

# WANDERINGS

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

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

**September 2009**

Contemplative Worship Service and Communion – 8:00 a.m.

Worship Service – 10:30 a.m.

Sundays, September 6, 13, 20 and 27

Communion - Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, September 6

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

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

Church Board will meet Tuesday, September 8  
at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Office

Celebration Ringers rehearsals begin  
Thursday, September 10 at 6:15 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Covenant Choir rehearsals begin  
Thursday, September 10 at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Jubilee Ringers rehearsals begin  
Sunday, September 13 at 12:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

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

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

Stewards meet on Tuesday, September 22  
at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Office

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

**From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~**

*“You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus,  
for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.  
There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, gay nor straight,  
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

—The Apostle Paul as recorded in Galatians 3:26-28  
and edited by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan

I'd always hoped it was true. So it did my heart good this past June to personally hear Professors Borg and Crossan declare the heart of Paul to be big enough to include gay and straight along with all the other dichotomies he notes in this passage from Galatians. For all my life, I have been one who believes that Christ worked for the full equality of people and the full inclusion of all into God's realm. This is at the core of my Christian faith, and it is firmly rooted in the biblical truth that God loves everyone...equally...

Out of this faith, I shared with you during the meditation on Pentecost Sunday (May 31, 2009 “Pentecost Persists”) that, in response to the California Supreme Court's decision to uphold Proposition 8, I have made a decision of personal conscience and will no longer be signing marriage licenses. (I encourage those of you who may have missed hearing that meditation to read it online or retrieve a copy from the church office, as the context of this heartfelt decision is more fully presented.) I expect to abide by this decision until it is once again possible for ALL loving couples to be afforded the legal benefits marriage offers in our state. Many of you applauded that decision when announced in worship. Others of you were disturbed and perhaps still are. Each person with whom I've spoken since then has supported my making that decision based on my own core beliefs.

In the spirit of “continuing revelation”—or, as we say around here frequently, “God is still speaking”—I want to share another perspective on this important decision. And in the interest of full disclosure, you must know that this perspective originated with my wise husband, Dr. John Sweeney! One day, right after the California Supreme Court announced their decision, while I was righteously stirred up, John calmly noted, “What you want to do is practice ‘Equal Marriage.’” He is right! Just as our beloved denomination was the first Christian church to courageously adopt a resolution in favor of equal marriage (General Synod, 2005), I want to remain on that path of offering equal marriage for all loving couples.

Thus, after more months of thought, prayer, conversation, and meditation on these important issues of justice, and now utilizing the insight John provided, I share with you again, that until ALL loving couples are given the civil rights inherent in marriage, I will continue with joy to welcome EVERYONE—gay, lesbian, straight—equally to the altar for a Christian celebration of their marriage! I will pray God's blessings on each marriage! We will have those proverbial acres of tulle draped beautifully in our sanctuary! We will give each couple a gold embossed certificate noting the date of their marriage and bearing the signatures of those in attendance! There will be attendants handsomely dressed and flower girls and ring bearers walking cutely down the aisle. All couples will be treated equally, as is consistent with scripture. But there is more: for those couples who are able still to purchase a marriage license, they will be directed to the county office that disburses them, and will be encouraged to take care of that “state business” with the state. If the couple wishes to have a license signed here, at Redlands UCC, on the day of their ceremony, then I shall enlist the assistance of a colleague who is willing to sign the license in private, and the public ceremony will go on without a hitch! Or, more accurately, with a hitch—a hitch for all, equally—that we all hope lasts a very long and loving time...!

*Thoughtful Blessings,*

*Sharon*

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

One of my all-time favorite Christian theologians, Frederick Buechner, writes: “Phrases like WORSHIP Service or Service of Worship are [redundant]. To worship God *means* to serve God. Basically there are two ways to do it. One way is to do things for God that God needs to have done...the other way is to do things for God that you need to do...” In that latter category, Buechner places things like sing songs for God, create beautiful things for God, give things up for God, tell God what’s on your mind and in your heart, and “...in general rejoice in God and make a fool for yourself for God the way lovers have always made fools of themselves for the one they love...” During these long months of what the church calls “Ordinary Time,” there is nothing ordinary at all about our joy in worship and our growth on the journey of faith. Come, for you are needed as much as you need to be a part of these family gatherings!

