

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

July 2008

Contemplative Worship Service – 8:00 a.m.
Worship Service – 10:30 a.m.
Sundays, July 6, 13, 20 and 27

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

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

Bible 102 will meet the 2nd and 4th Mondays
7 p.m. in the CE area

Church Board will meet Tuesday, July 8
at 7:00 p.m. in the church office

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

Summer Series July 13, 20 and 27 at 5:00 p.m.

Brown Bag/Game Day
Sunday, July 27 at 1:00 p.m. in Covenant Hall

Middle school and High school youth group
July meetings ~ check www.facebook.com ~ RUCC Youth Group

From your Friend and Pastor in Residence, Sally ~

The guarding of the God of life be on you,
 The guarding of loving Christ be on you,
 The guarding of Holy Spirit be on you
 Every night of your lives,
 To aid you and enfold you
 Each day and night of your lives.
 ~A Celtic Blessing

Our summer sabbatical journey is well underway and it has been wonderful hearing the different voices from the pulpit each week. The meditations have been insightful and inspiring. We've been guiding and encouraging one another along the way, in Sharon's absence, and it's been a good journey so far. It occurs to me that our church family is strong and interwoven, like designs in Celtic artwork. Celtic weavings and knot work speak to the interconnectedness of life. It is good to pause and feel grateful for the strength, joys and blessings our RUCC community has because of the ways our lives are woven together. Of course, the Spirit of Christ intertwines our tapestry of people, breathing new life, and refreshment into our sabbatical time.

Our Summer Series will be starting soon, on Sunday June 29th. I hope that you will find time to read some of the books that have been chosen for discussion. The featured book for the 29th is The Sabbath, by Abraham Joshua Heschel. Bill Maury Holmes will guide us in conversation that evening. Heschel conveys a passionate, reverential sense of the holiness of the Sabbath. It may help us to appreciate our own special time for rest and reflection this summer.

We have some wonderful books to share this season, but the main focus of the Summer Series will be getting to know one another better, and enjoying some food, fellowship and fun. I am looking forward to spending time with all of you there.

I attended the Southern California Nevada Conference UCC Annual Gathering in Glendale, June 19-21. Mary Belle Carter and John Walsh attended as delegates for our church. Rich and Kathie Blakely were also there. We are all looking forward to sharing a few of the highlights of the gathering with you. The theme this year was "God is Still Weaving." This is a reference to Ephesians 4:15-16, which speaks of the community of Christ being joined and knit together. This seems to compliment the celebration of the interconnectedness of life which is found in Celtic spirituality. Our church is stronger and more beautiful because of the many strands of diversity lovingly braided together.

Blessings & Peace~

Sally

President's Message

This month marked a historic moment in California, as same-sex partners were granted the legal right to marry each other. Of course, the concept is nothing new at Redlands United Church of Christ where such religious ceremonies have been taking place for years. The only difference is they are now recognized by the government, in addition to being blessed by God.

Two interesting events took place in my own life around the same time. The first was a joyous celebration at my office when a gay man brought a video of his marriage to share with friends. He is open about his sexual orientation and accepted by many of his co-workers. The joy he felt as he shared his special event is as much a "basic civil right of personal autonomy and liberty" as is the marriage license itself.

The second event was getting an email from a relative who said that June 16th was not only his 35th wedding anniversary, but also "one of the worst days of our lives here on this earth" for him and his wife. They feel very strongly that same-sex marriage is against the teachings of the Bible and therefore the word of God.

I have sometimes heard people say they don't mind what GLBT persons do as long as they don't "flaunt" it. Did this gay man "flaunt" his happiness at marrying the person he loved? Would it have been "flaunting" for a straight man to bring video of his wedding celebration to share at the office?

On the other hand, deep-seated religious beliefs are not something my relative can take off like a sweater on a hot day. He truly believes that people who disregard what he sees as Biblical truth are going to be separated from God forever. That's a pretty heavy burden to bear and he naturally wants to help protect his brothers and sisters from such a fate.

