

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

November 2006

Harry Potter Party – Friday, November 3, at 6:00 p.m.

Communion Sunday - Worship Service 10:30 a.m.,
Sunday, November 5

The Prayer Group will meet Mondays, November 6, 13, 20, 27,
at 10:30 a.m. in the Choir Room

“The Price is Right” taping trip, Monday, November 6, 8:00 a.m.

Alternative Christmas Faire – Sunday, November 12, 11:30 a.m.

Church Board will meet Tuesday, November 14, 7:00 p.m.
in the church office.

The Confirmation Group will meet on Sunday, November 19, at 12:30

The Sandwich Group will meet Tuesday, November 21,
at 12:00 p.m. in the Pastor’s office.

Stewards will meet Tuesday, November 28, at 7:00 p.m.

R.U.C.C. All Church Fellowship, 9:00 a.m., Sunday, November 26.

Brown Bag Lunch and Game Day on Sunday, November 26
following worship service in Covenant Hall.

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
November. Please check The View for dates and times.

From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*“Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple,
they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts,
praising God and having the goodwill of the people.
And day by day, God added to their number...”*

—From Acts 2:46-47

Seven days of creation... Forty years of wandering in the wilderness... Twelve tribes of Israel... Forty days of Jesus praying in the wilderness... Twelve disciples... Two fish and five barley loaves... Seven loaves and a few small fish... Scripture authors seem to be interested in, but not obsessed with, numbers. Numbers seem to offer a picture of either a lot or a little, for example, the number “40” in scripture is code language usually referring to an undesignated large amount—of years, of people, of days.

We are entering a season of numbers. Our congregation’s Area Leaders and their committees are creating generous and imaginative budgets to support programs, activities, and staff that inspire us all on our journeys of faith. Our Stewards will assemble these numbers into one cohesive annual budget. Each one of us is beginning to ponder and pray about our annual covenant statement which will be offered in worship on Covenant Sunday, December 3rd. As the office staff and volunteers were preparing the covenant forms and supplemental information sheets, the task (of necessity) included working with numbers. One number that stood out from the rest was the total number of covenant forms prepared this year. That number is 207. Yes! 207—a number that consists of currently covenanting members, former covenanting members who are still an active part of the RUCC community, and a large group of regularly-attending guests who are also active participants in the life of Redlands UCC. Friends, this is not a “preacher’s count”—an inflated number intended to impress. These are the folks—you and your neighbor sitting next to you in worship—who consider this congregation as their spiritual home.

Our annual covenanting process offers each one of us (me included!) an opportunity to reflect upon who we are as spiritual beings and what place we wish to hold within this spiritual community. Through thinking about and preparing our covenants, we can remember the highlights of our spiritual journey thus far, even as we imagine where we would like to travel with God in this next year. Covenanting is NOT about determining who is “in” and who is “out”. Covenanting is NOT about joining a club. At its fundamental level, covenanting IS about consciously and intentionally joining the journey along with our co-travelers here at Redlands United Church of Christ. Covenanting IS about imagining how our spiritual growth will be enhanced this coming year through offering ourselves in various areas of service.

Imagine yourself as one among the number of participants on this spiritual journey, this pilgrimage offered through covenanting. Where will you walk with God this next year? I cannot wait to read about it!

Blessings,



“Make us to know your ways, O God...teach us your paths...” Psalm 25:4

November 2006

When we worship God together we experience the power of community to transform—to transform thoughts, behavioral patterns, even entire paradigms and systems. This congregation was formed around the biblical concept of “covenant.” In a nutshell, covenant denotes a special type of promise in which transformation occurs. But, as we quickly discover, in biblical covenants and in our current church covenants, there is little that could fit in a nutshell! Covenants and covenant-writing form us into a unique community of faith...this month we’ll explore this complicated covenantal journey, one step, one prayer, one song, one hug and handshake and smile at a time!

November 5 - “And So It Begins” – Communion Sunday

Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Mark 12:28-34

As did the United Church of Christ, so Redlands UCC began in an atmosphere of love...love of God and love of neighbor as self. Today, as we begin celebrating the 50th Anniversary Year of the UCC, we also begin exploring the biblical concept of “covenant” which forms the warp and woof of the fabric we know as RUCC. In loving memory, we will give thanks for the saints who have traveled (and still do travel!) this covenantal journey alongside. Come to the party!

