# **Sundays at Valley**

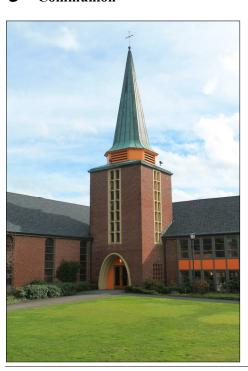
Online worship at 10:00 a.m. Visit <a href="https://www.facebook.com/">https://www.facebook.com/</a> ValleyCommunityPresbyterian/ and click videos on the left side.

# **December**

- 6 Second Sunday of Advent Communion
- 13 Third Sunday of Advent
- 20 Fourth Sunday of Advent Dining for Women, 11:30 a.m.
- 27 First Sunday of Christmas

# January

3 Communion



# ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT VALLEY

Advent means *coming*. It's the first season of the Christian year where we wait with great anticipation for the coming of Christ. It's a season of Holy waiting: waiting for God's peace to come to earth... waiting for the light of Christ to shine... waiting for the shepherds, the angels, and the Christ child.

Advent lasts for four Sundays, leading up to Christmas Day. In worship, we'll make our way toward Christmas through the season of Advent.

We'll light the Advent candles, one more each week, as we watch for the light of Christ. We'll sing hymns celebrating the miraculous gospel story in verse and song. We'll hear the prophets' words of warning and of promise. We'll tell the stories leading to Jesus' birth. We'll wonder and marvel with the shepherds and hear the angels' announcement with great joy. We'll journey to Bethlehem in our hearts and minds, waiting for the birth of the Christ child. And then we'll celebrate Christmas: the birth of Jesus, God-with-us, Emmanuel!



### Sunday, November 29 - First Sunday in Advent

We begin Advent with symbols of the season displayed in the sanctuary. The first candle of Advent will be lit as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The Sanderman Family will sing "The 'Huron' (Wendat) Carol' during 10:00 a.m. online worship.

### Sunday, December 6 – Second Sunday in Advent

The second candle of Advent will be lit. Poinsettias in honor and memory of loved ones will grace the sanctuary during the season of Advent. Eoghan McDowell, Tenor, will sing "Comfort Ye" by Handel from Messiah.

### Sunday, December 13 - Third Sunday in Advent

The third candle of Advent will be lit. Aaron Lange, Tenor, will sing "Every Valley" by Handel from Messiah.

### Sunday, December 20 – Fourth Sunday in Advent

The fourth candle of Advent will be lit. Please share in the Christmas Joy Offering. Raoul Bellis-Squires, Bass, will sing "Who Would Send a Baby" by Beal.

### Friday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

**5:00 p.m.** Celebrate the birth of our Savior during our single livestream candlelight service. Glory to the newborn King!

Our Christmas celebration continues through Epiphany Sunday, January 3 Livestream Worship.

# **Light in the Darkness**



It gets dark in the Pacific Northwest this time of year...really dark. I'm not sure if it's because of the additional clouds, or the rain, or the bone-chilling cold, but the darkness around here feels a bit different than other parts of the world this time of year. I'll admit it, I'm usually really bummed the first few weeks as the days become shorter and the nights grow longer. I find myself walking my dog at 5:00 p.m. in the pitch black and reflecting on how sunny and hot 5:00 p.m. was just a few months previous.

And then after feeling sorry for myself for a few moments, my mind tends to recalibrate as other objects in the darkness tend to appear. The beautiful lights of streetlamps and decorated homes begin to illuminate. The reflection of light in the puddles and streams glisten. The darkness of the nearby forest begins to lighten as my eyes adapt to the surrounding darkness. It seems that the world has not given up after all; life continues even in the darkness—there is light.

The metaphor of light shining in the darkness is of old wisdom and tradition. Many stories share that light ultimately conquers the darkness, like it is something to be tamed and controlled. However, I'd like for us to think about a different perspective of this relationship between light and darkness these days. Perhaps it is in the darkness that light is given birth.

Perhaps when times are most challenging and foreboding; it's then when our visions and dreams of a brighter future originate. In some ways, perhaps we need the darkness in our lives to create space for our moments of light.

