

COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Nurturing Spiritual Growth and Working for Social Justice

814 Dixie Trail

Raleigh, NC 27607

Phone: 919-787-6422 Fax: 919-787-2296

Office: office@communityucc.org; Pastor: pastor@communityucc.org

www.communityucc.org

Stephen S. Halsted, Pastor

March 2003

Lectionary for March

March 2nd, Last Sunday after Epiphany/

Transfiguration

2 Kings 2:1-12; Ps 50:1-6; 2 Cor 4:3-6; Mk 9:2-9.

March 9th, First Sunday in Lent

Gen 9:8-17; Ps 25:1-10; 1 Pet 3:18-22; Mk 1:9-15.

March 16th, Second Sunday in Lent

Gen 17:1-7, 15-16; Ps 22:23-31; Rom 4:13-25;

Mk 8:31-38 or Mk 9:2-9.

March 23rd, Third Sunday in Lent

Ex 20:1-17; Ps 19; 1 Cor 1:18-25; Jn 2:13-22.

March 30th, Fourth Sunday in Lent

Num 21:4-9; Ps 107:1-3, 17-22; Eph 2:1-10; Jn 3:14-21.

Dear Friends,

The Season of Lent will begin on the late side this year as Ash Wednesday is on March 5th. That evening at 7:30 pm you are invited (all ages children-adult) to gather in the Sanctuary for a special worship service. During the service everyone will have time to write a personal/private message to God and then to ceremonially receive ashes on the forehead to dedicate lent as a time to grow in “spirit and in truth” as Jesus himself did. We will also share in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. If you have need of child care for this service, please call the office so it can be arranged.

During the six weeks of Lent we are offering three different Faith Enhancement Opportunities. *Sunday afternoons* Adrienne Talbot will host a 4:00 pm study group at her home using a workbook entitled The Seven Deadly Sins by Maxie Dunham. *Monday evenings* 6:30-7:30 we will offer a pot luck in the Vaughan Wing followed by Prayer and Meditation for Peace held in the Sanctuary. Instruction in meditation, use of silence and prayer for peace will be the focus of this group. *Wednesday mornings*, 2 opportunities are offered. A Tai Chi Chih class will

be held at 10 am followed by a study and discussion of Stephen Zune’s book Tinderbox. This book looks at the turmoil in the middle East and has excellent chapters on the Israeli—Palestinian conflict. It offers rays of hope for peaceful solutions in this birth land of three world religions. Please consult the March calendar for dates on all these “Lenten Faith Enhancement Opportunities.”

We will also be having a Maundy Thursday Service as we look ahead to April 17th followed by our Easter Celebration on Sunday April 20th.

May we all journey together in worship, study and fellowship in this special Season of Lent.

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 who need to be remembered in prayer: Bob Keyes; Jo Lemons; Sister Evelyn Mattern; Nancy Keppel; Sarah Hoffman.

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

Women's Support Group meets March 20th at 7:00 pm in the Bradow Room. A women's movie will be shown with discussion afterwards. Call Sally Cook 467-3642.

Monday Lunch Group meets at 12:15 each Monday in the Hoffmann Room. Bring a sandwich and enjoy.

Retirees – CUCC Retirees will meet March 10th, at 11 a.m. in the Vaughan Wing. Guests Jim and Sandy Dukeman will tell about their work with the Young Eagles – a fascinating volunteer program which introduces thousands of young folks to the world of aviation each year. Come, bring a sandwich, and share in this truly wonderful story of pilots and flying enthusiasts who share their time, talents and airplanes with kids and parents at dozens of weekend rallies each year.

BOARD OF DEACONS

Congregational Evaluation and Meeting March 9

The due date for completed evaluations was February 23rd, but if you did not return an evaluation and would like to do so, please return it to the Deacons as soon as possible. Additional copies of the form are available at the back of the

sanctuary and from the CUCC website. The Deacons met February 25 to go over the evaluations received so far. There will be a meeting after church on March 9 to discuss what we have learned. Please plan to be there and to take part in the discussion.

