

# WANDERINGS

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

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

*April 2009*

Contemplative Worship Service and Communion – 8:00 a.m.  
Worship Service – 10:30 a.m.  
Sundays, April 5, 12, 19, 26

Communion - Worship Service 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday, March 1

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

Christian Marriage Equality Committee will meet  
Monday, April 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Office

Bible 102 will meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays  
7 p.m. in the Church Office

Maundy Thursday Seder Meal and Tenebrae  
Thursday, April 9, 6:00 p.m.

Church Board will meet Tuesday, April 14  
at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Office

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

Stewards will meet Tuesday, April 28  
at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Office

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

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

## From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*Our sufficiency is from God, who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant,  
a covenant in the Spirit that gives life.  
Adapted from 2 Corinthians 3:5-6*

In the past several years, April Fools' Day has taken on a very special meaning for me, as it was the day in 2002 when we began our ministry together. Each year, as April 1 approaches, I delightfully ponder the light-hearted nature of the day, and am filled with gratitude that such joy continues to define our shared work here at Redlands UCC.

To be sure, there are folks who are not always pleased with decisions made (including me, at times!). There are others whose paths take them away from RUCC, bringing sadness in the wake of their leaving. Still others return after an absence, and there are smiles and hugs all around. We are, after all, a human body with human emotions, reactions, and responses. More than that we are a body that, from its courageous beginnings, has been a sanctuary and a training ground for loving people, a community that is founded and grounded in the loving and compassionate ministry of the Christ.

We are not perfect in our work. Nor are we complete in and of ourselves. As the apostle Paul wrote to those feisty Corinthians in the first century, our sufficiency is from God, not us. I have come to believe, as I both participate in and prayerfully observe what we do around here, that any "success" we've achieved together has been because we know so-called "success" does not originate with us. Its origins are in the Spirit, who leads us, gently guides us, sometimes nudges us firmly from behind, and who always is present. As the apostle reminds us, Spirit's work is to "give life"—and that it does!

This month we continue what Spirit initiated...as we welcome new travelers to the shared journey on Palm Sunday...as we celebrate resurrection and honor new life within and without on Easter...as we appreciate the created order and vow to protect it on Earth Day...and as we commit ourselves again to the specific ministry of Get on the Bus at month's end.

In the Spirit who gives life to all, we continue to stand together as ministers of a new covenant. In the spirit of April Fools, I suggest we do so in the words of an old saying, "Angels can fly because they take themselves lightly...!" Breathe and let our covenant relationships bring life that is both abundant and joyful. Laugh with joy as we put into practice our banner words: Justice, love, mercy, kindness, compassion, walking humbly with God. Pray and Play with the new ideas God give us.

Welcome to this part of the journey, marked by our Spirit-given covenants of newness!

Blessings,



*“On your feet now—applaud God!  
Bring a gift of laughter, sing yourselves into God’s presence...”  
—From Psalm 100:2 (The Message Bible)*

This month our Lenten journey leads us into Easter, as naturally as April showers bring May flowers. Shadows give way to increasingly penetrating light. Cobwebs of the mind are brushed aside to make space for fresh ideas. Stones of all sizes, blocking tombs that are spiritual as well as physical, are mysteriously rolled away, so that life may breathe deeply once again. Though it is in our nature to ask “why?” I suggest that we simply receive the gift of new life as the gift it longs to be! Welcome to the changing of the season...yet again!

April 5 – “Glory!” – Palm Sunday and Sixth Sunday in Lent

*Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; John 12:12-16*

Whose parade do we follow? Using the work of Jesus Seminar scholars, Marcus Borg and Dominic Crossan, we explore the two parades that entered Jerusalem on that long-ago Sunday. One was led by King Jesus, and the other no doubt led by some powerful representative of King Caesar. Some 2,000 years later, similar parades beckon. Which shall we follow and why? Today, we shall also welcome new covenanting members in a parade of hugs and handshakes unique to Redlands UCC!

April 9 – Maundy Thursday Seder Meal and Tenebrae – Reservations appreciated!

