

COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Nurturing Spiritual Growth and Working For Social Justice

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February 2006

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

A Word from the Pastor

Dear Friends,

As we begin the month of February, it is time to start thinking about the Season of Lent. This year, Easter falls on Sunday April 16. The six Sundays leading toward Easter mark the six weeks of Lent, a preparation time for spiritual enrichment, introspection, and study that enhance our "Resurrection" experience as it reaches its zenith on Easter.

Ash Wednesday is the official opening date of Lent and we will be holding an Ash Wednesday Service in our Sanctuary on Wednesday March 1 at 7 p.m. It is planned to accommodate children and adults. Ashes will be offered on the forehead of those who choose to participate as a mark of humility and discipleship to Christ.

For those who seek a lengthier immersion for spiritual direction, I will be leading a "Pilgrimage Retreat" at Franklinton Center on March 3-4 (6 p.m. Friday – 4 p.m. Saturday). This event is being sponsored through the ENCA (Eastern N.C. Association) of the UCC. Therefore, people from other churches in our area will also be joining us. Registration for this retreat will be offered early in February. Let me know ASAP if you are interested in attending to ensure a space.

Study groups for Lent are in the process of being developed and a flyer offering these opportunities will be available by mid-February. Already, one is being formed around the "God is Still Speaking" initiative by the UCC. If you have an idea or would

like to facilitate a group please let me know. New church banners, anyone? Or a Maxie Dunham workbook? Or other books to read and discuss together?

On the environmental justice front, CUCC will be represented on the "Climate Action Plan" commission for the state in 2006. Bob Hazel and I have been invited through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to respond to recent legislation on environmental issues. We wrote letters in support of this legislation during our Vacation Bible School sessions this past summer. Our congregation's emphasis on "Stewardship of Creation" issues is being noticed and is benefiting the community at large!

Hope to see you in church next Sunday,

Steve

Church Council

CUCC's first annual Congregational Meeting was held January 15, 2006. Business transacted included:

- The budget was passed as presented.
- The Nominating Committee's slate of officers, Ministry teams, and committees as presented in the November newsletter was elected.
- The appropriate portion of Pastor Steve's compensation was designated as housing allowance.
- Ministry reports were distributed and briefly discussed.

- **Rhonda Zingraff** announced opportunities to be involved in and support the Lost Generation Task Force.
- Announcements included opportunities to participate in King Day activities.
- It was suggested that the literature rack contents be revamped and updated.
- An *ad hoc* committee for Wider Church (e.g. ENCA, Southern Conference, TIA, and NC Council of Churches) was formed. Initial members are **Dawn Pickett, Vandy Bradow, and Steve Halsted**. Others are welcome.

Copies of the referenced documents (Treasurer's report, Officers and Ministry list, Ministry reports) are available from the church office.

Council held its regular meeting on January 16. The group discussed and produced an initial CUCC master calendar of events for 2006. Preliminary plans were made for several new events, including a St. Patrick's dinner and a Halloween party (fundraisers). The calendar will be available and further populated at the January 29 ministry kickoff.

It was noted that the Pastoral Relations committee needs new appointees for new terms this year. This will be addressed during the February meeting.

Additional informative publications from UCC will be purchased for display in the literature rack.

Reports were provided by:

Deacons—Tentative plans for the Lenten season should appear in the March newsletter.

Welcoming, Fellowship, and Growth--Ministry members will be advised that expenses for reimbursement will go through Chair **Gretchen Aycock**; ALL costs are to be reimbursed. We need to be able to estimate future costs. Those wishing to endorse checks back to CUCC may do so.

Property—Priorities are established, beyond functionality, as (1) safety, (2) environmental, (3) cosmetic. A project listing is planned for the March newsletter. We are feeling the energy crunch. CUCC's November gas bill was \$800; December's was \$1600!

Treasurer Mary Pruneau noted during her report that the church credit card should be used for major purchases. A check can also be prepared.

The Council discussed plans for the Ministry Kickoff. A short session in the sanctuary will be followed by a potluck. Ministry teams will be seated together in various rooms.

Pastor Steve Halsted reviewed recent and planned Activities, including leading a Pilgrimage retreat series (see "A Word from the Pastor", above).

--**Vandy Bradow, Moderator**

LATE –BREAKING NEWS: Thanks to all who participated in the successful Ministry Kickoff January 29! Thanks especially to **Sam Johnson, Kurk Brewington, Mac Hulslander, and other Forum** folk for rooms setup, and to **the Journey class** for table setup. Our gathering was full of good food and fellowship, energy, laughter and Spirit! One Ministry Team has a new head (see Welcoming, Fellowship and Growth, below). Congratulations to EVERYONE.

Deacons

The Deacons Ministry met January 10, 2006.