There are plenty of people on both sides of this issue. I believe our goal should be to try and understand the other side. What makes them tick? Why do they believe what they do? Where can we find common ground? Both sides need to realize the depth of conviction their "opponents" have. Only then can we heal the rift and close the gap with understanding.

With optimism and hope,
Loring Fiske-Phillips

Sabbatical Leave

The Sabbatical Committee has finished arranging preachers for the Summer and what a great list. A big thanks go to John Walsh, Loring and Jacob Fiske-Phillips, Paul Hodson, Bill Maury-Holmes, Rick Sforza, the Youth and Richard Blakley, Janet Wilson, Sally Burton, Craig Colclough, Bill Kintner and Lora Hall. For those of you who also volunteered, a big thanks and we will keep you in mind when there are other opportunities.

The planning for the Summer Series is finished and a list is available in the Gathering Area. Again, a big thanks to all the hosts and discussion leaders. Since there has been so many weeks to prepare, some of the leaders may make some changes in the topic that is printed. As has been learned in the past, the published list of hosts and leaders/topics may change so we ask that you read The View for possible last minute changes.

As a personal note, I have read (not studied) five of the six books which we will have available. After reading "The Sabbath", I had a new insight to the Sabbath that I had never considered. This is a short book written by an academic rabbi and is fairly easy to read. After I finished "The Sabbath", I then started (and finished) "Teachings on Love" by a Vietnamese monk who has lived in the West for thirty years. It was very unusual to go from Judaism to Buddhism. I learned much about Buddhism and also more about my own personal Christian pilgrimage. Limited copies of these six books will be available to purchase for those who wish to know more.

THE SABBATH, by Abraham Joshua Heschel

LISTENING FOR THE HEARTBEAT OF GOD, A Celtic Spirituality, by J. Philip Newell

ONE FOOT IN EDEN, A Celtic View of the Stages of Life, by J. Philip Newell

THE BOOK OF CREATION, An Introduction to Celtic Spirituality, by J. Philip Newell

TEACHINGS ON LOVE, by Thich Nhat Hanh

CELTIC PARABLES, by Robert Van De Weyer

Eric Naftzger
Sabbatical Committee Chair

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

Events at RUCC...

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!

Naftzger/Sforza Shepherd Group

The Naftzger/Sforza Shepherd Group will meet in Covenant Hall on Sunday, July 20 at 12:00 p.m.

All Church Retreat

Your talents are needed! We need someone to chair a committee to plan an all-church retreat. Past retreats have been varied in theme, location, participants, and even food! But, they have one thing in common, they have brought us closer together. Please offer your unique skills to make it happen again! Contact Loring Fiske-Phillips for more information.

JULY WORSHIP LEADERS

6 Floyd Orr
13 Lora Hall
20 Karen Walsh
27

JULY BIRTHDAYS

1 John Macomber
2 John Drage
3 Brooks Dierdorff
6 Mary Fung
Vern Jones
Marlene Moran
7 Suzanne Seifert
Lisa Ruiz
8 Andrea Schuiling
Kristopher Kintner
9 Diana Waters
Joel Wacks
11 Sheila Campbell
12 Kendra Killpatrick-Bolen
14 Terry Dickey
Sarah Fiske-Phillips
15 Rosemary Whitmer
16 Debbie Vuocolo
Chris Blumberg
19 Marjorie Benz
22 Lashawn Lee
23 William Kintner
Margaret Paul
Cathy R. DeWalt

IONA

According to my fallible chronometer, Pastor Sharon's coracle (m.v. King George V) has just put out from the one time fishing village of Oban, Argyll, and is now plowing the Atlantic blue waters down the Firth of Lorne, with the Island of Mull to port and the white sands of the 3 by 3 mile Isle of Iona round the next point. Welcome Sharon, to the thin world between worlds. Meet St. Columba 563 A.D.

