



CROSS CONNECTION

The Newsletter of Cottage Grove United Church of Christ
Published Semi-Monthly
December 1, 2008



150 Years and Going Strong



*No matter who you are
or where you are
on life's journey,
you'll find a home here!*

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CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING

MONDAY, December 8, 2008 7:00 PM

Church Council has announced that the Annual Meeting of Cottage Grove United Church of Christ will be held on **Monday, December 8, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.** A new slate of officers will be presented for a congregational vote, and the Annual Reports will be reviewed. All church members are urged to attend this annual business meeting of the congregation where each member has a vote.

Along with this issue of the **Cross Connection** you will find the Annual Report. Please read it carefully to understand what is happening at your church. Please bring the special issue of the **Annual Report** with you for reference as the Annual Meeting progresses.



Rev. Bryan Olson Transitional Pastor

Office Hours
Monday—Thursday
Beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Office Phone:
(651) 459-1501
Rev. Olson's e-mail:
olsonbw@hotmail.com



PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!

Sue Brown and family; Daniel Bies; GeorgAnn Biscoe and family; Bill and Isabel Board; Bill Bothun; Beth Davies; Margaret Eberspacher; Bob Fox; Ron and Joyce Fries; Russ Gausman; Don Hanson; Delores Janke; Emily, Chris, and Joel Spicer; families facing unemployment issues; the Search Team, Rev. Bryan Olson, and our church during this time of transition.

Tom Avenriep (GeorgAnn & Steve Biscoe's friend); Alma Buechler (former pastor's wife); Abi Christopherson (Elaine Mitchell's friend); Alex (Dorothy Crampton's grandson, who is also Deb Tilson's son); Dorothy Brown (Ashley & Luke Longmuir's great-aunt); Alan Gausman (Russ Gausman's brother); Ken & Nora Krahn (missionaries); Denise Heschke Krech (Marilyn's Heschke's daughter); Steve and Eboné Koerselman family; Molly Livingston (Eboné Koerselman's grandmother); Margie Mattison (Farmers' Market vendor); Mary Schmidt (Karen Schmidt's mother-in-law); Ann Schmitt (Sue Brown's cousin) and her 5 small children, Ann's husband Troy Schmitt died recently; Agnes Thyren (Gary Thyren's mother); Beth Vinge (Bill & Arlene Kropelnicki's daughter); Midge Youngquist's grandmother; our soldiers around the world.



Author A.J. Jacobs has written a humorous and theologically reflective book called *"The Year of Living Biblically"*. It is, as the title tag line states, "one man's humble quest to follow the Bible as literally as possible." For 365 days, Jacobs devotes his entire life to researching and living out the more than 600 laws and commandments in both the Old and New Testaments of our Holy Scriptures. The surprising part of the book, however, is not how Jacobs goes about upholding these biblical requirements but what he discovers about himself in the process.

What I love about the book is that while Jacobs is many times confused and challenged by the biblical commandments he encounters, his commitment to living them out often transforms his perspective of religion and the world. He could have easily written off any number of biblical laws, as many Jews and Christians do today, as being outdated or unimportant. He could also have allowed cynicism and skepticism to cloud his findings. Jacobs, however, wanted to live according to the words and laws that millions of Jews and Christians around the world claim to adhere to in order to understand their value for faithful living. By doing this, Jacobs left himself open to the Holy Spirit and true transformation of the soul.

In order to complete his project, Jacobs took the time to intensely read and interpret the Bible for himself. He would read a commandment in Scripture and then determine how to uphold that law through his daily living. As you might imagine, many of the things Jacobs did to adhere to biblical law drew much criticism and slander from family, friends, and strangers alike. By adhering to an ancient moral and social code, Jacobs was mocked, ridiculed, and labeled as "weird." Jacobs himself, however, genuinely grows closer to God and his neighbors by following the biblical commandments.

Through his experiment, Jacobs proves that living according to the Word of God takes commitment and sacrifice. Living a good and faithful life is not easy, but the rewards, while not material, are always invaluable. I know that many of us want to grow closer to God and live the lives we are called to live, but fear of appearing outside the "norm" often holds us back from being our true selves.

