



NewsNotes

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

Volume 65 – Number 4

April 6, 2009

Christ Congregational Church's Annual Meeting is June 7, 2009

As you prepare to review your 2008-2009 ministry and programming at the Annual Meeting on June 7th, I offer the words from the last paragraph of last Sunday's sermon. We celebrated our being a community of faith and paid special honor to those who have been members for 50 years.

“You, members, friends and visitors of Christ Congregational Church, you are an Easter People! Far into the future you will be called upon to share your faith and to share your resources faithfully; until Christ's love is fully evident in all that is done in the name of God's love for us all. So, share abundantly what God has given you. Share it with one another and then with the world. Thanks be to God. Amen.” Blessings, Susan

CCC's Covenant - Announcement of Proposed Revision for approval by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting, June 7th



Background: As many of you know, a special committee has been working on a proposed revision of the CCC Covenant since last summer. We were charged by the then-Moderator to consider the existing Covenant and whether it should be revised. This was undertaken because the Covenant is to be presented in the church profile to prospective candidates for the Senior Minister position. We were to report to the Board of Deacons. We reported our result to the Deacons in February 2009. The Deacons unanimously approved the draft we submitted and recommended it to the Executive Council for consideration. At its March meeting, the Executive Council accepted the revised Covenant statement for presentation to the Congregation for their approval at the CCC Annual Meeting, Sunday, June 7th, after church. We have been asked by the Moderator to present the recommended Covenant to the congregation on that date and to publicize it before-hand, in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution (Article V contains the Covenant, and to amend that language requires a 2/3 vote of approval by the congregation under Article XIX pertaining to amendments, with

due advance notice to the congregation). This article is one step in that advance notice.

Our process: We began by studying the existing Covenant and its history. We then developed a schedule of extensive meetings – with boards, and with congregational members – during the fall of 2008 to seek comments. We received particularly helpful comments from the Board of Christian Education and the Board of Outreach and Engagement. We also held four ‘conversation meetings’ on Sundays after church for interested members of the congregation, and comments received were very helpful and taken very seriously by our committee. We also met with the Rev. Susan Henderson.

With this important input, we began considering new language that honors the intent and thrust of the existing Covenant, yet has appeal to those with a more contemporary understanding of God's presence in our world and lives. We took seriously the charge from some of our meetings with
(Continued on Page 2)

congregants not to ‘dumb the language down’ and we trust we have not done that. We also took seriously comments of others to have the Covenant reflect who we at CCC are now, in this time, in this place. Amazingly, after several drafts and edits, we unanimously agreed on the draft below, which we reported to the Deacons (and which they reported to the Executive Council), and we recommend it to you for approval at the Annual Meeting in June. Note that the proposed Covenant will be read during church on the three Sundays preceding the Annual Meeting. --*The Covenant Revision Committee: Dave Ackerman, Chuck Mason, Mary Stone, Jane von Maltzahn, Anne Weissenborn.*

Proposed new CCC Covenant:

We covenant with one another as a community of faith grounded in God, the source of all life. We seek to walk in the ways of God’s abiding love, made known or to be made known to us through the Holy Scriptures, the life and teachings of Jesus, and the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives and worship. Affirming that all persons are created in the image of God, we honor and celebrate people of all races, cultures, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, and gender identities. In our life together, we endeavor to support each other on our spiritual journeys, with

open minds and loving hearts. We hold it to be the mission of the church to embody the good news of God’s love for all people by laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, and the reign of peace. We work and pray for the transformation of ourselves and all creation into realms of God’s compassion; and in faith we place ourselves in God’s hands, in death as in life.

Current CCC Covenant – for reference:
[*Underlined words and phrases are retained in the new proposed Covenant.*]

We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the Gospel to all people, exalting the worship of the one true God, and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, and the reign of peace. Depending upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the Kingdom of God and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.

From the Editor ~~

Over the year’s time that I have been editing NewsNotes, there has been a new trend: The articles that I am receiving for publication are becoming lengthier. Five articles were submitted this month, all equally important, all one and a half to two pages long! For the editor, that means cutting, revising, or setting articles aside for another month. Instead of being included in this month’s issue, two of these articles are being posted on the CCC web site at www.christ-ucc.org and also being printed out in full on information sheets that can be found in the kiosk in the lobby for your review.