In the discussions that have been going on about revising the Constitution and By-Laws to reflect the proposed new ministry structure of the church, the suggestion was made that we consider revising the Church Covenant, which has been included in the Constitution. Our current covenant reads:

We covenant with one another to seek and to respond to the Word and Will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our forebears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

Does this reflect how we see ourselves as a Congregation in 2003 (as possibly revealed by our responses to the evaluation)? Should we revise the Covenant to highlight recent congregational affirmations of ourselves as “nurturing spiritual growth and working for social justice,” that we are a “just peace church,” “open and affirming,” and “accessible to all”? What parts of the existing Covenant are most important to us today and what might we modify for the new century? Do we want to update our wording while reflecting the same or similar meanings? Time permitting, we will also open discussion of the Covenant at the March 9 meeting.

New Communion Set

The Deacons are happy to report that we now have a new matched set of vessels for communion by intinction. Geraldine Bryan generously commissioned from our own potter Chris Schafele a blue pottery pitcher and two sets of matching chalices and bread plates for the times that we serve

communion by intinction. Many thanks to Geraldine and Chris for this offering of their creative and artistic talents!

CHURCH COUNCIL

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be a special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, March 23rd right after the service in the Vaughan Wing. We will be discussing and voting on the revised Constitution and By Laws and the slate of officers and ministry team members.

Wondering How You Fit in at CUCC? First, Discover Your Gifts!

If you want to get involved here at CUCC but don't know where to start...

If you're new to the CUCC community...

If you want to have a better understanding of what you have to offer in service...

... **you're invited** to the Gift Identification workshop on Sunday, March 2nd from 12 noon to 1 pm. This special workshop is designed to help you discover more about yourself. By looking at your natural qualities, your acquired skills, and your life experiences, you can begin to discover your gifts and where to use them in CUCC. Joan McAllister and Etta Barksdale will facilitate this hour-long workshop held in the Bradow room. Light refreshments will be provided. Hope to see you there!

What: Gift Identification Workshop

When: Sunday, March 2nd from 12 noon-1 pm

Where: Bradow room

Hopefully worth considering-

Dear CUCC members,

The recent conversations around congregational structuring for ministry have taken on a larger scope for me and I wish to share some thoughts and invite you to reflect and respond.

While I personally endorse the proposed structural and language changes, in the main, with their focus on functions, I also have issues with them. Allow me to explain. I firmly believe that, in its best sense, the term "ministry" involves at least three components: a sense of call (known through some process of discernment), the gifts to respond to the call/vocation and the commitment to heed it. As such, ministries occur in/at, through, to and beyond the local institutional or "gathered church". For some of those at CUCC their ministry is to CUCC (Steve, the moderators, etc., come to mind); or in/at CUCC (retired peoples, Monday lunch, Deacons Board); for yet others it may be through CUCC (AIDS Care Team, IAF, RICH Park, ASP, etc.). But, I dare say, for most of us, our ministries best find their expression beyond it (and here I am aware of the variety of ministries being carried on "extramurally" such as healing, teaching, masculine spirituality, women's support, counseling, the homeless, children, human rights, etc. Using myself as an example, my present ministry is to sacred place making and landscape gardening. But I also serve on Sacraments and Chancel. While the latter is not the focus of my calling it is a means of serving my faith community. My concern is that it not be confused with my ministry. My guess is that many would see their intramural function in a similar light – an important service but not a vocational/ministerial focus.

The problem for me with the present discussion is that most of the ministries carried on by this congregation seem to be in its "scattered" form but there are virtually no structures in place at CUCC that recognize these ministries, affirm them, offer support and/or accountability and, only occasionally, opportunities for really discerning what God has in store for our lives NOW. There have been some efforts in the past but the corporate culture of religion (what really matters, what is valued and what gets rewarded and recognized) focuses on the intramurally programmatic or structural and calls that "ministry" rather than understanding member's ministries as an extension

of our “gathered” life as a congregation to be embraced, affirmed, called forth, etc. Ask yourself how many times you’ve been sent forth following a worship service “to minister to the world” but nobody ever asks what you did, how it went, what support did/do you need, etc.? Does the church really care?