While none of us will be able to recreate Jacobs' experiment of biblical living for ourselves, we can take the opportunity of Advent to begin planning for a new way to live in relationship with God and one another. Advent is a time of preparation and waiting. It is a time to ponder what the world would be like without the hope of a Messiah and how our lives have been irreversibly changed by the joy, peace, and love that come to us through the Christ child. Jesus said that all the laws of the Scripture can be summed up in two commandments; to love God with all our heart, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. If, during this Advent season, we can begin to faithfully interpret and uphold these two commandments in our daily lives, then we, like Jacobs, will be one step closer to living out the Word of God and discovering the Holy presence within it.

Blessings to you all this Advent season! See you in worship.

Peace,
Rev. Bryan

Sermons on Line

Rev. Bryan Olson's series of sermons on the Ten Commandments are now on-line through a link on the church web page. They are media files and require a media reader to be able to download them. Check it out on the home page—click on "Rev. Olson's Sermons."

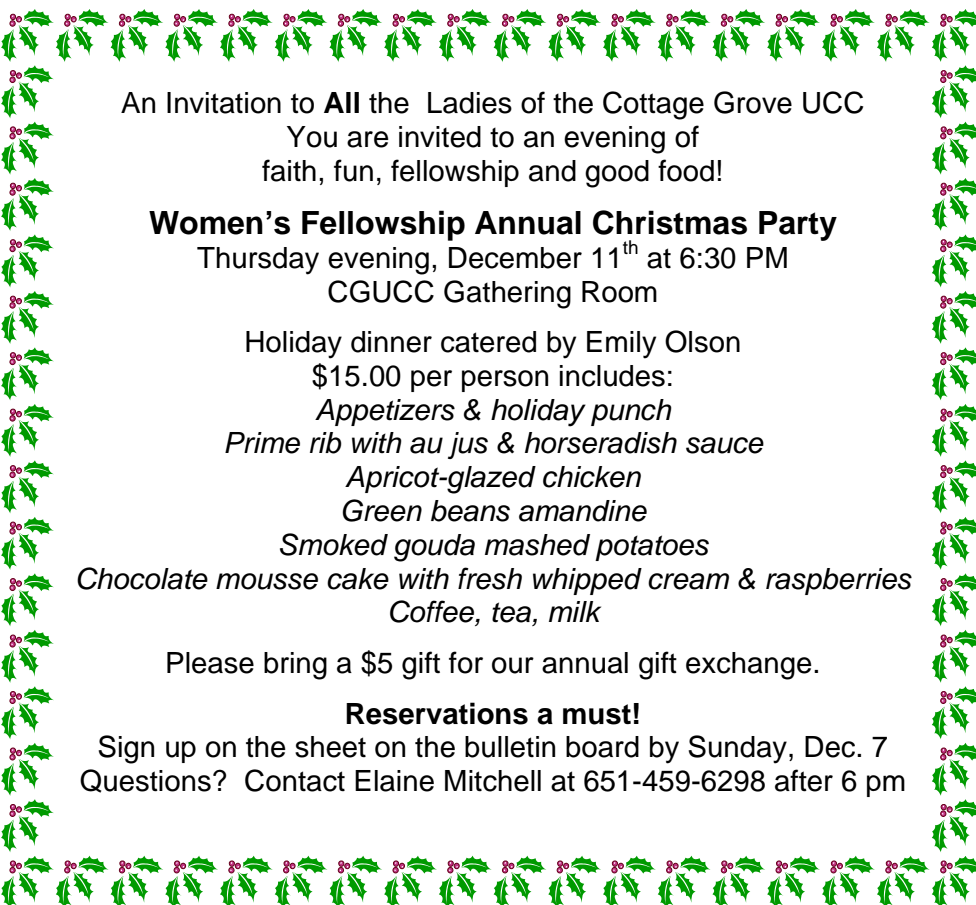
10 Commandments
Sermon Series



Check it out on the home page—click on "Rev. Olson's Sermons."

Adult Advent Study

All adults interested in studying and discussing the Advent scriptures are invited to come to an informal gathering before worship (9 a.m.) each Sunday from November 30 – December 21, 2008. The texts that will be studied each week will coincide with those that will be preached on during the worship service that Sunday. Come and enjoy enlivening and enlightening discussion as we interpret together the meaning of the coming of the Christ child. Lay leaders for this study will include Diane Davies, Gary Thyren, and Ron Bonnevier.