Beginning at **6:00 pm** in Covenant Hall, we will enjoy the distinctive tastes of the Seder (Passover) meal. The evening continues with a brief Tenebrae (darkness) service in which we hear again Jesus’ words and conversations leading up to his death. A moment of hope will sustain us until we re-gather on Easter Sunday. **Please make reservations for this service in the church office.** All ages are welcome!

April 12 – EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE IN THE GARDEN – 6:00 AM

We’ll meet inside the sanctuary in darkness lit by candlelight, read and sing and cluster together as did those first disciples, then gradually meander out to the garden for a joy-filled resurrection experience! Breakfast will follow at 6:45. Come! Celebrate! Christ is risen...again...still!

April 12 – “What Rock?” – Resurrection Sunday! – 10:30 am

*John 20:1-18; Mark 16:1-8*

The ultimate question... Beyond the historical doubts about a physical body, removed from the wonderings of who saw what and what was said at the garden tomb that first Easter morning, the ultimate question we verbalize as believers is “What Rock?” For with resurrection joy, roadblocks shrink, pathways become more clear, and rocks in front of tombs are replaced by thin air. The Easter morning story—ultimately a story of love and mystery—is told through the voice of Mary who encourages believers to love...hard to imagine a more appropriate way to fill that empty tomb than with a life of love. Come for the music, come for the prayers, come to hear the stories of mysterious love once again. More importantly, come to experience the new life, the resurrected life, which God has arranged especially for you!

April 19 – “Concrete Love” – Earth Day

*Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; John 20:19-31*

Meeting first inside to sing and pray, then (weather permitting) moving outside to appreciate and give thanks, this day invites us to embrace earth and earth creatures with a love that is concrete, real, relevant. Another baptism will highlight our shared responsibility to nurture all life. A great way to spend time with people who love you on the week after Easter egg overload!

April 26 – “All in the Family” – Rev. Bill Maury-Holmes, preaching

*1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48*

For several years, we’ve been leaders in the Get on the Bus program—a program of transporting children to see their incarcerated mothers on the Friday before Mother’s Day. Today is a day of dedication and commitment, as we make that final push—spiritually, organizationally, and financially—to make this year’s visits happen. Come with eyes and hearts open to learn and to respond.

Worship will be deeper and richer with your presence as we experience together the Spirit’s movement among us.

—Sharon R. Graff

## President's Message

I get a real kick out of seeing young people maturing and gaining knowledge and confidence. You can imagine then, what a thrill it was attending Chapman University Founders Day on March 21. Barbie, Jacob and I, along with Mary Belle Carter and Domenick Sforza represented Redlands UCC in Orange as part of a day that starred over 80 DOC (Disciples on Campus) students. They coordinated, led, sang, acted, staffed, toured, created video, played instruments, ushered, conversed and did much, much more to make it a very enjoyable day for hundreds of UCC and Disciples of Christ attendees. In a word, the students were amazing! (I was especially proud of Sarah's involvement as a member of the planning committee and part of the 2009-10 DOC Leadership Board.)

Redlands United Church of Christ is a Partner Congregation with Chapman, as are about 15 other UCC congregations in the Southern California-Nevada conference, and the conference office itself. It's a proud heritage of our denomination and our local congregation to be involved in education. The UCC and our predecessors have started and sustained dozens of colleges, universities and seminaries throughout our history. That includes not only the likes of Harvard and Yale, but also colleges and universities founded to offer educational access and opportunity for Blacks in the South: Dillard University, Fisk University, LeMoyne-Owen College, Huston-Tillotson College, Talladega College and Tougaloo College.

With this kind of educational legacy, it comes as no surprise that RUCC is very connected to the University of Redlands (despite its Baptist roots!) with many of our church members and friends on the university's faculty and staff. Several folks work at other area colleges and universities. Many others work in the Redlands Unified School District and other neighboring schools. A few are home schooling. Several RUCC members are receiving financial assistance from our scholarship fund.

Education and the expanding of the mind are very important to us as individuals and as an institution. We encourage education and learning to take place every day in myriad ways. Our national UCC's educational mission includes a statement that: "All the realities and needs of life are occasions for learning—e.g., dealing with personal and social crises of life; wrestling with issues of ethics; exploring the meaning of Christian vocation; assessing the impact of science, technology, economics, and politics upon individuals and nations; and recognizing and opposing injustice in every form."

