



CROSS CONNECTION

The Newsletter of Cottage Grove United Church of Christ

Published Semi-Monthly

January 15, 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!*

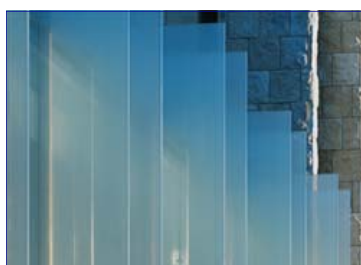
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**Cottage Grove
United Church of Christ**
7008 Lamar Avenue South
Cottage Grove, MN. 55016-2397
Tel: 651-459-1501
Email: cgucc@usfamily.net
Web: www.cgucc.org

United Theological Seminary to Hold Class at CGUCC

CGUCC will be hosting a class beginning in April offered by United Theological Seminary. 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.



*Bigelow Chapel on the campus of
United Theological Seminary*

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

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 and Eric Bies; Bill and Isabel Board; Bill Bothun; Beth Davies; John and Karen Greenwell on death of John's sister-in-law; 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; Amber VanTassel and Derek Rasmussen on death of Amber's grandmother.

Angie Barta (Doreen Barta's mother-in-law); Vera Benshoof (Bonnie Vink's mother); Cheryl (Joyce Fries' daughter); Abi Christopherson (Elaine Mitchell's friend); 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); Denise Heschke Krech (Marilyn Heschke's daughter); Richard Lara (in prison); Jason Lindemann & family; Fred Minster (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; victims of the earthquake in Haiti.

An Offering of Gold

Rev. Désirée
H. Gold



Cottage Grove United Church of Christ hosted another successful blood drive on January 6. We did not seem *quite* as busy as we did during our August drive, but we actually collected almost 10 more units of blood than we did at the last one. (In August we collected 26 units; this time we collected 35.) In August the flurry of activity was due, in part, to the Farmers' Market going on at the same time, and I think the presence of the

Farmers' Market also gave us more walk-in donors. However, more people signed up this time...and the Red Cross changed the way they configured our Gathering Room, so things flowed a little better.

Although things weren't as crazy-busy this time around, the church was still hopping. The majority of donors were CGUCC members or friends, and I was struck by the spirit of community flowing throughout our church building. People chatted as they waited to donate blood...or even as they were donating. Red Cross personnel talked and laughed with donors and with one another. Greeters (all church members) welcomed well-known faces and strangers alike into our transformed church. Children cheered on their loved ones and everyone else. The canteen buzzed with good conversation and good snacks. Our church became exactly what it is supposed to be: one big body of Christ.

I was struck by the way in which we were the body of Christ, or the body of humanity, in another way too. The blood that was removed from the bodies of 35 healthy individuals last week will help unhealthy individuals return to wholeness. It will help them to live.

There are religious groups that do not condone blood donation or transfusion, but the way I see it, we are all one body, and we are all created in the image of God. If we have the ability to save a human life, we are called to do that, over and above any scripture that may be interpreted to denounce the sharing of blood. There are also those who become squeamish over the idea of blood donation and transfusion, but to me, the idea of my blood flowing into the body of another, or vice versa, is merely symbolic of the unity of humankind. That can only be a beautiful thing.

We do not know if the blood that was donated last week will go to Christians, or Jews, or Muslims, or Hindus, or Buddhists, or Atheists, and it does not matter. We do not know if the blood will go to Euro-Americans, or African Americans, or Hmong, or Latinos, or American Indians, or any of the other beautiful shades in which God has created us. But we do know that the blood that was shed will go to our fellow human beings who, by their very existence, are every bit as worthy as we are.

Many people see blood donation merely as a community service activity. It is certainly that, but it is also much more. As Christians, we can see it as a symbol of our human unity – we are one body. We can also remember the blood Christ shed for us and find beauty in the idea that we, too, can shed our blood for humanity (albeit in a much less violent way).

