

# WANDERINGS

*A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose*

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

**May 2008**

Contemplative Worship Service – 8:00 a.m.  
Worship Service – 10:30 a.m.  
Sundays, May 4, 11, 18 and 25

Celebration Service in San Bernardino  
Sunday, May 18 at 10:00 a.m.

Communion Sunday - Worship Service 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday, May 11

First Friday Film Series  
Friday, May 2 at 7:00 p.m.

The Prayer Group will meet Mondays, May 5, 12, 19 and 26  
at 10:30 a.m. in the Choir Room

Bible 102 will meet Mondays at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Office  
Beginning May 19

Alpha Bible Study  
Tuesdays May 6 and May 20 at 7:00 p.m.

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

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

Stewards will meet on Tuesday, May 27, at 7:00 p.m.

Covenant Choir Rehearsal on Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.

Middle school and High school youth group  
May meetings ~ check [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) ~ RUCC Youth Group

## From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*“...The church is not the pastor...”  
—Ruth Durrant, RUCC longtime member*

*“The church is not a building,  
the church is not a steeple,  
the church is not a dwelling place,  
the church is the people...”  
—Avery and Marsh, songwriters*

I grew up in a church that prided itself on the biblical notion of the “priesthood of all believers.” The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—a.k.a. “Disciples”—nudged me into leadership from my earliest memories of church. They invited me into the pulpit before I ever considered attending seminary; they welcomed me to preside at communion, saying the words of institution before I was ordained; they delighted in my singing and playing musical instruments in worship while still a child and youth.

The priesthood of all believers meant that anyone—yes, ANYONE—was considered qualified to do any of the usual ministerial tasks...from preaching to calling on the sick to leading worship to teaching Bible studies and conducting prayer groups and even to presiding at communion. That last one has been a bit difficult for this former-Disciple-now-UCC to revise!

On a recent Sunday, while in conversation about our upcoming sabbatical, I was reminded of this impressionable upbringing as one longtime RUCC member noted that there is no need for anyone to stress about my absence, for, as she so wisely quipped, “The church is not the pastor...!” I couldn’t agree more! All will be lovingly and effectively cared for during the three months of sabbatical. Sally Burton, fresh from her completed seminary degree and internship at the San Bernardino UCC, will be in the office three mornings a week to care for your pastoral concerns and will also attend meetings to help coordinate all your efforts in one direction. Countless others will serve as Bible study leaders, prayer group participants, preachers, worship leaders, singers, organizers, cooks, and Summer Series facilitators. In other words, our vibrant church will continue its vibrancy and growth in my absence!

During this three-month absence (from May 13-August 13) you are releasing me from all pastoral duties and responsibilities, and I am promising to stay released! This means that when we happen to see one another around town, no talking church! No matter how hard I beg to know what’s going on (!), please help me keep some distance and continue trusting all of you who are making this incredible time possible. Further, this sabbatical gives you the opportunity to learn from one another, to have fun together, and to participate with our elected and appointed leaders in being the church.

For the 25+ years I’ve been in ministry, I have never been offered such a wonderful gift as a sabbatical! I am profoundly grateful—to the committee for their persistent and loving commitment to make this happen; to the church board and other leaders for their encouraging participation in the planning; to all of you for your enthusiastic prayerful and financial support of this sabbatical! You have truly shown—and will continue to reveal—that this church’s strength is the people.

Please know that as we enter this sabbatical season, I will carry you on my journeys to Cambria (for a week of silence), to Ireland (where John and I get to explore ancient stone circles), to Scotland (as we walk in the steps of St. Columba), to Stonehenge (as I spend hours and days listening to the stories that emanate from these ancient stones), and finally back to the Domehome (for a time of attentive integration of the reading and reflection). And, honestly, while I know that great lessons are just around the corner for each of us in this sabbatical, I cannot wait to return to begin sharing them with you again!

Blessings and much love,

*Sharon*

## Worship Themes for May

*“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God...” 1<sup>st</sup> 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! We are completing our 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!

