

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

April 2008

Contemplative Worship Service – 8:00 a.m.
Sundays, April 6, 13, 20 and 27

Communion Sunday - Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Sunday, April 6

First Friday Film Series will present “Fast Food Nation”
Friday, April 4, at 7:00 p.m.

The Prayer Group will meet Mondays, April 7, 14, 21 and 28
at 10:30 a.m. in the Choir Room

Church Board will meet Tuesday, April 8, 7:00 p.m.

The Sandwich Group will meet on Tuesday, April 15
at 12:00 p.m. in the Pastor’s office.

Stewards will meet on Tuesday, April 22, 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 group
April meetings ~ check www.facebook.com ~ RUCC Youth Group

From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*“...They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers...”*

—Acts 2:42

Sounds like a sabbatical to me!

The above description of one part of the early Christian community also seems to be describing the kind of sabbatical period for which we have been preparing for over a year now. Our sabbatical—set to begin on May 13 and extend through August 13—is a shared sabbatical, with our journeys of faith continuing on in parallel fashion, yet occurring in different places. While I will be on sabbatical and traveling to my “holy land” of England, Scotland, and Ireland, you also are invited to be on a type of sabbatical right here at home in Redlands UCC.

The word “sabbatical” comes from the root word, “Sabbath” which means a kind of holy rest. Sabbath, as you recall from reading the creation stories in Genesis, is a gift from God, intended to provide a healthy balance to the productivity of life. All nature participates in this gift—though plants, animals, and other creatures seem more practiced at Sabbath than are we humans! So, in this ensuing sabbatical, we are not focusing on production. Rather, we are intentionally putting ourselves into a period of holy rest—which promises to bring with it a deeper attentiveness to the Spirit’s nudging in our midst. Sabbatical is not about staying home from church; neither is it holing up in one’s own interior journey. Sabbatical—as we are defining it for us at RUCC—is a time of learning and parties, a time of worshiping together and praying together, a time of spiritual growth of the sort that is fun!

As I have shared at both of our last annual congregational meetings, and you also are hearing from our Sabbatical Committee (ably chaired by Eric Naftzger), the theme of this sabbatical is “Celtic Spirituality.” My hope is that, over these past several years of enjoying Celtic Sundays, we have become fond of this particular stream of Christianity. With its intricate and intertwined artwork, its earth-based and nature-loving theology, and its playfulness of creatively seeing God in all, I believe that Celtic Spirituality offers our congregation a friendly traveling companion on our journey of faith.

This sabbatical promises to be one, like the early Christian community, in which the “apostles” will be teaching—in the form of several of our own members preaching each Sunday and leading various groups. This sabbatical promises to be one of “breaking bread and prayers”—with our customary inspiring worship rituals of communion, praying, singing. This sabbatical promises to be one of “fellowship”—as parties and study groups invite each of you into a more joy-filled faith!

A couple of years ago, when I had returned from my first trip to Ireland and England, we had a class in Celtic Spirituality in which many of you participated. We learned that, according to the oral tradition they left behind, the ancient Christian Celts apparently had prayers for many of their daily activities. The idea of praying throughout the day—literally with nearly every part of their routine—was intended to bring them into an attentiveness of God’s presence with them in each moment, every event, and all persons. Such attentiveness is work and it doesn’t come without some effort and intention. In that spirit as we enter sabbatical together, I share with you a traditional Celtic greeting spoken upon entering the house of one who is working: “God’s blessing on the work...”

Blessings and much love,

Sharon

Worship Themes for April

“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

That first Easter season was a precursor to the one we are now living nearly 2,000 years later. It was busy, with disciples wondering and praying and conversing and working to spread the good news of new life. It was filled with energy, the energy generated by an empty tomb. It was loving, as the emerging Christ-followers banded together for bread-breaking and song and prayer and fellowship. So, too, are we at RUCC busily living out our faith in this season following Easter Sunrise! Some of our flock are just returning from our second mission/work trip to the Gulf Coast, and are eager to share the good news of God’s love they saw there. Others are completing their work of planning for our shared sabbatical experience of Celtic Spirituality, and are eager to lead the rest of the congregation into a deeper appreciation of this early expression of Christian spirituality. Come, friends in faith, let us walk these weeks together, open to hearing what the Spirit has to say to the church!

April 6 – Communion Sunday – John Walsh, preaching

Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

Today we keep in prayer our Biloxi work/mission folk who are completing their building tasks and preparing to return home. Having been to the Gulf Coast twice for such trips, John Walsh helps focus our thoughts, prayers, and theology on this intersection of the inner and outer journeys of faith.

