking lot. And warm thanks to all the purchasers, the helpers, and our church for raising nearly \$2000 for the Rabuor Village Project (RVP).

Right now in Rabuor Village a recently hired agronomist has started RVP's new "Food First Project." He will help the women to improve their farming skills, choice of crops and method of storing of crops for better markets and for times of drought.

Thanks to your generosity, hope also continues to grow in the Rabuor community.

—Barbara Peterson

Make Plans for the Men's Retreat

The theme for the **Jan. 29 to Feb. 2, 2009** Pacific Northwest Men's Retreat at Pilgrim Firs will be "Seeking Spiritual Courage: Why Spirituality Is More Difficult for Men." Our speakers will be the "Three Interfaith Amigos" including our retired Pastor Don Mackenzie, Rabbi Ted Falcon, and Brother Jamal Rahman. There will be a day of silence to seek other ways of communing spiritually prior to the retreat. Flyers and registration forms are available in the office and in the narthex on Sunday. Scholarships are available.

—Michael Phipps

Little Known Facts About Marcus Borg

Marcus Borg retired from Oregon State University last spring where he taught religion for 28 years. Students there say he had a reputation as an academic rock star according to a March 24, 2007 article in *The Oregonian*.

Borg's fans have been known to show their admiration with humor. They wear t-shirts identifying themselves as "Borg Again" or saying, "May the (meta)phors be with you." Fans also once sat in the front row at one of his lectures with their legs crossed to show their red socks (a Borg hallmark). Dr. Borg was quoted as saying that faith is a matter of living in relationship with Jesus and working politically, first for justice, and then for peace.

We look forward to being enriched by Marcus Borg's visit, learning more about mysticism, radical discipleship and prayer. We are also excited about welcoming lecture attendees into our faith community. (Marcus Borg lectures are **Feb. 6 and 7, 2009**. For more information and a registration form, visit the church office or our website).

Check Web Site for Parking Solutions

The decision to host the Homeless Encampment on Lot C will create a challenge in parking on Sunday morning. Check the church home page at www.ucucc.org for the most up-to-date information on where to park, optimal routes and transportation options. Because Sunday morning worship is such a central part of our faith and our life together, we will work on making parking on Sundays as easy as possible.



Faith and Care of Creation: Explore Interfaith Voices

All of the major faith traditions include a strong ethic in favor of care of the planet and neighbor. A five-week class beginning in Jan. explores how Christian, Jewish, Muslim and other traditions approach caring for our planet. Classes include videos, readings, prayers and your reflections. Come help us explore together how these many voice might be lifted up as one hopeful, transforming voice. Sessions will be held at **9 a.m. on the Sundays of Jan. 11, Jan. 18, Feb. 1, Feb. 15 and Feb. 22**. Sponsored by Sacred Earth Matters!

Assistance Needed by University Churches Emergency Fund

University Churches Emergency Fund (UCEF) has seen record numbers of clients over the past two months. This is due to the homeless encampment being close by, and also a result of the worsening economy. Now more than ever, UCEF could really use your help as a volunteer. UCEF is open from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. Please contact Jo Gustafson if you are interested in volunteering at 206-524-7885 or see their web site at www.ucefseattle.com.

If you have Metro bus tickets in your Chinook book that you won't use or unopened hygiene items, donate them to the Social Action Board's basket in the narthex. UCEF is grateful for the continued financial support provided by UCUC and UCHA.

Can You Host an OWL Participant?

Interested in meeting an out-of-towner attending the Our Whole Lives (OWL) training at our church? OWL is a holistic sexuality education series for all ages, and the leaders are committed to facilitating an atmosphere of learning and inclusivity. Folks will be coming to Seattle from all over the country for the **Jan. 9-11** training session. If you can host a participant in your home, or pick someone up at the airport, contact Kim Comstock at 206-225-8362 or comkimstock@gmail.com. Thank you!



To: The Congregation
From: The Leadership Staff
David Anderson, Catherine Foote, Peter Ilgenfritz, and Jim White

December 5, 2008

Dear Wonderful UCUCC Congregation,

Greetings to you this Advent season, as we watch for the coming of Christ among us. In this wonderful season we are reminded that we see the face of Jesus in everyone around us, and we do the work of this faith community in so many ways, remaining, through the grace of God, faithful to our calling. Because we are no longer in “ordinary time” (speaking liturgically), we want to bring you news of the things that are happening among us, and most especially of the encampment we have invited to our parking lot “C” and of the ongoing work of our search committee.

