

# WANDERINGS

*A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose*

## *Redlands United Church of Christ An Open and Affirming Church*

November 2004

Staff Meeting, 11:30 a.m., Monday, November 1

Funtastic Festi-Fall Conference Youth Event, Friday, November 5 & Saturday November 6

Communion Sunday - Worship Service 10:30 a.m., Sunday, November 7

Wider Ministries Area meeting after worship, Sunday, November 7

Morris Cantley's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration, Sunday, November 7<sup>th</sup> after worship

The Buchanan Shepherd Group will meet at the home of Mary Belle Carter  
Sunday, November 7, 5:30 p.m.

"Begin Your Week ... Praying for Peace"  
Every Monday Evening in our sanctuary 7:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Celebration Ringers Rehearsal on Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.  
Jubilee Ringers Rehearsal on Sundays, 11:45 a.m.

Covenant Choir Rehearsal on Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.

Church Board will meet Tuesday, November 9, 7:00 p.m.

Health Ministries Committee workshop, Sunday, November 14, 12:15 – 2:00 p.m.

R.U.C.C. Women's Fellowship will meet at 9:30 a.m. at the home of  
Rosemary Whitmer, Wednesday, November 17

Middle school youth group (grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) will meet November 7, & 21, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.  
and 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 14 & 28

High school youth group (grades 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>) will meet November 7 & 21, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.  
and 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. on Sunday November 14 & 28



From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*“...And God said, ‘It is good...It is very good.’”*

*--paraphrased from Genesis 1*

This past weekend during the magnificent 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary ‘Art, For Heaven’s Sake!’ I found myself looking around numerous times and quoting the divine: “It is good...It is very good!” Everywhere the eye rested, there was evidence of ongoing creativity between creator and created. The artwork, the garden flowers and lawn, the greetings of old friends and new, the music, the organization, the many, many volunteers—all of these were incredible indications that the creative spirit is alive and well.

Creation didn’t just stop after the Genesis stories. God didn’t cease participating in the creative process with us humans. Rather, God continually invites us to join in the wild exuberance of creation! Art Show weekend has become, for me, an amazing reminder of that divine invitation. Now that the work of the weekend has passed, I invite you to muse with me about many reasons to love the Art Show:

- it provides a rich opportunity for the wider community—over 1300 this year—to know us and to see us in action
- we have a chance to do what we do well—take responsibility, complete tasks, offer our particular gifts for the good of the whole, and do it all with mostly good humor!
- an array of fine art comes to the Redlands area in one accessible place, nestled in the natural beauty of the outdoors
- it makes spectacular use of our buildings and grounds
- each of us is reminded of the amazing creativity that surrounds us
- we can work together for the good of the whole
- The Art Show is a “Win-Win-Win”—good for the artists, good for the community, good for the church!

Many, many thanks to each of you who worked, trimmed, pulled weeds, planted, organized, moved furniture, cleaned, phoned, typed, photocopied, cooked, baked, served, poured, sang, played instruments, strung wires, hooked up lights, and prayed for the success of this community ministry—you are awesome!

Blessings,



## *Covenants: Blessing and Bane*

By Sharon R. Graff

Since I began serving as your Pastor and Teacher in April 2002 and even during my initial conversations with the Search Committee, the topic of “covenant” has been the center of many lively discussions! My rather unscientific research with members and friends of Redlands United Church of Christ has netted a diversity of opinion about the form of covenant (no surprise!) as well as a remarkable agreement on the function of covenant.

