



NewsNotes

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

Volume 64 – Number 5 May 13, 2008



That “Wonderful, Heady, Exasperating Mix”

Grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the United Church of Christ is undergirded by the understanding that we are a priesthood of all believers. “Each member is called to minister to one another in the church, and to spread the good news of the gospel in word and deed.” We are a mostly progressive church who unabashedly engages both the heart and the mind. As such, we are often described as a heady and exasperating mix. We value the richness of diversity, but we sometimes struggle with it too. There is not one particular creed that binds us together; rather we live in covenant with one another agreeing to walk together in faith and dialogue.

Historically, we are a church who comes to the table to talk about within our church, but also about key issues about life in the conversations about slavery, the Vietnam war, women in ministry, Sanctuary Movement in *El Salvador* are examples of this. We do not always agree; neither do we walk away from hard conversations. Relying on God’s grace, we sit down and talk with the hopes of finding some common ground where each one can find a place to stand even if when we do not completely agree.



key issues not only about life public square. Honest open and affirming and the

The current dialogue in the political arena presses us to come to the table once again. A voice amongst us has stirred the pot in an uncomfortable and sometimes unhelpful way. I have great respect for my colleague the Rev Jeremiah Wright, especially for his work with Trinity United Church of Christ. He is an amazing human being. While I value his wisdom on several matters, I do not agree with many of the recent statements he has made. I am reminded that no one person or group speaks *for* the United Church of Christ. Rather, we commit to talking with one another.

While Rev. Wright’s words challenge and sometimes offend, the most important thing they do is invite us to the table to have an honest dialogue about race and the impact race has on us all. This I believe we must do—engage in an honest and sacred conversation about race. The conversation at Christ Congregational Church continues. You are welcome to come to my office anytime to talk. Dates for a monthly conversation on becoming an anti-racist church will soon be announced, and on Sunday June 1st, the Rev. Gordon Forbes and Mr. Andy Holmes will do a dialogue sermon on race from the perspective of two different generations.



Let’s come to the table and talk...

Susan

See the letter from Rev. John Thomas, General Minister and President of the UCC, on our website: <http://www.christ-ucc.org/>

Deadline for the next *News Notes* is Wednesday, June 11, 2008 at 5:00 PM.
Send copy to Susan Gray at cccoffice@christ-ucc.org or place in *News Notes* box in the office.



Spotlight On ~
Concerts at CCC



Sunday, May 18, 4:00 p.m. The combined choirs of Christ Congregational Church and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church (College Park, Md) will present Franz Joseph Haydn's masterwork, *The Lord Nelson Mass*. The 70-voice chorus is joined by a professional orchestra and guest soloists. A free-will offering will be collected. Open to the public.

Saturday, June 7, 7:30 p.m. The Tour Choir of CCC will present the music they are taking on their summer tour of Copenhagen, Estonia, Latvia, and St. Petersburg, Russia. The choir departs on June 10 for a 15-day journey which will include their participation in a choral festival, Cantate Smaland, in Vaxjo, Sweden. A love offering will be received. Bring your friends and family and come and cheer us on!

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

Care to Change the World?

Immersion Into Homelessness ~ Middle School Summer Mission ~ June 19-21

Youth finishing 6th-8th grades are encouraged to participate in a 2-night/3-day immersion into the world of the homeless. We will move about Silver Spring and DC learning about the causes of homelessness, its day-to-day challenges, and the resources available to assist homeless persons. We will volunteer at Shepherd's Table. One night, we will sleep outside on the CCC playground; another night, we will sleep at Shepherd's Table. (No clients stay overnight at the shelter in the summer.) Fee: \$70. Flyers are on the youth bulletin board near the Social Hall. Questions? Contact Rev. Sandy Dodson.

Senior High Youth and Young Adult Mission Trip to Kentucky ~ June 21-28

Travel to Lotts Creek Kentucky to join other UCC youth in tackling several maintenance and repair projects throughout the rural Appalachia area. Learn new skills and make new friends. Fee: \$275. For more information and to register, see the flyer on the youth bulletin board or contact Stevan Fisher (phisher2@verizon.net).

