

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

April 2006

Communion Sunday - Worship Service 10:30 a.m., Sunday, April 2

R.U.C.C. Men's Fellowship, 8:30 a.m., Sunday, April 2

Lenten Soup Supper, Wednesday, April 5th
at 6:00 p.m. in Covenant Hall

The Easter Eggstravaganza, Saturday, April 8 at 10:00 a.m.

Church Board will meet Tuesday, April 11, 7:00 p.m.

The Sandwich Group will meet Tuesday, April 18, at 12:00 p.m.
in the Pastor's office.

Staff meeting, Friday, April 21, 12:00 p.m.

The All Church Retreat begins Friday, April 21, at Pilgrim Pines.

Shepherds will meet Tuesday, April 25, at 4:00 p.m. in the office.

Stewards will meet Tuesday, April 25, at 7:00 p.m.

Celebration Ringers Rehearsal on Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.

Jubilee Ringers Rehearsal on Sundays, 12:00 p.m.

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

Middle school and High school youth groups will meet at various times during April. Please check The View for dates and times.

From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*"There is so much to be thankful for!
The feeling of springtime in the air after the cold grayness of the winter season;
the drops of rain that take on new meaning.
They are not the dull accompaniment to a somber, gray sky and a relentless chill,
but bear the promise of new life and renewed energy to the rootlets and buds."
- Helen Keller*

In going through some of my parents' books recently, I came across a little volume entitled "The Faith of Helen Keller." Its 60+ pages illuminate a life lived in the shadows of blindness and deafness. Mark Twain once referred to Helen Keller as one of the two greatest women who ever lived; the other being Joan of Arc. Miss Keller's greatness, Twain argued, lay in her strong and enduring faith.

Born as the bright, energetic first child in her family, she "came, saw, and conquered" for the first 19 months of her life. Then conquest suddenly changed to defeat, as an undiagnosed disease resulted in young Helen being struck totally blind and deaf. For the next five years, Helen's world shrunk until she was trapped within herself, no longer able to communicate. It was then that her mother read about work being done by Dr. Alexander Graham Bell with people who could neither see nor hear. Meetings led to consultations, and eventually Dr. Bell arranged for Miss Anne Sullivan the miracle worker affectionately known as "Teacher" to meet the Keller family. Thus began a 50 year relationship with Helen as teacher, companion, friend, and pupil.

When I ponder the shadows we trudge through in our lives, including disappointments, discouragement, grief, doubt, disbelief, anger, etc., I can well-imagine that our road is little different than that of Miss Keller. For each individual's issues, struggles, and problems seem monumental to that person, especially when in the midst of the struggle. Did Miss Keller survive and thrive because of some kind of "Pollyanna Faith"? No, I don't think so. Helen Keller survived the shadows because she trusted that she was not alone. She accepted help from Teacher, and eventually from friends and associates. Helen Keller thrived to the point that she could enthusiastically write "There is so much to be thankful for" because she chose to live her life abundantly.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is quoted summarizing his entire ministry by saying, "I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly." Welcome to this springtime promise ~ Welcome to the new meaning that emerges ~ Welcome to new life and new energy ~ Welcome to the resurrection within you.

Blessings,



“Day by Day, they spent much time together in Worship...” Acts 2:46

—Sharon R. Graff

April 2 – “Paths of the Heart” – Communion Sunday

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

New covenants written, not on paper or tablets, but on veins and arteries and muscles...New hearts washed so clean that no further cleansing is needed...Old vessels (like grains of wheat) planted and sprouting new life. The season of Lent, though somber and reflective, offers also many warm and comforting heart-filled pathways. Come and walk on one or two.

April 9 – “Paths of Risk” – Palm Sunday

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Mark 11:1-11

Beginning outside on the patio (weather permitting), we will process into the sanctuary, singing and smiling, trusting that the Spirit has something to offer. And thus begins our risky journey with Christ through this week called “holy.”

Taize Service – Sunday, April 9 – 7:30 pm in our sanctuary

John 11:47-48, 53; 12:1-11; 12:20-28; 12:35-36

Music from the Taize community in France and passages from John’s gospel will guide us as we focus our thoughts and center our prayers. All are welcome!

