



CROSS CONNECTION

The Newsletter of Cottage Grove United Church of Christ
Published Semi-Monthly
December 15, 2009



150 Years and Going Strong



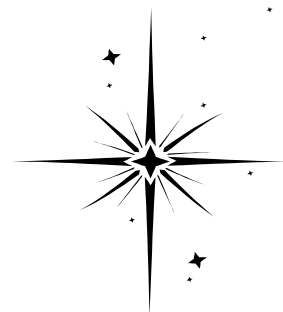
*No matter who you are
or where you are
on life's journey,
you'll find a home here!*

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United Church of Christ**
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Cottage Grove, MN. 55016-2397
Tel: 651-459-1501
Email: cgucc@usfamily.net
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Advent Events



Thursday, December 17
5:30 p.m. Toys for Tots

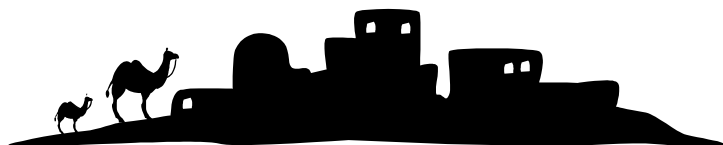
Friday, December 18
*6:30 p.m. Y.A.H.O.O. Christmas
Party and Confirmation Class Gift Wrapping*

Saturday, December 19
*9:30 a.m. Practice for Christmas Pageant
12:15 p.m. Sunday School Children's Bowling Party*

Sunday, December 20, Fourth Sunday of Advent
*9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship with Sunday School Christmas
Pageant, "Is It Really Christmas"
11:30 Take Home Lunch Sale*

Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve
*4:30 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service
10:00 p.m. Candles and Communion Christmas Eve
Service*

Sunday, December 27, First Sunday after Christmas
*No Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship*



Rev. Désirée H. Gold, Pastor

Office Hours
Tuesday—Thursday
10:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.

Office Phone:
(651) 459-1501

Rev. Gold's e-mail:
pastorgold@inbox.com



PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!

Nita Bertram; Daniel Bies; Eric Bies; Bill & Isabel Board; Ron Bonnevier; Bill Bothun; Beth Davies; Don Hanson; Debra Hanson; Ruby Hanson; Chris Miller; Sandy Rabe; Jamie & Adam Roberts; Lucy Spicer; families facing unemployment issues; all those who have the flu.

Angie Barta (Doreen Barta's mother-in-law); Howard Biscoe (Rob Biscoe's brother); Dorothy Brown (Ashley & Luke Longmuir's great-aunt); Abi Christopherson (Elaine Mitchell's friend); Cheryl (Joyce Fries' daughter); Patricia Clark (Doreen Barta's mother); Diane (friend of Carole Weitzel Biscoe); Jim Gregory; Kandy & David Hartson (Pastor Gold's parents); Donna Johnson (Gary Afdahl's mother-in-law); Ken & Nora Krahn (missionaries); Denise Heschke Krech (Marilyn's Heschke's daughter); Richard Lara (in prison); Margie Mattison and family (Farmers' Market vendor); Fred Minster (Stan Barta's cousin); Joan Peterfeso; Allison Rathlisberger (Doris Fiedler's great-granddaughter); David Sauve; Gene Sauve; Emilie Stordalen; Midge Youngquist's grandmother and mother.

An Offering of Gold

Rev. Désirée H. Gold



On December 8th we finally got our first real dose of winter. Snow bunny that I am, I was thrilled! It was all I could do to stay inside on Tuesday when all that beautiful snow was falling. The following day I put on my big coat and boots and hat and mittens and headed out for a walk. I relished the cold wind blowing against my face and didn't mind the mild wind burn. I even dug out my sled and went down a snow pile near our house a couple of times.

We Northerners respond to the onslaught of winter in different ways. Ben was not nearly as excited as I was; he puts up with winter rather than relishes in it. Some people I know get downright grouchy when the snow begins to fall. Others don't mind the beginning of winter, but come February or March they are ornery and ready to be done with it.

