

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

September 2005

The church office will be closed Monday, September 5th in observance of Labor Day.

The Covenant Choir will meet for practice Thursday, September 8th at 7:30 p.m.
in the sanctuary.

Celebration Ringers will resume practice Thursday, September 8th at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary.
Jubilee Ringers begin practice again on Sunday, September 18th, in the sanctuary following worship.

Confirmation classes will resume on Sunday, September 11th and 25th at 9:00 a.m.

“Lectio Prayer Group” meets Mondays, September 12, 19, and 26, 7:00 p.m., in the sanctuary.

Church Board will meet Tuesday, September 13th, 7:00 p.m.

FaithActs committee will meet at the home of Dianne Landeros,
Monday, September 19th, 7:00 p.m.

“Sandwich Group” meets Tuesday, September 20th, 12:00 noon
in the church office.

Women’s Fellowship will have a luncheon on Wednesday, September 21st,
at 11:00 a.m. in Covenant Hall.

Wider Ministries meeting following worship service, Sunday,
September 25th, 12:15 in the church office.

Middle school youth group and High school youth group will meet at various times in September.
Please check “The View” for times and places.

From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*“Jesus climbed a mountain and invited those he wanted with him.
They climbed together.
Jesus settled on them, and designated them apostles.
The plan was that they would be with him,
and he would send them out to proclaim the Word...”
—Mark 3:13-14*

Adding to the ministry staff is an event worthy of celebration!

Jesus knew he could not accomplish the work of God’s Spirit independently or in isolation. He gathered many around him—men, women, children, poor, wealthy, any who had faith or who needed faith—and those folk became a kind of “staff” for the ministry of healing and teaching. The Apostle Paul continued in the Jesus tradition, inviting leaders with special skills to organize, inspire, and motivate service among the growing flocks of believers. To my knowledge, there are no recorded instances of actual parties to welcome or to celebrate the staff growth in the early church, yet I can well imagine that additional hands brought with them a great relief and joy to those already involved in the work.

For the next year, I know that we will celebrate together the return of Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo to RUCC! Jeanne served so faithfully and lovingly as our Seminary Intern during the 2004-2005 academic year that when it was time to consider adding a staff person to lead our newly-formed parolee ministry, Jeanne’s was the first name that surfaced! We are delighted that she has agreed to rejoin the work here at RUCC in a new capacity as Associate Minister of Outreach Ministries.

This is a one-year position, in which Jeanne’s primary responsibilities will be to implement the directives and suggestions that many of you have made concerning the parolee transition ministry. Most of her work will be accomplished on one week day, and she will also join the congregation in worship one Sunday each month. Jeanne will also serve as the “point person” for any other outreach ministry ideas and/or programs. This means that she is the one we all look to for guidance in our outreach ministry, but she will not be in this alone. By adding this staff person, our Church Board is challenging each of us to rethink our own commitment to outreach ministry. I believe that our former congregation’s president, Jim Hester, stated this invitation best when he noted recently that RUCC has always had a plethora of people who were actively involved in many kinds of community ministry—i.e. tutoring, counseling center committees, social service volunteering, housing mentally ill people, library work, etc. But, Jim added, we are now moving into a new model—it is a model in which our whole congregation is working together toward a common purpose in outreach ministry.

As the first weeks of Jeanne’s new role with us take shape, I urge you to listen to the Spirit nudging you to help reflect God’s love to these sisters and brothers recently released from prison. Each of us, playing to our gifts, and with Jeanne’s capable and compassionate leadership, will bring this new ministry to life!

Blessings,

Sharon

“Worship God!” (Revelation 19:10)

By Sharon R. Graff
September 2005

Back to work...Back to school...Remember when September actually marked a distinct and new beginning? There is still quite a bit of the “coming home” feeling embodied here at RUCC, whether in September, or whenever someone who has been gone for awhile returns and is welcomed back with smiles and hugs. Such meetings are opportunities of the Spirit...I invite us to be present and attentive so that the joy of these returns is fully experienced.

September 4 - “To Gather” – Communion Sunday

Psalm 149; Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20

Scriptures invite us to gather—to gather in joy, with dancing, to sing and pray and learn and grow *in community*. Much of the journey of faith is mistakenly believed to be traveled in solitude...and while solitude certainly can and does infuse us with wisdom, it is *in community* that we are really urged to grow. Like that proverbial isolated ember that flickers and goes out, our lights shine just a bit brighter when reflected in the mirror of those who love us. Come to community...there will be food enough for all.

