

Wright Right?

The UCC in the News

As most of us are aware, our denomination has been in the news of late. Barack Obama's candidacy, and the subsequent deluge of attention on his church and former pastor, Jeremiah Wright, have made for some interesting headlines. For solid, reliable information, please check the official UCC website, www.ucc.org, and our own website as well. In addition, The Christian Century, in its April 22 edition, has several pieces on the Rev. Wright.



During the past two weeks, the denomination raised funds for and published two full-page ads, one in the New York Times (http://ga3.org/ct/tps_yws1SEBZ/), the other in USA Today (www.ucc.org/news/uccs-full-page-ad-in-usa-toda.html). Each of these aimed to clarify the basic tenets of the denomination, and to encourage our nation to engage in a meaningful dialogue on race. An e-mail from General Minister and President John Thomas urged all UCC congregations to pursue this dialogue as well. We will be looking at constructive ways to do just that.

It is critical that UCC members be well-informed and prepared to help others understand our denomination in light of the public attention. Toward that end, we are making available on our website and in "hard copies" several well-written essays and brief articles concerning the UCC and the controversy with Rev. Wright. The New Yorker has an excellent article on Trinity

United Church of Christ, which gives helpful perspective on that church as well as on Jeremiah Wright. That article can be found at this link: www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/04/07/080407fa_fact_sanneh?currentPage=1.

In this era of quick sound-bites, youtube videos, and snap judgments, our faith compels us to strive to see the whole picture rather than merely a 30-second snippet, to remember that context matters, and that there is far more at stake in the upcoming elections than the many side distractions that seem so appealing to so many.

We are part of a denomination with a proud and amazing history. Being in the public spotlight can be challenging and yet can also inform many about the UCC's faithful witness to God's compassion, justice, and redeeming mercy in this world. To quote the NY Times ad, in part: "With all Christians, we rest in God's amazing grace and hear God's voice in the words of Scripture. Yet, the UCC is unique to some because we do not require uniformity of belief. We are a church of open ideas, extravagant welcome and evangelical courage. Our passion for democracy extends to both government and church, where decision-making rests within each congregation. We support liberty in our pulpits, just as we affirm the individual conscience of our 1.2-million members to agree, disagree and wrestle with life's biggest questions in a spirit of love."

Please keep our denomination's leaders, all candidates for public office, and the good folks at Trinity UCC in Chicago in your prayers.



Congregational UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Worship Schedule

General Assembly: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Worship: 11:00 a.m.
Refreshments: 12:00 p.m.

Our Mission

As people of Congregational United Church of Christ, we seek to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, accepting God's call to be a true community of love, compassion, and nurture.

Visitors

Congregational United Church of Christ is a warm, welcoming congregation that is always happy to receive visitors. To help you feel as comfortable and at-home as possible when you visit us, we've put together some information on what the Congregational experience is like — how to get to the church, what to wear (which is pretty much anything you'd like), nursery and Sunday school hours, and more. For details, check out our Visitor Page at our website: www.congregationalucc.com/about/visitors.php.

Our Next Newsletter

Deadline: Friday, April 25
Publication: Wednesday, April 30

News and events can be sent to office@congregationalucc.com.

Can't wait for news? Check out the Congregational UCC web site at www.congregationalucc.com. It is up-to-date, relevant, interesting, lively, and available 24 hours.

Lectionary Readings

April 20, 2008

Acts 7:55-60
Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
I Peter 2:2-10
John 14:1-14

April 27, 2008

Acts 17:22-31
Psalm 66:8-20
I Peter 3:13-22
John 14:15-21



Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

400 West Radiance Drive
Greensboro, NC 27403
Phone: 336-274-5378/274-0838
Fax: 336-370-0297
Web: www.congregationalucc.com

Rev. Julie Peeples
Senior Pastor
julie@congregationalucc.com

Rev. William C. Smith
Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Paul Davis
Minister for Christian Education
paul@congregationalucc.com

Ms. Amy Maier
Organist
aemaier@spartan.uncg.edu

Ms. Charlotte Evans
Congregational Nurse
opendoornc@aol.com
Drop-In Hours: 4th Sun. of the month
10:00-11:00 am
Home Visits: Thursdays

Ms. Sarah Downey
Director of Children's Music
Bella A Cappella
sarahdowney81@hotmail.com

Ms. Regina Hayes
Nursery Director
regi.hay@gmail.com

Ms. Judy Page
Office Manager
office@congregationalucc.com
Office Hours: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Monday thru Wednesday & Friday

- Ministries**
- Bible Study
 - Children & Adult Choir
 - Handbell Choir
 - Youth Programs
 - Women's Fellowship
 - Adult Fun Club

- Outreach Programs**
- Greensboro Urban Ministry
 - Mobile Meals
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - Potter's House
 - Higher Ground
 - and many more . . .

