



NewsNotes

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

Volume 65 – Number 1

January 13, 2009

Leaving the church last evening after youth group, I received the call about the death of Rev. Bob Marston. To say the news caused me to pause would be an understatement—another pillar gone. Bob's ministry and friendship at Christ Congregational Church has played a significant role in what we have become as a congregation. His presence amongst us will be greatly missed. In the past several months we have experienced considerable loss. News of each death *has* taken our breath. Remembering each legacy gives us hope and direction.

The December 7th, celebration of 64 years of ministry reminded us that while giving thanks for the past, our ministry is about the future. In a sermon preached on July 30, 1967, Bob Perry said, "Within the membership of this church you will find people in many aspects of business, government, the arts and sciences. Consider the tremendous impact on your society if each of us were to base [our] daily decisions on what [our] belief tells [us] is right. ...we all perform the work of the church.." This is still true today. Each of us has a ministry to share at CCC and in the world. Together we are deeply committed to doing a ministry of hospitality, spiritual growth, and outreach. The ministry we do today will be a part of the legacy we pass on to the next generations.

In the midst of fun, silliness and candor, I experienced the youth of our church longing for opportunities to be respected, strong and vital leaders within our church. What they experience while they are here will shape the ministry they do wherever they go in years to come. Our gratitude to those who have died will be best expressed in the ministry we share with our children and youth today. May it be so. *Rev. Susan A. Henderson*

A memorial service celebrating the life of Rev. Bob Marston will take place at 1 PM on February 7

Interim Updates from the Moderator

Shortly after Interim Senior Minister, Rev. Susan Henderson arrived in October 2007, she enumerated the Five Tasks of Interim Ministry to the CCC Executive Council. Those five tasks include: 1) Coming to terms with our history, 2) Discovering a new identity, 3) Leadership changes, 4) Renewing denominational linkages and 5) Commitment to new directions in ministry. In the November issues of News Notes, I shared information about the first two tasks and where CCC is in the process of completing them. As we start 2009, we will focus on the third task, Leadership changes.

III. Leadership changes - As a new identity and vision takes shape, during a transition, leadership changes in staff and lay personnel are expected and inevitable. A congregation needs open, realistic and healthy discussions about informal/formal power, structure/organization, and how decisions

are made and who makes them. Managing conflict to promote congregational unity and trust is important during this interim time. In October we said farewell to Rev Sandy Dodson, Associate Minister. In June 2009 we will say farewell to Sarah Anders, Director of Senior Adult Programming, as she pursues her seminary studies full time. An intermediate staffing plan is in place from now through June 2009 in order to sustain and grow important ministry areas of our faith community (see related article in this issue of News Notes.). During this time, the **CCC Transition Committee, Past Moderators group and Executive Council** are developing a long-term staffing plan that includes roles and responsibilities for staff positions. They are also reviewing the church's organizational structure as it relates to Boards, Committees and staff positions. Boards and Committees are exploring revising current

programs and developing new ones. The Executive Council and Rev. Susan Henderson will continue to evaluate staff positions as they relate to programs and church needs. In preparation for the Senior Minister Search Process, the Church Profile Committee (Mike Breads, Maureen Ingram and Sara Watson) will begin their work in January 2009. The Senior Minister Search Committee will begin their work in April 2009 (Tom Ault, co-chair, Merlene Bagley co-chair, Kristen Brown, Elise Gifford -youth, John Gipson, Allen Hill, Maureen Ingram, Elaine Kim, Bob Robey, and Nicole Wilson - youth)

CCC is a strong and vibrant faith community. We are on a steady course as we make our way through the Five Tasks of Interim Ministry. There is no set time table, precise order to follow or schedule. Time to discern, reflect, vision for the future and plan cannot be rushed, hurried or completed on a prescribed deadline. We will rely on the Holy Spirit to continue to guide us through this interim time.

