

COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Nurturing Spiritual Growth and Working for Social Justice

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December 2010

NEXT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING JANUARY 9, 2011

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

A Word from our Pastor

Dear Friends,

We are just beginning a new Christian calendar year, as the Season of Advent started on Sunday November 28. The liturgical colors for Advent are purple or deep blue. They may symbolize the color of the late autumn's night sky. The days are short. The long nights mark the end of the year's growing cycle. The long nights, though, are fertile ground for dreaming and meditation. Imagine the desert blooming and sheltering a mother and child; imagine peace prevailing; imagine God-all-in-all. Joseph dreams in this season of the child to be born soon, whom he is to name Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Advent is a time marked by waiting and watching for the unexpected ways in which God's "presence of spirit" breaks into our lives. At CUCC we traditionally set aside special times during Advent to "watch and wait" together: Special times to engage our bodies, minds, hearts and souls in quiet reflective spiritual practices/disciplines that fertilize the ground of our being to receive anew God's seeds of spiritual gifts. Sister Miriam Therese Winter in her poem, "Root of Jesse" expresses it beautifully with these words, "A virgin shoot accepts God's seed, bows to the Mighty Deed. One branch bears bud, flower, fruit: Christ blossoms as David's root. Lord, you are stem, stalk, tree! Let your fruit take root in me."

In that spirit we will gather to learn and practice "Centering Prayer" on the first two Tuesdays in December from 7-8 p.m. in the Vaughan fellowship hall. Please mark your calendars for December 7 and 14 and join us for a rich and rewarding spiritual experience to enrich your Advent Season.

Blessings and Peace

Steve

Church Council

At the November 21 congregational meeting a Resolution addressed to the Wake County Board of Education was passed (and letters have now been sent to each member of the Board. Also presented was a proposed update of the "Resolution on Being an Open and Affirming Congregation."

The next congregational meeting will be held after church on January 9.

Items on the agenda:

- * Results of the Stewardship drive
- * Approval of the budget for 2011
- * Election of candidates for church officers and ministries
- * Presentation of the Annual Reports (**due Dec. 15**)
- * Vote on proposed Resolution on Being Open and Affirming. The new resolution broadens and replaces the ONA resolution first passed in 1989. (see end of the newsletter)
- * Proposals of the Adult Forum in 2011 (see article under Religious Education)

January 9 Finger Foods Potluck

Bring a finger food to share (no utensils will be provided). We'll snack during the congregational meeting. The party celebrates the babies of 2010 on Epiphany Sunday.

Stewardship

In a children's message on a recent Sunday I used the book, The Giving Tree, by Sal Silverstein. Adults and children alike seemed to enjoy the story as well as the message. The point, of course, from the standpoint of the faith community is that God is like the Giving Tree. God provides for us each and every day whether or not we engage in relationship or stop to say thank you. *Stewardship* is what we give in relation to what God has already given to us in abundance.

In expressing your gratitude for all God does, CUCC offers many opportunities for service and financial contributions. Of course there are other ways to express your gratitude than to give through your church, but giving back through the church is a time-tested way of spreading the joy of your abundance around the world.

Financially, we need your contribution to keep up the good work begun. The largest single item of our financial planning is the financial support of our professionals in CUCC. A 2% increase has been recommended by the Deacons. We need your gifts just to stay even in 2011 and will need increased resources if there is to be any raise for those who serve us so well in leadership of our ministry. Additionally, the ministry of the church cannot exist without *volunteers*. From the first twelve disciples until now the church has depended on those willing to give time and talent to serve the Lord. We need Sunday school teachers, people who will join several of our ministries to provide direction and backbone to the many outreach projects of CUCC. Again, you can make a vital contribution to all we hold dear by giving a few hours here and there in the life of the congregation.

Pledges have been coming in. About one half of the membership has pledged. Your pledge makes it easier for the Council and leaders of the various ministries to know what we can commit to outreach in 2011. A pledge is a covenant between you and God about what you intend to give back in service.

May the richness of God's grace inspire you to make a contribution through the ministry of CUCC in 2011.

Michael Evans, Co-chair of Stewardship

Property

The Property Ministry met November 30 to discuss several upcoming projects and plan for 2011. The ministry approved the contractor to be used for the tree work and the contractor to be used for the parking lot renovation. **Lena Gallitano** reported also that the electrician has now completed work on the lights (indoor & outdoors) that were not working. Unfinished business includes windows for the Pilgrim House, an altar railing in the sanctuary, pest control, and repairing the brick planter box below the outside cross.

