



**FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL**
United Church of Christ - Portland

The Pilgrim

May 2016

Vol. XVI, Issue 2

"In my father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." - John 14:2

Whatever Heaven is, it is large and mysterious. Jesus tells us as much. For some, Heaven is the world we use to imagine the afterlife, but it's clear that this isn't all that Heaven is. Even though Heaven is separated from Earth in the Lord's Prayer ("thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven"), Jesus also tells us that Heaven is inside us, that Heaven is at hand, and a whole host of other expressions that lead us to believe that Heaven can be found right here and now—that there are secret gateways, wormholes, and access points.

There probably is no definitive answer to "what is Heaven"? But whatever else it is, it has something to do with the "good news" Jesus taught, and "the way" Jesus demonstrated. Forgiveness is part of it. Going to the margins of society is part of it. So is living in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed. At its core are the Two Great Commandments (because people love commandments): "Love God with all your heart, mind, and soul; and love your neighbor as yourself." The rest of it's just window dressing.

Maybe it's too simple of a definition, but I think Heaven opens up inside us, between us, and around us whenever we hand our lives over in the moment to the Good News and the Two Great Commandments. It's still not something you can define, or budget for, or correctly illustrate through a brochure (or newsletter), but our hearts know when the veils part and a little corner of it opens up. Heaven heals. Heaven roots. Heaven clarifies. I could try to think of my own metaphors all day long, but none would match the ones Jesus already gave us.

Instead, here are a few places that Heaven has been opening up for me at First Congregational. These aren't the only places, but they are the first ones I thought of while writing this, so maybe the Spirit is telling me something. Heaven is definitely present during our Monday Night meditation and sharing group. The open vulnerability and genuine communion make it undeniable. Heaven has also been peaking around the edges of our council meetings. I've seldom seen such good spirits in these types of meetings, but it's there and everyone can feel it. But the best example that leaps to my mind this month is our fundraiser for the Q-Center: "Drag Me to Church."

Now the Caravan of Glam wasn't for everybody—if Heaven was a large house with many rooms, there would no doubt be rooms that would appeal to some more than others. Even for those who loved it most, there were problems: sound glitches, high temperatures, and a running time that left some of us early-to-bed folks sleepy. But even though all this, something miraculous happens when we bracket our usual way of doing things, extend our hospitality, and "make church" for communities that have traditionally been alienated from the Christian club. Forgiveness happens, and the kind of spirit emerges that can only be discovered when we move past our safety zones and take a risk on loving real humans.

And who knows? It could be that the Angels in Heaven (which are often described as having both male and female aspects) look a lot more like the Caravan of Glam than the winged hybrid monsters that traditionally adorn our churches. After all, in Heaven there are many mansions.

In faith,
Michael

Editor Jonathan Dyer, jonathan@uccportland.org

Church: 1126 SW Park Ave. *Office:* 1137 SW Broadway Portland, Oregon 97205 *P:* 503-228-7219 *F:* 503-228-6522
W: uccportland.org

Moderator's Moment

Here are a few things your Church Council has been doing over the past couple of months:

Members in Discernment: A "Member in Discernment" (MID) is someone who is working with the local church and the UCC Conference Committee on Ministry to meet the requirements for ordination. While we have had Members in Discernment in the past (most recently Liz Durrant), up to now the process has been fairly informal and ad hoc. As our congregation has grown over the past year, several newer members have felt called to pursue ordination in the ministry. Because of this growing interest, Rev. Ellick proposed to the Council that we create a more formal process for selecting and working with MIDs.

To that end, in February the Council created a Discernment Advisory Group and appointed Gwen Pierce, Phil Oliver, Alison Killeen, Norm Bengel, Sheldon Hurst, and Gary Vaughan as members. The Discernment Advisory Group's duties are to formulate and recommend policies relating to MIDs to the Council, interview and recommend prospective MIDs to the Council, and evaluate the progress of MIDs.

At the March Council meeting members of the Discernment Advisory Group recommended that the Council approve Michael Overman and Grant Helbley for the MID program. After Michael and Grant each gave a statement of their background and goals and answered the Council's questions, the Council unanimously and enthusiastically approved both of them for the MID program.

Over the next year Michael and Grant will be working with the Discernment Advisory Group and the Central Pacific Conference Committee on Ministry as they complete the requirements for ordination.