Easter Sunrise – April 16 – 6:00 am in the RUCC Garden

With our friends from Mentone, and joined by others from congregations in San Bernardino and Rialto, we are invited to open our eyes together in the early morning light and see new life beaming! Come to the garden alone or with family and friends...and there you shall see and hear evidence of God’s new life in Christ through each one of us. Following the service, all are invited to enjoy Easter breakfast together in Covenant Hall.

April 16 – “Resurrection Sound Bytes at the Cross-Roads” – Easter Sunday – 10:30 am in the Sanctuary

Acts 10:34-43; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8

No one in the original Easter stories hesitates long at the open and empty tomb...and neither ought we. The tomb, and the empty cross before it, are a kind of crossroads—a place only to pause and to rest, and from which to move quickly and decisively on the adventurous pathway of faith. Come for the music, come for the prayers, come to hear the stories once again, come to pause for a moment or two and gain direction. More importantly, come to experience the new life, the resurrected life, which God has arranged especially for you!

April 23 – All Church Retreat at Pilgrim Pines – Worship on the Mountain at 10:00 a.m.

Even if you cannot attend the weekend retreat, you are urged to come up the mountain to Pilgrim Pines for worship on Sunday morning. Note the earlier 10:00 a.m. start! Meet in the church parking lot at 9:00 a.m. to carpool.

April 30 – “Continuing Resurrection”

Acts 3:12-19; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

The effects of the resurrection seem to go on and on and on in the life of the early church. Healings, appearances, joy, and love are just some of the continuing gifts emanating from that empty tomb. How does that resurrection power impact your life?

Worship will be richer and deeper with your presence. I especially look forward to sharing this Lenten season together.

Holy Week Services

To help you honor the sacredness of the week between Palm Sunday and Easter, we invite you to the following special services:

Palm Sunday, April 9, 10:30 a.m. – We'll meet on the outdoor patio and process into the sanctuary together, while singing and waving palms! A service of celebration, enthusiasm, and joy awaits.

Palm Sunday Eve, April 9, 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary – Taizé music with its repetitive chanting interspersed with readings from the Gospel of John invite you to ponder the meanings of Jesus' last week on earth. A quiet, meditative, prayer-full service for all ages.

Maundy Thursday, April 13, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. – Soup Supper and Tenebrae Service invite you to relive Jesus' last meal with his friends, his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, and his loneliness as he faced his inevitable death. A powerful prelude to the empty tomb of Easter Sunday.

Good Friday, April 14, The YMCA will hold its 47th Annual Good Friday Community Breakfast from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. at the First Congregational Church, 2 West Olive Ave., Redlands. The cost is \$5.00.

Tomb Saturday, April 15 – You are encouraged to spend a bit of time alone and/or in silence, pondering the movement from death to life.

Easter Sunday, April 16 – Sunrise Service at 6:00 a.m. in the Church Garden. A service fueled by joy and wonder, by hope and faith! We'll meet our friends from our sister-UCC churches from Mentone, Rialto, and San Bernardino, as we meet the Risen Christ walking among us...and we'll eat together a yummy breakfast here in Covenant Hall. All are invited!

Easter Sunday, April 16, 10:30 a.m. – Worship and Celebration of New Life. Once again, the wheel of the year turns, calling Jesus from the tomb and us from our lethargy to fully enter the new life God has prepared for us. Believe and enter it with great joy!

Easter Sunday, April 16, following worship service. Our traditional Easter Egg Hunt for all children and our annual "Scavenger-Hunt-Golden-Egg-Game" for our youth. Meet on the outdoor patio after worship to enjoy fun for all!



Getting to Know You...

By Betty Jacobs

A Celebration of Rich Blakley's 30 Years of Ministry

If I were to describe Rich Blakley's life with one word, it would be his name-RICH- not monetarily, but in lifestyle. We talked for an hour, but Wanderings is only a few pages, so I hope I can give you the essence of this amazing man.

