

COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Nurturing Spiritual Growth and Working for Social Justice

814 Dixie Trail, Raleigh, NC 27607

Phone: (919) 787-6422 Fax: (919) 787-2296

Email: cucc@nc.rr.com - Office Manager: Carol Clark pastor@communityucc.org - Rev. Steve Halsted

Website: www.communityucc.org

December 2009/January 2010

Newsletter published monthly for Community United Church of Christ (CUCC) members and friends

A Word from our Pastor

Dear Friends,

I could hardly believe my eyes! On Friday evening, November 20th, I saw a home in my neighborhood all lit up like a Christmas tree at Disney World! Talk about getting a head start on the season of Advent! What ever happened to Thanksgiving? Perhaps we need to slow down and get our lives in better order. Let's let "first things be first" and build our anticipation toward a Christmas celebration that is more than merely decorations on a house – announcing what? That we're going to be Progress Energy's best customer this year? Let's take our time – time to ease into the Spirit of the season – time to let things inside us and around us build in a natural and unforced way toward the real spectacular event – which is both welcoming and celebrating the eternal light of Christ and the incarnation of the Divine Spirit into our hearts that we might be renewed, recharged, and rededicated to be the Body of Christ in the world of today, tomorrow, and evermore! "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory..." John 1: 14.

I invite you to attend as many of the Advent offerings in the church as you are comfortably able to plan into your Advent journey. Mark your calendars from the church's newsletter calendar for the month of December. Hope to see you as you enjoy the real reason for the season!

Blessings and Peace,

Steve

Church Council

No summary was available for the Council meeting of November 16; the lengthy minutes have not yet been approved by Council. Please see individual Ministry reports (below) for the respective news items, or contact a Council member.

Congregational Meeting – December 6

There will be a congregational meeting after the worship service and fellowship time.
Please plan to attend

Celebrate! 20 Years ONA

By unanimous vote on **December 17, 1989**, the CUCC at a Congregational Meeting adopted a "Resolution on Being an Open and Affirming Congregation." Over the years, our life together has been blessed by that decision and by the gifts and friendships it engendered.

On Sunday, December 20, we'll celebrate! Following 10:30 worship join us for cake and conversation. With this celebration, we are renewing our commitment "to continue to look for ways to address the needs and advocate the concerns of lesbian, gay and bisexual people."

Let us join together as a covenantal community, to celebrate and share our common communion and the reassurance that we are indeed created by God, reconciled by Christ and empowered by the grace of the Holy Spirit."

2009 Annual Reports Online

We will be posting the annual reports from all of our ministries on our website in the Resources section. **Please read these before attending the January 24 meeting** in case you have questions. A limited number of print copies will be available in the literature rack.

Congregational Meeting – January 24

Hors d'oeuvres Potluck

Please bring a finger food to share. This hors d'oeuvres potluck will help us focus on the business at hand. There will be no eating utensils, so bring something easily eaten by hand.

Flu Season- Caring for One Another

Council reminds CUCC folk to check the church blog before attending any non-Sunday event. Our new flu prevention protocol is on our website Resources page, and through the blog.

Stewardship

*It's never too late to be generous
with your church!
Please submit your pledge before the
December 6 congregational meeting
so we can present a balanced budget .
Your pledge is important !!*

Deacons

Highlights from **Deacons Ministry** 11/12 meeting:

Pastoral Report – Steve

- Steve and Robert have been working on the evaluations of staff.
- There were 12 participants at the Johns River retreat in October. McCray Harris showed slides from the retreat during fellowship time on November 15.

Advent - The season begins November 29. On Wednesday, December 2, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. we will celebrate "Awakening to the Joy of Advent." The evening will begin with a simple meal of soup and bread, followed by a guided meditation, produced by Creighton University, "Creating a Sacred Space for Yourself at Advent."

Christmas Eve Service. There will be one (~45 minute) service this year, beginning at 5:00 p.m. Special music will be provided by the choir, Mike Schafale on dulcimer, and Amy Jensen on flute. The candlelight service (candles in hand and on the pews) will include a special children's story.

Other Business.

- The CUCC Christmas party is scheduled for Saturday December 12.
- The process for nominating officers and committee members for 2010 has begun.

Religious Education

Sunday School News

Project Christmas Child was a huge success!!! Many thanks to everyone who donated items to help the children fill the shoeboxes. We had agreed to donate 10 shoeboxes but actually donated 14!!!! **Angelina DeVito** came to our Sunday School class on November 22 and talked with the children and explained her involvement with the project through a service club at Enloe High School. She thanked the children for their hard work and encouraged them to become involved in clubs and organizations in middle school and high school and talked with them about giving to others.

