

COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Nurturing Spiritual Growth and Working For Social Justice

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December 2006

Newsletter published monthly for Community United Church of Christ (CUC) members and friends
Pastor: Steve Halsted Newsletter Editorial Board: Vandy Bradow, Carol Clark, and Susan Lane

A Word from our Pastor

Dear Friends,

As November comes to a close, so does our series of **Bible 101** classes that began in mid-October. My thanks to all who participated. And special thanks to **Marty Lamb and Sue Cottle** for working with our children. They sang Shaker songs and played and had an all-around good time! The Bible study for adults had over 20 participants and they were unanimous in wanting to continue the study during the six weeks of Lent before Easter 2007. Perhaps you would like to join us then. New participants are always welcome.

The Month of December will offer the following special events to enhance the Christmas spirit of hope, peace, love and joy that the Christ child embodies.

- December 2 – Saturday Advent Retreat, 9–12 N to include a video about the spirituality of Trappist Monks and Taizé worship – Pilgrim House
– Family Advent Festival – 9:30-11:30 Vaughan fellowship hall
- December 3 – First Sunday in Advent
Theme: “Children’s Sabbath” – **Sue Rogge** will preach and special guest Brian Lewis will represent “Covenant with Children”
- December 9 – Saturday, 7-9 p.m. – Annual Church Christmas Party with Handbells and Dulcimer Christmas Music

- December 10 – 2nd Sunday in Advent
Theme: “Festival of Lights” and Choir Christmas Music Program (choir will lead neighborhood caroling after worship – all invited to participate)
- December 17 – 3rd Sunday in Advent
Theme: “A Bethlehem Birth” – Church School Christmas Pageant
- December 24 – 4th Sunday in Advent & Christmas Eve
Theme: “Joy to the World”
9 a.m. – Taizé Service
10:30 a.m. – Steve will preach on “Christmas Joy to Remember”
No Church School
5 p.m. – Christmas Eve Family Service
11 p.m. – Christmas Eve Candle-light and Carol Service
- December 31 – First Sunday after Christmas
10:30 a.m. – Hymn/carol sing led by **Anne Pope** with
Theme: “Thanks to God”
No Church School

Wishing you all the full blessings of the holiday season and a Happy New Year!
Blessings and Peace,

Steve

Church Council

Report on Congregational Meeting, November 5

At the Congregational Meeting, **Jeanne Ledbetter** gave the report of the nominating committee. She noted that a moderator-elect was still needed. The report presented by the nominating committee was motioned to be accepted and the motion carried.

A preliminary budget for 2007 was presented. After all pledges are in for 2007, a final budget will be drawn up. The motion was made and seconded to accept the preliminary budget as presented, and the motion carried.

The motion changing the language of Article II, "Ministries," of the bylaws, where it concerns the vice chairs of each ministry, from ". . . shall rotate to the Chair position the following year" to ". . . may succeed to the Chair position the following year", was moved, seconded and carried.

Vandy told the group that, in the next Church Council meeting, she will suggest beginning the process of clarifying how the church defines membership.

Church Council

In the pastor's report, Steve said that he was working with the nominating committee and that we are in good shape in getting people to fill the various church positions for 2007. Among others, **Pat Young** will be the new church clerk, and **Tom Young** will be the chair of the Community Outreach ministry.

The December meeting of the church council will be held on Sunday, December 17, at 4:00 at Steve and Marcy's house. There will be a potluck, with Steve and Marcy providing drinks and dessert.

The Welcoming, Fellowship and Growth Ministry is canvassing the congregation as to how many would be willing to receive the church newsletter via e-mail and how many would require a hard copy of the newsletter. One aspect that would be studied is whether enough people would want a hard copy of the newsletter for us to still get the special bulk mail rate. **Jane Smith's** Sunday school class will look at the subject, as the children have been studying ecology in relation to, among other things, waste issues.

Gary Smith has been nominated for the position of Chair of the Social Justice ministry for 2007.

In the Treasurer's report, **Carol Kepler** stated that so far 53 or 54 people have responded to the pledge drive for a total of \$133,000. We need to keep urging people to pledge, because the church will probably need around \$220,000 for next year.

The Deacons reported that throughout December, the children's story time during the Sunday 10:30 service will focus on the children talking about his or her favorite Christmas carol.