An Invitation to **All** the Ladies of the Cottage Grove UCC
You are invited to an evening of
faith, fun, fellowship and good food!

Women's Fellowship Annual Christmas Party

Thursday evening, December 11th at 6:30 PM
CGUCC Gathering Room

Holiday dinner catered by Emily Olson

\$15.00 per person includes:

Appetizers & holiday punch

Prime rib with au jus & horseradish sauce

Apricot-glazed chicken

Green beans amandine

Smoked gouda mashed potatoes

Chocolate mousse cake with fresh whipped cream & raspberries

Coffee, tea, milk

Please bring a \$5 gift for our annual gift exchange.

Reservations a must!

Sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board by Sunday, Dec. 7
Questions? Contact Elaine Mitchell at 651-459-6298 after 6 pm

Women's Fellowship Upcoming Events

November 30—The Sock and Mitten Tree goes up.

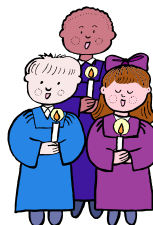
Please help the needy by donating mittens, socks, or hats. All will be most welcome. It will continue through the Christmas season so it is never too late to share.

December 14—Christmas Goodie Bake Sale. All baked goods or other treats are most welcome. We will use the money made at this sale for the Battered Women's Shelter and the Capital Campaign.



Kids Sing November 30

The Sunday School Choir will be sharing two songs from their current rotation, "Christmas Around the World," during worship on Sunday, November 30. Please come and support our kids!



Coming Up in Worship

Sunday, November 30

First Sunday in Advent

9:00 a.m. Adult Advent Study
9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:10 a.m. Announcements
10:15 a.m. Worship with Sunday School Choir Singing
11:30 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship

Sunday, December 7

Second Sunday in Advent

9:00 a.m. Adult Advent Study
9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:10 a.m. Announcements
10:15 a.m. Worship
11:30 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship

Sunday, December 14

Third Sunday in Advent

9:00 a.m. WF Christmas Bake Sale
9:00 a.m. Adult Advent Study
9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:10 a.m. Announcements
10:15 a.m. Worship
11:30 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship

Sunday, December 21

Fourth Sunday in Advent

9:00 a.m. Adult Advent Study
9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:10 a.m. Announcements
10:15 a.m. Worship with Sunday School Christmas Pageant
11:30 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve

4:30 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service
10:00 p.m. Candles & Communion Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 28

First Sunday after Christmas

10:10 a.m. Announcements
10:15 a.m. Worship
11:30 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship



Y.A.H.O.O.

(Youth Aspiring to Help Out Others)

Y.A.H.O.O.s is the Youth Ministry program of Cottage Grove United Church of Christ in Cottage Grove, MN.

As Y.A.H.O.O.s, we work to serve Christ by using our spiritual gifts for the benefit of our church, our community, and our world.

All youth grades 7 through 12 are invited to participate.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cquccyouth>

YOUTH Events Calendar

Thursday, Dec. 4, 6:00 p.m.
Toys for Tots

Saturday, Dec. 6, 9:00 a.m.
Confirmation

Thursday, Dec. 23, 6:00 p.m.
Toys for Tots

February 13-15, 2008
Winter CYE

Confirmation

Confirmation students and mentors will gather for their third class session on **Saturday, December 6, 2008**, from 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. The session is entitled, “**Values and the Christian Life**” – An exploration of how we develop our individual value system through the examination of personal, societal, and Christian values.



Winter CYE

Mark your calendars! The Winter Conference Youth Event will be held **February 13-15, 2008**, at United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, MN. Registration forms for this event will be available soon. Scholarships are available for this event! Please see Rev. Bryan for more details.

Youth Events

Bell Ringing Opportunities

Interested in doing an evening of bell ringing for the Salvation Army with your fellow disciples at CGUCC this holiday season? Contact Rev. Bryan today and let him know when you are available. He will be putting together a volunteer schedule and signing up for red kettle sites in the near future. We would like to send three to four bell ringers to each site, so check your schedules and see when you can serve!



Greeters Wanted

Each week we welcome members and visitors to worship with a smile and a friendly greeting. Please prayerfully consider helping with this ministry. Greeters are needed both before and after worship each Sunday. If you would like to volunteer to be a greeter, please sign-up on the sheet in the Gathering Room. A few minutes of your time will make a world of difference in the life of our church! Volunteer to be a greeter today!



