

# GREENBELT COMMUNITY CHURCH NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2011

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## Pastor Letter

As I write, the horrible disaster in Japan is still unfolding. First there was the devastation of an earthquake now rated 9.0 on the Richter scale. That makes it the fourth most powerful quake since 1900. Then came the tsunami. Large city neighborhoods and whole villages along the coast were wiped away. Now at least three nuclear reactors are unstable, prompting a mass evacuation of the surrounding area. Roads are impassable. Rail lines have ceased functioning. Supplies of food, fuel and water are dwindling.

Naturally we want to help. The United Church of Christ has a close relationship with our sister denomination, the United Church of Christ in Japan. Church World Service also has partners in the country. As of now, both the UCC and CWS are assessing the situation to determine what assistance is needed, where it's needed, and how to get it there.

We're impatient. People are suffering. We want action!

This is a difficult lesson in human limitations. Right now there's nothing we can do to alleviate the suffering in Japan. It's entirely possible there won't be much we can do over the longer term. The truth is there are a great many problems, near and far, that we do not have the power to fix. A relative or friend is going through a rough time. A natural disaster strikes a distant land. We want to help, but sometimes all we can do – and the best we can do - is pray.

May God give us the wisdom to act when and where we can, the humility to accept our limitations, and the courage to pray.

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## Calendar

**March 16, 23, 30, April 6, and 13 - Agape Meals**

**March 13 – Daylight Savings Time begins**

**April 10 – Octtava Piano Duo Concert**

**April 16 – Yard Sale**

**April 17 – Palm Sunday, One Great Hour of Sharing**

**April 21 – Service of Tennebrae**

**April 24 - Easter Sunday; Sunrise Interdenominational Service at Buddy Attic Park**

**April 30 – Christmas in April**

**May 1 - CROP Walk**

## **Agape Meals Honor Lent**

During Lent the Board of Congregational Life will be sponsoring Agape Meals on the Wednesdays of March 16, 23, 30, April 6, and 13 at 6:15 p.m. After a short meditative program, there will be a simple supper of homemade soup, salad and bread. The Board asks for help with setting up, cleaning up, and providing soup.

## **Christmas in April Planned for April 30**

Again this year Greenbelt Community Church will adopt a house to be restored, bringing "Christmas in April" to a local homeowner. Saturday, April 30, will be the day this great volunteer effort will take place

This year we will be working on the Riverdale home of Thomas and Myra, who has suffered two strokes. We will be installing a long handicap ramp at the front entrance, cleaning out a shed, installing the plumbing for a washer and dryer, and other small jobs. Even for those who are not able to participate in the more physical jobs, any help is greatly appreciated. Financial assistance is most welcome too.

## **Octava Piano Duo to Perform Here**

The Octava Piano Duo, comprised of our choir director and pianist Wei-Der Huang and her friend and colleague Hsien-Ann Meng, will perform a spring concert in the Sanctuary on Sunday, April 10, at 4:00 p.m. All are invited to attend. Donations will be accepted at the concert to defray the costs. Please join us for an afternoon of beautiful music!

## **Everyone Enjoyed the Hulls' Annual Christmas Party....**



## **We Have New Pew Cushions**

With thanks to Wesley Theological Seminary, we have new-to-us pew cushions that look and feel great. Diane Wogaman made the arrangements. In thanks, we took up an offering for the Seminary's Chapel Arts Fund.

## **Prayerful Being and Prayerful Listening**

Leeann Irwin is leading two more adult learning sessions on March 20 and April 17, after worship. The classes will focus on skills we can use to be active listeners with families and friends who are in crisis. Each class is independent so please come to any or all.

## **Welcome to Our New Members**

On December 12, 2010, we welcomed three new members to our church. They are Keith Johnson, Laura Moore, and Richard Semler. Please add our new members to your directory:

Keith Johnson, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Laura Moore  
[REDACTED]

Richar Semler, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## **Our Church Hosted Homeless Men for Christmas Week**

In keeping with the spirit of Christmas, once again our church provided shelter for homeless men under the "Safe Haven" program during Christmas week. Our guests arrived at 7PM each evening and stayed until 7AM in the morning, and were welcome all day on Christmas Day. Many thanks to all who provided food and served at the shelter.

## **Another Delightful Christmas Pageant!** **by Terry Henderson**

The 2010 children's Christmas Pageant was held on schedule - due to the lack of a major snowstorm – and was very well received by all. "Christmas Carols" was written

and performed by the kids under the expert guidance of Amy Hansen. After the opening, each scene of the play was based on a well-known song being sung for the first time in celebration of Christmas. This writer's personal favorite was "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" – expertly performed by Mairead Alexander and Kristin Beauchamp. Also performed were: "We Three Kings" (Clare Alexander, Scott Candey, Jan Knutson, Jake Trangsrud, Sidney Palmerton, and Samantha Scheff), "What Child is This?" (Mairead Alexander, Kristin Beauchamp, Elizabeth Moore, Emily Palmerton, Skylar Scheff, Jared Washington), "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" (Emily Colby, Abigail Moore, Skylar Scheff, Emily Palmerton, Jared Washington, Jan Knutson), "Away in the Manager" (Abigail Moore, et al), and "Joy to the World" (everyone). In addition to the kids named above, several others participated solely behind the scenes: Allen Beauchamp, Katherine Breon, Dawn Burnett, Sarah McCarthy, and Nia Ruckus all contributed to the writing. Evan Candey (stagehand & understudy) and Alma Knutson (general assistant) were also involved in the production.

