

COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Nurturing Spiritual Growth and Working for Social Justice

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Stephen S. Halsted, Pastor

February 2002

Lectionary for February

Feb. 3, Fourth Sunday after Epiphany:

Mic. 6:1-8; Ps. 15; I Cor. 1:18-31; Matt. 5:1-12

Feb. 10 Last Sunday after Epiphany/Transfiguration:

Exod. 24:12-18; Ps. 2 or Ps. 99; 2 Pet. 1:16-21;

Matt. 17:1-9

Feb. 17 First Sunday of Lent:

Gen. 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Ps. 32; Rom. 5:12-19; Matt. 4:1-11

Feb. 24 Second Sunday of Lent:

Gen. 12:1-4a; Ps. 121; Rom. 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

or Matt. 17:1-9

Dear Friends,

Let me begin by saying that it is a great blessing to be here among you!

I arrived at CUCC on Friday just after noon on the 11th of January. My pilgrimage here began from Albuquerque, NM on Monday in a 24 foot Ryder truck, towing my car behind. Needless to say, it was quite an adventure to be "on the road" those five days and I gained a deeper appreciation for truckers who brave our highways everyday!

It was very heartwarming to see the welcome sign at Pilgrim House reading, "Welcome Pastor Steve Halsted," and signed by many from the congregation. Now I am in the process of settling into my office and my temporary home at John and Joan Little's. Everyone has been most helpful in making my arrival and start-up time go smoothly.

I have really enjoyed meeting with committees and individual leaders in the congregation. It is readily apparent how active and involved people are in a wide variety of ministry opportunities. No wonder that there is a real sensitivity to the recognition of the "ministry of all believers" that is so central to Protestant theology.

As I settle into ministry here, one of my initial objectives is to get to know all of you and to help you get to know me and my family. That will take time and effort and patience. I am working hard to learn names and who's involved in what. Please forgive me if I forget and don't hesitate to reintroduce yourself if I falter!

Just a quick word of update on my family. My wife, Marcy, will remain in Albuquerque to finish out her

public school teaching year and sell our home. Our hope is to buy a home here in late May or early June, when she completes her school year. Our son, Janaka, has moved to Atlanta to work at J.P. Morgan for a year and then finish his business degree the following year. Our daughter, Elizabeth, plans to spend part of the summer with us here in Raleigh. She is undecided about transferring to attend college here in NC or returning to NM State University for the fall semester.

Marcy, Janaka, and Elizabeth all plan to be here for Easter and I look forward to introducing them to the congregation at that time.

Blessings to All,

PRAYERS

Please remember in your prayers: **Paul Marsh**, recovering from pneumonia; **Sarah Hoffman**, coping with cancer; **Isabella Cannon**, recovering from a heart attack; Isabella's nephew, **Dr. J.M. Hughes, Jr.**, in need of a liver transplant; Robert Parrish's brother, **David Parrish**, who is hospitalized; **Linda Baker**, suffering from pinched nerves in her right arm and shoulder; and **Jo Lemons**, who gives thanks for progress in her condition.

The Monday Lunch Group offers prayers each week for those persons and needs of which they are aware. Please write your requests on a slip of paper and place it in the offering plate or one of the prayer jars at the back of the sanctuary or in Pilgrim House.

The Caring Committee wants to know of the special needs of any of our members and friends so that we can respond to those needs. Please keep us informed by calling Marge Eckels, 787-5552, with any news.

MEETINGS and EVENTS

Calling All Committees

We plan to hold an informal and informative get-together with all the committees on Sunday, Feb. 3rd in the Vaughan Wing right after the regular Sunday service. Refreshments will be served.

This is a wonderful opportunity for committee members to learn about the mission and the activities of their committee and of other committees in the church. Any questions, contact Susan Lane, 846-5881.

