

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

January 2005

Communion Sunday - Worship Service 10:30 a.m., Sunday, January 9

Lenten Worship Services Planning Meeting, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 9

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, January 11, 7:00 p.m.

R.U.C.C. Women's Fellowship will meet at RUCC
9:30 a.m., Wednesday, January 19

Middle school youth group (grades 6th-8th) will meet January 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30
(check bulletin for times)

High school youth group (grades 9th-12th) will meet January 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30
(check bulletin for times)

RUCC Annual Meeting and Luncheon
Sunday, January 23, following worship service



From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*“...This has been a good season!”
--one of the saints of Redlands United Church of Christ*

Words spoken to me by one of our saints on the last Sunday of December, and accompanied by misty eyes and a grateful tone. I had to agree! This Advent season just passed has been incredible in so many ways. Thanks to a number of factors, we have experienced:

- record worship attendance (average 122 for each of the 5 Advent services, with an all time high of 170 folks on Christmas Sunday!)
- an amazingly creative and relevant youth Christmas pageant—bringing our spirits, our senses of humor, and our intellects delicious food for the season
- opportunities for each of us to assist others in unanticipated ways to bring programs to life
- scenes of inspiring candlelight
- and, most importantly, a strong affirmation that our inclusive message is magnetic—with 17 new friends coming forward with their first covenants on Covenant Sunday!

Each of these majestic moments, and the host of other less obvious indications of grace, have brought great joy to our body! These magnetic and majestic moments have been filled with the Spirit’s presence, and I believe that the credit is for all of us to share. We each have contributed to the welcoming spirit of this congregation. We each have offered our gifts—leadership, planning, setting tables, cleaning up, singing, ringing, reading, creating, writing, acting, directing, or, if you were one of the three little angels in the pageant: looking very cute! We each have embodied this congregation’s inclusive message with integrity in our words and actions, and in so doing, we are becoming RUCC’s best commercials.

Our congregation has also been the grateful recipient of many factors contributing to the joy of this season just passed. Beginning with the completion of the beautiful and flexible sanctuary three years ago, and continuing more recently with our involvement in the national election, the national UCC advertising campaign, and redesigning our congregation’s website (same address, new look: www.uccredlands.org) – we are revealing a beauty of spirit that is truly magnetic to others. In other words, we are in the process of building our welcoming community—a process that continues as long as life’s journey.

As one year ends and another begins, I am acutely aware that our church is not a “one person show.” The Apostle Paul was absolutely correct in using the human body as a metaphor illustrating the community of faith. Not everyone is an arm or an eye or a brain or a heart. But someone here at Redlands United Church of Christ is each of those and more. And together, we are one body, continuing our journey in hope, in love, in compassion, and, thankfully, in playfulness! Bring on 2005!

Blessings,



Sundays with the Body
January 2005

By Sharon R. Graff

In most of our calendars, January is the first month and often means a new beginning of ongoing projects. For our teachers, it is the continuation of work begun before the extended holiday break. For the retired, January may bring travel to warmer climes. For children and youth, it is a time to enjoy the treasures unwrapped on Christmas morning. Each of us may approach the month of January with new hopes and renewed energy for the road ahead. In the church calendar, January is an in-between time. It encompasses the very short season of Christmastide and moves us in and through much of Epiphany. Advent-Christmas completed, and Lent-Easter not yet present, January offers us time, precious time. You are invited to use some of that precious time to gather with fellow-travelers in worship. See you on the road!

January 2 – Dave Childress, Guest Speaker

Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:1-18

Today, we welcome Claremont School of Theology student, Dave Childress to the pulpit. Dave is a third-year Master of Divinity student, and a certified lay preacher in the United Methodist Church.

January 9 – “No Fainting Here!” – Communion Sunday (note change of communion date)

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17

Isaiah speaks of “a chosen servant”—Jesus? You? Me? Some unnamed BCE king?—who will not faint or be crushed, but will work and work and work to establish justice in the earth. Sounds like a huge task for any one person...and so it is. But together, nourished by bread and cup, sustained by prayer, and holding on to one another, we will not faint. And as did Jesus in the story of his baptism, we just might hear the Spirit of God saying to us, “Beloved!”

January 16 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday – Rev. John Walsh, preaching

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

Our friend and the Chaplain of the University of Redlands, The Rev. John Walsh, will bring the morning message on the theme of justice as proclaimed by Dr. King so many years ago. Come and sing the songs of freedom and be inspired by the hopefulness that accompanies us on the continuing journey.

January 23 – “Seen the Light Yet?”

Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23

We may joke with our closest friends about times they (or we) have missed the light, or have finally seen the light, or even times we didn’t have a clue that the light was even present! Isaiah, the psalmist, Paul, and the writer of Matthew all have something to say about light—come, explore, and let us become enlightened!

January 30 – “From the Margins” – Student Intern Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo, preaching

Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12

Once again we welcome our intern, Jeanne, to the pulpit. Jeanne will be speaking from Matthew’s version of the well-known beatitudes.