As the year 2020 comes to a close, we find ourselves once again in the darkness. I invite you to take a moment in the coming season of darkness to instead of resisting the darkness, try leaning into it. Allow our eyes and our senses to adjust. Allow for the stillness to embrace us. And then give a moment to glimpse the light that is slowly on the rise. What new hopes and dreams can you make out for the new year ahead? What new things are in store for our community? What bright new days lie ahead?



God's Peace,





### THE MESSENGER

VALLEY COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 8060 SW BRENTWOOD ST. PORTLAND, OR 97225-2355

503.292.3537 FAX 503.292.4272 valleycommunity.org

Email: mail@valleycommunity.org

# **PASTOR**JEFF BINDER

**NEWSLETTER STAFF:** ANGELA GRAHAM

PLEASE SUBMIT ARTICLES VIA E-MAIL BY DECEMBER 20 FOR THE JANUARY ISSUE: angie@valleycommunity.org

THE NEWSLETTER STAFF RETAINS PERMISSION TO MODIFY SUBMISSIONS FOR CLARITY, SPACE, CONTENT AND STYLE.

# **December Birthdays**

Kristi Albertson Jenny Pratt Hale Bob Archibald Charlene Hegdahl Wade Askew **Bob Hinson** Claire Bedsaul Steve Levine Steve Bird Hannah Nolen Sarah Blair Mark Rodman Donna Russell Kiel Carlson Marilyn Connell Linda Sanderman Deborah DuFresne Silvia Smart Polly Dye Harry Thomas Laura Evans Kerry Viestenz

Happy birthday to all those born in December! If we missed you, please contact the church office at 503.292.3537 or info@valleycommunity.org and let us know.



# **Christmas Joy Offering to be Received**



On Christmas Eve, the Christmas Joy Offering will be received at Presbyterian churches across our nation. This special offering commemorates the perfect gift we've all be given in Jesus, who brings God and humanity closer together. One of the names given to Jesus is Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." During these past months, many of us haven't been together in person, but we have continued to be together in spirit and in faith. God has been

with us. And through our gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering, we are together with those who need our love and support.

Fifty percent of our gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Because God is with us, we see the potential of students of color who will become leaders in their communities, and we seek to come alongside them, to encourage them, to be with them.

The other fifty percent of our gifts provide assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs, like a pastor who was enabled to purchase a specialized scooter that allowed him to continue his ministry while living with multiple sclerosis.

Please join in supporting these vital ministries. When we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

# Chenoa Stock, Mission Co-Worker in Peru



Chenoa Stock

In 2007, Valley entered into a partnership with other congregations in the Cascades Presbytery and with the Joining Hands program of the PCUSA in Bolivia. Valley members went on several mission trips to learn about the program and conditions in Bolivia, and worked with several different mission co-workers during that time. Chenoa Stock became the Joining Hands facilitator in 2011, and was hosted at Valley several times to speak about her work in Bolivia. The Joining Hands network was disbanded in 2018, and Chenoa and her husband and infant son became mission co-workers in Peru.

Chenoa writes a monthly newsletter, which is available at "pcusa.org/chenoa-stock". In her September newsletter, she reports that Peru has the fifth highest COVID-19 cases and the highest fatality rate in the world. They were in one of the world's longest mandatory periods of isolation, from March 16 through June 30, with the first peak of cases in late May. "Once the economy re-opened in July, the case numbers began to surge, surpassing the first peak and heading toward a new one. The

healthcare system has collapsed due to a lack of investment in infrastructure during Peru's recent economic growth. Oxygen is scarce, with cylinders selling for more that \$1,000 on the black market, access to decreasing quantities of medicine is limited, and unemployment and poverty are on the rise, along with food insecurity for a great majority of the population."

Chenoa's work can be supported by sending checks to "Presbyterian World Mission, P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700", and writing "Stock – E200530" on the memo line.

# **Hunger Knows No Season**



Valley partners with Portland's Transition Projects to provide a once-a-month meal at Bud Clark Commons for 50 homeless men. We are looking for groups to prepare the meal for Thursday, December 17 and Thursday, January 21. Since the corona virus, members are not using the church kitchen to prepare the meal. We are no longer serving the meal, it only needs to be delivered to Bud Clark Commons, 665 NW Hoyt St, Portland, by 6:30 p.m.

