

## New Series

### A Public Dialogue About Belief – One Essay at a Time

We are beginning a new, multi-faceted program this winter, based on the NPR series, *This I Believe*. The radio series first aired in the '50's, hosted by Edward R. Murrow. In 2005, the series was brought back to life, and each Monday, public radio stations across the country air an original three-minute essay written and delivered by a vast array of contributors, from the famous to the unknown. With each segment, the author offers a personal account of what has come to matter in his or her life and why. Not an expounding of official dogma, but a description of the core values that guide people's lives. The goal is not to convince others to believe a certain way; rather it is "to encourage Americans to begin the much more difficult task of developing respect for and reaching deeper understanding of beliefs different from our own."



We will host our own *This I Believe* series in several ways in the hopes of involving as many in our congregation as possible. First, our **Supper Study on January 21st** will offer an introduction of the series, sharing a few essays from the radio program, and giving folks an initial "taste" of how to write one's

own story. Second, in the coming weeks, **all in the congregation will be invited to write** their own brief essay. Guidelines and helpful hints will be included in the next newsletter. During Lent, we will invite a willing participant each week to share their essay in worship. We will also publish some on the website and in the newsletter.

Third, there will be a **small group** which focuses on this as well. The group will meet for four Thursday evenings, beginning February 5, at 7:00 pm. This group will be designed especially for those who are wrestling with their beliefs, who want to clarify their core values, rather than those who have it all figured out! (*If there are those who would be interested in a daytime group as well, please let Julie know.*)

We believe this will be a fun, stimulating, and rewarding endeavor, and we hope everyone will choose to participate, at whatever level will work for you. Not only can it be of great benefit to the individual to reflect upon their most basic beliefs, this can also be an enriching effort for our congregation, as we share our faith together, learn from one another, and come to a deeper appreciation of each one's journey.

*Find more information on This I Believe at [www.thisibelieve.org](http://www.thisibelieve.org). There you can listen to or read many of the essays that have been heard on NPR.*



**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](http://www.congregationalucc.com/about/visitors.php).

#### Our Next Newsletter

Deadline: Friday, Jan. 16  
Publication: Wednesday, Jan. 21

News and events can be sent to [office@congregationalucc.com](mailto:office@congregationalucc.com).

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

#### Lectionary Readings

##### January 11, 2009

Genesis 1:1-5  
Psalm 29  
Acts 19:1-7  
Mark 1:4-11

##### January 18, 2009

I Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20)  
Ps. 139:1-6, 13-18  
I Corinthians 6:12-20  
John 1:43-51



# Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Home Visits: Thursdays

**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 . . .

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## From the Pastor

# And The New Year Begins . . .



What a beautiful season we have just completed – how did it go by so fast? As I re-pack our nativity scenes and strings of lights,

there are things I refuse to put away as we set off into 2009:

- I refuse to put away the heightened spiritual awareness that our holy-days cultivate. There is such depth in the stories, scripture readings, and reflections of the special liturgical seasons like Advent and Christmas. While it may be harder to find the spiritual beauty and inspiration during the “ordinary” seasons, it is always worth the search.
- I refuse to give up my hope for peace. Even though it seems as times that armed conflict, particularly in the Middle East, appears to be the only option, I remain convinced there are other peace-making, justice-growing, less destructive ways to mitigate conflict.
- I refuse to put away my hope that 2009 will be better than 2008. Even though the news coming from many quarters is grim, I firmly believe that much good will emerge. That is based not so much on an election or a hunch or simple relief that 2008 is over. It is based on faith in God and in wise and compassionate men and women who, with God's help, will always find ways to bring good out of hardship.
- I refuse to put away the joy I have felt this season, from beautiful music, amazing conversations, time with family and friends. Even the dark days of winter

cannot take that away. Starting the year off with a deep sense of gratitude keeps me mindful of how very blessed we all are.

Those are a few of my refusals. As for what I am especially looking forward to in this new year:

- I am looking forward to even more great music!
- I am looking forward to welcoming new members, lots of children continuing to come down front for the children's message, all of us worshipping together.
- I am looking forward to a new series, which you can read about in this newsletter. In short, I am looking forward to another amazing, challenging, blessings-filled year with all of you.

So what do you refuse to put away? What are you looking forward to?