Safe Church Make Up Class ~ June 7, 9-11AM

For those volunteers who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults, safe church training is mandatory. If you are a church school teacher, camp staff, nursery volunteer, youth leader/chaperone or Called to Care minister, this training is for you. The class will be a shortened version of the March 8 session. Rev. Sandy Dodson is the facilitator. Please pick up a Safe Church Training packet in the church office BEFORE the training. We will work from the premise that everyone has read the policy. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board outside the church office. Can't make it? There will be another make up training on August 30.

Colorful Quilts for Food and Friends

What does the Meeting Room, a collection of creative people, four sewing machines, lots of fabric, a desire to help others, and faith have in common? The answer is a collection of beautiful quilts to be given to babies and young children served by the Food and Friends organization. The colorful quilts were designed and made by Emma and Sophie Foster, Michelle Esposito, John Muncill, Wroblewski, Delilah Marrow, Cynthia Page, Marilyn Meyer, and Terry Strand. Liz friend of Terry's, quilted some of the tops on her quilting machine. This activity has been a several years, and the sick children have always appreciated receiving the quilts. This new batch of quilts will be blessed during the 10:30 service on May 18th.



the critically ill quilts were Margaret Hemming, a youth project for

Senior Adults Hold Successful, Meaningful Retreat at Bon Secours

On April 29th, 37 seniors gathered at beautiful Bon Secours Retreat Center for two days of sharing, discussion and fun. Our program included small and large group interactions on a variety of topics. A full first day began with Neville Platt welcoming us and Pat O'Connor introducing a chant, "Love the Lord Your God," which we sang throughout the retreat. Jeanne Young led us in a "Getting to Know You" icebreaker. (What would *you* do with a million dollars?) Following a beautiful introduction by Nancy Kosinski, Susan Henderson spoke to us about "God's Beloved Community." At the end of the session, one participant said, "The retreat has *already* exceeded my expectations!"

Following a filling dinner and lots of conversation, Nae Pearson led a musical meditation, "The Mirror in the Mirror." The session ended with a blessing honoring each person in the circle. At 9:00 pm, we headed to an enclosed porch for drinks, snacks, and time to catch up with old and new friends. What group spirit!

At morning worship, thoughtfully planned and led by Pat O'Connor and Chuck Mason, several seniors

participated in the readings. Next, accompanied with music by the Judds, Audrey and Neville Platt led a discussion on "Developing Gifts in Later Life." (By the way, can you stand on one foot?) Then, Shirley Coll and Dave and Toko Ackerman helped us remember "Our Most Alive Moments." (Are you a cat or a dog?) We ended the retreat with Communion and song.

Although our time together was full, there *was* free time for strolling the grounds and walking the Labyrinth, making a collage of our life, and viewing pictures of the Disciples generously exhibited by Ruth Freitag.

Participants described the retreat as "stimulating" "awesome" "enriching" and "insightful." The retreat's success is due to the thoughtful and talented planning of many people. We are grateful for the work of the retreat planning committee, to Susan and Nae for being with us and leading us with such love, and most of all, to the great group of people who attended – God's Beloved Community of Seniors at CCC!

Retreat Planning Committee: Dave and Toko Ackerman, Sarah Anders, Shirley Coll, Ruth Freitag, Nancy Kosinski, Audrey and Neville Platt, Betty Stith, Jeanne Young.

Thank You

In honor of Earth Day and to fulfill part of the Naturalist Activity Pin, the Webelos I Den picked up over 300 pieces of trash on the Church's property at the April 23 den meeting. Two items tied for the yuckiest: an empty drink cup that was full of ants and a piece of ABC gum.

Christopher Lewis and Dianne Abraham

There's nothing like it--the medicine that comes from the loving kindness of others. That is what I experienced during my recent illness--your prayers and good thoughts, cards, food, errands, ministerial visits, "whatever is needed." Thank you for helping me to get through it. I am deeply grateful.