- CCC has a new Pastor Parish Relations Committee. What is it? What is the role of a PPRC? Do other UCC churches have PPRCs? How will PPRC differ from CCC’s Personnel Committee? How many members will serve on PPRC? Who are the members of the PPRC and how do I contact them regarding my joys and concerns?
- Exciting plans for the Retreat House! An architect has been selected to develop the Retreat House Master Plan. We invite you to join us in conversation with architect Lisa Dall’Olio of Grove and Dall’Olio Associates on **Saturday, May 30** at 9:00 AM in the Conference Room as we discuss the objectives the Retreat House Task Force has established for the Retreat House. Learn more about Lisa Dall’Olio and the specific objectives for the Retreat House.

Both of these articles are important. Take a moment to read them in full on the web site, found in the kiosk in the lobby, or you may request to have copies mailed to you by calling the church office at 301-585-8010.

Susan Gray – NewsNotes Editor

Trustees Refinance the Debt Service



The Board of Trustees announces that it has successfully refinanced the remainder of our loan from the UCC Cornerstone Fund with a mortgage loan from SunTrust Bank. The amount of the new loan is \$1,457,565, and the interest rate is a very favorable 5.95% (down from the 7.875% of the Cornerstone loan) with a term of 10 years and an amortization rate of 20 years. By this action, we will reduce our debt service payments by \$740 per month, or \$8,880 per year. In addition, the amount of interest paid each month will be about \$2,170 less than with the Cornerstone loan, allowing more of each month's payment to pay down the principal. This will result in an accelerated reduction of principal of roughly \$88,000 over five years. The terms of this loan permit the church to pay it off at any time without penalty. The Trustees wish to thank Treasurer Dan Pence for his diligent and skillful negotiations on behalf of CCC in concluding this transaction.

From Librarian, Peggy Mentzer Books about the Bible:

The Geography of the Bible, A Study in Historical Geography, by Denis Baly, 1957, 303 pages;

Reading The Bible Again For The First Time: Taking the Bible Seriously but not Literally, by Marcus J. Borg, 2001, 321 pages (two copies);

The Great Code: the Bible and Literature, by Northrop Frye, 1982, 261 pages (two copies in paperback);

The Good Book; Reading the Bible with Mind and Heart, by Peter J. Gomes, 1996, 383 pages;

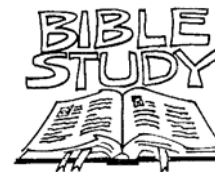
The Bible As It Was, by James L. Kugel, 1997, 680 pages;

Brush Up On Your Bible!, by Michael Macrone, 1993, 366 pages;

The Illustrated Guide To The Bible, by J. K. Porter, 1995, 288 pages;

The Timechart Of Biblical History, 2002, charts and many illustrations, oversize and found to the left of the bookcase, donated by the Bisbing-Vecchia family, CCC members from 1991-2004, and

The Bible A Pictorial History, by Claude Westerman with photos by Erich Lessing, 1976, 144 pages.



The Adult Education Class on Bible Stories, led by John Gipson, meets each Sunday morning at 9:00 in Room 207. It is open to all. The only pre-requisite is a desire to learn!

Thank you -

Many people joined to make the receptions following memorial services for Oscar Reed, Rev. Robert Marston, and Elsa Brandt a fitting part of their memorials. The help of each of the members of the Referral and Service Committee and others is greatly appreciated. In addition, we want to say two individual "thank you's:" First to the amazing Nancy Kosinski, who before she went into the hospital left multiple sheets of yellow table paper covers with names and who'll do what. These were enormously helpful. One note said, "Tell her to call Ruth Haigh, who knows what we're doing." So the second special thank you is to the also amazing Ruth Haigh. We called upon her many times. "Where are they?" "How do you do that?" The voice of experience - lots of it - she always knew. Thank you, everyone. *Eleanor Waldrop and Kate Rogers, and Referral and Service Committee co-chairs for February.*

The deadline for the next NewsNotes is 5:00 PM Sunday, April 26, 2009
Send articles to Susan Gray cccoffice@christ-ucc.org or leave them in the NewsNotes Box.
Publication will be on Monday, May 4 and mailing on Tuesday, May 5

Opportunities To Give Of Your Time and Talents ~ ~

Have You Noticed CCC's Building and Grounds?



One of the quirky aspects of human nature is that we frequently notice and complain when things aren't right but fail to notice and appreciate when they are. Making things right around the church is the mission of CCC's Building & Grounds Committee, and there is much to notice and appreciate.

Under the leadership of co-chairs Tony Ingram and Christopher Lewis, the Committee is planning monthly workdays on Saturday mornings and has an ambitious schedule of building and grounds projects. In January, volunteers cleaned and painted the baseboards in the sanctuary and the day care hallway, cleaned and re-glued the floor transition strip in classroom 106 (used by the church school), and brushed and prepped the water-damaged wall in the Conference Room for painting.

