



CROSS CONNECTION

The Newsletter of Cottage Grove United Church of Christ
Published Semi-Monthly
February 15, 2008



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

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Palm Sunday

March 16

*10:15 a.m. Worship—Sunday School Choir Singing
11:30 a.m. Brunch hosted by Y.A.H.O.O. Youth
Free Will Offering for Brunch*

Maundy Thursday

March 20

7:00 p.m. Worship Service with Holy Communion

Good Friday

March 21

*7:00 p.m. Tenebrae Service of Shadows
Passion Story Told through Drama and Music*

Easter Sunday

March 23

*7 a.m. Sunrise Service with Holy Communion
9 a.m. Celebration Worship Service
Both Services Will Include JC Rock Praise Band*

First Sunday after Easter

March 30

*10:15 a.m. Worship Service with Easter Choral
Cantata*

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

Name Tags!

"Who Are You??"

Help us be a welcoming church!
Please wear your name tag
each Sunday morning.



PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!

Ken and Nora Krahn; Ron and Joyce Fries; Don Fiedler; Denise Heschke Krech; Eileen Wilson; Don Hanson; Abi Christopherson; Alan Gausman; Michelle Boudreau; Lynsay Nieman; Ron and Judy Bonnevier; Connie Meyer; Bill Bothun; Bill Board; Leona Perkins; Sandy Rabe; Delores Janke; Red and Lucy Spicer; Theresa Radke whose father had a serious heart attack; Doris Rosenfelt, Kathy Biscoe's mother; Sharon Matzke, friend of Bette Meyer; Amy Stoker; Nick, husband of Jean Stoker's granddaughter; our soldiers around the world; Rev. Bryan Olson and our church during this time of transition.



Last weekend I found myself flipping around the channels on my television in hopes of finding something that would entertain me as I did battle against a nasty cold and flu that had set in earlier in the week. To my surprise and delight, I found the third installment of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (*The Return of the*

King) running without commercial interruption on one of the cable movie channels. For over three hours, I was swept away to Middle Earth where an epic battle between good and evil was climaxing and a hobbit's quest to bring about peace and justice for all beings was drawing to its dramatic and stunning conclusion.

During those three hours, I journeyed with Frodo Baggins, a young hobbit, and his companions to Mordor as they sought to fulfill the calling to which they had been called; to destroy the "one ring" with the power to rule them all in the fires of Mount Doom. Their journey was filled with a myriad of pitfalls and betrayals. I feared for them when they put their lives on the line and I cheered as they triumphed over those who wished them harm. I also marveled at the power of temptation that threatened to turn Frodo and his companions from their destined path to seek their own glory. At times it truly possessed them. But to see the strength of friendship and sacrifice win out in the end was an inspiration.

At the beginning of this cinematic journey my spirit was feeling the wear-and-tear of the world. Physical illness and daily stress had certainly taken their toll. At the end, however, my spirit was lifted and a glimpse of hope was restored to my soul. Physically I was still feeling pretty poor, but I was alive again inside.

For me, Frodo's quest was a cinematic snapshot of a similar journey we, as Christians, are all called to be on in this Lenten season. The goal of our Lenten journey is spiritual growth; that feeling of inner renewal and hope that comes with being drawn into closer relationship with God and one another. Lent is a time of "turning." This brief forty-day season gives us an opportunity to turn our lives around. We can let go of practices and habits that separate us from God and distort our relationships with others. We can open our minds and hearts to God's word. We can ask God through prayer to show us what is really important in our lives. We can turn toward God.

Our Lenten journey will conclude with Holy Week as we walk with Jesus on his journey to the cross. During that week, we will enter into a timeless journey that is again fraught with pitfalls and betrayals. We will marvel at the destructive power of temptation and greed and stand in awe of the life-giving power of friendship and sacrifice to overcome it. Our journey will end at sunrise on Easter morning when we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from death and our own resurrection into new lives, new community, and new hope through Christ.

Sound like a journey you want to be on? Then get started today! See you in church.

Peace,
Rev. Bryan

Sunday School News

The Sunday School would like to thank Bill and Traci Larsen with *Larsen Films* for the wonderful DVD they produced and sold of the Christmas Pageant. All profits (\$150) were donated to the Sunday School program. Thank you!!



Upcoming Sunday School Events:

- Birthday Sunday – March 2nd
- Sing during Palm Sunday Worship Service – March 16
- No Sunday School on Easter Sunday – March 23

Next Women's Fellowship Meeting

Women's Fellowship will meet next on Thursday, February 21, at 6:30 p.m. We will have a pot luck supper, so bring a dish to share. All women are invited.



