

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

February 2008

Contemplative Worship Service – 8:00 a.m.
Sundays, February 3, 10, 17, and 24

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

The Prayer Group will meet Mondays, February 4, 11, 18, and 25
at 10:30 a.m. in the Choir Room

Ash Wednesday – February 6 – Taizé Worship Service 7:00 p.m.

Church Board Retreat – Tuesday, February 12, 5:30 p.m.
in Covenant Hall.

The Sandwich Group will meet on Tuesday, February 19,
at 12:00 in the Pastor's office.

Lenten Soup Suppers and F.A.I.R. Conversations
Wednesdays, February 20,27, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

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

Jubilee Ringers rehearsal on Sundays, 12:00 p.m.
Celebration Ringers rehearsal on Thursdays, 6:15 p.m.
Covenant Choir Rehearsal on Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.

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

From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

“...but those who wait for God shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”
—Isaiah 40:31

Advice from my doctoral advisor in 1998 on how to complete my dissertation project: write one paragraph at a time...

Advice from my first walking marathon coach in 2001 on how to complete a 26.2 mile marathon: put one foot in front of the other...

Advice from my first knitting teacher in 2004 on how to create a large prayer shawl: make one stitch at a time...

While the philosophical truth that “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” is obvious to anyone who has completed a large project or accomplished something taking significant effort, when it comes to our spiritual journeys, we tend to think more like the prophet Isaiah’s broad strokes. We are supposed to fly like the eagles, are we not? We are supposed to be running without a trace of weariness and we are supposed to keep walking without fainting. Practically speaking, who in the world can accomplish that immediately? No human I’ve ever met! Such endurance—physically or spiritually—necessitates a high level of training.

So, spiritually speaking, how do we soar in our faith? Simply put, by taking one step at a time. This “one step” for you might be making time for 15 minutes of prayer each day, or taking a walk in the park, or spending time with a theological book, or sitting in silence, or writing in a journal. There are endless possibilities of what, for each of us, constitutes that “one step.” After several of these “one steps”—be they a commitment to prayer or silence or reading or writing or whatever activity helps you look up and out instead of down and out—you will look back and see that your spirit is, indeed, beginning to soar! Like a marathon walker, one mile will lead you, quite naturally, to the next and the next. And pretty soon, you’ll be putting that metaphoric medal around your neck!

The ancient Hebrew people had it right, practically speaking, I believe. Every seven years was a “Sabbath year”—the ground was to lie fallow, and generally little work was to be done, so that both people and land could be replenished through rest. They recognized that rest was an important step toward enjoying a richer and fuller life. While there is no archaeological evidence (yet!) that such was ever the case, I like the concept nonetheless. Taking a break from the routine in order to enjoy a different kind of activity is refreshing for us humans! Sabbath rest offers us what we know we need: a new perspective, a refreshing recess, time for activities and relationships we love and sometimes ignore.

2008 is a year in which Sabbath rest is a gift we are giving one another...or, perhaps more accurately stated, a gift that Spirit is giving to each of us! My 3-month sabbatical is being planned to occur from May 13th – August 13th, and it will include activities that “make my heart sing!” I believe that Spirit is inviting all of us to do the same... As we each prepare for this Sabbath time, when our spirits will be soaring with those eagles, I invite us to be in training now by taking those all-important “one steps.”

Blessings,



*"Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God..." 1st John 4:7*
Lent 2008

Lent again...this year earlier than most. We have barely put away holiday decorations and tree lights, when it is time to pull out the sackcloth and ashes for a journey into the shadowy unknown of the spirit. In your covenants this year, many of you noted the need to move inward; to focus on matters of the Spirit; to (in my words) be attentive to opening the highway between head and heart as did Jesus the Christ. Sometimes such a journey can feel a bit intimidating or even frightening. But it needn't be. To the ancient Celtic Christians—whose influence was felt during the first 1,000 years of Christian history and whose works we will be studying together during this sabbatical year—such a journey was known as a pilgrimage, a journey of mind, body, and spirit that took a person to unexpected places and which was undertaken, not in fear, but out of love and joy! These faithful ancestors of ours sought to follow the ways of the Christ, and in this Lenten season, they invite us to do the same: to do the inward work in order to strengthen and focus our external work...to follow the model of Jesus, by regularly hiding out in the mountains and hillsides so that our return to the flatlands will be all the more Spirit-filled and Spirit-led. May this Lenten journey be for each of us a deepening two-way journey between head and heart!

