

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

November 2009

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

Worship Service – 10:30 a.m.

Sundays, November 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29

Communion - Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, November 1

The Prayer Group will meet Mondays, November 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30
at 10:30 a.m. in the Choir Room

Wider Ministries will meet

Sunday, November 8 at 12:00 p.m. in the C.E. Area

Church Board will meet Tuesday, November 10

at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Office

Christian Marriage Equality Committee will meet
Monday, November 16 at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Office

The Sandwich Group will meet on Tuesday, November 17
at 12:00 p.m. in the Pastor's office

Stewards meet on Tuesday, November 24

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.

(No rehearsal on November 26)

Jubilee Ringers rehearsals

Sundays at 12:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Middle school and High school youth group

November meetings ~ check www.facebook.com ~ RUCC Youth Group

From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

*“You are a letter of Christ...
written with the Spirit of the living God...on tablets of human hearts...
Therefore, since it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry,
we do not lose heart...”*

—The Apostle Paul, 2 Corinthians, chapters 3 and 4, selections

Imagine that! Each one of us a letter of Christ! What might that letter contain? What inspirations might that letter reveal? What hopes, dreams, fears, concerns, limitations, and expectations might that letter unveil?

It would appear from Paul’s line of thinking in these chapters, that there is a connection between our being a letter of Christ and the ministry in which we participate. Our acknowledgement of who we are connects to and strengthens the ministry we do. As members and friends of a covenanting church, we know that what and who we are is intimately connected to what we do. For example, we are an artistic people, and out of that love of art is born the annual art show “Art, For Heaven’s Sake!” in which hundreds of guests are welcomed to our spiritual home. Another example: we are an educated people, with street-smarts and book-learning living side by side. Consequently, we are interested in continuing our education through classes, through reading, and through weekly conversations that dive beneath the surface of “how-do-you-do’s”. We are an active people, who understand that faith is a two-way journey. And so we put our faith in action and deepen our spirituality through participating in Step By Step Parolee Reentry Program, Marriage Equality, Immigration, bringing our ugly mug to church, buying fair trade products, reducing our eco-footprint, and the like.

Our annual covenanting process offers each one of us (me included!) an opportunity to reflect upon who we are as spiritual beings. With thought, prayer, and actual preparation of our covenants, we can remember the highlights of our spiritual journey thus far, even as we imagine where we would like to travel with God in this next year. Covenanting is NOT about determining who is “in” and who is “out”. Covenanting is NOT about joining a club. At its fundamental level, covenanting IS about consciously and intentionally joining the journey along with our co-travelers here at Redlands United Church of Christ. Covenanting IS about imagining how our spiritual growth will be enhanced this coming year through offering ourselves in various areas of service.

If you are new to Redlands UCC, and would like to know more about the covenanting process of membership, please come to the orientation lunch after worship on **Sunday, November 15th, 12:30-2:00 pm**...or call me...I LOVE to talk about covenanting!

Imagine yourself as a letter of Christ, a word of the Spirit, a phrase of God. What will you write with your life this next year?

Blessings,



President's Message

It's November 2009. Do you know where your covenant is? OK, old joke, but not an old topic! The whole covenant process is designed to be new, fresh, and a look toward the future. That's not to say the past doesn't play a part; for clearly, our past is part of who we are and helps shape our future. But this time of year, we become especially attentive to what the next year of our lives holds in store for us.

I hope the excitement for the covenant process is building within you as you listen to the voices of God, your family, and your friends. While covenanting can be a solitary exercise, I think it is best done with input from those who love us. They add another facet to the view we have of ourselves. They can help illuminate our talents, opportunities and even our passions.

When I covenanted to be president of RUCC, I had a LOT of conversations. I talked with past presidents about what it would require, I talked with other volunteer organizations about my commitments to them, and I talked with my family about my overall mix of outside family time.

These conversations helped solidify my feelings as well as my dreams and hopes for the job and my part in the community. It's interesting to note that the word *conversation* comes from the Latin *conversari* meaning "to live with, or keep company with." Our conversations remind us that covenants don't exist in a vacuum, they help define who we are in relationship with those around us.

As you consider what your 2010 covenant will hold for you, please seek out and accept input from others. Read, think, meditate, pray, converse, listen, dream and above all, let the Spirit of God guide you. As Jeremiah 29:11 tells us, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

May your covenant be a reflection of God's plan, and give you and Redlands United Church of Christ hope for the future.

With optimism and hope,
Loring Fiske-Phillips

Covenant Season is Upon Us ~ An Annual Spiritual Discipline

Rev. Dr. Sharon R. Graff

As the crisp fall air marks a change of season, the writing of a covenant to express your desire to be a member of Redlands United Church of Christ is an annual journey of the spirit that can mark a sacramental change in you. From its inception nearly 35 years ago, our congregation has used this unique way of joining, precisely so that each person can participate fully in their own faith journey every single year. No minister or lay leader makes a decision about whether you are a member here...you decide for yourself!