September 11 – “Forgiving Egyptians?”

Exodus 14:19-31; Matthew 18:21-35

So, forgiveness is all well and good, unless you are the weeping mother of an Egyptian soldier drowned because he followed orders to ride after those blasted Israelites. By looking with bifocal vision at that old desert story and at Jesus’ injunction to forgive seventy times seven, we shall see what might we learn from the ancients about getting along in our violent 21st century world community.

September 18 – “It’s Only Fair”

Exodus 16:2-15; Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45; Matthew 20:1-16

Biblical justice has many facets. Today, Jesus seems less concerned about keeping score than about keeping faith with God’s extravagant generosity. Where do you stand on the balance sheet?

September 25 – “God’s Time Cards”

Exodus 17:1-7; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32

Each of these three passages cleverly identifies various ways that God is at work in the world. Through the words of whining and complaining wanderers, through the actions of faithful and road-worn leadership, through the form of Christ and each who follow in his footsteps, God works and works and works, seemingly without pause. How in the world does God keep such a pace? We shall see.

I look forward to sharing these times of worship and celebration with you.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Interim President's Message

The past two months have given us a wonderful chance to learn more about Jesus, not only during Sunday morning worship, but in the informal setting of the Summer Series. We discovered that Jesus was indeed a powerful revolutionary in his time. His teachings and how they've been interpreted by biblical scholars challenge us today.

I hope you were able to benefit from the probing Summer Series discussions and enjoyed getting better acquainted with each other in addition to yielding to the delicious food. I know I did.

Bill Buchanan

To all of those who helped with our farewell party, to all those who attended, to all those who have supported us by kind words and gentle deeds over the time we have tried to complete our move – thank you! It has been an exciting, frustrating, and – on occasion – scary time. But, we now know that we will be leaving Redlands on Wednesday, September 14th.

Our thoughts and love will always be with this congregation, our spiritual home!

Love,

The Hesters

Getting to Know You.....By Betty Jacobs

It was summer, and he was in church sitting behind several choir members. We could tell he loved to sing. Several of us, including Peggy our choir director, met him and asked him if he would be interested in singing in the choir. Since then, John Drage has been a lively member of the bass section!

Born in San Bernardino, John was raised in Rialto with his mom and dad and two older brothers. He was a member of the Drama Club and acapella choir at Eisenhower High School. He carried on his interest in drama by winning a part in the Rialto Community Players performance of "1776." Recently he enjoyed playing three roles in the Redlands Footlighter's play, "Shadowlands." John is a human encyclopedia of knowledge of old movies and musical theater.

The working part of his life is spent as a Southern California Edison Co. customer service phone representative. When not working, John enjoys his home and cat, Gracie, and can be seen speedwalking in his neighborhood.

Calling Singers

With the coming of fall, and the renewal of many activities, the RUCC Covenant Choir season will begin as well. The choir members and I are looking forward to our official restart on Sunday, September 11th. If you enjoy singing, and are not already singing with us, we invite you to join us!

In addition to ministering with you each Sunday in the service, we will be presenting our two special programs in December and in the spring. We will also participate in a few community events as well, such as the city wide World Communion service on October 4th.

You may have noticed that our choir could benefit greatly from a few more male singers! But we welcome anyone, age fourteen or older, who would like to sing whether it is a commitment for the year, short term, or only for our special programs. The ability to read music is a definite advantage, but not required. We rehearse regularly on Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 9:15 p.m. and on Sunday mornings at 9:45. If you would like to try *us* out, please join us at our first rehearsal, September 8th at 7:30 p.m. We'll shorten it a bit for dessert, coffee, and fellowship afterwards. No strings, just come, have fun and we'll make music too! Please see or call Peggy McMeans (909) 798-1474, or email PGWMSing@aol.com if you are interested. And keep singing heartily in praise and thanks, whether from the choir or congregation!

FAITHACTS PROJECTS

FaithActs is busy this year on several old and some new projects. As you know, FaithActs is a steering committee developing projects about which we are passionate or about which YOU are passionate – passionate enough to commit your time and effort to. It is our hope that you will all participate in at least one project and put your faith into action – for the community, environment, or peace and justice.