Martin Luther King, Jr. summed it up nicely when he said, "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically... Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education." I believe education—critical thinking—is an important part of being open to our still-speaking God. It is when we open our minds to new thoughts, new ways of seeing our world and new ways of living our faith with our brothers and sisters, that we expand our own limited views to see all the way to God's limitless horizon.

With optimism and hope,  
Loring Fiske-Phillips

Dear Friends of RUCC-

I once again wanted to take an opportunity to thank you for your invaluable support in allowing Candy Dietsch and meo represent us in Sacramento last month.

What we all need to bear in mind as we await the Supreme Court's decision is that Proposition 8 is an improper revision, rather than an amendment of the California Constitution, because it eliminated a basic right, but just for one minority -- a minority which has been a target of discrimination again and again.

This case is not just about marriage or gay people. If a simple majority of the voters can take this core right away from gay people, it can take any right away from any other group as well.

If Prop. 8 is upheld, then Californians could, for example, vote to take religious freedoms away from anyone who doesn't believe what the majority believes, or free speech rights away from women, or the right to vote away from Chinese-Americans, or the right of interracial couples to marry. This case is important for every Californian: it's about whether the limits we've set on the power of the majority have meaning.

The California courts have a solemn responsibility to enforce the state constitution to protect the rights of all people, regardless of popular opinion. We hope the court will recognize that it is not just the rights of lesbian and gay people, but the rights of all Californians that it must protect by striking down Proposition 8.

Please join me and the countless others who have so much to lose. There are many actions that you can take, beginning with using your voice. Communication is of key importance in expressing what is at stake. If Prop 8 is upheld, it will once again be placed on the ballot of the next election and because it won by a 2 percent margin, it will become necessary to change the minds of at least 2 out of every 100 people who voted in favor of this proposition.

You can contact your legislators... write letters, make phone calls, visit their offices. Let them know that we, as their voters, demand human rights now!

You can also donate your time and your money. We are fortunate here at RUCC that a group devoted to Marriage Equality is already in place and doing great work. Please support them in any way possible. It is a difficult feat for a few to be doing the work for many. They need your help and your support!

Again, thank you for who you are and the wonderful things you do. Keep up the good work!

Peace,  
Dana Hawley-Zechlin

I am so proud that my granddaughter, Sabreena, was recognized at Chapman Founder's Day on March 21 as the "Youth Leader of the Year." She was totally surprised and so was I. My daughter-in-law, Tina, had not told me or Sabreena's sister, Clarissa.

Sabreena is on the Disciples of Christ Youth Leadership Team for the Pacific Southwest region and the national. So, she certainly deserves the honor. She will go to Chapman in the fall.

At the memorial service for Brad and baby Lindsay in August 2006, one of his friends said that "when Brad smiles, it is all over his face", as was Bob's. From wherever Bob and Brad are in this heavenly world, they are so proud of Sabreena that they are beaming! Lindsay, who would have been 4 on March 2, would be dancing a jig.

I met Bob at Chapman College and our three children, Linda, Casey and Brad went there too.

Granny Mary Belle

## ***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!

### **Friday Night at the Movies**

"Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price" takes you behind the glitz of lavish television commercials and into the real lives of workers and their families, business owners and their communities. An extraordinary journey that will challenge the way you think, feel and shop. Wal-Mart has applied to build a Super Center in Redlands. Come and learn what has happened to other communities where Supercenters have been built and then ask yourself if this is what you want for Redlands. Brief discussion will follow and refreshments will be served. When: Friday, April 3, 2009 at 7p.m.

### **Seder Supper**

We gather to eat a full meal, as did Jesus for the last time with his friends. Scripture, song, prayer, food and extinguished candlelight will lead us into "Good Friday." Thursday, April 9 at 6:00 p.m. in Covenant Hall. Please call the church office to make your reservation – 793-3520. Indicate whether you would like lamb or the vegetarian meal.