With such a talented pool of young artists in our congregation, I can't wait to see the 2011 Christmas Pageant!

### **A New Beginning for Worship**

We now have Acolytes to provide a brief period of silence and centering before worship begins. The Acolyte brings a lighted taper, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, down the aisle to light the altar candles while the congregation observes a moment of silence. At the end of the service, the Acolyte lights the taper from the altar candles and then puts them out, and carries the taper to the rear of the church. This symbolizes the Holy Spirit going out with us into the world for the week ahead.

Thanks to Diane Wogaman for serving as our Acolyte coordinator.

### **Another Great Pancake Supper! by Barbara Ransom**

Many thanks to all who helped make the Pancake Supper a great success! We raised \$763.00. Our ad in the Greenbelt News Review brought in not only church members but many community members as well; at times we had people waiting for seats.

Special thanks go to our help in the kitchen, and with setting up and clean up. Thanks to the Youth Group for helping too!

### **The Progressive Dinner - Good Food and Fellowship by Jane Young**

We had another great Progressive Dinner on Sunday, February 20. The first course of salads and appetizers was at Marsha and Larry Voigts' home. I didn't make it there because of family plans. Laura O'Neil said they enjoyed the appetizer course, visiting, and the miniature villages there, and that they appreciated all the hosts' efforts.

The main course and the ambiance at Judy and Ken Dixons' home was - as always - terrific, with a lot of variety. The Dixons always knock themselves out, so

thanks to those of you who helped them with dishes, signing up as soon as possible, and in other ways. Thanks to those of you who let us cut in line so we could have dinner there and not be the last people arriving at our own house!

My husband John Lippert and I hosted the last course. There were more than enough great deserts for about 30 people. We were able to have a “green” course, with our dishes, glasses and cloth napkins, and utensils I borrowed from the church. With such cooperative guests this wasn’t too much work. We enjoyed a friendly, relaxed end to the day.

### **Green Team News** **by Jane Young**

We now have a green task force in our church. At the annual meeting, most congregants agreed that we should try to be greener. About 10 people agreed to be on our task force, and since then we have about doubled. We met once after church and mostly exchange ideas by emails and informal discussions after church. We’d be glad to add to our number, or just take ideas. Some of the things we’re thinking about are:

A dishwasher and/or drying rack to expedite dishwashing, with possible health benefits. However, nobody can think of a practical way to install either at this time. Alex Burnett suggested an old-fashioned dishwasher which hooks up to a faucet, doesn’t need installation and can be rolled away on its wheels for storage. Alex also suggested UV coating for the windows and low flow devices for the bathrooms and kitchen. I agree for the bathroom faucets and toilets but don’t think it would be as practical for the kitchen. A rain barrel. This could be very water efficient and cost effective, but is an expensive major project. Superhandyman Eric Crompton could guide us in building one after he does his own. Eric also suggested that we have a community/youth garden on church property. In any case, volunteers are needed for general gardening—our garden needs work. And gardens are usually more ecological than just grass. A “carbon fast.” Linda Edwards and Diane Wogaman suggested an ecumenical Lenten “carbon fast” calendar to benefit the environment, which Dan encouraged in church. What better time than Lent to reflect and act on what we can do to decrease our carbon footprints? There are printed copies in the narthex, and I can email it to anyone who requests it, if you did not get my email attachment.

We are saving a lot of trees, energy, and money by washing dishes after church on Sundays. People are graciously signing up individually instead of being assigned by their Boards. Although there is more work since we’re not just trashing dishware, this seems to be a more efficient method. Judy Dixon donated small plates too. What do you think? There is a sign-up sheet on the cupboard by the kitchen door, and instructions over the sink. We still have a lot of slots to be filled. Also we’ve been recycling at the Lenten meals.

Our church is considering purchasing wind power. The cost for homes is about the same as for dirty electricity but the rates for the church may be different. Even if it costs a little more, I hope we will do the right thing by the earth and go with wind. Do you or anyone else you know of in the church purchase wind power, whether you live in

Greenbelt or not? I printed the 8 GCC people I knew of in the newsletter last time—can we do better than that?

I'm co-hosting Greenbelt Climate Action Network's May 11 meeting with an informal interfaith "panel" on ideas for more sustainable sanctuaries. We need participants in any capacity, and any ideas you may have, for this meeting and of course for our own church. Also I'd appreciate your thoughts on ideas we've presented, including the Lenten "carbon fast."

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