I look forward to experiencing with you the Spirit’s movement among us.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I sit here writing this report for the January Wanderings and Christmas has not come yet. I know that when you are reading this report you will already know what kind of Christmas season you had and the joys and relief that you experienced. But plans must go forth. At this time Covenants are being reviewed, the budget is starting to come together, and leaders and committees are forming. This annual process will not be completed until our Annual Meeting to be held January 23, 2005. Just as we prepared for Christmas during Advent we also prepare for the next year after Covenant Sunday. We know the probable outcome of both events, we just do not know the particular details.

I find that sometimes I become so concerned with planning and worrying about details that I miss the joys that all work can bring. What is more important is that I miss the Spirit that is often trying to lead and direct as well as inspire the good news in me and in others. To worry about where we are to put every one up for the night or who will take on the job of President is not the purpose of planning, but to rejoice that family and friends will be together and that a new leader will come forth.

One of the roles of President of the RUCC is to be a cheerleader, to show how well we are doing and to encourage others who may have doubts and concerns which come to all nonprofit volunteer organizations. This report is addressed more to me than to you the members of the RUCC. I will try to listen to my own advice, even as I get ready to write my Annual Report.

Eric Naftzger

ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING AND LUNCHEON SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 2005

Immediately following worship, all are invited to the lunch and congregational meeting. New officers, area leaders, and committee members will be introduced and voted into leadership. The 2005 budget will be presented for a vote. A special treat will be the introduction of all new covenanting members for 2005. All members and friends are welcome! Please RSVP to Becky in the church office at 793-3520.

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: 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Monday - Friday

Wanderings is published monthly by R.U.C.C.

PEACE ACCOMPLISHED!

Wouldn't that be an amazing headline? As you know, from reading the newsletters and/or bulletin announcements, since March 2004 our sanctuary has been open each Monday evening for thirty minutes of silent prayers for peace. Unfortunately, despite the most ardent praying of many folks over the span of these 10 months, world peace is still not a reality. Those most involved in these Monday evening prayer times have agreed to cease meeting on Monday evenings for the time being. The sanctuary may still be open from time to time, and in shorter spans and seasons, for quiet prayer and meditation. Please let Rev. Graff know when you would like such to resume.

YOUTH GROUP MEETS

Remember that our two youth groups—middle school and senior high—meet nearly every Sunday. For more information and specific times (which vary according to group needs and schedules) please call the church office and leave a message for Craig Colclough, Youth Director!

COVENANTS STILL BEING RECEIVED

Those who wish to complete covenants for 2005 are encouraged to do so soon! Planning for 2005 is happening now, and your covenanted participation is needed. Please contact your shepherd leader or Rev. Graff if you have questions or needs concerning covenants. Thanks!

BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC

Blood Pressure Clinic will be Sunday, January 2nd and January 30th, 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.

MENTORING A CONGREGATION

As a congregation, we are being enriched by our mentoring relationship with our seminary student, Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo. And though our official mentoring will end with the completion of Jeanne's academic year in May 2005, we will continue to pray for her as she travels her road of ministry.

Now, thanks to our Conference Minister Jane Heckles, we also have been asked to become mentors to an entire congregation...the Bloom in the Desert congregation located in Palm Springs. They are a group of about 35 faithful and creative folks, affiliated with the United Methodist Church, who have been together for two years and are seeking to expand their denominational relationships to include the United Church of Christ. To that end, our Church Board agreed to enter a one-year mentoring relationship with "Bloom." What exactly this means is yet to be created! It may include sharing several intentional conversations. It may include parties and social gatherings—five of their members, for example, joined us for Feastings in December.

Rev. Graff is looking for about 4 or 5 RUCC folk—can be new members, friends, or longtime members—to meet with a handful of people from "Bloom" to plan our mentoring events. If you have an interest in such work, please let Rev. Graff know ASAP—the year has begun and many parties and conversations are in waiting! Thanks.

JANUARY WORSHIP LEADERS

- 2 Jake McMeans & Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo
- 9 Lisa Dewey
- 16 Colleen Kintner
- 23 Galilee Glanville
- 30 Jim Cox and Mary Ann Stanson

A THANK YOU NOTE

A huge and grateful thank you to many of RUCC angels who once again show me, to paraphrase Clarence to George Bailey a bit, that “no one is *without hope* who has friends.” The choir members and many others rallied to make Feastings and Gingerbread house building very successful ventures. My shepherd group came forward with meals, and many of you have been of practical help, or have offered *genuinely* and I know would follow through. You seem to do this without question or thought of reciprocation.

A quieter and too often unspoken and assumed thank you to Phil, Hannah and Jake who stand by their mom/wife.

I truly wish a Happy New Year to us all.

-- Peggy

RUCC WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP

RUCC Women’s Fellowship will have their 2005 Planning Meeting in Covenant Hall on Wednesday, January 19, 2005, at 9:30 a.m.