### **Sheldon Montgomery is returning home for a visit!**

On Wednesday, April 8, at 1:00 p.m., Sheldon invites whomever wishes to a gathering in Covenant Hall at church. His life journey since his beloved Helen's passing has taken many turns, and from them he has learned and grown. In a recent phone conversation with Rev. Graff, Sheldon offered to share his story with us, his church family, so that when we face the death of a loved one (or our own deaths), we may be better prepared. What a wonderful gift! Please plan on attending...Sheldon looks forward to greeting old friends and new.

### **Easter Sunrise Blessings**

All ages are welcome to participate in the Easter Sunrise service. We will begin the service in the warmth and darkness of a candlelit sanctuary, then make our way (as did those first followers of Christ) to the garden where resurrection awaits! After the service, all are invited to stay for breakfast in Covenant Hall. Plan to be here at 6:00 a.m. (yawn!).

### **Rainbow Pins**

Mary Belle Carter has rainbow pins available which say "celebrate diversity." The pins are \$2.00 each.

## Get On The Bus Pizza Party

Pizza party at Gourmet Pizza on April 14<sup>th</sup> (we've all been to these by now, right? GOTB Bus #7 will get 10% of the take that night). Our goal is to get at least 500 people in there. Can you please mark your calendars and help spread the word about that as well? You don't need a flier to get the donation; just mention that you're there because of GOTB.

## Sabbatical Pilgrimage Photos Online (finally!)

Rev. Graff has posted online many of the 2300+ photos from her sabbatical travels last year. Commentary accompanies the photos. For those of you without internet access, please know that she is happy to bring her computer to your home and share as many of the pictures as you can sit through! Or, if there is interest, we could plan a few sessions at church for photo viewing...let her know! Those with internet access can find the files at the following two websites:  
<http://picasaweb.google.com/RevDrSGraff> (May 11-June 14--Going away party, Cambria, time with son Will, and the beginning of the Ireland trip) and  
<http://picasaweb.google.com/SRGravf>.  
[JMSweeney](http://picasaweb.google.com/SRGravf) (June 15-July 24--Ireland, Scotland, Stonehenge).  
 ENJOY!

## Special Note From Rev. Dr. Sharon Graff

Please know that I keep regular office hours on most Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Though the hours vary depending on commitments and appointments, please know that I am usually available on-site during some part of those weekdays.

I use Wednesday as a sermon-writing day at home. I rest on Fridays and Saturdays (when the schedule allows), and am ready to enjoy and lead our worshipping community on Sundays. Please feel free to call Carla in the office (909.793.3520) and she will happily schedule our appointments, lunches, pastoral visits, meetings, playtimes, etc. In emergencies—including hospital visits—I hope you will be diligent in contacting me (office or home: 909.794.8138) so that I may be present with you. You may also reach me by email (which I usually check each day) at [pastor@uccredlands.org](mailto:pastor@uccredlands.org).

## Save the Date

All church retreat, Saturday, May 30 – Sunday, May 31 in Angelus Oaks.



## APRIL WORSHIP LEADERS

- 5 Lower Sunday School with  
Dana Hawley-Zechlin  
12  
19  
26

## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

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

## On The Shelf

The library is taking shape. There is a section devoted to Bibles and Bible interpretation. If you are a Max Lucado fan, there are several children's and adult books. New additions include Gays Lesbian and Family Values, The Shack, and Stories for a Teen's Heart. So, come and see what is on the shelf.

## ARE YOU AWARE?

Chapman University is one of the places your giving to Wider Ministries goes. Chapman is a place, where Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ students as well as others will find a warm community and get an excellent education.

Sarah Fiske-Phillips is a student at Chapman. Loring and Barbie Fiske-Phillips, Mary Belle and Bob Carter are alumni. Mary Belle's granddaughter, Sabreena, will be going to Chapman in the Fall of 2009. Founders Day was celebrated March 21.

## *...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**

Guest lecturer is Professor Aristotle Tziampiris from Greece. Professor Tziampiris will be discussing Faith and International Politics. Thursday, April 2 at 7:00 p.m. in Watchorn Hall at the University of Redlands.