If you gave blood last week (or ever), think for a moment about the person who received your blood. Imagine for a moment what they may have looked like (not necessarily like you). Imagine the joy of their loved ones when they returned from the brink of death because of *your* gift. Imagine the warmth of your blood coursing through the veins of your fellow human being, giving them life. Imagine, then, the gift of life which God has given you, and remember that you are created in God's image.

(continued on next page)

Mortgage Reduction Brainstorm Session

Please join us for a half hour after church on Sunday, January 31 to brainstorm different methods to reduce our church mortgage. We will meet from 11:30-12:00. There are many different things we can do in addition to our successful Scrip program. Help us think of them! Come with ideas!



Debt Reduction

Y.A.H.O.O.s Locked-In!

The Annual Y.A.H.O.O. Winter Lock-in will be held on January 17-18, from 7 PM to 7 AM. Mark your calendars today! (Note that there is no school on Monday, January 18th due to the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday) We will spend the night hanging out with friends, playing games, snacking, and watching movies. Come and be part of the fun! All youth in grades 7-12 are invited to attend. Add to the fun by inviting your friends. All are welcome. Please RSVP for this event with Bruce Fiedler by January 15. Sign up today!!!



New Member Class

Are you interested in becoming a member of Cottage Grove United Church of Christ? Do you have questions about our church? Do you want to know more about the United Church of Christ? If so, you are invited to attend Membership Exploration Classes, which will begin on January 24 after church. We will meet in Pastor Gold's office.



New Help With Visitation

After consulting with Pastor Gold and with approval of the Church Council, I have volunteered to help, when I can be of assistance to Pastor Gold, with pastoral visitation or health and illness concerns that may arise in the congregation. Gayle Korth



Adult Sunday School

The adult discussion group is studying a book entitled *Kindness* which is one of a series of books by Calvin Miller on Fruits of the Spirit. The class meets at 9:00 a.m. with Ron Bonnevier as moderator. All adults are invited to attend.



Confirmation Class

The Confirmation Class will meet on January 23rd from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Please mark your calendars.



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.



(continued from previous page)

One final thought: According to the Red Cross, many people only donate blood once. If this was your first time, please don't make it your last.

May all of you be blessed with life!

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
Deadlines are the 10th and 25th
of every month

Edited by Becky Graff

**Back issues available on our
Church web site at**
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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Cottage Grove MN 55016
(651)459-1501 www.cgucc.org

Rev. Désirée H. Gold, Pastor
pastorgold@inbox.com

Gary Afdahl, Director of Music

Becky Graff,
Administrative Assistant
cgucc@usfamily.net

**Deb Hanson, Brenda
Herrmann, BobbiJo Janicek**,
Sunday School Team

Sheri Wohlers, Custodian
sherileewohlers@msn.com

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



Birthdays

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



Appeal from the Minnesota Conference of the UCC

As you may know, the work of the Minnesota Conference can no longer be adequately supported solely by Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and per capita Covenant Dues from local churches. For the past few years we have undertaken an intentional approach to individuals who care deeply about the ministry of the Conference and who might choose to support the conference financially. The conference has a growing list of such persons, and those persons are currently receiving our annual fund raising solicitation letter. If you are not currently in our database of donors, but wish to offer a contribution for the support of the ministries of the Minnesota Conference, please send your check to the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ, 122 W. Franklin Ave., Suite 323, Minneapolis, MN 55404 and indicate "Friends" on the memo line, or give online at www.uccmn.org. Please be sure to indicate whether you'd prefer your gift be used entirely in Minnesota, or whether you'd like it shared with the national setting of the church. We'd also be interested in receiving the names of persons you know who might appreciate our ministries and be willing to consider support.

God bless you!

Rev. Dr. Karen Smith Sellers, Conference Minister

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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.



Farmers' Market Team Begins Meeting

The Farmers' Market Team will meet on Thursday, January 21, at 6:00 p.m. to set up the letters to be sent to vendors and to discuss the 2010 Farmers' Market. Anyone interested in joining the Farmers' Market Team is most welcome at this meeting.