### **May 4 – Music Sunday – “Praising God”**

*Psalm 100, Psalm 51, Psalm 19, Psalm 98, Psalm 150, Psalm 46*

An annual celebration of gratitude for the gifts of music, this Music Sunday features the Spirit whose voice and message will be heard through choirs, instrumentalists, handbells, and you! Bring your singing voice and a cheerful heart!

### **May 11 – “Gift-Giving” – Pentecost Sunday and Communion Sunday**

*Acts 2:1-21; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; John 7:37-39 and 20:19-23*

Thank God for the gifts of the Spirit! Through them, we grow and learn. Because of them, this church is stronger each year. In them, the ministry of Christ flourishes and God’s love is continually revealed. Today we celebrate the gifts of Spirit—dramatically experienced among the first Christ-followers on an unlikely Hebrew agricultural holiday, Pentecost—and now apparent as we look around our growing community of faith. The author of John was inspired when he or she had Jesus promise that “out of believers’ hearts shall flow rivers of living water...” and “Peace be with you...” Come and share in a drink of refreshing Pentecost Peace...

### **May 18 – “Celebration”**

We will begin our Sabbatical leave by traveling to San Bernardino First Congregational Church to worship with them. This is a unique opportunity because our own member of RUCC, Sally Burton, will be preaching and celebrating the completion of her internship. See page 5 for details of this adventure!

### **May 25**

*John 13:21-26; John 19:25-27; John 20:2; John 21:7 and 21:2-23*

Eric Naftzger will be preaching on the beloved disciple.

## President's Message

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, in a stirring service in Covenant Hall and the garden, the congregation heard the stories of our delegation from the Biloxi work trip. These six intrepid volunteers gave up a week of their spring break / vacation to go and participate in the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast, still in great need nearly three years after the utter devastation of hurricane Katrina.

If you were there, you were probably touched by their commitment, their stories of hope and despair, and the way they brought us into the lives of the people in Mississippi.

I am very grateful for the time and energy these six volunteers put forth to help a great cause. But even more than that, what really struck me was the way the whole church supported them. People gave money, prayed for them, and helped coordinate the details of their travel. People helped move chairs, listened to their stories, and looked at their pictures. People asked them what was needed, commented on their blog, and offered them hugs (and tears) of appreciation.

RUCC is such an incredible community of people helping people and of pitching in wherever needed. As the Sabbatical Experience begins this month, we're going to need that same spirit to carry us through the time while Sharon is away. The Sabbatical Committee has arranged for people to provide pastoral care, lead in worship, and serve the church in countless other ways that Sharon normally provides on a daily basis.

But it goes much deeper than that. Just as we do now, we will need to actively seek opportunities to help. We need to be attentive to the needs of our community. We need to remain patient when things don't go exactly as planned. We need to remember that sometimes things are different; not right or wrong, better or worse, just different. We are all unique, with our own special mix of personality, talent, and opinion. One person's quirk is another person's endearment.

This is a real strength of our church and I look forward to the opportunity to exercise our abilities. Stay helpful, hopeful and happy and we will grow in our time of shared Sabbatical with Sharon.

With optimism and hope,  
Loring Fiske-Phillips

## Sabbatical Leave

Time is fast approaching for Sharon's and the RUCC Sabbatical leaves. Sharon's last Sunday with us will be May 11. This day will start off with the usual Contemplative Service. During morning worship we will celebrate Pentecost, Mother's Day and commission Sharon and the entire RUCC congregation for their Sabbatical leaves. A light lunch will follow worship where we will celebrate our Sabbatical leaves and get our last hugs before Sharon leaves.

Many of you have asked that if Sharon gets to leave town for Sabbatical then why is the RUCC staying in town. The Sabbatical Committee felt the same way so we will start our Sabbatical leave May 18 by traveling to San Bernardino First Congregational Church to worship with them. This is a unique opportunity because our own member of RUCC, Sally Burton, will be preaching and celebrating the completion of her internship. After lunch with the San Bernardino congregation, there will be an Ecclesiastical Council for Sally to approve her for Ordination. These are two really big events in Sally's life. The schedule for the day is meeting at RUCC at 9:00 a.m. to get into our carpools and leave at 9:15 a.m.; 10:00 a.m. worship at 3041 N. Sierra Way, San Bernardino. We will have lunch after worship and then Ecclesiastical Council at 1:30 p.m.