The comments that follow represent the diversity of opinion about our process of covenanting derived from several pastoral conversations with over 60 people who are members and friends of RUCC:

- writing a covenant, however long or short, however complicated or simple, is an effective way of clarifying one’s own thoughts and beliefs, and therefore should be required (unless one is physically or mentally unable so to do)
- it is not necessary for covenants to be in writing (covenants may be expressed verbally or artistically, such as through painting, music, etc.)
- from the founding pastor onward, it has been the norm for covenants to be written; however, each pastor has also received verbal covenants from those who were opposed to writing their covenant
- making a written commitment is too binding, too concrete, and appears inflexible
- the whole covenant process needs to be thrown out; it inhibits the growth of RUCC; we must be open to alternative forms of expressing membership
- the annual covenant may be expressed to the shepherd leader
- the annual covenant is to be conveyed only to the senior minister

By contrast to these divergent and sometimes contradictory opinions, the most repeated shared understandings I have heard are that:

- Covenanting is an essential part of the life and ministry of RUCC because it both creates and nurtures in members a deeper, unique level of commitment.
- The annual practice and discipline of covenanting holds us together as community; it gives us a way of annually assessing and reaffirming our relationship with one another and our relationship with the divine.
- The common practice of putting a covenant in writing has been suspended through the years both for those physically or mentally unable to complete a written covenant, and for those who just do not want to commit their covenant to writing. Most, but not all, people with whom I’ve talked agree that this flexibility is a positive reflection of our general flexibility on most matters of faith and practice.

I heartily concur with each of these shared understandings, and I want to add one of my own. Written covenant statements—of whatever length—provide me with invaluable information that helps me be a more effective pastor for you. I can better serve you by knowing something of your growth, struggles, hopes, and needs, and together we can better serve the God we love. From a practical standpoint, my own preference is for our annual covenants to be in writing. Those who, for a variety of reasons, cannot or do not wish to write their covenant, are welcome to talk confidentially with me about their intended commitments, and I will take notes that they can sign. Pragmatically, such a written document makes it possible to plan a budget, to select leaders,

to create an accurate and informational membership directory, and to pastorally interpret the direction of the church body.

In addition to these rather practical matters of “running the church”, I believe that there is great spiritual value in written covenants. In writing an annual covenant (of whatever length or content) and in the thoughts, prayers, and quiet reflections that precede such writing, a person participates in important spiritual disciplines that provide creative and dynamic ways of learning about oneself in relationship to this particular faith community and to God. For those reasons, I join you in writing an annual covenant.

Though the 29 years of this congregation’s life has not brought agreement on a specific form of the covenant, there is widespread agreement that our annual covenanting functions to make this faith community stronger, more cohesive, and more committed to God and to one another.

November is the month for covenant writing. Your covenant form is available from your shepherd leader. If you are not in a shepherd group, and want to covenant, please contact Becky in the church office and a form will be mailed to you. Please complete your covenant form prayerfully. Bring it with you to worship on Sunday, December 5—Covenant Sunday—and we will bless the covenants on the altar. And remember my office is open for any conversation you wish or need about covenanting.

\* \* \* \* \*

***Morris Cantley is 100 years young...***

***and we are honoring him!***

Sunday, November 7

Reception after worship service  
with a few surprises!

\* \* \* \* \*

Citizens Action for Peace (CAP), a Redlands-based organization dedicated to peace is now meeting in our facility each month. Ordinarily they will meet the first Sunday of each month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in the Sunday School area to watch and discuss a video related to peace. All in our congregation are invited to join them! For more information, you may call Sharon Swan at 794-0607. The group’s monthly newsletter is also available (for free!) on our Awareness Table in the Gathering Area. **We want to thank these new guests for the gift of a large-screen television with built-in DVD and video players—this equipment is available for any church group to use—THANKS CAP!**

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Youth Meetings are now happening EACH SUNDAY! 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders meet with Youth Director, Craig Colclough, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in the Youth Room. 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders meet with Craig from 7:00-9:00 p.m. On the first Sunday of each month, the younger group will meet earlier (12:30-2:30 p.m.) to accommodate those who travel a distance to be here. Any questions? Call Craig at the church office—793-3520. All are welcome every Sunday!

**Sundays with the Body  
November 2004**

The last strides of the political campaign (thankfully!) and the beginning of the holiday season mark the bookends of this month. Liturgically in November we move from Saints to King Christ to the anticipation of a baby in a manger bed. Quite a range! Your body and soul are invited to join with others in our community of faith as we both celebrate the present and anticipate the gift.