However you react to the snowy, Arctic blast that is Minnesota winter, it is likely that you have a warm house to shelter you and a warm car to transport you where you need to go. You may gripe about the cold and the snow, but you ultimately have plenty of protection from it. You may, as I do, see the snowy outdoors as a fun playground to be enjoyed, then escaped with a cozy fire and cup of hot chocolate. Such is not the case for the 1,000 people who are homeless in Minnesota on any given day. Yes, at least 1,000 people *in Minnesota alone* are homeless on any given night. That includes days and nights when the temperature is -20°F and the wind chill colder yet.

Needless to say, not everyone survives on the street. For this reason, communities around the country will mark National Homeless Persons Memorial Day on Monday, December 21. Why now? Why focus on such a topic right in the middle of the Advent season, so near to the joyful celebration of Christmas? December 21 was chosen as Homeless Persons Memorial Day because it is the longest night of the year. You can imagine how endless nights seem to those who must spend them alone, in the dark and the cold. I remind you also that Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, who himself taught us to care for the poor.

You may wonder why we should think about homelessness out here in Washington County, where it is uncommon to see panhandlers or homeless people sleeping on park benches. We *do* in fact have homelessness here; they are just less visible here than they are in the city. Not all homeless people sleep on the street or even in shelters. Many find temporary shelter on the couch of a family member or friend. Others sleep in their cars. Some sleep in motel rooms when they can afford to do so. Still, all of these are without permanent shelter and at risk.

Did you know that 131 homeless people and advocates for the homeless died in Minnesota in 2008? Did you know that the average life expectancy of a homeless person is 47 years? (Keep in mind that the average life expectancy for the average American is somewhere around 77 years.) These are atrocious figures, and they should shock us.

How better to prepare for the incarnation of Christ into our world than by pausing to remember the "least of these," who were unable to survive their poverty? How better to live into the Advent season than by grieving the deaths of those who in many cases were deeply alone in life?

We reach out to the "least of these" in part by "adopting" families in need, as the Gratitude Group and the Confirmation class have done. We reach out through such programs as the "sock and mitten tree" sponsored by Women's Fellowship or the Toys and Tots activity planned by the youth. We help through our Sunday offerings. Let us also reach out by grieving together

(continued on next page)

Sunday School Pageant

The Sunday School children will present their annual Christmas pageant during the worship service on Sunday, December 20. The final dress rehearsal will be Saturday, December 19th from 9:30-11:30 a.m. A pizza party will follow rehearsal. At approximately 12:15 p.m. we will be leaving church to take the kids to the local bowling alley for a bowling party. Please plan to help your children attend for kid-sized fellowship and fun.



Service Learning Trip Fundraiser

Lisa Wohlers is a graduate student at St. Catherine University working toward her doctorate in physical therapy. As part of the educational experience she is going on a service learning trip to Mississippi. The service learning objective is to provide students with opportunities to assist under served communities while analyzing issues of race, class, and social justice. Examples of past services students have provided include running youth programs, working in food shelf cafeterias, and providing pro bono medical services at free clinics.



Lisa will be selling turkey wild rice soup, bread, and pie as a fundraiser for the trip to Mississippi on Sunday December 20th. This to-go meal is perfect for Sunday lunch or dinner! See Lisa in the gathering room after service on Sunday to pick up these delicious home cooked favorites!

Women's Fellowship Mitten Tree

Women's Fellowship is sponsoring the Sock and Mitten Tree which can be found in the Gathering Room. All donations (socks, mittens, scarves, caps) will be appreciated by those who need them.

Chris Miller, Women's Fellowship Chairperson



Toys for Tots

On Thursday, December 17th from 5:30 to 8:30 PM, CGUCC members and friends will be helping at the Toys for Tots warehouse. We will be sorting and boxing toys as they are received at the warehouse. Everyone and their friends are welcome to come and help, as it is always a fun time for all. We will meet at the church parking lot and leave at 5:00 PM to go to the warehouse, located at 2360 Pilot Knob Road, Mendota Heights. The plan is to be back to the church parking lot by 9:00 PM.