—Julie Peeples



### Keep in Your Prayers ...

Sue Blanton (friend of Charlie & Debra Hertlein), Lauren Brower, Evelyn Chamberlain, Sunny Covington, Bob Crews (Cathy Wheeler's father), The Dollyhigh Family, Jessica Ellisor (Teresa Earle's niece), Irene Fenn, Kaye Gardiner (Midge Rasey's daughter), The Guerra Family, Beth Haunton (Lorie Tyson's friend), Paul Huffines, The Lamberts, Virginia Stricklen, Ruthann Wenger, H. O. Williams

## 2009 Summer Work Trip, Supper Study & More



I have begun the planning for a summer work trip for 2009. I have two weeks in mind, either August 2-8 or 9-15. Guilford

County Schools believes the first day of school will be August 25, and the first day for teachers will be August 19. So, I am seeking from you two things: would you be interested in a trip to New Orleans, and would you prefer one week over the other. —Paul Davis



### Green Update

A gentle reminder that the Green Team continues to collect office paper (like used bulletins), spent batteries, empty ink jet cartridges spent ink cartridges (these are turned in for either cash or store credit, so the church actually profits from this!), and compact fluorescent bulbs that no longer work. In addition, the church makes active use of the City's recycling program for cardboard (brown boxes), glass, #1 and #2 plastics, metal containers, and paperboard (gray or white boxes). In fact, just since October, we've since recycled over 100 pounds of office paper!

The world joins with us in thanking you for recycling!



### Missed a Worship Service?

We have CD recordings available for our worship services. If you would like one, please contact the office. If you are not able to come to worship regularly, this is a fine way to keep in touch.

### Book Group

The next meeting of our Book Group will be on Sunday, February 1st. (*Please note date change.*) We will read *The Shack*, by William Young. Several people in our congregation have read this thought-provoking book, and I encourage them to join our regular participants for the conversation. We meet in the Parlor, around 12:30 pm. Bring a lunch.



### Upcoming Supper Study Programs

We will continue to meet at 6:00 pm on the first and third Wednesdays, except when noted. The cost for the

meal remains \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. Reservations must be received by Tuesday noon, and can be made via e-mail or phone or by filling out your request on the pew pads in worship.

### January 21: "This I Believe"

Come hear some fascinating essays from the NPR radio series, and have the opportunity to reflect in creative ways on our own journeys of faith. See the article on page one of this issue of the newsletter for further information. Supper will be chicken pot pie, rolls, salad, fresh fruit, and dessert.

### February 4: Update from Israel

Terry Moore-Painter and Julie Peebles will share pictures, stories, and impressions from their recent interfaith trip to Israel. Supper will be covered dish.

### February 18: Update on the Economy

Bob Williams will lead us through some of the aspects of our changing economy.



Jo Hiebert reading the Tommy DePaolo story, "The Clown of God." Julie is showing our children the beautiful illustrations.

## The Dawn of 2009 in Darfur, Higher Ground & More

January 1, 2009 brought no change to Darfur. The genocide continues. Nevertheless, there are some reasons for hope. The Obama administration has made it clear that it will not repeat the failures of the Clinton and Bush administrations in addressing forcefully the genocides in Rwanda and Darfur. For this reason *New York Times* columnist and long time Darfur advocate, Nicholas Kristof maintains that 2009 is the time for a meaningful change in Darfur. He points out that "...Sudan fears the Obama administration, and now for the first time in years, there's a real chance of ousting President Bashir and ending his murderous regime."

What can we do to hasten the end to this genocide? One important step is to let President-Elect Obama know that we support and expect action on Darfur. We can join people of faith around the country in making our voices heard. On January 18<sup>th</sup> we will have the opportunity to send our message of concern. Following the service, post cards will be available to send our message. The card reads: "Dear Mr. President. As a candidate you promised 'unstinting resolve' to end the genocide in Darfur. I urge you to keep this promise by making Darfur a priority from day one of your term...." For those individuals who would like to complete the cards in the Fellowship Hall following church, *Darfur Action* will pay the postage and mail them.

*Darfur Action* is exploring the most effective ways of responding to the on-going humanitarian needs of refugees in Darfur and neighboring Chad. In the future we will provide suggestions for responding to those needs. With the dawn of a new year and a new administration in Washington, it feels right to focus our initial effort

on encouraging political action.

Prognosticators present a bleak picture for 2009 on several fronts, particularly the economic. Let us work and pray that it is not a bleak year for those in Darfur. Let us work and pray that the dawning of 2010 sees no genocide.