Parents of Youth Meeting

There will be an organizational and planning meeting for the parents of all CUCC Middle and High School Youth on Tuesday, Feb. 5th at 7:00p.m. in the Pilgrim House. Please bring your ideas for activities and what you would like to see happening with the youth to the meeting. Any questions, contact Grady McCallie, 785-2207.

Movie and Pizza for Youth

On Sunday, Feb. 10th, all Middle and High School Youth and their friends are welcome to join us in the Pilgrim House at 6:00p.m. for an evening of fun, food, and "Finding Forrester." We'll enjoy a pizza dinner and this 2001 movie starring Sean Connery. Any questions, contact Grady McCallie, 785-2207.

Senior High Bible Study

Sarah McGiverin continues to lead an hour-long Bible study in the Bradow room each Monday beginning at 4:00p.m. In January, to honor Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, they studied Amos. All Senior High Youth and their friends are welcome to join the continuing study of Luke.

The Monday Lunch Group continues to study and pray for specific countries and their leaders. Some countries include: Nepal, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and Israel/Palestine. On Feb. 4th, the group welcomes special guest, Ghazala Sadiq, for a discussion on Pakistan.

During Lent, the group will discuss The Good Heart, a Christian-Buddhist dialogue comprising the Dalai Lama's responses to questions about the Gospel. For more information, call Sarah Hoffman, 781-2373.

Habitat for Humanity VBS

The focus of this year's Vacation Bible School will be Habitat for Humanity. Pastor Steve Halsted noted that the Habitat organization has created an intergeneration VBS kit. This intergenerational VBS is scheduled for the week of July 15th.

CUCC Retirees Group

The Retirees will gather Monday, Feb. 11th, for our annual Valentine's Day celebration. The party will begin at 11:00a.m. with a potluck lunch to start at 11:30a.m. No need to bring a sandwich – just come and enjoy the fun!

Bus Tour

March 26th-30th, 2002 will be the Civil Rights Historic Bus Tour through Selma, Montgomery, and Birmingham, AL, Atlanta, GA, and Memphis, TN. For more information, call 832-3193. CUCC's own Margaret Osbourne took this tour last year.

"Just Peace Meditation Breakfasts"

Dorothee Soelle, a German theologian who taught for many years at Union Theological Seminary in NY, writes in her book *The Silent Cry. Mysticism and Resistance*, "In the present scenario there are global players on one side, and satiated, isolated individuals on the other. But the groups who are committed to voluntary effort, critical openness, and taking their own initiative are the bearers of hope.... What sustains those groups? What keeps them awake? Why do they not give up? I believe that it is elements of mysticism that cannot be extinguished."

In continuing the "Just Peace" forum discussions, five "Just Peace Meditation Breakfasts" will be held in the Pilgrim House on Saturday mornings, Feb. 16-Mar. 16, 7:45-9:00 a.m. (On Mar. 23, there will be a "Silent Saturday" retreat at the church.) We'll begin with a half hour of mostly silent Quaker-style meditation to be followed by breakfast, during which we'll discuss possible peace-promoting actions. Please RSVP to the church office so we can plan the food, but drop-ins are also welcome. For more information, contact Edith Sylla, 782-1641, or Cy and Carolyn King, 787-5461.

CHRISTIAN WITNESS

Wider Outreach

Habitat for Humanity

For those wishing to find out more about the Habitat for Humanity project and how they can help, contact Jim Smith, 832-2213, or jwsmith@bellsouth.net. We will need 20 people per Saturday for 12 to 20 weeks.

Eckel's Bequest

The Wider Outreach Committee is currently accepting suggestions for the Eckel's Bequest. Have an idea? Contact a member of the committee.

