



# NewsNotes

**Christ Congregational Church, United Church of Christ**  
A Just Peace and Open and Affirming Church  
Becoming an Anti-Racist Church

Volume 64 – Number 7 July 15, 2008

## Choir Returns from Successful European Concert Tour

Over 15 days, CCC’s Tour Choir traveled through five countries, gave eight concerts and innumerable impromptu recitals, and made several new friends. Concert venues ranged from a glass factory in Sweden to churches of odd architectural configuration to the all-purpose room of a retirement home. We sang impromptu recitals in cathedrals and in an old wooden church at the Latvian Open-Air Ethnographic Museum. Director of Music Nae Pearson complimented the choir on its ability to adapt to different acoustics in every venue. Accompanist Sam Brush made every piano, however undistinguished and out-of-tune, sound glorious.

Accompanied by singers from Westmoreland UCC and Marvin Memorial United Methodist Church, the choir was the first American choir to participate in Cantate Smaland, an international choral festival held annually in Vaxjo (pronounced Vak-yo), Sweden. Along with choirs from Norway, Sweden, and Germany, the Americans learned spirited mid-summer dances, ate a traditional hot herring lunch, and traded songs and stories in an old glass factory in the Swedish countryside.



Beginning in Denmark, where we picked up Sven, our friendly bus driver, and Maria, our guide for Denmark and Sweden, the choir embarked on a tour of countries and cultures marked by centuries of global expansion through exploration, conquest and trade. At the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde, outside Copenhagen, we learned that the Vikings established trading routes as far south and east as present-day Iran. Their zest for exploration, conquest and trade influenced the development of languages, art, and culture in present-day Scandinavia. *Continued on page 2*

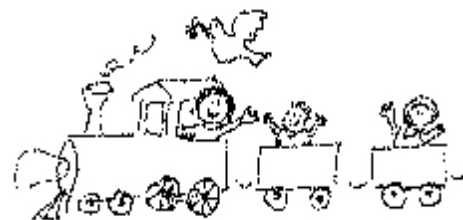
## Fun in the Sun



Sign up by July 20 for Bethany Beach weekend, August 15 to 17, 2008. This is a great opportunity to stay with CCC friends and families at the Christian Church Conference Center in beautiful Bethany Beach, DE at reasonable rates just two blocks from the ocean. Come enjoy the beach, sunsets, rocking chairs on the porch, private rooms for each family, community playground right on the grounds, good meals, and more. Cost for the weekend, including five meals is approximately \$113 per adult, \$55 for ages 5-15 and free for under age 5. Sign up on the church bulletin board by July 30, including the number of adults and the number of children attending. If you have questions, please contact Melissa Milkie at 301-585-2273 or [mmilkie@socy.umd.edu](mailto:mmilkie@socy.umd.edu).

**All Aboard the Peace Train**  
**Vacation Bible School**  
Coming Monday August 4 – Friday August 8  
9:00 AM – Noon  
For 3 – 8 year olds

Don't miss out on this action packed week riding the Peace Train. Brochures/Registration forms are on the bulletin board. Sign up early! Volunteers are needed to help with crafts and to lead small groups. If you can volunteer, or for further information, contact Kristina Aabel at (301) 680-0911 or Anne Weissenborn at (301) 681-6042.



*Choir Tour Continued...* In the Hanseatic cities of Riga, Tallinn, and St. Petersburg, we learned how German merchants built trading empires in the north and, in the process, transformed architecture and economic development. In museums chronicling Danish resistance, Latvian occupation, and Swedish emigration, we learned how lively, vibrant cultures and the ideals of freedom survive and revive in spite of social upheaval, war and oppression. In St. Petersburg, the choir sang in St. Petri Church. Like many churches during the Soviet era, St. Petri had been used for secular purposes, in its case as a swimming pool. The choir sang in a second-floor sanctuary rebuilt over the old pool with bleachers for spectators still in the gallery.

