

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

July 2009

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

Communion - Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Sunday, July 5

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

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

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

Summer Series will meet Sunday July 19 and 26
at 5:00 p.m.

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

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

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

From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*“Pronouncing a blessing puts you as close to God as you can get;
to learn to look with compassion on everything that is...”*

—Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar in the World*

One of the delights of reading the daily mail is seeing the various newsletters that arrive at our door from the doors of many area congregations. Recently, I was reading “The Reporter” from University Christian Church in San Diego—it is the congregation currently being served by Rev. Dr. Jill Kirchner, who found her wings in ministry right here at Redlands United Church of Christ.

Jill writes about a member of their congregation helping her weed her garden, and the spiritual lessons she became attentive to in the process:

“She came across a very dead looking rose bush that was still in its original container, a rose bush that I had failed to plant into the ground. Since [she] oversaw the Garden Department of this year’s rummage sale, she asked, ‘Jill, what are you going to do with that rose bush?’ I told her that I had planned on throwing it away. She said ‘Can I have it for the rummage sale?’ I looked at her like she had two heads, then shrugged, and said okay. A few days later I was in the Garden Department at the rummage sale. There was a beautiful rose bush, healthy, vibrant and alive with several buds on it. This beautiful bush was selling for only \$5. It was a steal! As I admired the rose bush, [the same woman] whispered in my ear, ‘That is your rose bush.’ Again, I looked at her like she had two heads and I began to ask questions—how is this possible? She said, ‘I took it home, watered it, fertilized it, and gave it some love, and it came back to life in only three weeks.’ I bought my rose bush back for five bucks...Several years ago I visited Findhorn in Scotland, a remote community where people talk to plants with amazing results. A cold wind-blown peninsula with soil as sandy and worthless as your local beach—grows 42-pound cabbages, 8-foot delphinium, 60-pound broccoli plants, and roses that bloom in the snow. When asked the secret of this modern day garden of Eden, the answer is ‘love.’ Those who work in the garden give love and light to their plants, vegetables, and fruit trees. Amazing!

I recently finished a book that I highly recommend, *An Altar in the World*, by Barbara Brown Taylor. She invites us to pronounce blessings. A blessing does not confer holiness; the holiness is already there. She writes, “To pronounce a blessing on something is to see it from the divine perspective. To pronounce a blessing is to participate in God’s own initiative...Pronouncing a blessing puts you as close to God as you can get. To learn to look with compassion on everything that is...” Jill concludes, “This summer, as you work in the garden, walk in the park, or hike in the outdoors, I encourage you to pronounce a blessing. We are all ministers. Anyone can bless anything regardless if anyone has authorized you to do it or not. In Taylor’s words, “All I am saying is that the world needs you to do this, because there is a real shortage of people willing to kneel wherever they are and recognize (its) holiness...”

Happy Blessing!



President's Message

Summer afternoon - summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language. ~Henry James

Summer is here ... although this was one of the coolest Junes in my memory. The kids are out of school, vacations are just around the corner, and soon our beautiful mountains will be completely obscured behind the daily haze.

The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco. ~Author unknown, commonly misattributed to Mark Twain

Summertime at many churches means empty pews as people leave town, go to the beach, or just sleep in. That's not a big issue at Redlands UCC. Our attendance fluctuates somewhat over the course of a year, but there's not a huge drop off in the summer. Except for the inevitable trips out of town, it seems most folks come to church before they head off to their favorite swimmin' hole.

Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass on a summer day listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is hardly a waste of time. ~John Lubbock

I believe this phenomenon has a lot to say about why RUCC'ers attend church. We don't come to church as an afterthought. We don't just squeeze it in when it's convenient. It's an intentional relationship with this community of our brothers and sisters in faith. Many people have told me their whole week is improved by coming to church on Sunday morning.

A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken. ~James Dent

This sense of family is not limited to the regular crowd. I have been blessed to attend quite a few new member orientations where people interested in membership share lunch with the church board and other members. One of the most frequent comments I've heard about why people chose to attend RUCC is the sense of welcome, friendship, and acceptance.

A life without love is like a year without summer. ~Swedish Proverb

For this year's Summer Series, we'll be exploring what inclusiveness means in our lives and in the life of our church. What does it really mean to be an open and affirming community? Where in our personal lives have we felt excluded? Who have we excluded (intentionally or unintentionally)? This will be another opportunity to have sacred conversations and get to know each other (and ourselves) on a deeper level. I hope you will be there, unless of course, you're on a summer vacation!

Then followed that beautiful season... Summer...Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light; and the landscape lay as if new created in all the freshness of childhood. ~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

With optimism and hope,
Loring Fiske-Phillips

Welcome, Rev. Leif Lind
Associate Pastor

Our new Associate Pastor, The Rev. Leif Lind, begins his ministry with Redlands United Church of Christ, on Sunday, July 5th!

Leif is no stranger to RUCC, as he was married last year to our Organist/Choir Director Taylor Ruhl (they have been together for 12 years), and Leif has been playing the piano for our early Sunday morning Contemplative Service. A minister raised in the Seventh Day Adventist tradition, Leif has lived and served around the world. Born in Uganda to Norwegian missionary parents, Leif grew up in several different countries and continents, and took his ministerial training in England and the US. Leif has two children—a daughter who lives here in California, and a son who lives in Geneva, Switzerland.

