



Enlightening Lines

Volume 12, Issue 5

May 2010

Notes from

The Rose Garden

The Pastor's Letter



Change we can see...

We're moving along in our "church visibility" project. Chuck Martinek has painted the church cross and fascia board bright red—check it out, it looks great! Barry Walter replaced the floodlight with a brighter unit. Bruce Butler (Miss Pam's husband) has volunteered to build a frame for temporary banners.

Some bright flowers tucked in the front garden, new church street numbers, and a mural (I have a design!) will complete the project.

An appealing exterior will help bring visitors to our doors. What will we do when they get there? An usher training session will be scheduled soon, to help our friendly ushers become even better at greeting guests and making them feel at home. Please attend; it will make you more confident and effective.

But great ushers are just the beginning—we need to examine every facet of our church life and see where we need a boost. May 2nd's "Communion 101" service is a start. What do we do and why do we do it? Come to church and find out more. Other aspects of church life will be topics for future discussions.

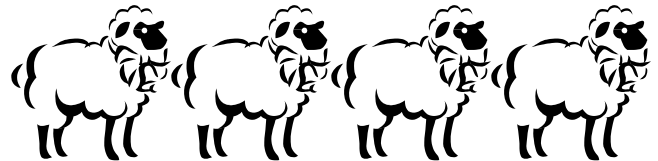
In June we will be brainstorming ideas for Fall worship. I'd love to have you in my planning group or to get your input. In church all things are feasible; with God all things are possible! We're going to shake, rattle, and roll in September!

--Rev. Garnet

TO GET "EWE" IN THE PEW

I have decided that having at least half of our membership in worship on any given Sunday is a more-than-worthy goal. Worship is stronger, we have more fun greeting all our friends and visitors, and we certainly sing better! So—promote regular worship attendance, I will personally PLEDGE \$50 to Heifer Project for every Sunday when worship attendance is 50 or more, through next December. Anyone willing to match me? Don't be "chicken"—get a "hoof in the door" if "ewe" are a friend of HPI!

--Rev. Garnet



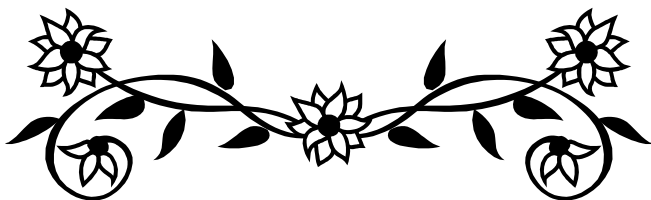
PLEASE PRAY FOR:

CONCERNS:

Tom – Beth – Esther – Mark
Dorothy – Seyi & David – Faye
Pastor Kathryn in the Philippines
Disaster Victims

JOY & THANKSGIVING:

Mike A. – Garnet – Bob F.
Amanda – Hannah – Katie D.



PENTECOST

May 23 is Pentecost Sunday, and a big day for FCC. Wear flame colors of red, orange, or yellow to church. Our guests at worship will be Rev. Drew Nettinga, our Associate Conference Minister for the Bay Association, and David Bergman-Hill, the Associate Conference Minister for Finance and Stewardship. Rev. Drew will give the sermon.

After worship, we will hold our Spring Congregational Meeting. If you have an item for the agenda, please contact Moderator Carolyn Zeljak by May 10.

And after our short meeting, we will enjoy a salad potluck lunch and hear a presentation by David and Drew about growing our church in spirit, mission, and membership.

What Is It? Where Does It Go?

Sunday May 23 we will be taking an offering called Strengthen the Church.

Strengthen the Church is the special mission offering that builds the United Church of Christ's future. These gifts help start new churches, renew existing churches, foster new leaders and grow the UCC community.

Funds are shared by Conferences for the national setting of the church. Conferences may use 50% of the offering for local and regional Strengthen the Church efforts, such as new church starts, leadership development, women's ministry and youth.

From the \$258,000 directed to the national setting in 2008, about \$22,000 was for support of the God is Still Speaking Ministry, the messaging/advertising arm of the UCC. About \$119,000 was to be given in grants to provide pastoral leadership for new church starts and revitalizing congregations, with a goal of creating 250 new churches by 2011. And about \$20,000 was for support Youth @ General Synod as well as a brand new initiative: Regional Women's Ministry Coordinators. Thanks to Strengthen the Church, in April 2009, two women from each of five regions, gathered to train for shared visioning and resourcing of Women's Ministry across their regions.