A Note from the Altar Committee

Years ago, Marilyn Coltrain made and donated the holy family and angel figurines for the crèche that is on our altar during the Christmas season. Much thought went into the making of these pieces, and their beauty and message has been enjoyed by all. Many of the people involved in decorating the altar and church were aware that there were additional pieces of wisemen and shepherds, but were unsure if they were still available. Joyce Biscoe started to search for these pieces, and was fortunate to find a lady in Rochester, MN who had the molds to make the ceramic greenware. Joyce traveled to Rochester to look at the molds, and asked to have a set of wisemen and shepherds made for our church. Joyce will then take the greenware and use her skill and tools to finish these pieces to match our existing set, which will take months to complete. The Altar Committee is planning to hold a bake sale in the fall to defray the cost of this additional set. We wish to thank Joyce for finding the matching pieces, and offering to finish them for our church.



Sharing Resources, Changing Lives

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have."

Hebrews 13:16a

For the early Christians, beneficiaries of Jesus' own sacrifice, the old system of burnt offerings and temple sacrifices no longer made sense: a new offering of praise became the order of the day. But the writer of Hebrews tells them that saying good things to and about God isn't enough. Our offerings should be more than the "fruit of our lips." More than our words, God desires our participation—asking us to share our resources to change people's lives.

Sebastiana's Story of Hope

Sebastiana has known nothing but poverty her entire life. A widow, she is caring for her nine children in the difficult environment of the high Peruvian plains. When the program *Credit with Education* came to Sebastiana's village, she summoned courage to take her first loan of \$64 to raise pigs for a market many miles away. "I knew others with loans, but I never dared to become involved," she said. "I worked with what I had." As a loan recipient, she received business training and her first lessons on child nutrition and illness prevention.

Our gifts to **One Great Hour of Sharing** support the organization Freedom from Hunger which operates *Credit with Education*. The training—and the encouragement of other women in her village—gave Sebastiana the confidence that she, too, could productively use a loan. She hopes her children will have a better life than she has had. **Our church will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on Palm Sunday, March 16.**



Coming Up on Sundays

Sunday, February 17

- 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 9:00 a.m. Adult Class
- 10:15 a.m. Worship
- 11:15 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship
- 3:00 p.m. Y.A.H.O.O. Bowling

Sunday, February 24

- 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 9:00 a.m. Adult Class
- 10:15 a.m. Worship
- 11:15 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship
- 11:30 a.m. Bible Challenge Small Group Discussion
- 6:00 p.m. Jr/Sr High Bible Study

Sunday, March 2

- 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
- 9:00 a.m. Adult Class
- 10:15 a.m. Worship with Baptism
- 11:15 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship
- 6:00 p.m. Jr/Sr High Bible Study



Y.A.H.O.O.

(Youth Aspiring to Help Out Others)

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

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/cguccyouth>

YOUTH Events Calendar

Sunday, February 17, 3 p.m.
Bowling at Park Grove Lanes

Friday, April 18—Night on the Street

July 23-28—National Youth Event in Knoxville, TN

Y.A.H.O.O. Bowling—Round 2

All Y.A.H.O.O.'s and their friends are invited to come bowling at **Park Grove Lanes** on **Sunday, February 17, 2008**, from **3:00-5:00 p.m.** The cost of the event is **\$10** per person. *In the spirit of Christian giving, however, all friends of Y.A.H.O.O.'s are invited to come and bowl at no cost.* **Food, drinks, and PRIZES** will be provided by the church!!!



Please **RSVP** for this event with **Rev. Bryan** by **Friday, February 15th!** Come and join the fun!

A Night on the Street

On **Friday, April 18, 2008**, the Y.A.H.O.O. youth will spend a **"Night on the Street"** in downtown Minneapolis to raise awareness about the problems of homelessness in Minnesota, and to raise money for homeless people and families in our community. The Y.A.H.O.O.'s, along with hundreds of other youth from around the state, will sleep overnight in cardboard boxes in the parking lot of Plymouth Congregational Church in downtown Minneapolis. The youth will spend the evening learning about issues specifically related to teen homelessness and how they can work as advocates to help make sure all people have access to affordable housing.

This event is open to all youth in grades 8-12. If you wish to participate in this event, please RSVP with Rev. Bryan by no later than **March 1, 2008**. Parental permission is required for youth to participate in this event. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Bryan at (651) 459-1501.



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. To volunteer to be a greeter, please sign-up on the sheet in the Gathering Room or contact Barb Arntzen. A few minutes of your time will make a world of difference in the life of our church! Volunteer to be a greeter today!



New Bible Challenge

Here is a new challenge—read just the New Testament in one year. Reading lists are available on the table in the Gathering Room for reading the entire New Testament in one year.

OR

It's not too late to start the One Year Bible Challenge. Copies of the full-year reading plan are available on the Welcome Table in the Gathering Room, while the weekly study guide questions are posted on the church web site www.cgucc.org. The next Bible Challenge small group discussion session will take place on Sunday, February 24, following worship from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Join us as we walk through the Holy Scriptures together.