Toys for Tots

Thursday evenings, December 4th and December 23, CGUCC will be taking a group of volunteers to St. Paul to work with Toys for Tots. The scheduled times are 6:00—8:00 p.m. Please contact either Rev. Bryan (olsonbw@hotmail.com) or Jerry Biscoe (jbiscoe2@travelers.com) if you would like to meet at the church and carpool there. This is a great opportunity for you do help ensure that children will get toys in these tough economic times.



Food Distribution for Families

On Saturday, December 13th, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon the Harbor Church, 11125 W Point Douglas Road, Hastings, is sponsoring a Food Distribution, “Enough food to feed your family for a week.” They feature milk and dairy, fresh produce, meat, and bread. The suggested donation is \$15.00. This is for families who could use help to cover their housing, utility, and food needs. The food distribution is the 2nd Saturday of each month. If you and your family, or another family you know is struggling to make ends meet, this is for you. Please consider yourself invited.





December

- 1 - Joyce Fries
- 2 - Lyle Kohls
Chris McCoy
Dave Utsch
- 3 - Yvonne Bonngard
Corry Vink
- 4 - Donna Bothun
- 5 - Kylie Hanson
- 6 - Bill Bothun
Bobbi Jo Janicek
- 7 - Dale Marty
- 8 - Brittany Marty
- 9 - Melissa Hanson
- 10 - Sandra Dahlke
Margaret
Eberspacher
- 11 - Daniel Schmidt
- 13 - Bradley Bender
- 14 - Andrew Bloomquist
- 15 - Allyson Youngquist
- 16 - Theresa
Fritze-Nelson
Kasandra
Westerberg
- 19 - Rob Howard
- 21 - Gary Eddy
- 22 - Christy Eddy
- 23 - Gordon Siedschlag
Emily Spicer
Chase Wilkinson
- 24 - Gloria Mathison
Kathy Weber
- 25 - Roxanne Burns
- 26 - Kate McCoy
Nina Kottke
- 27 - Kathryn Biscoe
Jessica Longtine
Jim Stoker
- 28 - Kyle Kropelnicki
- 29 - Bonnie Vink
- 30 - Red Spicer
Leah Sutter

Ecumenical Christmas Service

This year's Ecumenical Christmas Service for all women in the area will be held at Newport United Methodist Church, 1596 Eleventh Avenue in Newport. The service is Thursday, December 4, 7:30 p.m. All are invited to attend to celebrate this beautiful season.



Women's Ecumenical
Christmas Service

Christmas for Christophersons

The past 2 years our congregation has helped make Christmas a happy time for Abi and her family. Abi is a 10-year-old with chiari, a severe medical, life-threatening condition. The Outreach and Fellowship Team is asking for the congregation's support to help buy Christmas gifts this year for Abi, Mattie and Kaydee Christopherson. The family continues to struggle with health issues for all 3 girls and financial difficulties. Each Sunday through December 14th, I will have a box on the counter at the coffee bar for donations. I know this is a tough year for all of us, but I also know just how generous our congregation can be. Please join me and the Outreach Team in sponsoring this worthy family. Thank you.



Elaine Mitchell

To My Church Family

A very sincere and heart-felt thank you for all of the prayers, cards, care and concern during my recent hospitalization and recovery. A special thanks to Pastor Bryan for his visits, to my family and my sisters in Christ, to the Farmers' Market Team for covering for me during my absence.

Sandy Rabe



Thanks to our Historian

Many thanks to our Church Historian, Emily Biscoe, for all her work on the historical records of the church, the photo albums, and for the very attractive and informative picture displays on the hanging boards in the Fellowship Lounge.

Emily worked hard to bring the photos up to date for the 150th Anniversary Celebration, and now has a new display of photos from that special event. Check out the photo display boards in the upstairs Fellowship Lounge, and say "thanks" to Emily, our historian.



Craft and Bake Sale

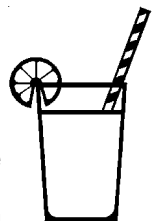
Saturday, December 6, 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
Red Rock Manor (where Sandy Rabe lives)
1421 10th Avenue, Newport



Remember When?