Leif's responsibilities will include assisting with all pastoral tasks—worship leadership, periodic preaching, and pastoral care and counseling. In addition, Leif will provide pastoral leadership for the Growth area by helping to keep track of our many guests. He will offer guidance to the Education area, especially in the arena of Adult Education, and he will offer training to the Shepherds to strengthen their vibrant and helpful ministry with the hospitalized and homebound.

He has just returned from the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, where he was participating in the UCC History and Polity class to fulfill a portion of the requirements to become a fully authorized minister within the UCC.

A special reception after worship on Sunday, July 5th will welcome Leif “officially” and we hope you each will take time to write or call or email him to welcome him personally!

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announcements, Announcements, ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Our vibrant community continues to grow, and with growth, comes the challenge of communication. The weekly View (emailed and available in printed format each Sunday) AND the monthly Wanderings (emailed, mailed and available at church each month) both seek to inform and educate us about the many activities, meetings, and opportunities for spiritual growth available. From time to time, meetings are planned at the last minute (not around here, you exclaim!)—so to better facilitate participation, IF you want a meeting announced on Sunday morning, please make a note with ALL pertinent details, and hand it to one of the pastors. We will happily mention this “JOY!” during our Joys & Concerns time. Sound good?

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!

Barn Raisers

We need weed-whacking, hoe-bearing, rake-wielding friends to help in a one day project clearing brush from the Hawley-Zechlin property. We will meet on Saturday, July 11, time to be announced. Please RSVP Janet Wilson at 909 883 5877 (aikijlw@aol.com).

Save The Date!

The all-church retreat has been postponed to allow more of YOU to attend! Registration is currently underway for the NEW dates of September 26th and 27th.

Come out and relish in the splendor of Autumn in Angelus Oaks while we explore all "THE TIES THAT BIND". See Jennifer or Dana Hawley-Zechlin for more details and to register. You may also e-mail Jennifer at deeprootsacademy@hotmail.com or call either Dana or Jennifer at 909-795-2398.

July Worship Leaders

5 Floyd Orr
12 Kerry Doherty
19
26

July Birthdays

1 John Macomber
2 John Drage
3 Brooks Dierdorff
6 Mary Fung
Vern Jones
Marlene Moran
7 Suzanne Seifert
Lisa Ruiz-Shipp
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

Summer Series

Come and participate in the Sacred Conversations on Inclusivity and Equality. This is a good way to get to know more about yourself and others. Sundays, 5:00-8:00 pm. July 19, 26 and August 2, 9, 16, 23. ~ Swim ~ Eat ~ Visit ~ Listen and be listened to with delight! Meet in homes TBA. ALL are welcome!

In the past few years, as part of our open and affirming mission, we have been working on LGBT, immigration and racial issues. In all of these efforts, our goal has been to build a church community that is inclusive and welcoming, striving toward justice and equality. This year's summer series extends these activities.

Organized around the theme of inclusivity and equality, the series will borrow the successful "sharing stories" format that was used during our "Sacred Conversation on Race" this past Lenten Supper Series. The chance to think and be listened to with delight, created a space to think deeply about our lives. We'll use this "God is still listening" approach through the summer series.

In the first meeting on July 19th, the groundwork for the series will be laid. We'll start off by trying to develop some general insights into what it means to an inclusive and welcoming community. Participants will be asked to think about experiences when they have been warmly included, and times when perhaps they have been excluded for various reasons.

In the next four meetings, we'll use these general insights to look at the ways various social forces operate to include and exclude people. For these meetings, we need your input. We know that people are divided and treated unequally along a number of lines (age, religion, ability, social class, language, race, gender, sexual orientation etc.). Are there some issues or social identities that you'd like the group to think about? Please let us know by signing the sheet and listing your ideas in Covenant Hall on Sunday morning. Your ideas will be used to shape the foci of our middle four meetings.

In the last meeting, we'll think about where we want to go. Building on the UCC motto, "God, is still speaking (and listening)," we'll think about what the Summer Series means for our church as we continue on our journey to be an open and affirming community.

Birthday Celebration

Sunday, July 19th – Join the celebration of Marjorie Benz's 90th birthday at fellowship time following the worship service. Bring a card and/or personal greeting to Marge on this special occasion.



...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.

Ordination

The Eastern Association of the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ and The First Congregational Church Santa Ana Invite you to a worship service on July 12, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. at First Congregational Church (UCC) 2555 Santiago Street, Santa Ana, CA

During our worship service, Leonard Mark (Lenny) Anderson will be ordained to the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ.

Light refreshments will be served following the worship service in the Fireside Room. All clergy are invited to wear red stoles. All non-clergy attendees are invited to include something red in their attires.

RSVP by July 3, 2009 to First Congregational Church at 714-639-0311 or fccsa@sbcglobal.net

Ecclesiastical Council

Ecclesiastical Council for Emily McGaughy on Friday, July 17, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. First Congregational Church of Riverside, 3504 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside. While there is ample paid parking in downtown Riverside on weekdays (street parking and one lot directly across the street from the church that would cost \$2), the church parking lot will be cleared and made available for Delegates. Please RSVP by calling First Congregational Church at 951-684-2494. If would like to receive a copy of Emily's ordination paper, please e-mail Reverend Jane Quandt at revjq@sbcglobal.net or call the church.



July Scripture Readings

Information for July will be in each week's View

Minister – Rev. Dr. Sharon R. Graff
Associate Minister – Rev. Leif Lind
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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