Social Action

Department of Peace

Cong. Dennis J. Kucinich of Ohio has introduced legislation (H.R. 2459) to establish a Dept. of Peace that shall be a cabinet-level department in the executive branch of the Federal Government to be dedicated to peacemaking and the study of conditions that are conducive to both domestic and international peace. The legislation calls for the President to appoint a Sec. of Peace, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The goals of the Department include:

- to hold peace as an organizing principle
- to endeavor to promote justice and democratic principles to expand human rights
- to strengthen nonmilitary means of peacemaking
- to promote the development of human potential
- to work to create peace, prevent violence, divert from armed conflict and develop new structure in nonviolent dispute resolution
- to take a proactive, strategic approach in the development of policies that promote national and international conflict prevention, nonviolent intervention, mediation, peaceful resolution of conflict, and structured mediation of conflict.

The Dept. will create and establish a Peace Academy, modeled after the military service academies, which will provide a 4-year concentration in peace education. Graduates will be required to serve 5 years in public service programs dedicated to domestic or international nonviolent conflict resolution.

The full text of H.R. 2459 can be found at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c107:1:/temp/~c107TwWuJL:e5663:>

Volunteering Opportunities

Appalachian Service Project

The ASP is scheduled for the week of June 9th with fundraisers and meetings beginning in March. If you would like to participate and haven't signed up, contact Mark Denlinger, 847-5131. More information as the date approaches.

Marketplace for Meaningful Gifts

We have a need for volunteers to assist Marty Mclean with the coordination of this project. There is strong support for this mission by our congregation, now we are challenged with how we can make it better. Do you have any suggestions, thoughts, or insights? Contact Marty, 846-6929, or mmcl@nc.rr.com

CUCC Vegetable Garden

Calling all those with a green thumb, or those wishing they had a green thumb! Our pastor has suggested that we investigate the possibility of creating a community vegetable garden, with the harvest to be donated to the NC Food Bank. While the Food Bank greatly appreciates our donations of canned and dry goods, there is a real need and desire to have fresh vegetables available. Do you feel called to be involved in such a project? There are many ways in which you can be involved and can contribute to this project. Contact Steve at the church office or at pastor@communityucc.org.

Loaves & Fishes

Volunteers are needed to prepare a simple meal for 20. Menus and reimbursement money are available. Contact Suzette Roach, 460-8678.

Interested in Karate and helping children? Loaves and Fishes Ministry is looking for adults to drive and participate with 2-3 students in a Karate class at Halifax Community Center once each week, Tuesdays or Thursdays from 6:30-8:00p.m. Interested volunteers please contact Sarah Cooper, 231-4687 ext. 225.

Emergency Food Bags

CUCC's emergency food bag contributions were extremely low for January. The total number of bags donated was only **14!** Let's all pitch in and sufficiently surpass that number with our future contributions!

The Annual CUCC Auction is coming in April. If you would be willing to help with any aspect, contact Anne Pope, 872-2380. Some volunteers are still needed to help with the various duties. You may want to start to consider what you would be willing to lay on the auction block for the good of the church. More information to follow.

The Cupboards Are Bare!

If you have a few pots or pans you could donate to the Pilgrim House kitchen, they would be greatly appreciated. Any excess dishes will be stored for the Fall Youth Yard Sale.

SPECIAL DAYS

Valentine's Day

The history of Valentine's Day, and its patron saint, is shrouded in mystery. But we do know that February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition.

Today, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints names Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred, varying from a priest who helped young lovers wed secretly, to a priest who helped Christians escape from prison, to a prisoner who fell in love with his jailor's daughter and sent her a letter signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure.

Some argue that the Christian church decided to celebrate Valentine's Day in the middle of February in an effort to "christianize" celebrations of a pagan fertility festival. In addition to the US, Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia.

www.historychannel.com

Ash Wednesday and Lent

Ash Wednesday, in Christian churches, is the first day of the penitential season of Lent. On Ash Wednesday, Christians have a smudge of ashes placed on their foreheads as a sign of penitence. In the Roman Catholic Church, the ashes are obtained from palm branches that were distributed the previous Palm Sunday, they are burned and blessed

before mass on Ash Wednesday. When the ashes are placed on a forehead, the penitent is reminded of our mortality: "Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return."