Our Encampment Hosting Ministry

We are embarking on an exciting ministry of outreach and hospitality, as the homeless encampment that has been at University Christian Church has been invited to move to our Lot C parking (on the corner of 45th and 15th.) After a faithful discernment process, where all views were respected and everyone demonstrated deep caring for this congregation and all of its ministries, we have chosen to move forward with this gospel work. Now we move forward to implementation. Move-in day was Friday Dec. 5.

We’re part of a community that has embraced this and we’re in it together – thanks be to God! And this congregation is willing and committed to making this work, as well as to help us also stay focused on our regular work while this special program is underway. While there will be questions, issues and adjustments, we do think we’ll be fine, and that in March we will be glad for having had this opportunity.

How to Get Involved

A Hosting Ministry Team of congregation members and friends is being formed to provide support and help this ministry. This team will be led by David McCracken and will work in all ways as much as possible with the encampment, the congregation, church neighbors, partners and friends, the city, and others to help the congregation carry out its vote.

This committee will address the wide variety of opportunities and issues related to our hosting ministry, including providing hospitality to the encampment, staying in contact with our neighbors and with one another, and handling the day-to-day stuff that will come up. We would love to have you join the team in any way that feels faithful to you. More information about the Hosting Support Team and its functions will be available on

Sunday. In the meantime, you can sign up for regular updates and opportunities by emailing HostingMinistry@universityucc.org. If you have questions, contact David McCracken 206-523-9765 or davidmcc@u.washington.edu. Financial support for the church can be noted as “Lot C Hospitality.”

Here are some details of the ministry that have already been worked out:

Parking for Worship and Other Sunday Activities

Sunday morning

We are committed to making sure that every one coming for 9 am education and 10 am worship will be able to find parking. We are trying to reserve Lot A on 16th Ave for those with small children or limited mobility, so feel free to park there if you have a such a need. There will also be greeters and valets for those that have difficulty walking. In addition, there will be a van from the UW central parking garage on 15th & 42nd up to the church. University Presbyterian Church is also inviting us to use their shuttle bus which comes from that lot and drops folks off in front of their sanctuary. From there is it a short walk to our building. A list of other options is posted at <http://www.universityucc.org/events/Homeless%20Encampment/Parking.pdf>.

We will help people park, find options, welcome you. So please do come to worship! We all need to rejoice in God’s presence and call as we gather to worship the One who has called this church to life 118 years ago and is with us still!

Weekday Parking

University Christian Church has offered us the use of their parking lot for our weekday events. That lot is on the northeast corner of 15th and 42nd, and if you use that lot please check in with their office. Parking is also still available in Lot A, and at times we can even find parking on the street. If you have any questions about weekday parking, please contact Ann Lev or the Hosting Support Team.

Our staff will also be adjusting its parking habits. The dentists across the alley are significantly impacted by the loss of Lot C for their staff parking. It is appropriate and neighborly of us to offer to their staff our staff parking. Our leadership staff will park in the lot at University Christian. Some other staff will have an assigned spot in the Sortun Court parking garage. University Presbyterian Church has offered us two spots of their alley parking, which will be assigned to Office Coordinator JoAnn Dunn and the office volunteer. (Thank you, University Presbyterian Church). The rest of the staff will be using Lot A, and signing in.

Permit

We have applied for a permit, the City of Seattle has accepted our application, and we have paid the required application fees. Because the City of Seattle has not yet issued the necessary permits, it is likely we will get a Notice of Violation, with a threat of fines. We were aware of this possibility when we took our vote so such action is not a surprise. However the odds that the church would actually have to pay those fines are small, though not nonexistent.

Insurance

There has been a question about insurance coverage, since we have not yet received a permit from the City of Seattle (though the City has accepted our permit application and we have paid the application fees). We have been reassured with the following from the insurance broker, Charles W. Clausing, Vice President of Willis of Ohio, Inc:

If a claim were to be lodged against the church or its trustees, e.g., a local business suffered loss of revenue due the tent encampment, would Lexington view the church's not having the permit as a "... willful violation of any statute or regulation..."? From a purely technical interpretation of the policy language, it is conceivable coverage would be denied. I believe that was the essence of Sharon's good counsel to you. However, would the insurer ever take such a stance? For any number or reasons, I think the answer is an emphatic "No".

I appreciate board members concerns that there is a possibility, albeit a remote one, that your D&O policy would not respond. Should Lexington ever attempt such a draconian claim stance, that would never be the final answer. Willis, as an advocate for the UCCIB program, along with UCCIB management, would exert their combined, considerable influences to convince the carrier otherwise.

The full text of this memo is available from the Hosting Ministry Team.

In addition, the church has committed to backing the actions of staff and board members with the following in Article X the church bylaws.

