

A Dialogue On Personal Values, Civic Ideals & Core Beliefs

This I Believe

During the next two months, our congregation will participate in our own version of the National Public Radio (NPR) series, *This I Believe*. Like the radio series, we are encouraging all to write their own 350-500 word essay encapsulating their most basic belief, that which guides their life and most influences their actions. In addition, a small group will begin Thursday, February 5 at 7:00 pm for those wishing to explore their beliefs in a safe, supportive setting. The group will continue each Thursday in February. Then, on the Sundays of Lent, we will hear from a few members in the congregation willing to share their essays.

If you are interested in submitting your essay to NPR for consideration, there are instructions for doing so on their website, npr.org

We want all ages to participate, so parents, please encourage your children and youth! Depending on their ages, you might offer a variety of ways to do this: drawing a picture of what is most important to them,

writing or drawing the things that make them happiest, telling you what they think would help make the world a better place. At certain developmental stages, thinking in abstract ways is beyond them; on the other hand, children can amaze us with their wisdom, thoughtfulness, honesty, and spiritual sensitivity.

So, start writing! Sometimes getting started is the hardest part. Here are a few ways to get the creative juices flowing: Consider a time in your life when your belief was tested or changed. Think about a person who profoundly influenced you. What event became a blessing in disguise? Start writing without censoring; edit later.

God is at work in astounding ways in each of us. By sharing our most basic, core beliefs, we can get to know each other better, and develop even deeper levels of understanding in our congregation and beyond. We are *en-couraging* each other; helping one another seek the ways God is at work in us all.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING YOUR ESSAY *(adapted from NPR)*

- Tell a story. Be specific. It can be heart-warming, gut-wrenching, or even funny, but should be *real*. It should tie into the essence of your daily life philosophy.
- Be brief. 350-500 words is about three minutes when read aloud at a natural pace.
- Name your belief. If you can't name it in a sentence or two, it might not be about belief. Rather than writing a list, focus on a core belief.
- Be positive. Tell what you believe, not what you don't believe. Avoid editorializing and passing judgment. Speak in the first person.
- Be personal. Write in a way that is comfortable for you to speak. Edit and simplify your words until your essay is a true reflection of you.
- Remember that we are focusing not on delineating tenets of faith or creeds or views of society, but rather on what strongly influences our way of being in the world – what makes you tick? Keeps you going? Brings you joy?



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, February 13
Publication: Wednesday, Feb. 18

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

February 8, 2009

Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
I Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

February 15, 2009

II Kings 5:1-14
Psalm 30
I Corinthians 9:24-27
Mark 1:40-45



Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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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

Great Meeting, New Adventure



Our annual meeting was a well-attended, very upbeat, informative gathering. Many thanks to all who prepared reports, presentations, and helped with the morning's activities. What an amazing witness to the faithful stewardship of this congregation, that even in troubled economic times we can end the year in the black and begin 2009 with a balanced budget! Times such as these clearly call for even greater stewardship of all resources and continued faithful giving. Through our giving, we help the increasing numbers in our community who are barely making it; our pledges keep our doors open and lights on for our own congregation and also help support the various non-profits that need the meeting space. Our financial commitment keeps the staff paid and impacts the vital efforts of agencies and institutions far beyond our walls. Our budget is a testimony of our faith.

As discussed and voted on at the meeting, we will soon be embarking on a new adventure: welcoming one of the local Montagnard congregations into our sanctuary on Sunday afternoons. This dedicated church has been meeting without adequate space for quite a while and they are most grateful for the opportunity to worship and hold classes here. There are a few details to finish working out, and we will keep everyone updated. In addition to the obvious benefit of receiving rent from the congregation, we can look forward to opportunities for shared learning, cross-cultural exchanges, and the simple joy of fostering new friendships.

As I write this I find myself at a loss for words. How can I express my gratitude for the open-heartedness, the generosity of our congregation? What a blessing it is to be part of a community of faith in which, when the going gets tough, the call to be faithful, to be Christ's hands and feet in this world, is not only met but exceeded.