September 6 – “Ben Franklin Meets Jesus” – Communion Sunday

*Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23; Psalm 125; Mark 7:24-37*

Aphorisms, proverbs, adages...usually these are pithy sayings containing a general truth about life. One of our nation’s founders, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, was as well-known in his day for his proverbs as was the ancient biblical writer of the book of Proverbs. Then there was Jesus, who, in today’s gospel lesson, becomes a proverb with his quick and dirty healings accompanied by his equally hasty comments. Quick now, don’t blink, or you may miss today’s message...!

September 13 – “A Friend Named Sophia”

*Proverbs 1:20-33; James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38*

She is called by many names, Lady Wisdom, Sophia, and Holy Spirit among them. She is described in the book of Proverbs as a cherished treasure of a companion, and scholars have suggested that Jesus himself looked to her for advice. Yet, in the history of Christianity, the Divine Feminine tragically has been overlooked, ignored, and all but lost. Come and meet this long-lost friend...you’ll be the better for it.

September 20 – The Rev. Leif Lind, preaching

September 27 – ALL-CHURCH RETREAT WORSHIP IN ANGELUS OAKS

Today, we **ALL** meet in Angelus Oaks at Alpine Meadows Camp at 11:00 am for worship as the All-Church Retreat concludes. There will be no services at RUCG...Come up the mountain to join the rest of the RUCG Retreaters for a refreshing worship experience! Contact your shepherd if you need a ride up the hill or wish to carpool. Maps are available in the church office.

Worship will be richer and deeper with your presence.

—Sharon R. Graff

## President's Message

For many of our members and friends at RUCC, September means going back to school. We have quite a number of students, people in administration, teachers, professors, etc. I'd guess the percentage of people involved in education here is well above the average in the general population. I wonder if it's our community that draws them here or does their presence create the community? Like many things in life, it's probably a mixture of both.

You see education manifests itself in so many ways. Time and again we pursue opportunities to teach ourselves new things, look for new ways of understanding, and partner with people who are actively involved in education.

The 2009 Summer Series on Equality and Inclusivity was a great example of our community opening our minds to new horizons. Through the process of listening, we heard different perspectives and different ways of dealing with life. That doesn't mean we always agreed, but we listened with love, acceptance and above all, with delight. Many people who participated in the Summer Series told me that whether they were on the sending or receiving end of these conversations, they learned something about their fellow RUCC'ers and about themselves.

If you were able to attend some or all of the sessions, the following questions will look familiar. If not, I hope you will take time to reflect on some of them. Think about what your answers are, or your own further questions! Talk to your friends and family and learn firsthand what delight there is in hearing others' deepest perspectives.

**INCLUSION/EXCLUSION** – Led by Loring & Sharon

1) "Talk about a time you have been included warmly." 2) "Talk about a time when you participated in excluding others (or had trouble including someone else)."

**KINDNESS THAT WAS OFFERED/RECEIVED** – Led by Georgia, Sara, Barb

1) "When have you known or received abundant kindness?" 2) "How did it change you?"

**RECEIVING HELP OR SERVICE/GIVING HELP OR SERVICE** – Led by Larry & Gretchen

1) "When were you on the receiving end of assistance?" 2) "When were you on the giving end of rendering assistance to someone else?"

**FORGIVENESS: RECEIVING/GIVING** – Led by Rick & Keith

1) "Think of times when you needed forgiveness or were forgiven. What was that like?" 2) "Think of a time when you forgave someone, and how did that help you to be more inclusive and treat people more equally?"

**YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH GOD: PRESENCE/ABSENCE** – Led by Barbie & Susie

1) "When have you felt particularly close, intimate, connected or accepted to/by your conception of God or the Divine—whatever you might define that to be?" 2) "When have you felt disconnected or separated from that entity?" 3) "How has either or both of these experiences influenced you or led you to where you are today on your faith journey?"

**REFLECTIONS ON THE SERIES AND OTHER TOPICS FROM THE COMMUNITY** – Led by Loring & Sharon

1) "Looking back at the topics/questions, what has changed in you as a result of summer series?" 2) Of the other topics suggested by the church community (poverty, homelessness, socioeconomic differences, race/racism, GLBT concerns, marriage equality, adoption, mental illness, immigration/amnesty), which of these are you most passionate about and what in your life story drives that passion?" 3) "Holding that passion tenderly, what is it in your story that holds you back from pursuing that passion?"

I hope you will continue to learn and listen with delight, because different perspectives are so enriching. My mother used to frequently quote, "Variety is the spice of life!"

