

tidings



Pets and People Say “Thank You”

Thank you for supporting the Hillsdale UCC kids’ efforts to help homeless pets and people during the Christmas season! Through these gifts, our community shared food and hygiene supplies for cats at the Animal Aid Shelter in SW Portland. Through HomePDX, we also shared gifts of warmth and protection from the elements for people living outside during these cold winter months. Both Tina (Animal Aid) and Gus (HomePDX), expressed their gratitude and appreciation for our gifts to their organizations. If you have interest in helping the kids continue supporting Pets & People throughout the year, please talk with Rebecca Holt or Jessica Denniston. Sometimes Christmas comes in July, right? ☺

Personnel Update

by Cathy Thomas, Personnel Committee Chair

The good news: Julia Miller has been promoted to church sexton, the position previously held by Terry Cornell, who retired last summer. (The word “sexton” derives from the Medieval Latin word *sacristanus*, meaning “custodian of sacred objects.”) Julia had already been doing some custodial duties on a limited basis and now will work 20 hours a week. (We have discontinued the short-term custodial service we had for a few months). Terry had held the sexton position for 18 years and, in lieu of compensation, lived in the church’s Frutiger House on the northeast corner of the church property. The arrangement with Julia is slightly different: she’ll be paid an hourly wage and will pay rent once she moves into the house. Right now, Evan Holt is doing some much-needed safety updates to the house.

The sad news: Kathy Schneller has left as church receptionist to pursue other opportunities. (She will continue as a church member and as a Stephen Minister.) We wish her well in her new pursuit. We’ll be recruiting for someone to fill the nine-hour-per-week position.

IRA Gifts Benefit Foundation

The Hillsdale Community Church Foundation was established to promote HCC’s long-term financial health and security, and to help implement the mission of the church. Here is one way you could help promote that mission. Legislation has been approved that offers donors age 70½ and over a powerful way to support nonprofit organizations of their choice, such as the Foundation. Here’s what the legislation may mean to you: An IRA Charitable Rollover allows donors older than 70½ to rollover any amount up to \$100,000 from their IRA to nonprofits, without increasing their taxable income or paying additional income taxes. Gifts transferred directly from a donor’s IRA to the HCC Foundation or any other charitable organization at any time during 2016 will qualify

Tidings is published monthly by Hillsdale Community Church, United Church of Christ. The printed version is produced on recycled paper. An electronic version is available at www.hillsdaleucc.org. Send a request to tidings@hillsdaleucc.org to be added to our email list. *Tidings* is edited and designed by Tim Ditch.

as a rollover gift. These gifts are tax-exempt, and the amount of the transferred gift can be used to meet your required minimum distribution. It is our understanding that by rolling over this gift to a nonprofit, the money is not treated as income for tax purposes. However, it cannot be taken as a charitable deduction. You meet your required minimum distribution without the tax implications, and greatly benefit the mission of HCCUCC.

Please consult your financial advisor and tax preparer to see if this option works for you. If it does, please contact Patti Brandon or Paula McCall, Foundation directors. Your Foundation board encourages you to gift all or part of your mandatory IRA distribution to God's work through HCCUCC.

Construction Update by Jon von Behren

Despite poor weather and a busy subcontractor market, the workers are making good progress on the building project. As of this writing in late January, the framing crew is on site erecting the structure; this is an exciting time as the building quickly takes shape! We've been able to manage design and site issues as they've arisen and cover the costs to deal with unanticipated changes within our contingency—so the project is tracking to our budget! We are still anticipating project completion by early May. Thanks again to Carl Wamser and Mike Van Loo for their active participation in keeping this project moving forward.



From the Pastor by Chris Hyde

It's February, which means that Lent is starting soon. Wikipedia describes Lent in this way: "Lent is a solemn religious observance in the liturgical calendar of many Christian denominations that begins on Ash Wednesday and covers a period of approximately six weeks before Easter Sunday. The traditional purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer through prayer, penance, repentance of sins, almsgiving, atonement, and self-denial... During Lent, many Christians commit to fasting or giving up certain types of luxuries as a form of penitence. Many Christians also add a Lenten spiritual discipline, such as reading a daily devotional, to draw themselves near to God... Lent is traditionally described as lasting for 40 days, in commemoration of the 40 days which Jesus spent, before beginning his public ministry, fasting in the desert, where he endured temptation by the Devil."



This year, we will observe this six-week season in the following ways:

- Communion will be served during the worship service on each Sunday of Lent. Because of that, we won't be serving communion on the first Sunday of February. We will be partaking in communion weekly in order to declare our dependence upon Christ and to remind us of Christ's love and sacrifice for us.

- Since Lent is a time of spiritual renewal, I encourage everyone to renew your commitment to a spiritual practice or to begin a new spiritual practice. Some ideas for spiritual practices are: reading a Psalm daily, committing to a regular time of prayer, establishing a practice of centering prayer or meditation, taking meditative walks, reading a passage of scripture daily, reading a daily devotional, etc. Choose a practice that works for you and your personality...one that will feel encouraging to you and that will deepen your faith.

- We will be having a Soup Supper and Lenten Study each week at the church. Our study will be "Gifts of the Dark Wood." Though commonly understood as a place to be feared and avoided, the Dark Wood is the surest place to meet God. It is a place where you may feel uncertain, empty, lost, tempted, and alone. Yet these feelings can be your greatest assets on your journey because they invite you to probe, question, and discover. Join us Wednesdays for dinner at 6:15 and the study from 7:00-8:00 in the Mt. Hood Room starting on February 10 and ending March 16.

- We will conclude our observance of Lent with our Palm/Passion worship service on Sunday, March 20, and then a Maundy Thursday service on March 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. These Holy Week services will provide opportunities to remember Christ's sacrifice for us through word and song.

My prayer is that this Lenten season will be a time of depth and growth for all of us!

Compassion for the Self: The Art of Giving Yourself a Break

by Kathy Schneller

Pinned to the meeting notice board in the Narthex, you'll find a copy an article Mike Van Loo shared with us at a meeting of Stephen Ministers, "A Guide to Cultivating Compassion in Your Life, with 7 Practices." The article comes from the blog Zen Habits, which claims to be "about finding simplicity and mindfulness in the daily chaos of our lives." As happens frequently with Buddhist thought, the suggestions in the essay complement Christian ideas about compassion while also providing us with practical, everyday ways of achieving that goal.

The article details techniques for developing compassion for others. But in a culture that embraces the idea of constant self-improvement—think of all those self-help books, diet and

exercise videos, and even our New Year's resolutions—we could also use a little more compassion for ourselves. So I'd like to make some additions to the article with that goal in mind, since each of us deserves more kindness and mercy in our lives.

An important first step in developing compassion for others is to start to notice how much we all have in common. Noticing these commonalities generates empathy for others. Similarly, realizing how much you yourself are like others can help you to understand and forgive your own imperfections. So whenever you meet people, try reciting the following to yourself:

Step 1: "Just like me, this person is seeking happiness in his/her life." May we both find happiness.

Step 2: "Just like me, this person is trying to avoid suffering in his/her life." May we both avoid suffering.

Step 3: "Just like me, this person has known sadness, loneliness and despair." May we both know love and understanding.

Step 4: "Just like me, this person is seeking to fill his/her needs." May we both have our needs met.

continued on page 4

February 2016

(visit our live calendar at www.hillsdaleucc.org/calendar)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 7:30a Men's Breakfast GT	3 10:00a Meals on Wheels MC 6:30p Open Co-ed AA Meeting R4	4 9:00a Walking Group UL 7:00p Choir Rehearsal CR	5	6
7 9:00a Adult Study Group MH 9:00a Children's Activities DN 10:30a Worship Service SA 10:45a Children's Sunday School R1	8 Transition Projects/ Hoyt St Meal BC 6:30p Post-Sabbath Bible Study (PSBS) MH	9 7:30a Men's Breakfast GT 7:00p Consistory Meeting, MH	10 6:15p Soup Supper and Study MH 6:30p Open Co-ed AA Meeting R4 7:00p Foundation Meeting MR	11 9:00a Walking Group UL 7:00p Choir Rehearsal CR	12	13
14 9:00a Adult Study Group MH 9:00a Children's Activities DN 10:30a Worship Service SA 10:45a Children's Sunday School R1	15	16 7:30a Men's Breakfast GT	17 6:15p Soup Supper and Study MH 6:30p Open Co-ed AA Meeting R4	18 <i>Tidings Deadline</i> 9:00a Walking Group UL 7:00p Choir Rehearsal CR	19	20
21 9:00a Adult Study Group MH 9:00a Children's Activities DN 10:30a Worship Service SA 10:45a Children's Sunday School R1	22 6:30p Post-Sabbath Bible Study (PSBS) MH	23 7:30a Men's Breakfast GT	24 6:15p Soup Supper and Study MH 6:30p Open Co-ed AA Meeting R4	25 9:00a Walking Group UL 7:00p Choir Rehearsal CR	26	27
28 9:00a Adult Study Group MH 9:00a Children's Activities DN 10:30a Worship Service SA 10:45a Children's Sunday School R1	29	March 1 7:30a Men's Breakfast GT	2 10:00a Meals on Wheels MC 6:15p Soup Supper and Study MH 6:30p Open Co-ed AA Meeting R4	3 9:00a Walking Group UL 7:00p Choir Rehearsal CR	4	5

continued from page 3

Step 5: “Just like me, this person is learning about life.” May we both open our hearts and learn.

Another step toward developing compassion is to imagine the suffering of someone else, and open your heart to them. But after you have done this, try too to think of something that causes you to suffer. Notice how similar you are to others in this way. Then pray or meditate on an end to both your own suffering and that of this other person. Be careful not to dismiss your own misfortune as minor or unworthy of consideration by comparison. Finally, contemplate the fact that all beings suffer, and then wish all beings free from suffering, including yourself.

Then go commit some acts of kindness, and remember to also be kind to yourself. For instance, if you have negative thoughts about yourself, you might say a little affirmation based on your practice, such as “I do not wish others to be filled with self-doubt, and I wish to be free of self-doubt as well.” If you work too hard, make little breaks for yourself. If you are consumed with worry or fear, take action, if you can, to reduce those feelings. If you cannot change the conditions causing your negative feelings, try prayer. Above all, discover the things that bring you joy, and make sure you experience that joy on a daily basis.

In learning compassion for those who mistreat us, we reflect

on the internal state of that person, trying to imagine why they act as they do. The trick in feeling compassion for ourselves when we make mistakes is similar. We should imagine a loved one in our same situation. What would we want him to do, how would we want him to feel? No doubt we might want him to take the actions needed to help himself, but we would never condemn someone we love for his missteps along the way, for his failure to be perfect. We would wish for an end to his suffering, and we would love him as he made his way toward his goals. But if you have let these other exercises sink in, you see that you are no different than others, and so you will begin to have that same love and compassion for your own mistakes as well.

The Christian addition to the art of self-compassion is simple. God loves all creatures and wants them to be free from suffering. God wants this for you too, and does not want you to dwell too long on your own shortcomings. So, if you’re pressed for time, you could replace all these exercises with prayers for mercy for both yourself and others. Praying wakes you up to the fact that God wants you to be, and would not want you to make ridiculous demands on yourself or feel bad when you fall short of your own expectations. When you have compassion for yourself, self-improvement will gradually and naturally happen too.

Hillsdale Community Church
 UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
 6948 SW Capitol Hwy • Portland, OR 97219
 503-246-5474 • www.hillsdaleucc.org

February 2016 tidings

Interim Pastor Rev. Chris Hyde (chrs@hillsdaleucc.org) Director of Music/Church Administrator Tim Ditch (tim@hillsdaleucc.org)
 Sexton Julia Miller (julia@hillsdaleucc.org) Child Care Providers Sam Hinerfeld, Julia Miller

2016 Consistory Members: Rebecca Holt, President (503-866-0340 • rebeccah@ldark.edu); Cathy Thomas, Vice President, Personnel, Worship (503-246-9509 • elturn@aol.com); Drake Mitchell, Treasurer (240-672-1738 • drakem@pdx.edu); Carl Wamser, Past President (503-504-4296 • wamserc@pdx.edu); Bob Brandon, Personnel, Capital Campaign (503-313-0056 • Bob.Brandon@lic.com); Cindy Van Loon (503-680-1146 • cindyvanloo54@gmail.com); Carol Weber (503-232-2703 • cweber@peetworld.net).

In Christ, we the members of Hillsdale Community Church United Church of Christ, declare ourselves to be an open and affirming congregation. We cherish and embrace individuals and families of all kinds. Believing that God's unbounded love and grace are offered to all and meant to be shared and celebrated by all, we seek to be a congregation that includes all persons, embracing differences of age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, mental and physical ability, as well as racial, ethnic, or social-economic background. We welcome all to share in the life and leadership, ministry, and fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, and blessings of participation in our congregation. We commit to be a community of faith and spirit that works toward openness and understanding, offering justice, healing, and wholeness of life for all people. We believe that through our diversity, all can grow and practice a unity of faith that transcends our differences.