Congregational News is published by
Congregational United Church of Christ,
Greensboro, North Carolina

From the Pastor

Grateful to God, Grateful to One Another



Friends, it has been a trying few weeks for all of us. Yet breaking through the sadness for me is also a profound sense of gratitude. The

way this congregation has pulled together has been absolutely inspiring. In a most challenging time, so many of you volunteered in any way you could: setting up chairs, fixing food, preparing the hall and the sanctuary, folding bulletins, rehearsing, standing in the rain to help park cars or greet guests – the list is nearly endless. It was the tremendous effort of a grieving, loving community. The many remarks from family, friends of Isa and Jorge's, and others who came that Saturday reflect the warm welcome and gracious hospitality they experienced.

The entire staff did a remarkable job as well, going far beyond the call of duty and giving generously of their time and their abilities. I could not be more grateful. Our congregation, our church, truly came shining through.

And now we look to the future. Jimmy Buchanan, our interim music directory, is already doing an amazing job of pulling the chancel and handbell choirs together. We will continue to be enriched by beautiful, meaningful music in worship. Sadly, we will soon lose Amy Maier as she completes her master's degree at UNCG and returns to her family in Maine. We hate to see her go – she has been such a tremendous asset and such a joy to work with. Her courage and fortitude these past few weeks has been a real source of strength for many.

Unfortunately, we must also say good-bye to Sarah Downey, director of the children's choir and

Bella a Capella. Sarah has accepted a position as Director of Music at another church, something that had been in the works for a while. She has served us well and brought us such wonderful music; we wish her great joy and success in her new position.

Our search will soon be underway for these various positions. God has guided us in the right direction over these years; I have no doubt at all that God is guiding us still.

We each have tasks then, in these days ahead. We all need to be in prayer, each day, for the search process, for continued strength in our music program, for those who are leading, and those soon leaving. Beyond that are various other tasks: singing, ringing bells, loving each other through our grieving, reminding one another of Christ's presence with us always. (Please note the special Supper Study program on April 23). As I wrote in other places over the last few weeks, we will all come through this together. God's unending grace will surely guide us to days of renewed joy, constant hope, and steady faithfulness. The healing that has already begun will continue to bind us together and lead us forward.

—Julie Peeples



Our kitchen helpers prepare for the reception following the memorial service.

Education Notes

Book Group, New Library Books, Supper Study



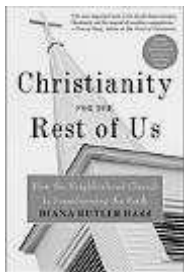
There will be a meeting on Sunday, May 4th, following worship, for those people interested in participating in a summer work

trip to New Orleans. The two weeks we are considering are July 20-27 and/or August 10-17.

—Paul Davis

CUCC Book Group

The Book group will meet on Sunday, April 20, at 12:30 p.m. in the Parlor. We will read and discuss *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church Is Transforming the Faith* by Diana Butler Bass.



For decades, the accepted wisdom has been that America's mainline Protestant churches are in decline, eclipsed by evangelical mega-churches. Church and religion expert Diana Butler Bass wondered if this was true, and this book is the result of her extensive, three-year study of centrist and progressive churches across the country. Her surprising findings reveal just the opposite—that many of the churches are flourishing, and they are doing so without resorting to mimicking the mega-church, evangelical style. *Christianity for the Rest of Us* describes this phenomenon and offers a how-to approach for Protestants eager to remain faithful to their tradition while becoming a vital spiritual community. Join us!

New Books in The Church Library

Aulen, Gustaf

Christus Victor

Peterson, Eugene H.

Eat This Book

Wright, N.T. (Tom)

The Resurrection of the Son of God

Davis, Ellen F. & Hays, Richard B.

The Art of Reading Scripture

Bauckham, Richard

Jesus and the Eyewitnesses

Look for these books (and others) on the library cart in the Fellowship Hall.

Supper Study Schedule

April 23:

Grief and the Journey of Life

Jack Register, a licensed Clinical Social Worker and friend of CUCC, will lead a program on coping with loss and grief.
Menu: Baked Fish, Mashed Potatoes, Vegetable, Salad, Bread, and Dessert

April 30:

Healthy Communications

Rebecca Starnes from the Family Life Council will lead a program on fostering good communications in relationships.
Menu: To be determined

General Supper Study Info

- Time - Supper: 6:00 pm
Program: 6:30-7:30 pm
- Cost - Adults: \$5, Children: \$3
- Reservations are required and are due by noon on Tuesday.
- Make reservations by indicating your interest on the Attendance Pad in worship or by calling or e-mailing the church office.
- There is no charge for Covered Dish meals, but please make a reservation.
- Child care is always provided.