November 7 - "Saint Blessing" – Communion Sunday

*Hebrews 12:1-2, 12-14; Luke 6:20-31*

Here a saint, there a saint, everywhere are saints...and today is the day to honor them. One of our newest "saints"—seminary intern Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo—will be offering us her very first sermon, and we saints will be blessed! This is also the morning when we join with hundreds of other UCC congregations to unveil and explore the national media campaign, "God is still speaking." It involves a comma and an intriguing quote from Gracie Allen.

November 14 – "Covenant Soles"

*Isaiah 65:17-25; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; Luke 21:5-19*

Every year we talk about covenants. Every year we contemplate what (or if) we will write. Every year, when the process is over, we just may feel a little closer to our biblical brothers and sisters who played the first covenant game with God. Today we'll consider the soles—and souls—of our covenants here at RUCC.

November 21 – Guest Speaker, Rev. Hal Jackson

*Jeremiah 23:1-6; Psalm 46; Colossians 1:11-20; Luke 23:33-43*

Our friend, who retired from ministry with the Mentone Congregational Church, The Rev. Hal Jackson will be offering the morning meditation. Hal will be addressing the theme of Christ the King—guaranteed to inspire and provoke your thinking.

November 28 is the First Sunday of Advent, and will be included in the December newsletter...stay tuned...the holidays are upon us!

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**LIGHTEN UP AT ADVENT**

Busy holidays are ahead. Join the Health Ministries Committee on November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004 12:15 to 2:00 p.m. in Covenant Hall for a fun lunch and workshop emphasizing wholeness of body, mind, and spirit during Advent.

**EXPECT:**    Snack Lunch  
                  Relaxation  
                  Stress reduction  
                  New ideas

**BRING:**     Your appetite  
                  A big towel if you want to relax on the floor  
                  Your best ideas for the holidays  
                  An open mind

Listen for more details and look for sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

My best friend and I do not agree on all issues. This is probably true of all friends but where I and C. S. Lewis disagree bothers me. I do not feel that any war is justified. During World War II, C. S. Lewis was asked to regularly address the British people on the radio to help raise their morale. It was during these talks that he came out publicly in favor of the war with Germany and Italy. When I was growing up there were often movies on television which showed how good the U. S. military was and how bad the enemies were. Even the show "The Three Stooges" showed the enemies to be evil.

Recently the book club I am in had two selections by James Brady. The first, *Flags of Our Fathers*, was about his father and the other five soldiers who raised the flag on Mount Suribachi (Iwo Jima). Mr. Brady had known that his father was in the war and that he had been one of the flag raisers but that was about all. After his father's death he was looking for his will when he found a box with his father's medals and other war memorabilia. His father never shared stories about the war with his wife or children and would not accept calls from reporters for interviews. Mr. Brady became very curious about the events in which his father had been involved. He sought out the families and friends of the other five men who raised the flag and surviving commanders. He wrote about the many atrocities the Japanese committed but also balanced them with a good side of the Japanese people he had come to know while living in Japan.

The second book by Mr. Brady, *Flyboys*, is focused on the air war in the Pacific during World War II. The first quarter of the book gives a brief history of the hundred years leading up to Pearl Harbor. It does not give the U. S. a picture of being a perfect and caring nation nor does it show British, European, and Japan as shining examples either. During the war many atrocities were committed by all sides, even the U. S. The war could not be won without soldiers and civilians being killed.

The only answer I have to war is to love one another. It is hard to love your enemy when they are trying to kill you or your family, or when you feel they are wrong and you are right. War has been part of humankind life for centuries and will still continue but if each one of us tries love and not war, then maybe some day war will be history.