February 3 – "Cows, Milk, and the Kingdom of God" – Communion Sunday & Honoring Celtic Saint Brigid
Exodus 24:12-18; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9; Readings from the Northumbria Community.

Yes...we are still UCC! Our honoring of Celtic Saint Brigid today offers us a spiritual bridge between the ancient and the contemporary, the pre-Christian and our familiar and beloved Christian story. Wait...do not be afraid...be attentive...these are mountain messages that come from on high in today's scriptures. On this "pre-Lent" Sunday, we will explore the legendary stories of Brigid and receive a gift from the mountains to guide our Lenten journeys.

Wednesday, February 6 – Ash Wednesday – 7:00 pm in our sanctuary
Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-17; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent by recalling the very first sign of God's love—the gentle divine touch on our foreheads soiled by a bit of dust from the ground—reminding us that we are made from earth and filled with Spirit. The evening's scriptures nudge us to pray discreetly and to give secretly, so that justice will realize its quiet revolution throughout the land. Music from the Taizé community in France will guide us as we focus our thoughts and center our prayers. Our friends from Mentone Community Congregational Church will be joining us for this service.

February 10 – "The One and the Many" – First Sunday in Lent
Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

The doorway into Lent this year is through the question of individualism vis-à-vis community, or phrased as did Mr. Spock during his alleged death scene in *The Wrath of Khan*, "the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the one..." Is our inward spiritual journey one that only we can enjoy and from which only we each can benefit, OR is it a journey from which many will find healing, justice, peace, OR is it, perhaps, both?

February 17 – "To Know is to Believe" – Second Sunday in Lent
Genesis 12:1-4a; Romans 4:1-5, 13-21; John 3:1-17

What does it mean to say we have faith? Is faith about believing in certain tenets, as in the lines of a creed? Does faith bring peace of mind? Living in faith means what exactly? Thankfully, we don't have to begin at square one in pondering these questions, for our brothers Abraham and Jesus have walked that road ahead of us. Labyrinthine though this journey of faith may often appear, ultimately and foundationally the journey is about love more than fear, about salvation more than condemnation, and about joy more than despair. Want to walk together for a bit?

February 24 – "GroundWater" – Third Sunday in Lent
Exodus 17:1-17; John 4:5-42

A typically "low" Sunday in Lent, with scriptures about whiny wanderers and complaining pilgrims, this day offers us a treasure in the trove of God's love. Come and hear the very good news that right there in the middle of our difficulties or struggles or doubts or even whining God is present with a towel and basin, with refreshing water right out of the ground! And, even more than offering us the gift of water, God offers reconciliation and healing for our hurting souls and bodies. We will embody this healing presence of God by offering each other the exquisitely refreshing gift of washing one another's hands.

Lenten Series

F.A.I.R. Conversations (FaiAnd Immigration Reform)

Wednesdays, February 20, 27, March 5, 12
6:00-8:00 p.m.
Covenant Hall

In an attempt to open discussion and provide for both intellectual and spiritual growth, RUCC will host a four week series on the issue of “Immigration” each Wednesday from February 20 through March 12. The evenings will begin with a Soup supper which will be organized by the Shepherd Groups. This series will provide a historical, economic, political and social look at the topic and will try to tie the issue with the scriptures. Ed Gomez, RUCC church member and Professor of History at Valley College will be our major presenter. All are welcome! For additional information, please contact Rev. Graff, Kathie or Rich Blakley, or Ed Gomez.

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Shhhhhh.....Silence Anyone?