At the present time preachers for our regular worship services beginning May 25 are being lined up. The list includes not only some of our ordained members but some of our lay members also. Our preliminary list is longer than the number of Sundays we will need to fill. This is a pleasant problem to deal with.

On June 29 we will begin the Summer Series. As in previous years, we will meet on Sunday evenings at different members' homes; gathering at 5:00 p.m. for fellowship and potluck followed at 6:00 p.m. for discussions. The theme for this year will be Celtic Christian Spirituality and other Spiritual Experiences. Books will be available for those who wish to read more and share what they learned from their readings.

On July 6, instead of our regular Summer Series, we have been invited to travel again to the San Bernardino church for a 2:00 p.m. ice cream social and hymn sing. For those who love to sing some of those old favorite hymns, this will surely be a great time. The following Sunday, July 13, we will resume our regular Summer Series.

On August 17, during morning worship, we will celebrate Sharon's return and her Sabbatical completion as well as the completion of our Sabbatical leave. That evening we will have our final Summer Series and will party, party, party! Watch the weekly View for details for all of these events.

Eric Naftzger  
Sabbatical Committee Chairman

## **Long Range Planning at RUCC**

Redlands United Church of Christ is now thirty-five years old. In the early years we utilized rented space in other Redlands churches for worship and offices. Eventually we acquired land and put up a single building for multipurpose use. An adjacent residential structure was used as office and meeting space until it was burned to the ground by arson. Subsequently, a new sanctuary and offices were constructed, and many improvements were made to our church property. Now we have real estate for which we must care over the long term. We also have a growing congregation which has expanding space use needs. We have periodic capital maintenance issues which much be addressed. And we have a church staff, paid personnel to serve us. We have additional staff and equipment needs which must be met as our congregation grows in numbers and programs.

Already, a committee has been meeting to review the possibilities as we face major repair/replacement expenses with our sanctuary pipe organ. Increased building space for Christian education and other needs have been expressed. The question that we need to be asking ourselves is "where do we need to be two years from now, five years from now, ten years from now with some of these issues?" Intentional long range planning must be undertaken. The Church Board is seeking interested persons, including a committee chair, to help us begin to address our long range needs. Please speak with Pastor Sharon, President Loring Fiske-Phillips, or any Church Board member regarding your willingness to serve your church in this way as we face the future.

Bill Kintner  
Vice President



What does church mean to us? Mission? Compassion? Community? ... Praise? Prayer? Peace? We could sit in a circle asking that question and come up with as many different answers as people! But the heart of every answer would likely be the same: Love. Our church is love.

When we think about how the church's love – God's love – transforms and nourishes us, we want to share it. We want others to feel the blessings of grace and acceptance, to know the joy of service, and the freedom to live fully in God's moment – whether it brings joy or sorrow, struggle or laughter.

Each year, we receive a special offering that helps the church's love to grow and thrive. Called Strengthen the Church, this offering funds new congregations, and renews existing ones. It supports programs for youth and young adults, and nurtures current and future leaders. And this year, for the first time, it will aid the God is Still Speaking Ministry and its message of inclusivity.

We receive this offering on Sunday, May 11 – the birthday of the church – Pentecost – and Mother's Day. We are invited to celebrate both – the church and those who are Mother to us – by giving to strengthen the Church. Your generous gift today ensures a vibrant church tomorrow.

Spread the Love. Strengthen the Church. God is still speaking.

## ***Events at RUCC...***

First Friday Films  
presents

" Who Killed the Electric Car, A Lack of Consumer Confidence...or Conspiracy?" Unravels the puzzling demise of GMs fleet of electric vehicles, narrated by Martin Sheen. Brief discussion to follow. Refreshments served.

May 2 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!

### **Senior High Overnight**

The senior high youth will have an overnight event beginning May 2 at 6 p.m. until May 3 at 1 p.m. Please see Facebook for more details.

### **FACEBOOK**

This is a new form of communication for the Youth Group activities. [www.facebook.com](http://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.