February and March focused on cleaning the grounds of winter debris and preparing them for spring: raking, weeding, trimming, fertilizing and planting. Tony Ingram and team replaced defective soap dispensers in the lower floor men's bathroom and completed wall repairs in the second floor conferenceroom.

Building & Grounds is one of the most important committees in the church. More than any hired help, committee members and parish volunteers bring the invaluable elements of care and commitment for the whole community to the essential tasks of maintenance and repair, cleaning and beautification. In these difficult economic times, the leadership of this committee and those volunteers who dedicate their time and talent to keep our building and grounds clean, safe and beautiful are significant contributions to the stewardship, mission, and programs of CCC.

Monthly workdays are announced in the Sunday bulletin and sign-up sheets are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. Please consider donating your time and talent on a

Saturday morning to keep our building and grounds beautiful and in good working order.

Office Volunteers Are Needed!

The work of the church office is another of those behind the scenes activities that is essential to the day to day ministry of CCC. The church office is where hospitality is offered, visitors are greeted, bulletins and announcements are compiled and produced each week, where all of the small and large details are carried out. The work of the office volunteers is integral to the staffing plans of the church. Whether you can give a morning or afternoon each week or a few hours each month, to answer telephones, greet visitors, help with production of bulletins and NewsNotes, or enter data into our new data base, your gifts and talents provide a needed ministry to the church.

Volunteers are needed:

- Each day to assist in the office, answering telephones, greeting people and helping with production projects
- Friday afternoons for about two hours to help collate the bulletins
- One Monday morning each month to help with the production of NewsNotes
- Three or four times a year to assist with church-wide mailings
- To assist with data entry in the new data base

Contact Susan Gray at 301-585-8010 or cccoffice@christ-ucc.org for more details.

Shepherd's Table - A Change Of Relationship

In 1982, representatives of several congregations, led in large part by CCC's senior pastor, the Rev. Bob Marston, established a nightly dinner program in downtown Silver Spring for homeless persons and others in need in a small, two-bedroom Cape Cod bungalow owned by First Baptist Church. Later, Shepherd's Table moved into Progress Place, the modern center for homeless persons on Colonial Lane established by Silver Spring Vision, an organization that was inspired in large part by
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CCC's next senior pastor, the Rev. Jim Todhunter. For over twenty-six years, CCC volunteers have helped prepare and serve meals at Shepherd's Table on the second Wednesday of each month. Present economic conditions are, unsurprisingly, increasing the numbers of persons seeking meals, making Shepherd's Table's services ever more important.

Past months have, however, seen a diminishing number of volunteers on CCC's nights. In addition, it has been difficult to replace the CCC coordinators who, until recently, oversaw the congregation's involvement before and on our assigned Wednesdays. Opting out of Shepherd's Table completely was considered by the Board for Social Witness, but quickly abandoned as a choice given the importance of Shepherd's Table and CCC's long history with the project. Rather, the Board for Social Witness has worked out a new arrangement with Shepherd's Table beginning in April, whereby CCC will maintain its usual second Wednesday schedule, but will not have to provide full staffing

and coordination. CCC has committed to providing a minimum of 5-6 volunteers each assigned evening. The remaining volunteer slots will be filled from a roster of individuals who have wanted to work at Shepherd's Table, but who are not affiliated with a participating organization or congregation. And Shepherd's Table staff will be the on-site coordinators.

So, CCC members and friends will continue to have an opportunity to take part in the extremely important meal service provided by Shepherd's Table on the same night of each month that we have always had. Please continue to volunteer if you have been doing so, and please consider volunteering if you are new at CCC. The sign-up sheets are posted on the main bulletin board outside the CCC office. Remaining a part of Shepherd's Table is important, and your participation is vital to that goal. Thanks! *Board for Social Witness*



Coming Events

The Contemporary Theology Class - meeting at 9 a.m. on Sundays, will begin reading and discussing a new book in April. We will read *When Faith Meets Reason* edited by C.W. Hedrick, a collection of essays by 13 religious scholars. If you would like to order the book (approximately \$13.60), please let Lynn White know as soon as possible at her email: tsw123@comcast.net. Discussions are always lively - come join us!

