

COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Nurturing Spiritual Growth and Working For Social Justice

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March 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,

I want to share with you some developing news and background information on one of CUCC's oldest and most successful social justice initiatives. It is called the Raleigh Inter-Church Housing Corporation, better known as RICH Park. It is a visionary initiative boldly begun back in 1968 involving five Raleigh churches in sponsoring affordable housing to low-income people. It was a ground-breaking project for that day because it involved 3 traditionally black churches and 2 traditionally white churches. But, not only was it inter-racial, it was also interfaith in scope. The churches besides CUCC are First Baptist (black), First Cosmopolitan (black), Davie St. Presbyterian (black), and Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh (white).

Together, we have held a 40-year mortgage agreement with HUD which will come to an end in 2008. As we move into a new era without HUD involvement, a re-dedication and re-visioning of our partnership is required. At a meeting held on February 22nd at First Baptist Church, with representatives from all churches involved, a vote was taken to continue our partnership and rededicate our churches' mission to provide safe and affordable housing to low-income people. RICH Park provides 100 units of housing on Method Road. We also decided to develop a plan to insure the financial viability of RICH Park well into the future. We also recognized the importance of keeping our congregations well informed about this vital ministry. This letter is just the beginning in that process. We hope to have a special RICH Park

Celebration Day as we get closer to the 2008 termination date with HUD. At that time we will be responsible for and guide our own future in this interfaith project. Representing CUCC at the February 22nd meeting were **Everett Noland (RICH Board Chair), Peg Hulslander, Dawn Pickett, Tom Young and myself**. If you have questions or comments about RICH Park, please contact one of us.

Blessings and Peace

Steve

Church Council

Council met on February 20 with members Aycock, Bradow, Beidler, Halsted, Little, Pruneau, and Perry present. Gretchen Aycock was introduced and welcomed as the new Welcoming, Fellowship and Growth Ministry chair.

Moderator Vandy Bradow announced the resignation of **Sue Richey** as Clerk **owing to schedule conflicts**. Council members will take responsibility for documenting the 2006 Council and Congregational meetings until a new Clerk is identified.

In her report, Treasurer **Mary Pruneau** indicated that the budget is funded sufficiently to cover all programs. Additional funds are desirable; optimal investment strategy and fundraisers will be pursued.

Pastor Steve reported that two new churches being established in the Southern Conference have asked for financial assistance as seed money. Vessels of

Clay, in Mebane, and Grace UCC, in Elon, both are being formed as “Open and Affirming” congregations. Council voted to provide \$200 to each (from the Nancy Keppel Fund, and from Council’s budget), and to refer the request to other Ministries for possible further support.

Pastor Steve also discussed the RICH Park housing units (see his letter, above), and Lenten activities sponsored by the Deacons and others(see below).

The Ministry Kickoff and potluck on January 29 was well attended and feedback has been positive.

Gretchen Aycock reported the several follow-up actions from the Ministry Kickoff and God Is Still Speaking meetings. The WFG will work to provide greeters at the 10:30 worship service, more literature in the rack for visitors, and activities coordinated with the “Still Speaking” initiative.

John Little reported on Social Justice Ministry’s concern for and support of the Carolina Interfaith Task Force on Central America (CITCA – see below for more details). He also reported that the SJM has agreed to a request from the North Raleigh Universalist Unitarian church to hold a public forum on the church-state issue at CUCC.

Allan Beidler reported that the Property Ministry, at its Ministry Kickoff meeting, compiled a long list of projects to work on. An immediate focus is setting up the posts for the “Still Speaking God” Lenten series sign in such a way that the posts may be reused for other event signage.

Pastor Steve reported on behalf of Religious Education Ministry that Jane Smith is retiring from her Sunday School duties. There will be a meeting this Sunday with parents of Sunday School children to plan next year’s Sunday School program. Sunday School Recognition Day and the second annual congregational meeting will take place on June 11. Gretchen Aycock will be responsible for the recognition activities.

Steve noted that he and **Bob Hazel** had been appointed to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ Climate Action Plan Committee.

North Carolina is a leader in the effort to deal with global warming. He will also attend a retreat that **Grady McCallie** is conducting on this topic.