Pat O'Connor



CCC & First Baptist Rebuilding Together Volunteers Thank Panera Bread

Rebuilding Together Montgomery County's crack team of flooring installers, electricians, carpenters, trench excavators, landscaping specialists, window washers, and culinary technicians from CCC and First Baptist Church of Silver Spring would like to thank Panera Bread Company of Silver Spring for donating breakfast bagels and cream cheese for project volunteers on the April 19th and 26th workdays. (Bud was especially fond of the cream cheese.) And, a special thanks to Panera's Jenny Hurley, Neighborhood Marketing Coordinator, for her warm interest in the vital work of Rebuilding Together. There's a reason why CCC women find Panera to be such a cordial place for their second Saturday meetings.

Tim Wehrkamp

Opportunities

Ruth Richardson Scholarship ~~ established in honor of Mrs. Ruth Richardson, a founding member of CCC and a former teacher who maintained a lifelong interest in making higher education available to all students, especially those who wish to pursue their studies in a human service profession. The scholarship will be awarded at the end of the spring semester to an applicant who has:

1. completed two years or more of college or university study
2. is pursuing a career in a human service profession, with priority given to education
3. is a member or whose parent(s) is a member of CCC

The Ruth Richardson Committee is accepting applications until May 30, 2008. Applications are available upon request from the CCC church office. Consideration will be given to sincerity of interest, grade point average, volunteer experiences, and in-service training or work-related experiences in the human service field. Questions may be addressed to the committee chair, Aldene Ault, by calling 301-593-2438.

Stewardship Campaign Is at 77% of Goal of \$800,000

As of May 5, 164 friends and members pledged \$612,657 of the \$800,000 goal. Sixty people who pledged last year have not yet pledged this year. It would be helpful to receive all outstanding pledges by May 25 since, at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 1, the Trustees will present the budget for 2008-2009 based on how much has been pledged.

Misplaced your pledge card? Print one from the church's website (<http://www.christ-ucc.org/>) or pick one up at church either in the pew or the office. Your pledge card can be mailed directly to the church, dropped off in the church office or placed in the offering plate on Sunday. You may also email Dave Main directly with your information: maind@ix.netcom.com.

CCC can reach our \$800,000 goal if everyone increases their pledge by 25% over last year's pledge OR increases their pledge to 4% of your family's income. Thank you. *Alison Petersen & Gregg Brown, Stewardship co-chairs*

Library Notes, May 2008

CCC's library has several books that may be of interest as we explore the impact that racism has had and continues to have on our lives.



DISMANTLING RACISIM: The Continuing Challenge to White Americans, by Joseph Barndt, 1991. A pastor in the Bronx works to build a multi-cultural church and society.

FACES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL: The Permanence of Racism, by Derrick Bell, 1992. "Readers will want to fling (this book) across the room or pore over it with assiduous care," said H. L. Gates Jr., of Harvard.

UPROOTING RACISM: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice, by Paul Kivel, 2002. "Fact filled resource with simple, meaningful actions."

AMAZING GRACE: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation, by Jonathan Kozol, 1995. "Very powerful," wrote Marian Wright Edelman.

THE POSSESSIVE INVESTMENT IN WHITENESS: How White People Profit from Identity Politics, by George Lipsitz, 1998. Reveals how "color blind" public policies actually contribute to racism. (Includes the Latino and Asian American experience.)

MEMORY IN BLACK ANDWHITE: Race and Commemoration and the Post Bellum Landscape, by Paul A Shackel, a professor of anthropology at the U of MD, 2003. How Civil War sites contribute to racial memories.

PROPHECY DELIVERANCE (1982, 2002) and RACE MATTERS: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity (1992, 2001) by Cornell West, Harvard professor, scholar, theologian and activist. The first is described as a "classic manifesto," and the second as challenging and deeply healing. "It confronts the reader with profound and unsettling insights."
Peggy Mentzer, Librarian, 301-847-0079

BSW AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ENDORSE THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS COALITION AGAINST TORTURE'S STATEMENT OF CONSCIENCE; BANNER TO FLY AT CCC DURING JUNE

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture, an interfaith organization, introduced a Statement of Conscience entitled "Torture is a Moral Issue" in 2006. The statement reads:

Torture violates the basic dignity of the human person that all religions, in their highest ideals, hold dear. It degrades everyone involved – policy-makers, perpetrators, and victims. It contradicts our nation's most cherished ideals. Any policies that permit torture and inhumane treatment are shocking and morally intolerable.