Born in Phoenix as number three of four brothers, he was nurtured by caring, serving parents. In High School, Rich was a Student Court member, in Key Club, and probably a one-of-a-kind, four-year Latin student. At the U of R, his leadership skills continued as a student activist, and in Student Government where he was instrumental in reorganizing the entire system, a system which continues today. Dr. Jim Hester was his professor of New Testament studies. But the most important thing he did there was wooing, and marrying, Kathie.

He entered Claremont School of Theology with the intention of teaching New Testament, and Greek Studies. In 1972, in his second year of seminary, the First Congregational Church of Redlands hired him to be Youth Director at 10 hours a week. Ironically, he arrived the day the minister, Harry Suttner, died. As several members and interns filled in for the open pulpit, Rich's involvement increased spiritually and physically, and he eventually changed his original career intentions to that of parish ministry.

When Rev. Bruce Van Blair was hired at the Redlands Congregational Church, Rich, as a Claremont Intern, became the Assistant Minister, and, in 1975, the Associate Minister. At the Redlands First Congregational Church, when the vote that was to decide if the church was to join the national UCC failed, those of us who wished to be in the UCC denomination began to talk about our options. Minister Bruce van Blair, the Blakleys, the Hurleys, the Naftzgers, and others, presented an idea of how we could start a new church. The idea blossomed through word of mouth and many meetings. Under Rich and Bruce's leadership, the idea came to fruition in 1975. RUCC began with our first official service in the Morey house. Rich was ordained in the newly-formed Redlands UCC in 1976.

In 1980, Rich felt that it was time to try his wings in his own church, so this desert-reared man happily survived three Michigan winters. Kathie, and their then 3 year old son, Benjamin, moved with Rich to the parsonage at First Federated Church in Dowagiac, Michigan. In March 1981, a second son, Timothy, was born. In July 1982, he was called back to RUCC to serve as our senior minister. He served until 1988, when his deteriorating hearing loss became severe, and he resigned. He went back to school at CSUSB, earning a Certification in Accounting, and was hired by the Moreno Valley School District as an Accountant. Eventually he became the Director of Accounting before his retirement in 2004. Later, he was able to get a cochlear implant which has restored much of his hearing ability.

Rich's impact has extended beyond the Redlands UCC, into the community. Rich was in the forefront of its organization when the Christian Counseling Service began, and has worked with this organization in many capacities. The Food For All program began in Redlands, through the determined leadership of Linda and Milan Hamilton, and Rich was a great supporter and Treasurer of the first Board. Many of us were at Gerrard's Market for the celebration of the actual start up of Food For All. Helen Arth's picture was in the paper as one of the first

purchasers of a card. The picture in the Church foyer of three children was painted by our Albert Landeros for Food For All's poster. Our new Step by Step parolee program was the idea of Police Chief Bueerman, but has become a reality largely because of Rich and Kathie's interest.

How he has time, I don't know, but besides being Church Treasurer, Rich reads, collects coins, works with the AFS Student Exchange program, and is a fervent Dodgers fan. Topping all of Rich's joys through life is Kathie, the woman not behind the man, but beside him, and his two sons, Ben and Timm.

Events at RUCC...

PLEASE NOTE:

The previously announced date for the ALL CHURCH RETREAT at Pilgrim Pines has been changed to Friday, April 21- Sunday, April 23. This is the weekend immediately following Easter--it is hoped that this is a more convenient time for our church family to gather on the mountain for fun, food, fellowship, and getting to know one another better! If you have questions, please contact Floyd Orr.

RUCC Men's Fellowship

The monthly meeting of the Men's Fellowship group will take place Sunday, April 2 at 8:30 a.m. in the church office. For further information, please call Sheldon Montgomery at 794-3822 or Vern Jones at (951) 927-8325

EGGSTRAVAGANZA IS HERE!

SAVE THE DATE! Kids of all ages--come to the church April 8 at 10 A.M. and we will color Easter Eggs and play Easter games.

Ordination Celebration

Does 30 years seem like a long time? It does for Richard Blakley as well. Richard was ordained in our church 30 years ago. Our RUCC church will be celebrating the Rev. Richard Blakley's 30 years as a Minister of the United Church of Christ on Sunday, May 7, 2006. We hope that you can join us in Worship Service that morning, and for a luncheon that will follow. The only gift will be a Memory Book which we will be assembling in a 9"x11" page format. Please plan to join us!



