

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

June 2006

Communion Sunday - Worship Service 10:30 a.m., Sunday, June 4
New Member orientation and luncheon following worship service.

The Grief Group will have their first meeting on Monday, June 12, at 4:00 p.m.
in the Choir room.

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

Staff meeting on Thursday, June 15 at 11:00 a.m. in the church office.

The Sandwich Group will meet Tuesday, June 20, at 12:00 p.m.
in the Pastor's office.

Stewards will meet Tuesday, June 20, at 7:00 p.m.

R.U.C.C. Men's Fellowship, 8:30 a.m., Sunday, June 25
Brown Bag Lunch and Game Day on Sunday June 25,
following worship service in Covenant Hall.

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

From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*“Love one another.
Just as God loved us, we must love one another.
How can we show our children that we can live in peace?
How can we show our neighbors we can all live in harmony?
Though time and distance may divide us,
we are never far apart.
For God’s love unites us; it is written on our hearts.
Love one another”*
—adapted from “Love One Another” Choral Anthem by Ruth Elaine Schram,
and shared with the congregation on Music Sunday 2006

As I write this article, I am preparing for my two-week vacation, during which time you will be enjoying Music Sunday. When you read this, I will have returned, but will have missed the choir’s beautiful rendition of Jesus’ greatest commandment. As noted above, those words for that joyful day ask us several questions about how we live in peace and in harmony. And the answer based on the words of scripture is uncomplicated, but never simple: we show others how to live in peace by loving one another.

Whether we are near or far away, our love extends across seas and oceans and varying opinions; our love for one another traverses mountain barriers and divergent politics; our love for one another keeps us close. This is the magic or the miracle of love, if you will. When I was a small child, I was taught by my Sunday school teachers that our church was founded on this one principle: “In essentials unity, in opinions liberty, in all things love.” That value works as well now as it did 40 years ago, or 400 years ago when it was first penned by Puritan author Richard Baxter. It sits at the core of Jesus’ teaching on love; can we imagine a more diverse group than those twenty or so males and females who were Jesus’ first disciples? If the discussion was about politics or economics, they did not agree. If the discussion was about theology or sociology, they would not agree. If the discussion was about the particulars of Jesus’ activities, which they were witnessing, even then their opinions were as diverse as was his activity! Yet, it was to that seemingly disjointed and un-unified group of folks that Jesus said, “love one another...”

Love compelled those first disciples to become apostolic witnesses of the life and ministry of Jesus. Two millennia later, love propelled a group of courageous pilgrims to cross the street and form a new congregation in Redlands, the Redlands United Church of Christ. For these past 30+ years, love offered themes of “journey” and “pathway” and “fellow traveler” and “covenant” and “all are welcome” to this growing body of believers. In the words of a 60’s rock and roll song, love continues to keep us together.

Know that during this season of travels and pilgrimages and restful days, our love for God and our love for one another will keep us close—in prayer, in meditation, in thought.

Blessings,



“Day by Day, they spent much time together in Worship...” Acts 2:46
Pentecost 2006

Joy is, for me, the essence of worship. As a community, we gather each week to experience the joy of God's presence in relationship with others. To these services, we can bring our whole selves, knowing that the joy of community will heal hurts and offer hope for the journey. Let us come joyfully and honestly into worship this month!

June 4 – Pentecost Sunday – Communion Sunday

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

Ruach...the breath of the divine. From creation to Pentecost to today, from the 500s BCE to the 60s or 80s CE to 100 CE (when these three passages were written, respectively) God breathes new life into persons and communities. Traditionally, believers **wear bright red** on Pentecost Sunday to vividly welcome the Spirit's presence. You are invited to do so as we travel the centuries of faith right up to today!

June 11 – “The Family Table” – Welcoming New Covenanting Members

Isaiah 6:1-8; Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17

Children of God...what a title! From debtors to slaves to adopted ones to children to siblings...we travel a predictable pathway in the faith. Where are you on the journey's continuum? Where would you like to travel this summer? Today, we welcome new siblings in faith, as several folks offer their 2006 covenants.

June 18 – “Abba!” – Fathers Day – Loring Fiske-Phillips, preaching

Ezekiel 17:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 14-17; Mark 4:26-34

God is a botanist—plucking a sprig from a treetop and plants it on a desolate mountaintop. God is an entrepreneur—always and forever making new stuff out of the old. God is a farmer—scattering seeds so small they can barely be seen and delighting in their growth into trees large enough to be homes. God is this...and so much more. Today we are invited to move beyond gender to sacred characteristics...let us experience our living God in one another!