—Julie Peeples



Our Condolences to the Muskovin Family

We have been informed that long time member, Millie Muskovin, passed away on Tuesday, February 3rd, in Ohio following a massive stroke. Funeral arrangements were pending at the time of publication, but her daughter, Marie, did share with us that memorials will be directed to CUCC.



Keep in Your Prayers ...

Sue Blanton (friend of Charlie & Debra Hertlein), Becky Borum, 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, The Family of Millie Muskovin, Virginia Stricklen, Ruthann Wenger, H. O. Williams

Work Trip, Book Group, Green Church Team



We are set for our summer work trip to New Orleans and will be there from August 9th to 16th. There will be an organizing meeting sometime

in March, though be in touch with Paul if you have questions before then. A \$50 check written to CUCC and given to me will reserve your space.
—Paul Davis



Book Group

The next meeting of the book group will be Sunday, March 8, when we will read *This I Believe: The Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women*. This book is a collection of essays drawn from the NPR series of the same name, and on which we are giving much attention this winter and spring. The essays are short (see page one of the newsletter), provocative, more like poems than essays in that they convey more than 300 words worth of typical prose. We'll suggest three to four essays that all of us read (in the next newsletter), and then invite you to discuss one or two others that strike you. Reading all of them would be just great too! There are two volumes – Volume 1 is in paperback, so we'll use that. It is available at the usual places, as well as from NPR.

This past Sunday, the group discussed *The Shack*. Paul will be in the Parlor fifteen minutes after worship this Sunday to continue that conversation with anyone interested in delving further into the book. So, even if you were not with us for the first go round, you are encouraged to join us this week.

Green Church Team: CF Bulbs

The Green Church Team gave out compact fluorescent (CF) bulbs at the Annual Meeting as a part of their "swag-bags," and several questions were raised about CF bulbs. Here are some answers.

Compact fluorescent bulbs are widely available, though their cost also varies widely. The bulbs we gave out came from Costco, and cost just over \$1 per bulb (purchased in packs of ten). One can pay as much as \$6-7 for the same bulb elsewhere. The big box stores often sell multipacks of bulbs that can save money. CF bulbs are sold in many types of wattage. They use just 25% of the energy of traditional bulbs, so to replace a 60 watt bulb, one would buy (or attend a cool church like ours and be given) a bulb that would use 13-15 watts. CF bulbs burn cooler than incandescents – good for hot summer days. They come in a variety of "flavors:" daylight, quick starting, natural light, etc. Each distinctive "flavor" adds to the price without adding much to the quality of light. CF bulbs take about a minute to fully warm up and they typically produce light that is "cooler" (more



blues and fewer reds). A bulb that is marked "Energy Star" typically will give a "warmer" light.

CF bulbs come in a variety of styles: the curious bent-tube shape, one that resembles a traditional round bulb, one that is shorter in length, a round decorator shape (like in our women's bathrooms), a candelabra style (dining rooms), floodlight, reflector bulb shape. etc. Again, anything distinctive in CF bulbs adds to their price — you, the buyer, must judge whether it is worth it. CF bulbs are also available with a 3-way option.

Most CF bulbs come with a warranty allowing you a free replacement if they burn out prematurely (keep the package and receipts). Finally, most CF bulbs do not work with dimmers (the bulbs can blow out the dimmer circuit so don't try it), but some new bulbs are marked "dimmable." Again, these are more expensive, but are good for helping you set "that mood."

CF bulbs should be recycled because they contain a small amount of mercury (less than an old thermometer but still ...). Many stores will accept them, or you can bring them to church and we'll recycle them properly for you.

Compact fluorescent bulbs are one technology that will make a big difference in our energy usage. We use them at church; we hope you will use them in your home.



Annual Meeting Report, Supper Study, Pastoral Relations



Our church's Annual Meeting was held on Sunday, January 25th. We had good attendance and folks were in good spirits. Beth Hoagland was elected to the At-Large position on Church Council. Julie named three Life Deacons: Henrietta Ingram, Lewis Duckworth and Austin Lane. The Green Church Team gave out "swag bags" to all, and made a brief presentation on their efforts. Clif & Sharon Karnes were recognized for their work with the church library.



