



NewsNotes

Christ Congregational Church United Church of Christ
A Just Peace and Open and Affirming Church
Becoming an Anti-Racism Church

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April 8, 2008

Retreat House Committee Embraces Challenge to Make Summer Camp Happen ~ And Calls for a CCC “Barn-raising” Effort

It has been an exciting and sometimes daunting journey, making ready for the next 50 years of Retreat House ministry. When the Retreat House Task Force, established by the Executive Council in 2006 to develop a long-range plan for strengthening the physical structure of the House, issued its first report last December, it was clear CCC had to address immediate fire and life safety issues to continue operating camp and retreats safely and legally. To respond to this need, the Executive Council formed a short-term leadership group to discern Retreat House property operations for 2008. Their verdict is in – THERE WILL BE SUMMER CAMPING AT THE RETREAT HOUSE.

This affirmative decision arises out of the “never say die” attitude of the Retreat House Committee and the many campers who love this holy ground. For our three weeks of youth camping to happen, the Committee is calling on church members and friends for a “barn-raising” effort to complete several projects required by the Hampshire County Fire Marshall before camp season begins on July 6. The Retreat House Committee’s enthusiasm and expertise will lead the way.

At the opening work retreat, volunteers began turning the living room into adult sleeping quarters and the three upstairs bedrooms into activity rooms. Without a door and an approved fire escape for each room, those rooms cannot be used for sleeping but may be used for activities. The committee will also assess what materials and plans for the other projects are needed to prepare the property for camps and retreats, including building wooden decks for two 17’ x 15’ tents, making fire safety alterations to the bunk house and kitchen, installing more smoke detectors, and installing fire-rated piping for the wood stoves and chimneys. Campers (separated by gender) will sleep in tents with two adult counselors.

Work retreats are May 2-5 and June 13-15. Watch the bulletin for announcements and the bulletin board for sign-up opportunities. Contact Cory Gray (longhair5@verizon.net) or Bruce Strand (brucestrand@netscape.net) to volunteer.

With the support and labor of the entire congregation, the work can be done. The Retreat House property and its ministry belong to each of us. The generations of hearts and souls impacted by gathering in this space have a significant legacy - past, present and future.

Rev. Sandy Dodson

Editor’s Note: For more about summer camp and the Retreat House, see pp. 2 & 4



The UCC: Targeted and Responding

The United Church of Christ has come under scrutiny recently in the national media and by the IRS. Because it is likely these issues will remain in the news throughout this presidential election year, everyone associated with the UCC may be asked about our denomination, about the separation of church and state, and about what it means to be a prophetic church.

IRS Investigation into the UCC’s Tax-Exempt Status ~ On February 20, the IRS notified the UCC that it opened an investigation into the denomination’s tax-exempt status as a result of U.S. Senator Barack Obama’s address to the 2007 General Synod in Hartford. The notification stated that the tax inquiry was being initiated (*Cont. on p. 5*)

Deadline for the next *News Notes* is Wednesday, May 7, 2008 at 5:00 PM.

Send copy to Jackie Walters at jjwalters.SilverSpring@verizon.net or place in *News Notes* box in the office.



Spotlight On ~
Jamphel - CCC's Adopted Son

Jamphel, age 8, was born in Rekong, Tibet. A few years ago, his family fled to India and settled in Dharamsala, the site of the Tibetan government in exile and temporary home of the Dalai Lama. In 2006, Jamphel was accepted into the boarding school there and began attending kindergarten classes in the school's infant section.

For \$30 a month, Jamphel will receive housing, meals, and basic health care. Working through UCC's Global Ministries Child Sponsorship office in Cleveland, CCC individuals, couples, Sunday School classes, or other church groups can help Jamphel build a life for himself. Already, three members of the Board for Social Witness have donated \$180, enough to support Jamphel for six months.