Wishing you blessings and peace for 2009!
Trish Esposito, Moderator

Intermediate Interim Staffing Plan Update

CCC's intermediate interim staffing plan is complete. From now until June 2009 we will have the following folks on staff in stipend positions to help support and grow critical areas of ministry in the life of our faith community. We are grateful to these individuals for their willingness to serve.

Coordinator of Christian Education (10-15 hours per week) - **Kristen Curlee** – Kristen is completing her final semester of studies at Lancaster Theological Seminary. She most recently held the position of Youth Ministry Coordinator for the Central Atlantic Conference. Kristen's role at CCC will be to provide guidance and pastoral support to church school teachers, youth leaders and parents, and to periodically provide worship support. Kristen C. will be supported by Jan Forbes and Kristen Brown.

Administrative Coordinator of Church School Programs (up to 5 hours per week) – **Jan Forbes**. – In consultation with the Christian Education Board, Jan will recruit church school teachers and volunteers, plan curriculum and communicate plans to teachers and families.

Administrative Coordinator of Youth Programs (up to 5 hours per week) – **Kristen Brown** – Kristen will coordinate and communicate youth program events.

Coordinator of Social Witness (up to 2 ½ hours per week) – **Anne Weissenborn** – In consultation with the Board for Social Witness, Anne will develop and coordinate opportunities for all ages to participate in social witness activities.

Director of Music Ministry (10 hours a week) – **Nae Pearson** – This is an additional ten hour position with emphasis on music opportunities for children, youth and senior adults.

Coordinator of Camping Ministry (3-5 hours a week) – **Anne Nicotera** - Anne, will lead efforts to create and implement a vibrant Summer 2009 camp program for children and youth.

Coordinator of Adult Education Ministries (up to 2 ½ hours a week) - **Gordon Forbes** will develop adult education and spiritual formation opportunities.

Adjunct Worship and Pastoral Leader (up to 3 hours per month) – **Sarah Anders** – Sarah will provide occasional pastoral and worship leadership.

The Executive Council is currently discussing a long term staffing plan in preparation for the Senior Minister search process beginning in April 2009. The Council will seek the congregation's feedback to its recommendations for a long-term staffing plan before April. *Trish Esposito, Moderator*

Fair Trade Benefits Mission, Hospitality, Conservation and Education at CCC

Proceeds from Fair Trade coffee sales at CCC in 2008 benefited mission, hospitality, conservation, and education. Stewards of the Earth, which sponsors and runs the monthly sales of organic, fair trade coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate and almonds, reports that CCC members donated \$97 of coffee and tea to Shepherd's Table and \$166 of coffee to the Church for coffee hours, retreat house use, and other social functions.

Stewards of the Earth purchased fans for several rooms, reducing CCC's carbon footprint and utility bills by saving on air-conditioning. Several videos and books were added to the Environmental Library on the second floor. A donation of \$75 enabled the Church Administrator to purchase facial tissue made from recycled post-consumer paper.

In 2009, Stewards of the Earth plans to purchase more non-disposable glassware, signs reminding people to turn out lights, and books and DVDs for the Environmental Library.

CCC and other UCC churches participating in the Equal Exchange Fair Trade program purchased 64 tons of fairly traded products, which resulted in a donation of \$10,000 to the UCC Justice and Witness Ministries. The UCC's "Small Farmer Fund" supports projects in coffee, tea and cocoa growing areas.

Equal Exchange is a company that partners with small farmers worldwide (including the U.S.) who practice organic farming; who employ soil conservation measures such as terracing, manual weeding and crop diversification; and who plant shade, coffee and citrus trees that promote biodiversity, increase wildlife and songbird habitat, cool the planet and absorb carbon dioxide, improve pest control, and provide additional food sources. In return for practicing responsible farming, farmers receive a market and fair prices for their goods without the expense of employing middle-men.