I am gratified that the UCC at the national level through its Office of Parish Life and Leadership is beginning to address this discrepancy and to take the ministries of the laity seriously. At least it now acknowledges that most (i.e. almost all) of its resources for enabling ministry have been directed toward the ordained. Would that we at CUCC could be similarly engaged in dialogue.

Together in ministry,
Mac Hulslander

CHRISTIAN WITNESS

Wider Outreach Committee

One Great Hour of Sharing

Special offering of our monetary gifts will be collected Sunday April 6th during worship.

With our gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing, CWS purchased fabric and cotton batting in Pakistan. Then four hundred refugee women were selected for training and employment in the project. Priority went to widows and the very poor, who were paid for their work. Within three months, 25,000 quilts were produced and distributed to more than eight thousand refugee families, just as the weather turned cold. Since then, another quilt-making project has begun in Kabul, Afghanistan.

In hundreds of other self-help programs for refugees in Pakistan, Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Balkans, One Great Hour of Sharing transforms receivers into givers, offering hope to people in need around the world. **Please give generously.**

Reminder: **Food Bags** will be collected on March 2nd (next Sunday).



The month of February was a real triumph! We outdid ourselves by contributing 26 emergency food bags! – one more than our goal. So continue that level of giving; it sustains families in need. Just a reminder – please organize your bag with all food items from the basic list in one double bag. This is known at Urban Ministries as a “basic bag.” They can use it without further processing if we present it that way. It saves them a lot of time. THANKS!

Communications Committee

About our pictorial directories...

Your directories will be in the Narthex on Sundays and in the Church Office during the week. There are copies of the roster available for those folk who were not photographed. They are in the literature rack in the hall.

The Communications Committee extends heartfelt thanks to all who helped with our pictorial directory. We have been getting very favorable feed-back but we know that in spite of everything there may be mistakes or updates in some of the roster material. If you need a correction, please report it to the Office and it will be posted in the newsletter as a correction.

Many of you submitted beautiful activity pictures that we were unable to use. These will of course be returned to you.

Social Action Committee

The Social Action Committee found these words from Edward F. Snyder, Executive Secretary emeritus of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, important at this time of crisis and shares them with you.

“We know we are number one in military, political, and economic power. But our pride is spilling over into arrogance and hubris. Our American empire will brook no determined opposition. We have asserted a role of Biblical proportions – we are the righteous, they are evil.

Now we are in danger of launching a new war against Iraq with unforeseeable and dangerous consequences. This we are preparing to do despite the inherited wisdom that “they who take the sword shall perish by the sword.” We are in danger of creating a life consumed by perpetual fear of suicide bombers and barbarians at the gate.

Let us follow the healer’s rule: “First, do no harm.” Let us use America’s unchallenged power to change the script, to break from the past, to reject violence, to build up international institutions of law and order, of economic and political justice and environmental protection. Positive U.S. leadership could catalyze people of good will all over the world to effective action.

If we use our country’s immense power in this way, the lives of our children and grandchildren – and their contemporaries all over the world – can be liberated from the terror and hatred our present generation is enduring.”

Wage Peace

**Wage peace with your breath.
Breathe in firemen and rubble,
breathe out whole buildings and flocks of
redwing blackbirds.
Breathe in terrorists and breathe out
sleeping children and freshly mown
fields.
Breathe in confusion and breathe out
maple trees.
Breathe in the fallen and breathe out
lifelong friendships intact.
Wage peace with your listening: hearing
sirens, pray loud.
Remember your tools: flower seeds,
clothes pins, clean rivers.**

**Play music, learn the word for thank you
in three languages.
Learn to knit, and make a hat.
Think of chaos as dancing raspberries.
Imagine grief as the out breath of beauty
or the gesture of fish.
Swim for the other side.
Wage peace.
Never has the world seemed so fresh and
precious.
Have a cup of tea and rejoice.
Act as if armistice has already arrived.
Don't wait another minute.**

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submitted by Joan McAllister

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Adult Forum - 9:15 - 10:15 each Sunday Morning in the Vaughan Wing. Please join us to hear informed speakers and to participate in stimulating discussion.