### **Celebration of Patrick Ioakmides**

Sunday, May 4, during our fellowship time we will have an opportunity to celebrate with Patrick and to thank him for all that he has done this past year. As we all know, college students can always use encouragement and a little cash along the way. So, a basket will be available in Covenant Hall on 4/27 & 5/4 for your cards and donations. If you want to include a check, please make it payable to Patrick Ioakmides.

### **Landeros-Phillip Shepherd Group**

The Landeros-Phillip Shepherd group will meet at the home of Dianne Landeros 1368 Prospect Drive, Redlands on May 4 at 12:00 p.m.

### **Alpha Bible Study Group**

The Alpha Bible Study group will meet on Tuesday, May 6th at the Naftzgers` and on Tuesday, May 20th at the Nickoloffs`. Newcomers are welcome!

### **Summer Series**

Do you want to study and learn more about Celtic Christian Spirituality? Join us for the Summer Series which begins June 29. Fellowship and potluck at 5:00 p.m. with discussion beginning at 6:00 p.m. All are welcome! Locations TBA ~ Watch View for details.

## Bible 102

Anyone who participated in last year's Bible 101 study will remember how much we learned. We are about to embark on a new class ... Bible 102, the Bible in Depth. This will be a year long study using the Kerygma materials again, led this time by Jennifer Hawley Zechlin. I'm looking forward to seeing past participants as well as new faces. We'll meet every Monday from 7-8pm beginning May 19th. If you have any questions call Jennifer at 790-4941 or e-mail her at [deeprootsacademy@hotmail.com](mailto:deeprootsacademy@hotmail.com)

## Food

Members and friends at RUCC like to eat. It's a fact! While enjoying good food we are rarely aware of the "supporting cast". Out of habit we reach for plates, napkins and cups, expecting supplies to be there. Even at "free" meals like soup suppers, pot-lucks and coffee hour there are expenses for supplies. Please anticipate a donation container on every occasion where food is served. Your \$1-\$5 will go a long way to keep kitchen supplies well stocked. This will allow the Church Life budget to fund food and the "fun stuff" for special occasions. Thanks for your help.

## Opportunity for Teens

The Church Life Area is accepting applications from a few strong, responsible teenagers who are interested in providing community service at church or in earning a few

hours of minimum wage several times a year. This is primarily a clean-up position, running the dishwasher, etc. following church functions. It is very necessary work. Instruction will be provided; you can try the work before making a firm commitment. If you might be interested, call the church office to set a time for an interview. Thanks.

## MAY WORSHIP LEADERS

|    |               |
|----|---------------|
| 4  | Lisa Dewey    |
| 11 | Julie Phillip |
| 18 |               |
| 25 | Michael Dewey |

## MAY BIRTHDAYS

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 5  | Lois Campbell   |
| 6  | Bettye Wheeler  |
| 10 | Carrie Schindler  |
| 12 | Dan Wacks   |
| 13 | Nancy Nelson  |
| 14 | Sondra Hodson   |
| 16 | Floyd Orr<br>Jane Arnegard                                    |
| 18 | Sheldon Montgomery<br>Chance Austin-Brecher<br>Georgia Sforza |
| 21 | Kate Morics<br>Paul Hodson                                    |
| 23 | Helen Arth  |
| 26 | Susie Mayse   |
| 27 | Bill Buchanan   |
| 28 | Shirley Marks   |
| 30 | Aurea Nuñez<br>Kristi Campbell                                |



# Mother's Day

Mother's Day began as a day of peace. Julia Ward Howe, who was for many years as a champion of peace, worked tirelessly for a national day of peace because she was appalled by the results of war. She urged mothers and all women to come forward and take a stand against war. She promoted a "peace culture," a culture in which one day everyone would embrace the same loving feelings for each other that mothers have for their children. For nearly 30 years, Julia Ward Howe proclaimed that it was time to let go of the old, archaic, and tragic ways of resolving conflicts through warfare...it was time to embrace the new ways of peace. Her original protest to war is now known as the Mothers Day Proclamation of 1870:

"Arise, then, women of this day!  
Arise all women who have hearts,  
whether our baptism be that of water or of tears!