This is an exciting development in the life of our church, not only that Grant and Michael have felt the call to expand their spiritual lives with us, but also that the creation of a more formal program will enrich our church by drawing similarly motivated people to First Congregational.

Communications Team: The seed for this group was Council member Christian Logerstedt's desire to upgrade the church's website. From this seed grew the idea to "develop cohesion among web, social media, print, and signage resources in order to represent our church in a consistent, modern manner that reflects our identity, our tradition, and our relevance to the wider community." In February the Council voted to create this Communications Team and appointed Christian Logerstedt, Emma McIlroy, and Karen Hurst to it. Stay tuned as they roll out their work over the next several months.

Stewardship Captains: Ross Runkel and Layne Young have volunteered to be our 2016 Stewardship Captains, and the Council has happily appointed them to this position. Thank you, Layne and Ross!

Personnel Advisory Group: In February, the Council created a Personnel Advisory Group to assist the Council and Rev. Ellick in matters of personnel policy and management. Members are Scott Sorensen-Jolink, Edward Eggleston, and Barbara Bengel.

Pastoral Relations Committee: In March, the Council appointed Norman Bengel, Ric Drury, Jesika Gavilanes, Tim Pollard, and Margaret Baldwin to the Pastoral Relations Committee.

Al Horn, Moderator
ach.3@comcast.net

Gaining the Whole World, but Losing Our Breath Along with Our Soul

By Dean Sigler

Three paragraphs from the Guardian tilted my off-kilter view of the world to a newly acute angle this week.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/may/18/fossil-fuel-companies-getting-10m-a-minute-in-subsidies-says-imf>

“Fossil fuel companies are benefitting from global subsidies of \$5.3tn (£3.4tn) a year, equivalent to \$10m a minute every day, according to a startling new estimate by the International Monetary Fund.

The IMF calls the revelation “shocking” and says the figure is an “extremely robust” estimate of the true cost of fossil fuels. The \$5.3tn subsidy estimated for 2015 is greater than the total health spending of all the world’s governments.

(When the IMF, supposedly composed of smart money people, is shocked, it should be cause for alarm.)

“The vast sum is largely due to polluters not paying the costs imposed on governments by the burning of coal, oil and gas. These include the harm caused to local populations by air pollution as well as to people across the globe affected by the floods, droughts and storms being driven by climate change.”

The IMF says that ending subsidies for fossil fuels would cut global carbon emissions by 20 percent and “slash the number of premature deaths from outdoor air pollution by 50 percent – about 1.6 million lives a year.”

Not to be outdone, the Koch Brothers in the U.S. continue to fight subsidies for clean energy such as solar and wind power, tussle with the idea that electric cars can be sold in states in which they have influence, and whine about diminishing profits in their oil and coal holdings.

<http://cleantechnica.com/2016/02/22/koch-brothers-cant-stop-trying-to-kill-people/>

One Koch Brother has created a group that will spend about \$10,000,000 a year “promoting the glory of fossil fuels.” That, the Heartland Institute, and the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers trade group continue to spread well-financed disinformation about fossil fuels and clean energy alternatives.

<http://ecowatch.com/2016/02/23/methane-leaks-texas/>

Texas, dealing with methane leaks that dwarf California’s Porter Canyon disaster, has only five monitoring stations for the 20,000 square mile Barnett Shale/Eagle Ford natural gas site. Since “nearly one in four state legislators or his or her spouse, has a financial interest in at least one energy company active in the Eagle Ford,” such oversights are understandable. An eight-month study by the Center for Public Integrity, the WeatherChannel and InsideClimate News revealed, “a system that does more to protect the industry than the public.” Texas Railroad Commission’s three elected commissioners oversee “all aspects of oil and gas production,” and received over \$2 million in campaign contributions from the industries they regulate during the 2012 election cycle.

<http://ecowatch.com/2016/02/19/koch-brothers-war-on-eps/>

Not content to merely control the means of production (wait! Isn’t that socialism?), moneyed interests are attempting to control sales of solar panels and electric vehicles. The Kochs and Warren Buffet are financing anti-solar efforts in Nevada, convincing the state’s Public Utilities Commission to

remove subsidies from home solar systems and even charge punitive taxes for such installations. This has forced many homeowners to go back to the (fossil-fuel charged) power grid and closed several profitable solar firms in the sunniest of states.

Tesla’s Elon Musk, a favorite target of the fossil fuel industry, could only tweet a heavy “sigh” on his Twitter page. “Worth noting that all gasoline cars are heavily subsidized via oil company tax credits & unpaid public health costs,” Musk wrote.