(continued from previous page)

these tragic deaths and by working together to see that they stop. Let us not see the gloominess of Homeless Persons Memorial Day as a rude intrusion into our busy holiday season but as a solemn reminder of who we are called to be as followers of Christ.

May you enjoy a warm Advent and a cozy Christmas, but may we all be aware of those who will not.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Gold

Cross Connection

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

Published on the 1st and 15th
of every month
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of every month

Edited by Becky Graff

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

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

Becky Graff, Editor

Contact Us

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Sunday School Team

Sheri Wohlers, Custodian
sherileewohlers@msn.com

Office Hours: Monday-Friday
9:00 a.m.—12:00 noon



December

- 1 - Joyce Fries
- 2 - Lyle Kohls
Chris McCoy
Dave Utsch
- 3 - John Anderson
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 - Jessica Anderson
Sandra Dahlke
James Morgan
- 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 - Candice Harvieux
Roxanne White
- 26 - Nina Kottke
Kate McCoy
- 27 - Kathryn Biscoe
Jessica Longtine
Jim Stoker
- 28 - Kyle Kropelnicki
- 29 - Bonnie Vink
- 30 - Warren Spicer



SHOP WITH SCRIP REPORT FOR ANNUAL MEETING

December 14, 2009

What is Scrip? Scrip is fundraising while you shop. CGUCC buys the Scrip (substitute money or gift cards) from Great Lakes Scrip Center at a substantial discount (from 2 - 25%) then resells the certificates to you, our members, for regular face value. The bulk of the discount is retained by our church as revenue. The reason for the effectiveness of Scrip is simple: our families produce revenue by making purchases they would make anyway and without spending an additional penny. A handout describing this process in greater detail is available for you to review further if you are interested.

What has Scrip done for us so far?

- Our first order went in on 11/23/09. We had 3 families participate purchasing a total of \$375.00 in Scrip. The church received a \$23.00 rebate from which \$7.50 was subtracted for shipping leaving us with \$15.50 profit.
- Our second order went in on 11/30/09. We had 8 families participate purchasing a total of \$1615.00 in Scrip. The church received an \$81.85 rebate from which \$7.50 was subtracted for shipping leaving us with \$74.35 profit.
- The third order went in on 12/7/09. We had 11 families participating for a total of \$3830.00 in Scrip. The church received a \$118.35 rebate from which \$7.50 was subtracted for shipping leaving us with \$110.85 profit.
- Today (12/14/09) an order went in with 15 families participating for a total of \$7135.00 in Scrip. The church received a \$437.15 rebate from which \$13.00 was subtracted for shipping (overnight shipping as I was worried about it not arriving before Sunday) leaving us with \$424.15 profit.

Folks that means we've made \$624.85 to reduce the principle of our mortgage in just our first four weeks of Scrip! We spent money we were going to spend anyway, but by buying and using Scrip, we reduced our mortgage by over \$600.00! **Congratulations and Merry Christmas to all of us!!!**

Yes, this is the holiday shopping season, and yes I'm sure the purchases will drop off in the next couple of weeks BUT we only had 15 families participating and they raised over \$600. What would happen if we all started using Scrip to buy our weekly groceries, our weekly gas, our clothing purchases, our prescriptions? An organization of 150 families easily spends between one and two million dollars per year on these essentials. If these families used Scrip for these purchases, they can raise as much as \$40,000 to \$80,000 per year for their organization without spending any additional money. What would that mean in principle reduction for our church mortgage? This program makes sense to me and it IS making money. It is costing us only for shipping (normally \$7.50/week) and a couple hours of coordinator time each week, which is donated.