Say firmly: 'We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies.' Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy, and patience. We

women of one country will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs. From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says, 'Disarm, Disarm! The sword of murder is not the balance of justice.' Blood does not wipe our dishonor nor violence indicate possession. As men have often forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel. Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, each bearing after their own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God. In the name of womanhood and of humanity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women without limit of nationality may be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient and at the earliest period consistent with its objects, to promote the alliance of different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace.

Signed, Julia Ward Howe,  
Boston, 1870"

## *...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, celebrating, May Friendship Day, Theme: "God's Wisdom Inspires Hospitality" on May 2, at 10:00 a.m. at the Redlands UCC. Offerings to the Fellowship of the Least Coin will be collected. Salad luncheon or a donation of \$3.00. Coordinators: Ruth Moses and Opal Inman. Bring a friend!

### **41<sup>st</sup> Annual Rummage Sale**

May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> at the First Congregational Church, 3041 N. Sierra Way, San Bernardino. Friday hours are 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. There will be furniture, toys, clothing,, holiday decorations, books, appliances, house wares, hardware, etc. Kitchen: selling delicious lunches and desserts, pie, brownies, cake and cookies. Treasure Table: Silent auction closes at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. Open bidding follows.

### **Work Day at Pilgrim Pines**

May 3, 2008, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Show how much you care about camp, and lend a hand one afternoon! Join us for a fun work day, surrounded by friends and family. Come, ready-to-work, where you will help clear trails, pick up Johnny's, or paint benches. Lunch will be provided. An optional Friday night stay, must RSVP 2 weeks prior. Hope to see you there!

### **Women of Faith Humanitarian Service**

Our numbers of participants and hours spent continue to increase! And more work is being done at home. It is so fun to work together and see the mounds of finished items grow. Plan ahead and come by for an hour or two. *We need you- because they need us!* **Thursday, May 8 from 11:00 AM—8:00 PM.** Location: The LDS Church on the corner of Fifth Avenue & Wabash in Redlands (by the temple). To get more information, please email [jeanarnott@gmail.com](mailto:jeanarnott@gmail.com), or call 794-0456.

## **Ministry and Fellowship**

Volunteers are needed to help with preparing meals for people with HIV/AIDS. Meal preparation takes place at First Congregational United Church of Christ, 3041 N. Sierra Way, in San Bernardino, CA on Friday mornings from 7:30 to 9:30 am. You will be lovingly welcomed and trained to join in with a fun group of people. Donations of main dishes, fresh produce, desserts, fruits & vegetables, canned food items or money are also gratefully received. Monetary donations may be made to FCUCC HIV/AIDS Meals Program. Please contact the San Bernardino First Congregational United Church of Christ at 909-886-4911 if you are able to help. Thank you.

## **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 are available online at the website [www.pilgrimpinescamp.org](http://www.pilgrimpinescamp.org)

Registration deadline is May 16, 2008. For more information contact (909) 797-1821.

## **Southern California Nevada Conference Annual Gathering**

The Southern California Nevada Conference United Church of Christ Annual Gathering will be held at the Glendale 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church UCC on June 20-21 this year. This will be an interesting and exciting opportunity for UCC members and churches to share and learn. This is also the place where resolutions begin that end up at Synod, as the Immigration Reform Resolution did this past year. Our RUCC church delegates this year will be Mary Belle Carter and John Walsh, but all members are encouraged and welcomed to attend. It is a great way to learn what is happening to the larger body of faith of which we are part. Those of us who attend the Synod in Connecticut last year were amazed to find how empowering and exciting it was to share stories with our sisters and brothers in faith. There are some topical workshops and worship opportunities. You can register for the whole gathering, or for just one day, at [www.signmeup.com/59802](http://www.signmeup.com/59802). For further information, contact John, Mary Belle, Rich or Kathie Blakley.

### **May Scripture Readings**

May 4:        *Psalm 100; Psalm 51; Psalm 19; Psalm 98; Psalm 150, Psalm 46*  
 May 11:      *Acts 2:1-21; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; John 7:37-39 and 20:19-23*  
 May 18  
 May 25 :     *John 13:21-26; John 19:25-27; John 20:2; John 21:7 and 21:2-23*

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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