All children and youth are encouraged to participate in the Christmas pageant on December 13! We need everyone!!!!

Please put these important dates on your calendar:
December 6 – Family advent workshop, 4:30 pm, fellowship hall. Come make ornaments, sing carols, and pick up your costumes for the pageant. Pizza will be ordered for dinner.

Please bring Christmas cookies!!!

December 13 – Christmas Pageant during church
December 20 – regular Sunday School
December 27 – NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

January 3 – normal Sunday School resumes
In January we will begin collecting gently used children's books. All donations will be appreciated. As you make room for your new Christmas gifts please remember our book drive.

I hope your Christmas is filled with the joy and magic of childhood! **MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!!!!**
– submitted by **Anne Bailey Zschau**

CUCC Youth

Calendar and Events for 5th -12th Graders

December 6
5th –12th graders invited to join children's Church School for Christmas Pageant preparation
No Youth Group
Family Advent Event 4:30 p.m. (Youth will Decorate Tree During this Event)

December 13
5th -12th graders participate in Christmas Pageant Worship 2nd Sunday: Youth Group child-care fundraiser after church: 7th-12th graders will provide childcare for children, infants-6th grade, so parents can go Christmas shopping 12:00-3:00 p.m. lunch provided (one or more additional adult chaperones requested-contact Santi @961-8814).

December 20
Combined Church School for 5th-12th grade (Come hungry for Christmas brunch treats)
No Youth Group

December 27
No Church School or Youth Group, Merry Christmas!

January 3 – 1st Sunday of the Month:
No Church School for 5th-12th grade (enjoy worship with your family)
No Youth Group

January 10
Church School for 5th-12th grade
Youth Group for 7th-12th grade (Pick a good movie to go see together!)

January 17
Church School for 5th-12th grade
Youth Group for 7th-12th grade (Candle Making for winter fundraising: one additional adult requested-contact Santi @ 961-8814)

January 24
Church School for 5th-12th grade
No Youth Group

January 31 (5th Sunday)
Church School for 5th-12th grade
Youth Group for 5th-12th grade (Lunch and Skating or Bowling)

– submitted by **Šánti Matthews**

FORUM

December schedule

December 6 – Mary Jane Clark, volunteer with *StepUp Ministry*, an interfaith community that prepares people who are ready and willing to make positive changes in their lives to become self-sufficient. <http://step-up.us/>

December 13 – Celebrating Human Rights Week, "Embedding Human Rights in Communities." Judith Blau, Professor of Sociology, UNC-CH, and President of *Sociologists Without Borders* (US chapter)

December 20 – Maria Murray Riemann will read a Christmas story.

December 27 – Christmas – **no Forum**

January schedule

January 3 – To be announced

January 10 – Andrew Silver, Report on *J Street*, organization founded to promote meaningful American leadership to end the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts peacefully and diplomatically. www.jstreet.org

January 17 – Michael Watkins, *News...From Our Shoes*, the first newspaper written and published by the homeless in NC.

January 24 – To be announced

January 31 – To be announced

New Bible Study, Anytime, Anywhere

This winter join us as we try a new format for spiritual growth – an online Bible study using the lectionary readings for the week and “conversing” during the week through a blog.

Here is how we will “meet”:

This online study is an experiment. You can find a link to CUCC Lectionary Study on the homepage of our website. Taking a look might be the easiest way to understand what will happen. 1) At a time

convenient to you during each week, read Rev. Kate Huey's reflection on the United Church of Christ lectionary readings for that week.

- 2) Ponder prayerfully what you have read.
 - 3) Engage in our conversation by writing an insight, asking a question, suggesting a reference....
- Throughout the week, read the comments of others in the study and respond.

When will we do this online study?

I'm asking you to consider committing to participating for the six weeks from Epiphany (January 6) to Ash Wednesday (February 17). Then mark your calendar for a soup supper before Ash Wednesday (Feb. 17) evening worship. We'll meet face-to-face to reflect on our experiences in this virtual study and decide whether to continue. Then we can conclude this series by joining the rest of the congregation for Ash Wednesday worship.

What do I need to do to get ready?

- 1) Now is the time to contact the church office with your request to join the group. I'll send you an invitation (an email from Blogger). Follow the directions to join. There are two steps (both free). You will join Google (who hosts our blog) and then join our specific blog.
- 2) Practice writing a message. You'll find step-by-step directions on the blog.
- 3) If you like, request that you be sent an email anytime someone writes a new message, helping you stay connected. Enter your email address in the Subscribe box and respond to the email from Blog Alert so they know you requested this free service.