Lent consists of the forty days before Easter, not counting Sundays. Therefore, the first day of Lent is always a Wednesday. Lent now consists of two parts: the four days from Ash Wednesday to the First Sunday of Lent, and the thirty-six days between then and Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday). The second part of Lent is the time of Passiontide. Many Catholics adjust their diets and their lives as a sacrifice to enhance their spiritual Lenten journey.

The number 40 is a significant number in the Old Testament and the Jewish faith. Moses approached God on Sinai and Horeb only after a purification fast of forty days. Christ, after His baptism, began to prepare Himself for public life by a fast of forty days in the desert, during which time, Satan tried to tempt Him to discover whether Christ was indeed the Son of God.

www.computingcorner.com

Black History Month from Valerie Johnson

Since I am an unofficial expert on Black History, let me be the first one to welcome you to a month of celebration and reflection. Celebration, because we, as African Americans, take this time each year to joyfully thank God for what He has done for us as we reflect on our past to better our future. God has afforded African Americans many glorious opportunities to excel and forge a path of freedom from which all of humanity has benefited.

Spearheaded in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, affectionately known as the Father of Black History, the official observance of Black History Month originally began as a weeklong commemoration called the Negro History Week. In the early 1970's, the title was changed to Black History Week and then, in 1976, Black History Month was established. This recognition of the culture, achievements, and influence of African Americans promoted the opportunity for humanitarian ecumenism, which includes learning more about black history, building awareness of social causes that affect not just people of color, but society as a whole, and celebrating the contributions of African Americans to the arts and to American culture.

Born in a generation where baby boomers were booming, hippies were hipping, and John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. were

assassinated, I have no recollection of slavery. I do, however, have the recollection of my paternal grandmother, Emma Faircloth Melvin. She was a strong half black - half Cherokee Indian, who, above all else, revered the family unit as sacred. My grandmother shared with me, on several occasions, the horror and humiliation that her grandfather and grandmother endured as former slaves. As she reflected on how the past was laced with violence and fear, my grandmother would inadvertently become agitated and would, very urgently, change the subject to focus on us, her grandchildren, and the need for us to be educated. She would urge us, "Get as many degrees as you can get. I don't care if you get a degree in cartoonology, just get a degree. Education is the only thing besides God that cannot be stripped from you. Without education, you just can't move, and everything you hoped for is gone." I know that my grandmother's dream for all her grandchildren to be educated has not reached fruition, but we strive towards that mark daily. I am a product of Emma Faircloth Melvin, and I am proud that my legacy in the halls will record that her "dream" did come true.

Robert Parrish submitted the following:
 "A Meal at the Faith Table"

In our world, narrow-minded thinking plays a major part in the conflicts. One common mistake is thinking that there cannot be fellowship among people of different faiths. I believe, true faith is one that can both accept and share with another faith.

This was clearly seen and wonderfully felt at a celebration meal to mark the end of Ramadan. Ghazala Sasiq, a Muslim who visited CUCC after the Sept. 11th tragedy, invited us to her home to mark the end of this Islamic fasting period.

We were filled with good food but, more importantly, filled with the love of God. I saw that there is hope for peace in our world just by the fact that so many different people were eating and sharing together. This kind of common table must be a taste of what heaven is like.

I am renewed with the hope that we can reach out in our differences and be strengthened by other faith traditions.

Youth Birthdays

January Birthdays*

1/3/95 – Emma Paul
 1/13/87 – Sarah Huffstetler
 1/17/87 – Andrea Osborne-Newman
 1/23/83 – Andrew Ledbetter
 1/25/91 – Charles Fletchinger

February Birthdays*

2/5/89 – Katie Griggs
 2/5/92 – Abby Smith
 2/6/93 – Elena Briere
 2/15/00 – Gloria Difuidi

**If you are missing from this list, we apologize. Please notify the office so we can update our records.*

Did You Hear?