In Riga, we met our guide, Eva, who was at first very correct, punctilious and formal as she guided us through the Art Nouveau architecture of the city. Over the following two days, Eva, a professional singer, warmed up enough to sing traditional Latvian songs to us. She clearly delighted in our common love of singing and in the animation with which we performed. When we said good-bye, we eschewed the formal handshake for warm hugs and an invitation to America.



Outside of Tallinn, the choir performed a concert for residents of a retirement home. Most of the residents had survived the Soviet occupation of Estonia and at least one was a survivor of the siege of Leningrad. Singing for that group of people, with

remarks and lyrics translated into Estonian by our enthusiastic young guide, Stanislav, was a moving and memorable experience.

Crossing the border in to Russia was sobering. Thanks to Stanislav, Dianas, our bus driver, and a modest bribe, we made it across safely and without incident – that is, without having to pull all of our luggage out of the bus and hand-carrying it through the checkpoint as passengers on two other buses had to do. Cameras and joking were banned, and the bus was so quiet that no-one from CCC would have recognized us as a CCC group. Immediately, the change from a developed to an undeveloped country was apparent – in the quality of the highway and in the poverty of the tiny villages lining the highway.

Returning to Denmark for a celebratory farewell dinner capped a tour which holds many individual memories of cementing old friendships and making new ones. As we shared our music with people from other countries, we sang with our hearts; we shook hands and exchanged hugs with fellow singers and our listeners; we laughed, danced, listened and learned. All of us came back changed in some way by experiencing lands most of us had barely heard about and where memories of unimaginable horror, suffering and oppression linger in the midst of economic and cultural revival. All of us are ready to be on the road again! We thank you for your support and your prayers. *Jackie Walters, Tour Coordinator*

## Resolution Approved at Central Atlantic Conference Annual Meeting



The resolution on Physician Assistance in Dying proposed by the Board for Social Witness and Bill Neal was approved at the Annual Meeting of the Central Atlantic Conference on June 14, 2008. The resolution will now be sent to the General Synod for its consideration. The six-page proposal Bill Neal submitted to the CAC is available in the church office. Please see Susan Gray for a copy.

The Resolution states: “The Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ supports Physician Assistance in Dying, under very specific guidelines as determined by each State, when you have an Adult patient:

- (1) who has a terminal/incurable debilitating illness or condition;
- (2) is expected to die within six months;
- (3) who has periods of severe, unrelenting and intolerable physical discomfort or pain, without prospect of significant improvement, which is unacceptable to the patient;
- (4) who is legally competent to make medical decisions; and
- (5) is expressing a voluntary and personal choice to die.

## About CCC Members ~ ~

### Dan Pence Book Wins Award

Last September, Dan Pence published his grandfather's 482-page book on the lives of Frank and Jesse James, entitled *I Knew Frank ... I Wish I Had Known Jesse*. On June 21 the "Friends of the James Farm" presented the *John Newman Edwards* award to Dan, in recognition of "outstanding effort to promote, publicize and chronicle the legend of Jesse James and the Civil War era in Clay County." Dan's daughter, Karen, accepted the award on Dan's behalf, since he and Mary were in Europe on the choir tour.

John Newman Edwards was a Major serving for the Confederacy under General Jo Shelby during the Civil War. He returned to Missouri in 1867 and wrote a book about his experiences with Shelby. In 1868 he and Colonel John C. Moore moved to Kansas City and launched the *Kansas City Times*. As editor, Edwards rose quickly in fame and notoriety, especially for his Democratic Party leanings and for stressing the righteousness of the lost Confederate cause.

## Meet Jamphel

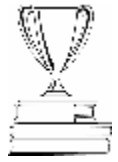
Did you know that our church is sponsoring a Tibetan refugee child? Jamphel lives in the Tibetan Children's Village in Dharamsala, India, located just north and east of the Indian capital of New Delhi, very near the Tibetan border. The Dalai Lama, the spiritual (Buddhist) leader of the Tibetan people and the head of their government in exile has relocated in Dharamsala. Many Tibetans have fled their homeland since the 1959 rebellion, which threatens to destroy their culture. They hope to return home one day.

