

Global Mission Moment

Simple gifts

Serve God with gladness! Come into God's presence with singing! Psalm 100:2

When the two of us headed to China for the first time, in 2006, we understood it would likely be for one year and possibly two. As it turned out, we lived and worked in China for four years, and we can say with all our hearts that we have been deeply blessed! It is our hope that we too have been a blessing.

We spent three years as visiting professors at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, then last year, took on new assignments, this time in the magnificent city of Shanghai at Shanghai University and at the YMCA. Our work in Shanghai had one aspect that was very different from that at the Nanjing Seminary; most of our students and the people we interacted with were non-Christians and even atheists. In most cases it was not that they had chosen to be "against" religion but only that they did not have a religion! Learning this brought immediately to my mind an old hymn we used to sing as children in Canada. Its second verse went like this.

How kind was our savior to bid these children welcome.

But there are many thousands who have never heard His name.

The Bible they have never read. They know not that the Savior said:

"Suffer little children to come unto me."

In Shanghai, we were living among the people, and seeing them as gentle and kind and giving – but without any religion, many never having heard the name of Jesus. We were not permitted to proselytize, as the Chinese government does not allow it. Still, there was no reason why could not talk about Christianity and, maybe even more importantly, to try to model in as simple and sincere a way as possible just how a Christian behaves. It was easy to love and serve the Chinese people, as they were always so good to us. This gave us pause to think about who we are and what we need to do as Christians in the world.

Let us pray, that in this season of giving we remember what a blessing each individual gift of service and love is to others.

Doreen and Michael McFarlane served as visiting professors at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. Doreen taught Biblical Hebrew and Greek, and Biblical interpretation, while Michael served as choir director and taught western sacred music. Later, in Shanghai as visiting professor in the history department of the Shanghai University, teaching American Culture and American Religion, and Michael as choir director and concert coordinator of the newest branch of the Shanghai YMCA.

Through your continued support of Our Church's Wider Mission the Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ is made possible; thank you!

December 5, 2010
Second Sunday of Advent

When my oldest child was about 7 years old, he asked me one day at Christmas time: "Mom, tell me the truth: is there really a Santa Claus or do you and Dad buy the presents?"

He had never asked before, and now I didn't know what to say. He seemed old

enough for the truth, so I told him it was really Mom and Dad who bought the presents. The instant this was out of my mouth, I regretted it. The wide-eyed look of shock on his face told me it was a mistake.

But before I could say anything else, he rallied and said, "Oh, now I know what you mean! Santa brings the presents that I ask for, and you buy the things I didn't ask for, like clothes." "Exactly," replied Mom, tremendously relieved. My 7-year-old had just let me off the hook because his determination to believe was stronger than his wish to know "the truth." I'd upset the world as he knew it by telling him the truth, and he wasted no time setting it right again.

For some of us, this is what faith is like: a confusing mixture of belief and curiosity about what's "really" true. Maybe it's better not to try to settle it one way or another. Maybe it's better to let ourselves off the hook and live in the world as we know it, all the while keeping our belief intact.

Isaiah 11:1-10

Matthew 3:1-12

Romans 15:4-13

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

December 6, 2010

Orchestrating a just peace in the Middle East has eluded dignitaries for decades and remains a priority in President Obama's administration. After the President's historic speech in Cairo in June of 2009, American Christian leaders from a broad spectrum of faiths sent a letter expressing support for the President's efforts in reaching out to the Muslim world. But the letter also expressed concern over the "deteriorating situation in the Holy Land," and urged action to bring about a two-state solution to the Holy Land's conflict. Dr. Joel C. Hunter, Senior Pastor of Northland Church, said, "For too long the Holy Land has been viewed as a clash of religions and cultures, but religion must be part of any durable solution. We're saying today that we're prepared to put our faith and resources behind that most important goal of bringing a just peace to Israelis and Palestinians – Jew, Christians and Muslim alike."

Isaiah 24:1-16a

Psalms 29

I Thessalonians 4:1-12

December 7, 2010 — Pearl Harbor Day

Blessed with a rich diversity of language, custom, and history, the United Church of Christ includes people and congregations of many ethnic and racial backgrounds, including Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino, Micronesian, Samoan, and native Hawaiian. Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries (PAAM), a recognized special interest group in the UCC, brings together people from across the United States and the waters of the Pacific to create community and advocate for justice. The Rev. Loimata Soa, once stated that when PAAM gathers, "All of us are just blown away by the richness and color of the many cultures that are PAAM. I am reminded once again that culture truly is a gift from God."