From stories told in 1940 by Lucy (Brown) Spicer and Hilda (Bahls) Lindeman

Remember when Vernie Kuehn used to be the janitor? He walked 2 miles from his home on a Saturday night to start the fire so he could get the church warmed up for Sunday morning. He dug graves, cut all the grass in the cemetery and church yard, and cleaned the church. He got \$50 a year. Leona Perkins remembers the time Vernie was cutting grass on a hot day. She made him a fruit jar of lemonade and brought it to him, only to have him say, "I don't like lemonade."



From the Red Cross Blood Drive

Thanks to all the members at UCC Cottage Grove for your wonderful hospitality and generosity in making the Red Cross Blood Drive a great success. All the Red Cross staff commented on how welcoming everyone was - and how much they would like to come back.

Some statistics: there were 28 pints of blood collected with 35 people presenting (or offering to give blood). Seven people were not able to donate. Of the people who made a donation, 10 had never donated before - several of whom were teenagers. This is important as young first time donors are very likely to give literally gallons of blood over a lifetime - enough to save dozens of lives. Of the remaining 18 donors, many hadn't given in a while, and were happy to get back into the habit. The bulk of the donors came from the church.

At least four donors commented that this was the first time that they had been in the church - one in particular said to me that she thought she might like to go to church here.

If the church wants to have a regular partnership with the Red Cross, I think they are very excited to do that and may approach you about coming back in the spring.

Again, thank you very much. Everyone was just great!

Yours,
Bob Dickie



Thank You to Blood Drive Volunteers

Thank you to all members and friends of Cottage Grove U.C.C. who assisted with the American Red Cross Blood Drive on Wednesday, November 19, 2008. A special thank you goes out to all those people who donated blood at this event. Your offering will bring the gift of life to a person in need this holiday season. In addition, CGUCC and the Red Cross would like to thank Bev Gross and Doreen Barta for overseeing the volunteer operations at the event as well as all the people who baked sweet treats and provided hospitality to donors during the blood drive. Your ministry is greatly appreciated!



Thanks for Sharing the Joy!

Thank you to all who donated money for the Friends in Need "Share the Joy" turkey dinner drive. We collected \$505 dollars and were able to make 15 dinners!!!! We also joined in assembling the turkey dinner baskets at the American Legion in St. Paul Park doing over 280. They provide 356 turkey dinner meals to the local families. Be proud of our support - I feel it was inspiring. God Bless and Happy Thanksgiving.
Yvonne Bonngard



Carole's Cookies

Celebrating 12 years of Holiday Baking for your holiday entertaining or for a special gift. I offer cookies and candies by the dozen, also breads and fruitcake. I also do special trays of cookies and candies. If you would like to receive my holiday flyer, please call me at (651) 459-1518, or see me in church. Thank you, and a very happy blessed holiday season to all.



Carole Weitzel Biscoe

Cross Connection

A Periodical Newsletter of
**Cottage Grove United Church
of Christ**

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Edited by Becky Graff

**Back issues available on our
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www.cgucc.org**

Deadline	Issue Date
December 10	December 15
December 26	January 1

Submit articles via e-mail at
cgucc@usfamily.net or drop
them off at the office.

Becky Graff, Editor

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STOP!!
If you would rather not receive this news
letter, please call or send an e-mail, and we
will take you off our mailing list. Thanks!

Christmas Schedule

Sunday, November 30, First Sunday in Advent

9:00 a.m. Adult Advent Study
9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship with Sunday School Choir
Singing

Thursday, December 4

7:00 p.m. Ecumenical Christmas Service at Newport
United Methodist Church

Sunday, December 7, Second Sunday in Advent

9:00 a.m. Adult Advent Study
9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship

Thursday, December 11

6:30 p.m. WF Christmas Party

Sunday, December 14,

Third Sunday in Advent

9:00 a.m. Adult Advent Study
9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship

Saturday, December 20

Practice for Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 21, Fourth Sunday in Advent

9:00 a.m. Adult Advent Study
9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship with Sunday School Christmas
Pageant

Wednesday, December 24, Christmas Eve

4:30 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service
10:00 p.m. Candles and Communion Christmas Eve
Service

Sunday, December 28

First Sunday after Christmas

10:15 a.m. Worship