The Executive Council gave the Board permission to raise additional funds since there are no discretionary funds allocated for child sponsorship. Treasurer Dan Pence has set up a special account to track contributions. Send your check payable to "Christ Congregational Church" with *Child Sponsorship* on the memo line to the church office or drop it in the collection plate on Sundays. For further information watch the Sunday bulletins and the Social Witness bulletin board to the left of the Sanctuary door or talk with Jean Narayanan, Carol and Tim Wehrkamp, or Jim Walters.

For and About Youth & Young Adults -- Call to Fun, Mission & Service

Care to Change the World This Summer?

CCC senior high youth are returning to rural Lott's Creek, Kentucky for a week of building community and muscles alongside other UCC youth. We join our friend, Frannie Millward, from Cleveland. Lott's Creek Community School in the "hollers" of the Appalachian mountains has hosted Frannie and her crew for over 30 years. Frannie powerfully greets our Covenant Class each time we travel to Cleveland introducing us to real situations and real people who share their real faith. Frannie is a social, gospel-driven grandma who leaves the energizer bunny in the dust.

The week includes tackling several maintenance and repair projects throughout the area, learning new skills and making new friends, taking breaks for play and adventure, and being surprised by God in the midst of everything.

Seasoned trip leader Stevan Fisher will load the van with another adult, 1-2 young adults and 7-8 youth completing 9th grade and older. CCC folk and their friends are welcome. Registration fee is \$225/person; scholarships are available. For more information, contact Rev. Sandy Dodson or Stevan and Sonja Fisher (phisher2@verizon.net). To find out what last summer's participants say have to say about their mission experience, talk with Julia Peterson, Nate Dirda, Neil Corran, and Coleman and Samantha Fisher.

Rev. Sandy Dodson

Young Adults! Our annual Young Adult Retreat is July 3-6. If you can make time for any one of the two next work retreats, May 2-4 or June 13-15, come help get the Retreat House ready for camps and other summer activities. Contact Cory at longhair5@verizon.net or Jordan at johnson.jordan@verizon.net if you would like to help in May or June. At the retreat in July, we'll go to Yellow Spring's annual July 4 pig roast and raise the tents for the campers arriving on July 6.

2008 Summer Camping Schedule at the Retreat House

July 6-12	Senior High Camp (completed 9 th – 12 th)	Director: Chris Walters
July 13-19	Middle School Camp (completed 6 th – 8 th)	Directors: Sandy Dodson & Cory Gray
July 20-26	Elementary Camp (completed 3 rd – 5 th)	Directors: Kathie McConnell, Stephanie Helsing & Anne Nicotera

Brochures and registration forms will be available April 20.

Planned Giving Committee Publishes Brochure

As members and friends of Christ Congregational Church and of the United Church of Christ, we are called to be good stewards of the assets with which we have been blessed. Good stewardship calls for faithful financial and estate planning for ourselves and our families to meet future needs and includes considering how we might provide for the future of the church we have loved and served during our lifetime, in order that its mission remain vital. To help members with this stewardship, the Planned Giving Committee is excited to offer its first brochure on Planned Giving opportunities at CCC.

What is a Planned Gift? A planned gift to the CCC Endowment Fund is a gift planned for during the donor's lifetime and usually (but not always) received by the church after the donor's death. Usually such gifts come from the donor's assets rather than current income.

How will my planned gift be used? The purpose of the CCC Endowment Fund is "to strengthen the long-term ministry of Christ Congregational Church by creating and building financial assets which will help CCC develop significant new ministries beyond what would otherwise be possible through its annual operating budget and to enhance the facilities of the church."

How Can I Make A Planned Gift? The brochure briefly describes several options for making a planned gift. Some of the easiest methods include directing a portion of the assets of your estate to CCC through your will; designating CCC as the beneficiary or contingent beneficiary of an IRA; or setting up a United Church of Christ (UCC) gift annuity.