Religious Education

Sunday School News

Merry Christmas to all! My favorite time of year is here and I can already feel the joy that Christmas brings. Children are God's greatest gift to us and I am so happy to share the magic of Christmas with

your children. Blessings to you and your family as we prepare for this special season. Please remember the important dates below.

Anne Bailey

Calendar

December 5 – Pageant Practice during Sunday School

Family Advent Workshop, 5p.m., fellowship hall - carols, crafts, stocking stuffing, pizza. Bring a plate of cookies to share.

December 12 – Christmas Pageant during worship

December 26 – No Sunday School

Christmas Pageant, December 12
ALL children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, visitors welcome to participate! Preparations have been under way for our annual Christmas pageant for several weeks already. The children are so excited.



This is a gift to you, the congregation, from the children and youth of the church. If you have children in your life who will be here on December 12, please remember that we would love to have them participate in the pageant. I am making more costumes and there is room for everyone!!!

Advent Workshop
You are invited to the annual Family Advent Workshop December 5, 5 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Join with us for carols, crafts, stocking stuffing, and a pizza supper. Please bring a plate of cookies to share. EVERYONE is invited. We hope to see you!

ADULT SUNDAY MORNING FORUM

CUCC's Adult Sunday Morning Forum has for many, many years been a source of growth, inspiration, and increase of knowledge on issues of interest in our community and nation. It has long been an important part of the social and economic justice outreach tradition of CUCC.

In recent years Cynthia Ball and the Forum Committee have led the series in choosing timely topics, arranging guest speakers, and facilitating discussions each Sunday from 9:15 A.M. to 10:15 A.M. Our proximity to universities and a plethora of knowledgeable, articulate resource persons and our associations with area organizations doing the work of social and economic justice have often led to new connections and wisdom emerging from Forum discussions that is unique among churches.

Now, however, Cynthia has asked us to find a new Chair for Forum so she can take a break and handle family responsibilities out of town on some Sundays. Also, the Forum Committee has raised some questions about how we might organize Forum so as to attract more interest from church members and increase our attendance. With other things scheduled during the Forum time (such as choir practice, Bible Study, and Taize), our attendance at Forum is not as large as it might be. Therefore, we'd like to explore some different approaches (e.g. having external speakers at Forum on the second Sundays of the month, which Cynthia has agreed to handle, and have timely series of

WISH LIST for stuffing SALVATION ARMY STOCKINGS

Instructions

1. Please provide **BRAND NEW, AGE APPROPRIATE** gifts. (See below for suggestions)
2. Make sure all gifts are **unwrapped**.
3. Please **DO NOT** include any personal letters, pictures or candy.

To assist you in shopping for your stocking fillers, here are some ideas:

Infant/Toddler Ages 0-2

Sippy cups, caps, wipes, toys, books, blankets, pacifiers

Girl or Boy Ages 3-5

Coloring books, crayons, toothbrush/toothpaste, hat and gloves, bubbles, Play-Doh, stuffed animals, dolls, cars, balls, jewelry, pocketbooks, card games

Girl or Boy Ages 6-8

Jump ropes, jacks, cards, toothbrush/toothpaste, hat and gloves, markers, stuffed animals, dolls, pocketbooks, cars, flashlights, jewelry

Girl or Boy Ages 9-12

Cards, games, hat and gloves, toothbrush and toothpaste, watches, flashlights, radios, markers CD holders

interest led by church members on the other Sundays).

We hope those who would like to offer new ideas, insight and interest in Forum will come to the Bradow Room at 12 noon after church on Sunday, December 12th, 2010 to enter an envisioning process regarding adult Sunday Morning Forum, and how we may keep this valued CUCC tradition alive and vibrant. Please place this date and time on your calendar now, as you are thinking about it, and come explore possibilities.

– **Martha Lamb** Chair, Religious Education

FORUM SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

December 5 – "Celebrating Human Rights Week, December 6-10, 2010" - Steven Edelstein, renowned civil rights attorney.

December 12 – "Feasible and Practical Energy Strategies for Homes" - Dan McFarland, Director of Existing Home Services for Southern Energy Management (SEM).

December 19 – **Back by popular demand!** Third Annual Reading of a Christmas Story by **Maria Murray Riemann**.