Stymied about what to put in your covenant? You might write something about how God has been present or absent in your life this past year. Or comment on what hopes you have for your journey this coming year. You could include books you've read that made a difference in your relationship with God. Or studies you'd like to see in the life of the church that would benefit us all. Or lessons you've learned. Or lessons you need. The leaders of the church (and especially the Nominating Committee, who prepare the list of officers and leaders for 2010) certainly hope you will prayerfully discern and tell us in your covenant the places you'd like to offer your gifts in this coming year so that we all share the load of ministry here at RUCC. Our Stewards (who must create a responsible church budget) hope you will prayerfully consider and note the financial gifts you can offer....and also consider an increase to assist with our growing congregation's needs.

Covenants do lots to build up our church. They **mark** where we are as a body, by your communication of where you are on the journey. They **make** our journey more clear and directional, by your straightforward statements of what contributes to (or hinders) your own spiritual growth. Even if your covenant reads a bit scattered, no worries! When all are read together, and seen as individual facets of this diamond we know as Redlands UCC, each one makes a valuable contribution.

This year, with the addition of our Associate Pastor, the Rev. Leif Lind, the covenant reading will be a bit different, as he will join me in prayerfully reading your covenants. Together, we shall seek to discern the Spirit's nudges and movement in our collective midst. Be assured we hold your covenants close as sacred and confidential statements. As your pastors, we anticipate that you will utilize this year's covenant process to strengthen your own journey of faith.

Covenant Sunday is **Sunday, December 6th**...Please have your covenant ready to place on the altar during worship that morning. If you need additional forms or have any questions, please contact Carla in the church office.

I look forward to Covenant Sunday, when we share this significant mile-marker and mile-maker of our journey together!

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!

Alpha Bible Study

We will meet at the home of Rich and Kathie Blakley on Tuesday, November 3 and at the home of Jane Arnegard on Tuesday, November 17. We meet at 7:30 p.m. All are welcome!

Friday Night at the Movies

“Rethink Afghanistan” is a 2009 documentary about the ongoing war in Afghanistan. This full-length documentary campaign features experts from Afghanistan, the U.S., and Russia discussing critical issues like military escalation, how escalation will affect Pakistan and the surrounding region, the cost of war, civilian casualties, and the rights of Afghan women. Brief discussion will follow and refreshments will be served. When: Friday, November 6, 2009 at 7p.m.

Naftzger/Sforza Shepherd Group

We will meet on Sunday, November 15 at 1:00 p.m. at the home of Floyd and Jean Orr for a salad potluck.

New Member’s Orientation

Are you (or someone you know and love) considering becoming a member of Redlands UCC? Please know you are invited to an orientation on Sunday, November 15 from 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. to learn more about the United Church of Christ, Redlands UCC, and our unique method of joining! Church Board members and the pastor will be present, so bring your questions, and plan to enjoy a lovely lunch. Meet in Covenant Hall, Sunday, November 15 at 12:30 p.m. New members will be welcomed on Sunday, December 6. Please RSVP to Carla in the Church Office by November 10 at (909) 793-3520.

New to UCC? To RUCC?

You may especially benefit from and enjoy UCC 101! This monthly class, led by one of our pastors, meets 12:30-1:30 pm in the church office on the second Sunday of the month. We are using the UCC confirmation book as a guide, and discuss various items that are unique to UCC and/or RUCC. All are welcome!

Shepherd Groups

Currently our congregation is divided into several Shepherd Groups or Flocks led by a Shepherd or Co-Shepherd. The groups are rearranged every two years so individuals in each group can get to know more people. New Flocks will be reformed in January. In our Groups we support each other, eat, have fun, and spread news by telephone and e-mail. As our church grows we need more Shepherds and Shepherd Groups. If you would like to be in a Shepherd Group or be a Shepherd, please consider it in your Covenant and or call Carol Buchanan (909) 798-4501 or Sally Cummings (909) 307-6455.

November Worship Leaders

1	Mary Belle Carter
8	Jen Neibling
15	Floyd Orr
22	Samuel Maury-Holmes
29	Janet Wilson

November Birthdays

November

1	Janet Greenfield Chris Beach
5	Abraham Campbell
10	Duncan Campbell
12	Jill Kirchner Mike Moran
13	Toni Layton
15	Vickie Wilson
16	Carole Wesson Sara Schoonmaker Patrick Wiedlin
20	Kerry Dunn
21	Leif Lind
23	Luther Austin-Brecher Ross Thrasher
26	Charissa Wiedlin



Our RUCC Response to a “World of Need”

As members of the Redlands United Church of Christ, we are related to the community, denomination, and world at large. This past spring, donations were sent from RUCC to Chapman University, Christian Counseling Service, Redlands Family Services, and Peppermint Ridge. This fall the following organizations have been sent donations for you by the RUCC Wider Ministries Committee. In addition to knowing that your covenant donations have been sent to help support these organizations, we urge you to visit the websites and find more information and ways for personal involvement. Please contact any of the following committee members: Kathie Blakley, John Sweeney, Rich Blakley, Gal Glanville, Jane Arnegard, Mary Belle Carter, Vicki Wilson, and Julie Phillip if you wish additional information.