Isaiah 41:14-20

Psalms 124

Romans 15:14-21

December 8, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of Old South Church, Boston, MA. "For more than 340 years, Old South Church has stood as a progressive, vibrant Christian community grounded in Jesus, alive to the Spirit, and engaged in the adventure of faith. We are an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, welcoming all who seek to journey toward the promised realm of God. Our life together is animated by our belief in the presence of the Living God, whom we come to know through the rhythms of worship, prayer, scripture and learning, generosity, kindness and hospitality. Old South is a spiritual home to people from all walks and stations of life, believers and questioners, people from a range of backgrounds and faith perspectives. In our worship, we draw on a variety of Christian traditions, from ancient to contemporary. Through a broad and eclectic program of service, outreach, education, and fellowship, we strive to be part of God's work of mending the world."

Genesis 15:1-18

Psalms 124

Matthew 12:33-37

A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ

December 9, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of First Church in Cambridge Congregational United Church of Christ, Cambridge, MA. "Imagine a church that is glad you're here no matter where you come from, what you look like, how old or young you are, how much money you have, where you are on the journey of life, or where you are on the journey of faith. Imagine a church that loves its heritage, yet flexibly entertains new people, new ideas, and new ways too. Imagine a church that is amazed by the wonderful gifts God gave you for service, wants to receive them, and is eager to help you use them for the good of the world. Imagine a church that helps all who enter its life take one more step, or many more, on the Way of Life. Imagine a church with a wide open door, a church of life-changing welcome, a church of unity in our differences, a church shaped in the pattern of God's boundless embrace: Imagine First Church in Cambridge!"

Ruth 1:6-18

Psalms 146:5-10

II Peter 3:1-10

December 10, 2010 — Human Rights Day

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the World Council of Churches, the United National Human Rights Council and others have issued reports on human rights abuses in the Philippines. Bishop Eliezer M. Pascua of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines says that since 2001, there have been more than 800 "extrajudicial killings" – victims who were targeted for promoting human rights. United Church of Christ and Global Ministries staff have lobbied key House and Senate committee members to hold the Philippine government accountable for human rights abuses through strong military appropriations language in the 2010 budget. A Letter of Concern, signed by more than 230 leaders of faith-based organizations, union and labor rights groups, Filipino-American associations and academics was sent to the U.S. Congress to protest human rights abuses in the Philippines, funded by U.S. foreign military assistance. "The killings happen in a political climate of impunity," Pascua said. The Philippine people seek social justice and the human rights that we in the U.S. take for granted.

Ruth 4:13-17

Psalms 146:5-10

II Peter 3:11-18

December 11, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of Green's Farms Church, Westport, CT. "Green's Farms Church has a long, rich commitment to Outreach in our community. This commitment touches the lives of those who live locally and internationally. Services we have historically supported include assistance for the homeless, mentally disabled, victims of domestic violence, services for the elderly, affordable counseling and a wide spectrum of youth services for economically disadvantaged children and teenagers. The Outreach of the Church extends internationally through direct contribution, depending on need, and through a generous annual contribution to Our Church's Wider Mission, the Outreach arm of the UCC. In addition to providing funding, there are numerous volunteer opportunities that are staffed by the friends and members of Green's Farms Church. For example, our church is responsible for cooking and serving dinner at the Gillespie Center, Westport's homeless shelter, twice a month."

I Samuel 2:1-8

Psalms 146:5-10

Luke 3:1-18

A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ

December 17, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of Coral Gables Congregational Church (CGCC) a United Church of Christ, Coral Gables, FL.

"What are the CGCC mission and vision statements? To provide a spiritual home for a diverse and inclusive congregation actively seeking to spread God's love.

Vision Statement

We are all on a journey of hope. As a diverse community of friends, we seek the inclusiveness of God's love. We embrace the challenge to believe and to act, striving for social justice and caring stewardship. Convinced that love and laughter are God's gifts, we celebrate a sense of wonder for all creation through the arts and worship. Inspired by our heritage, we continue our journey as an historic church whose greatest days are today and tomorrow.

When was CGCC founded?