☪Community Ministries.

WORSHIP FOR MAY

May 2 - 5th Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion & Benevolence offering

Theme: "Communion 101"

Luke 22:7-20 *The Last Supper*

Anthem: "Come To the Feast"

May 9 – 6th Sunday of Easter

Theme: "In and Out of Prison"

Acts 2:1-24 *Paul and the slave girl*

Acts 2:25-40 *In and out of prison*

Anthem: "Home In That Rock"

May 16 – 7th Sunday of Easter

"5th Sunday" Speaker:

Compassion And Choices

Deuteronomy 34:1-12 *The death of Moses*

Anthem: "We Are Singing For the Lord is Our Light"

May 23 – Pentecost Sunday

Guest preacher Rev. Drew Nettinga

Scripture to be announced

Anthem: "Spirit, Falling Like a Dove"

May 30 – Trinity Sunday

Theme: "Wisdom and the Word"

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 *Wisdom cries out*

Sirach 24:1-12, 19-22 *Wisdom praises herself*

John 1:1-18 *In the beginning was the Word*

Anthem: "Praise Ye the Father"

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

Thanks to everyone who came out to work at the church on the clean-up day before Easter. Special thanks to Chuck Martinek for painting the cross in front of the church. It looks so bright and new. And thanks to Barry Walter for replacing the light that shines on the front of the church with a new fixture and brighter bulb.

Plan to attend the Spring Meeting on Sunday, May 23, followed by the Salad Luncheon. A sign-up list will be in the Social Hall.

☪Carolyn Zeljak

CONFERENCE ANNUAL GATHERING

Rev. Garnet and our two Conference Delegates, Michele McConville and Chuck Gebhardt, will be heading out for Asilomar Conference Grounds on Thursday, May 13, for the Annual Gathering. They will return Sunday afternoon.

Annual Gathering is a terrific event where pastors and laypeople from most of our Conference churches come together to do necessary business, attend fascinating workshops, and worship and play together. This year's theme is "A Wonderful Harmony: Transforming Lives, Churches and Communities." Annual Gathering Chair is Rev. Sofia DeWitt of Fresno.

Items for vote at Annual Gathering will be presented at our FCC Spring Meeting, and our delegates will report back on what happened and what they learned!

OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITY

This summer our Conference is offering an ADULT spiritual retreat up at beautiful Camp Cazadero! The dates are August 13-15th.

All adults 18 and over are warmly invited to Caz to reflect upon the spiritual heroes offering strength for our life journeys. Also enjoy hiking, swimming, crafts, the Talent/No Talent Show, firebowl, morning watch, Communion, and relaxing alone or with friends old and new!

Coordinators for the retreat include Dr. John Osborn, Charlotte Asher, Brian Wetzell, Jeannie Merchant, Rev. Lizann Bassham... and you!

Cost is \$120.00 per person. Children may come with parents but be advised there will be NO children's program offered and parents will be responsible for supervising their children. Kids 5 and under are free; 6 and over are \$50.00.



For online registration and more information, visit nncucc.org or see Rev. Garnet. Judy and Linda are already planning to attend!

MEMORIAL SUNDAY

Memorial Sunday is May 30th. We will have our traditional "Bouquet of Memories" during worship. Bring a flower to add to our bouquet in memory of each loved one you wish to commemorate. This is always a very moving ceremony and a lovely way to remember.

Memorial Day, May 31st, the church office will be closed.



GREENER THAN THOU

A Modern Sea Monster—that's what HPI's Spring 2010 World Ark magazine calls the Pacific Trash Vortex. "In the Pacific Ocean, floating between Hawaii and the U. S. mainland, lurks a leviathan estimated to be **twice the size of Texas**. What comprises this monstrous mass? It's not fish or plankton or algae, but trash, mostly plastic—water bottles, shopping bags, buoys. The flotsam, most of it originating on land, is swept out to sea and gets caught up in a gyre, a giant whirlpool-like current. And the floating trash heap is more than just an eyesore to sailors. Researchers are finding staggering amounts of plastic in the bellies of fish and other ocean animals. Even after the plastic breaks down, the toxic chemicals it releases, like polystyrene and bisphenol A, continue to circulate in the ocean. This threatens not only the health of marine life, but of anything—or anyone—who feeds on it. Including us."

Other sources report that micro-organisms and tiny fish eat the broken down bits of plastic and are in turn eaten by larger fish, which become unsafe for human consumption. Many nations depend on fishing to supply their protein needs and boost their economies. The loss of safe-to-eat ocean fish will likely cause more poverty and hunger world-wide.

