



CROSS CONNECTION

The Newsletter of Cottage Grove United Church of Christ
Published Semi-Monthly
January 1, 2010



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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American Red Cross Blood Drive

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

We still need people to make reminder phone calls to those who have signed up to donate, and set-up and clean-up crews.

And we need lots of folks to donate blood!

**Is this the year you will decide to give
the gift of life through donating 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

You can make a difference in the lives of others!

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; Kathy Biscoe; Rob and Carole Weitzel Biscoe and family on death of Rob's brother Howard; Bill and Isabel Board; Bill Bothun; Beth Davies; Don Hanson; Debra Hanson; Ruby Hanson; Chris Miller; Elaine and Ira Mitchell and family on death of their niece Karen; Richard Piel; Sandy Rabe; Jamie and Adam Roberts; Lucy Spicer; families facing unemployment issues.

Angie Barta (Doreen Barta's mother-in-law); Vera Benshoof (Bonnie Vink's mother); Abi Christopherson (Elaine Mitchell's friend); Cheryll (Joyce Fries' daughter); Patricia Clark (Doreen Barta's mother); Diane (Carole Weitzel Biscoe's friend); family and friends of Jami Flannagan; Jim Gregory; Kandy Hartson (Pastor Gold's mother); Obid Hofland; Donna Johnson (Gary Afdahl's mother-in-law); Ken & Nora Krahn (missionaries); Denise Heschke Krech (Marilyn Heschke's daughter); Richard Lara (in prison); Jason Lindemann & family; Fred Minister (Stan Barta's cousin); Joan Peterfeso; David Sauve (Beatrice Sauve's brother); Gene Sauve; Emilie Stordalen (Pastor Gold's cousin); Elaine Torseth; Andrew Witherspoon; Midge Youngquist's grandmother and mother; our soldiers around the world.

An Offering of Gold

Rev. Désirée
H. Gold



Ah, New Year's resolutions! They have a tendency to be made fervently at the New Year...and then forgotten a week later. "Oh, I ate so much during the holidays!! I'm going on a diet January 1st!" Or..."I am so tired of procrastinating. Staring January 1st, I am going to stop procrastinating and never be late for anything anymore!" ...but come January 8th or so we are back eating every bit as much or putting off our resolutions "until tomorrow."

Why do we have so much trouble keeping resolutions? The Apostle Paul aptly said that he does the things he does not want to do and vice versa, and his words are a sad commentary on human nature (Romans 7:15). It's hard for us to do the right thing, even when we know it could save our life (a new diet), or make life a lot easier for us and everyone we know (stop procrastinating). Perhaps we are afraid of the changes our resolutions could bring to our lives. It's hard to change.

With all of this said, I am going to invite you to do that most difficult thing: to make a New Year's resolution - between yourself and God - that you will work on deepening your relationship with God this year. That will mean something different for each one of you, and you will achieve it in different ways. Some of you may deepen your relationship by attending church more. You may decide to officially join the church, join a ministry team, or volunteer for a role in worship leadership. Perhaps you are already doing all or some of those things. For you, deepening your relationship with God could mean attending adult Sunday School, reading more, exploring scripture, or finding someone with whom you can talk about your faith. Some of you may deepen your relationship to God by increasing your financial commitment to the church—by making bigger sacrifices to support the ministry that goes on here. For all of us, a resolution to deepen our relationship with God should mean that we pray more.

Like most New Year's resolutions, this will not be an easy one to keep. Most of our lives are too busy, and it can be easy to forget to pray, or to say "I'm too busy or tired to go to church this week," or "I'd rather watch TV than read that devotional book right now," or "I'd rather go out to dinner than put that money in the offering plate." It is easy to put our faith on the back burner when we have so many other things going on in our lives. But if we are to call ourselves Christians, faith should really be central to who we are as human beings.

God showers us with an abundance of grace and forgiveness, so when we slip up on our journey of faith it will not be the end of the world. That said, we are called to work hard at our faith lives, and I hope you will embark upon this adventure with me. Let us make the time and the sacrifices necessary to deepen our relationships with God this year...and for the rest of our lives.

I wish all of you a blessed and fruitful New Year.

Grace and peace, Pastor Gold

Ordination and Installation

Obadiah Balingier will be ordained and installed as pastor of Community United Church of Christ in St. Paul Park on Saturday, January 23 at 3:00 p.m. All are invited to attend.



Confirmation Class

The Confirmation Class will meet in the month of January on the 9th from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and 23rd from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Please mark your calendars.



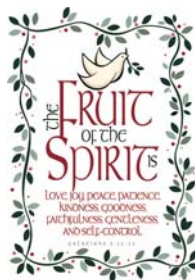
Back to Sunday School

After taking a break to slow down and enjoy the Christmas holiday, the Sunday School staff will be back in their classrooms to welcome the children on Sunday, January 10. They will begin a new rotation and start learning new songs and a Bible verse.



Adult Sunday School

The next discussion group will start on Sunday, January 10th, and will run for a total of six weeks; we will be meeting at 9:00 a.m. Ron Bonnevier will be the moderator, and we will use a book entitled "Kindness" which is one of a series of books by Calvin Miller. This will be the third book we have used in the Miller series on Fruits of the Spirit.



If interested please sign the sheet in the Gathering Room. Ron will order the books, which will cost about \$10.00 each.

Thank You

Thanks go out to John Perkins for keeping the church parking lot, sidewalks, and entry ways open during the Christmas storms. If someone would like to take turns in helping John out after it snows, please call John at (651) 459-9665.



Thanks from Pastor Gold

Dear Members of CGUCC,
Thank you for your extremely generous Christmas gift. What a wonderful surprise to open the envelope on Christmas morning! I am so blessed to do ministry with you.