Finally, Sankey Moore-Painter presented the year end financial reports for 2008 and the budget for 2009. We ended the year in a very strong position with a very nice surplus of \$21,000! Two-thirds of the surplus will go toward this year's income, while the remaining third will be used to reduce the amount of money we draw from our Invested Funds. The Budget Proposal for 2009 differed slightly from what we saw in December, in that some projected expenses were trimmed, a couple items were increased (more money for Missions, for Christian

Ed., and for our hourly staff); projected Regular Unpledged income, a figure based on the actual amount given the previous year, was increased. In all, Sankey proposed a balanced budget for 2009, and this was accepted enthusiastically. So we begin 2009 filled with hope and gratitude. Your generosity inspires us — thank you!



Supper Study: Feb. 18 Update on the Economy

Bob Williams and Kate Larson will lead us through some of the aspects of our changing economy. We will meet at 6:00 pm; 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. The menu will be lasagna, salad, bread, fruit, dessert and beverages.



Pastoral Relations

The church has two Pastoral Relations Committees, one for Julie and one for Paul. These committees give them advice and counsel, support and encouragement, based on what they see and hear, both from Julie or Paul and from members and friends of the congregation. They function year round, meeting two to three times a year.

Julie's committee consists of the Moderator (Kate Larson), the Chair of the Board of Deacons (Becky Fleischer), and a person Julie designates (Ken Sell). Paul's committee consists of the Chair of the Board of Christian Education

(Lynn Hamilton), the senior At-Large person on Church Council (Jeri Rowe), and a person Paul designates (Stephanie Shoaf). Feel free to speak with Julie or Paul, or members of either committee if you have questions, comments, concerns, or praise.



Boards & Council

The next meeting of our boards and council will be Tuesday, February 24th, beginning at 6:45 for a time of prayer. Boards meet at 7:00, council at 8:15.

CUCC Business

Volunteers

February 8

Lay Reader: Lorie Tyson
 Toddler Nursery: Sharon Harper and Susan Frye
 Coffee Hour: Beth Hoagland

February 15

Lay Reader: Clif Karnes
 Toddler Nursery: Tracie Cranford
 Coffee Hour: Jamie Anderson

February Ushers

Ed Driver, Charles Hertlein, Frank Kuester, Milton Shaw

Financial Reports

Weekly Income	01/18/09	01/25/09
Pledged Offering	\$4,874.00	2,772.00
Unpledged Offering	358.50	1,238.20
Supper Study	---	61.00
Book Sale	---	24.00
Total	\$5,232.50	\$4,218.20

Budget Income/Expense Summary

	January
Income	\$39,621.28
Expense	22,733.67
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$16,887.61

Vitamin C: The Unsung Hero



One of our least appreciated vitamins is good old vitamin C. It helps metabolize proteins into energy, boosts our immune system,

builds collagen in your skin, promotes healing and aids in joint repair. Vitamin C also keeps our arteries young and aids in the prevention of plaque buildup on blood vessel walls.

Vitamin C is an antioxidant that can protect against damage caused by harmful molecules called free radicals, as well as toxic chemicals and pollutants like cigarette smoke.

This vitamin is water soluble, so when cooking food items containing vitamin C, use as little water as possible. Foods that tend to be the highest source of vitamin C include green peppers, citrus fruits and juices, strawberries, tomatoes, broccoli, turnip greens and other leafy greens, sweet and white potatoes and cantaloupe. Other excellent sources include papaya, mango, watermelon, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, winter squash, red peppers, raspberries, blueberries, cranberries and pineapple.

Recommended amounts of vitamin C:

Infants and Children

0-6 months	40 mg/day
7-12 months	50 mg/day
1-3 years	15 mg/day
4-8 years	25 mg/day
9-13 years	45 mg/day

Adolescents (14-18 years)

Girls	65 mg/day
Boys	75 mg/day

Adults

Men	90 mg/day
Women	75 mg/day

Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding and those who smoke need higher amounts.