The hosting group needs to purchase ingredients and prepare the soup at home. Four gallons of milk needs to accompany the meal. Raleigh Hills New Seasons Market donates the bread products. An option is to purchase ready made meals for 50 people. Soup recipe and guidelines are available to any group. If interested in preparing the meal for December or January please contact Mary Kay Rodman at <a href="mailto:mkrodman@comcast.net">mkrodman@comcast.net</a>.



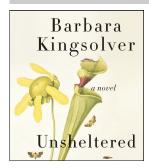
Thank you for sending your check for \$36.50 for the

2020 Per Capita (for wider church expenses) for each Valley member.

For more information about what per capita is, and how it helps, go to: oga.pcusa.org/percapita



# **Valley Book Group**



Under normal circumstances, the Valley Book Group would be holding their combined November/December meeting in the Fireside Room on December 4 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss <u>Unsheltered</u>, written by Barbara Kingsolver. However, due to closures caused by Covid19, we will again be meeting using Zoom. One review of this novel describes it as "brilliantly executed and compulsively listenable. This is the story of two families, in two centuries, as they navigate the challenges of surviving a world in the throes of major cultural shifts. In this mesmerizing story told in alternating chapters, Willa and Thatcher come to realize that though the future is uncertain, even unnerving, shelter can be found in the bonds of kindred—whether family or friends—and in the strength of the human spirit." If you have not attended in the past, but would like to join us, contact Laura Sanders to have your name added to the list. If you are already on

the Book Group email list, you will receive further information about how to attend the Zoom meeting. The January meeting is devoted to selecting the books for 2021. Recommendations for good books are being collected by Pat Bryant (bear pat@msn.com) and Kathy Ems (rkems@comcast.net), so if you have recommendations, contact one of them by December 15, 2020. They will send participants a list of recommended books with a brief description of each book prior to the January meeting.

# **Dining for Women on December 20**

Dining for Women at Valley will end the year with its last monthly meeting on December 20 at 11:30 a.m. on the ever -present Zoom platform. Despite not being able to enjoy the fellowship of a potluck meal and a presentation in person for most of this year, our chapter has been able to continue to meet virtually to learn about various nonprofits that support women and girls around the world with sustainable efforts to achieve gender equality.

In December we will learn about and support Care 2 Communities (C2C) in Haiti. Their nonprofit has created a new, innovative approach for community healthcare delivery in Haiti: a social enterprise model that delivers reliable, affordable, high-quality primary care through a network of clinics. C2C believes that its community-based model, developed in partnership with the Haitian Ministry of Health, can transform the lives of vulnerable people by providing high-quality curative care, promoting good health, and ensuring sustainable long-term access to care.

Please plan to join us to expand your knowledge of those in need around the world and let your donation dollars help relieve that need.

If you are interested in joining us on Sunday, December 20 and are not on the evite list, contact Ruthann Marquis.



# **Reverse Advent Calendar**



For the past several years Valley Community has paired with the Good Roots Church of SE Portland ~ Food and Clothing Pantry by collecting items with the Reverse Advent Calendar. Instead of 'opening the door for a treat' you place a gift into a bag or box through Epiphany (January 6, 2021). On January 7 we will donate our 'gifts' during the first Thursday 10:00-11:30 a.m. time. Click here for the link to the calendar which has suggestions of items to collect. You can also find the link on our website under the Resources & Links page. You may, of course, put anything you choose into your box. Have fun and Merry Christmas.

# **Distance Food Collection**



Thank you to all who have driven over to the church on the **first** and/or **third** Thursdays, or who have left food inside the bins by the Fireside Room at other times. By the end of the year we will have collected **OVER A TON** of food! Between March and the end of November we have given 1,846 pounds of food to the St Matthew's Food Pantry. We only need 154 pounds to come in on December 3 or December 17 to surpass a TON OF FOOD! The need is great and only getting greater...Thank you for your generosity!

Valley Mission Committee.