To All Ministry Chairpersons

As we come to the end of the year and new leadership takes over your Ministry, please pass on to the new Chair any minutes, correspondence, etc. that may be useful to that new person. For any records that you do not think important to the new chair, please bring them to the church office marked for **Cy King**, Historian. Include anything that you think will be valuable in documenting the work that your Ministry has done. These records are important for documenting the history of our church.

Deacons

There was a discussion about Steve's upcoming sabbatical. Steve reported that **Nancy Callaham** has responded favorably to the invitation to be in charge during the sabbatical. Others will assist Nancy. These include **Hunter Thompson, Maggie Stoddard and Sue Rogge** who are "in care" or soon to be "in care". It was noted that it is very important to be sure that duties are carefully defined in order to avoid problems. If there is to be a Vacation Bible School next year, it will have to be without Steve's assistance as he will be on Sabbatical.

Peg Hulslander proposed having a "blessing of the animals" service in the spring. It was decided that this service would fit well with the movie about St. Francis and could be done in April around the time that the movie is shown. It was suggested the

service be held in conjunction with Earth Day, which is April 22.

The deacons' next meeting is December 14.

Stewardship

If anyone would like to know the status of their pledge payments, please contact **Carol Kepler** at 787-7420 or email at jkepler@nc.rr.com.

Fundraiser a Success!

Over 35 CUCC members and friends gathered on Saturday, October 28 to enjoy fellowship and Anne Pope's special Turkey Dinner. The event raised more than \$500! Thanks to all who came, and especially to all who worked to make this a success.

Religious Education

Church School News

CHILDREN'S SABBATH DECEMBER 3

This year on the first Sunday in Advent, CUCC will celebrate a "**Children's Sabbath**" in harmony with interfaith services across the nation, designed to express concern for children. Sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund, the first "Children's Sabbath" was held 15 years ago "to be a moral witness for children that crosses all lines of geography, faith tradition, race and ethnicity".

This year's focus is on children's health care, especially the nine million children (one in every nine) without health coverage. In North Carolina, while the number of children covered has improved by 11% since 2001, we still have 11% of our children without coverage, or one in every nine (same as in the nation). In North Carolina, the number of low birth weight infants has risen, keeping N.C. among the worst 10 states for infant health. In N.C., the infant death rate has increased 3.5% since 2001, again keeping us in league with the lowest 10 states.

At CUCC, the Children's Sabbath will be marked with two events on Sunday December 3. Forum will host Brian Lewis, the executive director of Covenant for North Carolina Child Advocacy. Brian is a lobbyist and will speak on the 2007 political agenda. During worship, **Sue Rogge** will preach "Cradle to Cross", about the "cradle to prison pipeline".

Jesus said, "whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me" (Mark 9:33-37).

Our annual *Family Advent Festival* will be held Saturday, December 2, from 9:30-11:30. Families with children of all ages, from nursery through high school, are invited to join us. We'll make advent wreaths for families to use at home, sing carols, eat cookies, and get costumes fitted for the Christmas pageant. Questions? Contact **Suzette Roach**, 460-8678.

The children will present their annual *Christmas pageant* during worship on Sunday, December 17.

Adult Forum

Join us every Sunday from 9:15 -10:15 a.m. in the Vaughan Fellowship Hall.

Forum Schedule for December:

December 3 – Brian Lewis, "Child Advocacy in 2007."

December 10 & 17– Viewing and discussing the documentary "Why we fight"

December 24 – **No forum** on this date

December 31 – To Be Announced

Sunday Monday Bible Study

The Sunday morning Bible study at 9:15 AM in the Bradow Room continues to discuss the book of Genesis. We read and discuss about one to two chapters a week. There is no preparation and no homework. Please join us! For more information, call **Gary Smith**, 787-6539.

Wednesday Bible Study

The group meets at Pilgrim House at 6:30 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays to discuss the next week's Lectionary selections. Bring a bag supper. More information? Call **Mike Schafale**, 567-1098.

Saturday Men's Group

The group meets each Saturday at 9:00 a.m. in the library and will start a new book in December. For more information, call **Ed Klemmer**, 847-7992.

Monday Lunch Group

Carolyn King will lead an Advent study the first Monday in December. The Monday Lunch group will have its Christmas party on December 18. It's a potluck of assorted salads and desserts. For more info and/or to sign up, contact **Geraldine Bryan**. Bring lunch and join us in the Hoffmann Room Mondays at 12:15 p.m.