National Youth Event

The U.C.C. National Youth Event (NYE) will be held July 23-28, 2008, in Knoxville, TN, on the campus of the University of Tennessee. At NYE, you will have the opportunity to join over 2500 other U.C.C. youth from around the United States in worship, workshops, fellowship, dances, mission projects, movie nights, meals, and more!!! NYE only happens every four years - so don't miss out on your opportunity to experience this fun, faith-building event! All youth that will be entering eighth grade through graduated high school seniors are eligible to attend NYE.



The Y.A.H.O.O. Youth are going to be a part of this very special celebration! Plans are currently being made to register for this event. The cost will be \$400 per person.

NOTE TO YOUTH: Remember that your participation in youth group and Sunday school events has been earning you points which translate into real dollars. Some youth have already earned over \$100 towards the cost of this trip!!! With six months remaining before NYE, there is still time to offset the cost of the trip considerably with your participation.

Official registration forms will be available at the end of February. It would be helpful, however, to know before that time which Y.A.H.O.O.'s are planning on attending NYE! Please complete the brief RSVP form below and return it to Rev. Bryan ASAP to reserve your spot on the trip.

RSVP Form for National Youth Event

I, _____, wish to attend the U.C.C. National Youth Event on July 23-28, 2008, in Knoxville, TN. I have spoken with my parents and/or guardians about this opportunity, and they support my participation in this event.

I also understand the financial costs associated with this trip and am willing to earn, through my participation in Y.A.H.O.O. events, and/or pay the full registration/transportation cost to attend this event.

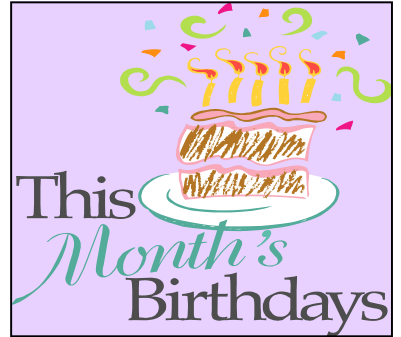
Please reserve a space for me on the Y.A.H.O.O. NYE trip.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Please return to Rev. Bryan ASAP



If your birthday is in the church records, it will appear here. If yours does not appear, please let Becky in the office know when your birthday is and we will get it in next year. And please call if your birthday is wrong so we can get it right.

- 2 - Ramona Westerberg
- 5 - Deb Madsen
- 6 - Bernice Kuehn
Meagan Richter
- 7 - Karen Greenwell
- 8 - Ken Eshom
Renotta Scherr
Carrie Tate
- 9 - Barb Larson
- 10 - Darrin Hunter
Steven Miller
- 13 - Joan Goebel
Amy Howard
- 14 - Julia Biscoe
Karly Biscoe
- 15 - Kathy Hunter
- 17 - Heather Biscoe
- 18 - Russ Gausman
- 21 - Christine Eberhardt
Karen Spicer
- 22 - Greg Bonngard
Ken Huber
- 23 - Colton Brown
- 24 - Harlow Radke
- 27 - Marc Meyer
Evan Murr



Head Start

Head Start is a free pre-school program for children ages 3—5. Head Start Accepts applications year-round. Please call (763) 783-4300 for eligibility guidelines and to register your child. Volunteer and employment opportunities are also available. Please call the above number for information.

Stone Soup Thrift Shop

Stone Soup is located at 950 3rd Street, St. Paul Park, next to Oltman Junior High School. Store hours are 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday; 9 am to 4 pm on Saturday; Closed Sunday. Drop off donated items from opening until 1 hour before closing. Questions, call (651) 458-9786.

Feed My Starving Children

You are welcome to volunteer to help provide meals for starving people all over the world. This organization, located in Eagan and Brooklyn Center, needs people to help package meals. Open hours to volunteer are numerous during the week and on weekends. For more information, contact 763/504-2919 or www.fmssc.org.

Boy & Girl Scouts

More than 40 boys are involved in both the Cub Scout Den 777 and the Boy Scout Pack 777, both of which meet regularly in our church. And more than 20 adults are involved in each. Girl Scouts and a new Troop of Brownie Scouts also meet regularly at our church.

Bryan Sirchio Concert

Rev. Bryan Olson invites the congregation to a concert featuring his good friend and mentor in ministry, Bryan Sirchio, on Saturday, February 23 at 7:00 p.m., Parkview United Church of Christ, White Bear Lake. Bryan's original music strives to nurture a balance between songs which help us look inward and nurture the Spirit's presence in our personal lives, and songs which call us beyond ourselves to reach out to this broken world with Christ-Centered compassion and justice. For more information, see the poster on the bulletin board in the Gathering Room, or visit Bryan's website at www.sirchio.com. Please talk with Rev. Bryan Olson if you are interested in attending the concert.



