

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

September 2006

Communion Sunday - Worship Service 10:30 a.m.,
Sunday, September 3

The office will be closed Monday, September 4 in observance of
Labor Day.

CE Hamburger Fry and Game Day - Sunday, September 10, following
worship service.

Church Board will meet Tuesday, September 12, 7:00 p.m.

The Sandwich Group will meet Tuesday, September 19,
at 12:00 p.m. in the Pastor's office.

All Church Retreat at Pilgrim Pines begins Friday, September 22,
through Sunday, September, 24.

All-Church Worship Service at Pilgrim Pines ~ Sunday, September 24
Worship begins at 9:30 a.m. at the fully-accessible fire circle ~ Carpools leave
RUCC parking lot at 8:30 a.m.

Stewards will meet Tuesday, September 26, at 7:00 p.m.

Jeanne's Ordination on Sunday, September 30 at 3:00 p.m.

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

From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*"The most important commandment?" asked Jesus...
'They are two in number: Love God, and love your neighbor as you love yourself...'
—Matthew 22:34-40*

This year's Summer Series, in a round-about way, addressed this very question: What is most important...What is the core of our faith...What is the essence of this thing we call "progressive Christianity?" We are not alone in asking this many-faceted question, as evidenced by the scripture quoted above from Matthew's gospel. Like the followers of Jesus in the first century, we too, want to know what is most vital to a vibrant faith journey. Thankfully, we have some help in addressing with relevance the same question in our century. And that we did for four weeks this summer.

The Center for Progressive Christianity—an online resource center—provided us with free materials. Our competent leaders ably led our discussions, and many of you participated with your questions and comments.

So, after all that...do we describe ourselves as progressive Christians? Do we refer to our growing community of faith as progressively Christian? The consensus seems to be "Yes!" No matter where we each stand on the political spectrum, the notion of being a progressive Christian echoes the RUCC Vision Statement which we embody each time we gather. We are a group that welcomes all—to worship, to groups, to prayer, to meals, to service, to the holy table—and we are already a group that seeks to minister to and with all who are in need. In a nutshell, friends, according to the summary description from TCPC below, that defines us as progressive. No political labels are needed. No particular persuasions are required. "Progressive Christian" is a title that applies equally to folks of any party, or no party. If we seek to follow Christ by loving God and really loving neighbor as we love ourselves, well then, we are progressive!

TCPC invites us to continue this open conversation by considering the following descriptions of so-called "progressive Christians:"

- Progressive Christians find an approach to God through life and teachings of Jesus
- Progressive Christians recognize that other people in other faith traditions are also faithful to God
- Progressive Christians understand the holy communion meal to be a place for all God's children
- Progressive Christians invite all people to come as they are, to participate fully as they wish
- Progressive Christians know that beliefs are evidenced in behavior
- Progressive Christians find grace in the search, and value the questions of the journey
- Progressive Christians form communities dedicated to ministries of peace, justice, & compassion
- Progressive Christians recognize that following Jesus is costly—personally and communally

As your pastor and teacher, I urge you to prayerfully contemplate these descriptions, and to discern how they apply (or could be applied) in your own life and work. Here is one very tangible example to ponder. In the past month, as we have each heard and experienced the shock and disbelief of the news of the sudden deaths of Mary Belle Carter's son and grand-daughter, I have seen our "progressivism" at work. Tears of empathy have been shed. Meals of compassion have been prepared and delivered. Phone calls and cards of loving support have been made, whether or not you personally knew the family. You have reached out from the very core of your beliefs, and from the very center of your hearts. Look again at the scripture from Matthew. Read again the 8 points noted above. You see? Being progressive is about loving first...about responding out of love...love of God...love of neighbor...love of self. Are we progressive? You bet we are...and will continue to be!

Blessings,



Many, many, many thanks for the expressions of love and caring following the deaths of Brad and Lindsey Carter on August 16, 2006. Our appreciation to the many people who prepared meals for our family in the days that followed. In my hurting I feel your love and the outpouring of your affection has been so much that I feel overwhelmed with your hugs. Love, Joy and Peace to you all – Mary Belle Carter

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

September 2006

This is a month of celebrations, beginning with communion, continuing by honoring our teachers, and concluding with our wonderful All-Church Retreat and the Ordination of Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo! You are invited to gather each week with your family of faith to sing, pray, explore, dream, and serve.

September 3 - “One Nation, Under God” – Communion Sunday

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9; James 1:17-27; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

What makes a wise and discerning nation? Scripture offers a compelling response to that question, describing such a nation as one in which God is close at hand, in which the widow and the orphan are cared for, where pride and greed are replaced by generosity, listening, meekness. It is a place that lives and embodies its values in ordinances and in behaviors. As my mother used to quip, “Your actions are so loud, I cannot hear a word you are saying...” As we take a break from our usual labors this weekend, let us ponder the ways we citizens can help our nation be such a place.