If you have any unease about figuring out how to do these steps, you are welcome to call me and we can go through the process over the phone.

Who can participate?

This study is open to anyone who is interested in participating respectfully, has regular access to the Internet, and can communicate in English. You are welcome to mention it to friends and family. The study could be especially meaningful for people who are isolated from a church family at this time. Remember, the Internet is international.

-submitted by **Jane Smith**

Social Justice

Being There Says Something Important

On January 18, join others from CUCC as we walk in the 30th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial March. In the sea of people, you will remind yourself of hope. This is an opportunity to teach your children and grandchildren about the joy of coalition-building and the etiquette of taking a public stand. For those of us with pale skin, this is a chance to experience being a minority surrounded by a friendly and welcoming majority. CUCC members will gather on the NC Museum of History steps at 10:45a.m. and walk together. Some will choose to stay for the noon Ecumenical Observance, others will go out to a family-friendly place for lunch. In January the News & Chat blog will give details of the many excellent MLK celebrations.

Welcoming, Fellowship and Growth



Make your reservation for the Adult Christmas Party

Imagine: twinkling lights; holiday greenery, animated conversation with an overlay of laughter; enjoying friendships new and long-held; a break from shopping and Santa, traffic and cooking.

Saturday, December 12, 6:00 PM
Heavy hors d'oeuvres & entertainment

RSVP [to the office](#).

If you'd like, dress in your Christmas finery, whether a red vest, a wreath sweatshirt, or a taffeta gown.

Contribution for wine requested.
If you would like childcare, please call the office.

Celebrating the Babies of 2009

Epiphany - the day we remember the story of the wise men search for hope, discovered in a child. Epiphany Sunday, **January 4**, we'll celebrate the hope incarnate in the children born to us in 2009. Join us after worship for Epiphany cake as we thank God for **Anna, Jesse, and Ruth Ann**.

Retirees will be celebrating the Christmas spirit at 10:30 on Monday, December 14, by wrapping the gifts the congregation has donated to the Meals on Wheels program. Come join the group spirit.

and

On **January 11**, at 10:30, the group will hear Ron McDaniel, exploration geologist, speak about exploring for gold in the Carolinas! You won't want to miss this opportunity! **Bring a sandwich; drinks and dessert will be provided.**

Sisters in Spirit (SIS) are to meet on December 29th in the Hoffmann Room of CUCC at 7:00 p.m. for a potluck (great use for Christmas leftovers) and our debriefing Christmas together and possibly sharing Christmas stories with each other. Let's support each other as we approach the coming year.

In January SIS will meet at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday Jan. 26th in the Hoffmann Room for potluck and an opportunity to create "something unique" as exemplified in Julia Cameron's "Vein of Gold." Marty will lead and bring materials. Come explore space and creativity."

Our People

Prayer requests

Please write out your prayer request and place it in the offering plate or a prayer jar (Narthex or office). Prayers are solicited for Jo Lemons; Lisa Marsh; Al Matthews; Kerma Hazel; Carolyn King; Vandy's sister Mary Kinley; Betty Watson; people of the DRC; and other victims of war and natural disaster across the globe.

CUCC sends condolences to **Jo Perry** upon the death of her sister Linda Tavernise.

Graduates If you or someone in your family is graduating or finishing a degree this school year, CUCC would like to recognize you in the spring. To facilitate the recognition, please send an email or a note to the church office to remind us that you will

or a family member will graduate this year. Please label the subject of the email or note "Graduate Recognition".

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE'S BIRTHDAYS



Ben Cole – 12/8/99

Faith Davis – 12/12/01

Anna Roach-Howell – 12/19/91

Katherine Lan Manus – 12/22/96

Caelan Eckard – 1/6/98

CUCC Directory

Change: **Joan McAllister**, joan_mcallister@att.net

Community Outreach

Loaves and Fishes Chili Fundraiser is scheduled for January 29th and 30th, 2010. Further details will be available at a later date. Orders for meat or veggie chili may be placed with Shannon Core at 846-0902 or e-mail at gesmc4528@aol.com.



This month has been unique in emergency food bag history. Not only were there donated **29** food bags, but we found a mysterious collection of **11** bags of sweet potatoes in the usual collection spot. Of course all were delivered to Urban Ministries. Later we discovered that the potatoes were meant for the Congolese congregation. Sorry they were diverted, but of course they were very welcome! Today (11/22/09) - long before the first Sunday in December - there were a large number of food bags waiting in the cart. It must be Thanksgiving! Our congregation and all recipients of food bags can give thanks!