CCC members support small farmers in underdeveloped countries as well as environmental conservation when they purchase fair-trade items at the monthly coffee sales. Thanks to all those who help with this program and special thanks to Sonja

and Samantha Fisher and Jim Walters who faithfully staff the sale almost every month.
Winifred Roberts, Stewards of the Earth

A CALL FOR A PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDER BANNING TORTURE

On Nov. 12, CCC was represented by Christopher Lewis and Anne Weissenborn at the rally in front of the White House organized by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture and other organizations working to assure that torture as an interrogation technique will not remain the policy or practice of the United States Government.

The rally called for President-Elect Barack Obama to sign an executive order on his first day in office banning torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment of prisoners. See the Declaration of Principles for a Presidential Executive Order on the BSW bulletin board. In addition, everyone can go to the Obama-Biden Transition Team website at www.change.gov, scroll way down to "American Moment" and "Your Vision," and express our wishes that such an executive order be signed.



PROJECT MALA

A business friend of mine in York, England, as Chief Executive of a small UK conglomerate acquired a subsidiary carpet weaving business in India, and started Project Mala. He saw the need to provide educational opportunities for children involved in the carpet weaving industry in the very poor rural districts of India, where a child's income was an essential part of the family income needed for survival. The whole issue of child labor is complicated by these cultural and economic problems of the very poorest families in third world countries.

The first Project Mala school was opened in January 1990 and initially families were paid a stipend each month to compensate for the loss of the child's earnings. Once the schools started to flourish, parents saw the advantages that their children were receiving and this no longer became necessary. Children in the Project Mala primary schools are taken through a five-year course in three

years, and many who pass out after this time in school have been accepted at advanced levels in secondary schools. The standards of education, hygiene, and the provision of a midday meal make the Project Mala schools generally superior to the state schools, where these are available. The first Project Mala middle school was opened this year and there are now a total of six schools, in Guria, Mujehra, Hasra, Paterha, Amoi, and Turkahan.

Robin Garland (Mala means Garland in India) who started this project has made it his passion, in retirement to expand and develop these schools. Robin was a great help to me in organizing many fund raising events in the York area when I was Treasurer of the St Leonard's Hospice Appeal, which has established a 20-bedded hospice on the outskirts of York. CCC has contributed regularly to the Project Mala schools over the last few years and has sponsored Anand Kumar one of the boys at the school in Hasra.

Patrons are the Maharaja of Benares, Felicity Kendal CBE, Sir Mark Tully (who has written extensively on India's development), Lady Young, and Madeline Weinrib. Other than the teaching and administrative staff in India, there are only two part time paid employees in the UK. Mr. Garland is a volunteer. In order to support his efforts I established Project Mala USA, Inc. as a 501(c)(3) Public Charity this year on a volunteer basis. The premise is to expand the sponsorship of children at the schools through a wider reach. At the present time under 50% of some 1100 children in the schools are under sponsorship. With the very low administration costs it has been possible to offer sponsorship at the rate of \$216 per year, which covers education costs, plus a midday meal for each child, and also some clinical evaluation. The opportunities for sponsoring Children can be seen

on the www.projectmala.org web site, as can the map of the schools and recent Newsletters.

The objective is to build more schools in the region. Currently it is planned to build a larger school at Turkahan, which would also accommodate middle school children. Typically a 4,000 sq ft, four classroom school could be built for \$35,000 and when full would have running costs of \$20,000 per year. The whole operation is very much dependent on obtaining grant aid for major projects, and also a key element is the individual sponsorship of children.