*Ralph Wenger  
Darfur Action*



### **Weaver House Meal**

On Thursday, December 11th, our congregation had the responsibility of providing the evening meal for the residents of the Weaver House of Greensboro Urban Ministry, plus some fifty refugees from the frigid streets who had come into the building as part of the Winter Emergency Program.

There was a ready response of volunteers, some of whom were unable to come due to various health situations of members of their families. Seventeen of our membership – from ages 3 to 81 – enjoyed working together to serve some of God's people, and attempt to brighten their lives some. Working together were: Harold Ashworth, Lesley Barker, Cynthia Brewer, Margaret Byrd, Mike Dorko, Jay, Jenny and Jude Grayer,

Clif Karnes, Chip, Nancy Jo, Camille and Isaac Prairie, Karl Schleunes, Winnie and Bill Smith, and Barbara Whitener. Mike Dorko also recruited his colleague, Ken Gibson, who brought along his daughter, Conner.

We enjoyed working together, were happy to observe positive responses as we served the meal, and felt we had done some Christmas Season good for others.



### **Lunch for Higher Ground**

Our next opportunity to serve is Tuesday, January 27th. Food donations and volunteers are welcome. Please have food at the church by 10:45 am on that Tuesday, or you may bring your donation directly to Higher Ground by 11:45 am. Please join us!



### **You Bring 'Em, I'll Take 'Em!**

Dear Fellow CUCC Members and Friends,

Our donation to Greensboro Urban Ministry this week was great — 120 pounds! With only a couple of weeks plus Christmas Eve, we've donated many times more than the past few months.

Thanks for your steady efforts to help feed Greensboro. I promise I'll keep driving the cans over if you keep bringing them in to church. Let's keep up the effort into 2009.

—Katherine Rowe

# Lay Readers Needed

Our coordinators, Robin Dorko and Charlie Hertlein, are searching for additional individuals to enlarge our pool of lay readers. If you have an interest in serving, but are a bit hesitant, some assistance can be provided to help you become familiar and comfortable with the task. If you feel called to help, please contact Charlie at 852-1133 or edebs31350@aol.com.



## CUCC Business

### Volunteers

#### January 11

Lay Reader: Ralph Wenger  
 Toddler Nursery: Jon & Marie Nance  
 Coffee Hour: Barbara Hollifield

#### January 18

Lay Reader: TBA  
 Toddler Nursery: Becky Fleischer & Sunny Covington  
 Coffee Hour: Becky & Jo Fleischer

#### January Ushers

Joann Myrick, Sticky Burch, Clyde Humphrey, Mike Dorko

### Financial Reports

Weekly Income	12/21/08	12/28/08
Pledged Offering	\$7480.00	\$2,177.00
Unpledged Offering	1,549.00	2,183.72
Second Mile	2,500.00	---
Use of Church	120.00	93.00
Poinsettias	90.00	18.00
Christmas Fund	650.00	1,477.30
Book Sale	94.00	---
Miscellaneous	144.55	185.45
Mobile Meals	---	100.00
Prepaid 2009 Pledge	---	1,503.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,722.55</b>	<b>\$7,737.47</b>

### Budget Income/Expense Summary

	12/1-12/28	Year-to-Date
Income	\$33,735.89	\$338,220.96
Expense	39,708.13	324,252.15
Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$5,972.24)	\$13,968.81

\$262,448

### Boards and Council To Meet January 13

Our boards and Church Council will meet on Tuesday, January 13th, rather than the usual fourth Tuesday of the month. **All out-going and new members are asked to attend!!** We gather at 6:45 pm for prayer, the boards meet at 7:00, and the council at 8:15.

### Annual Report Deadline: Tuesday, January 13

The Annual Meeting will be Sunday, January 25th at 9:00 am.

### A Note About Parking

We are once again marking off several parking spaces on the west side of the church on Sunday mornings (the parking lot is the east side), designating them as handicapped parking spaces. Please help us reserve these spaces for those who need easier access into the building. Thanks!!

### In Case Of Bad Weather

If by some chance we happen to get snow or ice this winter, our church's policy is that we will not cancel Sunday morning worship. **We urge everyone to use caution and sound judgment** in deciding whether or not to attend. Some of us live close by, and we promise to pray on behalf of all! This is simpler than everyone staying glued to television announcements for closings. For weekday activities, we will have a recorded message on the church answering machine, and also notices on the website, concerning cancellations, and will otherwise get the word out as best as is humanly possible.