Welcome, Fellowship & Growth

Sisters in Spirit (SIS) formerly Women's Group, won't have a regular meeting in December. On January 18, there will be a potluck at 6:30.

Retirees Fellowship – (2nd Mondays, monthly)

The Retired Group will meet Monday, December 11, to wrap packages for Meals on Wheels recipients. We will then be joining one of the MOW congregate groups for lunch. **PLEASE NOTE: We need to gather at 10:00 a.m. to get everything wrapped before leaving with our gifts at 11:00 for lunch!!!** Please plan to join us for this special Christmas "giving" event. Everyone is welcome - many hands (and wrapping paper) are needed! If you plan to join us for lunch, please call Anne Pope (872-2380) by **December 7**.

Coffee and snacks during fellowship after worship are only there if we all help! A sign-up list is in the kitchen. Please add your name soon and remember to check the list periodically as a reminder for your Sunday! Call **Ed Klemmer** for info, 847-7992.

FYI – Celebrating Small Changes

In the spring of 2005, CUCC's children led the congregation in purchasing cloth napkins to use at our dinners and parties. Since the purchase, those

napkins have been used at more than 10 CUCC festivities. That's about 500 paper napkins we didn't throw away! If every U.S. household replaced just one 250-count package of virgin fiber napkins, we'd save one million trees.

-- **Jane Smith**

Christmas Cabaret

Come one, come all to ring in the holiday season on Saturday, December 9 at CUCC. Festivities will begin with a social hour at 6:30 pm in the Bradow wing. This will be followed by heavy hors d'oeuvres, a performance by the **Fairmont United Methodist Bell Choir**, and elegant desserts. We will also be entertained by our own **Mike Schafale** on the dulcimer. No registration is necessary, but a \$10 donation is suggested. Wine will be sold by the glass as well. Hope to see everyone there!

Property

November has been a busy month for the Property ministry. There were several projects completed including:

Vaughan Wing painting, including ceiling tiles, doors and walls.

The Property Ministry would like to thank **Jane Smith** for organizing and painting and those who helped with the various tasks including **Abby Smith, Gary Smith, Joan Little, Julia Robertson, Kurk Brewington, Steve Halsted, Paul Kiel, and Ron Howell**.

Pilgrim House basement waterproofing.

Both the apartment side and the work area side of the basement were waterproofed by the B-Dry company. They also reinforced the front walls of the basement with steel I-beams. There is a plastic membrane that covers the walls to catch the seeping water and channel it into pipes buried in the concrete floor. A sump pump pulls the water from the pipes and routes it to a drainage pipe. In

addition to making the space usable again, this project will prevent mold and mildew and keep the foundation from further damage.

Narthex tile replacement

Tom of Tritex Home Repair removed and replaced floor tiles that were peeling up in the narthex. This has been a safety hazard.

Floor stripping and waxing.

Willie Foggie has stripped and waxed the floors throughout the church.

If Only Michelangelo Had Had This Crew...

Have you noticed the Vaughan Fellowship Hall's newest art installation: White in a Grid? When next you see the ladder-borne artists with cricks in their necks, please thank **Kurk Brewington, Joan Little, Julia Robertson, Abby, Gary, and Jane Smith.**

Memorial/Meditation Garden

Thanks to **Sam Johnson** for the care he gave to our surroundings in November. If anyone would like to help "groom and maintain" the garden, please contact one of the following who have volunteered their time for a month:

December – **Sue Cottle**

January – **Shannon and Glenn Core**

Chores include: keeping weeds pulled, dead branches picked up, leaves raked, checking status of plants, and watering as needed.

Please contact **Carol Kepler** if you can help.

Social Justice

Autumn is the season that is almost always bitter-sweet. The spectacular display of leaves and flowers fills the senses and saddens the heart as we attempt to reconcile fiery beauty and earth-to-earth degeneration all around us. Our popular music also reflects this autumnal paradox. Think of the songs "Autumn in New York," "September Song," and "Autumn Leaves". (If you haven't reached age 55, you may have to look them up!) Each projects a haunting beauty in both lyric and melody.