Eric Naftzger

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*Minister – Rev. Dr. Sharon R. Graff*  
*Choir Director – Peggy McMeans*  
*Organist & Handbell Director – Kristen Cameron*  
*Youth Director – Craig Colclough*  
*Seminary Intern – Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo*  
*Administrative Assistant – Rebecca Gutierrez*  
*Sunday Child Care – Mariana and Mina Ryan*  
*Custodian – Jay Grayson*  
*Church office hours: 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Monday - Friday*  
*Wanderings is published monthly by R.U.C.C.*

## **HELP INCREASE OUR COMMUNITY**

Here's a very worthwhile goal for each of us in 2004: Bring at least one new guest to our church. Let them discover how much we have to offer!

Church Growth Committee

### **FFLAG MEETING**

Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (FFLAG) meet on the first Wednesday of every month at the First United Methodist Church on the corner of Cajon and Olive at 7:30 p.m. Mary Belle Carter represents RUCC. For more information please contact Mary Belle at 795-6369.

### **BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC**

Blood Pressure Clinic will be Sunday, November 28<sup>th</sup> following the worship service. Come in for a check up before you have your coffee. The blood pressure clinic will be held in Covenant Hall.

### **NOVEMBER WORSHIP LEADERS**

- 7 Michael Dewey
- 14 TBA
- 21 Sarah Fiske-Phillips
- 28 Sandy Peavler and Family

### **RUCC WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

RUCC Women's Fellowship will meet at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, November 17, at the home of Rosemary Whitmer, 823 Robinhood Lane.

### **NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

- 1 Janet Greenfield
- 5 Morris Cantley
- 10 Duncan Campbell
- 12 Jill Kirchner
- 16 Carole Wesson
- 23 Luther Austin-Brecher
- 26 William Badgley

## **FEASTINGS**

It is time to add RUCC's special holiday tradition to your calendar! The Covenant Choir and Handbell Choir will present their annual Feastings event on Fri. December 10 at 7:00 PM. This is a time for you to sit back and be served an elegant meal, be entertained by the choir and musicians, and revel in the spirit and music of the Christmas season.

This year our evening will return to a theme of Our Favorite Christmas Carols: Part II. Two years ago we heard stories behind some of the carols we've sung every Christmas season and that have become such a part of our celebration. Now we will learn about others as well as offering a reprise of everyone's favorite, Silent Night. The choir will be accompanied by several instrumentalists, and our evening will feature readings, skits, and a chance for you to sing along.

Our dinner will be prepared by a favorite local caterer and served to you by our choir members. The menu offered will be that most favorite of elegant meals, a sumptuous traditional turkey dinner. We will gather at the Wassail Bowl at 7:00 PM, then will be seated and served at 7:30.

Tickets are priced at \$20.00 for adults and \$10.00 for children 10 and under, and a portion of any proceeds will be donated to help local needy families. Tickets are available and may be purchased after church on Sundays, Nov. 14, 21, 28 and Dec. 5. Reservations may also be made with Becky during office hours through Dec. 6. Childcare will be provided if needed--please specify when making reservations. Join us for this festive occasion!

### **SHEPHERD GROUP MEETING**

The Buchanan Shepherd Group will meet on Sunday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 p.m. at the home of Mary Belle Carter, 9534 Sharon Way, Calimesa, 795-6369. It will be a salad potluck.

## RUCC YOUTH GROUP

We are rapidly approaching our first full month of weekly meetings! I am really excited, as I thought our meetings last week went really well. In all sincerity, Amanda and I think that each of you are awesome. Sounds a little corny, but we are serious: you're cool! It is going to be an odd month for me schedule-wise, so here is a little calendar to help you keep track of which days are at which times.

### November 7

Middle school: 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

High school: 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

We will start work on the Christmas Pageant.

Bring your ideas!

### November 14

Middle school: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

High school: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

### November 21

Middle school: 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

High school: 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

### November 28

Middle school: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

High school: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

*Always feel free to bring a friend!*

-- Craig Colclough, Youth Director

## HAPPY THANKSGIVING FROM THE RUCC STAFF



## 56<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL PILGRIM PLACE FESTIVAL

Friday & Saturday, November 12 & 13, 2004  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

FREE ADMISSION

660 Avery Road, Claremont, CA

Pilgrim Place is an active community of retired church professionals. Originated in 1948, the annual Festival features the crafts, talents and activities of residents who work year-round to prepare for the two-day celebration.