### Year-End Financial Matters

There is still time for you to turn in your 2008 financial gifts, but you must act quickly! Make sure your check is dated for 2008, and make sure you have it in the office by Sunday the 11th. Year-end giving statements will be ready on Sunday the 18th.

Pledge cards for 2009 are still coming in. We have met 87.6% of our goal so far. We look forward to hearing from you soon. One piece of great news is that we have 17 new pledges for 2009!

Weekly offering envelopes for 2009 may be picked up in the Fellowship Hall. As we try to trim where we can, envelopes have been ordered only for those who have indicated that they desire them. Anyone who gives will continue to have an account number, and giving statements will be available for all.

We have plenty of envelope boxes available, so if you find that you weren't assigned a box and would like one, please see Pam Aldridge. Children seem to enjoy using the pew envelopes, so special Children's envelopes were not ordered this year. However, they are invited to request a regular box if desired.

It is a great help to the Financial Secretary when weekly Sunday morning offerings are placed in these envelopes.

To show us graphically where we stand with pledges and income, we have turned our usual column line into a picture. We are making good progress, so together let's pledge the 2009 budget and run this line off the page!

\$ 0

# A Time for Reflection, New Nurse's Hours



The end of the year is a good time for reflection. The beginning of the new year is a good time for setting goals. I like doing both.

It has been my tradition to review my journal entries for the past year on New Year's Eve. It is a sacred time. Among many things, I reflected about how blessed I am to be a part of Congregational. I remember my first week, three years ago. I was oriented to Fun Club. I thought I must be just about the luckiest nurse alive to be here, in this moment, with these people, serving the God I love so much.

Those feelings have only gotten stronger as these brief three years have gone by. I thank you for being a part of my church family. Thank you for opening your hearts, allowing me to journey with you.

### New Nurse's Hours!

I will be available in the office on Wednesdays from 2:00 pm until 4:00 pm. Please come by and see me! Services available: Blood pressure check, health care counseling, glucose testing (blood sugar), vision screening, weight and fat analysis, resources galore and warm hugs!

Remember, I am available in my office on the last Sunday of every month from 9:45 to 10:45 am.



Julie at our 11:00 pm Christmas Eve Service.

Need a speaker for your class or group? I am available! Please give me a call.

You may reach me through the church office or call me at 549-8814.

Shalom,  
—Charlotte



### Blankets-Blankets-Blankets!

This month, the women's morning circle will meet on Monday, January 19th at 10:30 am (note date change due to the presidential inauguration on Tuesday morning). Remember to bring a sandwich! The evening circle will meet at their regular time on Tuesday, January 20th at 7:00 pm. An offering for the Church World Service Blanket program will be taken at each meeting.



### Church Women United: Annual Meeting

All are welcome to join with women from other congregations as we meet on Friday, January 16th at Abbotswood, 3504 Flint Street, Greensboro. The program will begin at 10:00 am with registration. After a time of devotions and the annual business meeting, our guest speaker will be the Reverend Mark Sills, Executive Director of FaithAction International House, who will share

with us the latest information about the projects in Greensboro on which his organization is working.

A fellowship luncheon will follow the morning's program. The cost will be \$7. You must make your reservation by January 9th. To do this, call Babs Gordon, 454-4277, between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. Church Women United requests that you confirm your registration by mailing your check, made payable to "CWU-Greensboro," to its treasurer, Babs Gordon, 114 Sagewood Road, Jamestown, NC, 27282 by January 9, 2009. You will receive your luncheon ticket the day of the meeting when you register.

Come! Begin 2009 by attending this ecumenical gathering and meeting women from other churches who are interested in working together to promote a peaceful and just society.

Please call Eileen Stirling, 852-0170, if you have questions, and to arrange transportation (as parking is limited at Abbotswood).

Those attending are asked to bring non-perishable items for Greensboro Urban Ministry's food bank. Thank you!



The Handbell Choir in the balcony on Christmas Eve, with Clif Karnes accompanying. The bells are on a special rack that allows them to be played with special mallets.

