

ENewsNotes for September 2010

“May you live in interesting times.”

I've no idea if this really is a Chinese proverb that is supposed to be a curse hidden in a blessing, but the folklore surrounding the expression says so. I'm inclined to accept interesting times less in terms of curses and blessings (biblically sanctioned ways of making meaning though they may be) and more in terms of making a difference. Which leads to another expression, of more recent vintage, with presidential pedigree no less: be the change you seek. That's gospel. That's the invitation of Jesus to incarnate the grace that Jesus reveals. Be the change you seek. Live the love of God. Different words, but the first fits nicely into the second: live the love of God by being the change you seek.

Several changes are being sought, lovingly, here at CCC. Marriage equality is one, and I am honored (if only for the brief duration of my tenure) to have a chance to serve a congregation that lifts up this priority, lives this love, and seeks to move the wider world toward the civil consistency of liberty and justice for all, emphasis on all. Current inconsistencies of liberty and justice prevent many from marrying who would otherwise be wed. Prevailing prejudice denies equal rights to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people because they cannot be legally married, and so they do not enjoy the rights, privileges, and protections that marriage affords me, affords my wife. CCC is moving toward taking the stand that will change this injustice, and that is living the love of God by being the change you seek.

The other change is far more local, is in fact internal to CCC itself. You are living out of a time of significant transition and change, including formal self-study and reorganization. This means you are living into a time of realization, of real-izing the reorganization that came from your self-study. Time to put down pens, time to cease with drafting statements, and to be the change you seek, to live the love of God here at CCC according to the Long Term Staffing plan, according to the One Church One Budget plan, according to the Strategic Goals as Discerned by Members of CCC. Oy! So much planning! Does your head hurt? Ready, aim, aim, aim, aim, aim...

Time to release that arrow. Time to walk the talk. Time to live the model you've created. Live the love of God by being the change you seek. Thanks for letting me walk a spell with you. I'm enjoying it, and I know your called Senior Minister will love it. I am delighting in very interesting times indeed!

Rev. Richard Thayer

CCC To Host Caritas Chamber Chorale as Part of National Tour

The Caritas Chamber Chorale, an *a cappella* ensemble, will present a free concert on Friday, October 8, at 7:30 p.m. in CCC's sanctuary. The concert features sacred repertoire, spirituals, and several international selections.

This concert, which is one of five on the chorale's national tour, is part of the **National Festival of the States Special Events** which aims to present choirs from across North America in venues and communities in Maryland, Washington DC, and Virginia.

Based in central New Jersey, Caritas Chamber Chorale was founded in 2005 for the purpose of presenting a series of concerts of *a cappella* sacred music to raise funds for the Adorno Fathers' St. Francis Caracciolo Mission, Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa. The singers, who come from various communities and faith traditions, are united in their shared love of choral singing and their desire to aid

those in need. The founder and director of the group, Barbara Sanderman, has a long history of supporting the African Mission through music and in other ways.



MARRIAGE EQUALITY

CCC's Open and Affirming (LGBT) Work Group continues to explore ways to live out CCC's covenant to intentionally welcome and affirm gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals to journey in faith with the congregation and to *"recognize the diversity of families among us and the ways in which God calls us into relationship."*

The Work Group strongly believes that the time is right for CCC to engage in a church-wide discussion of marriage equality for same-sex couples, and has developed a proposal for nurturing that discussion through worship, education, and social witness in the coming months. At its July 12 meeting, the Executive Council strongly endorsed the Work Group's proposal for a number of Fall 2010 activities which would lead up to a congregational vote on a resolution affirming the commitment of Christ Congregational Church (CCC) to marriage equality. In taking this path, CCC would follow in the steps of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ (UCC), which issued a marriage equality statement in 2005.

The timeline set out below outlines important activities relating to the marriage equality issue. For more information about any of these activities or the Open and Affirming (LGBT) Work Group, please contact Kathleen Boucher at kmmboucher@starpower.net or Matthew Nelson at alfnelson@aol.com.

FALL 2010 ACTIVITIES

September 19, 2010

The Work Group will staff a table at Taste of Ministries which will highlight the Draft Position Statement and Marriage Equality Worship, Education, and Social Witness Proposal (Marriage Equality Proposal)

September 20, 2010

The Work Group will seek input on the Draft Position Statement and Marriage Equality Proposal from all Boards.

September 26

The Sunday Worship Services will focus on the meaning of marriage and an educational forum will be held on that same day following the 10:30 Worship Service (food and child care will be provided).

September/October/November 2010

The Work Group will continue to solicit input for boards, committees, and congregants, and will sponsor mission moments, educational opportunities, and social advocacy throughout October and November, including outreach to seniors and youth. A smaller group, lead by Richard Thayer, Amy Lewis, Cyndy Wright-Johnson, and Matthew Nelson will participate in a Listening Project aimed at making sure that everyone at CCC feels that there is a safe place to express their views and get information about the Marriage Equality proposal. If you would like to participate in that project, please contact any of these individuals. Opportunities will be provided throughout the fall

CCC BOOK GROUP will next read the award-winning true account of a Syrian-American family in Katrina-beset New Orleans, *Zeitoun* by Dave Eggers, paperback. The father is accused by police of being a counter-terrorist as he struggles to rescue neighbors and pets using his canoe. We will meet on **September 26 at 7 p.m.**, at the home of Eleanor Waldrop. All are welcome.