What may be a nail in the dirty energy coffin comes from Goldman Sachs Group Inc. They note that 40 percent of its loans and lending commitments to oil and gas companies are to junk-rated firms. Beyond that, many of these promises may become “stranded assets” as oil, gas and coal futures sink below the offering price investors have made, leading to bankrupt firms unable to fulfill commitments for production (which we don’t want or need anyway).

A final note from CleanTechnica puts the spiritual emphasis where it belongs.

“If the new promotional efforts begin as expected later this year, expect to see lots of commercials telling us why destroying the earth is good for us, why earthquakes and polluted groundwater are a small price to pay for energy independence, and how moving away from fossil fuels will throw millions of people out of work.

“What do you call people who would trade the health of their own grandchildren for a few shekels? Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say 30 pieces of silver?”

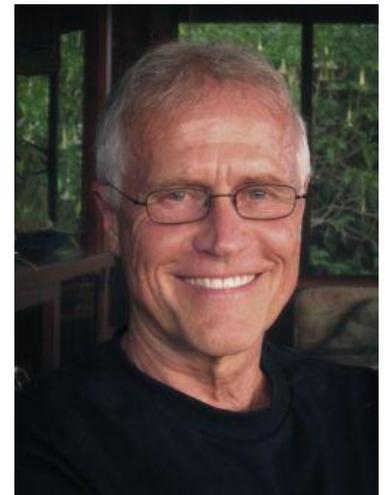


Drag Me to Church

A special thank you to everyone who helped make Drag Me to Church such a successful event. With over 350 people in attendance, we raised \$2,774 for the Q Center!

Best-selling author Paul Hawken to speak in Portland May 12, 7:00 p.m. | First Congregational United Church of Christ

Paul Hawken is a world-renown environmentalist, entrepreneur, and best-selling author on sustainability. He will speak about his work with Project Drawdown, a non-profit that is mapping and modeling 100 existing, substantive solutions to reverse climate change. These solutions are widely practiced, commonly available, economically viable, and scientifically valid. When implemented globally and at scale over the next thirty years, they'll not only forge a pathway to reverse climate change, but will also result in more security, more prosperity, more jobs, and better health. Hawken will show how a wide variety of actors can advance these solutions – engaged citizens, students, teachers, farmers, business leaders, policymakers, and more. For tickets, visit hawken.brownpaperticket.com



Spiritual Path Group

Spiritual Path group meets every Tuesday from noon to 1 p.m. in the chapel. A talking circle format to share, explore, and deepen your personal spiritual practice. Time is given for each person to speak from the heart with no interruption or crosstalk from others. All sharing is respected as sacred and confidential. There is no other instruction, comment, discussion, debate, advice, etc. All are welcome, whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey. Come every week, or drop in as you are able.

Thank you from Camions of Care and Eve's Circle.

Eve's Circle of First Congregational is grateful for the congregation's support of our Month of March drive for Camions of Care. We are delighted to report that the boxes and packages of all sizes and quantities of tampons and maxi pads and mini pads filled four tall bags! Further, you donated \$125 in cash and checks. Thank you!

Nadya Okamoto, Camions of Care founder, sent us this note: "Wow this is absolutely amazing. We so appreciate all of your advocacy efforts and generosity. Efforts to support Camions of Care always go a long way—for every \$2 given, another care package is provided, and in-kind donations have an expansive impact. I hope that we get the chance to work with your congregation again in the near future!"

COLOR YOUR WORLD with FAITH & FRIENDSHIP

2016 Eve's Retreat
Camp Adams
Friday, May 20 to Sunday, May 22

We are thrilled to be offering our sixth annual retreat opportunity for the women of our church. We gather in friendship and fellowship. Our theme for this year will be **Color Your World with Faith & Friendship**. Get ready for a colorful weekend of relaxation, faith exploration and friendship. Since our first retreat in October of 2010 we have become a wide and diverse group of women spanning all ages and interests. Spread the word. Invite someone at church you are hoping to get to know better. Twentysomethings to Ninetysomethings. Generations blend and we are one. It is our hope that we will continue to experience personal growth while getting to know each other better. This promises be a fun, relaxing and nourishing weekend. Spring at Camp Adams is a wonderful time when the morning air invigorates, the creeks, full of winter run off, sing, the emerging soft, feathery leaves paint the scenery with promise, the warmth of the sun feels delicious and the scents of the piney woods stimulate.