The process for signing up is pretty painless with or without an internet access. With internet access merely go to shopwithscrip.com, use the enrollment code for CGUCC (B79185A723386) and set up your family account and start shopping. For those without internet access, paper order forms are available. You merely fill out the order form, include your check to pay for your items and place both in the envelope marked Scrip Orders in the Gathering Room or give it to Diane Davies. Orders are placed every Monday. You will all pick up your orders the following Sunday in church from Diane. Orders are not shipped individually to your home as the postage costs would eat up the profit.

Contact Diane Davies at 651-436-7234 or online at Dianedavies@live.com if you have any questions.

Thanks so much for your participation in this fundraising effort.
Diane Davies, Scrip Coordinator

Minnesota Conference UCC Christmas Open House!

December 16th, from 1:00-4:00

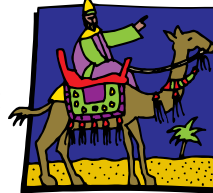
The staff of the Conference Office invites you to come, snack, mingle, and visit us in Minneapolis!

Stop on by!

122 W Franklin Avenue #323, Minneapolis



**Christmas
OPEN HOUSE**



Amahl and the Night Visitors

First Christian Church is proud to present Gian-Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* on Friday, December 18 at 7:30 p.m. The production features members of the First Christian Church Choir and the University of Minnesota Opera.

Please join us at this benefit to support Feed My Starving Children, a Twin Cities-based charity that has been involved in making sure that all of God's little ones around the world are fed. First Christian is located at 2201 First Ave S, Minneapolis, www.fccminneapolis.org.

Thank You

We would like to thank all of our church family for your kind expression of sympathy on the recent loss of my mother. We truly appreciate all those who sent flowers or a sympathy card called with the kindest words or thought of us those days. Your thoughts and prayers were truly heart warming. We are so blessed to have such a loving and caring church family.



Blessings to you all,
Joyce and Jerry Biscoe & Family

Thanks from Pastor Gold

Thank you for your concern and prayers during my mother's recent surgery and hospitalization. I am very grateful, as is my family, and I am happy to report that my mother is recovering well at home.



Grace and peace, Pastor Gold

Share the Joy

The Confirmation students will gather to wrap all the gifts donated for our adopted family, and deliver them to the Cottage Grove Armory on December 19th at 6:30 p.m. The Y.A.H.O.O.'s Christmas Party will follow the wrapping. All youth are invited to attend.



Farmers' Market Calendars

You can still get your 2010 calendar at church for \$7.00, or call the office to reserve yours.



Join the Altar Team

Jan Huber, Chairperson of the Altar Team, is looking for two people to join them in beautifying the altar for worship. One person is responsible for the altar each month, and with enough help, each person is only responsible for one month a year. Help is need for January and for March. If you are willing and able to help, please call Jan at 459-0118.



Coming Up in Worship

Sunday, December 20 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Meals-to-Go Sale

Christmas Fund Offering

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:15 a.m. Worship with

Children's Pageant

11:30 a.m. Fellowship

Sunday, December 27 First Sunday after Christ- mas

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:15 a.m. Worship

11:30 a.m. Fellowship

Sunday, January 3

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:15 a.m. Worship

11:30 a.m. Fellowship

Participating in Worship in December

Head Usher—Jerry Biscoe

Altar Team—Jan Huber

Communion Preparation—

Midge Youngquist and

Mike Roberts

Participating in Worship in January

Head Usher—Ron

Bonnevier

Altar Team—

Communion Preparation—

Krisi and Jeff Jacobs

**If you are willing to take care
of the altar in January,
please call Jan Huber at
459-0118.**

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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!



American Red Cross Blood Drive

January 6, from 3:00-7:00 p.m.

We need callers, canteen hosts, set-up and clean-up crews,
and folks to bring treats for donors.

And we need lots of folks to donate blood!

Please call the church office at 651-459-1501 to make an appointment to donate
or contact the American Red Cross at 1-800-GIVE-LIFE, or www.givebloodgivelife.org