November 12 – “Intertwined But Not Enmeshed”

Psalm 105:1-11; Deuteronomy 7:7-13; Luke 1:67-79

Covenants have been a source of much lively debate and discussion around here since the beginning of the congregation some 31 years ago. Foundational to the diverse opinions and beliefs swirling around covenants is the surprising amount of agreement that covenant is a core value of this congregation. Covenant as a core value drives this bus of Redlands United Church of Christ. Why? How? Let’s shine a light on covenant today—you who are undecided or apathetic about covenants and covenant-writing are especially urged to be here!

November 19 – “The Joy of Covenanting”

Psalm 16; Hebrews 10:19-25; Mark 12:38-44

The Rev. Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo will bring the morning message... Whether big or small, covenant promises are individual recipes for growth and fulfillment. Some ingredients will delight your palate while others will tempt it with new flavors and tastes. Come and savor the possibilities while pondering how your covenant will serve to feed you throughout the next year.

November 26 – “The Dotted Line”

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 26:26-29; John 18:12-17, 25-27; 21:15-17

“The dotted line” used to refer to that place on written contracts where the two parties each affixed their signatures, thus making the contract a legal document. Ever wonder what God’s “signature” on a covenant document might look like? My hunch is that if you were to look in a mirror, you would see a very close approximation of that Divine covenant signature. What final matters, what dotted lines are still to be discussed in this whole covenant process?

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

—Sharon R. Graff

* * * * *

Covenants: Blessing and Bane!

By Sharon R. Graff

(This article is edited and reprinted from November 2005 Wanderings.)

Since I began serving as your Pastor and Teacher in April 2002 and even during my initial conversations with the Search Committee, the topic of “covenant” has been the center of many lively discussions! My rather unscientific research with members and friends of Redlands UCC has netted a diversity of opinion about the form of covenant (no surprise!) as well as a remarkable agreement on the function of covenant.

The comments that follow represent the diversity of opinion about our process of covenanting derived from several pastoral conversations with over 60 people who are members and friends of RUCC:

- writing a covenant, however long or short, however complicated or simple, is an effective way of clarifying one’s own thoughts and beliefs, and therefore should be required (unless one is physically or mentally unable so to do)
- it is not necessary for covenants to be in writing (covenants may be expressed verbally or artistically, such as through painting, music, etc.)
- from the founding pastor onward, it has been the norm for covenants to be written; however, each pastor has also received verbal covenants from those who were opposed to writing their covenant
- making a written commitment is too binding, too concrete, and appears inflexible
- the whole covenant process needs to be thrown out; it inhibits the growth of RUCC; we must be open to alternative forms of expressing membership
- the annual covenant may be expressed to the shepherd leader
- the annual covenant is to be conveyed only to the senior minister

By contrast to these divergent and sometimes contradictory opinions, the most repeated shared understandings I have heard are that:

- Covenanting is an essential part of the life and ministry of RUCC because it both creates and nurtures in members a deeper, unique level of commitment.
- The annual practice and discipline of covenanting holds us together as community; it gives us a way of annually assessing and reaffirming our relationship with one another and our relationship with the divine.
- The common practice of putting a covenant in writing has been suspended through the years both for those physically or mentally unable to complete a written covenant, and for those who just do not want to commit their covenant to writing. Most, but not all, people with whom I’ve talked agree that this flexibility is a positive reflection of our general flexibility on most matters of faith and practice.

I heartily concur with each of these shared understandings, and I want to add one of my own. Written covenant statements—of whatever length—provide me with invaluable information that helps me be a more effective pastor for you. I can better serve you by knowing something of your growth, struggles, hopes, and needs, and together we can better serve the God we love. From a practical standpoint, my own preference is for our annual covenants to be in writing. Those who, for a variety of reasons, cannot or do not wish to write their covenant, are welcome to talk confidentially with me about their intended commitments, and I will take notes that they can sign. Pragmatically, such a written document makes it possible to plan a budget, to select leaders, to create an accurate and informational membership directory, and to pastorally interpret the direction of the church body.

In addition to these rather practical matters of “running the church”, I believe that there is great spiritual value in written covenants. In writing an annual covenant (of whatever length or content) and in the thoughts, prayers, and quiet reflections that precede such writing, a person participates in important spiritual disciplines that provide creative and dynamic ways of learning about oneself in relationship to this particular faith community and to God. For those reasons, I join you in writing an annual covenant.

Though the 31 years of this congregation's life have not brought agreement on a specific form of the covenant, there is widespread agreement that our annual covenanting functions to make this faith community stronger, more cohesive, and more committed to God and to one another.