In attendance were Deacons **Jo Perry** (Chair), **Jim Smith, Edith Sylla, Roger Manus, Sam Johnson, Mac Hulslander, Ann McLaughlin, Peg Hulslander, and Pastor Steve Halsted**.

In deference to members' schedules, it was agreed to change the meeting date to the second Monday.

Each deacon is to be responsible for one month for arranging to have scripture readers and children's sermon givers as follows:

Jo Perry and Peg Hulslander, Jan /Feb.
Edith Sylla- March,
Mac Hulslander-April,
Roger Manus-May,
Jim Smith-June,
Sam Johnson-July.

The other months will be selected later.

Attempts will be made to (1) determine what the church school lesson theme will be so that the children's sermon may relate. (2) track children's sermon presenters so that the same person will not be asked repeatedly.

Marge Eckels has resigned as chair of the Caring Committee. Deacons **Bill and Marty Lamb** are committee members.

Steve requested feedback on the 2005 Christmas activities. The group discussed the Christmas party, the children's pageant, the two Christmas Eve services and the Christmas morning breakfast. There was also a preliminary discussion of the possibilities for 2006 services.

The Deacons discussed plans for Lent. **Jane and Gary Smith** are planning to show a DVD on the "God is Still Speaking" campaign and lead discussion. The Monday Lunch group's topic will extend from March 6 through Lent. Tai Chi will continue to be available as a discipline. Pastor Steve will be leading one of the ENCA Pilgrimage retreats during the Lenten season. Discussion of tentative plans for other observations included the Ash Wednesday service, a retreat, and preparation by members of a book of meditations. Activities are to be announced in a forthcoming newsletter.

--Excerpted from minutes, by Editorial Board

Welcoming, Fellowship, and Growth

The Ministry team met for the first time in 2006 as part of the Ministry Kickoff. The group was so full of new ideas and energy for our Community that it was still going strong at 2:00 when Pastor Steve came in to join the discussion. The UCC "Still Speaking" initiative was often referenced, and everyone agreed that **Spirit was present when an overburdened Betsy Towler stepped down from the Chair, and an enthusiastic and eager Gretchen Aycock stepped up to it!** Some of the results are apparent on CUCC bumpers already. You'll be hearing more from this energized group.

Property

Memorial/Meditation Garden Volunteers

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:

February – **Marge Eckels and Binks Mew**

March – **Joan Little**

April – **Linda Baker**

May – **Heather and Chris Burkhardt**

June – **Binks Mew**

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

Stewardship

Owing to the generous response of CUCC members, the budget was passed as recommended. The committee thanks the congregation.

St. Patrick's Day "Dinner and a Movie"

Fun, food, festivities, and frolic – Friday night, **March 17**. Save the date for an evening to remember – an Irish celebration with food for both meat and veggie lovers. Preliminary plans call for a social gathering with Irish music at 6:00 p.m., dinner at 6:30, then the wild and funny film, "Waking Ned Devine." The dinner price will be \$12.50; reservations and more information will be available at the end of February.

Save the date – wear green and bring green (paper money, that is). No denominations turned away! More information? Offers of help?

Call **Carol Kepler or Vivian Hunter**

Religious Education

Church School

During the month of February the preschool and elementary children will be studying the book of Daniel. We will be learning how God protected Daniel and his friends from all sorts of perils. We will also be learning how God looks after us and our family and friends today. There will be exciting things going on in Sunday School. Don't miss it!

{Other news is available through *Water Word*, a separately distributed CUCC Church School newsletter. Contact Christian Education Director, **Anne Bailey Zschau.**}

–Editorial Board

High School and Middle School

Change of plans: The youth will **not** be preparing St. Valentine's Day lasagna dinners this year.

-- **Toni Maes**

Adult Forum

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

Speakers for February include:

February 5 – Dr. Edith Sylla, "Myths: Religion and Science in the Ancient Near East."

February 12 – Pat Spearman, et al, "Major Themes of the Hebrew Prophets."

February 19 – Dr. Jim Hartye, M.D., "From Christianity to Buddhism: How Far is It?"

February 26 – Mac Hulslander and Dr. John Paar, M.D., "Politics and Spirituality: A Report."

Sunday Bible Study

The group meets Sundays at 9:15 in the Bradow Room, and will continue study of the book of Isaiah during February. The group will also lead Forum discussions February 5 and 12. Everyone is welcome! For more information, call **Pat Spearman, 781-0041**.

Wednesday Bible Study

This 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 at 9:00 a.m. in the library. The current topic is O'Malley's *Four Cultures of the West*. Contact: **Ed Klemmer, 847-7992**.