Is the Spirit nudging you towards giving yourself the gift of a weekend of silence with friends from RUCC? A retreat center with individual cabins is again available to us in nearby Angelus Oaks. In recent silent retreats, we’ve enjoyed spaces of silence punctuated by meals in which we speak. This “dance” of silence and speaking has been both refreshing and revealing to all participants. You are invited to consider this for yourself—male, female, adult, youth. If you are interested, please contact Kristi Campbell or Jill Spencer at soar15@quixnet.net, or by phone at 909.862.0809.

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Another opportunity study ONA “hot button” scriptures

Thanks to Mary Belle Carter and the group of RUCC’ers that met last fall to share ONA stories, we now have another opportunity to continue the discussion. On **Sundays, February 10th, 17th and 24th, 6:30-8:00 p.m.**, ALL are invited to join John Walsh and Sharon Graff to discuss the various “hot-button” scriptures relative to homosexuality. You know the ones...you’ve probably been in conversation when they’ve been quoted (or hammered!). Come and learn some more welcoming ways of interpreting these passages. Locations Church Office.

Jesus Seminar on the Road at Irvine United Congregational Church February 29-March 1

Two lively progressive biblical scholars will present a “Jesus Seminar on the Road” at Irvine United Congregational Church on February 29 and March 1.

The two speakers are longtime fellows of the Jesus Seminar/Westar Institute of Santa Rosa, CA. Robert J. Miller, Ph.D., is professor religious studies at Juniata College in Pennsylvania, and is the author of Born Divine: The Birth of Jesus and Other Sons of God, among other books. James A. Veitch, Ph.D., taught religious studies for many years at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand. “Jesus Seminars on the Road” are presented nationwide, and in a style that is readily understood by church members who are not biblical scholars themselves.

Sharon Graff has attended Jesus Seminar conferences in Santa Rosa, and she draws upon the insights and findings of the Jesus Seminar in her teaching and preaching.

Friday evening’s lecture will be “The Search for the Historical Jesus” from 7:30-9:00 p.m., for which the cost is \$15. Saturday workshops will be from 9:30 a.m. to noon on “The Jesus of the First Century,” and from 1:2:30-4:00 p.m. on “The Jesus of the Twenty-First Century.” Each Saturday workshop costs \$25, or #50 for all Friday night and Saturday sessions, plus \$40 for an additional family member. Reservations may be made with your credit card by February 8th at 877-523-3545 (toll free). Irvine United Congregational Church is at 4915 Alton Parkway, Irvine, CA—phone, 949-733-0220, ext. 202. Books published by the Jesus Seminar/Westar Institute will be available. For more information, please contact Phil Robb through the RUCC Directory.

Sharing Resources, Changing Lives

One Great Hour of Sharing will be celebrated on Sunday, March 2 by the congregations of the United Church of Christ, along with congregations in eight other denominations.

Your gift on March 2 will offer hope and well-being to people all around the world, helping them to make vital basic improvements in their lives, to overcome poverty, illiteracy, illness, and the dangers of wars and disasters.

This year’s theme is “Sharing Resources, Changing Lives.” The monetary resources we share will change the lives of people facing violence in Sudan, people suffering from AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, people reeling from devastation in Indonesia, people starving in poverty in India, and people recovering from various disasters around the United States. Sharing our resources really changes lives in more than 80 countries, as the United Church of Christ works with highly effective local mission partners, Church World Service, and Action by Churches Together. UCC Refugee Ministries is totally supported by our annual offering.

On Sunday March 2, bring your offering with you to church. Make checks payable to “Redlands United Church of Christ,” and include “One Great Hour of Sharing” on the check’s memo line. If you contribute in cash, put it in a special marked offering envelope. If you are unable to be at church on March 2, just mail your gift to the church office. Members of our congregation contributed \$896 in 2006, and \$1,313 in 2007. Our sisters and brothers, who are in desperate need, implore us to open our hearts with even greater generosity in 2008.

Events at RUCC...

First Friday Films
presents
"The Ground Truth"

February 1 at 7:00 p.m.