# **Small Group Continues**

Job & the Holiday Blues
Facilitator: Pastor Jeff
Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m., on Zoom, all ages



A lot of emotions show up around the holidays. While many people wish to highlight the happiness of the holidays, there are also quite a bit of moments of grief and sadness that accompany such times.

The story of Job is a story asking an age-old question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" In this small group we'll explore Job's story, ask questions of God's presence and nature in this book, and share our own experiences, both good and bad, around the holiday season.

This small group meets on Wednesdays over Zoom. Each participant will be expected to read approximately six chapters from the Book of Job each week before we gather (Just one chapter a day!). All ages are welcome, and this event is open to the public--come as you are!

### **Meeting Dates:**

Wednesday, December 2 at 7:00 p.m., chapters 25-30

Wednesday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m., chapters 31-36

Wednesday, December 16 at 7:00 p.m., chapters 37-42

### **Discussion topics:**

Grief

God's Nature

Redemption & Restoration

Zoom link: <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88019381756?pwd=QjRvWUE0bTN4dXlwVGcrMnFyeEpudz09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88019381756?pwd=QjRvWUE0bTN4dXlwVGcrMnFyeEpudz09</a> Questions/Comments, contact Pastor Jeff: 503.292.3537; jeff@valleycommunity.org.

# **Mission Endowment Committee Awards Fall 2020 Grants**

Valley's Mission Endowment Committee has awarded six grants totaling \$10,750 for Fall 2020. The grants support housing, education, medical needs, and social services here in Oregon and around the world.

# • UNICEF: Nothing But Nets - \$1,000

Provide bed nets to prevent mosquito bite transmission of malaria.

### • YWCA of Greater Portland, Domestic Violence Services - \$1,500

Work with survivors of domestic violence to secure affordable housing and provide other services so that they can become self-sufficient.

### • Willamette West Habitat for Humanity - \$1,700

Support construction of homes for low income families in the Denney Gardens Neighborhood.

### • Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon: Second Home - \$2,000

Create video training materials for home providers.

### • Ripple Africa - \$2,100

Provide sustainable, low-tech fuel efficient cookstoves to rural households in northern Malawi. These stoves reduce firewood use by 67%, which reduces pollution and the amount of time spent gathering wood.

### AHIVOY (Asociación Hispana de la Industria del Vino en Oregon y Comunidad) - \$2,450

Provide a scholarship for a Latinx vineyard worker to pursue continuing education allowing for professional advancement. Training is in partnership with Chemeketa Community College and Linfield University.

These grants were approved by Valley's Session on November 10. Members of the Mission Endowment Committee are Jan Bellis-Squires, Ernie Bootsma, Robert Hayes, Pam Kessinger, and Carol Powers (Chair). Janet Adkins is the Mission Committee liaison.

# **Vital Congregations Team Continues to Meet**



During the pandemic the team is still meeting each month and working on Vital Congregations activities behind the scenes. We love you and pray for you. We wish each of you a very Merry Christmas!

### The Seven Marks of Vital Congregations:

- 1. Lifelong Discipleship Formation
- 2. Intentional Authentic Evangelism
- 3. Outward Incarnational Focus
- 4. Empower Servant Leadership
- 5. Spirit-filled Worship
- 6. Caring Relationships
- 7. Ecclesial Health

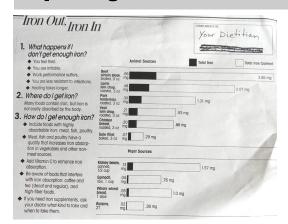
# **Poinsettias Grace the Sanctuary**



Poinsettias will enhance the Sanctuary Chancel throughout the Advent season in memory and honor of our loved ones. If you wish to participate, please provide the name of the honoree and a donation of \$15.00 noted to "VCPC Flower Fund" and send it to the church office by Sunday, December 20. Honorees' names will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Questions? Contact <a href="mailto:angie@valleycommunity.org">angie@valleycommunity.org</a>.



# **Improving Iron Status**



Another blood drive coming up on December 16. If you have been sometimes turned down due to low hemoglobin, here are some ideas to improve iron status. Also, hemoglobin will be diluted by extra hydration. I recommend hold off on your last tall glass/bottle of water until after the hemoglobin test.