December 26 **Merry Christmas! No Forum.**

Online Lectionary Study this winter

Back by popular demand, we'll have our winter online lectionary study group. This is an ideal winter spiritual growth opportunity for those who live far from CUCC, who travel, who work atypical schedules, or who are reducing their carbon footprint. We'll begin on Epiphany (January 6) and conclude Ash Wednesday (March 9). Now is the time to contact the church office with your request to join the group as a participating Author. While anyone can read the blog, Authors can post their thoughts and questions. Call Jane Smith if you would like a personal tutorial on how to use a blog.

How does the online study work?

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. If you request it, you will automatically get an email each week with the reflection, Weekly Seeds (no cost). Or, you can simply read it at <http://www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/weekly-seeds/>.

2) Ponder prayerfully what you have read.

3) Engage in our conversation. Remember that anything you post can be read by anyone in the world with internet access.

– submitted by **Jane Smith**

Social Justice

HOLD THE DATE! Martin Luther King Holiday, January 17, 2011

You are invited to participate in an exciting upcoming event to be held at CUCC!

CUCC is one of two co-sponsoring organizations for a special event on the Martin Luther King Holiday on January 17, 2011. The event, entitled, "**YWCA King Day-On**" will be led by the [YWCA of the Greater Triangle](#) and is also co-sponsored by the [North Carolina Social Justice Project \(NCSJP\)](#).

The event will commemorate Dr. King's life by highlighting lesser-known aspects of his political and theological philosophies and will also mark the kick-off of three YWCA Study Circles in the community. Study Circles are multi-racial groups of eight to 10 people who gather weekly for six weeks to learn about present-day racial disparities in our nation and the region. The event will begin with a program at 3:00 pm followed by a reception, and from 4:00 to 6:00pm, the first session for the three Study Circles will be held in rooms at the church.

More information about the event, and about how you can sign up to participate in one of the Study Circles will be shared at a Ministry Moment on December 12 and on our website blog, and will be emailed to you. If you would like to learn more, please contact Cynthia Ball, Event Liaison, at 387-9479 or cball@ballmediation.com.

Justice in a Changing Climate Recycling your florescent bulbs

I'm still accepting unbroken tube and compact florescent light bulbs for recycling. However, please DO NOT leave them for me. Do not put them on the recycling shelf where we collect the bottle caps. In order to keep everyone safe, I need you to hand the bulbs to me or to Gary so we can move them immediately to our car.

– submitted by **Jane Smith**

RECYCLE HOLIDAY CARDS!!

After the holidays please bring your holiday cards to Anne Bailey's classroom to recycle. The children

will use them for a special Christmas project next year.

– submitted by **Anne Bailey Zschau**

Welcoming, Fellowship & Growth

To welcome first time visitors to CUCC, our greeters are now presenting small **loaves of homemade bread** to each newcomer to welcome them to our church.



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 11
Beginning with wine at 6:30 PM
followed by

Heavy hors d'oeuvres & entertainment

RSVP [to the office](#).

You are invited to join us for food, fellowship, music by Linda Baker and Amy Jensen and songs of the season accompanied by Linda.

Contributions accepted
If you would like childcare, please call the office

Sisters in Spirit (SIS)

Let's reminisce of Christmases near and far with potluck (Christmas dinner leftovers perhaps ;-)) December 28 at 7:00 p.m. in the Hoffmann room.

Retirees will meet on December 13 to wrap packages for Meals on Wheels (Christmas list follows). In January, Dennis Hazel will be our guest speaker. Bring a sandwich, drinks and dessert will be provided.

Meals on Wheels Wish List for Christmas

All gifts are requested to be new. Any monetary contribution will be used by the Retirees to purchase gift cards, which are really appreciated. The gifts may be placed in the labeled boxes in the church.

- Gas and Gift cards
- Holiday candy, cookies, and snacks
- Gloves and hats
- Holiday soaps, towels, etc
- Umbrellas
- Fleece throws
- Postage stamps
- Holiday gifts sets of any kind
- Holiday baskets (small)

Babies You Love Born in 2010

Every Epiphany Sunday CUCC celebrates "our" babies born the previous year. While CUCC welcomed no one in the one-and-under-set, we know that many of you became grandparents, aunts/uncles, etc. So, this year we are expanding the circle of welcome. If a "baby you love" was born in 2010, tell Jane Smith BY JANUARY 3. Provide the baby's name and relationship to you, the parents' names, the birthdate, and send a photo if you have one. On Epiphany Sunday (January 9), we'll celebrate with a "Babies of 2010" display. Bring a finger food to share - we'll snack during the congregational meeting.

