

ENewsNotes



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February 2011

A Note from Richard

Summer swim league is a riotous affair in Reston Virginia, starting way too early every Saturday morning from early June to late August. Kids cheer, parents cheer, starting buzzers make us cover our ears. It is a blast! As a parent of swimmers, I stood at the shallow end of the pool, stopwatch in hand, with two other parents of swimmers, we three leaning over to witness the touch and stop our watches, note the middle of the three times, and report it to the timer's bench. Kids were hugely encouraging to their teammates. Adults were hugely encouraging to swimmers regardless of team. Coaches, many of whom were college students who swam summers when they were younger, stood on the deck demonstrating strokes to excited little ones who nodded agreement and then jumped in at the buzzer and simply splashed their way to the end of the pool, to the cheering delight of all, regardless of team. Forgive my nostalgia, but it was wonderful.

As has been my brief time at CCC. Twice as long-barely-as a poolside summer, my tenure among you spanned colder weather, some very long nights (many meetings), and maybe a little less cheering than summers poolside. But the energy across generations is similar: encouraging, sincere, aimed toward a cause greater than any one of us. CCC is diverse enough that I risk leaving out someone by suggesting a common cause, but here's my best effort anyway: Our cause is not swim-meet victory (really an excuse for community) but worship-centered spiritual formation (really the essence of community). Instead of way too early every Saturday morning, we gather only a little too early every Sunday morning. Or we gather Sunday evenings. Or we do both (bless you if you are among the AM/PM devout). And we choose to do this. Over and over. For reasons I will not presume to summarize. But I want to honor your reason for being at CCC, whatever that reason may be. Spirit dwells here. Community abides here. Love lives here. Because you are here. Resurrection is evident for those who

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use such language, and for those seeking language less orthodox, there's silence here (yes there is; we are a noisy bunch, but when conscious of Christ, we will be still for your words), receptive to your truth too: God is still speaking at CCC. God is still listening as well. Keep up that conversation everyone. - Rev. Richard Thayer

Civil Rights Storytelling Event

On Sunday, February 13, we are hosting an open mike storytelling event for CCC members to share their experiences during the civil rights era. What was your journey like? What stories do you have about the large and smaller events that were such an important part of who we are today? What did you experience and what did you learn? All are welcome - and encouraged - to participate. Please join us for soup and sharing on the 13th at noon in the Conference Room.

We did this on a smaller scale last year and this is a continuation of the discussions we had in February 2010 during the development of the anti-racism time line.

Our goal is to begin by examining the past by learning about each others' journeys. Then we'll continue the discussions later this year by looking at the issues we're facing today - especially those faced by youth and people of other faiths. This event, hosted by the CCC Anti-Racism Journey Leadership Team and the Board for Social Witness, is part of the living out of our Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multi-Racial/Multi-Cultural Church covenant.

Notes from the Music Ministry

Days of Simplicity - Starting March 16 Lenten Concerts and Soup Luncheons

You are cordially invited to join the CCC community for a series of **Six Lenten Musical Offerings** in the sanctuary each Wednesday at 12:00 noon beginning March 16. The concerts last for 30-40 minutes and are followed by a delicious home-made soup and bread luncheon prepared by our senior adults. Lunch is complimentary and served in the conference room on the second floor. All are invited and welcome. A free-will offering is accepted each week in order that we might offer these outstanding musicians an honorarium. Your gracious generosity has sustained this event for four years running, and we look forward to another wonderful spiritual, and musical opportunity for fellowship together this year. If you have any questions please contact Nae Pearson, at 301-585-8010, ext. 224 or email Nae at Holymusic@aol.com.

Wednesday, March 16--Lazo Momchilovich, oboe

Wednesday, March 23--Audrey Tornblom, soprano
Wednesday, March 30--Lynne Joseloff, flute
Wednesday, April 6--Ken Kolodner, hammer dulcimer and fiddle
Wednesday, April 13--Stuart Kern, double-bell Euphonium
Wednesday, April 20--Molly Stier, piano

Upcoming Music Ministry Concerts/Recitals

Sunday, March 27 - Vocal Recital in the Sanctuary - 3:00 p.m.