ArtBeat

Sunday, May 4th, our church will join in the city-wide ArtBeat programs, with our own take on art in Greensboro. We will feature some of our own artists who will display their works, we will decorate our "Tent of Hope" as a part of our efforts to raise awareness of the situation in Darfur, we will have Jimmy Buchanan's Gospel Choir from his school in worship, and we will do our best to turn the church into a space where we can look at and participate with art. We'll have activities for everyone, curriculum to promote thought and conversation, and in general have a good time. The creative impulse is a gift from God; on that Sunday we will celebrate this wonderful gift.

Keep in Your Prayers ...

Erin Abernethy (at the death of her grandmother), Luther & Phyllis Abbott, Lauren Brower, Evelyn Chamberlain, Mike Connelly (Clif Karnes' brother-in-law), Bob Crews (Cathy Wheeler's father), Fran Ditto, Jessica Ellisor (Teresa Earle's niece), Emily Field, Bob Foster, Kaye Gardiner (Midge Rasey's daughter), Betty Gibbs, Beth Haunton (Lorie Tyson's friend), The Lamberts, Marie McLennan, Jordyn Pickett, Natama Summers (Henrietta Ingram's niece), Charles Stricklen, Virginia Stricklen, Matthew Wagoner (Margaret Wagoner's grandson), Wilbur Parrott's father

Higher Ground, Giving Statements, Know Your Church

We will serve lunch at Higher Ground on Tuesday, April 22nd. Food donations (especially vegetables) and volunteers are welcome as always. Our menu for April is BBQ ribs. For more information, contact me at 434-792-6707, 434-250-4364, or dancinchefish@msn.com.

A special thank you to Robin Dorko, Henrietta Ingram, Clif Karnes, and Sterling Whitener for all their hard work during my absence. —*Ish Whitfield*

Giving Statements

Giving Statements for the first quarter are now available in the Fellowship Hall. Statements for this quarter will be mailed only if requested. We are trying to save postage, and it will be helpful if members and friends will pick up statements from the church. Some folks give annually, so statements will be printed for that group as giving is received. Thank you for your support of our church's programs and missions. *Please note that all contributions made on Sunday are deposited the following day.*

Some of our folks like the convenience of handling giving and pledges through Electronic Funds Transfer. For more information, see the church website. Authorization forms to start that process can be found in the Narthex, and near the Fellowship Hall and Church Office.



Some of our children giving out flowers following the Easter Service.

Know Your Church:

Members-At-Large

The members-at-large, **Teresa Earles, Jeri Rowe, and Margaret Byrd**, serve as a liaison between the congregation and the church council. They also serve as our nominating committee, presenting the names of persons to serve on the boards and officers of the church. They also select the delegates to the Western Association and the Southern Conference meetings of our denomination. The members-at-large serve for three years and are members of the Church Council.



Teresa Earles, Jeri Rowe, Margaret Byrd



City-Wide Food Drive

On Saturday, April 5th, our congregation was responsible for helping with the Greensboro Urban Ministry city-wide food drive. I want to publicly acknowledge and thank Lesley Barker, Mike Allen, Beth Kuoni, Ralph and Ruthann Wenger, Alice Franks and Emily Franks-North for taking time out from their busy schedules to solicit donations of food at the Harris Teeter at North Elm Village. They collected 1,771 pounds of canned and packaged food and \$46.83 in cash and checks. It was gratifying to witness the generous response of shoppers to the challenge of feeding the growing number of hungry folks here in Greensboro. —*Rod North*

Oatmeal Reminder

Remember to purchase 18 oz. quick-cook oatmeal and leave it in the kitchen in support of CUCC's ongoing commitment to Greensboro Urban Ministry. Thank you!

Next Board & Council Meeting Night

The Boards and Church Council will have their next regular meetings on Tuesday, April 22, beginning at 6:45 pm with a time of prayer. Board meetings begin at 7:00, Council at 8:15.

CUCC Business

Volunteers

April 20

Lay Reader: Hannah Davis
 Toddler Nursery: K. Joseph/M. Kennedy
 Children's Church: Paul Davis
 Coffee Hour: Stephanie Shoaf & Trish Sutter

April 27

Lay Reader: Rod North
 Toddler Nursery: K. Rowe/ S. Montanus
 Children's Church: Karl Schleunes
 Coffee Hour: Beth Woody & Randy Yardley

April Ushers

Joann Myrick, Sticky Burch, Clyde Humphrey, Mike Dorko

Financial Reports

Weekly Income	04/06/08	04/13/08
Pledged Offering	\$5815.00	\$2466.00
Unpledged Offering	1433.48	438.65
Memorial Fund	690.00	160.00
Use of Church	500.00	520.00
Supper Study	---	118.00
Total	\$8348.48	\$3702.65

Budget Income/Expense Summary

	March	Year-to-Date
Income	\$26,233.48	\$85,927.69
Expense	\$20,824.83	\$69,633.09
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$5,408.65	\$16,294.60

New Baby, An Appeal for Help, Church Women United

Kelly Hmok made her grand entrance on Sunday, April 13, 2008 at Women's Hospital. Congratulations to proud parents Gun and Ju Nie! Some in the congregation have already made wonderful donations of baby items and funds, including our Women's Fellowship. If you would like to help out, checks can be made to the church, marked for "Montagnard Fund." Gently used baby clothes will also be welcomed!



