

Music Notes

Join us and invite your friends for a morning of music sure to inspire the Christmas spirit.

Sunday, December 12th at 10:30 a.m.

Magnificat by John Rutter

Soprano soloists:

Emily Moore, Stephanie Gilmore and Jennifer Weiman

Accompanying the choir will be an outstanding orchestra made up of Wichita Symphony musicians, many who are the principal players in their section, including John Harrison, Catherine Consiglio, Mark Foley, and the Lieurance Woodwind Quintet, etc. The orchestra will also perform for the prelude and offertory music. The sixty member ensemble will be under the direction of our own Bob Scott. Merry Christmas!

Useful Tidbits

Christmas Eve Services
7:00 Family Service
11:00 Candlelight Service

New Member Sunday
December 5th
Come welcome our newest members to the UCC family

Be Included submit news items by Wed., December 15th to Julie Baker: julie4design@gmail.com

Go Green if you prefer to receive an e-newsletter as a PDF each month, let us know: cathy@ucchurch.org

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Steeple Notes

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Volume 28, Issue 12

Where head & heart are partners in faith.

December 2010

News from the Belfry

Tagore wrote, "All that is not given is lost." We find ourselves at this time of the year thinking about the gifts we would like to give and the ones we would like to receive. With six children and several grandchildren that can be a daunting task. Last year Mimi and I sent the usual Christmas check with a family board game to each of their homes. The idea was that it might prove to be a family building opportunity.

When I was a child Christmas certainly included toys. But we also received our mid year supply of school clothes. Most of them came from Sears & Roebuck and usually included new blue jeans, cowboy shirts, and socks. There were no malls or such a thing as stonewashed jeans. Most children get clothes at the beginning of the school year but also throughout the year. In fact, there is little that we want that we do not buy when we want it.

Giving at University Congregational Church is a daily reality. I think of the financial contributions that people make, the talent that arrives for choir or memorial services, and the skills that are offered from everything to meeting facilitation, media and marketing. The Women's Guild just distributed over 60 newborn bags with diapers, baby wipes, and clothes to new moms in Wichita that are struggling to make ends meet. The Guild also purchased an icemaker for the church's kitchen. In the first three Saturdays it was open, our "Head to Toe Hygiene Pantry" served 408 families, representing 1,379 people. The Pantry received a \$10,000 grant from the Schowalter Foundation. That is a wonderful gift to get us started and we are deeply thankful. The other side of that coin is that we are spending about \$1,500 a month and the grant will last us about six and a half months. We have other grants pending and will continue to need donations of products and cash. There are other gifts on the way. Consider these opportunities:

- Dec. 5th: Children's Christmas Program immediately after church
- Dec. 12th: Christmas Music Program, "The Magnificat," featuring a 60 member ensemble of instrumentalists and vocalists
- Dec. 24th: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Service at 7:00 P.M. Offerings from this service will go to the Food Bank and WSU's campus ministry. The Campus Ministry is funded by congregations and their judicatories. It provides pastoral care for students, interfaith dialogue, opportunities of fellowship and Bible studies.



I will be teaching a doctor of ministry class the first two weeks in January at Phillips Theological Seminary. I will preach January 2nd. Karen Robu will preach January 9th.

Mimi and I thank you all for the wonderful gifts that you have shared with us and the larger UCC family. May yours be a blessed holiday.

Merry Christmas,

Gary

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Moderator's Thoughts

by Becki Herod

December has arrived. And that means it's time to reflect on the accomplishments of 2010 and look forward to 2011. I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as Moderator this past year and look forward to serving the church in that role in 2011.

As I look back over the last year I realize that we have a lot to celebrate. The most noticeable, of course, is the completion of our beautiful new office building. We have also developed a Stephen Ministry and Parish Visitor Program. Our choir members are wearing new robes, and if you haven't noticed, we have one of our largest choirs in our history. Our Christian Education program has been expanded - from our toddler program to adults. Our congregation overwhelmingly accepted a motion to join the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. And our church has expanded its outreach in the community by implementing an open approach to accepting new outreach ideas from our congregation. Overall, I would say this has been an exceptionally positive year.

All of this success would not have happened without the hard work of many individuals in our congregation. I would like to thank Gary Poore and the entire building committee for the many hours of hard work they have put forward in completing our new office building. I would also like to thank Mary Ellen Conlee, Jerry Becker, Dorothy Blankenship, Dwayne Green, Burt Tims, Grace Kneil and Esther Sullivan for their hard work as Presidents of our church boards. And they obviously would not be successful without the hard work of their board members. And finally, I would like to thank Phil Rhea for his vision in creating and carrying out the first two years of our strategic plan. As a new group of leaders steps forward in 2011, I hope we will support their work as you have done this past year.