The Council is required to appoint two members of the Pastoral Relations Committee (The Deacons Ministry also names two, and the pastor names one). Council voted to name **Marge Eckels and Sally Cook** as its committee appointees (Marge Eckels for a one-year term; Sally Cook for two).

On the general subject of communication, Vandy asked that each ministry have a newsletter reporter and a website contact. Vandy and Steve will decide if church will meet in cases of bad weather and arrange for appropriate notification of members.

Steve indicated that he, Dawn Pickett, and Vandy will establish an *ad hoc* committee to maintain ties with Southern Conference, the denomination, the NC Council of Churches, and the Interfaith Alliance. Steve said that he has told TIA that after his current term on the TIA Board ends he will not be serving for at least a year.

From notes by **John Little and Vandy Bradow**

Deacons

2006 Lenten Activities

Services:

Ash Wednesday Service – March 1, 2006–7:00 p.m.
Taizé Style - Ashes

Palm Sunday Service – April 9, 2006
Processional Celebration – 10:30 a.m.
“God Is Still Speaking” at CUCC

Maundy Thursday Service –
April 13, 2006–7:00 p.m.
Tenebrae, Handwashing, Communion

Easter Sunday Service
April 16, 2006 – 10:30 a.m.
Flower Resurrection Cross

Faith Enhancement Opportunities:

1. “God Is Still Speaking” Study Group,
Tuesdays: 7:30-9 p.m. March 7, 14, and
April 4, 11 at **Gary & Jane Smith’s** home

2. "African-American Spirituals" Study Group
Thursdays March 2-April 6, 7 – 8:30 p.m. –
Pilgrim House On Ma Journey Now
3. Monday Lunch Group
March – April, 12:15-2:00 p.m.
Searching for God Knows What by Don Miller
4. **Tai Chi** for physical and spiritual well-being and
growth. Wednesdays March – April, 9:30– 10:15
a.m., Vaughan Fellowship Hall.
5. Ongoing Bible Study Groups
Sundays 9:15 a.m. – Bradow room
Wednesdays (1st & 3rd of month) – 6 p.m bag
supper, 6:30 Study, Pilgrim House

The Arts in Worship Committee held its quarterly meeting with pizza on Tuesday, January 31, in the Hoffmann Room with **Marty Lamb, Ellen Beidler, Mary Pickering, Linda Baker, Peg Hulslander, Doug Barrick, and Steve Halsted** in attendance. We created some synergy on the following topics for the year:

- reading of the play "Doubt" with discussion following one evening (Peg and Linda to explore, others to perform),
- a creative workshop perhaps as a part of Lent (Steve to explore),
- another "Celebration of the Saints" to be held over Halloween in 2006 (Marty to explore with Steve and Mac, all to support) ,
- continuation of the Art Wall each quarter (Ellen to coordinate).

For the past few years we have coordinated an Art Wall on the brick wall across from the Hoffmann music room. The artwork of numerous members of our church, our children, and friends and family have been displayed here and featured in church newsletters and bulletins. If you have art you have created and would like to share or have friends and family who have work we could display, feature, and share on our art wall, let a member of the Arts in Worship committee know, especially **Ellen Beidler** who will be coordinating this year. Art often speaks to the heart and helps us to know our spirits better. I hope you'll consider sharing.

The **Susie Allen choir and the Folk Choir** (Thanks to the organizational energies of **Maria Murray**

Riemann and Mike Schafale) remain active, as are the smiling spirits of our music leaders, **Doug Barrick and Anne Moorman-Smith**. Those of you with musical ideas for services or who are interested in joining their voices with the choir or Folk Choir are encouraged to speak with any of us. Newcomers as well as oldtimers are welcome. The folk choir sings on the 4th Sunday of the month and practices that morning and the Sunday before, after church. The Susie Allen choir practices on the Wednesday nights at 7 before the first and third Sundays. They regularly sing on the first and third Sundays of each month.

Peace!

-Marty Lamb

(Chairperson, Arts in Worship Committee)

"Art is not a pastime but a priesthood."

Welcoming, Fellowship, and Growth

As reported in Council notes, above, new Chair **Gretchen Aycock** would welcome volunteers to serve as greeters both before and after the 10:30 service, and for welcoming activities in general.

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:

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.