Here are some high iron snacks for energy and red blood: Bananas, blackberries, blueberries, elderberries, loganberries, plums, prunes, strawberries, watermelon, prune juice, tomato juice, eggs, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, enriched cereal, hamburger, liver sausage, turkey, enriched bread.

Valerie Conner, Clinical Dietitian

# **Prayer Shawl Knitting Group is Zooming!**



Just a reminder that our knitters still gather once a month to visit and keep up with what's happening in this ministry. Ruthann Marquis has graciously agreed to become the leader of our group which began in 2005. Since then, we have gifted well over 1000 shawls to members and friends. Though the group has changed, those now involved still find enjoyment creating lovely, warm shawls in hopes they will bring comfort to someone who needs a bit of TLC. If you know anyone going through an especially difficult time, feel free to request a shawl through one of our knitters, or call Ruthann Marquis.

If you knit and would like to join us to help carry on this special ministry call the church office and leave your name and one of us will give you a call with details. We'd welcome you!

# VALLEYYOUTH

# December 2020

# **Christmas Party**

Valley Youth will be celebrating Christmas on December 13 in an in-person, socially distanced gathering.

# **Youth Group**

We're temporarily foregoing meeting in person until the freeze is lifted. Stay safe and stay engaged virtually!

# **BottleDrop Bags**

Thank you for all of your BottleDrop contributions! We're all out of bags at the church and I will be restocking them soon. Expect to see more Blue Bags outside of the church very soon!

# **Follow Our Blog!**

Subscribe to our blog, valleyyouth.org, for regular updates on who we are and what we're doing!



# **Temporary Pause**

Valley Youth has placed all socially distanced, in-person meetings on hold until the "freeze" has been lifted. We will continue gathering virtually until the projected end of December 2.

# **Confirmation**

We are three sessions into our Confirmation course and our next session is on December 6. Renn Sanderman will be teaching our Confirmands part three of our three part series on the Trinity. This class will be focused on the Holy Spirit.

# **Prayer Requests**

Please continue to pray for all of our students as the fall semester draws to a close. We so appreciate all of your prayers and support.

"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

2 Corinthians 9:15

# **Valley Scrapbook**



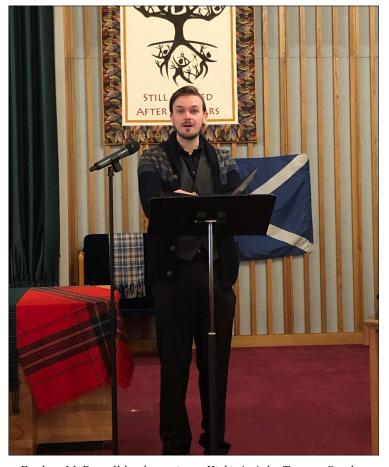
A cornucopia graced the sanctuary for Thanksgiving.



The McCleans and Ann Johnson on Kirkin' o' the Tartans Sunday.



David and Sophia Scearce played during livestream worship.



Eoghan McDowell leads music on Kirkin' o' the Tartans Sunday.

# **Valley Notes**

**Opportunities** 

Equal Exchange products will be for sale at the food pantry dropoff in the East parking lot on the first and third Thursdays in December from 10:00-11:30 a.m. Pick up some organic, fair-trade olive oil, chocolate bars, coffee and tea for Christmas!

The 2021 Stewardship

Campaign officially kicked off with pledge cards being mailed out to Valley members and friends. If you have not received a pledge card, please contact the church office or fill out your pledge card by following this link: <a href="https://www.jotform.com/assign/202816913814052/cHZybnhFVGMxVXgyRG5FendYL3N1VmJNaGRaVElCaExXbnV2cFd0Q3IyZ0pXSmdJUUFiR0xINVZtODlHNTcwUjJ4alpOOUJHYWlhaFRHV2tyYytTU2c9PO">https://www.jotform.com/assign/202816913814052/cHZybnhFVGMxVXgyRG5FendYL3N1VmJNaGRaVElCaExXbnV2cFd0Q3IyZ0pXSmdJUUFiR0xINVZtODlHNTcwUjJ4alpOOUJHYWlhaFRHV2tyYytTU2c9PO</a>

Please use Smile.Amazon for your holiday online shopping and select Valley Church as the non-profit to receive your shopping credit. There is no cost to you.