This community-wide effort is undertaken on behalf of the missionaries and clergy living here who were called to careers in service to others...and who now require additional assistance to meet their monthly needs. For more information call (909) 621-9581.

### DIRECTORY UPDATES

Craig and Amanda Colclough  
1400 Barton Road # 2714  
Redlands, CA 92373  
(909) 792-2417

Cindi Donald  
246 E. Fern Avenue # 210  
Redlands, CA 92373  
(909) 793-1462

Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo  
5958 Los Arcos Way  
Buena Park, CA 90620  
(714) 220-2836

Kathleen and Zachary Fox  
1000 Pine Avenue # 188  
Redlands, CA 92373  
(909) 335-0188

Dana, Jennifer, and Kire Hawley-Zechlin  
215 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S.  
Baxter, TN 38544  
(931) 858-6535

Maryann Stanson  
1429 Magnolia Avenue  
Redlands, CA 92373  
(909) 793-2720

**Dear Sharon and Church Family (and I use the term "family" purposefully),**

We miss you all terribly and think and pray for you often. Leaving the church was indeed the hardest part of our move and your kindness and generosity only made our good-byes more difficult.

Life in Tennessee is really agreeing with all three of us. The beauty of our world is really highlighted here, it's much easier to see the hand of God in our surroundings. We never realized just how gorgeous Autumn is. We have over 10 different trees in our yard, among them Oaks, Maples, Black Walnut, Hickory, and Apple. Almost all of them are huge and old, reaching way beyond the roofline of our two story house. They are ablaze in a magnificent symphony of color right now and I have caught Kire on a couple of occasions out twirling around as the leaves floated down around her leaving a crunchy carpet at her feet.

Dana is working for our County School District and enjoys the fact that work is only a block and a half away. Kire continues to homeschool and has just been cast in our local Children's Theater's production of "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever". Dana and I recently became Girl Scout leaders for Kire's troop so we are meeting some girls and their parents and having a good time with that.

We were having trouble finding a church here, maybe it's just that nothing seemed to measure up to what we had with all of you! We were just thinking of trying the Nashville area where we knew we would probably find something, but wondered how committed we would be able to be having to drive an hour to get there. Well there is hope on the horizon... At Kire's audition we noticed a woman wearing a United Church Of Christ-Cookeville T-Shirt! After talking to her, we found out they are a new congregation and they recently wrote their mission statement and decided to pursue becoming an Open and Affirming church! Yes folks, sometimes God uses a Hanes Beefy T to speak to his children. We are very excited and will be there on Sunday. Our only hope is that this place holds half the warmth, love, and spirituality that we found with you all!

Well, I am going to end this letter for now. I want to make sure that it is short enough to be read in service or printed in the bulletin because there's not one among you that this letter is not intended for. Continue to be the beacon of light to the Inland Empire that you are and know that you all will forever be in our hearts and souls.

Jennifer Hawley-Zechlin and Family

### **November Scripture Readings**

November 7:       *Hebrews 12: 1-2, 12-14; Luke 6: 20-31*

November 14:     *Isaiah 65:17-25; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; Luke 21: 5-19*

November 21:     *Jeremiah 23: 1-6; Psalm 46; Colossians 1: 11-20; Luke 23: 33-43*

November 28 is the First Sunday of Advent, and will be included in the December newsletter.

### **BEGIN YOUR WEEK PRAYING FOR PEACE**

Our sanctuary is open each Monday evening from 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. for quiet prayer and meditation. Please join in the hope and faith that our nonviolent and consistent actions will help to change the direction of many governments from their tendency toward retribution and vengeance towards working for more peaceful solutions. All ages are welcome. For more information, please contact Sharon Graff.



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