

COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Nurturing Spiritual Growth and Working for Social Justice

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Stephen S. Halsted, Pastor

December 2003

Lectionary for December

December 7th, Second Sunday of Advent

Bar 5:1-9 or Mal 3:1-4; Lk 1:68-79; Phil 1:3-11;
Lk 3:1-6.

December 14th, Third Sunday of Advent

Zeph 3:14-20; Isa 12:2-6; Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:7-18.

December 21st, Fourth Sunday of Advent

Mic 5:2-5a; Lk 1:47-55 or Ps 80:1-7; Heb 10:5-10;
Lk 1:39-45, (46-55).

December 28th, First Sunday after Christmas

1 Sam 2:18-20, 26; Ps 148; Col 3:12-17; Lk 2:41-52.

mainstream use will not only clean the air and water, but reduce the cost to be more comparable to electricity generated by coal.

Not everyone thinks of electricity generation as an ethical issue or its purchase as a way to express their faith, but these days, energy issues have taken on more significance. How we live and how we use resources affect others, today and in the future. To love our neighbors as ourselves requires attention to matters we once took for granted.

With the purchases by NC GreenPower supporters, solar and wind sources will be installed across the state, creating new jobs. Initially these cleanest sources will constitute a smaller portion of the mix, with methane from existing landfills and animal production facilities providing the bulk of the power. By paying suppliers to convert those wastes into energy, though, the program reduces the hog lagoon problem and turns garbage into energy, while funding the start-up and growth of wind and solar.

The \$4.00 per 100 kWh block of clean energy is an additional charge to your electricity bill. For example, if a home's usage for the month is 1200 kWh and the residents buy one block of NC GreenPower, they will pay their regular bill total plus \$4.00. To buy 1200 kWh though NC GreenPower (12 blocks) would cost \$48.00 extra.

All residential customers, as well as congregations and small business, may participate by enrolling through their normal provider. Information and sign-up forms will accompany your utility bills. This power is accredited as "green" by a third-party national certifying organization, Center for Resource Solutions.



Dear Friends,

As we move into the Christmas season and begin to see and feel the effects all around us of a society addicted to consumerism that threatens the integrity of God's creation, we may feel the need to respond in an alternative way. Why not, in our giving, give something toward clean, renewable energy sources in North Carolina? And not just at Christmas (though this is the time to get started) but throughout the year!

Through the recently announced NC GreenPower program, individuals and faith communities can now bring a new kind of power and light into their homes and churches. By paying just an additional \$4.00 per month, socially-responsible users can buy 100 kilowatt hours of clean energy created by wind, solar and other renewable sources. The NC Interfaith Eco-Justice Network, a committee of the NC Council of Churches of which I am a member, has been actively involved in this exciting initiative which will be offered through local utility providers. Moving these energy sources into

The website www.ncgreenpower.org offers additional information and immediate enrollment.

Because many problems facing the world are due to energy production and consumption, people of faith are called to address these issues in their own lives. Purchasing NC GreenPower is a convenient and economical step toward solutions. Members of the NC Interfaith Eco-Justice Network encourage you to sign up for this exciting new opportunity.

Blessings & Peace,

Steve



PRAYERS

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.

Following are the names of those to be remembered in prayer: Jo Lemons, Sister Evelyn Mattern, Nancy Keppel, and Buck Little.

MEETINGS and EVENTS

Retirees Group - Come one Come all! Doug Barrick and Anne Pope will lead the Retirees Fellowship in Christmas music and caroling on December 8th at 11 AM in the Vaughan Fellowship Hall. Let Anne know what carol you would like to sing so we can have words printed for all.

Bring a friend and a sandwich. Dessert will be provided.

- Dot and I.T. Littleton

Women's Support Group will not have a meeting in December.



CUCC CHRISTMAS PARTY **DECEMBER 6**

The annual CUCC Christmas party will begin at 6:00 PM on Saturday, December 6, at the Church. The Social Hour will be held from 6:00 - 7:00 (wine, punch, and snacks), and at 7:00, Mitch Hazouri (of Mitch's Tavern on Hillsborough St.) will furnish dinner in the Vaughan Fellowship Hall. Afterwards there will be Christmas Carols and more fellowship.