Nothing less is at stake in the torture abuse crisis than the soul of our nation. What does it signify if torture is condemned in word but allowed in deed? Let America abolish torture now – without exceptions.

The national UCC is a participating member of NRCAT. Early this year, the Board for Social Witness voted to endorse the Statement of Conscience. On May 5, the Board requested, and received, permission from the Executive Council to display a banner bearing the Statement's title along Colesville Road during June. The Council also endorsed the Statement of Conscience and voted to send it to the congregation for a vote at the CCC annual meeting on June 1. If the congregation approves, CCC will join several other UCC congregations around the country as an endorsing entity.

In Praise of Children and Youth Program Leaders

In the sacrament of baptism, we as a congregation promise to love, support and care for our children.

Thank you, teachers, advisors, mentors, cooks, drivers and parents! You help give scripture meaning.

Through our families and church, we learn how to recognize the sacred all around and within us.

Thank you, teachers, advisors, mentors, cooks, drivers and parents! You help name and make visible the Divine.

Through our life together we grow to trust our lives to the leading of Jesus, daring to go out into the world doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Rev. Sandy Dodson

Sanctuary Committee Brightens Corners

To convey the theme of a Lenten journey at CCC this spring, the Reverend Susan Henderson looked to the front right corner of the Sanctuary with an artist's eye. Under her leadership, handmade quilts graced that corner every Sunday, symbolizing through color, fabric, and imagery steps on journeys of penitence, liberation, and salvation. Members of the Sanctuary Committee began to look at that space with fresh eyes. At Easter, the corner held a lavish display of lilies. In recent weeks, the corner has been filled with flowers. A group of women in the church has been approached to design

and make a quilt. Recently, the Committee purchased, with funds from memorial flower donations at Easter and Christmas, two banners. One carries the symbols of Alpha and Omega and can be used throughout the year. The other banner is for Pentecost. In coming months, the Committee will work with the staff and other groups in the church to place in that corner seasonal and liturgical pieces using various media. Ben Gallup is making a new banner stand. To continue a conversation about this corner, see Ruth Prindle or Jackie Walters, Committee Co-Chairs.

**Christ Congregational Church
9525 Colesville Road
Silver Spring, MD 20901**

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Mailed May 13, 2008

HAPPENINGS IN MAY & JUNE

Wed., May 14 ~ Trustees' Budget Hearing for Congregation – 7:30 p.m.

Sat., May 17 ~ Sisters for Sisters ~ 1 p.m. at Seibel's Restaurant. RSVP to June Leonard or Nancy Kosinski

Sat., May 17 ~ CCC Work Day ~ 9 a.m. – Noon – Lunch Provided

Sun., May 18 ~ Trustees' Budget Hearing for Congregation – Noon

Sun., May 18 ~ CHURCH SCHOOL SUNDAY ~ 10:30 a.m. Worship

Sun., May 18 ~ Choral Concert ~ Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* ~ 4 p.m. – Sanctuary

Sunday, June 1 - Summer Worship Schedule Begins!! - 10 a.m. Worship

Sun., June 1 ~ CCC's Annual Meeting ~ 11 a.m. – Sanctuary

Wed., June 4 ~ Silent Retreat at Dayspring Retreat Center ~ 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Brochures are on the bulletin board outside the church office.

Sat., June 7 – Gardening/Weeding Day

Sat., June 7 ~ Choir Tour Concert ~ 7:30 p.m. -- Sanctuary

Sun., June 8 ~ Music Appreciation Sunday

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**CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UCC**

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Rev. Susan A. Henderson,
Interim Senior Minister;
Rev. Sandra K. Dodson,
Associate Minister; Nae
Pearson, Director of Music;
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.

www.christ-ucc.org