Fair Trade Coffee, Tea, and Chocolate – We continue to sell these items at church and many of you are purchasing your fair trade items from us regularly. In so doing, you are supporting products grown in an environmentally friendly manner which do not use child labor and which pay directly to the farmers, thereby giving them a decent living wage. Please help us expand this effort by taking it to your work site (do you have a coffee club at work?) or to your clubs and organizations. See or call Chris Nicoloff if you have special needs or requests.

Parolee Transition – We have a parolee transition steering committee consisting of Dianne Landeros, Richard Blakley, Bettye Wheeler, Lashawn Lee and Jay Grayson; who have been working with the police department to develop this program. You will be receiving more in-depth information on this over the next few weeks as we seek to enlist you to help with hygiene kits, helping parolees establish identification, refurbishing bicycles, arranging a bus trip for children to visit their moms next May, and more.

Arctic drilling – It's not too late! Are you concerned about the plans to drill in the arctic? See or call Bob Barton to find out what you can do.

Help the homeless – I am a member of the Redlands Charitable Resource Coalition representing RUCC, FaithActs. This group is trying to find ways to assist homeless families in Redlands. See me, Dianne Landeros, if you are interested in helping.

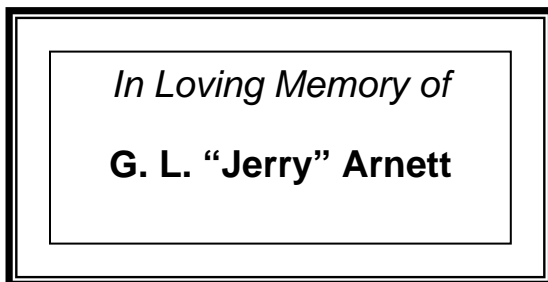
Dr. David Griffin at the University of Redlands

FaithActs is also co-sponsoring with the Office of the Chaplain, University of Redlands, the first in a Speaker Series, offered free of charge to the community with the intention of providing alternative perspectives on current issues of interest in order to open dialogue and enhance learning. First speaker will be Dr. David Ray Griffin, who will speak on "A Faithful Response to the 9/11 Commission's 571 Pages of Lies." Sunday, October 2, 2005, 4:00-6:00 p.m, The Orton Center, University of Redlands, 1200 Colton Avenue. For more information about this event, please check RUCC website www.uccredlands.org

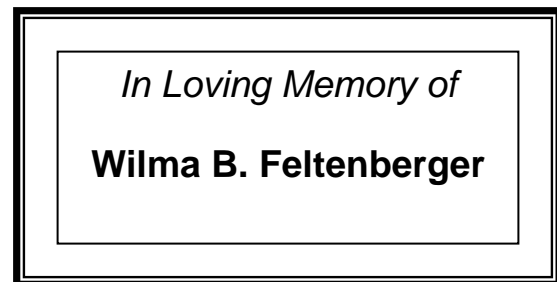
Dr. Griffin will speak to the issue of why the airliners were not intercepted on September 11, 2001, and address what he considers to be the implausible explanation provided by the 9/11 Commission's report. His analysis of the data provided by the Commission will be followed by his thoughtful suggestions directed especially toward people of faith who wish to respond. A one-hour lecture will be followed by a time for questions.

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP LEADERS

September 4th – Julie Phillip
 September 11th – Floyd Orr
 September 18th – Sandy Peavler
 September 25th – Loring Fiske-Phillips

**SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

1 Dee Hodson
 Diane Richardson
 2 Michael Dewey
 3 Ian Naftzger
 Katie Barton
 12 Steve Chapman
 16 Jo Dierdorf
 17 Wendy Naftzger
 19 Elizabeth Schuiling
 20 John Sweeney
 Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo
 23 Mary Belle Carter
 26 Sam Dickey
 Noah Dewey

**First Congregational Church of Rialto, UCC**

Celebrates 115 Years of Ministry
 on Sunday, September 11th, 2:00 pm
 625 North Eucalyptus Avenue, Rialto

*You are invited to join the congregation for their final worship service,
 marking the closing of this congregation’s ministry.*

From the I-10, take the Pepper Avenue exit, go north on Pepper, then turn left on Foothill.
 Turn right at the next signal onto Eucalyptus. Church is on the right, in the second block.