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

Stewardship

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



There will be a **St. Patrick's Day dinner** and a **movie** on Friday, March 17. The Social hour is at 6:00 p.m., and the dinner will be at 6:30 p.m. Come and enjoy Irish music and dance, Irish food and drink and a delightful movie. The dinner price is \$12.50. Make your reservations through the office. For more information call **Carol Kepler** (787-7420) or **Vivian Hunter** (782-8100).

Religious Education

Church School

March 5 – April 9 – The children will be studying a rotation called "Listening to God." There will be a lot of exciting things happening including singing, dancing, making altar cloths, special nature activities and much more. Our Sunday School offering will go to "Horizons" which is a children's program within Hospice.

- **Anne Bailey Zschau**

Crayon Helpers Needed – Two people are needed to take turns replenishing the Sharing Basket clipboards. Each week – anytime during the week or on Sunday – each of the dozen clipboards needs 3 pieces of clean paper and 3 crayons. If you would be willing to share this job, contact **Jane Smith**, 787-6539.

Adult Forum

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

March 5 – **Sam Johnson**, "On Poverty" using "Nickel and Dimed" by Barbara Ehrenreich as an example.

March 12 – **Diana Koening** will moderate a discussion of "Experiences working for minimum wage."

March 19 – Libby Manly, "The Problems of Smithfield Packing Workers."

March 26 – Dr. **Rhonda Zingraff**, "Flat Broke with Children," based on research by Sharon Hayes

Sunday Bible Study

A Lenten Study of the Book of Revelation will begin Sunday February 25 at 9:15 a.m. in the Bradow Room. This study will conclude on Palm Sunday, April 9th. We will use different translations of the Bible plus a recent book, The Rapture Exposed, as a supplement. Everyone is welcome. If you can attend only a few sessions, that is fine.

We will not meet on Easter Sunday. On the first Sunday after Easter, we will resume our study of Isaiah. 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 Sam Harris' book, The End of Faith. Contact: **Ed Klemmer**, 847-7992.

Sisters in Spirit

SIS will not have a meeting in March. If you are interested in being contact/contacting SIS folk for "spur of the moment" activities, send an email to Vandy Bradow (vbradow@aol.com).

Retirees Fellowship will gather March 13 at 10:30 AM to hear Jon Heisterberg tell about his eight years of wildlife conservation work in Africa. Jon made an excellent presentation last year about his work with wildlife here in North Carolina. Our Valentine's Day get-together – just visiting, chatting, and eating together – was enjoyed by everyone. We look forward to more of that therapy! Come, hear Jon's story, and spend some time visiting with friends and fellow retirees. Bring a sandwich - drinks and dessert will be provided. All who wish to come are welcome - retired or not!

Monday Lunch Group

Bring lunch and join us in the Hoffmann Room Mondays at 12:15 p.m. During March and extending through Lent, there will be activities and discussion related to Don Miller's book, *Searching for God Knows What*. Miller, based in Portland, OR, describes himself as a "progressive evangelical." Newcomers are welcome. More information? Call **Vandy Bradow**.

Social Justice

The Social Justice Ministry welcomed two new members—**Sam Gaither and Ann Duffel**—to share in its mission of supporting public policies that promote peace and justice at its February 6 meeting. Their presence gives this ministry its highest number of members in several years.

The SJM is undertaking a total budget review to determine the best use of its resources this year. **Grady McCallie** is reviewing the tax-exempt status of the organizations that the ministry supports, while the rest of us are examining the compatibility of each recipient's work with the goals of the ministry.

Cy King will prepare a letter urging Congressmen David Price, Bob Etheridge, and Brad Miller to sign on as co-sponsors of HB 1217, which would close The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), formerly known as the School of the Americas. The letter will be made available for all CUCC members to sign. WHINSEC, based at Fort Benning, GA, has a well documented record of training Hispanic nation soldiers who have used their lessons to torture and kill their own countrymen of political views different from their own. The victims of their abuses have included members of the clergy who sought greater equality and justice.

In a related matter, and in response to an urgent need, the SJM agreed to co-sponsor and provide \$100 to the Carolina Interfaith Task Force on Central America (CITCA). The urgency of this action is the result of Gail Phares' recent arrest for trespassing at Fort Benning, GA while protesting the existence of the WHINSEC. Ms. Phares is the founder, director of the CITCA and a co-founder of the Witness for Peace program. She has been sentenced to three months in jail. CITCA is sponsoring two events—a Celebration of Hope to take place at Pullen Baptist Church on March 12

and its annual "Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace" on April 9-12.