PARENT'S NIGHT OUT - SEPTEMBER 17TH

The Parent's Night Out program is a babysitting co-op for children of all ages. It meets on the third Friday of each month from 6:30 to 10:00 PM. We start our evening in the meeting room, where the parents sign the children in, leaving a phone number where they can be reached. Weather permitting, we go outside to play before going to the social hall for more play. There, we have a snack, which is brought by the parents on duty, before returning to the meeting room for a video. Some of the children enjoy putting on pajamas and resting on a sleeping bag or blanket during the video. Parents receive three or four times off for one time on duty, depending upon the participation in any year. Please remember to sign up on the Board For Church Life bulletin board near the kitchen on the first floor. There is a limit of 22, so if you sign up and can not come, please let Glenda know. If you have questions, call or email Glenda Neal at (302)622-3948) or gbneal58@yahoo.com.

Nae Pearson Presents Doctoral Studies Proposal to Executive Council

Nae Pearson, Director of Music and Organist, presented a proposal for the completion of his Doctor of Ministry degree at Wesley Theological Seminary to the Executive Council in August. Nae has completed all of the necessary coursework for the degree and has nine months in which to prepare and present his dissertation. A significant part of this final step is to engage the community at Christ Congregational Church in his field-work and conduct a detailed study of the current worship opportunities at CCC. His study will also include a glimpse of the current liturgical practices of Northern American Protestant churches in general. His central focus will be to look at worship from two very different perspectives: worship as performance (leaders and "audience") and worship as "participatory experience" by all gathered.

The Executive Council supported Nae's proposal to engage CCC's community in his doctoral study. This fall, Nae will be conducting a study of a cross-section (both chosen and volunteer) of the worshipping community at Christ Congregational Church to determine (a.) historic and (b.) present theological, cultural, political and socio-economic influences on worship styles and ritual in the life of our faith community. The findings from the fieldwork will be formulated in order to provide a structure to a framework for the inclusion of a more broad-based, intergenerational, technologically advanced, inclusive liturgical arts program that could continue to be developed within CCC and the surrounding community.

The model for this program might be used by other churches in developing similar ministries in their own parishes. The invitation to participants for interviews will include senior adults, baby-boomers, single adults, young families, youth and children of Christ Congregational Church. On several occasions throughout the fall, small discussion groups will be invited to gather around the inclusion of certain new elements within the worship celebrations at CCC (dance, scriptural drama, visual arts and technology) to discuss how those elements are perceived within the liturgical celebrations at CCC. Nae will welcome your thoughts and ideas as we journey through this time of continued exploration, and expresses his heart-felt gratitude to the community at CCC for the love, care, and support that have been so graciously offered to him throughout this entire process! *Nae Pearson and Jackie Walters, Communications Officer*

Scouting News

Cub Scout Pack 275, Chartered to CCC since 1949, off to a great start to the new year!

On behalf of the boys who make up Cub Scout Pack 275, I want to express my sincerest thanks to the CCC community for your continued support and encouragement for these boys! We're starting a new year of scouting, and looking forward to our first Den meetings the week of September 20, and our first Pack meeting on September 29. Now's a great time for new boys to join who might be interested, we're especially looking for Tiger Scouts, that's 1st graders (our youngest scouts). If you want to check us out - please do. We also want to heartily thank CCC friends who supported our popcorn sale on September 5. We'll be having an encore sale on October 17th after worship for those of you who missed us. Anyone who wants to learn more about Pack 275, please contact Carolyn Hoskinson 301-589-0153, or hoskinson.carolyn@epa.gov.

Children's Communion Activity: For the grownups, a peek into our kids activities...

Ever wonder what the kids are doing downstairs on Communion Sundays while you grownups remain upstairs in the worship service? We gather each month on Communion Sunday for a special communion activity just for kids. For September 5, we had our usual handfuls of warm fresh baked bread, and grape juice juice-boxes, while we discussed the origin of communion, and what it means for us. We discussed the meanings behind the bread and juice, and some hints at what Jesus might want us to remember when he said, "Do this in remembrance of me." We also had some fun with asking ourselves, when we go back upstairs will only kids with red sneakers be invited to the table? or only kids with blue eyes? or is EVERYONE invited? Let me tell you, it seemed that our kids at CCC are so accustomed to inclusiveness, the concept of excluding anyone seemed ludicrous to them. Hint for next month: October 3 is World Communion Sunday, the kids know that means they'll have a very special role in the worship service, do you know what that is? Anyone interested in hoisting a juice box with us sometime is always welcome. - *Carolyn Hoskinson*