Planned Giving Committee members are available to discuss which options might work best for you and to answer any questions you might have about CCC's Planned Giving program. You may contact a member or ask the church office to have a member contact you. Printed copies of the full brochure are available in the pew racks, the literature rack in the foyer and online – just click here for a copy of the online brochure: http://www.christ-ucc.org/files/Planned_Giving_Brochure_0308.pdf

Dick Meyer, Chair
Dave Ackerman
Tom Ault

Pete Hotchkiss, Recording Secy.
Toko Ackerman (Trustee Rep.)
Tony Ingram (Stewardship Rep.)

Mary Stone

Upcoming Musical Events at CCC



Friday, April 11, 7:30 p.m. The Northfield High School Concert Choir. This free, family-friendly concert is for all ages. Come hear the spectacular sound of 75 young people from Northfield, Minnesota as they share their gifts of music. The concert ends at 9 – meet the singers at a reception afterwards in the lobby.

Sunday, May 18, 4:00 p.m. The combined choirs of Christ Congregational Church and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church (College Park, Md) joined by a professional orchestra and guest soloists present Franz Joseph Haydn's masterwork, *The Lord Nelson Mass*. Free and open to the public. A love-offering will be collected.

Saturday, June 7, 7:30 p.m. The Tour Choir of CCC will present a concert of the music it will perform in Copenhagen, Estonia, Latvia, and St. Petersburg, Russia. The choir departs on June 10 for a 15-day journey which includes participating in a choral festival in Smaland, Sweden. A love offering will be received. Come and cheer us on!

Thank You

Thank you for your calls, cards, prayers, and generous offers of support during my recent illness. Your collective prayers linked together contributed to my healing process. It is wonderful to be part of a Church family of special people where care and concern just come naturally. *Merlene Bagley*

Thank you just doesn't seem to be enough! We want to thank the CCC community for their outpouring of kindness and generosity during these last few weeks. While my back was slowly 'healing', CCC members brought our family meals and assisted in shuttling our children to their various activities. Thank you all for your prayers, phone calls and healing thoughts. Our special thanks to Nae Pearson and 'Aunt Nancy' Kosinski who were always just a phone call away. We are truly blessed and humbled by the love and support of our CCC family. *Natalie, Ted, Sophie, Emma & Will Foster*

Opportunities

Small Group Retreats at the Retreat House ~~ Retreat groups are limited to a maximum number of six persons sleeping in the new downstairs bedroom (formerly the living room and heated by a wood stove!) and a maximum of six persons sleeping in the Bunk House. The silver lining in the reduced retreat lodging capacity is an exciting opportunity for families and small clusters of friends to get away to West Virginia. Discover the fun of board games, crafts, reading, hiking, talking with one another – unplugged! Contact Susan Gray, church office, for more information on rates and available dates.

Camp Counselor Opportunities ~~ Each summer Calvary Baptist Church in DC donates camping scholarships for several children from Silver Spring Interfaith Housing Coalition (SSIHC) families to attend Camp Fraser (<http://www.calvarydc.com/campfraser.html>), an overnight camp at Great Falls, Virginia with amazing outdoor facilities. Simplicity in the cabins increases the campers' experience of nature. Camp Fraser is also recruiting youth 18 and over to serve as camp counselors for ages 7-13 for six weeks starting June 16th and ending July 25th. If you apply through <http://www.studentdotgo.org/>, you could receive a modest stipend. If you are interested, please contact SSIHC/Sandra Miller at ssihc.sandra@verizon.net, 301.562.0520.



Through Rebuilding Together, CCC Reaches Out to Local Family in Need Volunteer & Change a Life!