September 10 – “Mercy Trumps Judgment” – Education Sunday

Isaiah 35:4-7a; James 2:1-17; Mark 7:24-37

Images of water in the desert sands, laws being bent to fill a hungry soul, and the poor being offered the best seat in the house—these images invite us to consider that, when God plays poker, mercy will always trump judgment. Want to play by God’s rules?

September 17 – Rev. John Walsh, preaching

Scriptures TBA

John Walsh will bring the morning message and lead worship, as Rev. Graff joins other RUCC members and friends in the inaugural Disney Half-Marathon. Pray!

September 24 – ALL-CHURCH WORSHIP ON THE MOUNTAIN

Various passages from the Psalms that celebrate God’s gift of nature

Come retreat in beautiful Oak Glen at our UCC camp and conference center, Pilgrim Pines. The full weekend will include games, singing, faith-enriching activities, and lots of fun! If you can only come for Sunday morning, that’s ok, too! Worship begins at the fully-accessible fire circle at 9:30 am. Carpools will leave the RUCC parking lot at 8:30 am, or you may drive up on your own for the inspiring outdoor worship service. **All** are welcome! **Please note, there will be no worship service in the sanctuary today—come to the mountain—maps to Pilgrim Pines available in the church office.**

Saturday, September 30 – Service of Worship to Ordain Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo – 3:00 pm

Join the rest of the RUCC Family as we celebrate the gift of ministry together! Joy is the spirit of the day, and red is the color of celebration...come ready to party!

Worship will be richer and deeper with your presence. Come and be refreshed for the journey...

—Sharon R. Graff

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2006

I've always thought of September as the start of a new year. Yes, I know that it really begins in January - maybe fiscal folks think of July that way – but I guess it's because of school that I think of September as the beginning of something new. For so many years, from September to June was school, followed by a long, hot, lazy summer of play days at my grandma's, swimming at the Sylvan plunge and eating those great hamburgers at the snack bar, summer camp, and finally preparing with anticipation for the start of another school year.

So, here we are, and September feels like we're starting the year. At RUCC, that start is full of events and new beginnings. We kick off the long awaited speaker's forum series with the noted Rev. Barry W. Lynn on Friday, September 8, 2006, at 7:30 pm in the sanctuary. The title of Rev. Lynn's speech will be "Religious Values, Yes; Theocracy, No." Rev. Lynn is the executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, has been an activist and lawyer in the civil liberties field, and is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. Rev. Lynn's speech will be followed by a Q & A period. I hope you will all plan on attending this very special event. Please help us get the word out. Invite your friends, families, and associates. We hope to have a good attendance.

There will be a church retreat on September 22 to 24 at Pilgrim Pines. This will be a great opportunity for us to get to know each other better as the focus will be on fellowship and community.

The other major event of the month will be Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo's ordination on Saturday, September 30. This will be a special day for Jeanne and for us. Please save the date.

We are a small, but growing church. In spite of our modest size, we are a church filled with energy and with the Spirit, putting our faith into action, making a difference in each other's lives, in the community, and maybe making a little difference in the world. This promises to be a good year as we continue the journey together.

Dianne Landeros

Summer Series ~ THANKS!

To those who participated in this year's summer discussions—we hope that you have a better understanding and appreciation of what it means (and what it doesn't mean!) when we use the descriptive phrase “progressive Christian.” To the discussion leaders—Michael and Lisa Dewey, John Walsh, Allen Killpatrick, and Sandy Peavler and Debbie Gerberich—many thanks for the time you took to reflect on the materials and guide us through our own maze of thoughts. To our gracious hosts—Carol and Bill Buchanan, Peggy and Phil McMeans, Bonnie and Allen Killpatrick, and Sally and Paul Burton—your lovely homes and your generous hospitality are much appreciated! We also thank the Center for Progressive Christianity (tcpc.org) for offering such thought-provoking booklets, and encourage those of you unable to attend to check them out online! Paper copies can also be acquired by nicely asking our Administrative Assistant, Renee Chavez, in the church office.

~ WELCOME (again!) TO JEANNE FAVREAU-SORVILLO ~

We just cannot seem to get enough of a good thing...and in this case, the good “thing” is Jeanne! She began here two years ago as our Seminary Intern, last year moved into an Associate Pastor position to help us launch the Step By Step Re-Entry program for parolees and their families, and now the congregation has voted to extend a ministerial Call to (the soon to be Rev.) Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo to become our half-time Associate Minister for Outreach. In this new position, Jeanne will be continuing her responsibilities with Step By Step and adding pastoral duties to serve our congregation's growing needs. As we voted at the congregational meeting on August 27th, these additional responsibilities will begin on October 1st—the day after Jeanne's ordination (see article below)! Jeanne, we love to welcome you to ministry...again!