With optimism and hope,  
Loring Fiske-Phillips

## ***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!

### **UCC 101**

We will continue our conversation about the mission and purpose of the UCC. Please read and prepare session 3 in the study book. Sunday, September 13, 12:30-1:30 p.m. All are welcome!

### **RUCC All-Church Retreat Sign-Ups**

Registration is currently under way for the all-church retreat and a table will be set up in Covenant Hall this after church to help you do so. Better hurry though, time is running out!

Come out and relish in the splendor of autumn in Angelus Oaks while we explore all "THE TIES THAT BIND". As an added bonus, our keynote address and culminating experience of the retreat will feature the Rev. (almost Dr.!) Jeanne Favreau- Sorvillo as guest speaker. Jeanne will be speaking on the retreat theme, and we look forward to her insights.

Dates: Saturday Sept. 26th - Sunday Sept. 27<sup>th</sup>

Place: Alpine Meadows, Angelus Oaks

Cost:

Adults		\$75.00
Children	(ages 5-13)	\$60.00
Littles	(ages 3-5)	\$50.00
Teenies	(ages 2 and under)	Free

There is a Family Rate of \$225.00 and if you only plan on coming up for the day on Saturday there are a few spots available for "Daytrippers" at the rate of \$45.00.

Financial assistance is available, talk to Rev. Graff if you would like to attend! Sunday morning is, of course, available to all without cost.

If you will not be at church you can also contact Jennifer or Dana for more details and to register. You may also e-mail Jennifer at [deeprootsacademy@hotmail.com](mailto:deeprootsacademy@hotmail.com) or call either Dana or Jennifer at 909-795-2398

### **Pictorial Directory**

We are hoping to have our pictorial directory ready soon. Do we have your picture and/or questionnaire? If not, please contact Carla in the church office. We would like to have all pictures and questionnaires submitted by Sunday, October 4. If you have any questions, please contact Carla at 793-3520 or [office@uccredlands.org](mailto:office@uccredlands.org).

## **Sacred Conversation on Death and Dying**

Sunday, September 13 at 12:30 p.m. in Covenant Hall. Let's come together to share our stories and listen to each other with delight about our experiences with death and dying. What has it been like to support loved ones who are dying? What has it been like to continue on with our lives after loved ones have died? What kind of support do we need as we travel this part of our spiritual journey? As we listen and share our stories, we hope to enrich our relationships and develop closer bonds to support each other well in this important aspect of our lives.

### **Bells! Bells! Bells!**

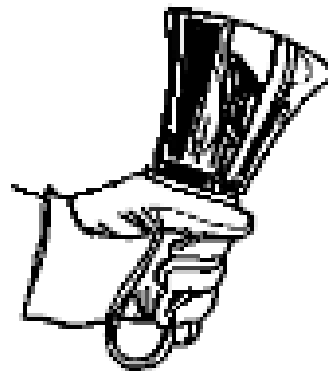
RUCC Bell Choirs provide a unique opportunity for people looking to serve in the worship of our church as well as enhance their own musical abilities. Bell choirs are unlike any other musical ensemble as the product is fully reliant upon the choir's collective participation. You will find the teamwork, musical experience and contribution to worship truly rewarding. I invite anyone curious about playing bells to join without hesitation. We have two groups that rehearse and perform throughout the fall, winter and spring.

The Jubilee Ringers group is open to people of all musical abilities and experience levels. While we always challenge ourselves to make the best music possible we move at pace suited for the newer ringers in the

group. Jubilee Ringers meet to rehearse each Sundays from 12:00pm to 1:00pm in the sanctuary. Our first rehearsal this season will be on September 13.

The Celebration Ringers group is open to those able to effectively read music and who have some past experience with bells. The Celebration Ringers experience hard work and discipline as a rewarding aspect of musical performance and enjoying the pursuit of excellence (even if we fall short of it on occasion). Celebration Ringers meet to rehearse each Thursday from 6:15pm to 7:15pm in the sanctuary. Our first rehearsal this season will be on September 10.