8. *Insurance and Bonding. The church council shall protect the church against the failure of church officers, including the treasurer, and employees to faithfully perform their duties through appropriate insurance and/or bonding.*

9. *Indemnification. The church council shall protect, indemnify and defend, through appropriate insurance or otherwise, church ministers, leadership and support staff, volunteers, and members of church council and church boards and committees from claims of any kind brought against any such individuals related to their church-related activities performed in good faith and within the scope of their employment or council, board or committee responsibilities, as applicable.*

Ongoing Communication

Regular updates on how our ministry is moving forward and how folks can get involved will be available at our website and on Sunday mornings, in our bulletin and in *Church and Home*. There are also links to a list of frequently asked questions, and parking information from the church home page: www.universityucc.org. And we will offer some reflections on our blog, which is also linked from the church home page.

Our Other Ministries

As we move forward in our hosting ministry we are also aware that there is other ongoing work in which we are engaged. We are deeply grateful for ongoing work in social action, our broader work with homelessness including the new HomeStep families we are welcoming into housing this month, and the support we offer for other crucial work with those on the margins (the University Churches Emergency Fund is especially in need of

our support in these tough economic times). And of course we continue with ongoing education of and care for our children and youth, parish care for one another, thoughtful and prayerful stewardship that supports our many programs, and a faithful ministry of worship. Please know that this congregation intends to move all of our work forward faithfully. So watch your *Church and Home* and the website for ongoing information and opportunities.

Search Committee News

Most especially as well, we are in the midst of a search process as a congregation, and we have this message from the Search Committee:

A joyful season's greetings to members and friends of University Congregational United Church of Christ, from the 14 of us on your Pastoral Search Committee!

We have a request of utmost importance for you: If you (and/or all members of your household) haven't already done so, please take a few minutes and complete the pastoral-search survey, at <http://tinyurl.com/69pc8b> . We need results from adults and kids. The survey will help us tell pastoral candidates about our church and the qualities we're looking for. It'll also help us in the selection process.

If you prefer to complete surveys on paper, you can pick up one in the Narthex on Sunday before or after church.

But do it soon, as we're already compiling the data, and we want to make sure your views are considered along with everyone else's.

Thanks, and most holy of blessings to you all during this most holy of seasons!

Your (exuberant and busy!) committee.

*P.S. For greater details, see <http://tinyurl.com/65s2we> . Read upcoming *Church and Home* articles and watch the church Web site for updates in the selection process, and feel free to e-mail us anytime: pastorsearch@ucucc.org*

A Blessing

God be with us and remind us of your presence
as we move forward together in this ministry of hospitality.

God come to us and walk with us.

God give us open hearts and grateful hearts.

God bless those we welcome in your name.

And God remind us that you are with us, you of providence and grace,
in a spirit of memory, thanksgiving and hope,

in all that you have called us to do in faithfulness to our covenant
with you and with one another.

Amen



THE CHRISTMAS FUND SPECIAL OFFERING

DECEMBER 2008

Our joy at Christmas is a response to God's promise of new life through the birth of Jesus. It is a joy we are called to share widely, through our witness and gifts, both to loved ones and to distant neighbors.

The Christmas Fund Offering, one of four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ, is an important way of sharing our joy at God's renewing and life-giving grace. The Offering, which is administered by the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance of the Pension Boards on behalf of the UCC, is an expression of joy and gratitude to, and for, those who serve the church.

Gifts to The Christmas Fund help provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees and Christmas Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants. Through The Christmas Fund:

- Christmas Gift checks will be sent to approximately 900 persons in 2008. Of those who will receive checks, 20 are over 100 years of age. The oldest person is 106. One person has received Christmas checks continuously since 1976. The 900 gifts will total \$247,500.
- Monthly pension supplementation is provided to 455 persons. These gifts total \$97,791 per month. A significant part of annual total of \$1,173,492 comes from the Christmas Fund.
- Quarterly health premium supplementation is provided to 279 families, totaling \$151,132 per quarter. All of the funding for health premium supplementation is derived from the Christmas Fund.
- Emergency Grants have been provided to 44 individuals and families, which totaled \$58,510 in the first ten months of 2008. It is estimated that 70-80 persons will receive an Emergency Grant by year-end.

The theme for the 2008 Offering is: "Don't Be Afraid, Shout!" We are commissioned to boldly proclaim Good News, that the incarnation of God in the Christ Child was happened – Good News that a new day, God's day, was about to dawn. The church today is the incarnate presence of the Christ. We are called to be the presence of the Christ in the lives of those who have served the church so faithfully, as well as to usher in a new day for God's whole earth.

Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care.

All gifts, large and small, are gratefully received and make a tremendous difference. The Mission Board thanks you for your prayerful support of this special offering!

(information on this flier obtained from www.christmasfund.org)