All are invited to the Ordination Worship Service
Of Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo
Saturday, September 30th, 3:00 pm
RUCC Sanctuary

With a Reception Party Following in Covenant Hall

(Please watch weekly notices in The View for ways your help will be needed!)

This congregation has shepherded many students through the ordination journey, and our journey with Jeanne over these past two years has been one of the most delightful! Please plan to join Jeanne and her family as we celebrate and worship the God who calls each of us to ministry. We will be co-hosting this event with Jeanne's home church, The Congregational Church of Fullerton. Please save the date on your calendar!

Events at RUCC...

Save the date! Art for Heaven's Sake

Please save the weekend of
October 13 - 15 2006
for this gala event
at
RUCC.

Covenant Choir

The Covenant Choir will resume rehearsals on September 7. Anyone who would like to join us, please see me, Peggy McMeans, call 798-1474, or email me @ PGWMSing@aol.com.

RUCC Men's Fellowship

The next meeting of the Men's Fellowship group will take place Sunday, October 29 at 8:30 a.m. in Covenant Hall.

Meditations to heal the Body & Mind

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.

~ Confirmation Classes to Begin ~

What do you believe? Why do you believe it? Where are God, Spirit, and Christ leading or nudging you? What in the world IS a journey of faith anyway? **Youth** (6th grade and above) are invited to join the pastors for a journey to explore these and other questions throughout the next year in confirmation classes. **Please bring your parents to a very brief introductory meeting** with Rev. Graff on **Sunday, September 10th, noon-12:15 pm** (before the hamburger fry) in the church office. Questions? Please contact Rev. Graff.

Christian Education Hamburger Fry and Game Day Sunday – September 10

Come have good food, play board games, play outdoor games, or just sit and visit with your church friends after worship service. This is also our chance to say thank you to all the hard working Sunday School teachers who have donated so much of their time to the Christian Education area at RUCC.



SEPTEMBER WORSHIP LEADERS

3 Lora Hall
10 Floyd Orr
17 Lauren Barton
24 At Pilgrim Pines

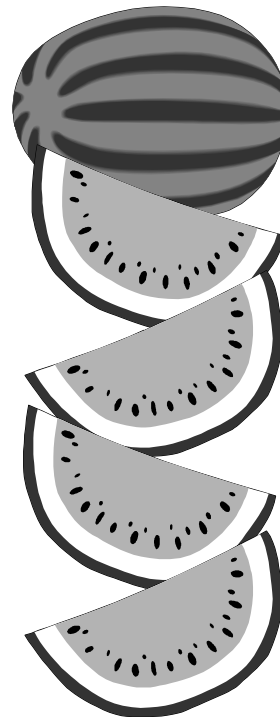
All Church Retreat Friday – Sunday, September 22-24 Pilgrim Pines Retreat Center

The All Church Retreat is coming soon and will be a weekend out of time for the refreshment of your body, mind, and spirit. A time to catch up with your elusive self, renew old friendships and make new ones. It will provide an opportunity to explore your inner world and the outer in a truly beautiful setting. Mark your calendar now! The retreat begins Friday, September 22 at 7:00 p.m. and ends Sunday, September 24. Please see the Retreat table set up in Covenant Hall for fee information and sign-up forms. There is NO charge to attend the Sunday morning worship service.

Sunday, September 24 ~ Worship Service for all will be at Pilgrim Pines. Carpool will leave the RUCC parking lot at 8:30 a.m. ~ worship begins at 9:30 a.m. at the fully-accessible fire circle at Pilgrim Pines.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 Dee Hodson
Diane Richardson
2 Michael Dewey
3 Ian Naftzger
Katie Barton
7 Douglas Miller
12 Steve Chapman
16 Jo Dierdorff
17 Wendy Naftzger
19 Elizabeth Schuiling
20 John Sweeney
Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo
Kent Taylor
21 Eric Goren
23 Mary Belle Carter
24 Matthew Walsh
26 Sam Dickey
Noah Dewey
27 Robert Broadhead



...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.

Chapman University Lecture & Special Event Series

Jerry S. Fowler Jr. will lecture on "Darfur: Who Will Survive Today?" on Thursday, September 14 at 4:00 p.m. in the Bush Conference Center. Admission is free. For further information, please call 714-628-7377.

Also, The Communication Studies Colloquium will present "The Rhetoric of Human Rights Beyond Our Borders" at the Lyon Conference Center on Thursday, September 28 at 4:00 p.m. Admission is free. For further information, please call 714-744-7921.