Tickets for the event will be approximately \$8 and will be available after 10:30 worship on Nov. 23 and Nov. 30. Alternatively, you may contact Lavon Page (lavon_page@ncsu.edu or 460-6103) to make your reservation. Please make reservations or purchase tickets by Tuesday, December 2.

This is an "adult" event, but mature youth are certainly welcome. A children's Christmas event is separately scheduled at a different time.

Contact Lavon for more information or to volunteer to help.

DEACONS MINISTRY

The Deacons gathered on November 12, 2003 for a regular meeting. The focus was on plans for the upcoming Advent season and the coming new church year. We discussed Christmas music: the hymns on November 30 will be Advent carols, celebrating the first Sunday of Advent. Subsequent Sundays in Advent will, by popular request, feature traditional Christmas carols. The choir will be performing throughout the season

The November 30 advent retreat will give participants a flavor of Steve's study leave as it features a video of Mepkins Abbey. The retreat, from 4-6, will include Taize-style worship and will

end with a simple supper. It promises to be a perfect time to reflect and ready oneself for the coming season. Other Advent plans are described elsewhere in the newsletter and include the Christmas party, decorating the church on December 13, caroling on the 20th and 21st, the Christmas Eve service.

The Deacons also clarified the jobs to be described to and recruited for by the Nominating Committee, as we noted that the terms of some Deacons are coming to an end this December. (My partial term in the position of Chair -that Edith Sylla so ably handled until her departure for NH/MA- ends December 31st). Therefore this may be my last newsletter article as Chair of Deacons Ministry. It has been a pleasure serving with this "class" of Deacons. I will be pleased to continue as one of the twelve and to support the new Chair, Peg Hulslander.

Wishing you a blessed Advent and Christmas.
Vandy Bradow, for the Deacons

Arts and Worship committee

"Stop by to look at the **Art Wall** across from the Hoffmann and Bradow rooms for our newest display. You'll see beautiful photographs from our very own Toni James-Manus. Extra added fringe benefit: you'll see other people you know in some of the photographs.

Toni James-Manus was born and raised in Winston-Salem, NC. She received her B.A. in Sociology, her M. Ed. in Special Education, and her M.P.H. in Maternal and Child Health. While in Charlottesville, VA, Toni utilized photography while teaching middle and high school students with special needs. She also directed the teen Bereavement program, "Creating a Living Legacy for Grieving Teens through Photography" at Hospice of Wake County. This exhibit continues to travel nationally to local hospice programs and other venues such as the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's annual conference.

Toni is presently specializing in doing black and white photography of children in natural settings.

She also enjoys color tinting her black and white photographs.

We're approaching the holiday season and both the Susie Allen choir (Did you know we had a name? Yes, we were named after a long-time choir member many years ago.) and the newly revived folk choir are beginning to explore music to note the occasions. We'll be singing at the community Thanksgiving service at 7:00 p.m., November 26 (the Wednesday night before Thanksgiving), which will be held at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church this year. Feel free to either join us at 6:00 with a robe to practice singing or come at 7:00 to participate in this traditional annual service.

The Susie Allen choir will be practicing holiday music on Wednesday December 3, Thursday December 11, and Wednesday December 17 at 7:30 p.m. We'll be singing Sundays November 30, December 7, December 21, and Wednesday December 24 Christmas eve (11 p.m. service). There is also a special practice on Saturday, December 20, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, including a potluck breakfast. As you might expect, Anne has chosen some lovely music for us to explore and bring to life, so mark your calendars and come join in the fun!

The folk choir will practice after church on December 7 and sing on Sunday, December 14; all folksy-inclined voices are encouraged to participate in this uplifting of spirits.

I leave you with the following quotations for the month to bring a twinkle to your eye.

'Your voice takes you to your heart.' -Gabrielle Roth

'Music has the capacity to touch the innermost reaches of the soul and music gives flight to the imagination.' -Plato

'Sing the wandering soul back home...' - Caitlin
submitted by Marty Lamb

CHURCH COUNCIL

At its November meeting, the Church Council decided that the **First Annual Congregational Meeting** of the year will be held on **Sunday**,

January 18, immediately after the 10:30 service. The church's detailed budget will be presented and voted upon at that time. In addition, a revised draft of the amended Constitution and By-laws will be distributed and voted upon. Copies of the revised draft will be mailed to all church members within the next couple of weeks. Any changes or corrections to the draft that you want to have considered at the January meeting must be sent to the Church Office no later than Monday, December 29.