Rebuilding Together - On **Saturday April 18 and Saturday April 25** CCC and First Baptist Church will bring together volunteers to help an elderly homeowner in Wheaton with needed home repairs. Each year we work together as part of Rebuilding Together, a county-wide organization that helps about 100 elderly, disabled and low-income homeowners stay in their homes by providing simple disability modifications in addition to repairs and improvements that the homeowners are unable to accomplish on their own. The philosophy of Rebuilding Together is to help neighbors like these homeowners to have a better quality of life without relocating to an institution. Volunteers with a variety of skills are needed -- contact John Enagonio, 301/649-6492 or enagonio@yahoo.com

Member Recognition Sunday - On **Sunday April 19** - Please join the congregation at the 10:30 service as we recognize members of CCC - members who have been with us for a year, as well as those who have been at CCC for 50 years or more. After the service there will be a reception in the social hall. Come meet or renew acquaintances with people who have served the church over the years.

Spring Hike to Adkins Arboretum - CCC Stewards of the Earth and Outdoor Spirited offers a church and community outing that focuses on environmental awareness and education **Saturday, May 2**, to the Adkins Arboretum on the eastern shore near Ridgely, Maryland. The Adkins Arboretum website at adkinsarboretum.org describes its campus as "a 400-acre native garden and preserve on Maryland's Eastern Shore dedicated to promoting the appreciation and conservation of the region's native plants". The outing will begin with a short walk of the grounds, and end with a light lunch of soup made from local organic produce, followed by an opportunity to explore the Arboretum grounds and the Arboretum Center in greater detail. A trip signup sheet with meeting time, transportation, and route details is posted on the bulletin board. The trip leader is Pat Ratkowski (pat_ratkowski@hotmail.com).

What is the Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC)?

At the February 2009 Executive Council meeting, the Council approved a charter for the newly established Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC).

What is a PPRC and why does CCC need such a committee? The CCC Executive Council recognizes that the church functions like a family system. Within a healthy relational system, clear, honest communication deals with trouble, conflict and other divisive issues before those issues expand into dysfunction and ultimately destructive patterns of behavior. In a PPRC, the Senior Minister has a safe and confidential space in which to speak with complete honesty about themselves, personally and professionally, and about their ministry. A PPRC helps the Senior Minister and the congregation share ideas, hopes, dreams and interpretations of the church's ministry.

What is the role of a PPRC? The role of PPRC is to create proactive communication between the pulpit and the pew by:

- Regularly assessing the church's ministry;
- Listening and speaking honestly to and with the Senior Minister, staff and congregation;
- Distinguishing itself from the church's Personnel Committee, which has responsibility for compensation, evaluation and policy development;
- Exploring ways to improve communication, interpretation and understanding between the congregation and the Senior Minister;
- Encouraging individuals to speak directly to each other and offering PPRC members as supportive "witnesses";
- Providing space for the Senior Minister to reflect in confidence about personal concerns, hopes, ambitions and frustrations;
- Recognizing and celebrating personal and professional milestones of the Senior Minister;
- Supporting the Senior Minister's work and ministry in the community and with the UCC denomination;
- Encouraging the Senior Minister to participate in continuing education programs and in planning sabbaticals that build on strengths and address weaknesses; and.
- Encouraging the Senior Minister to plan time for recreation, exercise, relaxation, family and solitude.

Do other UCC churches have PPRCs? Yes. The UCC highly encourages churches to have a PPRC for all ministers, and many, but not all, UCC churches have PPRCs. Last November, Rev. Dick Sparrow, lead team member for Parish Life and Leadership at the UCC headquarters in Cleveland, OH came to CCC and presented a workshop on PPRC. The UCC Local Church Profile which CCC is preparing for our senior minister search process asks if we have a PPRC in place.

How will the PPRC differ from CCC's Personnel Committee?

The PPRC will be assessing the church's ministries in dialog with the Senior Minister. The Personnel Committee will continue to be responsible for minister/staff compensation, personnel policy development and minister/staff evaluation. The Personnel Committee will seek input from the PPRC on the evaluation of the Senior Minister. The PPRC will report to the church's Executive Council, and the Personnel Committee reports to the Board of Trustees.

How many members will serve on the PPRC, for how long and how are they selected?

The PPRC will consist of five members – 2 recommended by the Senior Minister, 2 by Executive Council and 1 by the Moderator. CCC members are eligible to serve on the PPRC after two years of church membership. After the first complete year of operation (March 2010), the PPRC committee membership will rotate for staggered three year terms. PPRC members need to take a minimum of one year off PPRC before being nominated for another term.