Don't be shy now, come ring out the good news with us. Craig Colclough



## September Worship Leaders

- 6 Floyd Orr
- 13 Gal Glanville
- 20 Julie Phillip
- 27 Jacob Fiske-Phillips

## September Birthdays

- 1 Dee Hodson  
Diane Richardson  
Jake Spoor
- 2 Michael Dewey
- 3 Ian Naftzger  
Katie Barton
- 4 Joseph Kles
- 7 Douglas Miller
- 8 Sheridan Blanchard
- 11 Deana Whitfield
- 12 Steve Chapman
- 16 Jo Dierdorff
- 17 Wendy Naftzger
- 19 Elizabeth Schuiling
- 20 John Sweeney  
Jeanne Favreau-Sorvillo  
Kent Taylor
- 21 Eric Goren
- 23 Mary Belle Carter
- 24 Matthew Walsh  
Alyssa Jacobsen
- 25 Ryan Hughes
- 26 Sam Dickey  
Noah Dewey
- 26 Robert Broadhead  
Heather Shamp
- 30 Barb Lord

## Volunteer Opportunity

*"No One Dies Alone"* is a volunteer program at Redlands Community Hospital. This program provides a volunteer companion to dying patients who would otherwise be alone. With the support of the nursing staff, companions are able to help provide patients with the most valuable human gift – a dignified death. We are looking for people who possess the following:

Sensitive to, concern for, and empathy to spiritual needs of the patient.

Works well with others as well as independently.

Interacts in a non-judgmental manner with persons of all faiths.

If you are interested, please contact the hospital volunteer services at 909-335-5526 and express your interest in *"No One Dies Alone"*.



## Art, For Heaven's Sake!

It's time to mark your calendar for our 29<sup>th</sup> annual Art, for Heaven's Sake! Festival. The Festival will take place October 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> and much help will be needed to continue the overwhelming success of past shows. The art show committee has chosen sixty four artists from over eighty five applications which will make this year's show one of the largest ever!

Help will be needed in the following areas:

### Prior to the show

- \* **Tasty Treats** - Tea cookies and hors d'oeuvres are needed for the Friday night gala reception. These can be made ahead of time and frozen or you can make them a day or two ahead.

### Friday, October 16

- \* **General Set up Friday** morning - Help is needed to move furniture, set up temporary fencing, erect pop-up tents, string lights, put up banners and signs etc.
- \* **Set up Artist's Lounge Friday** morning – We provide sandwiches and snacks for the artists on Friday night and coffee and snacks all weekend.
- \* **Assist artists Friday afternoon** - Starting at 11:00 am the artists begin setting up their exhibits. Many appreciate help with carrying things from their cars and it's a great way to meet the artists.
- \* **Serve food and drinks Friday evening** - Starting at 7:00 pm hors d'oeuvres, cookies, coffee and punch are served at the gala reception. Help is needed carrying trays of food throughout the show, filling the coffee pot and punch bowls, and serving coffee and punch. This is a great opportunity to mix with the artists and guests.

### Friday, Saturday and Sunday

- \* **Monitor the guest book and greet guests** – Greet guests and invite them to sign the guest book.
- \* **Cashier Friday, Saturday and Sunday** – If you're experienced with retail sales or good at handling monetary transactions, help is needed to cashier at the checkout table
- \* **Breaks for artists Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday** – People are needed to sit at the artists' booths for short periods of time in order to give them breaks.
- \* **Monitor the Artist's Lounge Saturday and Sunday** – Help is needed to make sure the food and coffee for the artists is available.

### Sunday Evening 5:00 pm

- \* **Clean up!** – Clean up must be done quickly in order to get the church back in order for the Indonesian church service later this evening.

**Questions??** Contact Sondra Hodson at (909) 633-3210 or shodson2@roadrunner.com

Visit the Art For Heaven's Sake! Website at [www.artforheavenssake.org](http://www.artforheavenssake.org) for more information on the artists and pictures of last year's show.

## ~ Kid's Zone Gazette ~

### **Summer in the Zone!**

by Jennifer Hawley-Zechlin

We've had a great summer in Kid's Zone, with a lot of fun but an underlying theme of making our world a better place for all. We have utilized folk tales of tolerance from Rhinos & Raspberries, a wonderful collection I got from Teaching Tolerance, an arm of The Southern Poverty Law Center. (Elementary teachers – if you'd like to look at this let me know and I can tell you how to get a classroom kit of your own.)

Some of the other things we've done this summer include a water play day in the garden to kick off our summer and our own version of Music Sunday where we talked about the gift of music and then made our own "joyful noise" with a variety of instruments. A couple of the kids even opted to stay in service and listen to "the professionals".

Speaking of music, I would like to thank Lora Hall for coming in on July 12<sup>th</sup> and teaching the kids a couple of songs she enjoyed when she was younger.