SOCIAL ACTION CALENDAR

Monday, March 6, 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.: "Stop the Arms Race Vigil" in front of the Martin Street post office, downtown Raleigh. Signs will be provided. Contact **Cy King** with questions. (This vigil takes place the first Monday of each month.)

Sunday, March 12, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.: Celebration of Hope for Gail Phares, Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, 1801 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh. Potluck dinner for support of Gail Phares, given a sentence of 90 days in Federal prison for an act of civil disobedience at the School of the Americas. There will be music and a film shown to show what you can do to close the SOA. This event is sponsored by N. C. Peace Action.

Saturday, March 18: Third Annual March & Rally for Peace and Justice to memorialize the third year of the war and occupation in Iraq and to demand that a U. S. Military Withdrawal begin immediately. Welcome Center: 223 Hay Street, Video screenings, workshops and discussions. Gather and march at 10:00 a.m., 227 Fountainhead Lane, Fayetteville, NC. Rally: 1:00 p.m., Rowan Street Park. Email march18@ncpeacejustice.org for more information.

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, Lisa Marsh, June Bolton's parents, Beverley and DeForest Hubbard and the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo and other victims of war and natural disaster across the globe.**

CUCC Directory

Add:

Catherine Fairbanks, 5813 Shady Grove Circle, Raleigh, NC 27609, 325-3868

Change:

Aurora Gregory, akgregory5@aol.com

Wider Community

Appalachian Service Project 2006

During the summer of 2006 four young people from Community United Church of Christ again will accompany a group of youth and adults from the Prince of Peace Episcopal Church of Apex for Appalachian Service Project. This year the group will travel from Apex to Wolfe County, Kentucky in order to help with home repair and building in that rural Appalachian Mountain area. The group must raise money in order to go to do this service work. After doing a mission moment during the morning church service at CUCC, on March 19th, the CUCC young people, Jessica Alcorn (home on college break) and Sam Alcorn, Jack Alcorn, and Austin Osborne-Newman (3 high school students) will be selling Appalachian Service Project Stock in the Narthex after church. They hope you will choose to support their efforts. Please come to church March 19th prepared to buy your stock [for whatever amount of money you want to contribute] in order to support these young people in this work of service. During the week they spend in Wolfe County, Kentucky ASP participants will write postcards to those people who buy stock, and after they return from their week, they will talk with the church about their experience in Wolfe County. If you want to buy ASP stock, but you cannot be in church on March 19th, please contact one of the CUCC Appalachian Service Project participants before March 19th, to request that they get your stock certificate to you at another time. Thank you for supporting these young people!

Margaret Osborne

Congratulations!



Our Young People's Birthdays

- 3/24/90 – Nicholas DeVito
- 4/6/01 – David Snee
- 4/10/04 – Ashley Difuidi
- 4/11/89 – Austin Osborne-Newman
- 4/12/98 – Casey Riemann
- 4/12/99 – John Robertson
- 4/15/90 – Z.B. Haislip
- 4/21/94 – Sidney Keyes

Community Outreach

Thanks!

The **AIDS Care Team** wishes to thank **Vandy Bradow** for donating her computer for our care partner, who is experiencing increasing illness and who often feels too weak to leave her apartment. Please keep our care partner in your prayers.



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

Although we contributed only **21** food bags in February, the food cart already holds a large number of food bags contributed in advance of the first Sunday of March. Maybe that means that we will go over the top this month! Keep those food bags filled and we'll deliver them to Urban Ministries. Thanks for your faithfulness.

Wider Church

NC Climate Action Plan Advisory Group

I attended the first meeting of this newly formed group on Thursday February 16 at the McKimmon Center of NCSU. There were over 30 participants who came from various fields of representation, all concerned about change taking place in our climate that threaten our well-being. The main focus was on CO² emissions generated by the human burning of fossil fuels that has caused global warming. Represented were members of the academic community (NCSU, UNC, Duke), the Energy Utilities (Progress Energy & Duke), leaders in

business and industry, members of the North Carolina Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources and representatives of environmental advocacy groups. I was invited to represent religious advocacy through the **North Carolina Council of Churches**.