Who are the members of the PPRC and how do I contact them regarding my joys and concerns? Thank you to the following individuals for their willingness to serve on the PPRC. They are waiting to hear from you.

Paul Holmes pholmes@usaid.gov 301-593-6558

Trenton Osborne trenton.osborne@gmail.com 301-608-0140

Alison Peterson alpeters@allegisgroup.com 301-593-1597

Ruth Prindle rprindle49@msn.com 301-649-4698

Lynn White tsw123@comcast.net 240-328-6848

If you have any questions or comments regarding the newly established Pastor Parish Relations Committee, please contact CCC Moderator, Trish Esposito at 301-593-1858 or trishespo@yahoo.com.

From the CCC Retreat House Task Force:

**We invite you to join us in a conversation
with our new Retreat House architect,
Lisa Dall'Olio Saturday, May 30 at 9:00 AM
In the Conference Room**

Over the course of the last few years, we've had many opportunities to have both formal and informal conversations about the Retreat House. We've had visioning days, reports to the congregation, and times of solitary reflection. Church camp has experienced the house in new ways in an attempt to keep our children ever safer. We've found the joys of new activity and reading spaces on the second floor, and the fun and fears of sleeping in tents. And now we ask you to join us in the appointment of a new architectural firm (see reverse), as we are finally ready to put pen to paper and consider new directions with our building and property.

As the Task Force has listened to you and spoken among ourselves, the list below seems to reflect the priorities for improving the Retreat House property. We present these not as a *fate accompli*, but as a starting point for a congregational conversation with our architect, Lisa Dall'Olio.

Primary Objectives

1. The House should remain the center focus of the Retreat Experience, and be made structurally sound.
2. Our facilities should meet current life safety and health code requirements to provide a safe and secure environment, especially for our children.
3. Create a multi-purpose space that can accommodate at least 30 people, arts and crafts, and other typical retreat activities.
4. Modify and/or create spaces that are accessible for all, including a sleeping space with unit heating and air conditioning.
5. Improve kitchen facilities to improve sanitation, working space, and improved food storage.
6. Improved/enlarged bathroom facilities
7. Provide for a clothes dryer.

Secondary Objectives

1. Improved, out of sight parking areas
2. Improved access to the riverfront

Learn more about Lisa:

Architect Selected To Develop Retreat House Master Plan

Lisa Dall'Olio of Grove and Dall'Olio Associates in Martinsburg, WV, has been selected by the Retreat House Task Force to work with CCC on developing a comprehensive master plan for the Retreat House.

Before submitting a proposal, Lisa visited the Retreat House on the closing work retreat last November. She impressed CCC volunteers with her energy and enthusiasm. Several factors weighed favorably in the Task Force's consideration:

- Lisa's experience in synthesizing the needs and desires of diverse constituencies sharing one building. Notably, she worked on a restoration project of a building willed to a town with the proviso that the building accommodate several performing arts and other community groups. The reference on that project praised Lisa's skills in drawing out all points of view and then producing a plan that enabled every constituency to maximize the building's potential for their purposes while accommodating others' needs harmoniously.
- Lisa's and her husband and business partner, Matthew's, commitment to living their values and ideals. They bought a farm in West Virginia, on which they are developing a community that incorporates green building standards and sustainable organic agriculture.
- Demonstrated success with renovation, restoration and adaptive reuse projects.
- Lisa's willingness to work with the church to manage future construction cost-effectively, and references that confirm her ability to do so.
- References that speak to Lisa's ability to understand what the client wants and then manage a project with minimal supervision and from a distance.

Jackie Walters for the Retreat House Task Force

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Mailed April 21, 2009

HAPPENINGS In April and May

Friday, Apr 17 ~	Parent's Night Out
Friday, Apr 17 - Sunday, Apr 19	Senior High NYC Night Watch
Saturday, Apr 18 ~	Rebuilding Together
Sunday, Apr 19~	CCC Member Recognition Sunday Fair Trade Coffee Sale
Monday, Apr 20 ~	Board Meetings
Friday, Apr 26 - Sunday, Apr 26	Middle School Retreat
Saturday, Apr 25 ~	Rebuilding Together
Sunday, Apr 26 ~	Consecration Sunday Social Witness Israeli/Palestinian Film NewsNotes Deadline
Friday, May 1 ~	Deadline for Annual Reports
Saturday, May 2 ~	Potluck Dinner - families with young children
Sunday, May 3 ~	Environmental Fair O&E Membership Meetings - Orientation to CCC
Monday, May 4 ~	Executive Council

CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

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cccoffice@christ-ucc.org

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