April 13 – “Living Sheep-ishly”

Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 2:19-25; Psalm 23; John 10:1-10

Sheep run away frightened...sheep come when called...sheep recognize their shepherd’s voice...sheep scatter and gather...sheep are wounded...sheep are healed...sheep are stalked...sheep are safely loved... All of this and more is true of sheep, and coincidentally, of us as well. All are invited to the fold this day!

April 20 – “Faraway Cornerstones?” – Earth Day and Biloxi Work Trip

Acts 7:55-60; 1 Peter 2:2-10; Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16; John 14:1-14

A few weeks ago, Mary Belle Carter wisely noted in her mission moment that when we send money to meet needs after a disaster, then we are in effect, present ourselves with those in need. Come and hear how your money and your loving energy traveled all the way to Biloxi, Mississippi in the bodies, minds, and spirits of the RUCC workers. Standing on the earth together, we’ll see that the distance between Redlands and Biloxi is only as far as our God-created heartstrings can stretch...

April 27 – Seminary Intern, Patrick Ioakimedes, preaching

Acts 17:22-31; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21

A day for giving thanks—to God for bringing Patrick to our community this past academic year, to Patrick for his work and growth among us, and to Spirit and Christ who now lead Patrick’s journey from Redlands into the future! Come and hear Patrick’s final message to this community of faith...

Worship will be richer and deeper with your presence. I especially look forward to sharing this Easter season with you during our sabbatical year.

President's Message

There are so MANY exciting things happening at RUCC, it's hard to decide what to do! Bible study? Lenten series? Hot button scriptures? Contemplative service? 10:30 service? Choir? Handbells? Prayer group? Yard sale? Art show? Retreat? Board meeting? Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera (please read using your best Yul Brynner voice from *The King and I*).

One of the reasons RUCC offers so many opportunities is to meet the diverse needs of our church family and community. When people start to express a need, or others perceive a need, our congregation and staff are quick to address it. We have a bias for action and would rather try it and see what happens rather than wait for someday. There's a great song by singer-songwriter Tom Chapin (brother of Harry Chapin) called "A Study's About to Begin." It starts with a politician telling their constituents that of course, something is being done. In fact, a study is about to begin. In the last verse, his wife asks him to mow the lawn because it's up to her knees. He responds by saying he's already working on it ... that a study's about to begin!

There's nothing wrong with surveys and studies. They definitely have their place! But they shouldn't take up all our energy and keep us from getting the *real* work done. And that's a place where RUCC really shines.

The other reason for so many varied offerings is that people take the initiative. This is a church full of people who are willing to roll up their own sleeves and get started. They don't stand on the sidelines and shout instructions; they jump right in and just do it (I hope I don't have to pay a royalty fee to Nike to use that phrase!). Many organizations complain that 20% of the people do 80% of the work. At RUCC, more than any other group I've been a part of, the work is spread out among a large percentage of people.

So, how do YOU decide what to do? Perhaps you can do it all. Perhaps you need to choose one activity per week that speaks to your heart. Perhaps you'll be a leader, a follower, a cheerleader, an organizer, a collaborator, or any role that fits your personality and fills a need in the church, the community and your soul. Whatever it is, you are welcome to be it, to do it, and to be loved through it here at Redlands United Church of Christ.

With optimism and hope,
Loring Fiske-Phillips
President

IF YOU ARE COASTING YOU ARE GOING DOWN HILL

The sabbatical leave time (May 13 through August 13) is not to be a time when the RUCC is coasting. This will be a time for rest, rejuvenation and spiritual growth. When the Lilly Foundation set up the Sabbatical Grant program they made it very clear that it was to be a time for a congregation and the pastor both to be on sabbatical. The grant applications were to be made by the congregation for both the congregation and the pastor. It is easy to recognize the need for individual ministers to have a sabbatical leave for rest, travel, rejuvenation and learning. The same concept is new for congregations and is a little bit more difficult to understand and put together. Congregations periodically go through interim periods between the leaving of one minister and the calling of a new minister. During interim periods often the congregation needs to examine itself and its needs, usually with the guidance of a trained interim minister. This is not the same as a sabbatical leave period. Our minister will be returning to resume full ministerial activities with a renewed outlook and being refreshed and rested. For our congregation to get the most out of Sharon's sabbatical leave, we also need to be rested, refreshed and renewed when she returns. The sabbatical committee is busy developing ideas and plans for the RUCC sabbatical leave. We do not plan on just coasting. Ideas are still being accepted from members and friends for the congregation and may be given to any of the committee members (Sally Cummings, Barbie Fiske-Phillips, Kristi Campbell, Bill Maury-Holmes and Eric Naftzger). An outline of events, activities and subjects for the sabbatical time should be ready in time for the May Wanderings.