June 25 – “Where Were You When?”

Job 38:1-11; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

When impatient Job has had just about enough of death and destruction and despair and illness and holier-than-thou friends, and dares to ask God “what gives?” then God plays the rhetoric card. We may rightly inquire if that is fair. And if we listen to God's rhetoric, we might learn something about God's place and ours...which just might free us to really live and love and serve.

Worship will be richer and deeper with your presence. Come to the Pentecost party...
—Sharon R. Graff

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS FROM THE PREZ

I couldn't get my thoughts together this month for a cohesive report so I thought I would just share some random thoughts I have had about our RUCC.

With the growth of our church in numbers and in activities, the church board is looking to future needs of the church. The Personnel Committee has made some recommendations on staffing needs and will continue this effort over the next month. An ad hoc committee will be evaluating space needs and will be seeking your input as they work to develop a recommendation. Look for details about these and other church board decisions on the kiosk.

Member Justin Caldwell and Eric Shamp, who is new to the church, have offered to work on the FaithActs project to convert the church to solar energy. They are researching options and Eric has generously offered his architectural skills and knowledge to help make this a reality. Thank you both – we look forward to hearing about your progress as you pursue this project.

This month, two fund raising events occurred. A charity poker tournament was held and was a huge success. From what I hear, everyone had a great time – especially my granddaughter Cailie, the first place winner! Thanks to Lashawn Lee for all her hard work on putting this together to raise money for the Get on the Bus program.

Last Friday night, the First Annual Youth Jazz Festival was held. Justin Caldwell, husband of the aforementioned Lashawn Lee, organized this event which featured middle school and high school student jazz bands. Funds raised benefited the Step by Step program. I was personally blown away by the great music and immense talent displayed by these young people. There was a huge crowd in attendance. One of the youth participants was overheard at the refreshment stand saying, "This is the most fun I've ever had!" What a wonderful gift to the community! What a wonderful opportunity for young people to have a chance to perform!

We are blessed to have Lashawn and Justin as part of our church family. They used their youthful energy, creative ideas, and considerable amounts of hard work to organize these two wonderful, fun, successful events. Thank you, Lashawn and Justin.

In case you weren't there Sunday, we had music! Bells, instrumentalists, youth choir, soloist, organist, choir – lots of music! It was fun to be part of it and I hope you all enjoyed it as much as I enjoyed participating in it.

One more thing. Have you noticed the table set up in Covenant Hall during fellowship? Vickie Wilson is usually seen sitting at that table. It is our Letter Writing project in action. Each Sunday there will be letters which you can take, sign and send to your legislators on peace and justice issues. Come take a look; learn what the issues are. We have made it easy for you to let your voice be heard. And if you are willing to help with this project even if just to sit at the table occasionally, please contact me, Vickie Wilson, or the church office.

All of this in one month ! There is so much good work happening in this place. I'm proud to be part of it. – Dianne Landeros, President

The issue of immigration is on everyone's minds these days. I recently came across this article written by Rev. Daniel Romero, Conference Minister, United Church of Christ Southern California Nevada Conference. I thought it was worth re-printing in the Wanderings. - Dianne Landeros

Do Not Neglect to Show Hospitality to Strangers

Throughout the history of our nation, refugees and immigrants arriving in the United States have been received with varying degrees of hesitation and suspicion, as well as outright violence. Over time, however, many immigrants have been welcomed into the nation's life, both because of Americans' compassion and because of the conviction that the vitality and diversity that immigrants bring are a blessing. Today, once again, immigration has become a hotly debated topic, provoking a range of responses from Americans, including Christian leaders across the spectrum of the Church. Some advocate for the rights of immigrants, while others react to newcomers with outright hostility.

To think responsibly about immigration, we should first realize that it is a world-wide phenomenon. According to some estimates, more than thirty million people are on the move around the globe at any given time. As Christians we ask, What is God's agenda in the midst of this global migration? What is God seeking to accomplish in the midst of massive relocation because of war, oppression, and poverty? Is it possible that God is seeking to bring out of the change all around us a new way of living in the world, perhaps even a new world order? Is it possible that, in and through the global migration we witness today, God is challenging us to live out more fully the words we say often and much too easily, "humankind is one"?

The Bible speaks volumes about the movement of people, sometimes of entire societies, and it is quite realistic about the disruption and conflict that often accompany migration. Yet, despite the problems caused by migration, there is in the Bible an unwavering theme of hospitality to strangers. And this hospitality is called for without any distinction made between legal and illegal strangers: "When a foreigner resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress that alien. The foreigner who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the foreigner as you love yourself, for you were once aliens in Egypt" (Leviticus 19:33-34).