Sisters in Spirituality

SIS needs a leader for a potluck at 6:30 pm in the Hoffmann room on Thursday, February 16. **Carol Clark** will put an announcement in the church bulletin for the Sundays leading up to the potluck day. Everyone will help.

Retirees Fellowship – February 13, 10:30 a.m.

Retirees will celebrate Valentine's Day with a potluck lunch in the Vaughan Fellowship Hall. Please contact **Kerma Hazel (772-1393)** to make reservations and to let her know what you plan to bring. Also, think back over the years and remember a favorite romantic tune that meant a lot to you and your loved one. With **Anne Pope's** help, we will try to re-create some of your special music

moments. Come and enjoy! All are welcome! Drinks and dessert will be provided.

Monday Lunch Group

Bring lunch and join us in the Hoffmann Room Mondays at 12:15 p.m. During February, the group will discuss former President Jimmy Carter's new book, *Our Endangered Values*. Newcomers are welcome. More information? Call **Mary Pruneau**.

Social Justice

January 24, 2006 - The Warhead In Our Eye



Clay Bennett, Christian Science Monitor

THE WARHEAD IN OUR EYE "...there is a showdown between the United States and Iran over Iran's quest for nuclear power, and a possible attempt to build a nuclear weapon...."

This inspired Jim Lewis, retired Episcopal Priest and friend of CUCC, to rewrite the Jesus story found in Luke, chapter 6. The story talks about people who notice the speck in their neighbor's eye while ignoring the log in their own eye.

“How can you, the United States of America, look at Iran, with no nuclear weapons, without seeing the more than 10,000 nuclear warheads you have? How can you say, 'Iran, don't you dare start down a path that might lead to the creation of a nuclear warhead', when the United States has over 15,000 miles' worth of nuclear weapons bases and

facilities.... You're a two-faced nation, America--a hypocritical people. Take a good look at yourself in the mirror. Try dismantling some of your weaponry and then maybe other nations will believe you really mean business and decide to follow your example." From "Notes from Under the Fig Tree" by Jim Lewis.

-- **Cy King** for the Social Justice Ministry

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, Ed Zschau, Millie & Americo Scapicchio, Willie Foggie's wife, Nelda, Al Matthews' mother, Mildred, Elvah Mansky Lee, Lisa Leiser-Banks' uncle, Bill Pamplin, Richard's mother Audrey Leiser who is recuperating from a stroke, Vandy Bradow's parents, Ida and Roy Klages, Lisa Marsh, and the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo and other victims of war and natural disaster across the globe.**

January deaths "in the family"

We send our condolences to **John Little** and his family upon the death of his father January 30.

Herb Eldridge was a member of the English Department at NCSU and clerk of our church for many years. His widow Dorothy lives at 1405 Bellevue, Boulder, Colorado, 80302.

Phyllis Tyler, a wonderful Quaker lady, was a long-time member of the RICH Park Board, a gifted writer and many other things. Lloyd, her husband, lives at 1301 York Rd., A-8, Cockeysville, Maryland, 21030.

The Eldridges and the Tylers made many contributions to CUCC and the wider community.

Congratulations!

Happy birthday to I.T. Littleton! We won't say which one, but 5 years ago we celebrated his 80th!

Mary Pruneau led a happy band of culture groupies to visit Duke University's new Nasher Museum of Art in Durham --another outstanding auction item!

Congratulations to **Betsy Towler**, who accomplished (survived?) a stressful move to her new house. Does anyone have an old Avis "I Hate To Move" button for Betsy?

Thanks!

Jackson Kiel and **Carson Roach-Howell** have brightened up their garden in the south courtyard with colorful pansies for everyone to enjoy.

Thank-you notes are on the church school bulletin board in the hall for all those who contributed gifts for the Heart Program at Christmastime.



Our Young People's Birthdays

2/5/92 – Abby Smith

2/6/93 – Elena Briere

2/15/00 – Gloria Difuidi

3/24/90 – Nicholas DeVito

Community Outreach



Food Bags will be collected on **Sunday, February 5**, and every **first Sunday** of the month.

In January **24 emergency food bags** were delivered to Urban Ministries. Check out the number on the wall above the grocery cart in the Vaughan Fellowship Hall. Several days after delivery, a few more food bags appeared in the cart. They will be included in our February count. Maybe that will send us over the top this month! Our goal is still **25** per month. It's a great ministry!

Wright Center

CUCC is responsible for meals at the Wright Center once a month. Many years ago the congregation decided not to have a line item in the budget for this outreach but rather to finance these meals by individual contributions. **The fund is depleted so now is the time to contribute.**

Susan Lane writes about the January meal: "Please tell everyone who prepared (**Sally Roberson, Cheryl Alexander, Jeanie Ledbetter**) how wonderful the meal was. I think we got more compliments last night than I have ever heard before...it was really great!"