- ✦ "The most wasted day of all is that in which we have not laughed."
 -Sebastian Roch Nicolas Chamfort
- ✦ "Common sense and a sense of humor are the same thing, moving at different speeds. A sense of humor is just common sense, dancing."
 -Clive James
- ✦ "The supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved."
 -Victor Hugo
- ✦ "We can do no great things – only small things with great love."
 -Mother Teresa
- ✦ "Nothing shows a man's character more than what he laughs at."
 - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Our People

I.T. Littleton would like to thank everyone who has shown their love and support during this time of healing. He is extremely grateful for the loving outpouring of cards, food, prayers, visits, etc. He is home recovering well.

Robert Parrish submitted the following:
“Tribute to My Aunt Annie.”

So many times, families seem to come together over a death or some problem. However, in November, I had the wonderful privilege to experience a happier side of family get-togethers.

On Saturday, Nov. 17th, the Parrish and Bowens families came together to celebrate the 80th birthday of my only living aunt, Aunt Annie. Throughout her life, spent mostly in western NC, she has been known to be firm, fair, and full of compassion. The evening was filled with wonderful music, including some of my aunt’s favorite hymns, and plenty of delicious food. There were also many heartfelt tributes to my Aunt Annie from both family and friends.

I am so glad that my family and I took the opportunity to celebrate her life and the difference she has made in our lives. I would like to encourage each of you to recognize the people who are important in your lives and to thank them for all they have done.

Lenten Opportunities

Please take note of the special Lenten Faith Enhancement Opportunities as listed on the purple insert. There are a number of wonderful opportunities in which to participate in preparation for Easter, March 31st.

A Note from Toni

As I finish my time here at CUCC, I would like to thank all of you for making me feel so welcome and appreciated. All of your kind words, support, and encouragement have meant so much to me. I am so thankful that I’ve had the opportunity to work and laugh with you all. Please feel free to keep in touch. I’m sure I’ll welcome the mail and it would be wonderful to hear of the continuing projects and growth here.

Toni R. Maes
c/o American Peace Corps
G.P.O. Box 613
Kathmandu, NEPAL

*(Feb. 20, 2002-May 1, 2002, include **PCT** after my name. May 1, 2002-May 1,2004, include **PCV** after my name.)*

I leave RDU on Feb. 17th and travel to an orientation “staging event” in San Francisco. I’ll arrive in Kathmandu on Feb. 20th and will soon after begin my three months of intense language, culture, and project training. I’m not sure where the training will be or where I’ll be stationed after training. I’ve been nominated for the Primary Education Teacher Training Program and, as I understand it, I’ll be teaching in the schools during the first year and focusing on teacher training and school system improvements during the second year. I’m also “encouraged” to participate in community building projects, health education projects, and environmental education projects, so I’m sure I’ll be busy.

There are still a lot of questions I don’t have answers to but I know that the Lord will provide and I trust that I will be fine. One thing is certain; it will be quite an adventure. Thank you so much for your prayers and support!

March Newsletter Deadline is Monday, February 18th.

If you would like to receive the newsletter electronically, please contact the office.

Did You Know?

☀ In a study of 200,000 ostriches over a period of 80 years, no one reported a single case where an ostrich buried its head in the sand, or attempted to do so.

☀ 100 million meteoroids enter the Earth's atmosphere every day.

☀ A duck's quack doesn't echo anywhere and no one knows why.

☀ Texas has the highest bat population in the US.

☀ The moon is 1 million times drier than the Gobi Desert, the driest desert on Earth.

Can You Unscramble the Following Hymns?

- ☀ EUSLE JOMSS EV
- ☀ RL MLEWS AOEECVHO
- ☀ LEVV LXLENI, OEE LCDLL NAGISIEOV

How Did You Do?

Last month's scrambled hymns were as follows:

- Just As I Am
- Jesus, Still Lead On
- Take my Life, God, Let it Be
- In the Bulb There is a Flower

Lenten Faith Enhancement Opportunities

During the six weeks of Lent prior to Easter Sunday, which is March 31, 2002, the following Faith Enhancement Groups are being offered. They will begin the week of February 17th, which is the week following Ash Wednesday.