This documentary explores what really happens to our young men and women before, during and after their military service in Iraq.

Memorial Service

A memorial service will be held for Don Arnegard at RUCC on Saturday, February 2, at 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary.

Prayer Group

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

Alpha Bible Study

The Alpha Bible Study group will meet on Tuesday, February 5 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Betty Jacobs, 45 Sparrow Court, Redlands. All are welcome!

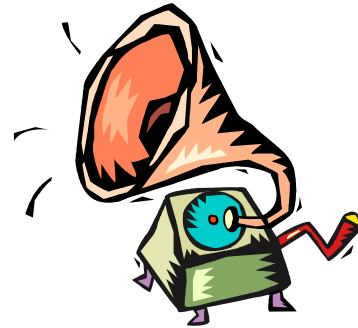
Meditations to heal the Body & Mind

Meditation classes will continue on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. in Covenant Hall. The fee is \$10 per class or five classes for \$40. You can join any classes you like; you don't have to join at the beginning of a series.

Citizens' Action for Peace

Citizens' Action for Peace celebrates the spirit and power of community with a viewing of "An Act of Conscience" on Sunday, February 10, at 1:00 p.m. in Covenant Hall.

Coming-in March



The RUCC Annual Rummage Sale

Saturday, March 1 from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Please bring your treasures to the church
beginning Monday, February 25 to
Thursday, February 28.

Please contact Opal Inman at 307-0859
for further information or if you would
like to volunteer to help.

FEBRUARY WORSHIP LEADERS

3 Bill Maury-Holmes
10
17
24



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

7 Sharon Graff
10 Tera Favreau-Sorvillo
12 Paul Romano
Jacob McMeans
Bailey Dickey
15 James Hester
Amanda Colclough
16 Deb Austin-Brecher
18 Carole Beswick
Andrea Morics
22 Maryann Stanson
23 Sarah Schuiling
26 Paul Burton
28 Kent Taylor

...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 meet Friday, February 1, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at University United Methodist Church, 940 E. Colton Ave., Redlands. There will be a presentation on the Heifer Project.



Christian Counseling Service

Christian Counseling Service needs your help, by being the first caring face or voice people meet as they come in to our agency. We are looking for individuals who can greet incoming families and direct incoming calls. Please call 793-1078 for further information

Music, Animals, and Prayer

Eco-theologian, Dr. Jay McDaniel will be speaking at Brea Congregational UCC, 300 East Imperial Hwy., Brea on Wednesday, February 13, at 7:00 p.m. Dr. McDaniel has written extensively on animal rights, sustainable living, process theology, and peace studies. For further information, please call 714.529.3014.

Chapman University

Chapman University Founders Day Celebration will be on March 8, 2008. The guest speakers will be Todd Adams and Mary Donovan Turner. As always, Founders Day will be a great time to celebrate Chapman's dynamic Disciple-related heritage and will include a chance to meet all the wonderful DOC students. Registration fees are \$30 per person. For further information please call (714) 997-6760 or at www.chapman.edu.

Center for Process Studies

The Center for Process Studies presents "The Legacy and Lure of John B. Cobb, Jr." February 14-17, 2008 at the Claremont School of Theology. For more information and registration details, please call 909.621.5330 or visit www.ctr4process.org.

February Scripture Readings

February 3: *Exodus 24:12-18; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9;*
 Readings from the Northumbria Community
February 6: *Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-17; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21*
February 10: *Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11*
February 17 : *Genesis 12:1-4a; Romans 4:1-5, 13-21; John 3:1-17*
February 24: *Exodus 17:1-17; John 4:5-42*

Minister – Rev. Dr. Sharon R. Graff
Organist/Choir Director – Dr. Taylor Ruhl
Handbell Director – Craig Colclough
Youth Director – Craig Colclough
Education Director – Amanda Colclough
Administrative Assistant – Carla Becerril
Seminary Intern – Patrick Ioakimedes
Sunday Child Care – Leah Lane
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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