With great enthusiasm and appreciation, the Council also voted to appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to study our Education Ministry and recommend ways to integrate youth activities with the other Church activities. Members include Peg Hulslander, Roger Manus, Joan McAllister, Grady McCallie, Margaret Osborne, Robert Parrish, Jane Smith and Adrienne Talbot. This Committee will report to the Council, which will in turn report to the Congregation.

-Susan Lane

SECOND ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The congregation met on Sunday, November 16, for the fall meeting as set forth in the Constitution and By-laws of the Church.

Three items were on the agenda as called for in the Constitution and By-laws above:

- (1) review of the Constitution and By-laws after six months of working under them as provisionally adopted
- (2) the budget for 2004 and
- (3) the report of the nominating committee for 2004 officers, committee members and other assignments.

No action was taken by the congregation on these three items. The Constitution and By-laws documents presented by the Moderator had too many amendments which had to be handwritten into the text. The review was discontinued and the Council instructed to report to the Congregation with a more manageable text prior to the next congregational meeting. The Budget review ended the same way. The Stewardship Ministry which has

pledge drive and budget matters to handle in the time leading up to the Fall meeting of the Congregation, will report the Budget for 2004 before the next congregational meeting. The Nominating Committee reported that it could not meet the requirement put into the By-laws last March that it present the nominated slate of 2004 posts in the Church by the Fall meeting.

The Congregation did take action on the perceived need for a rapid review by an ad hoc committee of the educational opportunities offered structurally by the Church to the young people – those too old for Sunday School as we have it – and too young for Forum as we have it. Roger Manus agreed to head up this review.

- Everette Noland

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

Reminder: **Food Bags** will be collected on **Sunday, December 7th**.



Miracles do happen! (Steve preached about them.) We have one of our own! In November our congregation contributed **36 – yes, that's 36!** Emergency food bags to the Urban Ministry Center. They were delighted, of course, to add that many basic food bags to their inventory. Needs are still pressing and our contribution is important. Let's create another miracle in December.

Volunteers Needed - Wright Center

Can you make a mean meat loaf? cook up a pot of chili? We need volunteers to help prepare and/or serve dinner at the Helen Wright Center (a.k.a. the Ark Shelter), which provides shelter to 36 women who would otherwise be homeless. No long-term commitment! CUCC is responsible for the evening meal on the third Sunday of each month. If you are

willing to help on January 18 (for example, to make a main dish, salad, or vegetable, and/or to help serve the meal), please contact Marty McLean, 846-6929.
-- Marty McLean

LOAVES AND FISHES CHILI Alert – Place your orders by Thursday, January 15th. Pick up orders Friday, January 23rd and Saturday, January 24th at Hudson Memorial Presbyterian church on Six Forks Road. Meat or veggie chili is available at \$ 8.00 per quart. Please contact Shannon Core at 846-0902 or use the sign up sheet on the bulletin board which also has more information regarding this event.

PROPERTY MINISTRY

Roofing has been completed! The sanctuary, classroom/hall, and Pilgrim House all have new roofs. The shingles have a 25-year warranty so the next time the roof is replaced, we will see the current youth taking charge. Final costs were within the contractor’s estimate. In fact, the contractor (Roach-Lamberg) did not charge for additional work and supplies beyond the estimate. They did an excellent job.

Property Ministry members spent much of one Saturday power washing the Pilgrim House walkway and front deck. We hope the removal of algae and dirt buildup on the walkway will improve the traction. Power washing of the railing and rear deck is planned for a later date.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Children Give and Inspire for Method

Following a children's story by Margaret Osborne about Method Day Care Center and our Church, Jane Smith had the wonderful idea of having the children give their pennies to help build a new home for Method. Each Sunday they dropped their pennies in the jar. In addition, adults were invited to drop change into the jar as they left church. The result was \$48.30 from the children and \$198.98 from the adults who were inspired by the children's giving. What an inspiration!
CUCC Church School News

As we celebrate the Christmas season, the children will be learning more about shepherds. We will have lessons on the animals and explore shepherds in art. We will sing carols and make Christmas ornaments.