The kids all buckled up as they boarded the imaginary bus for our Virtual Field Trip to the Jelly Belly Factory where we learned how they are manufactured. We then discussed the diversity of jelly beans and realized that even though they

come in all different colors and flavors they can all mingle together in the same package and we buy them *because* there is so much variety. Of course, we finished the lesson with a feast of Jelly Bellys!

Now even though school is back in session, we actually won't begin our new curriculum cycle for a couple of weeks. That means we've got a couple of things to look forward to still as part of our summer fun! On September 6<sup>th</sup> we'll have our "End of the Summer Water Play Day" and on September 13<sup>th</sup> we'll have a special treat to lead us into a new year of learning. Sara Schoonmaker has graciously agreed to help me bring the techniques we've been learning in Summer Series of "Listening with Delight" to the children! It will be an exciting time and you'll have to read next month's newsletter to find out how it went.

### **Summer of Service Project**

Our Summer of service project of collecting food for Redlands Family Assistance has come to an end. The Kids and I would like to thank everyone for his or her generosity and support. The kids have prayed over the food each week and we have done some creative praying for the families we imagined might be receiving it.

As of press time I do not have totals for you but I will report how many pounds of food we delivered in next month's issue. It's nice to know

that kids *can* make a difference in their communities.

### **Leadership Anyone?**

One of things we've implemented this summer and will continue is the formation of Flock Groups. Each of the Middle School and early High School students has had the opportunity to lead a small flock of younger students.

We lovingly have begun to refer to the older kids as "mutton", but I must tell you I am so very proud of each of them! These young people have really stepped into a leadership role and have even started coming up with some of their own ideas for programming.

Middle and High Schoolers, please know just how valuable you are in Kid's Zone. Thanks for the help!



### **Hello Redlands UCC**

by Jen Neibling, Seminary Intern

Thank you all for the opportunity to intern with this congregation. I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you. My name is Jen Neibling and I'm starting my second year in the Master of Divinity program at Claremont School of Theology. This semester, in addition to learning with this congregation through field education, I will be studying both practical and systematic theology, worship, and Greek.

I studied engineering as an undergraduate and worked for an environmental consulting firm for several years after college. However, I was unable to rid myself of the persistent idea that I could go into ministry instead, and ultimately decided that it was too good a possibility to pass up. I have three younger siblings: a sister studying naturopathic medicine in Seattle, a brother studying nursing in Idaho, and a teenage sister. When I am not studying, I generally read and play both computer games and the cello. I hope that this year is a wonderful experience for all of us.

*...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.

**Women of Faith  
Humanitarian Service**

Our next workday is Thursday, Sept. 10 from 11 am to 8 pm. Come at 11:30am or 6:00pm and bring a 'G' hook if you want to learn how to crochet a granny square. In addition to making bibs, aprons, and baby blankets, we're also helping out at an Ettie Lee Boys Home. *If you'd like to help provide a pair of Wrangle jeans or a gray T shirt for one of 12 boys, please call for details and sizes.* As always, we're also collecting hygiene items for area parolees. Most needed items are: shaving cream, men's disposable razors, and wash cloths.

*Location: The LDS Church on the corner of Fifth Avenue & Wabash in Redlands (by the temple).*

**Bach Cantata Vespers Concert:  
Mein Herze schwimmt in Blut  
(BMW 199)**

Sunday, September 20 at 7:00 p.m. Soprano Soloist and Orchestra, Jubilate Choir. Cantata 199, featuring a soprano soloist also highlights an obbligato part for oboe. The Jubilate Choir will be singing a psalm setting and two anthems as part of the service. The concert will be held at St. John's historical sanctuary, located at 185 S. Center Street in Orange.

**CITIZENS' ACTION  
FOR PEACE  
6TH ANNUAL PEACE  
AWARDS BANQUET**

Monday, September 21, 2009 International Peace Day. A special evening honoring peacemakers, peace activists - environmental activists "together we're better". Doors open at 5:15 pm - dinner at 6 pm. Mitten Building 345 North 5th St., Redlands

Honorees: Dianne Landeros, FaithActs – Redlands United Church of Christ. Peter Dudar and Sally Marr, Filmmakers. \$25.00 per person. For information call (909-335-2321) Reservations

[friend4earth@hotmail.com](mailto:friend4earth@hotmail.com)

## **September Scripture Readings**

September 6: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23; Psalm 125; Mark 7:24-37  
September 13: Proverbs 1:20-33; James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38  
September 20:  
September 27:

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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