November is the month for covenant writing. Your covenant form is available from your shepherd leader. If you are not in a shepherd group, and want to covenant, please contact Renee in the church office and a form will be mailed to you. Please complete your covenant form prayerfully. Bring it with you to worship on **Sunday, December 3rd—Covenant Sunday—and we will bless the covenants on the altar.** And remember my office is open for any conversation you wish or need about covenanting.

Thoughts on Covenanting from Jeanne

This will be my first year to formally covenant with RUCC. As an In-Care student for the past 2 years my membership remained with the Congregational Church in Fullerton. But now, through the formal Call of my Associate Minister position, I am able to participate fully in the process of covenant. And I'd like to share a few thoughts from the "new kid on the block's" perspective.

When I first came to RUCC over 2 years ago and was introduced to the idea of "covenant" membership, I was immediately struck by how welcoming that felt. It said to me "we want your ideas, your input, your talents, and your voice. The gifts you have to offer are welcomed and needed in order for our community to reflect God's presence and love." Unlike other places, I didn't feel I needed to earn anyone's approval or put in my time before I could become a full and contributing member of the congregation. What a gift that was/is ... to encourage the process of one's journey, recognizing and affirming it as it unfolds.

I am looking forward to the reflection that my covenanting will involve because I don't believe our journeys ever end. While I may have completed some hurdles recently, my life process continues. And discerning how the Holy is leading me to be with you, will be reflected in the covenant I write. I think it is an exciting opportunity and invite you all to participate. I can only imagine how it will lead to new places of growth and awareness ... the kind of places I love to be in and pray that you also seek! I look forward to walking with you!

Jeanne

Covenant Update

As of September 30, 2006 - **General Fund**

Pledged \$114,819

Received \$ 97,813

Under - 17, 006

President's Report
November 2006

It's covenant time! As you know, we renew our covenants annually. This gives us an opportunity to consider how we want to serve the church in the coming year, how much we can pledge financially, where we are on our spiritual journey, what we need or want from the church. This process by which we become members of the church and renew our commitment keeps us vital, dynamic, engaged and involved. You will be hearing more about covenants from our pastor and our church leaders in the weeks ahead. So I'll put in my two cents here.

Over the past year, the board has had several discussions on how to meet the changing needs of the church resulting from our growth. We have talked about the increased number and variety of activities and projects, especially those in the area of community service and peace and justice. We have more groups using our church, and we are using the facility more. Our youth are involved in exciting activities, including musical fund-raisers and trips to Mexico. We have added staff, expanded staff hours, and made much needed salary adjustments. The increases in facility usage and utility rates have raised our utility costs significantly. We have maintenance and facility needs that should be addressed in the near future (parking lot resurfacing and lighting, etc.).

The "faith line item" of our budget has grown. This line item is actually our deficit spending. Covenanted amounts received for the current year are somewhat under the level expected and we are dipping into the reserves in order to pay the bills.

Now, talking about money in this church is always tricky. You may hear some people say, "We don't talk about money in this church." That can be a blessing. Who wants to hear a constant appeal for more money? But it can be a problem if it keeps information about our financial status from the people who are making the decisions about future budgets and spending levels – namely, you! You have voted to add two new part-time positions this year. In 2007, that will result in an increase in the budget of approximately \$30,000. And you will determine how much income we receive by the amounts that you pledge. And so, I'll be the bad guy and talk about money, but only this one time!

Our monetary needs next year are greater and so I ask you to take this into prayerful consideration as you decide how much you plan to give. For some of you, the decision is easy. You are limited in what you can give, but you give as much as you can. Others of you have mentioned to me that you don't know how much is appropriate to give or what is needed. So I hope that knowing what our expenses are will help you in your decision making. The board is happy to provide more detailed budget information to you if you like. There are ways to give that don't involve giving money but will help save money – helping in the church office, mowing the lawn, or sweeping the leaves from the drain gutters, for instance.

Under the competent leadership of Loring Fiske-Phillips, the Stewards are exploring many creative ways to ensure that we remain financially sound, but responsible stewardship ultimately lies with all of us.

Okay, no more of the "M" word this year. The rest is up to you.

Dianne Landeros, President



Volunteers are always welcome to support the meals program for people with AIDS at First Congregational United Church of Christ in San Bernardino. Some cook a main dish, side dish, or dessert to serve 20 people, and bring it in on Thursday or Friday before 8 a.m. You can call Millie Thomson at 885-4789 if you'd like to sign up to cook something. Or, you can come on Friday mornings between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. to help package the meals and cook or assemble the remaining dishes. The volunteers meet in the church kitchen off the parking lot every Friday morning, 3041 N. Sierra Way, San Bernardino.