April is Autism Awareness Month

Fifth Annual Autism Awareness Charity Golf Classic

Monday, April 28, 2008

Bryan Park Golf & Conference Center - Championship Course

Registration Deadline: April 21

The fee to participate is \$125 per player which includes the driving range, greens fees, golf cart fees, goody bag, refreshments on the golf course, banquet/dinner and a \$50 tax-deductible donation to the Autism Society of North Carolina-Guilford County.

Registration forms are posted outside Paul's office.



An Appeal for Help

As some of you may know, Fran Ditto, a long time member of our congregation and employee of Kiser Middle School, has recently been diagnosed with congestive heart failure. Per her doctors' orders she has taken a leave of absence from

her job at Kiser where she is a guidance counselor. Fran is doing well and the doctors are optimistic that her heart will repair and be back to normal in 4-6 months.

However, Fran is 19 days short of being vested with the State of North Carolina. Being vested with the State provides health insurance for the rest of one's life. With Fran's health history, it is crucial that she have enough annual leave time to get her vested. She has 16 days of her own but is in need of 19 more days in order to get to the end of the school year. Other employees of the Guilford County School System may donate annual leave days to Fran. We know there are several employees of Guilford County Schools within our congregation and we hope each of you will

- seriously consider donating one or two annual leave days to Fran, and
- consider other colleagues you have that may be willing to give annual leave days as well.

The process for donating annual leave time is quite simple: the form that needs to be completed is available from Beth Hoagland (bethhoagland@bellsouth.net or 558-3582) or the church office (you may request that it be faxed or e-mailed as well).

It is imperative that the original form be completed and given to Beth by April 29 at the latest. Please **do not submit a form to Human Resources** or through your school. Fran must keep track of the days submitted (HR will not keep track) and submit these forms all together to the Guilford County Human Resources office.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact Beth, or Fran or Ann at 294-0171. Thanks so much for your prayers and support!

Church Women United May Friendship Day 2008

On Saturday, May 3rd, St. Stephen UCC, 1000 Gorrell Street, will host the final meeting of the program year. The theme of this celebration is "Plant a Seed of Hospitality – Reap Bouquets of Friendship."

After registration at 10:00 am, there will be a period of Bible study. The program of celebration will begin at 11:00 and will be followed by a fellowship luncheon. Please call Brenda James (297-0554) by April 23rd to make your reservation. The \$6 cost may be paid when you register that morning. The ladies of St. Stephen will provide childcare for this meeting.



For more than fifty years, May Friendship Day has included the dedication of the "Fellowship of the Least Coin" offering. This is a world-wide partnership of women who spend time in prayer for peace, justice and reconciliation. Throughout the year, the least coin of their country's currency is set aside for each prayer as a token of their participation. The monies collected are distributed to women's and children's health and literacy projects on all continents. The participants believe that prayer, as it circles the globe, can transcend borders, create unity, and demonstrate the ecumenical solidarity of every participant without regard to nationality, race, culture, denomination, education or economic status.

All are invited to take this opportunity to visit another UCC church and join in fellowship with women from other congregations.

If you have questions or need transportation, call Eileen Stirling (852-0170).



Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Congregational United Church of Christ
400 West Radiance Drive
Greensboro, NC 27403

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GREENSBORO, NC
PERMIT NO. 44



The newsletter is available online. If you like this option and **PROMISE YOU WILL READ IT**, we will stop mailing you the newsletter and you can save us some money and save the world some paper. We will send you an e-mail letting you know when the newsletter is available along with a link to take you to it directly.

To date, forty-eight households have requested to be removed.

Grief and the Journey of Life

As we travel through life we will experience loss. Sometimes it is expected and sometimes it is not. Sometimes we can process the experience and move and on and sometimes we have a harder time. Often we watch those we love go through grief and don't know what to do or say.

Come and learn about the stages of grief and some of the signs of "grief burnout." These are signs that the ability to process what one has experienced is starting to become a burden.

Come learn ways to identify what one may be feeling, ways one can take care of themselves, and when it is time to speak to someone about what is happening.

No matter where you are, you are welcome. Feelings are not facts, just signs about what may be going on in our lives. If you know someone experiencing grief, come and share thoughts and ideas with others.

Jack Register, our facilitator, is a licensed Clinical Social Worker in North Carolina.