The Salvation Army Giving

Tree that is annually sponsored by Valley will look differently this year because of Covid-19 restrictions. The Salvation Army has a wish list this year to help families in need: <a href="https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/16JE7MY8QIM0H?">https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/16JE7MY8QIM0H?</a> ref =wl share

# **Prayers**

We pray for those with health concerns:

Terry Hercher, Judy Johansen, Phyllis Patterson, Mary Albrecht

We pray for those who mourn:

- Friends and family of Rita Hammack who died on November 12, 2020.

### **Earth Care Corner**

Here are some ideas for Earth Friendly Ways to Celebrate Advent and Christmas offered by Nancy Corson Carter from the Presbyterians for Earth Care blog November 15, 2020.

### **GIFT GIVING**

- 1.Holiday gifting and gathering is complicated by Covid-19 this year. Best information about how to safely celebrate: www.cdc.gov COVID-19: Holiday Celebrations/CDC
- 2. Look for fair-trade and/or locally made goods. Choose organic, natural materials, and avoid plastics. Help cut down the TONS of extra holiday garbage by recycling, reusing or doing without gift wrap (or wrap with scarf, a towel, fabric).
- 3. Give the gift of time: call, send cards, invite a "facetime" or ZOOM with homebound members of your church or far-flung family members & friends. Simplify gift giving (one idea: drawing names and deciding on a limit to spend; re-gifting is fine, just be thoughtful about original giver; festive wine? bottles are recyclable)
- 4. Give a charitable gift like Heifer International: provide honeybees to water buffalo, in your giftee's name: see catalog and ordering info at www.heifer.org/
- 5. Support local and national/world eco-justice organizations like Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), 350.org, Presbyterians for Earth Care (PEC), and especially for young people-Our Children's Trust. 6. For holiday meals, cook seasonal foods raised locally, i.e., farmers' markets, CSAs: popcorn, fruit & nuts, all of which can be composted or used for bird seed afterward.

### **BIRDS**

7. Decorating a tree for birds is a good holiday activity, and diverse edible bird foods attract different birds: Your food helps them survive the winter. 8. Annual Christmas Day Bird Count - Take your binoculars, a field guide to local birds, a small pad or journal for each participant and walk a course through your neighborhood, local park or countryside. Try to identify and count every bird you see and note each in your journal. At the end of the hike, list species seen and number of birds per species. **ENERGY** 

9. As you decorate your home, replace some of your incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient LEDs; invest in a timer for outdoor displays. LED holiday lights use up to 95% less than larger, traditional holiday bulbs & last up to 100,000 hours indoors. Over a 30-day period, lighting 500 traditional holidays lights costs \$18.00 while the same number of LEDs costs \$0.19.

- ACTIVITIES
- 10. Walk outdoors and enjoy the change of seasons
- 11. Practice a random act of kindness at least once a week
- 12. Make home-baked bread, decorated cookies, etc. with friends or family. **BOOKS & WRITING**
- 13. A great link for creation-caring books for children: "Children's Lit Love"-a former 3rd grade teacher, now mother of 2 shares book recommendations & literacy tips https://childrenslitlove.com/2020/04/09/earth-day-books-to-read-year-round/ OR Google up: "Holiday 2020 books for adults & children about Earth care" OR All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, & Solutions for the Climate Crisis (2020): visionary essays & poems by 50 women leaders in the climate movement.
- 14. Send Christmas cards to your Senators and Representatives and urge their pro-environment vote on bills in the New Year & write to President-elect Biden too!
- 15. Gather a small group to read the Bible and pray together during Advent, think about ways you connect Advent to energy use and caring for creation.

  Warmest wishes from Valley's Earth Care Team Thank you!

### THE MESSENGER



VALLEY COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 8060 SW BRENTWOOD ST. PORTLAND, OR 97225-2355

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
TIME DATED MATERIAL

# DEACONS' RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

Wednesday, December 16, 2:00-7:00 p.m.



Up to three people may be helped with each pint of blood collected. Please help if you can.

Contact Jim Sandberg or Karen Miller for more information.