Audrey Tornblom, soprano; Katherine Sanford, mezzo-soprano; with Joy Schreier, piano. Join CCC's own Audrey Tornblom and guest vocalist Katherine Sanford as they share repertoire from various periods of musical writing for the voice. The eloquent renderings of these professional singers, along with the sensitive and technically challenging accompaniment of Joy Schreier on the piano, are sure to touch your heart and stir your soul. This concert is free and open to the public. A reception will follow the recital.

Sunday, June 12 - Chancel Choir Choral Concert - 4:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

CCC's own Chancel Choir has selected their choral favorites to offer to their best audience ever--YOU! Delight in classical repertoire as well as spirituals and some wonderful surprises as the choir celebrates the conclusion of another wonderful choir season. The choir will offer a full-length concert featuring such favorites as Randall Thompson's "Alleluia;" Handel's "Sing Unto God;" Moses Hogan's arrangement of "Walk Together Children;" and a stunningly beautiful rendition of "Shenandoah". This concert is free and open to the public. Start inviting your friends now! A reception will follow the concert.

Summer Music & Arts Camp

Explore the Arts! is the theme for a summer music and arts camp being offered from Monday, June 20 to Friday, June 24, 2011, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon each day at CCC. Do your kids like acting, singing, dancing, drama and music? Are they between the ages of 7-11 years old? If you answered yes, then it's time to sign them up for ***Explore the Arts!*** The music ministry of CCC in conjunction with the Girl Scout's Gold Award Project Committee will be offering this week of exciting music and arts, educational and fun-filled ventures. Michelle Esposito, a CCC youth and girl scout, is working with music director Nae Pearson to plan and implement this wonderful camp. The program is open to CCC members and friends, the communities around CCC and the general public. The cost for the week is only \$25.00 per child and includes all materials and a daily nutritious snack. In recognition of CCC's Safe Church policy, we anticipate a limited enrollment number, so please do not delay in registering your children. If you would like more information or want to register, please contact Michelle Esposito at 301-593-1858 or by email at

michelle.espo@yahoo.com.

A Message from the Board of Stewardship

The Board of Stewardship would like to express our appreciation for all pledges, shares, special offerings and contributions of time and talent received this year. All forms of giving serve as the financial framework of CCC.

CCC Unanimously Approves Marriage Equality Resolution

Members of Christ Congregational Church UCC unanimously approved a resolution calling for marriage equality for same-gender couples in a congregational meeting on January 30. In introducing the motion he offered from the floor, Matthew Nelson, co-chair of the Open and Affirming (LGBT) Work Group, called the months-long study leading up to the vote a "profound experience" of sharing stories and naming experiences through worship, conversation, and education.

Observing that "Our faith is based on stories," Matthew asserted that straight and same gender couples have the exact same stories: "They meet, fall in love, raise children, and discover themselves in each other" through a lifetime of shared experiences. In voting to affirm marriage equality, we have the "power to change the stories of same-gender couples to one of justice."

In the ensuing discussion on the motion, several members rose in support of the resolution, citing the Christian faith and decades of struggle for civil rights. Rev. Richard Thayer read a dissenting letter from one member who could not be present. Following the unanimous vote, the congregation read the "Resolved" statements aloud together.

Following the meeting, Open and Affirming (LGBT) Work Group co-chairs Matthew Nelson and Kathleen Boucher worked with Shawn Neidorf to draft a press release. Rev. Richard Thayer joined them to contact the Metro desk editors of the Washington Post and Baltimore Sun. Members can find the press release and the resolution on CCC's web site: www.cccsilverspring.org.

Save the Date - Beach Weekend - August 26-28, 2011

In the midst of melting snows and power outages, thoughts turn to summer and Beach Weekend. Mark your calendars now and save the date. This is a wonderful opportunity to spend a weekend at the

beach with CCC friends and families at the Christian Church Conference Center in Bethany Beach, Delaware. The conference center is just two blocks from the ocean. Rates are reasonable. Come enjoy the last weekend before schools start with ocean sunrises, rocking chairs, good fellowship and fun. Watch for further details!