Jamphel lives in a dormitory with 32 other children while his parents search for work. As Jamphel's sponsor, we send \$30 a month to help pay for his food, clothing, and education. Three members of the Board for Social Witness wrote a letter to Jamphel and just received a response. He tells us that he has made one friend, that he reads in class IID, and that he is very happy to have us as a sponsor. He drew a very nice picture, which I'll put on the bulletin board to the left of the CCC office. I can make out a few yaks, a tent, mountains, and a river. He likes a food called momo. We'll have to find out what that is. If you would like to participate in sponsoring Jamphel, please make out a check for \$30, or increments of \$30, to Church World Service and give it to Mary Carnahan. *Jean Narayanan, Board for Social Witness*

#### **BLOOD DRIVE**

The American Red Cross is conducting a blood drive in the Social Hall, 8 AM – 1:30 PM on Sunday July 20. Please call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (448-3543) to schedule your donation or note the sign up sheet in the Lobby. Walk-ins welcome. We have a goal of 30 productive units of blood. Our best has been 27 units. Let's try to exceed the goal this time. *Dick Meyer*

In 1870 he met the James brothers, ex-guerrillas whom he viewed as rebels keeping the cause alive, and from that point forward, the *Kansas City Times* became a widely circulating platform for defending the James brothers. More than anyone else, John Newman Edwards was responsible for the long-lasting notoriety of the James brothers.



The Friends of the James Farm is a nonprofit organization that maintains the James Farm and Museum near Kearney, Missouri. Dan's great-great-great-grandfather, Adam Pence, migrated to Clay County, Missouri from Scott County, Kentucky in 1825, becoming one of the earliest settlers of the region. The Pence property was immediately south of the James Farm. Dan's grandfather, Samuel Anderson Pence, finished compiling his manuscript about the James brothers in 1960, but was unsuccessful in getting it published and passed away in 1971. Dan took up the challenge in early 2006, motivated in part by the birth of his grandson, who is also named Sam.



## Mission Trips Change Lives ~~

High School students Samantha Fisher, Nathan Hill, Julia Peterson, and Gwen Mills, along with Coleman Fisher, Stevan Fisher and Susan Hill spent a week in June on a youth mission trip to the community of Lotts Creek, Kentucky. This is the second year that our youth have participated with other UCC youth from Arizona, Ohio and Kentucky.

### **Susan Hill's Remarks on Kentucky Happening**

When I heard about the Kentucky trip for the youth several months ago, I thought it would be a great opportunity for Nathan to have an experience similar to his older brother, Carrick's, of travelling to Georgia to learn about and volunteer for Habitat for Humanity. I also believe that everyone, no matter what their stage in life, should experience a new place and give selflessly of themselves to make it better. For me it is all about becoming better human beings as we share God's love. Nathan was somewhat reluctant, so I took the plunge and offered to chaperone so that we could go together. That did the trick. Little did I know what a profound effect it would have on me? God is always full of surprises.

I had never been to Eastern Kentucky in the heart of Appalachia. Before this trip, the closest I ever got was our own Retreat House just across the state line into West Virginia. But I had always been curious about the Mountain people and culture. Spending a week there was just a moment in time, but I learned to appreciate how much the mountains are a part of their lives. These steep, sharp ridges and deep valleys or "hollers" with streams are unrivalled in plant and animal diversity in North America. The beauty of this "vertical world," where everywhere you go there is a steep climb or descent, is awe-inspiring. No wonder the people stay generation after generation in spite of poverty and isolation.