In the United States we have regular support from a major rug retailer ABC Carpet & Home in New York, and in addition from Gifts of Compassion marketed through the ABC Home & Planet Foundation. (See www.abchomeandplanet.org. where there are links to the many organizations they support). We hope to be able to expand the base of sponsored children to enable this valuable work to expand. We can say with confidence that, with our very low administration costs, anyone wanting to sponsor a child in need will achieve the biggest impact per dollar contributed, by giving to Project Mala. *Neville Platt, Trustee* (supported by the Board for Social Witness – including child sponsorship)



From Our Youth

During November the junior high participated in two public service events. One was the Tents of Hope for Darfur. We went to an inter-faith service at the historic Sixth and I St. synagogue. Then we walked down to the mall with our Tents of Hope banner and viewed the hundreds of painted Tents of Hope set up on the mall. The second event was the Walk for the Homeless. The junior high youth had a lockin at the church on Friday night. After donuts on Saturday, morning we drove downtown and did the walk. The purpose of the events was to raise awareness of the genocide and housing needs of the people in Darfur and to raise money for those helping the homeless. *Katherine Rogers, 8th Grade, on behalf of the CCC Youth*

Another Step on our CCC Anti-Racism Journey

Come join the Contemporary Theology Class on Sundays at 9 AM in the CCC Conference Room. We are studying and discussing the seminal book on Black Liberation Theology written by James Cone thirty-eight years ago. We are studying the Twentieth Anniversary Edition of the book, [A Black Theology of Liberation](#), which includes commentaries by others. We are taking this opportunity to understand the concept and practice of Black Liberation Theology and its relevance for today. We began this study on 4 January; there is opportunity to join at any time. As we continue on our journey at CCC it is important for us to stay faithful to our three covenants: A Just Peace Church, An Open and Affirming Church, and Becoming an Anti-racism Church. These are not just statements that were made for one point in time. We need to be learning and acting as the church we say we want to be. Plan to join us. God is still speaking.



Thank You

The Council of Pilgrim Church, United Church of Christ in Wheaton extends its heartfelt thanks to you for the use of Christ Church and all the assistance provided to make the memorial service for Janet Young one that her family and many friends will long remember. It would have been impossible for Pilgrim Church to accommodate all those who we knew would attend this memorial. Thank you. Sincerely, Fred Evans, Clerk.

"Thank You" from NA

"You're doing God's work here!" Those parting words from Stan, one of the Narcotics Anonymous coordinators for Thanksgiving Day, stayed with volunteer Dave Ackerman long after the day was over. "For most of us Thanksgiving is a time to celebrate family and food (with a bit of a nod to American history)," Dave said. "But for many in NA, it can be a time of loneliness and temptation. I just think it's wonderful that the church is able to open its doors and give members of NA a place to share both food and fellowship. Building as mission – can there be a better example?"

Describing the volunteer experience, Dave said, "It's so simple to do -- just a few hours of volunteer time. No heavy lifting -- the NA folk do all of the setup and cleanup. In fact, Toko and I spent most of our two hour shift (7-9 p.m.) playing cards with the Marshall-Mains,

who had the shift just before us. And then we closed up the building."

CCC has been hosting NA on Thanksgiving for 5 years. Church volunteers give up an hour of their holiday to staff the office, extend hospitality, and respond to any emergencies. This year, Stan reported that 45-50 NA folk came during the day to share food and fellowship in a safe place.

In a note to Church Administrator Dianne Abraham, NA members wrote, "We would like to emphasize our appreciation for the use of the church facilities to provide services for our members who are without families during the Thanksgiving holiday. We were able to provide support groups and meals for members of our program. We had a very good turn out and a large number of our members expressed their gratitude for the services provided. Thanks to the charitable nature of the members of the church. We would also like to thank you for your continued support."

CCC members who volunteered are Dave and Toko Ackerman, John Gipson, Jim Henkelman-Bahn and Jackie Bahn-Henkelman, The Johnson Family, Nancy Kosinski, Christopher Lewis, Dave Main, Ann Marshall, Cindy & Phil Michel, John Rogers, Jan Shinpoch, and Karen Warburton.

