

THE LEAFLET

First Congregational, United Church of Christ
Naperville, IL Week of November 22, 2010

JOIN US FOR
WORSHIP
THIS SUNDAY
At 9:30 a.m.

SERMON

“Ready or Not...”

Rev. Greg
Schneck-Skiba
will be preaching

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 2:1-5
Matthew 24:36-44

GREETER

Todra Oken

LITURGISTS

Anne Swanson
Julia Roskopf

FLOWERS

Paul and June
Hennip, in
memory of
Paul Hennip, Jr.

PASTOR'S NOTES—ADVANCING GOD'S LOVE AND JUSTICE

Advent has a way of sneaking up on us. And, here it comes again.

Sometimes *Advent* is camouflaged by the weekend of Thanksgiving. But more often it slips in the week following. Always these days, however, it is simply obscured by the ever-earlier launch of “holiday” commercialism. *Advent*, like *Lent*, is uniquely a Christian holy season calling us to preparation. Yet, even we Christians find ourselves losing track of *Advent* as Bing sings “White Christmas” and holiday products replace Halloween candy on store shelves (look for the candy now on “clearance” tables...). So our *Advent* preparation is about what, again? Only four more shopping weeks ‘til Christmas, right?

Not quite.

Advent literally means that something is “coming.” What? This Sunday after Thanksgiving kicks off four weeks of getting ready for God’s surprising new entry into human life as *Immanuel*, “God with us.” It marks the start of an *Incarnation* that will bring renewal of all creation. It means something surprising that we are never really ready for, even with a good four weeks to prepare. The prophet Isaiah declares that what is coming is no less than the universal “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Isaiah cries out for God to “*tear open the heavens and come down!*” (64:1). Calling passionately for divine rescue of the exiled and desolate Israel, Isaiah pleads with God to “*Comfort, O Comfort My People*” (40:1) and prays for assurance that God will “*bring good news to the oppressed*” (61:1).

Christianity boldly claims that Isaiah’s prophetic words for Israel indeed have been fulfilled in Jesus. Yet no one with eyes and ears opened can claim Isaiah’s promises have been completely fulfilled so far. Many millions of God’s children live in darkness: bleak, desolate, war torn, and rife with death. They await God’s final triumph over the oppression of evil. But in *Advent* we hear that God’s promised *New Life*, even though appearing badly delayed in its fullness, is yet breaking hopefully on the horizon of God’s future. And in faith, we may both taste its coming and participate in making it more real.

We don’t like hearing about the dark stuff in church. Perhaps the minority of the world’s people who remain largely untouched by such deep sadness can cover their eyes to it. But the rest are desperate for the prophet’s good news of *Advent*-promised *Light and Peace*.

In acknowledging darkness Christians yearn for and work for a world **remade in the Light of God’s peace, in shalom**. *Advent* is about God’s Light coming in the *MIDST* of darkness. As the Light of God, Jesus means hope can live. But if we ignore or minimize the reality of suffering in our world, then we will miss the meaning of Isaiah’s words: “*The people...who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined!*” Without darkness, the coming Light of *Christ-mas* is simply not understandable. Honesty about suffering in God’s world will alert us to the **need** for God’s Light.

Let’s get ourselves *Advent-ready!* “**Arise! Shine! For your Light has come!**”

Grace and Peace, Rev. Greg

Thanks to all
who have turned
in their 2011
pledge to the
church! If you
haven't yet
pledged, we look
forward to
hearing from
you soon!

NOV. / DEC. BIRTHDAYS



November 23
Jean Scrymiger
Heidi Matthews

November 26
Dale Burns

November 27
Steve Bradley
Sara Farthing

November 28
Christine Binder

December 4
Trevor Weakly

December 5
Mary Bell

December 7
Steve Vanden Heuvel

December 12
Patricia Swindle

December 13
Patrick DeSpain

December 14
Courtney Uberas

December 17
Jeanie Guenther
Matthew Fales

December 18
Micki Johns
Joan Lausier

Upcoming Youth Time Events

(meeting at church from 5:00 - 7:00)

11/28: JH and SH will have Regular Youth Time beginning with dinner in the Community Room at 5:00 p.m. Thank you to the Trezona family for dinner!

12/2: (Thursday) Night Ministry Volunteer Opportunity! Youth, come in the afternoon to help prepare the food or in the evening to help transport and serve the food, and the Full Nesters Group will provide financial support!

12/5: Advent Bazaar after church! Please arrive early for church in order to help with setup and the pricing of baked goods. Also, remember to bring your baked items if you signed up to do so. Encore Regular Youth Time at 5:00 p.m. for JH and SH! Thank you to the Robson family for dinner!