During the war years ('39-'45) civilian travel in the Scottish Western Isles archipelago was limited. Years later, a seminary classmate at St. Andrews University who just happened to be Purser on the "King George" invited me to make the sea trip to Iona. The Reverend George MacLeod, leader of the Iona Community (*We Shall Rebuild*) who also happened to be aboard, kindly invited me to spend the night on the island. One thing I remember about the evening service is the Abbey: we were asked to kneel. The minister then placed his hand on each kneeling head. I was surprised nobody died. Not the way in the Presbytery of Lorne!

A mainland road to the Isle of Iona runs through Muckairn Parish with its scattered population of 500 on the south shore of Loch Etive and in the shadow of Ben Cruachan (3689ft) – 12 miles east of Oban. (Not sure about Columba, but we had another Irish refugee – Deirdre of the Sorrows – camp in our backyard.) During summer vacations, I delivered the Royal Mail on a red bicycle to crofters, shepherds and neighbors. The weather was the only problem in these days – in a strangely unique way – on Sundays only. If the forecast changed from "rain possible" to "rain likely" did you rush to secure the hay and break the Sabbath? If you had not already been given a communion token, you were already in a bad place.

Official word on the Iona Community by the Community: *History*. "The Iona Community was founded in Glasgow and Iona in 1938 by George MacLeod, minister, visionary and prophetic witness for peace, in the context of the poverty and despair of the Depression. From a dockland parish in Govan, Glasgow, he took unemployed skilled craftsmen and young trainee clergy to Iona to rebuild both the monastic quarters of the medieval abbey and the common life by working and living together, sharing skills and effort as well as joys and achievement. The original task became a sign of hopeful rebuilding of community in Scotland and beyond." (C.f. *They Converted Our Ancestors* – John Foster)

One of the few stories told by George MacLeod that I still remember relates how a preacher on Glasgow Green repeatedly asked his gathering "What do you do for Christ?" Just as repetitiously someone in the audience yelled "I bake." I can't recall exactly where George went with it. I thought I needed to know because its resonance intrigued me. It helped that I had to do a paper on John 21:15-19 – Jesus to Peter: feed my sheep. I particularly like John Dominic Crossan's conclusion (*The Birth of Christianity* p. 444) that 'it may be fine to reduce the Lord's Supper from a full eat and drink meal to a token nibble and a sip meal as long as it symbolizes the reality that Christians claim God and Jesus are peculiarly and especially present when food and drink are shared equally among all.' In our starving world I now go obsequiously with Sara Mile's non-fiction tale of a Food-Pantry-Communion-Table Service in St. Gregory's Episcopal Church, San Francisco (*Take This Bread* p. 108) – for everyone, leaving no one behind. Thank you, Mr. Baker and thank you Faeries too.

Duncan Campbell

...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.

Sing and Scoop Together

Please plan to attend a hymn sing and ice cream social for area UCC churches. It will be held on Sunday, July 6th at 2:00 p.m. at First Congregational UCC, 3041 N. Sierra Way in San Bernardino. Fun, fellowship and ice cream!

Women of Faith

Upcoming Workdays: So that we can reach the finish line with our Afghanistan project, we will return to having workdays on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month at the stake center. We may also announce workdays at other times and locations for specific purposes. We'll keep you posted...

Thu July 10

Thu July 24

Location: The LDS Stake Center at the corner of 5th & Wabash in Redlands (next to the temple).

July Scripture Readings

July 6: Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67, Psalms 45:10-17, Romans 7:15-25a, Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

July 13: Genesis 25:19-34, Psalms 119:105-112, Romans 8:1-11, Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

July 20: Genesis 28:10-19a; Psalms 139:1-12, Psalms 86:11-17, Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

July 27: Genesis 29:15-28; Psalms 105:1-11, 45b, Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Pastor in Residence – Sally Burton

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

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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