Remember to attend the family advent event on December 6 at 10:00 a.m at the church. We hope everyone will be there to join us.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!!!!

Calendar

Saturday, December 6 – Advent workshop

Sunday, January 4 – International Epiphany Party

THANKS

To Judy and Paul Kiel and Ron Howell for their many hours painting Performance Pond. It looks great!

Adult Forum meets in the Vaughan Fellowship Hall, 9:15-10:15 a.m. each Sunday morning. Join us for December Forums to provide a lift to your spirit, in the spirit of the season:

Calendar

12/7: Carol Cato (a counselor & doctoral student for a Divinity degree) - Recapture the Spirit of the Season: experience the joy & connection that bring meaning to our lives

12/14: Variety of readers - readings for the Christmas Season: listen to short passages from secular literature for the kind of meaningful enjoyment you crave

12/21: Mind Walk video – view a portion of a beautiful, stimulating film about the intersection of science & the sacred

12/28: no forum

Great News and a Big Thank You

As of this writing \$10,577.00 has been contributed either by pledge or gift to the Capital Campaign of the Method Child Development Center. Because our Church was one of the five founding churches of RICH Park and The Method Day Care Center, and because of our continued involvement and support of these projects, the Church Council took the unusual action of authorizing a special fund drive to raise \$10,000 to be used to help build a new home for what is now called the Method Child Development Center. You have responded so generously that the goal has been exceeded, but if for some reason you have not yet sent your gift or your pledge, and you fear that you will be left out, please don't despair. Method still needs money and it is not too late for you to give. *Make your check payable to Method Child Development Center, or ask Margaret Osborne for a pledge card. Margaret will be pleased to receive them.* Pride is a terrible sin so we won't say that we are proud to have given so generously, but maybe it will be acceptable to say that we are mightily pleased and very grateful to each other for making this happen.

Submitted by Cy King

SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

The December meeting of the Social Justice Ministry will be announced at a later date.

Calendar

December 3 – "Stop the Arms Race Vigil" – 12 noon on the Fayetteville Street Mall.

December 4 – International Human Rights Award Dinner. – 6:30 University Club, \$30. David Potorti of "Peaceful Tomorrows" will be the recipient. Call Joyce Scapicchio, 876-0501, to make a reservation. This is an important event for supporters of peace and justice. Please plan to attend.

December 4 – Prayer Vigil for Peace in the Middle East. – 7 p.m. at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church.

December 9 – UNA-USA Annual Meeting – 7:30 p.m. at Ten Thousand Villages in Cameron Village.

December 10 – Public Reading of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the Fayetteville Street Mall in front of the Court House at noon.

December 15 – Reading of the Bill of Rights in the Rotunda of the Capitol – 12:15 p.m. Following the reading of the Bill of Rights, W.W. Finlator will speak.

Sister Evelyn Mattern

“Unless action arises from spirit, it’s empty. And if spirit claims all the territory and never gets its hands dirty in the marketplace, it too is empty. I don’t know that I’ve integrated those things. But I’ve requested after it.” These words from Sister Evelyn Mattern, Program Assistant with the North Carolina Council of Churches, a nun and social activist were spoken just before she left Raleigh to take up her final residence in a Roman Catholic home for the terminally ill in Philadelphia. She had decided that continued treatment for the lung cancer that possessed her was futile.

For some 32 years Sister Evelyn was friend and mentor to many in this congregation. With a PhD in English literature she was a teacher, writer and poet, but it was as trumpeter for justice that she was special for many of us. Periodically she would take leave from her job with the Council and retire to her home she called “Peace Hill” in Franklin County to spend her days in prayer and meditation but then she would return to the barricades. Many of the struggles she engaged in – decent housing and working conditions for farm workers, ERA, abolition of the death penalty, a nonviolent solution in Iraq, and peace and justice for Palestinians and Israelis – remain unresolved despite her prayers and her protests. But because she passed this way and because we were privileged to know her, we may be a little bit stronger in the faith and a little more willing to “keep on keepin’ on.” She remains in our thoughts and our prayers.