University of Redlands Town and Gown Celebration Saturday, October 21, 6:00 p.m.

Following an evening of themed venues, guests will gather on the University quad for elegant desserts, champagne and coffee, spectacular fireworks and the premier of the centennial video – a retrospective of what has made Redlands unique for a century. The cost is \$100 per person until September 9; \$150 per person until October 9. All reservations close October 9, 2006.

The Jesus Seminars

Did Christianity begin with the resurrection, with Paul, with Pentecost or with Jesus? That question will form the agenda of the Jesus Seminar on Christian Origins at Westar's Fall meeting in Santa Rosa, California, October 18-21, 2006.

Program details and registration information are available in the church office along with a schedule of Fall 2006 Jesus Seminars on the Road. These are rich opportunities to keep current on the latest in Jesus studies.

Citizens' Action for Peace Third Annual Peace Awards

Please join us on Wednesday, September 20, at 6:00 p.m. for a special evening honoring peacemakers. The guest speaker will be Fernando Suarez del Solar of *Military Families Speak Out*. Awards will be given to Mr. Suarez del Solar and Redlands United Church of Christ for their peace and justice activities. The awards banquet will be held at the historic Mitten Building and the cost is \$25 per person. For reservations please call (909) 794-0607.

Getting to Know You...

by Betty Jacobs

Kristi Campbell was born, raised, and schooled in San Bernardino. At Pacific High she braved her way, and helped pave the way for girls to play water polo, when she was accepted to play on the boys' team. These steps helped girls' water polo eventually be accepted as a varsity sport in many schools. Loving anything involving water, Kristi was also a competitive swimmer in high school, mainly swimming the Butterfly.

Kristi received her BA at Cal State San Bernardino majoring in Human Resources which she's able to use in her job with Southern California Edison. She has carried on her love of reading since childhood. Hear this, kids – she loved school!

Feeling the need of an at home hobby, Kristi is now teaching herself woodworking, a hobby shared with Julie Philip. Away from the house, golf is the love of both Kristi and Jill. They play whenever they can – Palm Springs, other Southern California courses, and have played a couple of time in Maui, where the courses are so beautiful one could live on them. Coming up soon for Kristi is an annual event – a family reunion with her family in San Clemente.

Jill Spencer was born in Salt Lake City. But, having an engineer father who was transferred often, she only lived there briefly. Eventually the family ended up in Fullerton where in high school Jill enjoyed sports, especially basketball. At Cal Poly Pomona she was on the women's basketball team and earned her degree in Physical Education.

Jill and Kristi met fifteen years ago when they both worked at Southern California Edison. They eventually moved to Highland where they reside today. With that PE degree guess where Jill works? She's *sitting* in a chair at home while Kristi crawls her way through traffic to her job in Irwindale, soon to be Arcadia. But, to be truthful, they *both* work on their internet business helping others set up “virtual malls” where household items from companies such as Disney, Barnes & Noble, are sold via computer.

Jill and Kristi can be found most Sundays to the right of center and in the fourth pew from the back.

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

Can you spare some time October 13, 14, and/or 15? 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. Please consider saying "yes" when asked and you'll be sure to have an enjoyable experience!

Global Warming: Last Call to a Sustainable Future?

Noted science and culture journalist Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature* and *Wandering Home*, introduces an article in National Geographic (August 2006) on the hurricane season ahead and how those affected last year have fared. In his introduction, he asks the religious community to become involved in saving God's creation while there may still be time.

He posits that decisions made since the Scientific Revolution have been based on economics, e.g., what would earn the most money most quickly. These issues are expertly presented in Al Gore's Film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, (the book is available at local bookstores. See a discussion guide at www.eco-justice.org.)

Having spent 35 years working with others to raise God's creation as a major theological topic in the life of congregations, Rev. Albert G. Cohen, of the Southern California Ecumenical Council, states "There are faith-based organizations dealing with these issues, but with few exceptions the religious community has only been heard peripherally in the struggle to save the environment."

What is required is a massive change in the economies of nations, new business models and new political models. Please use your good offices to encourage the individuals and institutions with which you are connected to begin the shift to a sustainable future for our children who will bless us for our consideration of them and their children. – *Rev. Albert G. Cohen*

Redlands United Church of Christ, in conjunction with Progressive Christians Uniting, will be presenting the film "An Inconvenient Truth" on Friday, October 6 at 7:00 p.m. in Covenant Hall.

September Scripture Readings

September 3: *Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9; James 1:17-27; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23.*
September 10: *Isaiah 35:4-7a; James 2:1-17; Mark 7:24-37*
September 17: *Rev. John Walsh, preaching*
September 24: *Various passages from the Psalms that celebrate God's gift of nature.*

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



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