Thanks to Caring and Sharing

A small group of ladies meets on a monthly basis to make charming original greeting cards and send them to those who are ill, having surgery, bereaved, need encouragement, and many other occasions. They sold ice cream at last summer's Farmers' Market to raise money for their cards and stamps. A big THANK YOU to the members of Caring and Sharing for all you do.



Submit Your Thanks

Is there someone you think should be thanked for their behind-the-scenes work at CGUCC? So many folks contribute in so many ways that are never seen. If you would like to thank someone for what they do, please submit to Becky in the office at any time. We'll keep the thanks flowing.



Abi's Web Site

Over the past few years, our congregation has been praying for and supporting Abi Christopherson and her family. Abi has undergone 11 brain surgeries in her young life and continues to dream about simple and wonderful things like going to school every day. If you would like to learn more about Abi's story and share your prayers with her directly, please visit her Caring Bridge web site at <http://caringbridge.org/mn/abi/>.



Trash to Treasure Sale in April

Just a quick reminder to keep saving your un-needed items for the Trash to Treasure Sale the weekend of **April 19th**. Please call Sheri Wohlers at (651) 731-2717 with questions.



A New Baby

Welcome to the newest child of God—Ava Rae Youngquist. She was born February 9, 2008, and is the beautiful daughter of Tom and Allyson Youngquist.

Proud Grandma Midge Youngquist



A New Baby

Collection of Personal Care Items

Just a friendly reminder to please donate to the Caring Hearts for Homeless People supply drive...We need your help!

Non-prescription medications, hygiene supplies and cotton socks are just a few items that will be collected for the homeless. Supplies can be dropped off in the box in the Gathering Room by Friday, **February 29**. Cash donations are especially welcome. Please make checks payable to the "HealthEast Foundation Homeless Project."

This year the Y.A.H.O.O. Youth of CGUCC are sponsoring this special collection. The youth thank you in advance for your generosity.

Caring Hearts for Homeless People

Shopping List

(non-alcoholic, non-aerosol, new items)

Medication *(not expired)*

- ___ Adult pain relievers such as Ibuprofen, Advil or Aleve
- ___ Adult cough syrup, cold/flu tablets and cough drops
- ___ Children's pain relievers and vitamins
- ___ Vaseline and lip balm
- ___ Antacids (*Maalox, Tums, Rolaids*)
- ___ Foot care (*corn pads, nail clippers, antifungal cream or powder*)
- ___ Pedialyte, Enfamil or Similac (*with iron*)
- ___ Multivitamins, prenatal vitamins

Hygiene *(travel size preferred)*

- ___ Deodorant, soap, razors and razor blades
- ___ Hand and body lotions such as Eucerin and Aquafor
- ___ Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- ___ Hair products (*including products for African Americans*)
- ___ Sanitary pads and tampons

Other

- ___ Diapers, baby wipes, bottles and pacifiers
- ___ Band-aids and ACE wraps
- ___ Winter gloves, hats, white socks, underwear and washcloths

Monetary donations are also encouraged.

Make payable to: **HealthEast Foundation Homeless Project**

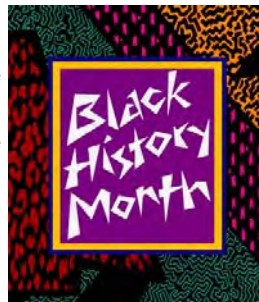
Thank you for giving from your heart.



Annual Black History Month Concert

All are invited to the Black History Month Concert to be presented on February 23, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at Grace Community UCC in St. Paul. The concert will feature the Hands for Christ Choir, Kevin and Aretta-Rie Johnson, the Fred Steele Singers, soloists, and the combined voices of our people from Friendship Baptist Church and Grace Community UCC.

Grace Community UCC
986 Forest Street, St. Paul (651)771-7649
www.gracecommunitychurch.com



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A Periodical Newsletter of
**Cottage Grove United
Church of Christ**
Published on the 1st and 15th
of every month
Edited by Becky Graff

**Back issues available on
our Church web site at
www.cgucc.org**

Deadline	Issue Date
February 25	March 1
March 10	March 15
March 25	April 1

Submit articles via e-mail at cgucc@usfamily.net or drop them off at the office. Thanks for all the information you submit to share with the congregation! Keep it coming!

Becky Graff, Editor

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12:00 noon

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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!

STOP!!



LADIES' NIGHT OUT!

Friday, February 22nd

7:00 p.m.

Bring your mother, daughters, sisters, friends and neighbors
and enjoy an evening out with the ladies
at Cottage Grove United Church of Christ.

Come and enjoy snacks, fellowship
and an open house featuring the following:

Uppercase Living

Tastefully Simple

Mary Kay

Pampered Chef

Cookie Lee Jewelry

Home & Garden