

From: "Christ Congregational Church, UCC" <cccoffice@cccsilverspring.org>
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To: johnson.barry@verizon.net
Reply-To: cccoffice@cccsilverspring.org

ENewsNotes



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Youth Mission Trip to West Virginia

On July 27th five youth from CCC joined a group of almost 30 volunteers from the Potomac Association for a week at Almost Heaven, Habitat for Humanity in Franklin, Pendleton County, West Virginia.

The population of Franklin, the county seat, is just under 800. Industry is limited. Most people make a living from logging or service jobs in town. The average income in Franklin for a family of four is about \$18,000 a year. There is a great need for affordable, well built housing and the services that Habitat provides.

We spent our week at Habitat working on two sites. The first is a community called Buffalo Hills where Habitat has built a number of houses over the last five years. There are two small four bedroom ramblers currently under construction. Our group worked on one of them where we laid the foundation transforming a hole in the ground to the beginnings of a house. Yes, youth that are 14, to 18 years old laid a cement foundation, rebarbed the walls and poured the supports like a professional cementing team. The second site is River Bend, a community just on the edge of town where our group worked on a set of town houses adding the finishing touches with paint, grout and landscaping on a couple of the units so that families could move into their new homes. Another team laid the blue board insulation onto the foundation so that the floors could be poured and the walls could be raised transforming a cement slab into the next two sets of townhomes.

Friendships were made, communities were strengthened, homes were built and fun was had by all on our trip to Habitat. As our week was drawing to a close Nicole Wilson said, "if I could sleep in my own bed and have my own shower, I would do this every day!" We all shared her enthusiasm. In fact, we've signed up to go back next year! The Potomac Youth Summer Mission Experience returns to Franklin and Almost Heaven Habitat for Humanity July 3rd to 9th in 2011 for a Blitz Build. Just imagine sixty volunteers, five days and a house is built. That is what it is all about. Thanks Greg Brown, Michelle Esposito, Alex Fitzpatrick, Bryce Ingram and Nicole Wilson for a great trip!

Hello Congregation,

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This is Chris Brown reporting on the status of my Eagle Scout Project and the wonderful bike racks that will be accessible to all shortly (come late August in time for relaxing fall bike rides to Christ Congregational Church). Unfortunately, my intense baseball and family schedule prohibits me from installing the racks themselves any time sooner this summer. I will not be able to install the racks until August 28 or thereafter. I apologize for the lackluster appearance of the two concrete pads that currently rest on our church grounds, but I promise, they will be spruced up and quite presentable come later this summer. I thank you all for your patience through this extended period of construction.

Cordially,

Chris Brown

Troop 457

CCC Approves Deficit Spending Plan

Members of Christ Congregational Church on June 6 approved a spending plan for 2010-2011 with a deficit of nearly \$31,000, despite payroll trims, program cuts and deferment of property maintenance and repairs.

The church's \$859,293 budget, adopted at the congregation's 66th annual meeting, does not close a widening gap between climbing church expenses and falling income. Since 2007, the church Board of Trustees reported to the congregation, CCC income has fallen 9.4 percent, while expenses have risen 4 percent.

"Frankly, the results are not what we had hoped for," said trustee Jim O'Steen. "There's not enough to support our current program levels. We need to communicate our needs better and improve our stewardship education."

Deacon Bill Prindle offered a prayer at the beginning of the meeting that called for "the next sign of faith" during a "time of unknowing." CCC's deficit spending comes while the congregation continues a prolonged search for a permanent senior minister. The church's leading candidate withdrew from consideration several months ago, and Interim Senior Minister Susan Henderson leaves in June after nearly three years at CCC. Moderator Tim White said the church plans to hire a second interim senior minister in the fall, while church leaders work to select a permanent senior minister by early 2011.

Before turning to budget deliberations, the congregation expressed its appreciation to member Mary Carnahan, who retired after 22 and a half years as the church's assistant treasurer. The congregation gave a standing ovation to Carnahan, who at one point served as treasurer to five groups.

"My gift was to be treasurer of organizations," she said. "You make five piles and you pick up one at a time."

CCC's 2011 spending plan is its second consecutive budget with red ink. The 2009-2010 budget, which closes June 30, is expected to show a deficit of nearly \$27,000.

Trustees crafted a budget for 2010-2011 that contains no salary increases for staff and postpones major repairs such as replacing the church roof. But members at the meeting were most concerned about the 50 percent reduction in spending for local social witness efforts, from \$18,396 this budget year to \$9,400.

"Surely, there must be some other place that we can cut," said member Winifred Roberts.

"It's really important as Christians we don't abandon efforts for others who are outside this church," said member Richard Jaeggi.

Tom Ault, a member of the Board of Trustees, responded, "We are faced with an impossible choice, with a bump in the road in our financial giving." The 2011 budget anticipates total pledge revenue from members of \$645,820. So far, the church has received 180 pledges totaling \$612,000 for the upcoming year. There were some increased pledges during the stewardship campaign earlier this year, but those were offset by lower pledges and a drop in undesignated giving.

Church trustees spoke in favor of a second stewardship campaign this fall to generate more pledges. Jim Walters, a member of the Trustees and Social Witness boards, urged that a campaign emphasize that members should move their pledging toward a half-tithe, giving 5 percent of their income.

"We don't even come close to that," he said.

CCC leaders also are creating a staff position of executive assistant for CCC ministries to handle more administrative work for the senior and associate ministers. Church leaders said the staff position was necessary to have a successful call of a permanent senior minister.

The congregation approved the budget on a voice vote, but there were nays against the spending plan as well. Cyndy Wright-Johnson, CCC's incoming moderator, adjourned the meeting.

--Susan DeFord

JOIN THE MARRIAGE EQUALITY DISCUSSION WITH CCC's O&A* (LGBT) PLANNING GROUP

On Sunday, July 25 at 11:15 am in the Conference Room, at the next regular 4th Sunday meeting of CCC's Open and Affirming (LGBT) Planning Group, the group will continue its discussion of a possible Marriage Equality Education, Worship and Social Witness Plan for CCC. The group will also discuss how CCC members can most effectively work with Equality Maryland in their Road to Equality Campaign. Aimee Martin, a field organizer for Equality Maryland, will be joining the group to discuss efforts to obtain marriage equality for same-gender couples and protection for transgendered persons in Maryland. A Montgomery County Action Team has been formed and CCC members are already involved with the campaign. The campaign is supporting the election of fair-minded candidates for the State Legislature, enhancing public education efforts, and strengthening an activist network. Come and join in the discussion.

****"O&A" is an acronym for "Open and Affirming" - which is a reference to CCC's Open and Affirming Covenant relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people.**

July Red Cross Blood Drive

The American Red Cross is scheduled to hold a Church and Community blood drive at our very own Christ Congregational Church this Sunday, July 18 from 8:00AM until 1:30PM in the Social Hall during church service. All adult members in our congregation are invited to make a vital and needed donation. Collected blood is sent to local hospitals to serve those in our community who medically require it. The American Red Cross is hoping to obtain thirty donations or more from this blood drive. Your contribution in this effort could possibly save a life. For more information contact Christopher Lewis at 301-593-5628.

Contact Information

Contact Title
CCC Office Administrator
Susan Gray
cccoffice@cccsilverspring.org

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