WEEKENDERS \$75 The retreat will begin at Friday, May 20 at 4p.m. at Camp Adams and end Sunday, May 22 at noon. Directions to follow. We will gather, settle in and relax until our potluck supper. Friday evening we will have our opening circle. We will create an altar that we will maintain until our closing circle on Sunday. There will be casual worship and communion Sunday morning.

ONE NIGHTERS \$55 There is an option to stay one night, either Friday or Saturday.

DAY TRIPPERS \$28 There is an option to come for the day on Saturday. Join us for breakfast and plan to stay through the evening.

There is **confidential financial aid available**. Please indicate on registration form how much you are able to pay or if you need a full scholarship.

Our time will be interspersed with choices. As plans develop we will share more details. We will have optional art projects, a sing-a-long, meditation/yoga and more.

We will be **COLORFUL**. We will have group sessions and several opportunities for small groups or solitude. If you wish you may enjoy a walk through the beautiful setting (200+ acres) that is our very own Camp Adams. If not a walk, there is a huge deck overlooking Milk Creek for those who want to just relax. Maybe even a game or two will be fun. Journaling, visiting, knitting, reading, sketching, photography, are all possible.

We will be in Waverly, Opsund and Fir Cone cabins. In Waverly there is a full kitchen, a fabulous deck facing the creek, a large common room with a huge stone fireplace and lots of windows. This will be our retreat headquarters. Bunk beds are located in two sleeping rooms in Waverly. No one needs to sleep on a top bunk. There are two bathrooms with showers for our use in Waverly. This cabin typically is for folks who are early risers or aren't into walking much. A second sleeping option is a short walk from Waverly. Opsund is a more traditional with

bedrooms with twin beds, two bathrooms, and a common area and will be for the night owls. Fir Cone will have bunk beds in a common room and is also just a short walk from Waverly. Some choose to sleep at home and come back for either/and Saturday and/or Sunday mornings.

For those of you who are one nighters or day trippers plan on staying for dinner Saturday. First Men of FCC will be cooking and serving us a sit down dinner in Morris Lodge. We will have a special closing circle. We hope to be done by 9 p.m.

Registration forms are attached. Please note **deadline of Sunday May 8 for registering**. Also a change from years past, **PAYMENT or PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS are DUE AT REGISTRATION. NO MONEY will be collected at the Retreat**

Questions? Ask any of your brilliant, enthusiastic, and welcoming planning committee,

Nanci Tangeman
nanci@nancitangeman.com

Judy Bishop
judybnorthwest@gmail.com

Rita Delamatre
rdelamatre@gmail.com

Julie Young
juliesy@me.com

Lou Sevetson
mlsevetson@aol.com

EVE'S CIRCLE CAMP ADAMS RETREAT REGISTRATION

Friday May 20 to Sunday May 22, 2016

PLEASE send form with FULL payment * made out to FCC with a bold note stating it is for Eve's Circle Retreat to: Judy Bishop 7777 SW Canyon Ln, PDX 97225 or with request for payment arrangements. Deadline is May 8, 2016

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Cell Number _____

Email _____

Lodging (check your plans for attendance and when you plan to arrive)

_____ Friday Night, May 20 Will Arrive @ _____

_____ Saturday **DAY ONLY** May 21 Will Arrive @ _____

_____ Saturday Night, May 22

Meals (check all that you will be partaking)

Dinner Friday _____ Breakfast Saturday _____

Lunch Saturday _____ Dinner Saturday _____

Breakfast Sunday _____

Cost: \$75.00 for entire weekend.

\$55.00 for one night

Fees include Camp Adams overnight and day use fees, meals and snacks, retreat materials and supplies.

\$28.00 for day tripper

Dietary Restrictions _____

Personal Requirements _____

Transportation

Will need a ride _____

Will offer to drive _____

***Need Financial Assistance** _____

i.e. partial or full (confidential)