Chris Miller, Farmers' Market Team



Items Found After Worship Services

Did you leave your glasses at church? If so, please call the church office to claim them. There was also a Teenie Beanie Baby white tiger left on the pew. Is it yours?



Communications Team

The Communications (Marketing) Team will meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 3:00 p.m. The meeting will be in Pastor Gold's office.



Need a Handyman?

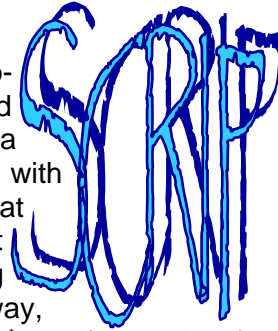
If you find you need help around the house, I can hang pictures, hang cabinets, paint, lay laminate and tile flooring, etc... I prefer to work on Saturdays. Contact me at troy.pribnow@gmail.com, 651-436-4498, or 651-274-2237.



Troy Pribnow

SCRIP

Every program needs a clever name. Our new scrip program is crying out for the same! So young and old and everyone in between put on your thinking caps. We have a CONTEST to help drive away the winter blues. Come up with an ingenious, slick, quick-witted slogan, title or phrase that we can use for our CGUCC Scrip Program. Just to get you thinking how about; "Miracle Money", or "Building Bucks", or even "Church Ca\$h". (These ideas, by the way, are not eligible to win!) The winning entrant will receive a \$25 gift card for Applebee's! Submit all entries in writing to Diane at Dianedavies@live.com or slip it in the Scrip order form envelope in the Gathering Room. Be sure to include your name so I know who to give the prize to. All entries must be in by February 1st. The winning name and the winner of the gift card will be announced in church on February 7, 2010.



Best Buy has a 1% bonus that runs from January 9 - 29. So instead of 3% - now earn 4% by purchasing a Best Buy Scrip card. Shell has increased their percentage from 1.5% to 2.5%. Motherhood Maternity is offering a 6% bonus contribution from Saturday, January 16, 2010, through Friday, April 2, 2010. That means Motherhood's \$25 gift card will have a 12% contribution instead of the normal 6% contribution, during that time period only. The card is redeemable at **Motherhood Maternity, A Pea in the Pod and Destination Maternity.**

For those ordering online, be sure to click on the specials before you place your order. Think ahead to Super Bowl parties and Valentine's Day, both just around the corner.

Happy Shopping!
Diane Davies

Dianedavies@live.com

651-436-7234 (H), 651-336-6138 (C)

Many Thanks!

Thank you to all who donated (socks, mittens, scarves and caps, etc.) to the Women's Fellowship Mitten Tree this year. Many of these items were handmade, requiring additional time and your special love and care for others. I had the privilege of delivering these items to the Friends In Need Food Shelf on two occasions. On both of these days the weather was bitterly cold. The items were put out for immediate display to be picked up by those in need and were put to good use and were much appreciated.

Mitten Collection



Gayle Korth

Thank You

Thank you to all for sending get well cards and for your thoughts, prayers, and concerns during my recent surgery and recovery. It was much appreciated.

Gayle Korth



Administrative Assistant on Vacation

From Friday, January 29 through Sunday, February 7 Administrative Assistant Becky Graff will be on vacation with her family in Florida. If you would like to offer assistance to Pastor Gold in the office during Becky's absence, please contact either Pastor Gold or Becky in the church office.



Coming Up in Worship

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
11:45 a.m. Membership
Exploration Class

Sunday, January 31

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

Sunday, February 7

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—Donna Perkins

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 March,
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



Many thanks to all who organized, made phone calls, helped on collection day, brought goodies to share, and of course those who donated blood. Your efforts have made a difference in the lives of others!

**CGUCC Gathering Room Becomes Collection Site
for Precious Blood**