Sunday, April 2nd

Charity Poker Tournament

Step by Step is having a Charity Poker Tournament to raise money for the "Get on the Bus" event on Friday, April 22 at 7:00 p.m. It is a \$10 donation to play. We will be playing Texas Holdem' with prizes for first, second, and third place. If you have never played or need a refresher course, then come to our poker lesson at 6:30. See ya there!

APRIL WORSHIP LEADERS

- 2 Angelynn King
- 9 Julie Phillip
- 16 Lisa Dewey
- 23 All Church Retreat
- 30

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Matthew Kolpien
- 5 Adam Dewey
- 10 Galilee Glanville
Kristen Cameron
Jay Grayson
- 14 Betty Jacobs
- 16 Jean Macomber
- 19 Hannah McMeans
Bonnie Pierce
Dana Hawley-Zechlin
- 21 Corey Dickey
Sally Cummings
- 23 Patricia Schindler
- 24 William Graff
Miz Becker
- 30 Leslie Hall

Got Anger? Meditate!

Kelsang Rak-ma, Resident Teacher at the Dharmachakra Buddhist Center, will teach meditation classes, Wednesday evenings, at 7:00 p.m. The classes are open to people of all faiths and belief (or non-belief!) systems.

SEEKING SINGERS OF ALL AGES:

It's not too late to join our singers for Maundy Thursday, Palm Sunday, and Easter!

Treble Choir: Children ages 5-12. We will sing a Hosanna processional song on Palm Sunday, April 9, and two anthems at the 10:30 service Easter morning April 16. Rehearsals are March 26, April 2, and April 9 at 11:45 AM-12: 15 PM in Covenant Hall. Also, Saturday, April 8 during Eggstravaganza, and April 16, the time will be announced.

Covenant Choir: Young men and ladies ages 13 to adult. If you have considered joining the choir, but are not sure about a long-term commitment, join us as you can for a season. We will sing a special Tenebrae work by Hal Hopson for Maundy Thursday on April 13 at 7:00 PM, and both traditional and contemporary anthems for Palm Sunday, April 9 and Easter, April 16. Rehearsals are Thursdays at 7:30 PM in the sanctuary and Sunday warm-up at 9:45 AM, with an added dress rehearsal on April 12. We will also be presenting a special music program with the handbell choirs on May 21. Please see or call Peggy McMeans at 798-1474 or email at PGWMSing@aol.com if you are interested!

...and around town

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.

Handel's *Messiah*

The Loma Linda University Church Choir, under the direction of Don Thurber, will present Handel's *Messiah* on Friday evening, April 7, 2006 at 7:30 p.m., in the Loma Linda University Church of Seventh-day Adventists. Admission is free.

Citizen's Action for Peace

Citizens Action for Peace will continue their Film and Speaker Series on Sunday, April 9th at 1:00 p.m. at RUCC

YMCA of the East Valley

The YMCA will hold its 47th Annual Good Friday Community Breakfast on Friday, April 14th from 7 to 8: a.m. at the First Congregational Church, 2 West Olive Ave., Redlands. The cost is \$5.00. For more information please call the YMCA at 747-9622 or 798-9622.

Spring Cleaning?

If you're looking to recycle or dispose of that old couch, concrete, yard waste, lumber, or household refuse, then bring it to the Redlands Spring Community Clean-Up Day. Redlands residents may recycle and dispose of their household refuse from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 15, at the City's Yard at 1270 W. Park Ave. For information, call Solid Waste Customer Service at 798-7529 or visit www.redlandssolidwaste.org.

Mayor's Prayer Breakfast

Please reserve Thursday, May 4th for the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast. The breakfast will be held at 7:30 a.m. at the Orton Center, University of Redlands. The theme for the breakfast will be "A Community Prepared." For further information, please contact Gal Glanville.



April Scripture Readings

April 2: *Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33*
April 9: *Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Mark 11:1-11*
April 16: *Acts 10:34-43; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8*
April 23: **Worship at 10:00 a.m. at Pilgrim Pines. See page 3 for details.**
April 30: *Acts 3:12-19; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48*

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