

WANDERINGS

A newsletter for people on a journey together with a purpose

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

April 2010

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

Worship Service – 10:30 a.m.
Sundays, April 4, 11, 18 and 25

Communion - Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Sunday, April 11

The Prayer Group will meet Mondays, April 5, 12, 19 and 26
at 10:30 a.m. in the Choir Room
and also on
Tuesdays, April 6, 13, 20 and 27
at 5:00 p.m. in the Choir Room

Christians for Equality Committee will meet
Monday, April 5 at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Office

Church Board Meeting on Tuesday, April 13
at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Office

The Sandwich Group will meet on Tuesday, April 20
at 12:00 p.m. in the Pastor's office

Stewards meet on Tuesday, April 27
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 rehearsals
Sundays at 12:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

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

From your Pastor and Teacher, Sharon~

This is one of the rewards
of being human:
quiet exaltation,
capability for celebration.
It is expressed in a phrase
which Rabbi Akiba offered to his disciples:
A song every day,
A song every day.
—From “A Song Every Day” by Abraham Joshua Heschel,
published in *The Wisdom of Heschel*

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 1st approaches, I delightfully ponder the light-hearted nature of the day, give thanks to the Spirit for leading us, and am filled with gratitude that such joy continues to define our shared work here at Redlands UCC.

This year, April 1st is Maundy Thursday. This is the day we gather to remember the death of Jesus, his last meal with his closest friends, and the beginning of the “great three days” that culminates in Easter Sunday. April 1st, this year, is hardly a day of joy, except for the doorway it provides to what follows.

Maundy Thursday and the days following usher in the season of Eastertide, a month plus of Sundays following Easter Sunday that brilliantly focus our attention on new life. In the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel, this year’s Eastertide invites us to enjoy “a song every day...” Beginning on Easter Sunday and continuing throughout the season, we will experience resurrection glory through the gift of music. The Eastertide message of new life, vibrant life, abundant life, will be heard through choral voices, solos, trumpet, organ, flute, violin, handbells, and of course, much joy-filled congregational singing!

In the Spirit who gives life to all—and who gives a song or two every day—let us continue to stand together as ministers of a new covenant. In the spirit of April Fools, I suggest we do so by following the advice 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 in this resurrection season with the new possibilities God offers each of us. Welcome to this part of the journey...I’m hearing resurrection music...no fooling!

Blessings,



From your (other) pastor and teacher, Leif:

Currently I am conducting a weekly study class of C. S. Lewis's perennial favorite *Mere Christianity*, in which the author presents what he feels are the strongest arguments in favor of Christianity giving meaning to life and the afterlife.

I am struck repeatedly by the strength of his — at times simple, at times convoluted — reasoning on this theme and the transparent sincerity that shines through his writing.

Reading through *Christianity*, it becomes readily apparent that Lewis was writing in a different era (not to mention a different, transatlantic culture!). But few would dispute the intellectual vigor with which he expounds his views.

While I personally have difficulty accepting some of his arguments that I find dated and disturbing (the subservience of women to men and the notion of establishing a Christian society or state, for example), I find him remarkably open-minded in accepting those who may differ from him. He is gracious, and rarely dogmatic in his conclusions.

Using the metaphor of a hall out of which doors open into several “rooms” (i.e. “answers” to faith questions), he states, “When you have reached your own room, be kind to those who have chosen different doors and to those who are still in the hall.”

“Be kind to those who have chosen different doors.” Easily said, but often challenging to do! As progressive Christians it is easy for us to conclude that others should use the same door as we have chosen, whether in teaching or practice, in church or in politics. It is, after all, the most logical door to enter! And while that may be so, we, like Lewis, can be large-hearted enough to grant that God did not create us all like-minded. What may be a perfectly valid choice for one may be not always be suitable for another. The only rooms that should be barred, of course, are those that bode harm to innocent or unsuspecting victims.

“Do unto others” is a dictum that applies here as well as anywhere else. The same acceptance we crave from others we must be willing to grant them. Ultimately we are all pilgrims on a life journey, seeking the answers to the dark riddles of life as best we can. “For now we see through a glass, darkly ... but then shall I know even as also I am known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12)

In the meantime I, for one, would wish Godspeed to all my fellow travelers, whoever they may be, as we journey towards our destination.

In Christian faith, hope, and love.

Leif

President's Message

I recently attended a workshop hosted at Redlands United Church of Christ, called *Writing the Sacred: A Psalm-Inspired path to Appreciating and Writing Sacred Poetry*. The workshop leader was Ray McGinnis of Vancouver, British Columbia, who has written a book by the same title. He led about twelve of us in an inspiring evening of exploration of poetry, psalms, and prayer, as a means of making a connection to our spirituality.

