



from the April 2008 issue of The Spire

And Easter People All Year Round

by Rev. Douglas S. Stivison, Pastor

On Easter, I shared with you my conviction that Easter is not just a one-day-a-year holiday, but that the message of Easter defines both who we are and whose we are as individuals and as a worshipping community every day of our lives.

We are an Easter people who are gathered in one very special Easter church — the First Congregational United Church of Christ. And in this church we believe — both as individuals and as the entire church family — in the triumph of hope over despair and in growth over stagnation. We know that Jesus turned his church over to ordinary but faithful disciples — just like you and me — to be “led by the Spirit” in putting their faith into action in their own specific place and time.

And we, the Easter people of this church are being led by the Spirit to put our Easter faith into action. In the past few weeks we have laid the foundation for an exciting and comprehensive relaunch of our Christian education efforts. An optimistic and enthusiastic Church Development team has begun an exciting array of initiatives that includes identifying and reaching out to every person who has moved into the area in the past six months.

We are beginning to see our church’s name appear in the local newspapers more frequently. We have had the joy of welcoming back old friends and meeting new friends at recent worship services. We are planning to celebrate our church’s history and heritage in June. Those of us who are in church late on Sunday afternoons hear the spirited singing of the *Iglesia Biblica* — a Spanish speaking congregation — who have been sharing our sanctuary. And we’ve all been reveling in the sounds of our new organ.

Perhaps one of the clearest examples of all that so much is happening at our church is that we are running out of space for new snapshots on our church life bulletin board!

We are truly an Easter people, moving forward as a church family with optimism, with hope, with energy, and with faith. Those Easter “alleluias” are still echoing in my head....and I know they will be all year long.