The theme of hospitality is consistent throughout the Old Testament and made even more emphatic in the New Testament. "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2). To make the point in its most conclusive way for Christians, the New Testament recounts the experience of the disciples on the way to Emmaus. Though bewildered and distraught because of the crucifixion of Jesus, they took time to offer hospitality to a stranger whom they met along the way, and gradually they came to realize that the stranger was the Risen Christ.

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers." Ever, for any reason?

The biblical theme of hospitality is accompanied by a full awareness that migration is not without problems. Indeed, just as migration usually originates in problems, such as intense poverty, it sometimes results in problems for the communities that are called to be hospitable. Today, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, one of the chief concerns highlighted in debates about immigration policy is national security: could the strangers in our midst be threats to our safety? The U.S. government has a legitimate responsibility to protect its citizenry. But when national security and immigration policies come to be based upon fear of strangers, Scripture reminds us that we must not permit fear to overcome hospitality (see I John 4:18).

Christians should join in debates about immigration issues, and when we do we will almost certainly come to a variety of different conclusions about matters of policy. In these debates, however, some things are surely required of all Christians if we are to be faithful to the biblical tradition:

* The first is careful attention to the facts. Our views must be informed by reading widely and thinking carefully about the claims we hear regarding immigration, and the difference that immigrants, documented and undocumented, make in our communities.

* The second requirement is careful attention to the personal dimensions of immigration policies and practices. Discussions about the economics and politics of immigration are really discussions about people. We are obligated to put human faces on these issues, to understand the individuals who are deeply affected by our actions. In addition, we must be personal agents of hospitality to the strangers who have come into our midst, and insist on the importance of personal concern in our otherwise abstract national debate about immigration.

* Finally, we should test every policy proposal in relation to the biblical obligation that is placed upon us. We must ask, does this policy “neglect to show hospitality to strangers”?

Thank You and Updates
From
Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo

It's hard to believe that I have been here at RUCC for almost 2 years now (at least in school terms). My time with you has been such a meaningful part of my theological education and it is through your support and encouragement that I was able to finally graduate in May. What a gift! Thank You!! And for all the cards and words of wisdom I am also grateful! Please continue to keep me in your prayers.

On Sunday June 25th at 9:00 a.m., I would like to invite everyone to meet a friend of mine, Margaret Machinga, who is from the African country of Zimbabwe. She will share stories of her work with children orphaned by HIV/Aids. Margaret works with an organization called “Simukai” and will be returning to Mutare, Zimbabwe at the end of June to continue her much needed work of child care and protection for street children. Margaret graduated from Claremont School of Theology in May 2005 and is back in the U.S. for 3 months to receive additional training in pastoral care and counseling. She is committed to caring for the children of her homeland while she tries to educate others about the devastation of HIV/Aids in Africa. Look for additional information in upcoming editions of The View.

“Step by Step” Good News Update: At our March gathering of members from seven interfaith congregations in Redlands there was a unanimous vote to form the Redlands “Step by Step Reentry Coalition.” These seven congregations represent over 10,000 citizens in our city committed to making Redlands a supportive and mentoring community for those on parole. Working with the PACT team of Redlands Police Department, coalition members will share in efforts to provide basic necessities and services that are desperately lacking for those who complete incarceration and return home to try to rebuild their lives.

Thank you, dear friends here at RUCC, for your vision and trust in the Spirit's prompting even when it seemed risky and challenging! Those efforts are now beginning to multiply thanks to the enthusiasm and willingness of a wider caring community in our city.

Events at RUCC...

Good Grief

In the past year, many saints have left this earth for other environs, leaving us to grieve. Others among us have had traumatic changes in employment, relationship, or residence; these changes are also accompanied by a sense of loss and grief. Grief takes many forms and travels various pathways...always it can be helpful to talk about the grief and to know that you are not alone. Our pastors, Sharon and Jeanne, will be starting a grief group for anyone who would like to join. This will be a short-term series, **Monday afternoons, 4:00-5:30 p.m., June 12 – July 24,** and a closed group—meaning that after the first two sessions, the group's membership will remain as is for the duration of the series. If this sounds helpful and/or relevant to your current journey, please come to the first session, **Monday, June 12, 4:00-5:30 p.m. in the Choir Room.** Questions? Contact either Sharon or Jeanne at the church office.

Meditations to heal the Body & Mind

Kelsang Rak-ma, Resident Teacher at the Dharmachakra Buddhist Center, will teach meditation classes, Wednesday evenings, June 7, and 14, at 7:00 p.m. The classes are open to people of all faiths and belief (or non-belief!) systems.

Guess who's turning
90?!

Please join us on
Saturday, June 17, 2006
to celebrate

Opal Inman's 90th!

2:00 – 4:30 p.m.
at

Redlands United Church of Christ
168 Bellevue Avenue
Redlands, CA 92373

No gifts please! Just your presence.
Cards for a memory book would
be appreciated

RSVP by June 10 to
Milan and Linda Hamilton
(909) 793-4482
or by email:
participationworks@dslexreme.com

JUNE WORSHIP LEADERS

- 4 Denise Cain
- 11 Sondra Hodson
- 18 Paul Hodson
- 25 Ken Hurley



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Melanie Moran
- 2 Carol Buchanan
Chase Warner
- 6 Valerie Naftzger
- 7 Barbie Fiske-Phillips
Julie Phillip
- 8 Ruth Moses
- 9 Robert Woods
- 12 Beverly Young
- 13 Bonnie Killpatrick
- 14 Opal Inman
Ivonne Moran
- 17 Peter Morics
- 18 Gene Kuehl
- 19 Steve Morics
Susan Traverso
- 21 Bob Barton
Barbara Hauser
- 24 Joan Kay Armantage
- 26 Joyce Planeta
- 30 Allen Killpatrick

Guide Dog Graduation was an Inspirational Event

To cap off this year's Sunday School sponsorship of a Guide Dog Harness, we got to see a wonderful graduation ceremony at the Guide Dog facility on May 20. We've been collecting money all year, and this was the payoff! Our harness went to a beautiful "Labradoodle" (part Labrador, part poodle) named Charm. Charm will be living with and helping a woman named Annis. We got to see Charm presented to Annis by the woman who raised Charm as a puppy. It was very touching. This is Annis' first guide dog. A big THANK YOU to all who helped the Sunday School in this endeavor.

In conjunction with this, we welcome TWO SPECIAL VISITORS, Charles Canan and his guide dog Bob, on SUNDAY, JUNE 11. Charles and Bob will visit with all of us during the Children's chat, and they will also come out with the kids during Sunday School. We are very grateful to Charles and Bob for spending this time with us.

RUCC Men's Fellowship

The monthly meeting of the Men's Fellowship group will take place Sunday, June 25 at 8:30 a.m. in the church office. Rick Sforza will be the guest speaker and will present his recent aerial photography experiences over Tunisia.

Shhh...Women's Silent Retreat
Friday – Sunday, July 14-16
Whispering Pines in Angelus Oaks

Rescheduled from the snowed-out spring weekend, the Women's Silent Retreat welcomes any women who wish to spend an entire weekend in periods of extended silence. Several blessed (and perhaps, challenging) extended periods of silence will be interspersed with times to eat and chat together. To register: email Angelynn King at angelynn_king@redlands.edu or call the church office at 793-3520. The retreat begins Friday, July 14 at 7:00 p.m. and ends Sunday, July 16 after breakfast. Whispering Pines in Angelus Oaks is located about 20 miles from Redlands in the San Bernardino Mountains. Driving directions will be given when you register. Cost varies depending on selected room, and Angelynn will assist you with this information. Questions? Contact Angelynn King or Rev. Sharon Graff, facilitators.

Summer Series 2006
"What is a Progressive Christian?"

"Progressive" = a word that gets batted around RUCC quite a lot!

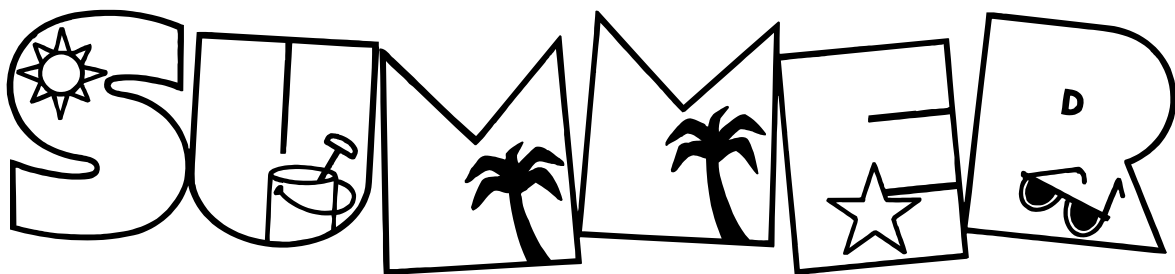
"Progressive" = something or someone who progresses, who makes progress

"Progressive" = an adjective that is a first name for Christian

"Progressive" = has much to do with our theology, and influences much about our lives

If these descriptions pique your interest, you will want to join the Summer Series discussions! Using material developed by The Center for Progressive Christianity, which offers thought-provoking information on eight values of progressive Christians, we will read, discuss, hear and learn from one another.

Sundays, 5:00-8:00 p.m.
July 23, 30, August 6, 13
Meeting in homes, locations TBA



...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.

Church Women United

Church Women United will present Mrs. Sherry Edwards, speaking on "Building a Generation", on June 2, at 10:00 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church, Dike Chapel. This is a project started by Chief Bueerman and the police department focusing on how to create a non-violent school and home atmosphere. Refreshments will be served and all are welcome. For further information please contact Ruth Moses at (951)769-9638.

Open House

In appreciation for your support to R-SB Harbinger Corporation, you are cordially invited to attend an Open House at the Barnett Apartments, 1028 Lombard Dr., Redlands on Sunday, June 4 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information please call (951) 683-1246 or 794-3302.

2006 Redlands Bowl Summer Music Festival

Performances are Tuesday and Friday evenings at 8:15 p.m. Community Sing on Tuesdays prior to the performance. No admission charged. Free will offering taken. For more information call (909) 793-7316.

Performances will begin on Friday, June 23 with the SUMMER FESTIVAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.

"America the Musical": Frank Paul Fetta, conductor. Dale Kristien, Broadway star of Phantom of the Opera, and Tony Award nominee Bill Hutton join the Summer Festival Symphony Orchestra for an evening of Broadway and much more.

On Tuesday, June 27 the winners of THE 55th ANNUAL YOUNG ARTISTS AUDITIONS, including our own Craig Colclough.

Pre-concert performance by the Youth Ensemble of Strings, directed by Karen Thurman-Palmer.



Getting to Know You...

by Betty Jacobs

I'm thinking of changing the name of this column to *Getting to Know Amazing People*. All of you seem to fit that description!

During World War II Janet Wilson's dad was a Sergeant in a jazz band that entertained troops. After his Army days, he moved to Oklahoma to attend the University of Oklahoma. He then moved to Nashville where he received his MD from Vanderbilt University.

Janet wasn't quite "Born on a Mountaintop in Tennessee" but she was born in musical territory – Nashville. She was born a middle child between two brothers. Her dad had finished his residency in Philadelphia so the family left for Michigan when Janet was two. Nashville's music and her dad's genes must have been in her blood because in high school she played cello in the orchestra and in the summer she switched to the baritone in a summer band. While in high school she was a nationally ranked table tennis player often competing in eastern cities.

At Michigan State Janet graduated with a dual major degree in Social Science and Psychology. After college, where maybe a little customer relations from psychology was used, she worked as a picture framer. In 1979 she braved coming west to Los Angeles where she worked for thirteen years in many capacities of the classifieds for the L.A. Times. Then it was off to beautiful La Jolla for a teaching credential at UCSD. Her teaching career began in San Bernardino's Warm Springs Elementary where she taught for nine years. She now teaches second grade at Bellvedere Elementary.

Janet had done some performance art in Los Angeles and while moving stage sets in San Diego she met Rosie, her partner of 15 years. Rosie now drives an Omnitrans bus but is also going to UCR taking courses to become an interior decorator. She practices on their home.

Those of you who went to the recent Talent Show saw Janet's demonstration of Aikito. In 1980 she began taking karate lessons but didn't like the "hurts" that came with it so she switched to Aikito which has no kicks and isn't competitive. As she explained it in the simplest of terms, in Aikito you harmonize with your opponent. Janet goes to Aikito three or four nights a week and now is teaching children the art.

Now, how many things could you find to say about a short little doxie? Evidently Janet and 450 friends from all over the world find plenty! They talk on the internet every day sharing information about their doxies. Janet also has a chihuahua. She also gardens and is building a fenced area to keep her dogs, rabbit, and two tortoises apart. To top all of these activities off Janet is getting her Master's Degree in dual Language Immersion.

All of this activity has tired me out – I'm taking a nap!

June Scripture Readings

May 7: *Psalms 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18*
May 14: *Acts 8:26-40; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8*
May 21: *Selections from the Psalms*
May 28: *Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; 1 John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19*

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
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