Thank You

A heartfelt thank you for the wonderful retirement celebration and thank you, too, for your many cards and notes. I am deeply grateful to each of you. A special thank you, also, to the dedicated volunteers who give their time to help in the office each week. It was an honor to serve as your office administrator. Blessings,
Susan Gray

Church Administrator Issues Reminder of CCC's Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of a weather or other emergency which may affect worship services and activities at CCC, call the event line at 301-585-4640, ext. 333 or listen to WTOP Radio, 103.5 FM. Information about weather-related closings is also sent to the Church Webmaster, who posts them as soon as possible, most likely in the evening. Delayed openings and church closings will be reported on the CCC Event line and called into WTOP Radio's storm desk.

The decision to cancel worship services will be made by the Senior Minister, in consultation with the Church Administrator, the Moderator and the Chair of the Board of Deacons by 7:00 a.m. on Sunday morning.

For other church activities, the event leader or coordinator is responsible for conferring with the church office about whether the building will be open, to decide whether to cancel and to contact participating members. If Board Meeting night is cancelled, board chairs are responsible for notifying their members and rescheduling the meetings, as needed. If a board or committee meeting needs to be rescheduled, contact the church office to confirm the availability of space, date and time.

According to Dianne Abraham, Church Administrator, the staff will be revisiting the inclement weather policy at their next staff meeting. Frequent power outages affecting the church as well as much of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties affect the ability of the Church to get word out and for members to get information.

An Update on Activities at Shaw Community Ministry

Many thanks to all who contributed food and cash donations for the Shaw Community Ministry (SCM) Thanksgiving Baskets, in particular the CCC Boy Scout Troop. We contributed two carloads of food and more than \$400. SCM was able to provide baskets to over 100 families. The baskets included nonperishable items and a Giant gift card.

The SCM Christmas Party was a great success. It began with a several arts and crafts tables where the children had the opportunity to make Christmas decorations. The children and their families were served lunch; after lunch, the children put on a show. It was a very impressive show of singing and dancing that reflected effort and practice as well as genuine talent. At the end of the party, Santa Claus distributed presents to all the children.

The CCC Christmas special offering resulted in a contribution of approximately \$2,000 to SCM. That will be very much appreciated and will help fund many activities which include a scholarship program, an after-school program, and a summer camp.

Coming events: Members of the CCC congregation are cordially invited to SCM's Celebrate Your Heritage Day on **Saturday, Feb. 26** (snow date Saturday, March 5). Come enjoy the SCM children and youth as they show what they have been learning all school year about the civil rights movement. Those children and youth (8-10 selectees) who excel during the program will go on all-expenses-paid trip to walk the Selma Pilgrimage, thanks to Rev. Jeff Stinehelfer who is raising money for the trip.

Saturday, April 2, at 3pm at Lincoln Temple: Please join neighbors and friends of Shaw Community Ministry as SCM celebrates the installation of executive director Rev. Anne Troy, as a minister in the United Church of Christ. The installation service will begin at 3pm and will include joyful music, words of inspiration, and communion. Taking part in the service, along with UCC notables and SCM board members, will be the children and families who benefit directly from Rev. Troy's leadership of SCM programs.

Following the installation service there will be a Twentieth Anniversary celebration of Shaw Community Ministry. What better way to join in fellowship following the service than to link Rev. Troy's spiritual call with the call to service that SCM represented twenty years ago, and continues in ever more dynamic and creative ways today. There will be delicious food, kids' presentations, and gratitude expressed for the many forms that support takes in keeping SCM a lively force in the community. All are welcome to join in this afternoon of praise and gratitude.

Anyone who is interested in attending these events and wants more information, please e-mail Marjorie Hoffman at marjoriehoffman@ccc-church.org

marjorienottman81@comcast.net.