12/12: Let's all make Christmas cookies to deliver to the folks we go caroling to next week! (We'll freeze them.) We'll also begin our discussion of the Youth Worship Service we will provide on May 8th! Thank you to Linda Robertson and Lou Aderman for dinner! **12/19:** Fifth (?) Annual FCC Youth Christmas Caroling! Meet at church at 5:00 p.m. with your best singing voice! We'll go caroling and deliver the cookies we made last week! Thank you to Ron and Mike for dinner! *Lisa Mitchell*

Adult Education Sundays, November 28 11:00 a.m.

The Bible Makes Sense: How do you make sense of life? What model does the Bible give us in contrast to other models that may have informed our worldviews?

As we review *The Bible Makes Sense* by Walter Brueggemann, we will seek to enter into dialogue with the Bible about life as we

experience it. Together, we will discover how the Bible helps us frame life in a covenantal-historical way, so that we can draw upon the Bible's resources in our own place and time. **Facilitator: Lewie Mitchell.** Adults of all ages are encouraged to take part in Adult Education offerings. On Sunday mornings those adults who are parents of younger children may attend while their children, from birth to 12 years of age, enjoy their own special time. Our youngest congregational members (from birth to 3 years of age) are supervised and cared for in our nursery. Children age 3 to 12 are encouraged to take part in our Bible Adventure offering.

Greening of the Church

We are looking for help on Friday, **December 3** as we prepare our beautiful church building for the Advent and Christmas season. Areas for "greening" are the outside doors, windows and choir railing in the Sanctuary, Remembrance Tree and windows in the Narthex, foyer doorway and of course the large tree to be decorated in the Sanctuary. This is a good time for fellowship and fun, as well as giving the "Greening Committee" a helping hand. Starting time is 9:00 a.m., and we hope to be finished by 12:00 noon. Thank you and hope to see you on December 3! If you have questions, please call Vicki Keller.

Evening Circle

Please join us for our annual Christmas Party on Wednesday, **December 15** at 6:30 p.m. (note earlier time). We'll gather for food and festivities at Vicki Keller's home. Please bring an appetizer to share; beverages and dessert will be provided. ALL are welcome!!

Full Nesters Chocolate Party

If you have kids at home, you are a Full Nester! Join us in the Community Room on Saturday, **December 4**, 5:00-8:00 p.m., to package chocolate for our annual chocolate sale. We'll all pitch in for dinner **from Culvers**, then get to work. It's a fun way to get to know other families in the church! Youth are welcome to help, and babysitting for the younger kids will be provided for \$3/child. RSVP to Theresa Hus, **by Wednesday, December 1**. Hope you can make it!

Call for Baked Goods

Calling all bakers...we need your help! The youth are going to be running the Bake Sale at the Advent Bazaar on Sunday, **December 5**. Please help us out by bringing in baked goods before church on Sunday, December 5. Leave your baked goods on the bake sale table in the Community Room, and the youth will take care of pricing and selling the items! Proceeds from baked goods will go to the Place 2b - a center for homeless teens to go to after school for a meal, clothes, socializing, and classes teaching life skills, as well as offering help with finding shelter in Rock Island (part of last year's mission trip). Thanks for your help! *Matt Fales, Julia Roskopf, Sara Farthing, Scott Farthing, Allison Trezona, Gareth Weakly, Gavin Mitchell, and Hannah Lorimer*

See The Stars!

Become part of the exciting morning PADS clean-up crew!! See the stars before you come to church at 6:00 a.m., and enjoy the sunshine before you leave at 7:00 a.m. In between, help with stripping sleeping mats and cleaning up

after breakfast. We'll have the coffee ready so you'll be ready for work after providing an important service to the homeless. Have questions? Talk with Susan Greenwood.

Annual Chocolate Sale

Once again, the Full Nesters will be selling chocolate bark in a variety of flavors after worship on **December 11 and 18**. Preorders can be available as early as December 5 by contacting Todra Oken. Chocolate is a great way to do a little something for people who surround your life to let them know you appreciate them. People like teachers, day care providers, trash collectors, babysitters, hair stylists, mail carriers, newspaper carriers, neighbors and maybe even your church staff! Attractively packaged chocolate bark will be selling for \$3.50 per ¼ pound bag. Proceeds will help defray babysitting expenses for Full Nesters events and benefit family-oriented causes within First Congregational Church.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT TO CONGREGATION			
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October 31, 2010	Pledges and Offerings October	Pledges and Offerings Needed to meet Budget	Better (+) or Worse (-) than Budget
Pledged and Offerings for Oct 2010	<u>\$33,508.91</u>	<u>\$26,693.36</u>	<u>\$6,815.55</u>
YTD Pledges and Offerings	<u>\$264,711.12</u>	<u>\$ 257,490.88</u>	<u>\$7,220.24</u>
Line of Credit			
Borrowed to Date	\$ 67,000.00		
Interest Expense	\$ 1,092.83		
Line of Credit Reduction	<u>\$ -</u>		
Line of Credit Debt Outstanding	\$ 67,000.00		

Note:

YTD pledges and offerings better than budget due to Building First to Last excess moved to revenue.