Slowing Time

Some of you have mentioned that you have a hard time keeping up with the scrolling "upcoming events" box on our website. We heard you. We have slowed the scrolling. Still moving too quickly to read comfortably? If you slide your cursor arrow over the box, the scrolling pauses until you slide the arrow away.

– submitted by **Jane Smith**

Emergency Contact Information Update

If you have not yet given Jane Smith your emergency contact information, please do. We'll use this information to make sure you are okay in the unlikely event of a regional emergency (hurricane, evacuation, flu quarantine). Needed: Names of people in your household (even if they aren't associated with CUCC) Phone # to reach you in an emergency

Contact person who is likely to know where you are & phone # (Please let this person know you have our permission to contact them about you) Email to reach you in an emergency (the one you will check frequently) Did you have any changes in your everyday contact info during 2010?

Facebook: Page or Group?

Some of you wanted to have CUCC's Facebook posts appear on your News Feed. We listened. We're trying a new Facebook Page. If you click "like" on the Community United Church of Christ Page, you should begin seeing on your News Feed the newest CUCC posts a few hours after they are made. Let me know what you think. If all goes well, we'll take down the old Group in early 2011. [How do you know which is which? The old Group has the UCC logo on its profile; the new Page has a photo.]

I have been putting reminders about upcoming events on the Page, but hope you will make it a meeting place for the congregation, adding your thoughts, dreams, joyful quips, etc. You, too, can post reminders and issue invitations.

Remember that anyone can see our page, so don't place anything you don't want to world to know. And always post in love. If you see anything you don't think should be there, contact **Jane Smith**. She will check weekly, but might miss something.

Our People

Prayer Requests

Please write your prayer request on a slip of paper and place it in the offering plate or one of the prayer jars (Narthex and office). Prayers are solicited for: **Jo Lemons; Al Matthews; Carolyn King; Lisa Marsh; Ann McLaughlin's mother, Frances Cox; Kerma Hazel; Nancy Callaham, Mike Callaham; Mark Denlinger; The Milandu family; Ted Gregory; Vandy Bradow;** those impacted by the oil spill; the people of the DRC, and other victims of war and natural disaster across the globe.

We thank you for the cards, emails, phone calls and other kind gestures that expressed your care, concern and compassion to us. We are grateful for your prayers and we appreciate the loving support we have received from CUCC. God Bless You,

Nancy & Mike Callaham



Our Young People's Birthdays

12/8/99 – Ben Cole

12/12/01 – Faith Davis

Community Outreach



Emergency food bags:

November was a red-letter month for emergency food bags. We collected 34 complete bags as well as some miscellaneous items for Urban Ministries' food shelves. Thanks to all who made this happen! It should relieve some of the hunger in our city.

Food bags will be collected **December 5th** and every first Sunday of the month.

Wright Center

On November 21 Sherrill Alexander, Geri Bowen, Margaret Osborne, Sue Rogge and the Lane's prepared the meal for the Wright Center and Don and Susan Lane served the meal.

Wider Outreach

Loaves and Fishes Ministry is selling jars of M&M COOKIE MIX and CONFETTI BEAN SOUP MIX at \$10.00 per jar. These would be great gifts or for your own holiday preparations. You may purchase these from Shannon Core.(846-0902).

CHILI ALERT

Loaves and Fishes Ministry veggie and meat CHILI will be available January 28 and 29, 2011. Details will follow at a later date.

Shannon Core

Resolution on Being an Open and Affirming Congregation 2011 – Presented 11/21/2010

We, as members of Community United Church of Christ, affirm our belief that all people are created in God's image and are thus blessed and loved equally by God. We declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming community, actively expressing Jesus' inclusive embrace of all people.

We invite and welcome into this Body of Christ all persons who seek to follow Jesus. Persons of every gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression are welcome to worship and enter into the full life and ministry of this church. We strive for justice and equality for all of God's children in our journey of faith. We covenant not to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and we seek to include and support those who find themselves in exile from a spiritual community. We seek to address the needs and advocate the concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in our church and in society by actively encouraging other churches, instrumentalities and secular governmental bodies to adopt and implement policies of non-discrimination. We 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. We will continue to strive to be an Open and Affirming congregation.