Eric Naftzger
Chairman

Events at RUCC...

First Friday Films
presents
"Fast Food Nation"

April 4 at 7:00 p.m.

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/refresher workshop time followed by meditation and silent prayer. All are invited!

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 will be showing the film, "The U.S. vs. John Lennon", which focuses on Lennon's politicization both during and after the Vietnam War and the U.S. government's efforts to deport him for fear of the threat he posed to the nation. Sunday, April 13, at 1:30 p.m. in Covenant Hall.

Alpha Bible Study Group

We will be resuming our twice monthly Bible Study Group on Tuesday, April 1st at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Betty Jacobs. We will be starting at Luke chapter 6 and verse 17. On April 15, we will meet at the home of Dorothy Landeros. Newcomers are welcome!

Cummings Shepherd Group

The Cummings Shepherd group will meet in Covenant Hall on Sunday, April 6 at 12:00 p.m.

Buchanan Shepherd Group

The Buchanan Shepherd group will meet at the Buchanan's home, 1320 Garden Street, Redlands on April 20 at 12:00 p.m.

FACEBOOK

New communication venue for our youth group. www.facebook.com When logged in look under "groups" for "RUCC Youth Group" or search "RUCC Youth Group" in the Facebook search engine which is at the top left corner of each page.

APRIL WORSHIP LEADERS

- 6 Karen Walsh
 13 Ken Hurley
 20 Biloxi Work Trip Crew
 27 Colleen Kintner



*You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. **1 Peter 1:18-19***

When Steve was a young boy his mother collected S&H green stamps. Merchants gave the stamps whenever she bought products at their stores. Every several months Steve would help his mother paste the stamps into special books. His mom would bring out several shoeboxes full of sheets of stamps. For the evening Steve and his mother would paste forty stamps on each page until all 30 pages were filled. After the books were filled, Steve and his mom would look through a special catalogue to choose their gift. The completed books would then be brought to the local redemption center where the books were "redeemed" for a card table, a picnic thermos, or some other valuable merchandise.

Do you doubt your value? Do you sometimes wonder what you are really worth? Keep in mind that you are redeemed. Not with green stamps, but with the Blood of Jesus. When you doubt your value, remember that God thought you were worth the price!

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Susan Thompson
 3 Matthew Kolpien
 5 Adam Dewey
 8 Janelle Bradford
 10 Galilee Glanville
 Kristen Cameron
 Jay Grayson
 11 Linden Taylor
 12 Betty Jacobs
 16 Jean Macomber
 17 Tricia Thrasher
 Virginia Michaela Henry
 19 Hannah McMeans
 Bonnie Pierce
 Dana Hawley-Zechlin
 21 Corey Dickey
 Sally Cummings
 22 Jean Williams
 23 Patricia Schindler
 24 William Graff
 Miz Becker
 25 Jennifer Hawley-Zechlin
 27 Lauren Waters
 30 Leslie Hall

...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.

Cummings Peace Lecture

RUCC's very own Ed Gomez is this year's speaker for the Cummings Peace Lecture at the University of Redlands. Scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 7:00 pm in the Casa Loma Room, the lecture is free and open to the public. Ed is Professor and Chair of the History Department at Valley College in San Bernardino, and will speak on "The Politics of Immigration."

Church Women United

Church Women United, presenting: **Peace Corp Experience.** Guest speaker: Paula Akompong on April 4, 2008 at 10:00 a.m., at the First Presbyterian Church, 100 Cajon Street, Redlands. Refreshments will be served. Bring a friend!

Women's Spirituality Retreat

June 6-8, 2008 - U.C.C. Women's Spirituality Retreat Discovering Our Faith Stories. Join us for a weekend full of spirituality and rejuvenation. This is a time to reconnect with your inner spirit and find peace and healing. This exciting, but relaxing weekend will be led by last year's facilitator, Rev. Lisa Maddox. Cost is \$100.00 Registration

can be filled out as a group or individually. All forms available at www.pilgrimpinescamp.org Registration deadline is May 16, 2008. For more information contact (909) 797-1821.

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.

March Scripture Readings

April 6:	<i>Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35</i>
April 13:	<i>Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 2:19-25; Psalm 23; John 10:1-10;</i>
April 20	<i>Acts 7:55-60; 1 Peter 2:2-10; Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16; John 14:1-14</i>
April 27 :	<i>Acts 17:22-31; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21</i>

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
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