The church was founded in 1923 and is the oldest established building and organization in Coral Gables. George Merrick, the architect and developer of Coral Gables, was the son of a Congregational Minister. To honor his father he built this church, which has continued to be not only an historic site but a significant force in this community. Known for its inspiring worship, outstanding music and arts program, a top notch early childhood center, and a bold and prophetic outreach program, the church has been a place of solace, sanctuary, and spiritual growth for many over the years."

II Samuel 7:18-22

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

Galatians 4:1-7

December 18, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of Altadena Community Church, Altadena, CA.

"Altadena Community Church and its members provide support to our community and those in need around the world through volunteer work, donations from our general operating fund, and donations from the congregation targeted to specific organizations supported by our church. The organizations and activities needing support are often brought to our attention by our own members, or by our United Church of Christ denomination offices. Some of our recent support has gone to: * Church World Service, a relief agency that provides disaster relief and helps fight hunger, poverty and illiteracy in our community, nation and other countries.* A food pantry that provides groceries to the needy in our community, run by the Altadena Congregations Together Serving (ACTS), of which our church is a member.* Global Ministries, an organization that provides education, medical support and other forms of relief around the world. Through Global Ministries we support a child in India, assist educational missionaries in Turkey, and provide funds for other programs.* Friends Outside, an organization that assists the families of prison inmates.* Peppermint Ridge, a non-profit residential facility in Corona, California, for developmentally disabled adults.* Friends In Deed of Pasadena, a program of the Ecumenical Council of Pasadena Churches that provides emergency clothing and food to needy families.* Heifer International, an organization that combats poverty and hunger and restores the environment by helping rural families and communities develop sustainable agriculture. * We also provide space for use by community organizations, many of them non-religious, such as the Altadena Community Children's Choir, and Y-SPIRIT, a program of the YMCA providing activities to developmentally disabled youth."

II Samuel 7:23-29

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

John 3:31-36



Mission Moment — The Christmas Fund

December 12, 2010 Third Sunday of Advent

Have you ever experienced the feeling that you were faced with an insurmountable problem, agonized over it, prayed about it, and almost despaired of finding a solution? Then unexpectedly someone, some organization, even a vague memory of a possible way out of the problem came to you. What a relief! What a blessing! Was this, indeed, an answer to prayer?

These circumstances come to us all, active and retired ministers included. "How are we going to pay those hospital bills?" "I know I need hearing aids, but with my meager income, how will I ever afford them?" "The rent is due again, the savings are practically exhausted, and still that search committee hasn't acted."

In such circumstances, you have provided the needed relief. The Board for Ministerial Assistance was enabled by your contributions to the Christmas Fund to bring relief from painful stress. Even the monetary gift at Christmastime comes to many a retired clergy household as a gift from heaven, arriving just at the time of need.

Emergencies can come at any time. Retirees on small pensions or without a pension altogether are in need of ongoing assistance. The disabled with no expectations of growth in earning power are, nevertheless, able to cope, with your help.

Please share some of your blessings with the "Veterans of the Cross" by contributing generously to the Christmas Fund.

Isaiah 7:10-16

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-11

Psalms 146:5-10

December 13, 2010

The widow's *might* could be the title of this story because it is about one woman's strength in transforming her situation into a local symbol of resilience and non-violent struggle. Mrs. Fawzieh Al-Kurd, better known as Um Kamel, was evicted from her home in Paestine— along with her family – in November 2008. Two weeks later, her 63-year-old husband Mohammad died of a heart attack. From that day forward, Um Kamel has lived in a tent outside her former home in spite of the fact that even this limited shelter has been destroyed five times. Each time, it has been rebuilt by supporters and friends – including Sabeel – an ecumenical grassroots liberation movement among Palestinian Christians which strives to 'develop a spirituality based on justice, peace, nonviolence, liberation and reconciliation'. A few days before Christmas 2008, Bishop Munib Younan of the Lutheran Church and the Adnoana Hussein, a Muslim leader in the Palestinian community, lit the Christmas tree in front of Um Kamel's tent in a gesture of unity.

Prayer:

*O God of Isaiah and John the Baptist,
through all such faithful ones
you proclaim the unfolding of future joy and renewed life.
Strengthen our hearts to believe your advent promise
that one day we will walk in the holy way of Christ,
where sorrow and sighing will be no more
and the journey of God's people will be joy. Amen.*

Isaiah 7:10-16

Psalm 42

Acts 5:12-16

December 14, 2010

United Church of Christ Greenawalds, Allentown, PA is helping to change the world two soles at a time. The program is "Soles4Souls" a Nashville based charity that collects shoes from warehouses of footwear companies and individuals. Did you know that over 1.5 billion pairs of shoes lay idle in American closets and that over 300 million children alone are in the world without shoes? "Soles4Souls" with the help of congregations like this one gives away a pair of shoes every nine seconds. Since 2005 they have distributed over 7 million shoes in over 125 countries on 5 continents. From new shoes to gently worn ones it is easy to give hope, no "heals" please.