The first meeting focused in large part on the process we will follow in developing an inventory and forecast of greenhouse gas emissions in NC and presenting to the Governor, the General Assembly, and Environmental Management Commission an action plan with recommendations to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions. **Bob Hazel** and his son Dennis are also members of the Advisory Group. I'll report more after our next meeting.

- Steve

Internado Orphanage School

Joan and I recently shared one of the most moving experiences of our lives when we visited the Internado Orphanage School in Chichicastenango, Guatemala. Alan Rubio, a native Guatemalan and, like Joan, a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, has spearheaded the "Children of God" project to uplift the lowly station of girls and women in a traditional male chauvinist culture through education. He has succeeded beyond imagination with 200 female regional resident students and an additional 500 day students from Chichi in attendance. Joan and I support one of the student's needs with a monthly donation.

Allan is currently attempting to build another school in different region of Guatemala. He has asked Joan and me to raise \$1,000 by March 15 as part of the \$12,000 he needs to make payment on the preliminary architectural work. Joan and I are asking all members and friends of CUCC to consider helping us support this effort. If you can find it in your heart and budget to contribute to this cause, please call Joan or me for further information about the school and directions on how to make your contribution or talk to us following service on Sunday, March 5. Thank you.

- **John Little**, 781-0829. jlittle17@nc.rr.com

DAY-TO-DAY CONTACTS 2006

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

Ministry Chairs:

Deacons, Jo Perry

Welcoming, Fellowship, and Growth,

Gretchen Aycock

Stewardship, Bill Bryan

Property, Allan Beidler and Joan McAllister

Religious Education, Sue Cottle

Social Justice, John Little

Community Outreach, June Bolton

Communications, Ann McLaughlin

Organist: Doug Barrick

Choir Director: Anne Moorman-Smith

God Is Still Speaking

In What Languages is God Still Speaking?

In what languages can you say "Welcome" and introduce yourself? Can you hold a conversation in languages in addition to English?

The UCC's national ad campaign will have airtime on Spanish language channels. The Triangle is a multicultural area. It would be great to give our ushers and Steve a list of members who can listen in the many languages that God speaks.

Please call or email Jane Smith to let her know your languages (whether in the "smile and gesture" category or fluency).

Enjoy Web-browsing and Blogs?

The UCC's God is Still Speaking website

www.stillspeaking.com is a great place to explore.

The Arts and Culture page is loaded with lists of books (fiction and nonfiction) written by UCC folk, blogs on culture from music to movies, artwork, etc. The log in song changes each time you open up. The Spirituality page has reflections, poems and short stories, and sermons for personal reflection as well as worship resources.

A ministry opportunity - there is a UCC Prayer Chapel where you can enter to pray for and with others or seek prayers for yourself. It would be great to know if any CUCC members have decided to visit the site regularly to intercede for others. If you decide to be part of this ministry, let Steve know.

- **Jane Smith**

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

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

The deadline for our April Newsletter is
March 20th.

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

A Month of Sundays

March 5 – First
Sunday in Lent.
**9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15
Adult Forum & Bible
Study; 10:30 Worship
Service with
Communion &
Church School.
Fellowship Time
Lectionary:**
Gen 9:8-17; Ps 25:1-9;
1 Pet 3:18-22;
Mark 1:9-15

March 12 – Second
Sunday in Lent.
**9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15
Adult Forum & Bible
Study; 10:30 Worship
Service & Church
School;
Fellowship Time
Lectionary:**
Gen 17:1-7, 15-16;
Ps 22:23-31; Rom 4:13-
25; Mark 8:31-38 or
Mark 9:2-9

March 19 – Third
Sunday in Lent.
**9:00 – 9:30 Taizé with
Communion; 9:15
Adult Forum & Bible
Study; 10:30 Worship
Service & Church
School;
Fellowship Time
Lectionary:**
Ex 20:1-17; Ps 19;
1 Cor 1:18-25;
John 23:13-22

March 26 – Fourth
Sunday in Lent.
**9:00 – 9:30 Taizé; 9:15
Adult Forum & Bible
Study; 10:30 Worship
Service & Church
School;
Fellowship Time
Lectionary:**
Num 21:4-9; Ps 107:1-
3, 17-22; Eph 2:1-10;
John 3:14-21