### **Church Women United**

Church Women United will meet Friday, April 3, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. at the Mentone UCC at 1205 Beryl Ave., Mentone. We will celebrate Church Word Service.

### **Eastern Association Spring Meeting**

It's All New! It's All Now! April 25, 2009. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. (Event will conclude with lunch being served about 12:30) Bloomington Congregational UCC, 18490 Santa Ana Ave., Bloomington. Please RSVP to Jeanne Halverson (909) 445-9144. \$10 includes lunch!

### **Dances of Universal Peace**

The Dances of Universal Peace are easy-to-learn circle dances that celebrate the teachings of love, peace and compassion from all the world's spiritual traditions. Children are welcome ages 6 and up. Light refreshments will be served. Friday, April 3, 5:30 p.m. Casa Loma Room, University of Redlands.

### **Music for a Spring Afternoon**

Will be held on Sunday, May 3, at 3 p.m. at the First Congregational Church (corner of Olive and Cajon). Featuring music for the organ, this concert is to raise funds for Step by Step, the coalition for positive re-entry into society by parolees. The five organists will be Dr. Del Case, Jeff Rickard, Kimo Smith, Irmengard Jennings, and William Brakemeyer. Everyone is welcome. A freewill offering will be received.

### **Installation of Rev. Jonathon Edwards**

You are invited and your presence would be a blessing. Sunday, April 19 at 3:00 p.m. Bethel Congregational United Church of Christ, 536 N. Euclid Ave., Ontario. Buffet reception to follow. RSVP appreciated. (909) 984-9111.

## Call to 27<sup>th</sup> General Synod

The 27<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the United Church of Christ will convene Friday afternoon, June 26, 2009 in Grand Rapids, Michigan and will adjourn at the close of business on Tuesday evening, June 30. The theme for this year's Synod will be "Immerse Yourself!" Guest registration opens in December and there will be instructions for registering on the website at this time. Please join us in Grand Rapids and "immerse yourself!"

### The First Annual Romero Lecture

"The Politics of Crossing Borders, Borderlands, Culture and Traditions" is the theme of the first Annual Romero Lecture Series, an event examining issues concerning the civic activism role of the church in the United States and in the world. The keynote speaker is Robert C. Orr, Assistant Secretary General for Strategic Planning and Policy Coordination in the Executive Office of the Secretary General, United Nations. Mr. Orr's responsibilities include advising the Secretary General on a full range of strategic issues, running the Secretary General's Policy Committee.

The Romero Lecture Series will be held on April 17, 2009, at Chula Vista Community Congregational Church located at 276 F Street, Chula Vista. A series of Faith and Praxis. Contact SCNC at 626-798-8082.

## Women's Spirituality Retreat

May 1-3, 2009 – UCC Women's Spirituality Retreat "Speaking and Listening from the Heart. Practice the healing ministry of empathic listening. Rev. Terry LaPage will offer tools from her community ministry of Nonviolent Communication to help build connection with self, others and God.

Cost is \$110.00. The weekend rates include sleeping accommodations, four meals, snacks and program activities. Please reserve by April 24 to avoid the late fee of \$10 per person. There is also an optional massage which is a 30 minute massage for \$30.00 and 60 minutes for \$60.00. Please pay for massages separately by check or cash. Questions? Contact (909) 797-1821.

### Telling Our Stories

Irvine United Congregational Church & University Synagogue present Helen Prejean, May 31, at 2 p.m. Irvine United Congregational Church. Helen Prejean, C.S.J., is a writer, speaker and community organizer who has lived and worked in Louisiana all her life. She has lectured extensively on the subject of capital punishment. Special Luncheon at 12:30 p.m. – limited seating – cost \$25. Please contact Robinmarie McClements, Director of Christian Education, I.U.C.C. 949-733-0220

### **April Scripture Readings**

April 5:                    *Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; John 12:12-16*  
 April 12:                  *John 20:1-18; Mark 16:1-8*  
 April 19:                  *Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; John 20:19-31*  
 April 26:                  *1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48*

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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Pastor Emeritus – Rev. Richard Blakley



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