Medicine for the Congo

On November 24th Rev. Boyaka Okumu, brother of Charles Pumbu, flew out of Kennedy Airport in New York with 4 boxes weighing 130 pounds containing much needed medicines for the clinic serving his parish in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This was the culmination of an effort by our congregation, Stop Hunger Now, and the clinic in

the Congo, a three way partnership put together by Rev. Ray Buchanan, President and CEO of Stop Hunger Now. CUCC agreed to raise \$500 and Rev. Buchanan through his contacts was able to acquire medicines valued at \$2,500. The clinic supplied a list of the medicines needed. The initial \$100 came from the Wider Outreach budget and members of the Congregation very generously contributed the rest. This is a small but tangible way that we have been able to help meet the needs of our Congolese brothers and sisters in their war torn country.

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

Reminder – If you haven't turned in your pledge card for the 2004 budget, please consider doing so within the next two weeks. We are seeking a 15% increase over pledges from last year. If you need a pledge card, please call or drop by the church office to receive one. Office number is 787-6422. We appreciate everyone's generous support for our Ministries. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matthew 6:21.

ALL WERE INCLUDED

Hesed Six

Throughout his ministry Christ made it a point to include everyone that was around him to carry out his mission on earth. For instance, he used the bread and fish from the lunch of a child to feed five thousand people. Another example finds Jesus "healing them all". On yet another occasion the Bible tells us how Jesus was found talking to a woman from Samaria in public; of course, this was strictly forbidden during his time. These situations, and others similar to them, clearly illustrate the love and compassion that Christ has for everyone.

This kind of mind set is one that the founders of Hesed shared. The word Hesed is derived from a Hebrew word that means love. The people who started Hesed felt that persons who were mentally challenged that took part in spiritual pilgrimage weekends were not fully benefiting from them. Basically, it was felt that the weekends were too intellectual for many of them and that this population group was not fully included in the

weekends. Thus, the idea to begin a simpler, and yet, deeply meaningful retreat weekend was conceived and developed.

The things that make the retreats fun are the dramas about the life of Christ, the creative art work, and the uplifting singing. The simple worship services and the atmosphere of servanthood contributes to spiritual growth.

Hesed Six was held at Camp Royal in Pittsboro, NC from October 25 through 27. Robert Parrish and Sue Rogge, from CUCC, served as pastors for this retreat.

The retreaters had much fun and deepened their spiritual growth as they acted out such dramas as the birth of Christ and the Last Supper. Worship was made meaningful as participants carried lighted candles from the chapel which symbolized Christ being the light of the world. Perhaps the act of baptism was understood even more as worshipers were sprinkled with water from branches. The beautiful art work created, ranging from clay pictures of the last supper to thoughtfully considered pictures of the cross of Christ, served to reinforce the things learned over the weekend.

Retreat team leaders, which included those who were mentally challenged, were encouraged to be helpful to the guests that were a part of the weekend. Some team leaders served as kitchen helpers while others served as hosts to tables. Team members served as buddies to guests and helped with aspects of the chapel services. A foot-washing service, held at the beginning of the weekend, set the tone for being a servant for the retreat.

The retreaters were from central and southeastern North Carolina. Both the retreaters and the retreat staff experienced different aspects of spiritual growth. Some signed commitment cards as to how they wish to follow up on this growth. First time retreaters proudly received crosses for being a part of the special weekend. Will Hesed Seven be as good as this Hesed Six? I believe it will be even better!

Submitted by Robert Parrish

OUR PEOPLE

Youth Birthdays

December Birthdays*

12/13/92 – Fidel Viadef

12/19/91 – Anna Roach-Howell

12/22/96 – Katherine Lan Manus

January Birthdays*

1/13/87 – Sarah Huffstetler

1/17/87 – Andrea Osborne-Newman

1/17/94 – David Cookmeyer

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



Olivia Grace Pulliam entered the world November 14 at 9:02 a.m., much to the delight of parents Amanda and Donnie and to her GRANDMOTHER, Vandy Bradow. She was just perfect: 7 pounds 13 ounces, 20" long, lots of dark brown hair. Donnie and Amanda were of course immediately enthralled, and so was I!

Peace, Vandy

ROSTER UPDATES

Changes:

Ed and Ruth Klemmer's email address – erklemmer@earthlink.net

Community United Church of Christ
814 Dixie Trail
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December 2003 Newsletter

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Raleigh, NC
Permit #914

**January Newsletter Deadline is
Thursday, December 18th.**

The Newsletter can be found on our web page:
www.communityucc.org