March Schedule

March 2 – Carol Cato “Keeping the Sabbath: Reactivating Yourself Through Restorative Time.”

March 9 – Dr. John Little of our own congregation on “The History of the Environmental Movement in the United States of America.”

March 16 – Rev. Ray Buchanan, Director of “Stop Hunger Now,” will talk about his experiences as a recent visitor to Iraq with the National Council of Churches.

March 23 – to be announced.

March 30 – Rev. Denise Long “A Visit to Colombia with Witness for Peace.”

CUCC Church School

The kingdom of God is like...

When Jesus tried to describe what God was leading the world to become, he often used parables. From Feb. 9 to March 2 the preschool and elementary school church school will be learning some of those parables and using them to prepare a puppet show. They will present that puppet show at the next Children and Youth Sunday, March 9th.

Parents: Please note the new date to mark the family calendar – March 8th for the dress rehearsal and March 9th for the presentation. Your children will be helped in their work by being able to attend church school during this time. Parents who have dramatic gifts (either the performance or the backstage kind) that you could offer to support the teachers, contact Jane Smith (787-6539).

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are very pleased to introduce our new Christian Education Coordinator, **Anne Bailey M. Zschau**. Anne is a graduate of St. Mary’s College and a long time resident of Raleigh. She is married and has 2 children, a daughter in college and a son in high school. Anne brings many years of experience working in church related educational programs at St. Michaels Episcopal Church. There she served as a lead teacher, as a supervisor and she selected curriculum. In addition, Anne was the founder and Director for North Hills Summer Camp before becoming Director for St. Michaels summer programs. She also has good administrative skills having worked in various capacities for the Governor’s Office.

We are truly blessed to have Anne Bailey (she prefers the shortened name) become a member of our church staff. Come and meet her Sunday March 2nd at worship.

SPECIAL DAYS

Youth Birthdays

March Birthdays*

- 3/3/88 - Amanda Bowen
- 3/24/90 – Nicholas DeVito

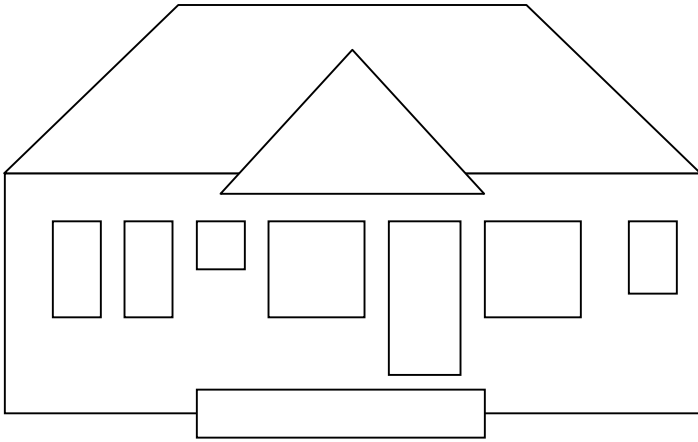
April Birthdays*

- 4/11/89 – Austin Osborne-Newman
- 4/15/90 – Z. B. Haislip
- 4/21/94 – Sidney Keyes

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

INVITATION

The Universal Church of the Twelve Apostles invites you to join them for a musical concert to celebrate the forty-eighth anniversary of their existence. The concert will be in the CUCC Sanctuary, Saturday March 8th at 4:00 pm. A reception in the Vaughan Wing will follow.



LET US CELEBRATE
HABITAT

Construction will soon be complete – Jobs for the next few weeks will include completing porch railings and stairs, paint touch up and landscaping. Help is also needed with finishing some of the houses that are not as far along as we are, so your help is still needed. There is no dedication date set at this printing.

The pictures we have to share with you can be found at our website
www.communityucc.org/activities/habitat/PhotoGalleryoftheGrowthoftheHouse .