The Vortex is largely invisible from a boat or satellite as much of it is tiny particles and broken-down larger items that float below the surface. Its exact size is not known. Most of the debris comes from Japan and the U. S. Learn more about the Pacific Trash Vortex and urge the U. S. and Japan to begin cleaning up this disaster immediately.

HEIFER PROJECT NEWS

Fans of Heifer Project International will be glad to know about a challenge grant. Every dollar donated to HPI will be matched 3-to-1 by the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development for a special project to restore Rwanda's economy after the 1994 genocide. The people who were young during the time of violence did not learn farming skills from their fathers and could not pass these skills on to the next generation. This lack of farming know-how, plus the desperation of poverty, has led many farmers to overtax their land. We can help the people of Rwanda re-establish a productive farming tradition by supporting this seven-year, \$6.7 million project that begins this year. Your donation may be made through our church; just mark it "HPI-Rwanda" and we will send it on. To learn more about this project, visit www.heifer.org/worldark.

SAVE THAT SOAP!

When you travel, be sure to save the sample-size soaps, shampoo, lotion and so forth that are available in hotels and motels. Ser-Rel-Lo collects them, sorts them, and donates them to Sunrise Village Homeless Shelter. There is a large box in the Ushers' Cabinet where such items can go. Toilet articles of all kinds are needed at the shelter—sample size or not!



Ser-Rel-Lo

Our outing for April 15th was canceled. Instead we met at the church to talk and think about ideas for our planning meeting in June.

Our next meeting will be May 20th when we will be going to the Oakland Rose garden and having lunch at Fenton's Creamery.

For further information talk with Marcia or me.

~Judy Johnson

ANNUAL BOOK SALE!

Our annual book sale, hosted by Family Ministries Board, will begin Sunday, May 2. Prices are the same as last year: \$2.00 for hardcover books, \$1.00 for paperbacks, \$1.00 for CD's, games, puzzles, and DVD's. You may bring in more items all month long. This year's book sale is a fundraiser for our patio furniture—this may do it! Items remaining after the end of the month will be donated to Newark Friends of the Library or Tri-City Volunteers.



“You are the cream in my coffee...”

Beneficio Coffee

“It's better than fair trade!”

Your coffee purchase helps farmers and families in Costa Rica.

Available in the Social Hall after worship or in the church office

Guest Speaker

Sunday, May 16, we will be hosting a speaker from Compassion & Choices to share with us during the sermon section of the service. Several quotes from the *Compassion & Choices Magazine* give you a broad idea of topics that may be discussed.

Part of their work involves supplying "...professional end-of-life counselors and trained volunteers (who) work with thousands of clients each year, explain options and offer non-judgmental support to help them make and communicate their decisions." Another comment states, "The process of considering options, making decisions and communicating with family and physician emerges as the most potent factor in a peaceful death." A topic we have discussed in the past, an Advance Directive for Health Care and the decisions necessary prior to creating one are discussed.

*Community Ministries

CHURCH MINISTRIES

Holy Humor – “Weekly church is God’s gift – Assembly required”

The church family thanks the following volunteers:

Coffee Hour – Chuck Gebhardt, Stacey Stephens, Family Ministries pancakes, Ser-Rel-Lo.

Liturgist – Michele McConville, Holly Walter, Gerald Moore, Chuck Gebhardt, Jeannette Guinan, Donna Sommer.

Ushers – Marie Brown, Barbara Babcock (2), Gerald Moore, Ann Finlinson (2), Linda Fair (2), Dede Smith, Jim McClure (2), Michele McConville.

Communion Server – Carolyn Hedgecock, Carolyn Zeljak, Barbara Babcock.

Flowers – Lilies, Mark McConville, Garnet, Ann Finlinson, DeHarts

Thought for the month – One is nearer God’s heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth.

❁ Nancy Koontz

EASTER OFFERING - Habitat For Humanity Build-A-Thon

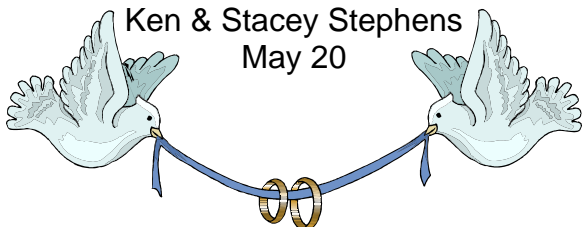
What a fun day! On April 19, Chuck and Mardell Martinek, Barry and Holly Walter, and Carolyn Hedgecock worked on the Habitat for Humanity Build-a-thon, helping build ten houses in four days. We hammered and hammered thousands of nails into the exterior plywood walls of a two-story home. The delicious noon lunch was very much enjoyed.