Also, tutors or reading partners are always welcome at the Afterschool Homework Center. Our center is open Monday-Thursday from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., and walk-in volunteers are always welcome, either once or regularly. Our director, Sarah Darter, is happy to answer any questions you may have. You can contact her at 886-4911 x104.

Alternative Christmas Faire

Volunteers of all ages are needed for the 2nd annual Alternative Christmas Faire.

Sponsored by FaithActs, the Faire will take place after worship on Sunday 11/12/06 in Covenant Hall from 11:30 until 3:00pm. A light soup and bread meal will be served to compliment the festive holiday atmosphere of music and shopping. Your purchases will support a variety of non-profit and faire-trade organizations working to create a more just and equitable world. Participating groups include Third World Gifts and Handarts, Heifer Project International, Zimbabwe Simukai Child Welfare Agency, and Fair Trade Coffee and Chocolate. You will find all kinds of unique gifts from baskets and weavings to cows, sheep, and goats. Your purchases will give much needed income and resources to people around the world who live in poverty and destitution. All proceeds will go directly to each organization to support their work. We will be advertising this event to the community and inviting their participation as well. Volunteers are needed before worship to set up the market and after worship to sell items.

Please contact Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo or leave your name with Renee in the office if you would like to help, even if just for an hour or so.

New Orleans Work Camp

If you are considering volunteering for the HillTop Rescue and Relief opportunity in New Orleans check out their website at www.HilltopRescue.org for detailed information and photos. Work camp dates are Nov 17-27; Dec 8-18; Dec 27-Jan 8. You are invited to participate during any of these dates for the full 10 days or any portion that you are able. Thanks to the generosity of Art for Heaven Sake, RUCC will be able to provide for plane fare and meals (as needed) for those wishing to participate. There is a sign-up list in the Gathering Area or you can contact Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo at amrucc@yahoo.com for details.

Events at RUCC...

Save the date! Feastings

Please save the evening of
Friday, December 15 at 7:00
for this gala event
at
RUCC.

Come On Down!

You're the next contestant on "The Price is Right"!! We're hoping to hear those words when we take a trip to see a taping of TPIR on November 6th. We have reservations for 25 people and everyone knows they almost always pick someone from the various groups in the audience to come up on stage and try their luck at winning lots of FABULOUS prizes! The other big advantage of going with a group is you can arrive later and still be guaranteed entrance. We'll be leaving Redlands about 8am and we'll plan on having an early lunch at Farmers' Market next door to the CBS Studios. Cost is \$25 per person and includes transportation (we're renting two large vans), gas and a group T-Shirt. Please sign up with Renee in the church office. You must be at least 18 years old. For more information, please contact Loring Fiske-Phillips at loring@pobox.com or 798-6111.

RUCC All-Church Fellowship

The monthly meeting of the RUCC All-Church Fellowship group will take place Sunday, November 26 at 9:00 a.m. in Covenant Hall. They will continue to discuss the book "A Purpose Driven Life."

Meditations to heal the Body & Mind

Kelsang Rak-ma, Resident Teacher at the Dharmachakra Buddhist Center, will teach meditation classes, Wednesday evenings in November, at 7:00 p.m. There will be no class on November 22. The classes are open to people of all faiths and belief (or non-belief!) systems.

Prayer Group

The Prayer Group will meet every Monday morning, 10:30 to 11:30, in the choir room. The first twenty minutes will be beginner/refresher workshop time followed by meditation and silent prayer. All are invited!

Employment Opportunity - Education Director

Redlands United Church of Christ (RUCC). Part time position – 10 hours per week. Must be available to work from 9:00 A.M. to noon each Sunday. Desirable qualifications would be experience with children's programs. Fax resume to (909) 793-5418 or call (909) 798-4501.

Frustrated that "they" just won't take on your views?

Listener's Way Effective Advocacy - Arguing will only make walls higher and gaps wider. Therefore, the Listener's Way method teaches the primacy of listening and empathy as a first step to engaging people with different opinions on issues from personal relationships to social justice, war and peace. Join the Listener's Way workshop on Saturday, November 18, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at RUCC. Presented by Citizens' Action for Peace and American Friends Service Committee. Please register with Katy Ahearn before November 10 at katyahearn@hotmail.com, or call (909) 335-2321.

Feastings

It is time to add RUCC's special holiday tradition to your calendar! The Covenant Choir and Handbell Choir will present their annual "Feastings" event on Friday, December 15 at 7:00 PM. This is a time for you to sit back and be served an elegant meal, be entertained by the choir and musicians, and revel in the spirit and music of the Christmas season.