Celebrate UCC American Indian Congregations

Christianity doesn't come in clean," said Dr. Martin Brokenleg, professor of Native American Studies at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, S.D. Christianity was not Good News for most of the world's indigenous peoples because it entered their lives accompanied by government policies, military oppression, and education efforts to alter native beliefs and practices. Yet, God was still speaking.

In the United Church of Christ the mission stance transformed into "mission with" rather than "mission to" American Indian people. Ferment for self-determination bore fruit in the formation of the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM), in 1970. CAIM is self-governing through a Board of Directors composed of American Indian leaders in the UCC. One-third of all our contributions to the Neighbors in Need offering support ministries carried out by CAIM.

Today, American Indian Ministry Sunday celebrates the historic United Church of Christ ministry with and among native communities. UCC individuals and congregations are invited to intentionally remember and pray for the nineteen UCC congregations located on American Indian reservations, dating back to the 1870's, and one multi-tribe UCC congregation founded in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1980.

On the Standing Rock, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, Santee Sioux, and Fort Berthold Reservations, in the Ho Cak community near Black River Falls, Wisconsin, and in the urban Indian community in Minneapolis, these congregations and CAIM provide spiritual, community and personal nurture, engage in leadership development, work for American Indian justice, and serve the wider church. Thanks be to the still speaking God.



“Choosing Peace Near and Far”

A Public Lecture by Jim Wallis

Monday, September 19th, 7:30 pm

Claremont United Church of Christ
233 W. Harrison Avenue, Claremont

Jim Wallis, author of *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*, will be joined by musician colleague Ken Medema. Both Wallis and Medema have dedicated their lives and extensive talents to peace and justice ministries. Wallis has long been a Christian leader for social change, founder of Sojourners, author, and an international commentator on ethics and public life. Medema, who has been unable to see from birth, started to play the piano as a young child. He has worked in music therapy, and now uses his gift of improvisation to hear with his heart stories from people or themes from events or speeches and sings the stories back to audiences of all ages. This will be an evening that will delight your mind and your artistic senses!

*First Congregational Church of Long Beach announces the
Second Annual F. Louis Valla Lecture on
Progressive Religious Scholarship*

Saturday, September 24, 2005
9 am – 3 p.m.

First Congregational Church, 241 Cedar Avenue, Long Beach

Featuring
Dr. William McKinney
President and Professor of American Religion
Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA

How can we equip faith communities to play a vital role in public life? This question has driven Dr. McKinney's research and education efforts in Protestant churches for more than two decades, and continues to inform his work as President at PSR. In the morning presentation, Dr. McKinney will address "Where we are as mainline Protestants and how we got here" and the afternoon presentation will focus on "The choices facing progressive Christianity today."

Registration is \$20 (includes continental breakfast, lunch, and the two lectures).
Please register before September 20th by calling or emailing First Congregational Church:
562-436-2256, ext. 221; firstchurchlb@earthlink.net



**Art for Heaven's Sake!
Show and Sale - Help Needed!**

Can you spare some time October 14, 15, and/or 16? Would you like to meet new people, and greet old friends, and have some fun while you're at it? If so, the art show committee needs your help! Whether it's one hour or the whole weekend, you have a great opportunity to get involved in this wonderful church and community activity. Below you'll find the descriptions and approximate time commitments for the numerous tasks that must be done in order to continue to make this the premier art show in the Inland Empire. During the next few weeks, art show committee members will be asking for people to sign up for the various jobs listed below. Please consider saying "yes" when asked and you'll be sure to have an enjoyable experience!

Prior to the show

- * **Tasty Treats** - Tea cookies and hors d'oeuvres are needed for the Friday night gala reception. These can be made ahead of time and frozen or you can make them a day or two ahead. See Bonnie Kilpatrick for more information.