Guide Dogs of the Desert – We have been visited several times in worship by a great canine and human team representing this organization. Also, our Sunday school children took this organization on as a mission a few years back. Guide Dogs of the Desert provides safe mobility, loving companionship, and the “miracle of independence” to the blind through the use of a guide dog. These wonderful dogs and all services are provided at no cost to their blind clients.

www.guidedogsofthedesert.org

Back Bay Mission – The Back Bay Mission of the United Church of Christ has been changing lives and seeking justice along the Mississippi Gulf Coast for more than 80 years. Members of our congregation joined a work team and went to this mission to work a couple years ago. They saw first hand how great the needs were, and how they could, and did, make a difference for the better.

www.thebackbaymission.org

Bread for the World – Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation’s decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. Our congregation has renewed our membership with this organization which seeks to refocus international attention on hunger and malnutrition. In addition to donations, a current action is to contact our senators to cosponsor S.1524, the Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009.

www.bread.org

Church World Service – Church World Service works with partners to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice around the world. Church World Service supports sustainable grassroots development, disaster relief, and refugee assistance, and educates and advocates on hunger-related issues. In the U.S., it helps communities respond to disasters, resettles refugees, promotes fair national and international policies, and provides educational resources. A current focus of CWS is on “Countdown to

Copenhagen” in December 2009 which will bring an important opportunity to curb climate change, when government representatives meet in Copenhagen, Denmark, to finalize a new global agreement.

www.churchworldservice.org

UCC Southeast Asia and Pacific Fund

– In response to the three natural disasters that have devastated much of Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands in just three days, the United Church of Christ on Oct. 1 set an immediate goal of raising an additional \$250,000 to share with UCC partners to provide relief, recovery, and rehabilitation throughout the region. Emergency funds are being sent to partners to assist with immediate relief efforts.

www.globalministries.org

The Carter Center for Peace

– The Carter Center is committed to advancing human rights and alleviating unnecessary human suffering. It envisions creating a world in which every man, woman, and child has the opportunity to enjoy good health and live in peace. It attempts to build a lasting peace by addressing issues such as fair elections, citizen trust in government and the justice system, respect for human rights, and freedom from suffering caused by diseases. www.cartercenter.org

...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 will celebrate World Community Day: Theme is Piecing Earth Together. We will meet on Friday, November 6 at 10:00 a.m. at the 1st United Methodist Church at 1 E. Olive Ave., Redlands. We will have a salad luncheon. Bring a salad or a donation of \$3.00. Bring a friend. Coordinator: Carrie Garrett.

Bach Cantata Vespers Concert

Sunday, November 8 at 7:00 p.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church, 185 S. Center St., Orange. "Gott de Herr is Sonn und Schild" (BWV 79). The 24-voice cathedral Singers adult choir will sing an anthem in addition to the cantata in this service. There is no charge, but a freewill offering will be taken. Childcare is available for children under the age of 5.

61st Annual Pilgrim Place Festival

Craft faire & bazaar. Lots of goodies, popcorn, cotton candy, snow cones and food court, too. November 13th and 14th, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 660 Avery Road, Claremont, CA

Love Walk for Peppermint Ridge

Come join the 4th Annual Peppermint Ridge Love Walk. Saturday, November 14. Check-in: 9:00 a.m. Walk begins: 10:30 a.m. Location: Crossroads Church, 2331 Kellogg Ave., Corona. Registration Fee: \$10 per walker. Participants will be treated to T-shirts and lunch provided by Chick-fil-A of Hidden Valley Parkway. You may donate or register online. www.LoveWalk.org

11th Annual Arts & Crafts Fair

San Bernardino FCUCC. Browse and shop! Homemade Goodies, Jams and Jellies Candles and Quilts. Great Food! Lunch from 11:00 a.m. on Saturday and Brunch from 11:15 a.m. on Sunday. Homemade Desserts too! Saturday, November 14, 9 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. and Sunday, November 15, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.



November Scripture Readings

Information for November will be in each week's View

Minister – Rev. Dr. Sharon R. Graff
Associate Minister – Rev. Leif Lind
Seminary Intern – Jen Neibling
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
Wanderings is published monthly by R.U.C.C.

Pastor Emeritus – Rev. Richard Blakley



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