On Ash Wednesday, we encourage you to attend an Intergenerational Evening of Learning and Worship beginning at 7:00p.m. There will be two parts to the evening offering several options:

Part I

- 7:00-7:20 Meet in Sanctuary for 20 minutes of silent, self-guided meditation and prayer
- 7:00-7:20 Meet in the Vaughan Wing with children and adults for an explanation of the meaning of Ash Wednesday, the Season of Lent, and the Lord's Supper. This is especially helpful to teach children and re-emphasize for adults the concepts behind the Season of Lent.

Part II

- 7:20 We will gather in the Sanctuary for a 30 minute worship of music, scripture, reflection, and the rituals of receiving the ashes and the Lord's Supper.

Classes Offered

1. Monday Lunch Group 12:15-2:00p.m.
We will read and discuss the book The Good Heart. It is the result of transcripts taken from the John Main Seminar of 1996. The Dali Lama was invited to speak on topics from the Gospels. His insights into the Christian faith are fascinating. (Hoffmann Room)

3. Thursday Evening Discussion Group 6:30-8:00p.m. Hosted by Jo Lemons at her home, 3011 Mayview Rd. The workbook entitled "Keeping Company with the Saints" by Maxi Dunham will be the focus of discussion.

2. Wednesday Yoga and Tai Chi Chih 11:30-12:15
This class is aimed at retirees and others who may want gentle exercise to enhance their health and spirit. Led, with previous success and enjoyment among seniors, by Pastor Steve. Afterwards, we'll enjoy a brown-bag lunch together. (Vaughan Wing)

4. Friday Evening Study Group 6:30-8:00p.m.
We will begin with a brown-bag dinner, with class commencing at 7:00. We'll read Creation Spirituality by Matthew Fox and become familiar with his theological concepts about the stewardship of creation. His book is a primer for all who wish to be empowered to tackle Eco-Justice issues. (Pilgrim House)

(Continued on reverse)

(Please complete the registration form below, detach, and return to the office as listed on reverse.)

Name:

Class Number(s):

Phone Number:

E-mail address:

Invite a friend if the Spirit moves you!!

5. Saturday Morning Just Peace

Meditation and Breakfast 8:00-9:00a.m.

Feb. 16th-Mar. 16th: We will begin at 8:00a.m. with half hour of meditation using the Hebrew Mantra

“Ruach/Shalom” which will be taught and led by Reverend Halsted. From 8:30-9:00a.m. we will enjoy breakfast and share thoughts about Just-Peace issues.

Mar. 23rd: On the last Saturday of Lent, we will offer a “Silent Saturday Retreat” from 8:30a.m.-12:30p.m. It will be based upon the Benedictine format of using meditation, prayer, and work projects to guide us into deeper service to God and Life. A Healing Service, followed by lunch, will close our retreat together.

(Pilgrim House)

6. Interfaith Field Trips

These are designed to build bridges of understanding and respect for people of other faith traditions as we worship and learn about their religious expressions. We encourage youth in Middle School and High School, along with adults, to join us in this adventure. We plan to visit the Islamic Center, a Buddhist Center, a Synagogue, a Greek Orthodox Church, a Ba’hai Center, and possibly a Sufi Dance group. Times and locations are being secured and a schedule will be forthcoming.

(TBA)

Please return the registration form to the church office by:

- Mailing it to: 814 Dixie Trail, Raleigh, NC 27607
- Placing it in the Offering Plate on Sunday
- Dropping it Off in the office or black milk box

We encourage and appreciate your interest. By returning the registration form in a timely manner, you are helping us to plan accordingly to help ensure your enjoyment of each opportunity.

Thank you!

(The portion below to be returned.)

Comments/Expectations/Limitations/Concerns: