

Stoking the Advent Fire



I once organized a St. Paul winter event called *Kindling the Light of Midwinter*. I still remember the power of it, though it happened years ago. On a deep-cold and shadowy December night, a hundred people collected into a circle to hear storytellers of different faiths tell their traditions' versions of the coming of the Light—that common hope of winter, on its way to banish darkness from the dingy corners of life. A rabbi explained how Hanukah emerged from a miracle of light produced when it was most needed, 8 days of it squeezed from a tiny bit oil. An African-American poet brought Kwanza's candles alive, reading dramatically about her ancestors who came to America by way of

"forced transport." A Christian pastor shared the classic Nativity story, straight up from Luke, pure and simple— Jesus, our Light. We shared music, spicy

food, and candle-lighting traditions that, synergized, transformed our small flares into a howling bonfire. You could see the crackling flames leap and glow from a city block away.

I can't help but think there are several Fire-Keepers at United Church. After all, this is rugged land and we are folks who live within the elements. As our faith family's Advent unfolds over the next 3 weeks, consider how a fire is cultivated, stoked with fresh logs added in just the right way, at just the right time. I hope you'll prepare for the Light's coming, a little each day. Warm to holiday lights piercing the darkness, sit awhile with an Advent devotion, notice small signs of God's clear presence, pray for peace. Kindle your own Advent fire with branches seasoned by stories and time spent together.

The Light is surely coming to help us find new ways to mend our broken world.

Let's greet the flesh and bone of a precious human baby with open hearts, warmed by stoking the Advent fire.

Along the path,

Jodie

With Love, from the Keenans

Dear United Church of Moscow,

As Thanksgiving Day approaches we want to thank each of you for welcoming us into your community. During our visit here to bond with our newest family members, Isabella and Matthew, one of the greatest gifts we believe we have received is having the opportunity to worship weekly with you. Thank you so much for your very warm and welcoming spirit. As we prepare to return to our home in Vancouver, we will carry in our hearts each of you.

With much love & gratitude, Lori & Rich Keenan

Sojourner's Voice of the Day

If our lives demonstrate that we are peaceful, humble and trusted, this is recognized by others. If our lives demonstrate something else, that will be noticed, too.

~~ Rosa Parks, civil rights activist

Joke of the Month



On a sunny May day, Momma Mouse takes her litter of new babies out into the field for the first time. The tiny mice follow Mom through the tall blades of tender grass. A fat tabby cat appears out of nowhere, bearing down to snag the baby mice! Momma Mouse acts fast! She puffs herself up and roars out a ferocious warning, barking just like a Rottweiler!

Woof, Woof!! Woof, WOOF, WOOOOF!!!

The startled cat scampers away and Momma Mouse falls back into the wet grass.

Mom! What was THAT!?, the astonished tiny mice ask.

Tired Momma Mouse replies: *Whew! Now maybe you'll believe me when I tell you how important it is to learn a second language!*

United Church COOKS!

Here's one more celebration of our weekend with the Pierre's, here from Nicaragua! This is Tiffany's Squash Casserole that was a hit at our Harvest Potluck! Another recipe that's cold-weather perfect!

Fabulous Squash Casserole

- 3 medium acorn squash
- 4 eggs
- 1/3 cup rice milk (can use any milk)
- 4 green onions, chopped
- 1/2 green bell pepper, diced
- 2 cups bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup parmesan, grated
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp ground pepper
- 2 sprig fresh rosemary
- 3/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 3 roma tomatoes, thinly sliced



Preheat oven to 350. Lightly grease medium casserole dish. Cook or steam acorn squash for 10-15 minutes, then peel squash and mash with fork. Blend eggs and milk. Mix together squash, eggs and milk mixture, green onions (reserve some for topping), green pepper, bread crumbs, parmesan, salt and pepper. Transfer to greased casserole. Press rosemary into center of mix. Top with feta, tomato, and green onion. Season with black pepper. Bake until lightly brown, about 45 minutes. Discard rosemary before serving.

We Gathered Together

Thank you to all who participated in this year's opportunities for thanks-giving!

This year, we appreciated a community service prepared by the Moscow Interfaith Alliance, and back at home, we enjoyed a beautiful harvest table and put special words of thanksgiving onto cards, and into the mail. So far 37 thanks-filled cards have been shared and more still come.

December Birthdays

- 5th - Charlotte McCallum
- 11th - Ed Goforth
- 17th - Lois Bradberry
- 21st - Pat Gentry

We Are Creators, Too!

YOU are invited to think about ways you can add a creative twist to United Church's monthly newsletter! Is there a poem you love? Would you write a paragraph to recommend a book or movie? Have you snapped a photo we should all see? Get in on it!

Here's **Glenda Hawley's** touching Tanka poem we heard in a sermon about **hope**:

Brilliant evening star
perched on a branch
in a turquoise sky.
Is it there just
to move my heart to wonder?



And here's a **bonus** Glenda Hawley winter poem:
Brilliant sunset
glorifies the West.
Red, orange, gold on blue
reflect on shimmering
ice-laden boughs.

Prayer Matters



The following folks have asked to be included on our prayer list.

Please keep them in your hearts this month.

If you'd like to add yourself or a loved one to our Prayer Matters list, just be in touch.

- ◆ Joan Gustaveson (bad cold)
- ◆ Bonnie Nelson (safe travels)
- ◆ Donna Spencer and Donna's parents (health concerns)
- ◆ Peter Lanting (at The Orchards for further healing)
- ◆ Tammy Lanting (ongoing healing, and caregiver for Peter)
- ◆ Pat & Dale Gentry (Pat's next round of chemo underway)
- ◆ Joanie (a request from our friend from Milestones)
- ◆ Sheila Batey (seeks to feel connected with faith community)
- ◆ Pray for those who feel lonely in this holiday season
- ◆ Pray for peace

Taking the Long View...

- ✓ December 1-- World AIDS Day
- ✓ December 6, 12 Noon-- Keenans' presentation on Guatemala
- ✓ December 13, 4p-- Caroling & Chili (contact Linda Rassmussen)
- ✓ December 20, 6p-- Christmas Dinner (contact Tiffany Thompson)
- ✓ December 24, 7p-- Christmas Eve Service

United Church of Moscow December 2009 Newsletter

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 5:30 p AA Mtg	2 10a – 12p Palouse Clear Water Color 12 – 1:30 p Moscow Interfaith Alliance 7p Choir Rehearsal	3 5:30 p AA Mtg	4	5
	6 9:30 a Adult Education 11 a Morning Worship 12 p Keenans' Presentation	7 7p Spiritual Mysteries	8 12 p Grief Support Group 5:30 p AA Mtg.	9 12:15 to 12:45p Advent Recital - Presbyterian Church, 1630 NE Stadium Way, Pullman 12 p Cancer Support Group 7p Board of Directors Mtg.	10 5:30 p AA Mtg.	11	12
	13 9:30 a Adult Education 11:00 a Morning Worship 4-6 p Caroling & Chili	14 7pm Spiritual Mysteries	15 5:30 pm AA Mtg	16 12:15 to 12:45p Advent Recital - First Presbyterian Church, 405 S. Van Buren, Moscow 7p Choir Rehearsal	17 5:30 p AA Mtg.	18	19
	20 9:30 a Adult Education 11:00 a Morning Worship 6 p Christmas Dinner	21 7pm Spiritual Mysteries	22 12 pm Grief Support Group 5:30 p AA Mtg.	23	24 Christmas Eve 5:30 p AA Mtg. 7 p Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas	26
	27 9:30 a Adult Education 11:00 a Morning Worship	28 7p Spiritual Mysteries	29 5:30 p AA Mtg	30	31 5:30 p AA Mtg.		

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Jodie: If you'd like to speak with Jodie, please call the church at 208-882-2924, or email jodietooley@gmail.com

Church Office Hrs: Tues 3:30 – 5 p & Wed. & Fri 8 – 11a