Each April, CCC coordinates a sizable project to help a low-income family with home repairs and modifications as part of Rebuilding Together Montgomery County. This year, our volunteers will be out April 19 and 26 helping the Valdez family, who have owned their home near Viers Mill Rd. for 12 years. Their daughter Kelly is disabled and has been injured twice from falls in the home, so we will be adding grab bars and handrails to improve her mobility and independence. CCC youth and adult volunteers will repair the exterior drainage system to help the home's basement living space stay dry and do extensive interior and exterior carpentry. **We are also seeking a donated dehumidifier to help reduce dampness in the family's basement.**

If you see one of our volunteers proudly wearing a Rebuilding Together t-shirt, thank them for the vital community service they perform on behalf of our church. Thanks to all of the CCC family for your time, talent and treasure in support of this important annual community project! To volunteer for the April project days, contact John Enagonio at (301) 649-6492 (enagonio@yahoo.com). To help deliver and serve lunch for the group, contact Tim Wehrkamp, (301) 552-1836 (t.wehrkamp@att.net).

Fulfilling Your Church Pledge Through Electronic Banking Helps You & CCC!

Would you like to (1) ensure you fulfill your yearly pledge? (2) by making one monthly payment? (3) and save paper? (4) and not have to remember to write a check each week to the church? Then electronic payment of your CCC pledge might be right for you!



You can set up CCC as a payee in the Bill Payment section of your online bank account. If you currently do not pay any bills online, contact your bank about setting this up. Once you are online, create CCC as a payee by putting in its full name and address (see p. 6 of *NewsNotes* for that information), then set up the payment. Put in the amount you pledged **monthly**, select the day of the month you want the money withdrawn from your account, and then **put your envelope number** in the MEMO field. It is VERY important to you (for tax purposes) that you reference your envelope number so the financial officers can track your pledge. **PLEASE NOTE:** Your envelope number and pledge amount will change from year to year, so please check your new envelopes and pledge amount when you set up each year's payment. Questions or concerns? Contact Alison Petersen, Dave Main or Sue Dollins.



Keeping CCC Beautiful ~~ Volunteers who helped make CCC beautiful for Palm Sunday and Easter by raking, planting, mulching, weeding and pruning around the grounds are Jane Beckwith, Bud Dennie, Bridgette Dougall, Tony and Maureen Ingram, Christopher Lewis, Dick Meyer, Mary Pence, John Rogers, and Tim Wehrkamp. They also did some small repairs around the church. Over recent months, Ben Gallup has done inspections and repairs around the building. Thanks to all. *Christopher Lewis and Tony Ingram, Co-Chairs, Building & Grounds Committee*

INSPIRING AND HELPFUL SAFE CHURCH WORKSHOP BUILDS RELATONSHIPS

“Thank you for doing this! This workshop was excellent and I learned so much!” Over 50 people representing CCC’s ministries among children, youth and vulnerable adults came together March 8 for an engaging workshop introducing Safe Church Policy. Hosted by the Board of Christian Education and the Personnel Committee and facilitated by Rev. Sandy Dodson and Rev. Hank Fairman (Rock Spring UCC, Arlington), the workshop gave participants a practical and spiritual framework from which to understand the practice of creating safe places where we value the sacred in everyone.

The purpose of a Safe Church Policy is to diminish the likelihood of a sexual misconduct incident. Church staff and volunteers need to be aware of ethical, spiritual and legal expectations concerning relational ministries in a faith community. Creating a safe church environment and culture is not limited to background checks or procedures to follow in the event of an allegation of misconduct. At CCC, Safe Church practices shape how we staff our church school, plan our youth events, and counsel Called to Care. For instance, there needs to be at

least 2 adults present with any group of children or youth and more as the group size increases. This is a matter of safety as well as program support.

This summer at youth camp, 2 adult counselors will be lodged in the same large tent as a group of campers. (Genders are separated for sleeping.) Thus, we will need more adult volunteers for our camping program than in the past. When invited to consider volunteering a week or a few days at a camp this summer, remember that the safety and care of our children and youth is paramount. Remember that all our programs require your regular assistance in order to exist. And, remember that the best part of church is sharing our lives and faith journeys with one another.

The denomination requires Safe Church training for all persons who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults, both on-site and off-site. Another session will be scheduled in May or June for those unable to attend the March training.