One of my observations about the workshop was the balance of three different perspectives. We sampled the works of others such as Rumi, Mary Oliver, Hillel Schwartz, A.A. Milne, and of course, the Biblical Psalms. We did individual writing prompted by random phrases from Psalms: "Trees turn," "Consider everything," "Freed from my chains," "Shall not be moved," "Bones grow weak," etc. Finally, according to each person's wishes, we read aloud what we had written, expressed feelings about what we had heard, and articulated reactions to the process.

I believe these three balanced perspectives are important to our everyday spiritual life as well. We look outward and learn from others by reading, watching TV and movies, listening to the radio, etc. This outside information brings in new perspectives and helps us stay connected to the wider world. We also look inward and see what ideas and feelings come from within our own hearts and minds. Finally, we look around to our families, communities, church, work, etc. This kind of information comes through relationship as well as facts, figures and opinions.

In my view, these three perspectives: Outward, inward, and around, form the basis for how God works in our lives. God is the common thread that runs through them all. That's also the reason it's important not to neglect any of these important pathways, since the Holy Spirit is moving in and out and around us each day. If we cut ourselves off from any of the three, we will not feel complete and will feel more distant from the Holy.

At one of our study sessions on Celtic Christianity, we learned the prayer:

Christ before me
Christ within me
Christ above me
Christ below me
Christ behind me
Christ to the right of me
Christ to the left of me

Let us all feel the presence of God in every aspect of our lives as we give honor and praise to all the pathways along which God travels.

With optimism and hope,
Loring Fiske-Phillips

To the church family

On behalf of the family of Dorothy Landeros, I would like to thank you all for your overwhelming show of support to all of us during my mother Dorothy's illness. For those of you who don't know, the Shepherds set up a daily schedule of volunteers to come by the house each day from 9 – 11 am to watch my mom and help her as needed while I got ready for the day. This was especially helpful when Rob and I were taking turns staying with her throughout the night and getting little sleep. Thank you for generously giving of your time and for your compassionate care of my mom.

Thanks also to those of you who provided food, who ran errands, and who provided music. A special thanks to the choir who came by after church one Sunday to sing for my mom. She was so pleased that she told everyone who visited that the choir had come to sing to her.

Thanks to Sharon and Leif and all of you who offered prayers and spiritual support. The love, compassion, and support that you offered during this difficult time spoke more about who we are as a church than any words could say. We will forever be grateful to you.

Love, peace, and thanks –

Dianne, Steve, Rob, Toni, Doug, Hunter, and Carlisle

Events at RUCC...

Prayer Group

The Prayer Group meets every Monday morning, 10:30 to 11:30 and Tuesday evening, 5:00 to 6:00, in the choir room. The first twenty minutes is a beginner/refresher workshop time followed by meditation and silent prayer. All are invited!

Tree Planting – Saturday, April 17

Breathe fresh mountain air in Big Bear Lake and join Faith Acts in helping to reforest an area devastated by wildfires. Forest Aid would like us to bring a group of 25-30 people, so we are opening this project up to a broader community; invite your friends and neighbors to plant trees and celebrate the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. Young adults can participate without a parent or guardian, as long as they have signed parental consent. To register or FFI contact Rosemary Touhy at Alaska1471@verizon.net or 909-799-0393.

Wider Ministries Meeting

Wider Ministries Committee will meet on Sunday, April 18 at 12:15 p.m. in the Pastor's Office.

Alpha Bible Study

We will meet at the home of Jane Arnegard on Tuesday, April 20 at 7:30 p.m.

Got Yoga?

If you would be interested in either a morning or evening (or both!) yoga class please contact Janet Wilson at 909 883 5877 (aikijlw@aol.com) We can discuss days/times with our Redlands based instructor. Morning-Come and join us for a gentle morning wakeup practice to get yourself moving. Gentle stretches, including some easy backbends and forward bends to help yourself wake up and get energized. Evening - Come and join us for a gentle evening practice to unwind from your busy day. This will mostly be a floor practice, so we can work on breathing and match the breath to gentle movement to open up the body and for relaxation so you can get a good night's sleep. Both classes can be done in a chair, if necessary.

Flowers

The Worship area is looking for an individual (or two, or more) who would be willing to carry on the process of signing up folks who would like to donate altar flowers on Sunday and ordering the arrangements from our talented florist. Please contact Janet Wilson at 909-883-5877 or email her at aikijlw@aol.com if this sounds like you!

Get on the Bus-a-palooza!

We've known for years now that the ecumenical social justice mission of Get on the Bus is a great fit with RUCC, but there is another element of GOTB's philosophy that suits our community as well. GOTB talks about fundraising and friend-raising as connected activities, and that spirit of inclusivity mirrors our own ethos. In that spirit, I'm excited to share news about our fundraising efforts after service on **April 18th**, and to invite everyone to do a little friend-raising as well.