Friday, October 14

- * **General Set up Friday morning** - Help is needed to move furniture, set up temporary fencing, erect pop-up tents, string lights, put up banners and signs etc. Whether you can come for one or two hours or all day, **your help will be greatly appreciated!**
- * **Set up Artist's Lounge Friday morning** – We provide sandwiches and snacks for the artists on Friday night and coffee and snacks all weekend. Help is needed to prepare these sandwiches and snacks.
- * **Assist artists Friday afternoon** - Starting at 2:00 pm the artists begin setting up their exhibits. Many appreciate help with carrying things from their cars and it's a great way to meet the artists.
- * **Monitor the Artist's Lounge late Friday afternoon and early evening** – Help is needed to make sure the food and coffee for the artists is available.
- * **Serve food and drinks Friday evening** - Starting at 7:00 pm hors d'oeuvres, cookies, coffee and punch are served at the gala reception. Help is needed carrying trays of food throughout the show, filling the coffee pot and punch bowls, and serving coffee and punch. This is a great opportunity to mix with the artists and guests. This job can be done in shifts so if you only have an hour to spare its ok.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday

- * **Monitor the guest book and greet guests** – Greet guests and invite them to sign the guest book. This job is also done in shifts – volunteer for an hour or more.
- * **Cashier Friday, Saturday and Sunday** – If you're experienced with retail sales or good at handling monetary transactions, help is needed to cashier at the checkout table
- * **Breaks for artists Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday** – People are needed to sit at the artists' booths for short periods of time in order to give them breaks. You can sign up for one, two or more hours for this job.
- * **Monitor the Artist's Lounge Saturday and Sunday** – Help is needed to make sure the food and coffee for the artists is available.

Sunday Evening 5:00 pm

- * **Clean up!** – Clean up must be done quickly in order to get the church back in order for the Indonesian church service later this evening. Any and all help is greatly appreciated for helping artists carry their things, taking down the temporary fence and pop-ups, removing signs lights, moving furniture back in place, cleaning up the artist's lounge etc.

Also, for more information on the artists and pictures of last year's show, go to artforheavenssake.org. We have a wonderful website!

Choir Retreat
Saturday, October 8
10:00 – 2:00

All present and prospective members of the Covenant Choir – please join us for a few hours on Saturday as we look at, and sing (briefly), all we’re preparing for fall and Christmas. New members, or those interested, are welcome to this retreat to try us out; we’ll have lunch too!

Music Ministry Musings

As we begin a fresh fall season, those of us who provide the ministry of music are thinking about how we may make our worship music more meaningful, to participant and listener alike. Many of us have reflected in the last year on the UCC’s current campaign, *God is Still Speaking*. The denomination has taken a bold stand and committed itself to a wide distribution, while at the same time, issues of theology, and inclusion and affirmation of all believers have come to the forefront. In that light, we are aware more and more, that our music should reflect that effort, especially since the resulting response has affected the growth of our own local congregation. To that end, we hope you will note a change. We are being more intentional in our special music about consistency of inclusive language, and whenever possible, to present messages of progressive theology. When there are exceptions, for musical reasons, or to present a theological concept with historical, sacramental, or traditional seasonal implications, or because the poetry of the period in which the piece was written would be compromised if changed, the choir director will include a word of focus and explanation in the bulletin. Please look for these messages, and know that we as musicians and worshipers are striving to take our purpose of enhancing worship to heart, providing meaning, and an opportunity to let God speak and work through us.

Men of Redlands United Church of Christ:

Just a note to let you know we are in the process of creating a men’s fellowship group in church. We have some fresh ideas and would love for you to be a part of this. We are planning on meeting once a month, on a Sunday morning, here at the church from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00. We need to create a bond between members, other than the quick “hi” and “bye” and the recognition of a familiar face. The tentative date for our initial get together will be Sunday October 30, 2005. If you would like further information, please contact Vern Jones, Mike Moran, or Sheldon Montgomery.

September Scripture Readings

September 4: Communion Sunday – *Psalm 149; Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20*
 September 11: *Exodus 14:19-31; Matthew 18:21-35*
 September 18: *Exodus 16:2-15; Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45; Matthew 20:1-16*
 September 25: *Exodus 17:1-7; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32*

Minister – Rev. Dr. Sharon R. Graff
 Associate Minister of Outreach – Pastor Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo
 Choir Director – Peggy McMeans
 Youth Director – Craig Colclough
 Sunday Child Care – Mariana and Mina Ryan
 Administrative Assistant – Renee Chavez
 Custodian – Jay Grayson
 Church office hours: 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Monday – Friday
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