Prayer:

*Shepherd of Israel,
may Jesus, Emmanuel and son of Mary,
be more than just a dream in our hearts.
With the apostles, prophets, and saints,
save us, restore us,
and lead us in the way of grace and peace,
that we may bear your promise into the world. Amen.*

Ezekiel 47:1-12

Psalm 42

Jude 17-25

A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ

December 15, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of Saint Pauls United Church of Christ Chicago, IL

"Saint Pauls Church recognizes the uniqueness of each person as a gift of God. We uphold the worth and dignity of all individuals and welcome them into our community to share our faith, with its joys and its sorrow, regardless of race, color, age, marital status, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or physical condition. We are members "one of the other" and show active love and support for each other.

Saint Pauls Church encourages personal growth in Christian life and active involvement in the ministry of the church. Community worship is our opportunity to open ourselves to God's revelation and power, give thanks to God for our lives, and find inspiration for our spirit through words, music and action.

Saint Pauls Church believes God's love compels us to serve and witness in our community and the world. Through denominational agencies, Saint Pauls Church supports outreach ministries in local, national and international settings, in this way fulfilling our commitment to be faithful witnesses to God's love."

Zechariah 8:1-17

Psalm 42

Matthew 8:1-17

December 16, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of First Congregational Church, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

"The Ministry of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Colorado Springs is to extend an extravagant WELCOME, to cultivate a sense of WONDER, and to provide a positive and proactive WITNESS to the possibility of a just society.

The Outreach Council of First Congregational Church dedicates its focus to provide outreach to members of our church and those outside our church through active committees. The dedication, energy, times and leadership of each of the committees is worthy of being or likely to be notice especially as being uncommon of extraordinary.

- Mission Giving and Outreach
- Justice and Peace Ministry
- Whole Earth Committee
- Open & Affirming Committee"

II Samuel 7:1-17

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Galatians 3:23-29

A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ

December 24, 2010 — Christmas Eve

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of First Church of Christ, Simsbury, CT.

"First Church of Christ has a long and committed history to wider mission. Our congregation provides significant financial support to charitable organizations locally and around the world; a commitment that we can be proud of. Through our generous gifts, we put food on tables, clothe children, deliver missionaries, provide critical medical supplies, build homes and pay for the administration of organizations that pull it all together. From our little church here in Simsbury, Connecticut, we have reached out across the oceans and touched every part of our world.

For over 35 years First Church has committed 25% of its operating budget to support mission activities in the local Simsbury and Hartford area, as well as global outreach projects. We try to follow the Biblical example that was demonstrated by Jesus when he served the poor and disadvantaged of the world. Under the direction of our Board of Mission & Outreach, the church undertakes a number of hands-on mission projects, where members of the church are actively involved in helping the disadvantaged, while we are building a greater understanding of our faith."

Isaiah 62:6-12

Titus 3:34-7

Psalms 97

Luke 2: (1-7), 8-20

December 25, 2010 — Christmas Day

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of Plymouth Congregational Church, founded in 1897, Coconut Grove, Florida.

Maggard Migrant Ministry: In 1967, the members of the Triune club of Plymouth Congregational Church endeavored to make the Christmas season a little brighter for some of the children of migrant farm workers in South Dade. Triune brought thirty-five children, ages 5-9, to Plymouth Church in Coconut Grove for dinner, a Christmas story, and gifts from Santa. That was the beginning of a comprehensive program designed to enhance the lives of children and young adults in the migrant community. Every year since then, Triune and now Maggard Migrant Ministry, Inc. have brought a busload of more than 80 little children to Plymouth for a festive Christmas dinner. Each child gets custom fit clothing, a choice of a major toy – plus two more to take back to a brother or sister who did not get to come to the party. MMM's mission grew beyond Christmas. To assist with the year-round needs, a relationship was established with the Migrant Education Office in Homestead to help migrant families with emergencies as they arose. In 1982, the Director of the Migrant Education Program of the Miami-Dade Schools, Cipriano Garza, asked Triune to assist with college tuition for two students. The next year tuition was provided for four more students. For twenty-three years, any deserving migrant high-school graduate who desired to continue his or her education, but who could not afford the price of tuition, was provided financial assistance. In 2006 more than \$26,000 was provided in scholarship aid. Maggard Migrant Ministry, Inc. was formed in 2000 to fiscally separate the Migrant Children's Christmas Party, the Migrant Scholarship Program, and other migrant ministries from other activities of the Triune Club."