Emergency Contact Name & Ph # _____

April and May 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 17 9:15 Lectio Divina 10:25 Worship 11:45 Fellowship 1:00 Potluck in the Park	18 12:00 SA 1:00 UCC Ukes 1:15 Senior Yoga 6:00 Way of the Rose 7:00 Locus Iste Rehearsal	19 12:00 Spiritual Path Group 12:00 OBT 1:00 SA 3:00 Returning Veterans Project 5:00 Church Council	20 7:00 AA 10:00 OBT 1:00 SA 5:00 Practicing the Presence 7:00 Choir Rehearsal 7:00 LGBTQ Christian Meetup	21 10:00 OBT 1:00 AA	22 11:00 OBT 12:00 Weight Watchers 1:15 Senior Yoga	23 10:00 Eve's Circle 10:00 OBT
24 9:15 Lectio Divina 10:25 Worship 11:45 Fellowship 1:00 Potluck in the Park	25 12:00 SA 1:00 UCC Ukes 1:15 Senior Yoga 6:00 Way of the Rose 7:00 Locus Iste Rehearsal 7:00 Oregon Desert Lecture	26 12:00 Spiritual Path Group 1:00 SA 3:00 Returning Veterans Project	27 7:00 AA 1:00 SA 4:00 Healing Through Yoga 5:00 Practicing the Presence 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	28 12:00 SA 12:00 French Group 12:30 Artists Way	29 12:00 Weight Watchers 1:15 Senior Yoga 8:00 Portland Classic Guitar	30
May 1 9:15 Lectio Divina 10:25 Worship 11:45 Fellowship 1:00 Potluck in the Park	2 12:00 SA 1:00 UCC Ukes 1:15 Senior Yoga 6:00 Way of the Rose 7:00 Locus Iste Rehearsal	3 12:00 Spiritual Path Group 1:00 SA 3:00 Returning Veterans Project 7:00 Hatfield Historians Forum	4 7:00 AA 1:00 SA 5:00 Practicing the Presence 7:00 Choir Rehearsal 7:00 LGBTQ Christian Meetup	5 12:00 SA 5:00 ArtReach Reception	6 12:00 Weight Watchers 1:15 Senior Yoga 7:00 Linus Pauling Memorial Lecture Series	7
8 9:15 Lectio Divina 10:25 Worship 11:45 Fellowship 1:00 Potluck in the Park	9 12:00 SA 1:00 UCC Ukes 1:15 Senior Yoga 6:00 Way of the Rose 7:00 Locus Iste Rehearsal	10 12:00 Spiritual Path Group 1:00 SA 3:00 Returning Veterans Project 7:00 Hatfield Historians Forum	11 7:00 AA 1:00 SA 4:00 Healing Through Yoga 5:00 Practicing the Presence 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	12 12:00 SA 12:30 Artists Way 4:00 Paul Hawken Lecture	13 12:00 Weight Watchers 1:15 Senior Yoga 7:00 Indigo Girls Fundraiser	14 11:00 Molly's Fund 6:30 Goose Hollow Family Shelter
15 9:15 Lectio Divina 10:25 Worship 11:45 Fellowship 1:00 Potluck in the Park	16 12:00 SA 1:00 UCC Ukes 1:15 Senior Yoga 6:00 Way of the Rose 7:00 Locus Iste Rehearsal	17 12:00 Spiritual Path Group 1:00 SA 3:00 Returning Veterans Project 5:00 Church Council 6:00 Consonare Chorale Rehearsal	18 7:00 AA 12:00 Downtown Bible Study 1:00 SA 5:00 Practicing the Presence 7:00 Choir Rehearsal 7:00 LGBTQ Christian Meetup	19 12:00 SA	20 12:00 Weight Watchers 1:15 Senior Yoga Eve's Circle Retreat	21 7:00 Consonare Chorale Concert
22 9:15 Lectio Divina 10:25 Worship (Jazz Sunday) 11:45 Fellowship 1:00 Potluck in the Park	23 12:00 SA 1:00 UCC Ukes 1:15 Senior Yoga 6:00 Way of the Rose 7:00 Locus Iste Concert	24 12:00 Spiritual Path Group 1:00 SA 3:00 Returning Veterans Project	25 7:00 AA 1:00 SA 4:00 Healing Through Yoga 5:00 Practicing the Presence 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	26 12:00 SA 12:00 French Group 12:30 Artists Way	27 12:00 Weight Watchers 1:15 Senior Yoga	28 10:00 Eve's Circle

The Reconciling Ministries Network

in cooperation with Basic Rights Oregon and First Congregational Church UCC Portland

present a gala benefit concert

featuring

Indigo Girls

Friday, May 13, 2016 at 8:00PM

First Congregational Church UCC

1126 SW Park Ave, Portland

General Admission: \$50



along with poet
J Mase III

tickets available at:
rmnetwork.org/indigogirls