Jackie Walters, Communications Officer

Ruth Richardson Scholarship Recipient Announced

Since 1991, Christ Congregational Church has awarded an annual Ruth Richardson Scholarship to a student who:

1. is a CCC member
2. has completed 2 or more years of college
3. intends to pursue a career in a human service profession, with priority given to education.

At the 10:30 service on Sunday, November 30 the award for 2008-2009 was presented to Adam MacLeod. Adam is now in his junior year at Springfield College and is majoring in physical education with a minor in health education. His current career goal is to teach both physical and health education and also coach. Adam has coached both the Takoma Soccer and Basketball camps for many years and plans to run his own soccer camp at Capitol Hill Day School this summer.

This scholarship was established by Donna Whittelsey, Ruth's niece, in honor of Ruth's active interest in making higher education available to all students. During her life, Ruth took a personal interest in the scholarship fund and the awardees. The fund grew with regular contributions from Ruth herself, her friends and family. Contributions to the scholarship fund are always welcome.



CCC Vehicle Donation Program

The Board of Trustees, at its December meeting, officially voted to terminate CCC's Vehicle Donation Program (VDP). The Board believes the program has run its course. Interest in this

program has waned in the last couple of years, due perhaps to the Federal tax code change which now allows a donor to claim a tax deduction only for the actual sale price of the car rather than its estimated value.

The Trustees initially signed a contract with Vehicle Donation of Maryland (VDM) in 2000 to facilitate the donation of unwanted vehicles by members and friends of CCC. Donors could take a charitable contribution deduction from their gross income for income tax purposes, and the proceeds of the vehicle sales were applied to the Building Fund to help reduce the Cornerstones debt. Since the program's inception, 55 vehicles have been donated; and a total of \$30,422.10 has been raised to support the Building Fund.

On behalf of CCC, the Board of Trustees wishes to thank the 55 individuals and families who generously donated their vehicles. We also want to express our gratitude to Greg Linden, who initiated and coordinated the program for the first 3 years, and to Ken Stith, who became coordinator after 2003 until he moved away from the area last summer.

We would welcome other creative ideas for reducing the debt. *Board of Trustees*

Communicating as a Couple

Have you ever wanted to have better communication with your partner? Couples Communication is a group that meets monthly here at the church to help couples work towards better communication and relationship. If you are interested in finding out more information about Couples Communication, please contact Terry or Bruce Strand 301-942-8883 or Julia Jarvis or Randy Gibson 301-270-0514. A new training class will be offered after the first of the year. If you are a Couples Communication member and have not been receiving group e-mails, please notify Jim O'Steen at jkosteen@comcast.net.

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Mailed January 13, 2009

HAPPENINGS In January

Sunday, Jan. 4 ~ Continued discussion on Marriage Equality
Monday, Jan. 5 ~ Executive Council
Friday, Jan. 9 - Saturday, Jan 10 ~ Chancel Choir Retreat
Sunday, Jan. 11 ~ Fair Trade Coffee Sale
Conversation Meeting
Just Peace/Open and Affirming/Anti-Racism Discussion
Memorial Service for Bob Perry
Youth Groups Game Night and Potluck
Wednesday, Jan 14 ~ CCC volunteers at Shepherd's Table
Friday, Jan 15 ~ Parents' Night Out
Monday, Jan 19 ~ Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, church office is closed
Pre Inaugural Prayer Service and Reception
Tuesday, Jan 20 ~ Inauguration Day, church office is closed
Thursday, Jan 22 ~ Third Thursday Discussion
Saturday, Jan 24 ~ CCC Building and Grounds Work Day
Sisters for Sisters Holiday Party
Sunday, Jan 25 ~ Blood Drive
Monday, Jan 26 ~ Board Meetings

**CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL
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Rev. Susan A. Henderson,
Interim Senior Minister
Nae Pearson,
Director of Music
Sarah Anders, Director of
Senior Adult Programming
Dianne Abraham,
Church Administrator
Susan Gray,
Support Administrator

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

www.christ-ucc.org