You can expect to see exciting things happening in the next few months. Our building committee will be completing its work by finishing a conference room in the basement. The buildout of that conference room will also affect our high school, middle school, and library space. The conference room will be built in the current high school room. The high schoolers will have a new space built where our middle schoolers currently meet. And our middle schoolers will move to the current library. Our library will be moved upstairs where we will build a new room out of the two old offices on the North side of the building. As we build that new room we will also widen the hallway upstairs making it easier for large groups to walk to fellowship hall. The building committee received three bids for this final phase of the building project. A bid has been accepted and I am happy to report that Eby Construction will be completing this work for us. You can expect to see construction start within the next month and will last approximately two months. Please be patient with our mess as we make our church even more beautiful.

I believe that our biggest work in 2011 will come in building our church membership. I feel so strongly that to ensure a long, healthy future for our church we need grow. You will hear more from me in the near future about a plan for marketing our amazing church and increasing our membership.

I wish you all a happy holiday season and a bountiful new year!

Social Scene

Men's Group Lunch

Meets the 3rd Thursday each month.
Thursday, December 16th at 11:30 am at Louie's Grill & Bar, 9747 East 21st St. North (Webb & 21st). Let us know if you need a ride. Sign up in Fellowship Hall or call the church office.

Women's Guild

Wednesday, January 5, 2011 at Noon. Myrne Rowe will be speaking about the 1970s Women's Movement in Wichita. She will be sharing stories from a book she is editing--an anthology of essays and poems by more than 75 women who reflect on their remembrances of the times. The cost of the luncheon is \$7. Call the church office for reservations.

UCC Adult Christmas Party

December 5th, 5:00-8:00 pm. in Fellowship Hall. We ask that you bring an appetizer (N-Z) or dessert (A-M). Deacons will provide beef brisket, pulled pork, and turkey along with condiments salads and bread. Tea, coffee, soft drinks and wine will be provided.

The Deacons would appreciate if all those attending would bring along as a gift to the Head-to-Toe Pantry a package of toilet paper. Childcare provided. Signup in Fellowship Hall or call the church office 634-0430.

It's Poinsettia Time!

If you are interested in donating for our Christmas floral display, mail \$12.00 to the church office by Dec. 8th or put your check in the offering plate. Please note "Christmas flowers" on the memo line of your check and include if the donation is in honor of or in memory of someone.

Among Our Own

UCC member **Bertie Crow** passed away on Friday, November 5th. Her service was held November 20 at UCC. Our deepest condolences go to her husband Ernie and their family.

Spirit Quest

THE SPIRITUAL LANDSCAPE OF AMERICA'S NATURE WRITERS class taught by Dr. Blaine is every first Wednesday of the month through May. At the **Wednesday, December 1**, class Dr. Blaine will present Henry David Thoreau's Walden. The class meets in Fellowship Hall. Dinner is at 6:00 pm (\$7.00) Class begins at 6:30 pm (no charge). Please sign up in Fellowship Hall if you have not paid for the dinners for the whole session. We need to know how many to count on when ordering the food. Children eat free and childcare available.

Phone a friend

Overwhelmed by the Holidays? Need someone to listen?
UCC Stephen Ministers, welcome your call.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| ▪ Bev Berl | ▪ Kim Carraway |
| ▪ Andrea Conlee | ▪ Debbi Green |
| ▪ Phil Rhea | ▪ Karen Robu |

THANK YOU!

The December Newsletter is sponsored by church members, Jerry and Debbie Becker, owners of *Snow White Carpet Cleaners*. Their motto is "When it's right, it's Snow White", call 721-4441 to make an appointment.

Sponsorships for the Newsletter are \$100.
If you would like to be a sponsor, call the church office.

News from the future...our youth

by Karen Robu



Sunday, November 28, 5:00 pm

Hangin' of the Greens

Potluck, Decorating the Church, Singing Carols, Ornaments for the kids to make

Sunday, December 5

Children and Youth Christmas Pageant

Following the service

Saturday, December 11

Mom's Day to Shop 2:00 - 6:00 pm (new time)

Sunday, December 12

Bake Sale fundraiser for 2011 Summer youth trip

Following the service in Fellowship Hall

Sunday, December 19

Youth Choir sings with Adult Choir

Library Pages

Lending Library

by Lavinia Gerould

You may have seen some of these books on the "Library Table" in Fellowship Hall:

▪ New baby book celebrating the birth of Kansas Josephine Stewart, granddaughter of Cathy and Greg Erbert: 'Guess How Much I Love You' by Sam McBratney

▪ National Book Award winner 'The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian' by Sherman Alexie in memory of Harriet Price -- this is a young adult book that has been recommended for adults as well

▪ 'How Good Do We Have to Be?' by Harold S. Kushner in Memory of Charlotte Wurth

▪ "First Man: The Life of Neil A. Armstrong" by Janes R. Hansen in memory of Frank Brosius.

The Library is looking for volunteers! Contact UCC office 634-0430. It's a great way to serve UCC.



Halloween Party 2010