Grace and peace,
Pastor Gold

Christmas Thanks

A special thank you to all who provided special music for the Christmas Eve services: the choir, Dick Spicer, Gary Weiby, and Lisa Wohlers.

Gary Afdahl, Music Director



Join the Altar Team

Jan Huber, Chairperson of the Altar Team, is looking for two people to join the team 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 needed for January and for March. If you are willing and able to help, please call Jan at 459-0118.



Need a Handyman?

If you find you need help around the house, I can do minor electrical work, fix plumbing leaks, hang pictures, hang cabinets, paint, lay laminate and tile flooring, etc... Contact me at troy.pribnow@gmail.com, 651-436-4498, or 651-274-2237.



Troy Pribnow

Cross Connection

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

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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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Herrmann, BobbiJo Janicek**,
Sunday School Team

Sheri Wohlers, Custodian
sherileewohlers@msn.com

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



Calendar

January

- 1 - Todd Hanson
- 3 - Arlean Kropelnicki
- 5 - Morgan Herrmann
Barb Meyer
- 7 - Cody Brown
Ruby Hanson
Bryan Welck
Melissa Wilkoske
- 8 - Brian Larson
- 9 - Bonnie Ries
Jacob Sorensen
- 10 - Michael Jeffrey
Paul Wohlers
- 12 - Robert Janicek
- 14 - Derek Harvieux
Alyssa Wilkinson
- 15 - Mark Marty
- 16 - Wally Fritze
- 18 - Loretta Gorgus
- 19 - Becky Mindrum
Taylor Stensgaard
- 21 - Doris Fiedler
- 22 - Beatrice Sauve
- 23 - Calle Fritze
Bonnie Power
- 25 - Richard Nieman
- 26 - Hunter Hakkila
Cadan Kropelnicki
Austin Murr
- 27 - Gary Thyren
- 28 - Hailee Marty
- 29 - Mikayla Hanson
Kathy Trout
- 31 - Ruth Radke



The Academy for Vital Christianity United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

What is the Academy for Vital Christianity? A chance to take seminary-level classes on religion and faith at a convenient time and place.

The Academy, which offers short-term classes in churches around Minnesota, is a joint venture of United Theological Seminary in New Brighton and the Minnesota Conferences of the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church. Classes focus on such timeless issues as evil and suffering, understanding the Bible in contemporary terms, and sacred music and arts. Taught by United faculty members and regional experts, the 10-hour classes are offered evenings and weekends.

Among this spring's offerings:

- *Professor Christine Smith leads discussions on how we can respond to "Eco-Injustice."
- *Gail Anderson explores the Metro area's growing communities of non-Christian faiths.
- *Dean Richard Weis shares a 21st century perspective on the writings of the prophets.

An interactive format encourages a lively give and take, and United's tradition of hospitality creates a sense of inclusiveness. Join others interested in strengthening their faith and understanding at a class this spring!



United Theological Seminary to Hold Class at CGUCC

CGUCC will be hosting a class in the spring offered by UTS. Below is the class description. Because we are hosting the class, our church receives two scholarships to attend. If you are interested in attending, please see either Diane Davies or Pastor Gold.



WRESTLING WITH THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND SUFFERING

The problem of evil and suffering is both ancient and new. Ancient people have wrestled with it and volumes of treatises have been written about it, yet it has remained a vexing problem that continues to haunt every generation. The past may shed light, but every generation faces it with certain freshness, intensity, and particularity. How we interpret the problem or challenge of evil and suffering greatly affects how we experience and respond to it. It is in this sense that this course seeks to explore ways of interpreting this phenomenon. It hopes to sharpen the theodicy question (God's power, love, and justice) and deconstruct theological constructs that are hurtful. It will not settle for easy answers particularly in response to the pain of those who are dying before their time. Finally, it will explore alternative theological interpretations of dealing with the challenge in ways that are consistent with our current worldview and are philosophically sound, pastorally caring, and hope giving.

Eleazar S. Fernandez is professor of constructive theology at United and an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. He earned his M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary in the Philippines, his Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary, and his Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University. He is the author of *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil*.

When: Tuesdays – April 13, 20, 27; May 4, 11; 7:00-9:00 PM

Cost: \$175.00 (early registration) or \$225.00 after March 13

Registration deadline: Tuesday, April 6

Coming Up in Worship

Sunday, January 3

Epiphany Sunday
NO Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship
11:30 a.m. Fellowship

Sunday, January 10

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship
11:30 a.m. Fellowship

Sunday, January 17

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship
11:30 a.m. Fellowship

Sunday, January 24

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship
11:30 a.m. Fellowship

Sunday, January 31

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Worship
11:30 a.m. Fellowship

Participating in Worship in January

Head Usher—Ron
Bonnevier
Altar Team—
Communion Preparation—
Krisi and Jeff Jacobs

Participating in Worship in February

Head Usher—Rod Heuer
Altar Team—Judy
Bonnevier
Communion Preparation—
Nancy & Wes Hillman

**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!

Sunday School Christmas Pageant

The pageant was a huge success! The kids did a great job performing! We could not have done it without the help from many members of our congregation!!! Thank you to Claudia Weisskirk for spending hours making the wonderful costumes for all of the kids, Tammy Brown and Stacy Frantzick for making the scarves and hats for the children, Bill Larsen who directed the kids, Yvonne Bonngard who directed the kids in the beautiful Christmas



music, Jim Herrmann for making the "Perkins Tree Farm" sign, Traci Larsen for making the gift tags for the congregation, Jill Richter for making the small tree costumes for Zach and Zack, and all of the other volunteers who helped make it a huge success! Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!!!!!

Brenda, Bobbi Jo and Debra