Wider Outreach

Interested in **Appalachia Service Project 2010**? CUCC's ASP team will be heading to Appalachia the week of July 11-17. ASP sends small teams of teens and adults to repair homes, making them "warmer, safer, dryer." Teams work for five days on a house, sometimes alongside the homeowner, making progress on extensive repairs that span the summer. Repairs range from wallboard to plumbing to floor replacement to trailer underpinning to roofing. Evenings are spent enjoying Appalachian culture and exploring the roots of the poverty that make the repairs necessary. This straightforward description doesn't come close to conveying the life-transforming experience of a week at ASP. To hear those stories, talk to Jackson, Paul, Abby, Gary or Jane.

An organizing potluck will be held at the Staley's home (our The Prince of Peace Episcopal Church colleagues) on January 16, Saturday. If you think you might be interested in this home repair week, talk with Jane Smith and plan to attend the potluck. While ASP emphasizes nurturing high schoolers as they experience Christian service, our TPOP/CUCC team always has many adults who come because of their own passion for the work. Adults are welcome! And I can report that NO construction knowledge is required.

– submitted by **Jane Smith**



An activity for all ages and great holiday fun!!

Decorating a Gingerbread House

When: Saturday, December 12, 10:00 am to Noon
Where: Multipurpose Room, Residential Health Unit

Glenaire Retirement Community, Cary
Cost: **\$25 / House** Proceeds benefiting:
Friends of Residents in Long Term Care

Please RSVP for this memory-making event.
For more information, please contact Abby at 919-389-3553, abby.emanuelson@gmail.com

Wider Church

UCC Southern **Conference Minister Steve Camp** will be returning soon to his home church in Connecticut. CUCC sent a card wishing him well.

CUCC was sent an invitation to the celebration of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh's 60th anniversary. At one time, the United Church, predecessor to CUCC, included both Raleigh's Unitarians and Society of Friends (Quakers). When in 1949 their numbers became large enough to support a separate congregation, the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh was founded. The anniversary celebration was held at the same time as CUCC's turkey dinner. Pastor Steve Halsted sent a letter of congratulations to the UUFR.

Two Months of Sundays

December 6 | Second Sunday of Advent | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15 Bible Study; 9:15 Forum; 10:30 Worship Service with Communion & Church School; Fellowship Time & CONGREGATIONAL MEETING; 4:30 Family Advent Workshop.**

Lectionary: Mal 3:1-4 or Bar 5:1-9; Luke 1:68-79; Phil 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

December 13 | Third Sunday of Advent | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15 Bible Study; 9:15 Forum; 10:30 Worship Service with Christmas Pageant; Fellowship Time.**

Lectionary: Zeph 3:14-20; Isa 12:2-6; Phil 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

December 20 | Fourth Sunday of Advent | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé with Communion; 9:15 Bible Study; 9:15 Forum; 10:30 Worship Service with Special Choir presentation & Church School; Fellowship Time.**

Lectionary: Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55 or Ps 80:1-7; Heb 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

December 27 | First Sunday after Christmas | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15 Bible Study; NO FORUM; 10:30 Worship Service (NO CHURCH SCHOOL); Fellowship Time.**

Lectionary: 1 Sam 2:18-20, 26; Ps 148; Col 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

January 3 | Second Sunday after Christmas | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15 Bible Study; 9:15 Forum; 10:30 Worship Service with Communion & Church School; Fellowship Time.**

Lectionary: Jer 31:7-14 or Sir 24:1-12; Ps 147:12-20 or Wis. of Sol 10:15-21; Eph 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9), 10-18

January 10 | First Sunday after Epiphany | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15 Bible Study; 9:15 Forum; 10:30 Worship Service & Church School; Fellowship Time.**

Lectionary: Isa 43:1-7; Ps 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 17 | Second Sunday after Epiphany | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé with Communion; 9:15 Bible Study; 9:15 Forum; 10:30 Worship Service & Church School; Fellowship Time.**

Lectionary: Isa 62:1-5; Ps 36:5-10; 1 Cor 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

January 24 | Third Sunday after Epiphany | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15 Bible Study; 9:15 Forum; 10:30 Worship Service & Church School; Fellowship Time & CONGREGATIONAL MEETING.**

Lectionary: Neh 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Ps 19; 1 Cor 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

January 31 | Fourth Sunday after Epiphany | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15 Bible Study; 9:15 Forum; 10:30 Worship Service & Church School; Fellowship Time.**

Lectionary: Jer 1:4-10; Ps 71:1-6; 1 Cor 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30