Isaiah 9:2-7

Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

Titus 2:11-14

Psalms 96



Mission Moment — God With Us

December 19, 2010 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Don't Forget . . .

Every year, the national offices of the United Church of Christ send a complimentary copy of the UCC's Desk Calendar and Plan Book to every retired UCC clergy person.

And every year, we get thank-you notes and letters—often written in shaky handwriting—expressing appreciation for being “remembered” in this way by the church. “This is the only way I can still feel connected to the United Church of Christ,” writes one who is no longer able to attend church.

It is important that we not forget about those who served so faithfully.

But in addition to remembering them, we must help where it is needed. Many ministers and church staff struggle to live on pensions after years of faithful service to the church. The Christmas Fund is designed to help. This offering is one way to express appreciation for the devotion of church workers. It supplements pension, helps with healthcare costs, and assists with emergency grants for those in financial crisis.

Generous contributions from UCC members ease the plight of those who helped establish our proud legacy of service and witness. The need remains great. Your generosity is especially critical to meet it.

Isaiah 7:10-16

Matthew 1:18-25

Romans 1:1-7

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

December 20, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of First-Plymouth Congregational Church, Lincoln, NE.

"First-Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ touches thousands of lives each week with the good news of Jesus Christ. Its ongoing ministries reach out to meet the needs of our community and our world.

First-Plymouth seeks to provide pathways for growth. A variety of small groups, events and workshops offer opportunities for friendships, spiritual and personal growth, emotional and spiritual support, or activity and service.

Among the many mission projects supported by First Plymouth we find, Voices of Hope.

Starting in 1974 The Lincoln Coalition against Rape began providing support to victims of sexual assault. Over the years it has evolved to Voices of Hope. Services provided include support to victims and families of sexual assault, domestic violence, and incest. The mission of Voices of Hope is to educate the community on awareness and prevention of these crimes. Voices of Hope received assistance as a result of funds raised by the First-Plymouth choir's 2010 performance of Cabaret."

Genesis 17:15-22

I Samuel 2:1-10

Galatians 4:8-20

December 21, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of The First Congregational Church, Downers Grove, Illinois.

"We praise God through a blend of traditional and contemporary worship forms on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. and 10:45 a.m..

An extremely musical church, we have 8 musical ensembles for all age groups and musical tastes. We're a seven day a week church, with numerous educational and fellowship opportunities for men and women, boys and girls of all ages.

We are also the site of the Two Way Street Coffee House and the Family Life Preschool. A socially active church, we host homeless guests on Monday evenings from October to May through the PADS program. In recent years, we have helped relocate a family from Bosnia, gone on mission trips to Honduras, and house a center for people with needs. "

Prayer:

*Shepherd of Israel,
may Jesus, Emmanuel and son of Mary, be more than just a dream in our hearts.
With the apostles, prophets, and saints, save us, restore us,
and lead us in the way of grace and peace, that we may bear your promise into the world.
Amen.*

Ezekiel 47:1-12

Psalms 42

Jude 17-25

A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ

December 22, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of Glenview Community Church, Glenview, Illinois.

"The Glenview Community Church, United Church of Christ, unites Christians of all denominations on the common principles of belief in God, Christ, the Bible, and the Church, with each member interpreting these beliefs as conscience dictates.

We propose to live in the fellowship and ways of God and to follow the leadership of Jesus Christ in all our life's experiences so far as God's ways and Christ's leadership are made known to us. We strive to know the will of God as taught in the Bible and all other sources and to walk in the ways of God made known to us.

We hold it our church's mission to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ to all people, exalting in the worship of the one true God. We labor for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice and the reign of peace in the world."

Isaiah 33:17-22

Luke 1:46b-55

Revelation 22:6-7, 18-20

December 23, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of First Congregational Church of Greeley United Church of Christ, Greeley, Colorado.

"The mission of the First Congregational Church of Greeley is to celebrate the joy of Christ's presence, to minister to all, offer Christian worship, spiritual growth, fellowship, education, service, outreach and support.