Last year's opportunity drawing and book sale was a great success, and this year will be even bigger. In addition to another opportunity drawing (this time featuring gift certificates from Briskets, Dream Dinners, State St. Deli, Mozart's, Hogi-Yogi, MisoFly, A Rolling Stone, and other local merchants), we'll have a small Mother's Day boutique featuring local artists whose beautiful work would make fantastic Mother's Day presents. Each artist will also donate an item for a silent auction (items on display – and bidding opens – April 11th). We'll also be selling Mother's Day Tribute Cards from Get on the Bus. This is too much fun to keep to ourselves, so I'm encouraging everyone to bring a friend to church on April 18th to spread the word about RUCC and all the things we value about this community, including our support of social justice projects like Get on the Bus.

Other ways you can help: 1) if you'd like to donate an item for the opportunity drawing, that would be wonderful! (gift certificates, goodie baskets, etc), and members of the congregation are more than welcome to participate in the boutique or silent auction – just let me know!; 2) we still need donated materials to make up the Stay Connected Bags (stationery, pens, postage stamps, stickers, etc). I'll put a box in the lobby this Sunday for contributions. 3) If you're a member of a group that you think would like to help, let me know and I can send you our "help" sheet for more ideas.

Disneyland Trip

We are planning a trip for Monday, April 26th. If you are interested, please contact Beki Hill or Susi Jacobsen. All are welcome!

April Worship Leaders

4	Jim Gilman
11	Samuel Maury-Holmes
18	Barbie Fiske-Phillips
25	Luther Austin-Brecher

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
- 26 Katie Hunt
- 30 Leslie Hall
Kire Hawley-Zechlin

...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.

Troubling Recognition

Seeing animals, seeing ourselves. The 2nd Annual "Do Unto Others" Conference. Friday, April 16 ~ 9:30 am-8:00 pm. Chapman University, Orange, CA. Keynote speaker: Paul Berry, Former CEO Best Friends Animal Society. Please Register online: www.animalsreligion.org

Eastern Association Meeting

All are invited to the UCC Eastern Association Spring Meeting on Saturday, April 17, from 9 am- 3 pm at Bethel Congregational Church, 536 N. Euclid Ave., Ontario, CA 91761. The theme is "Reflections on the Nature of Ministry", and will include two ecclesiastical Councils. There is a \$10 fee per person for lunch and snacks. Your RUCC representatives to this meeting are: Carla Becerril, Kathie Blakley, and Mary Belle Carter. If you wish to go, please let Kathie Blakley know in order to RSVP.

Seeking People to Serve

As the Conference looks at new leadership in the coming year, we are seeking folks who would be willing to serve in these interesting times as officers of the Conference and on the Conference Board of Directors.

There are several open positions such as that of Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer, Board members, Nominating Committee, Annual Gathering Planning Committee, General Synod Delegates. Officer terms are one or two years and Board terms are three years. If you have ever been curious or critical of the functions of the Conference or if you want to serve in a wider church setting, please consider this call to serve your sisters and brothers in Christ. Please contact the Nominating Committee member representing your association or Committee Chair, Bruce Ramet. Contact information is below.

Eastern Association:

Margo West mgwest@hotmail.com or
Lois Tait bigohn3116@verizon.net

Annual Gathering 2010

From One Foundation to New Creations. Southern California Nevada Conference United Church of Christ Annual Gathering 2010, June 11-12. First Congregational Church, Santa Ana, California. *From One Foundation to New Creations* was chosen as our theme to express our firm belief that God's creation, the

Church, has expressed itself over time in many ways, and that God is Still Speaking to us about the old and the new, including new creations that will help the Church meet the needs and challenges of the 21st Century. We believe that it is imperative that we listen for God's guidance on our journey. For more information and to register online, please visit the website: www.scncucc.org

Women's Spirituality Weekend

Friday, June 4 – Sunday, June 6, 2010 We are encouraged to practice the presence of God. June Boutwell will lead a retreat on how our five senses help lead a life of presence, prayer and discipleship. Come prepared to pray, sing, dance, reflect, be artistic, and explore your own unique place in God's creation. Cost will be \$110.00 per person. The weekend rate includes sleeping accommodations, six meals, snacks and programmed activities. Please reserve by May 21st to avoid the late fee of \$10 per person. Contact Pilgrim Pines Camp (909) 797-1821. www.pilgrimpinescamp.org

April Scripture Readings

Information for April 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

Interim Handbell Directors – Hannah McMeans and Steve Morics

Interim Youth Director – Dana Hawley-Zechlin

Interim Education Director – Jennifer Hawley-Zechlin

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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