And you thought, vitamin C was just used to combat the common cold!

Stay Well!
—Charlotte

Sources:
National Health Ministries, Health E-News, December 2008
MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia



Concert

The Duke University Chorale, Rodney Wynkoop, director, will perform in concert Sunday, February 8, 2009, at 4:00 pm in the sanctuary of Alamance Presbyterian Church in Greensboro (4000 Presbyterian Road). This will be their only appearance outside of Durham, North Carolina except for their spring tour. The concert is free and open to the public. A love offering will be received. Call 697-0488, or don@alamancechurch.org, for more information.

Photo Memories

2009 Choir Celebration



Employment Workshop, Fear or Faith?

Re-Inventing Myself?

Where Do I Start?

Free Resume Workshop/Job Search/Interviewing Skills

**Congregational UCC
Tuesdays, 6:00 – 7:30 pm
Beginning February 10th**

- Take the fear out of the process.
- Update your resume, job search and interviewing skills with a workshop designed with you in mind.
- Sign up and you'll receive assistance in all three areas from an accredited Human Resource and Professional Recruiter.

Call the church office by February 8th to sign up.



Fear or Faith?

By Martin B. Copenhaver

Fear in small doses can be a good thing. Fear is what told our ancestors to run from predators and spurred them on to go faster than they could have otherwise. And many of us never would have studied for math tests unless we had been motivated, in part, by fear of what would happen if we did not. So sometimes, in the short run, fear can prompt us to do the right thing.

But hold onto fear long enough, or let it go unchecked, and

it can have a corrosive effect, weakening judgment and leading us to unwise actions. And now fear has gripped the financial markets, and many people around the globe, which only amplifies the problems in the world's economy.

Fear, at its core, is a faith issue. That's because, in many ways, fear is the opposite of faith.

That's why there are so many admonitions in the Bible to let go of fear. The psalms are full of such admonitions: "Fear not." In the New Testament, that is how the angels—God's messengers—announce themselves. It is their calling card: "Fear not!" Quite a number of times in the gospels Jesus says, "Fear not!" And when Jesus says, "Fear not!" it is always with a sense of urgency, as if there is a lot at stake.

In challenging times, we have a choice: we can turn to fear or to faith. And, obviously, our hearts can be a battleground between the two. So the question then becomes: Are we going to act on our fears or on our faith?

Fear not! They are words of comfort, to be sure, but they are also a call to faith—and thus, also a kind of rebuke, because we are so much more likely to live by our fears than by our faith. Fear not! Those are not just words of reassurance. They are also a call to faith. And these days, when sometimes our very souls seem riddled with fear, that call to faith could not be more urgent.

Martin Luther was a person of great faith, but he was also a person who struggled with anxiety, fear and depression. Once, when he was in a particularly anxious and fearful state, his wife started wearing black clothes, as if in mourning. When Luther questioned her about it, she replied, "Well, I could tell from your state of mind that, obviously, God is dead." She knew her hus-

band well. Sometimes even people of great faith still need a little reminder now and then: God is not dead and God will prevail.

Whenever I sing Martin Luther's majestic hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," I am always struck by the words of the last verse: "Let goods and kindred go, This mortal life also; the body they may kill; God's truth abideth still." Most of us are not prepared to say, "Let it go. Everything I have, everyone I care about, even my own life. Let it go. It's okay. Let it go." Indeed, the only way we can sing those words is if we have sung, really sung, from the depths of our souls, the words of the first three verses. That expression of radical trust is not sung in the first verse, could not be sung in the first verse. No, it can only be sung in the last verse, after the first three verses have affirmed that we dwell in God, that Jesus Christ stands with us—powerfully, eternally. So, in the words of the hymn, "we will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us."

There are, after all, two forms of reassurance. One is to say that nothing bad can happen. But who can claim that? The other form of reassurance is to say, come what may, we can hold fast to the love of God, the perfect love that Jesus says has the power to cast out all fear, the love that will not let us go. It is that form of reassurance that is found in Luther's hymn. It is the very essence of the Gospel.