The community of Lotts Creek is still struggling with both, but it has benefitted from the amazing dedication of three generations of women named "Alice" to bring better education to the local children. Our UCC group of church members from Kentucky, Ohio, Arizona, and Maryland arrived together to help ready the Cordia School, serving K-12, for the new year with

painting, landscaping, sorting out and cleaning up. My first big surprise was to find a large room filled with boxes of books donated to the school. Alice Whitaker, who helped build the new school building in 1998, was delighted to learn that I was a librarian and asked me to start sorting. Nathan and I spent several hours sorting about 30 boxes, giving the best to the school, and the rest to the Resource Center, which was running out of the old school building. The first day the books were put out as free give-aways, almost all were taken by local families who stopped by for food supplies. Wow. Who knew we could make such a difference?

Another surprise happened when we learned that Lotts Creek and many other small communities in the hollers of Eastern Kentucky were facing an even greater threat than poverty. We all gathered in the new school building one night and heard a speaker from Kentuckians for the Commonwealth. She showed us two online videos that were shocking in their depiction of extracting coal through mountain top removal. You can watch them yourself at [www.kftc.org](http://www.kftc.org). The coal companies are so eager to quickly extract the coal that they often simply push the trees, soil, and rock, known as the "overburden," over the side and bury the streams in the hollers. This forces the people to leave their homes forever. One said, "It's like we are a forgotten land...sacrificed for cheap energy." Another said that it is a unique suffering to love a place that is completely destroyed.

So what is their connection to us? The power that illuminates this room from PEPCO is partially generated from coal that is extracted from Eastern Kentucky through mountain top removal. The same goes for my home, where the electricity comes from BG&E power plants near Baltimore. I had no idea.  
*Continued on page 5*

*Kentucky happening continued.* So here I stand today telling you about something surprising. We have a connection to the wonderful people of Appalachia in Eastern Kentucky. They need our help. They need our awareness. Please visit [www.ilovemountains.org](http://www.ilovemountains.org) to learn more about coal mining and what you can do. Please continue to support financially our church's

annual trip to Lotts Creek, Kentucky and consider joining us. The people are warm and appreciative, the food is good, the work is hard, and the satisfaction of giving selflessly and living God's love is a gift.

## Social Witness 2008 Film Series - July 20

On July 20, after the worship service, the Board for Social Witness will show "This Holy Place: The Stones Cry Out" in the CCC Conference Room. This short video (sixteen minutes) was produced by the Middle East and Europe office of Global Ministries, the joint ministry of the UCC and the Disciples of Christ.

"What does 'the Holy Land' mean to you? The land of the Bible and sacred places? Or a land of tragic violence and enduring conflict? When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the Pharisees told him to quiet the crowd's Hosannas. Jesus responded – 'I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out'". The film addresses the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem and the West Bank from the perspective of the occupied. As Christians, we are asked to consider what is required to seek justice in this land we call 'holy'.

<p>Deadline for the next NewsNotes is 5:00 PM Wednesday, August 6 Send articles to Susan Gray <a href="mailto:cccoffice@christ-ucc.org">cccoffice@christ-ucc.org</a> or leave them in the NewsNotes Box</p>
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Mailed July 15, 2008

**HAPPENINGS IN JULY & AUGUST**

Sun., July 20 ~~ Red Cross Blood Drive  
Social Witness Board Film Series

Sun., July 21 ~~ Board Meetings

Mon., August 4 ~~ Executive Council

Mon, August 4 - Fri., Aug 9 ~~ Vacation Bible School

Aug. 15 - 17 ~~ Beach Weekend

Sat., August 30 ~~ Safe Church Training

**Summer Camps**

July 13 - 19 ~~ Middle School Camp

July 20 - 26 ~~ Elementary Camp

**CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH UCC**

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**Rev. Sandra K. Dodson,**  
Associate Minister;  
**Nae Pearson,** Director of  
Music; **Sarah Anders,** Director  
of Senior Adult Programming;  
**Dianne Abraham,** Church  
Administrator  
**Susan Gray,** Support  
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people of all races, cultures, ages,  
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