Our program this year, *Twas the Night*, will feature the beloved poem by Clement C. Moore, and a musical setting of it, as well as handbell selections and special numbers by choir members.

Our dinner, prepared by a local caterer, will be served to you by our choir members. The menu remains to be announced! We will gather at the Wassail Bowl at 7:00 PM, then will be seated and served at 7:30. Tickets are priced at \$23.00 for adults and \$13.00 for

children 10 and under. Tickets will be available and may be purchased after church on Sundays, Nov. 19, 26, Dec. 4 and 10. Reservations may also be made with Renee during office hours through Dec. 12. Childcare will be provided if needed--please specify when making reservations. Join us for this festive occasion!

NOVEMBER WORSHIP LEADERS

5	Floyd Orr
12	Barb Lord
19	Gal Glanville
26	Sally Cummings



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1	Janet Greenfield
5	Morris Cantley Abraham Campbell
10	Duncan Campbell
12	Jill Kirchner Mike Moran
15	Vickie Wilson
16	Carole Wesson Sara Schoonmaker
20	Kerry Dunn
23	Luther Austin-Brecher Ross Thrasher
26	William Badgley

...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.

58th Annual Pilgrim Place Festival

Please join us on Friday, November 10th or Saturday, November 11th from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for this fun festival for the child in all of us. There will be crafts to make, a craft fair and bazaar, and lots of goodies to eat. Admission is free! For further information, please call (909) 621-9581 or go to www.pilgrimplace.org.

At the Getty Center

Opening in October, *The Gospels in Medieval Manuscript Illumination*. Through the Middle Ages the New Testament's Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were considered of paramount importance. This exhibition explores the major forms of illustration associated with the Gospels. The exhibition complements the exhibition *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai* opening in November. Further information can be found at www.getty.edu.

Dead Sea Scrolls

The San Diego Natural History Museum, in partnership with The Israel Antiquities Authority, will bring a number of authentic Dead Sea Scrolls to San Diego. The exhibit will open June 29, 2007 and run through December 31 of that year. The exhibition will include lectures, films and audio tours, and is timed to coincide with the 2007 conference of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature which will be held in San Diego. Learn more about this historic exhibit and other offerings at the Natural History museum by going to www.sdnhm.org and clicking on "Exhibits."



Getting to Know You...

by Betty Jacobs

Don Hines is another person who found our church when driving by and being attracted to the beautiful setting amidst the orange groves and trees.

I knew Don only on a “hello” basis and when I asked him if I could interview him his answer was, “That would be pretty boring.” I assured him that I believe everyone’s life story is interesting. And indeed, his life is.

How many Californians do you know who were born, grew up, and still live in the house in which his father and grandfather lived their lives? Don’s home is in Colton and was built in 1908. It has nine rooms but was called a cottage in those days. His dad worked for the Post Office and his mom was a housewife.

Don went to Colton High School and then to Woodbury College which was then a business college. In 1953, the Korean War era, he served in the Army in Panama. His duty was to guard the Panama Canal.

When back in Colton, he became a Loan Officer at the Citizen’s National Bank, which after two name changes became the Bank of America. He worked mainly with professional clientele. He was one of the fortunate people who loved his job. He retired twenty years ago. For the first ten of those years Don worked out at the local gym but says he was never an “exercise nut.” He now enjoys the easier relaxation of reading, especially mysteries.

I asked if he was rattling around in a nine room house. His answer, “No, every room is filled with stuff.” It turns out that he really meant that stuff is “stuff.” He explained that stuff just somehow gravitates to his home. But his passion is for good stuff – California art, mostly watercolor. He especially hopes to acquire more of Milford Zornes’ work. This interview was the week before the Art Show so by the time you read this I hope he has added to his collection.

Don has been a church goer all of his life. He is a Trustee of the Colton Library, volunteers at the Colton Museum, and when needed, at the Chamber of Commerce. He says that one of the joys of retirement is that he is just as busy as he wants to be – a happy thing!

November Scripture Readings

November 5: *Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Mark 12:28-34.*
November 12: *Psalm 105:1-11; Deuteronomy 7:7-13; Luke 1:67-79*
November 19: *Psalm 16; Hebrews 10:19-25; Mark 12:38-44*
November 26 *Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 26:26-29; John 18:12-17, 25-27; 21:15-17*

Minister – Rev. Dr. Sharon R. Graff
Associate Minister of Outreach – Rev. 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 – Youth Volunteers
Custodian – Jay Grayson
Church office hours: 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Monday – Friday
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