ADULT EDUCATION
Sundays: December 5, 12 and 19
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
(Sanctuary)

**Christmas According to the Gospels:
A Thoughtful Look At What the Gospels Really Teach Us About Jesus's Birth**

This three-session Bible study class in Advent will focus on the first four books of the Christian scriptures with special attention given to what they do and don't tell us about the birth of Jesus.

We'll start out with a very quick overview of the gospels of Matthew-Mark-Luke and John and look at a commonly held theory of how they came into being and why they are different.

Sessions two and three will focus on the birth narratives in the gospels and the core theological statements they are making about the identity of the Jesus they are proclaiming. A key resource for these sessions will be a small book titled *How to Read the Gospels: Answers to Common Questions* by Dr. Daniel Harrington, S.J., a Jesuit scholar especially noted for his work on the Gospel of Matthew. The book is out of print but can be found on Amazon.com if you'd like to purchase a copy. **Facilitator: Rev. Bob Stout**

Rev. Bob Stout is a retired UCC Pastor, having last served for eight years as the Teaching Minister at Wayzata Community Church in Minnesota. Bob approaches the Bible as a dynamic and inspired sacred text that has emerged from the faith and life of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Stouts were members here at FCC Naperville for seventeen years while Bob was on staff at Seminars International and are currently actively involved as members of FCC in Glen Ellyn.



Can You Help Support the Night Ministry on Thursday, December 2?

There is an opportunity to support the Night Ministry in a few different ways. Our church will be providing food and serving dinner on December 2. There are multiple ways you can get involved: 1) Donate food or money for the dinner (we will be feeding 200) - **there is a sign-up sheet in the Community Room!** 2) Prepare the food during the day on December 2; and 3) deliver and serve the food (7:00 p.m. shift). If you have any questions, please contact Tom Farthing, Janice Grimm, or Haley Wilson.



Come to the Advent Bazaar on Sunday, December 5 from 10:30a – 1:00 p.m. in our Community Room!

There will be a fine selection of handmade gift items in every price range....and delicious homemade baked goods! A portion of artisan's sales will be donated to the Missions and Social Action program!

LOOKING AHEAD:

Wed. Nov. 24	7:00p	PADS (Community Room)
Thurs. Nov. 25		Happy Thanksgiving! Office Closed!
Fri. Nov. 26		Office Closed!
Sun. Nov. 28	8:45a	Youth Choir Rehearsal (Music Room)
	9:30a	Worship / First Sunday in Advent!
	11:00a	Confirmation with Jr. Highs / Sr. High Sunday School / Bible Adventure / Adult Education
	5:00p	Youth Time
Mon. Nov. 29	5:00p	Christmas Pageant Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
Wed. Dec. 1	11:30a	Old Goats (Quincy's Restaurant)
	7:00p	PADS (Community Room) C.E. Meeting (Library)
Thurs. Dec. 2		The Night Ministry (Food Prep, Serve, Deliver)
	10:00a	Men's Discussion Group (Library)
	11:30a	Ladies Do Lunch (Colonial Restaurant)
	7:30p	Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
Fri. Dec. 3	9:00a	Greening of the Church! (Sanctuary)
Sat. Dec. 4	5:00p	Full Nesters' Chocolate Party (Community Room)
Sun. Dec. 5	8:45a	Youth Choir Rehearsal (Music Room)
	9:30a	Worship
	10:30a - 1:00p	Advent Bazaar (Community Room)
	11:00a	Confirmation with Jr. Highs / Sr. High Sunday School / Bible Adventure / Adult Education
	1:30p	Chimeringer Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
	5:00p	Youth Time (Community Room)
Mon. Dec. 6	7:15p	Women's Spiritual Group (Library)

CHURCH STAFF

Co-Ministers

Mark Winters
Greg Schneck-Skiba

Paul Grizzell,
Music Director

Sue Flaatten, Organist

Barbara Bailey, Secretary

Dana Merker, Bookkeeper

Gabriel Salgado,
Custodian

Volunteer Music Staff

Carol Fancher,
Gospel & Chime Choirs

Betsy Grizzell,
A Joyful Sound!

Diane Herr,
Youth Choir

Moderator

Christopher Lorimer

Stephen Ministry Leaders

Tom George
Sylvia Leeseberg

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Welcoming all, we spread Christ's radical message
of love and justice.