Resolution will be submitted for a vote at the Congregational Meeting, CUCC, January 9, 2011.

Wider Church

In it for the Long Haul

By Sandy Sorensen,
Dir., Washington UCC office

Saturday, August 28, 2010 found me marching through the streets and neighborhoods of Washington, DC in commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic 1963 march on Washington and speech at the Lincoln Memorial.

Having been on staff with the UCC Washington office for 20 years, I can safely say I have been to a lot of marches, on all kinds of issues. Some would argue, what is the point of marches anymore? And to some degree, I understand that sentiment – I don't think marches alone bring about change. But then again, I don't think any one thing we do does bring about change.

What is important to me about marches and rallies and interfaith services and public witnesses is the act of actually putting my body somewhere specifically because something matters to me. There is something about physically locating myself in a particular time and place with a particular community of people that connects me to the work

of justice in a deeper way – taking me to a place beyond words, as I put one foot in front of the other. Or for some, one turn of the wheel after another.

These are perplexing and troubling times for our nation and our world. It seems like I am always saying that, or at least thinking that. But as I marched along on August 28th, my eyes caught the women marching directly in front of me for a moment. A group of 3 older African American women, with graying hair and knowing eyes, walking steadily along, carrying their folding portable chairs. Yes, I thought, they know we are in it for the long haul, and you better bring a chair if you plan to stay because it is going to go on for a while. It brought to mind one of my favorite sayings about the work of justice, one that keeps me going when my spirit is weary: "it is not incumbent upon you to finish the task. Yet you are not free to desist from it." [Rabbi Tarfon] And so it is, as we follow the arc of the universe that bends toward justice.

from September 2010 Newsletter – Faithful Reflection

– submitted by **Cy King**

DAY-TO-DAY CONTACTS AT CUCC

Pastor: Rev. Steve Halsted,

Office Manager: Carol Clark

(Office hours: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Monday-Friday),

Moderator: Edith Sylla

Treasurer: Mary Pruneau

Asst. Treasurer: Carol Kepler

Clerk: Vandy Bradow

Ministry Chairs:

Deacons: Suzette Roach

Stewardship: Michael Evans & I.T. Littleton

Property: Lena Gallitano

Social Justice: Gary Smith

Community Outreach: Geri Bowen

Welcoming, Fellowship & Growth: Jane Smith

Religious Education: Marty Lamb

Children's Education: Anne Bailey Zschau

Youth Ministry: Šánti Matthews

Organist: Doug Barrick

Choir Director: Anne Moorman-Smith

Newsletter: Carol Clark and Vandy Bradow

Community United Church of Christ

814 Dixie Trail

Raleigh, NC 27607

The newsletter can be found on our web page:

www.communityucc.org

December 2010

A Month of Sundays

**December 5 | Second
Sunday of Advent |
9:00-9:30 Taize; 9:15
Bible Study; 9:15
Adult Forum; 10:30
Worship Service
with Communion &
Church School;
Fellowship Time.
Lectionary: Isa 11:1-
10; Ps 72:1-7, 18-19;
Rom 15:4-13; Matt
3:1-12**

**December 12 | Third
Sunday of Advent |
9:00-9:30 Taize; 9:15
Bible Study; 9:15
Adult Forum; 10:30
Worship Service &
Church School;
Fellowship Time.
Lectionary: Isa 35:1-
10; Ps 146:5-10 or
Luke 1:47-55; James
5:7-10; Matt 11:2-11**

**December 19 |
Fourth Sunday of
Advent | 9:00-9:30
Taize with
Communion; 9:15
Bible Study; 9:15
Adult Forum; 10:30
Worship Service &
Church School;
Fellowship Time.
Lectionary: Isa 7:10-
16; Ps 80:1-7, 17-19;
Rom 1:1-7; Matt
1:18-25**

**December 26 | First
Sunday After
Christmas | 9:00-
9:30 Taize; 9:15
Bible Study; 9:15
Adult Forum; 10:30
Worship Service &
NO Church School;
Fellowship Time.
Lectionary: Isa 63:7-
9; Ps 148; Heb 2:10-
18; Matt 2:13-23; Isa
60:1-6; Ps 72:1-7, 10-
14; Eph 3:1-12; Matt
2:1-12**