Rev. Sandy Dodson

UCC: Targeted & Responding (*Cont. from p. 1*) “because reasonable belief exists that the United Church of Christ has engaged in political activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status.” Senator Obama, a long-time UCC member, was one of 60 speakers from many backgrounds and professions who addressed the Synod on “the intersection of their faith and their respective vocations or fields of expertise.” According to the Rev. John H. Thomas, UCC president and general minister, “The United Church of Christ took great care to ensure that Senator Obama’s appearance before the . . . General Synod met appropriate legal and moral standards.” Before Obama’s address, the audience was told that his appearance would not be campaign-related, and that no electioneering would be tolerated. Obama campaign operatives were not allowed inside the venue. (The text of Senator Obama’s speech is at ucc.org/news/significant-speeches.)

Trinity United Church of Christ and the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr. Over the past several weeks, certain networks have rebroadcast brief portions of sermons preached over past years by the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., now retired pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ, the home church of Senator Barack Obama. On March 14, John Thomas issued a statement calling Trinity UCC “a great gift to our wider church family and to its own community in Chicago.” He continued: “At a time when [Trinity] is being subjected to caricature and attack in the media, it is critical that all of us express our gratitude and support to this remarkable congregation, to Jeremiah A. Wright for his leadership over 36 years, and to Pastor Otis Moss, III, as he assumes leadership at Trinity. . . . These attacks, many of them motivated by their own partisan agenda, cannot go unchallenged. It’s time for all of us to say ‘No’ to these attacks and to declare that we will not allow anyone to undermine or destroy the ministries of any of our congregations in order to serve their own narrow political or ideological ends.”

More recently, on March 17, Rev. Thomas issued a second statement entitled “**What Kind of Prophet? Reflections on the Rhetoric of Preaching in Light of Recent News Coverage of Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr. and Trinity United Church of Christ.**” Now is the time to visit <http://www.ucc.org> to see a video on the UCC and to read and listen to Rev. Thomas’ statements: <http://www.ucc.org/news/>. A link to the April 2 full-page ad in the *New York Times* is on the site: <http://www.ucc.org/newsletter/pdfs/ny-times-ad.pdf>. For two *Fresh Air* interviews exploring the history and context of Black Liberation Theology and providing theological and cultural context for the Rev. Wright’s sermons, visit <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89236116> and <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89236162>

**Christ Congregational Church
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Mailed April 8, 2008

HAPPENINGS IN APRIL & MAY

Sat., April 12 ~ Second Saturday ~ CCC Women meet at Panera in downtown Silver Spring for caffeine & conversation, 8:30 – 10 a.m. All welcome!

Fri., April 18 ~ 6:30 – 10 p.m. ~ Parents' Night Out (Contact: Glenda Neal)

Sun., April 20 ~ Sisters for Sisters (a support group for single women – all ages welcome!) ~ 12 Noon – Conference Room (Bring a lunch; beverages provided)

Sun., April 27 ~ Confirmation Sunday ~ 10:30 Service of Worship

Sun., April 27 ~ CCC Book Group ~ 7 p.m. – Home of Joanne Lynn. The group is reading *The Master Butcher's Singing Club*, a novel by Louise Erdrich about a German immigrant community in the Dakotas after World War I. All are welcome.

Sunday, April 27 – Annual Reports Due in the Church Office

Sat., April 19 & 26 ~ Rebuilding Together (See article on p. 4)

Tues. & Wed., April 28-29 ~ Senior Adult Retreat at Bon Secours

Fri., May 2 – Sun., May 4 ~ Work Retreat ~ Retreat House, WV (See article on p. 1)

Wed., May 14 ~ CCC Volunteers at Shepherd's Table

Wed., May 14 ~ Trustees' Budget Hearing for Congregation 6:30 p.m.

**CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UCC**

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Rev. Sandra K. Dodson,
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Sarah Anders, Director of
Senior Adult Programming;
Dianne Abraham, Church
Administrator

At CCC, we honor and celebrate
people of all races, cultures,
ages, abilities, sexual orientation,
and gender identity.

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