Contributions may be turned in to the office or left in Sunday's collection plate. Please note on your check "**Wright Center**". Thank you for your continued support.

-- **Mary Pruneau, Treasurer**

Wider Community

POLITICS AND SPIRITUALITY:

An Ecumenical Shot in the Arm

Whether a left-wing or centrist Christian, evangelical, mainstream Protestant or ecumenical Catholic, we were all welcomed at the table prepared for us by Christ through his intermediaries Jim Wallis of Sojourners, Richard Rohr of the Center on Contemplation and Action and Anne Lamott, author. There were about 1,600 of us who traveled to Washington DC --all pilgrims in search of public integrity and our calling within history during these disastrous times. Quite honestly, I went to Washington hoping to quench the dry places being experienced spiritually, psychologically and politically. I'd been rather desperate for new signs of hope and the opportunity to re-envision what might be. I was not disappointed.

Surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, representative icons of which included Mahatma Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero, Mother Jones, St. Francis, Black Elk, Martin L. King, Jr. and many others, we reveled in the transformation of our oft-perceived mutual aloneness and alienation to an enlivening embrace from others of faith on the journey toward greater integrity in our public life. The insightful depths of thought and wisdom of Franciscan Richard Rohr often felt like hearing the gospel again for the first time and always, always in his disarmingly self-effacing and personally vulnerable style. Jim Wallis was at his evangelically but socially radical best as he shared story after hopeful story from ordinary life and extensive travels. Anne Lamott, bless her soul, provided comic relief tinged with bits of sagacity gained from a life of wounded healing.

We gathered on Saturday, January 14th at a hotel near the capitol. We disbanded on the 16th from the presidential inaugural site in front of the capitol with restored hopes and energy. The ground, through prayer and song, had been transformed into sacred space. I offer this report simply as a bit of "seasoning" for all of us on that same journey.

Peace!

--- from **Mac Hulslander**

{See Feb. 26 Forum topic –Editorial Board}

Wider Church

Ron Buford of the "Still Speaking Initiative" of the UCC will offer a presentation to be held from 2:00 –5:00 p.m., February 24, at the First Christian UCC, 415 S. Church St., Burlington, NC. This is a prelude to a new UCC commercial airing across the country in late March. There is no admission charge, but **please RSVP to the Southern Conference (336-222-8771) by February 10** if you plan to attend.

On January 8, at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Pastor David Amidon led a "Service of Comfort and Remembrances" as part of the Vigil Against Violence's reflection on the 20 homicides within the City of Raleigh during 2005. CUCC is a member of The Interfaith Alliance, which sponsors the vigils held through the year after each homicide. **Cy King** and **Vandy Bradow** attended the service. To learn more about the vigils, contact Rev. Rachel Smith, Clergy Leader for VAV at Pullen Memorial Baptist.

DAY-TO-DAY CONTACTS

Pastor: Rev, Steve Halsted

Office Manager: Carol Clark.

Office hours: 9 a.m.- 1 p.m., M-F

Other Staff:

Organist: Doug Barrick; Choir Director: Anne Moorman-Smith,; Christian Education Director: Anne Bailey Zschau;

Officers and Ministry Chairs: See "CUCC Ministries and Committees 2006"

Community United Church of Christ
814 Dixie Trail
Raleigh, NC 27607
February 2006 Newsletter

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The deadline for our March Newsletter is
February 20th.

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

A Month of Sundays

February 5 – Fifth
Sunday after Epiphany
Day. **9:00 – 9:30 Taizé;**
**9:15 Adult Forum &
Bible Study; 10:30
Worship Service with
Communion
& Church School.
Fellowship Time**
Lectionary: Isa 40:21-
31; Ps 147:1-11, 20c; 1
Cor 9:16-23; Mark
1:29-39

February 12 – Sixth
Sunday after Epiphany.
**9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15
Adult Forum & Bible
Study; 10:30 Worship
Service
& Church School;
Fellowship Time**
Lectionary: 2 Kings
5:1-14; Ps 30; 1 Cor
9:24-27; Mark 1:40-45

February 19 – Seventh
Sunday after Epiphany.
**9:00 – 9:30 Taizé with
Communion; 9:15
Adult Forum & Bible
Study; 10:30 Worship
Service
& Church School;
Fellowship Time**
Lectionary: Isa 43:18-
25; Ps 41; 2 Cor 1:18-
22; Mark 2:1-12

February 26 – Last
Sunday before Lent.
**9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15
Adult Forum & Bible
Study; 10:30 Worship
Service
& Church School;
Fellowship Time**
Lectionary: 2 Kings
2:1-12; Ps 50:1-6; 2 Cor
4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9