Autumn also carries a spiritual message. For those of us concerned with the overwhelming social justice needs of our world—the Four Horsemen of

the Apocalypse can seem quite real—it will do well to recall that just as the dying leaves of autumn contribute to renewed life in the spring, so all things happen in God's good time. The test of our faith is to retain hope knowing that we will never comprehend God's reasons and to acknowledge that in all life, as in autumn, there is much sweetness amid the melancholy.

-- **John Little**

Our People

Prayer Requests

Please write your prayer requests on a slip of paper and place in the offering plate or in one of the prayer jars (Narthex or in Pilgrim House.) Our prayers are solicited for **Jo Lemons, Jo Banks, Al Matthews, Ruby Lamb, Elvah Mansky Lee, Vandy Bradow's parents, Ida and Roy Klages, Lisa Marsh, Kerma Hazel, Mamie Scott, Geri Bowen's mother, Nancy Cross' cousins Carolyn and Jean, Howard Miller, David Ledbetter's father, Bill, June Bolton, Joan McAllister, Rhonda Zingraff & Charlie Thomas, who is facing cancer surgery in December, and people of the DRC and other victims of war and natural disaster across the globe.**

Intrepid travelers **Geraldine Bryan, Mary Pruneau, Edith Sylla, Judy Smallwood, Vandy Bradow** and Vandy's friend Clare MacKenna returned to RDU from Egypt November 25 after having been up 26 hours. They "saw everything they were supposed to see and did everything they were supposed to do," in various sites from Aswan to Alexandria. Edith's knowledge of Arabic and Egyptology helped as they explored temples and tombs, haggled in markets, took a special "Spiritual Cairo" tour, and visited an NCSU faculty expat in her suburban home. The many

modes of transportation included taxi, bus, train, plane, felucca, riverboat, motorboat, hot air balloon, and camel! There was much to do, see, and learn - including a very timely word for the Thanksgiving: "Alhamdulillah" (thanks be to God).

Our Young Peoples' Birthdays

12/8/99 – Ben Cole
12/12/01 – Faith Davis
12/19/91 – Anna Roach-Howell
12/22/96 – Katherine Lan Manus
1/6/98 – Caelan Eckard
1/17/94 – David Cookmeyer
1/26/96 – Ellie Johnson

Church Directory

Change:

Rhonda Zingraff & Charlie Thomas, 3819 Red Banks Road, Mt. Jackson, VA 22842,
zingraffr@meredith.edu

Community Outreach

HELP YOUR NEIGHBOR BY BRINGING FOOD BAGS!



Unfortunately only **13** food bags were donated in November. We had a slump! Maybe we can make up for the shortfall in December. Let's try! Emergency needs continue unabated. What we contribute can make a difference in the lives of hungry families. Thanks for your faithfulness!
Food bags are due **December 3** and every first Sunday of the month.

Wider Community

Loaves and Fishes, a non-profit organization, will be providing its famous meat and veggie chili for sale at **\$10.00** per quart in freezer containers. There is a cap on the amount available so place your orders early, by January 14th or at the latest, January 21st, 2007 with **Shannon Core**, 846-0902

or on the signup sheet on the Coming Events bulletin board in the hallway. Pick up your orders at Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church, north entrance, 3-7 PM Friday January 26 and 9 AM to 12 noon on Saturday January 27th.

Marketplace of Meaningful Gifts

CUCC hosted ten local nonprofit agencies at the November 12th Marketplace of Meaningful Gifts. These ten groups displayed information about their work, received over \$2,200 in donations, and sold over \$1,800 of gift items. This total of over \$4,000 exceeds the amount raised by the Marketplace in each of the past two years.

Representatives from both Pullen Memorial Baptist and Fairmount United Methodist Churches attended this event. Both groups have indicated an interest in hosting future Marketplaces.

Marketplace Cafe

In addition, the **Market Café**, which was run by CUCC's **Journey and Friends Youth Groups**, raised \$252.05, which will be used for future mission work. They would like to thank the members of the congregation who donated sandwiches, bread, cookies, and cider for the Café.

Many of you have asked for the recipe for the soup that was served at this year's café. Here it is!