Musical Note: Introducing the Music Committee

Music Connects Us to God...with these few words, CCC's newest committee introduces itself to you and shares our vision. The Music Committee began meeting in late 2008. Two years later we were recognized as a Standing Committee by congregational vote in April 2010. Our core mission is to support CCC's Music Ministry led by Nae Pearson.

Our committee members include:

- Brian Frye, Brass Ensemble director;
- Laura Holbrook, avid Music Ministry supporter, is our secretary;
- Kathie McConnell, youth participants' parent;
- Karen Pelham O'Steen, Chancel Choir member, is our chair;
- Rachel Penn, Chancel Choir member;
- Claudia Tornblom, Chancel Choir member;
- Jeanne Young, avid Music Ministry supporter.

As we have proceeded on our musical journey, we have worked to accomplish a variety of things including: developing vision and mission statements; prayerfully considering the role of music in our worship experiences; exploring how the Music Committee can work effectively within our existing church structure; considering organ and other instrument maintenance issues; and more.

At our retreat last September, we shared ideas and have begun to chart a strategic path to the future, to ensure that the Music Ministry is inclusive, inter-generational, diverse, and spiritually focused. We invite you to talk with any member of the committee about ideas, questions, and/or concerns. Your thoughts are important to us and we welcome the opportunity to hear them.

Socially Responsible Investing

Is the CCC Endowment Fund invested in a socially responsible manner?

That's what the Planned Giving Committee investigated recently. The Fund as of the end of 2010 is invested in two mutual funds operated by United Church Funds (UCF), the investment arm of the UCC. The bulk of that amount is invested in the UCF Moderate Balanced Fund and a small amount is in the UCF Conservative Balanced Fund.

The Committee confirmed that UCF works hard to ensure that its investments are socially responsible. As a matter of policy the UCF Office of Corporate Social Responsibility here UCF funds

UCF Office of Corporate Social Responsibility bars UCF funds from owning stock in companies that derive more than 10% of their revenue from alcohol or gambling or conventional weapons, more than 1% from tobacco, or more than 5% from nuclear weapons. In addition, the Office works with other organizations and with the Interfaith Center on Corporate Social Responsibility to advance shareholder initiatives that reflect UCC values around issues of human health and dignity, environmental responsibility, and corporate transparency. Finally, the Office implements General Synod resolutions that call on the UCC to use its economic power to promote justice and peace. Recent initiatives, for instance, have addressed the exploitation of child labor on cocoa farms in Africa and political contributions to anti-gay candidates by Target and Best Buy.

More detailed information on the socially responsible investment practices of the funds in which our Endowment Fund is invested (and other UCF funds) can be found under "Social Responsibility" at www.unitedchurchfunds.org.

-- CCC Planned Giving Committee

Thoughts of Spring!

February is the dream time for gardeners. We flip through the seed catalogues and ponder last year's harvest. The chard was lush and produced late in the season. The early arugula was luscious as well. But there weren't enough leeks late in the season. And where can we fit more tomatoes this year? The seed catalogues spin promises of summer glory, and we wonder how much we should spend for next year's hoped for bounty. Natalie Sleeth beautifully described this dream time in her seasonal hymn:

In the bulb there is a flower;
In the seed, an apple tree;
In cocoons, a hidden promise;
Butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
There's a spring that waits to be,
Unrevealed until its season,
Something God alone can see.

At CCC we are in our dream time, too, wondering about the new beginning we will make this spring, and pondering our past. Last year we "planted our garden" with financial pledges, but our harvest was meager. So we undertook a second harvest "Shares Campaign" to glean enough to sustain us through the year. We have just enough, for now, but not the bounty we dreamed of. Now we question how much we will plant for the coming year to grow the garden that we dream about.

From the past will come the future,
What it holds, a mystery,
Unrevealed until its season

Unrevealed until its season,
Something God alone can see.

May God give us strength and confidence to cast our seeds
generously for a bountiful CCC harvest!

-- Marilyn Hall on behalf of the Board of Stewardship

Contact Information

Aileen Hilliard
Executive Assistant

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