About the Author

Martin B. Copenhaver is Senior Pastor, Wellesley Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Wellesley, Massachusetts, and the author of *To Begin at the Beginning: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*.

Our Life Together, Helping Children Cope with Violence

In the last newsletter we suggested how the church offers activities in five basic areas of life, five areas that are essential to a well-rounded, and well-lived life. These broad areas, Worship, Connect, Learn, Serve, and Give, provide a way to examine our lives, to see where we might grow, to see how we might change.

Being a Christian is a process few people really get right (that is why we have God's grace). We try, we seek, we hope we do what Jesus would have us do. But we live our lives in relationship with and in response to what we find in our world, and that alone is ever changing. This year is different from last year, and certainly different from 10 years ago, and you are a different person from who you were then. How do you express your faith now? We can exercise, we can eat less, we can watch less tv (although Saving Grace is a fascinating program...), we can spend more time doing, what? How about serving others? Our church is involved with a host of programs that helps others. Buy an extra can of food or give an extra hour, you'll benefit, they'll benefit, and Jesus will smile. Next time, connect with others.



Helping Children Cope with Violent Events

From LFS Carolinas

Your children may never be the victim of a violent act, but they will hear about or see violence on television, in the news or even at their school.

Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas recommends the following principles to keep in mind as you decide how to best help your children cope with violence in their world:

Find out what children know and are thinking about violence by asking, "What have you heard or seen?"

Children model their reaction after their parents, so deal with them in a calm and reassuring way, maintain your normal routine. You could say, "I don't know what will happen, but I know we'll be able to handle it."

Listen to your children as they share their fears and sadness, affirm their feelings, and share your own sadness or fear. Reassure them that they are safe and that parents and others are taking steps to ensure safety. You could say, "I understand how you could feel that way."

Limit children's exposure to TV coverage. "You can watch TV for 30 minutes but I need to see what you're watching." Limit news coverage of violence.

Take concrete, active, helpful steps like: pray together; write letters to the president, local soldiers; victims, and their families, donate supplies/money to helping agencies.

Be aware that changes in sleeping, eating or mood may be signs of difficulty coping with traumatic events and that these may occur weeks and even months later. If these problems persist beyond a week or two you may want to consider professional help.

When life's challenges are overwhelming and cause crises in the lives of individuals and families, many come to LFS for help. Counseling centers provide

individual, marital, and family counseling by state-certified therapists. As well as workshops for congregations and community groups on a variety of topics that can be customized to meet their needs. For more information call 1-800-HELPING today.



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.



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, fifty-six households have requested to receive it online.



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Notes of Appreciation

Betty and Mac Mackenzie thank you for the cards and your thoughts and prayers following the death of Betty's brother, Ray Tatum, on January 21st.



Dear Friends of Greensboro Urban Ministry,

How wonderful it is to have friends like you folks to help us! Thank you so much for your food donation of 47 pounds, that truly is life blood to Greensboro Urban Ministry. This is awesome, so important to us at this time, as the need for food continues to escalate. We can never express how much we appreciate your coming to our aid

and the aid of the community with your gift! You folks are so faithful to help us – we are so grateful.

Your support of Greensboro Urban Ministry and its programs is vital to us as we continue to provide “pathways of hope in time of need.” Our organization is directly involved with community services, including the soliciting and distribution of food, clothes, shelters for the homeless, and all aspects of help to the less fortunate in our area – those who are down on the luck or those who have permanent or semi-permanent needs and problems. The help you have given will allow us to give something extra to those in need. WE are thankful there are so many caring individuals who remember

the less fortunate, and want you to know that gifts such as the one given are so important in our efforts to help the needy, the elderly, the sick, and children of the community who are dependent on this agency for assistance.

A heartfelt thank you and our prayer for a blessed and prosperous new year!

Sincerely,
Pat Spain, Food Distribution Director, GUM