Community Resources

# Support, Training, Enrichment



## Between The Trapeze Bars

### Spiritual Support Group for Times of Transition

Six Thursdays Beginning  
January 29th • 7:30-9:00 pm

The space between letting go of one trapeze bar and grabbing on to the next is a dark void demanding a leap of faith. The transition zone between “the past is gone” and “the future is not yet here” can be disorienting, confusing, frightening. Our inclination is to move through it as quickly as possible. Yet spiritual wisdom teaches that the chaos following external change is fertile ground for internal change and transformation, if we can just hang out long enough.

This class will provide a community of support for those in any kind of transition. Using scripture, music, and personal story, we will search together for images of hope to sustain us in the wilderness while awaiting new life, which often begins in the dark. Material will be presented from *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes* by William Bridges and *The Seasons of a Restless Heart: A Spiritual Companion for Living in Transition* by Debra Farrington.

Group Facilitator:  
Marion McCollum, Ed.D.  
Psychologist, educator, spiritual director (336-274-4669)

Group Location:  
Center for Psychotherapy  
912 N. Elm St., Greensboro

Make checks (\$90) payable to Servant Leadership School of Greensboro and mail to 215 West Fisher Avenue, Greensboro, NC 27401. To register by credit card call 275-0447 or go online to [www.servantleadergreensboro.com](http://www.servantleadergreensboro.com)



## Women's Resource Center Winter Classes

### Moving on After Being Laid Off

Part 1: Tuesday, January 20th  
Part 2: Thursday, January 22nd  
5:30 - 7:00 pm

Are you a part of millions in this country who have been laid off as a result of the current economic downturn? If so, join Career and Life Coach Midge Spong this January to take charge of your future. To register, call 275-6090.

**New Choices: Strategies for Success Pre-Employment Program**  
February 9 through February 27  
Classes will be held every  
Monday, Wednesday & Friday  
9:30 am - 2:30 pm

This is a 40-hour program that offers pre-employment training. Upon completion, participants may qualify for educational stipends that can be used towards programs that help upgrade marketable skills such as: GTCC's Quick Jobs, Computer Training, etc.

This program is designed for those who have been dependent on the income of another but are no longer supported by that income due to divorce, separation, the death or the lay off of that person. They are unemployed or underemployed, and are experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.

Workshops include: Self-esteem, Transferable Skills, Networking, Budgeting, Identifying Career Goals and Resume Building.

A High school diploma or GED is required and attendance is required at all sessions.

For more information and to register, call Susan Ball (275-6090, ext.223).



## FaithAction International House: Foreign Language Classes

**Intermediate Spanish**  
Mondays, January 5 – March 23  
7:00 – 8:30 pm

Students who have completed beginning Spanish class will continue to build on the basics of Spanish grammar. Teacher: Maria Ardila

**Beginning Mandarin**  
Tuesdays, January 6 – March 24  
6:30 – 8:00 pm

The class is an introduction to beginning Mandarin Chinese for adults. Teacher: Hui-Jung Hsieh

**Beginning Arabic II**  
Thursdays, January 8 – March 26  
4:30 – 6:00 pm

The class is a continuation of the Beginning Arabic class. Teacher: Dr. Shadia Mahmoud

All classes are \$50 (includes cost of materials). To register, contact Rebecca Burrell at 379-0037, ext. 1#, or [Rebecca@faihouse.org](mailto:Rebecca@faihouse.org).



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## Among Our Members

### **Winnie Smith Class Honors Clif Karnes**

The Winnie Smith Class has a history of wonderful teachers, a tradition started by the class namesake, Winnie Smith. The group currently is led by the very devoted Clif Karnes. Clif spends countless hours reading and preparing for our lessons and the class is very thankful for his leadership.

In gratitude for all he does for our class and for the church, the group collected \$150 to donate to Santa's Elves in his honor. Thank you, Clif, for the many ways you serve our church.

### **A Note of Thanks**

The Muskovin family would like to thank everyone for all the Christmas and Birthday cards sent to Millie. The family threw a 90th birthday party at her nursing home. Millie enjoyed opening all the cards and they brought back lots of good memories for her.

This past year has been rough for Millie as her physical health continues to fail, but she loves her "apartment" and most of the aides and nurses. She lives very close to family and enjoys their frequent visits. Millie's new mailing address is 6441 Glenmont Drive, Hamilton, OH, 45011.



At the 5:00 pm Christmas Eve service, we traditionally gather in a candlelit circle for the benediction. We had so many people this year for the service that it required two photos!