LENT FOLLOWS CHRISTMAS...

Though our minds and spirits are cycling around Christmas, the calendar marches on towards Lent... and your creative juices are needed! Our intern Jeanne and I are inviting any who wish to join us in planning the worship services for the lenten season. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday (February 9) and concludes on Easter Sunday (March 27). Ponder, pray, think if you’d like to participate in this creative process. Our first meeting will be on Sunday, January 9th, from 12:30-2:00 p.m.

--Sharon Graff

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 (909) 795-6369.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Mahshid Ehteshami
- 12 Brad Beswick
Richard Blakley
- 13 Tammy Benz-Blumberg
- 23 Ty Schuiling
- 27 Elsie Badgley

THE GREATER L. A. PROCESS & FAITH CONNECTION

Invites you to hear Marjorie Suchocki, January 9, 2005, 7:00 p.m. at The Brea Congregational Church, UCC. Marjorie’s topic will be on prayer and the recommended book for preparation is her “In God’s Presence.”

OPEN AND AFFIRMING

“OPEN AND AFFIRMING”, does that include accepting atheist into RUCC membership?? I THINK THE ANSWER IS YES! What do you think??

-- Sheldon Montgomery

RUMMAGE SALE

The RUCC rummage sale is coming soon!! Mark your calendar...Saturday, March 5th. Start collecting things at home. Please **don’t** bring anything to church now!

***YOU FORMED MY INMOST BEING; YOU KNIT ME IN MY MOTHER'S WOMB.
Psalms 139:13***

“Cast on 57 stitches for size 13 needles or 63 for size 11. The pattern is K3, P3 every row, always beginning and ending with K3.” Does this language speak to you? Or do you wish this language spoke to you? If so, you might be interested in getting together with others who revel in the joy, the mystery, and the grace of knitting. Such a group is now beginning and will hold their first gathering this month. It will be a time to savor the beauty of this ancient art form, using the above pattern to create beautiful shawl-gifts for others. Best of all will be the opportunity to share personal stories and journeys. Please contact Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo for further details about day and time. She can be reached at 714-856-4589, jfavors@hotmail.com, or after worship services on Sundays.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

On December 5th eighteen new members were greeted by our congregation. Let us introduce you to some of these folk.

Maryann Stanson offered her covenant in the fall of 2004 but had not yet been publicly welcomed. We welcome her with the others. Maryann lives in our area and was looking for a church. One of her co-workers at ESRI, Jimmy Cox, told her about us. She has three boys, Chase, Brent and Sam who attend services with her. We did see Chase and Brent in the Youth Christmas program. Maryann cycles with her husband, hikes, runs, and joins in marathons. At ESRI she is an event planner.

Julie Philip walks through our neighborhood and walked the Labyrinth first. Julie is from Nebraska and has no family here, but was looking for a church family. Commercial Real Estate Loans is her job. Her hobby is wood working; small, large, and keeps learning, most recently dovetailing. Julie thinks our music here at RUCC is inspiring, spiritual and very enjoyable.

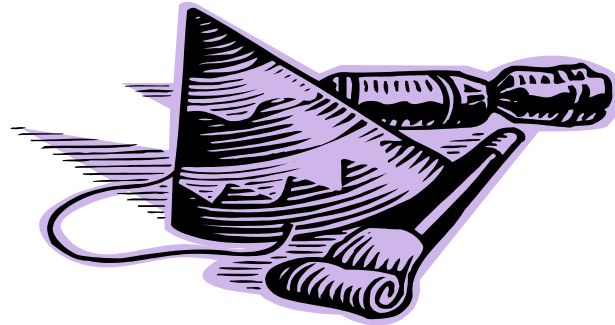
Cindi Donald was a member before and, in fact, was ordained at Redlands United Church of Christ in 1982. She went on to be a Psychiatric Counselor, Chaplain in hospitals and campus ministry. Eric and Val Naftzger have been her mentors and Sharon, our pastor, has been a great help to her. Cindi's interests are spiritual experiences, prayer dreams, meditation and small group study. Most of you should know of her Friday night Women's Group study of the book, "Something More".

Vern Jones travels from Hemet to join us. He is from Spokane, Washington. Vern has a Masters' degree in Speech Pathology and has worked for 35 years in private practice, hospitals, clinics and now schools. His interests are sports and travel. Music of most kinds and his love of animals (he has four cats) are a great part of his life. In his early years he had considered being a "Vet," and when he was in the Army in Seattle he saw this interesting building, which was a United Church of Christ and he entered. He had never heard of this church before. Since that time he has visited other UCC congregations. He found us on the internet and follows us on the Web. He likes our diverse congregation, the music and people.

January Scripture Readings

January 2: *Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:1-18*
January 9: *Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17*
January 16: *Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42*
January 23: *Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23*
January 30: *Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12*

***HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM THE RUCC STAFF***



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