Journey Autumn Stew Recipe

See Sally Sampson's Souped Up!. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2003, pp. 130-131, alias "Moroccan Vegetable Stew with Raisins, Herbs, and Rice." You can find the book at the Cameron Village Library; it is also available from Amazon for a small amount. (Avoiding copyright infringement)

Modifications for MMG version: 1 yellow onion instead of leeks. Homemade veggie stock instead of chicken stock. **IMPORTANT:** When cooking zucchini, etc., to add depth lost by the switch to veggie stock: add 2-3 T olive oil and a good dash of salt. Garnish: yogurt or sour cream are crucial - again, needed due to switch to veggie stock, otherwise it is "flat." Use lemon twist and raisins. Our taste-testers didn't think the cilantro added much and we didn't try goat cheese. For MMG we served with bread, but our taste-testers liked it on

rice as described. Hint: Our youngest taste-testers liked the broth on rice, even if they didn't care for

the veggies. We froze it after adding (but not cooking) the zucchini, etc. Reheating was adequate for final cooking (this is when you'd add extra oil and salt). Questions: call **Jane Smith**

Campbells Soup (products) CHANGE

The Campbell's Company has begun accepting **only** UPC'S (universal product codes) and lids for redemption in its Labels for Education program. Going forward, the company **WILL NO LONGER ACCEPT FRONT PANEL LABELS**. Clipping **both** the UPC's **and** logo's, found right on the label, will be easier and mailing them will be less expensive.

Wider Church

The **Faith to Focus retreat** was held the first weekends in October and November at the lovely Cedar Cross Retreat Center. CUCC members who were fortunate enough to share in this experience were **Gretchen Aycock, Sam Johnson, Ann Retzer, Joe Retzer, and Mary Pickering**. The focus of the retreat was to help each person hear God's call to service in his or her life, by finding where an area of that person's greatest bliss intersects with an area of the world's greatest need.

Through many different exercises, meditation times, journaling, and group sharing, the retreat leaders, John Hilpert, Margaret Hilpert, and Betty Anne Ford, created a safe, nourishing environment in which we were encouraged to enter a closer walk with God. Wonderful meals were provided by Nancy Newell. The Faith to Focus retreat was a special time, when seeds of faith and insight were planted that will continue to grow and bear fruit far into the future.

- Mary Pickering

DAY-TO-DAY CONTACTS AT CUCC

Pastor: Rev. Steve Halsted

Office Manager: Carol Clark

(Office hours: 9 a.m.- 1 p.m., Monday-Friday)

Moderator: Vandy Bradow

Treasurer: Mary Pruneau

Asst. Treasurer: Carol Kepler

Clerk: Mary Pickering

Ministry Chairs:

Deacons: Jo Perry

Welcoming, Fellowship, and Growth: Sue Rogge

Stewardship: Bill Bryan

Property: Allan Beidler and Joan McAllister

Religious Education: Sue Cottle

Social Justice: John Little

Community Outreach: June Bolton

Organist: Doug Barrick

Choir Director: Anne Moorman-Smith

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The deadline for our January Newsletter is
December 18th.

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

A Month of Sundays

December 3 | First Sunday of Advent | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15 Adult Forum & Bible Study; 10:30 Worship Service with Communion (Sue Rogge preaching) & Church School; Fellowship Time**
Lectionary: Jer 33:14-16; Ps 25:1-10; 1 Thess 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

December 10 | Second Sunday of Advent | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15 Adult Forum & Bible Study; 10:30 Worship Service (with choir music program) & Church School; Fellowship Time;**
Lectionary: Bar 5:1-9; Mal 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Phil 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

December 17 | Third Sunday of Advent | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé with Communion; 9:15 Adult Forum & Bible Study; 10:30 Worship Service & Church School Christmas pageant & Church School; Fellowship Time**
Lectionary: Zeph 3:14-20; Isa 12:2-6; Phil 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

December 24 | Fourth Sunday of Advent | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15 Adult Forum & Bible Study; 10:30 Worship Service; NO Church School; Fellowship Time; 5:00 Family Christmas Eve Service; 11:00 Candle light Christmas Eve Service**
Lectionary: Mic 5:2-5a; Luke 1:47-55; Ps 80:1-7; Heb 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45, (46-55) Isa 9:2-7; Ps 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

December 31 | First Sunday after Christmas | **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15 Adult Forum & Bible Study; 10:30 Worship Service (hymn/carol sing) NO Church School; Fellowship Time**
Lectionary: 1 Sam 2:18-20, 26; Ps 148; Col 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52; Isa 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-7, 10-14; Eph 3:1-12; Matt 2:1-12