MAY ANNIVERSARIES

Ben & Starla Garst
May 18

Ken & Stacey Stephens
May 20



BYLAWS REVISION FOR NURSERY SCHOOL BOARD

The Church Council is recommending that changes be made to the FCC bylaws concerning the Nursery School Board. These bylaw changes will be voted on at the Spring Meeting on May 23. The changes will assure that the board is made up of four church members and up to three parents. The Nursery School Board will report to Church Council instead of House and Finance Board. The recommended changes are:

Number 7 under Article XI will be Fremont Congregational Nursery School Board of Directors.

Under the description of the Board of Directors it shall state:

- The Nursery School Board of Directors shall consist of four church members elected for a term of two years each, with additional terms allowed. The Chair of the Nursery School Board shall be a church member. In addition the Nursery School Board of Directors may appoint in September up to three parent board members who shall serve for two school years each. These board members shall be parents of children enrolled in the nursery school.

Number 7 under the duties of the Nursery School Board shall be changed to read:

- report to the Church Council on all building maintenance needs, building improvements, and necessary insurance.



STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

Families of God

A wandering Aramean was my ancestor.

Deuteronomy 26:5

When the people of Israel entered into the Promised Land and harvested the very first crops from their new homes, they were called to bring offerings of those crops to give to God and to share with those in their community who needed food. As part of the ritual around those offerings, each giver was to tell a story, a story common to all of them but specific to one family as well. The “wandering Aramean” was Abraham, joined by Sarah and their extended family. The story involves God in relationship to that one family which then extended out to an entire nation, a nation called to be a light to other nations.

In May, we celebrate Mother’s Day, also known in UCC circles as the “Festival of the Christian Home.” This day is an opportunity to remember that God relates to us not just as a church community or as a world-wide community of the body of Christ, but also to our families individually, no matter what their composition. It continues our ancestors’ understanding that God’s presence is known in families, and that God calls individuals and their families to order their lives around that presence, that relationship. Just as God’s love is incarnate for us most intimately in our families, so we are called to incarnate our relationship with God by how we make family choices, and that includes how we share our resources. What story would you bring to God with your offerings?

Rochelle A. Stackhouse is the Senior Minister of The Church of the Redeemer, United Church of Christ, New Haven Connecticut.

May 2010

God is still speaking,

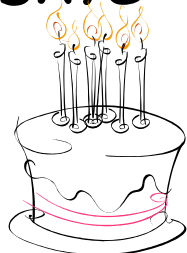
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



This resource is a free service and is made possible by your gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Joelyn Carr-Fingerle
- 8 Charlie Wilkins
- 9 Donna Sommer
- 13 Sarah Euchler
- 20 Hannah Stephens
- 29 Barbara McKinlay



I OWE MY MOTHER!

1. My mother taught me to APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE. “If you’re going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning.”
2. My mother taught me RELIGION. “You better pray that will come out of the carpet.”
3. My mother taught me about TIME TRAVEL. “If you don’t straighten up, I’m going to knock you into the middle of next week.”
4. My mother taught me LOGIC. “Because I said so, that’s why.”
5. My mother taught me MORE LOGIC. “If you fall out of that swing and break your neck, you’re not going to the store with me.”
6. My mother taught me FORESIGHT. “Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you’re in an accident.”
7. My mother taught me IRONY. “Keep crying, and I’ll give you something to cry about.”
8. My mother taught me about HUMOR. “If they tease you, just laugh it off.”
9. My mother taught me about ENVY. “There are millions of less fortunate children in this world who don’t have wonderful parents like you do.”
10. My mother taught me about RECEIVING. “You are going to get it when you get home!”
11. My mother taught me COMPASSION. “When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don’t come running to me.”
12. My mother taught me HOW TO BECOME AN ADULT. “If you don’t eat your vegetables, you’ll never grow up.”
13. My mother taught me WISDOM. “When you get to be my age, you’ll understand.”
14. My mother taught me about my ROOTS. “Shut that door behind you. Do you think you were born in a barn?”
15. My mother taught me about JUSTICE. “One day, you’ll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you!”