The church serves its membership as a sanctuary for personal renewal and as a center for fellowship and relief from alienation. It empowers its members for Christian decision making through teaching from the pulpit and in the classroom.

The church serves its community through support of local and world missions, and by responding personally and financially to the material and spiritual needs of others."

Prayer:

*Praise is our cry, O Holy One of Israel, for you have come among us and borne our burdens.
Give us open hearts, that we might embrace our suffering sisters and brothers, and welcome Jesus in the hospitality we show to exiles. Amen.*

II Samuel 7:18, 23-29

Luke 1:46b-55

Galatians 3:6-14

A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ

December 31, 2010 — New Year's Eve

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of Church of the Apostles, Lancaster, PA.

"The Church of the Apostles is a congregation with a strong ecumenical commitment responding to faith in God's call to grow spiritually, covenant for Christian unity and partner with others to proclaim in word and deed Christ's gospel by striving to be:

*A growing, inclusive community where we invite others to share in its life and ministry;

*A nurturing community where all are spiritually fed through worship, education, caring for one another and sharing Christ and His love with all people;

*A serving community dedicated to helping meet the needs of others and building a better world for all God's children;

*A learning community, embracing the traditions of the UCC, providing vibrant programs, enhancing faith development and the spiritual and emotional growth of persons of all ages;

*A giving community dedicated to being faithful and generous stewards of our time, talents and treasure;

*A faith community joining in ministry and mission with campus partners, the community, the wider United Church of Christ and the ecumenical church."

Isaiah 62:6-12

Titus 3:34-7

Psalms 97

Luke 2: (1-7), 8-20

January 1, 2011 — New Year's Day

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, Texas.

The Core Values of the Cathedral of Hope are Compassion, Inclusion, Liberation, Hope and Faith in Jesus.

We are a people of Compassion. We are ministers who embody the tangible love of a savior who fed the hungry, healed the hurting, and told us bluntly that what we did to the least we did to him.

We are a people of Inclusion. This is a value Jesus held. We believe Jesus came to include, not to exclude. All are welcome around God's table.

We are a people of Liberation. We seek to challenge all oppression, particularly the oppression of queer people. By embodying grace we live out our liberation until all are set free.

We are a people of Hope. We are people filled with joy and unrelenting optimism because we believe God is good. With God, all things are possible. God can use us to transform the world.

We are a people of Jesus. We believe Jesus was the incarnation of God's grace. Jesus was the ultimate liberal, who resisted the status quo of oppression and showed us the way to the abundant life God intends for all people.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

Revelation 21: 1-6a

Psalms 8

Matthew 25:31-46



Mission Moment — Resolutions

December 26, 2010

First Sunday after Christmas

Many of us mark the New Year by making resolutions, which is

really a very Christian thing to do. The Christian faith holds

out to all people the continuing possibility of redemption. As

church-goers, we are offered the opportunity for new life every

Sunday. At worship, the ritual goes like this: confession of sin,

assurance of forgiveness, promise of obedience.

In resolving on New Year's Day to do better in the future, we may not

be aware that we are recapitulating a rite of Christian worship. But

that may be due to the kinds of resolutions we make. Instead of

resolving to be punctual for a change, or to forego second helpings of

dessert, why not adopt John Wesley's Rule this New Year's Day?

Do all the good you can,

By all the means you can,

In all the ways you can,

In all the places you can,

At all the times you can,

To all the people you can,

As long as ever you can.

Isaiah 63:7-9

Matthew 2:13-23

Hebrews 2:10-18

Psalms 148

December 27, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of Central Congregational Church Providence, Rhode Island.

"Welcome in the name of the Lord. Behold how good and pleasant it is to share this time together. May you feel cleansed and renewed by God's presence, equipped to face the challenges of the new week with courage, faith and calm. The Lord be with you. At Central, we are committed to living the words of Jesus, Love one another. This church is open to all and welcomes everyone who chooses to worship here. We affirm that all of us are created in God's image regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental facility, economic circumstance or physical condition.

A program of Central Church is Hamilton House. The mission of Hamilton House is to provide a program center for those over 55 years old without discrimination on grounds of race, creed, color or gender, and to offer a wide variety of activities that enhance the meaning, pleasure, and health of retirement years. We seek to offer creative answers to problems most frequently experienced by the aging: isolation, inactivity, loneliness, insecurity, poor health, nutrition and financial worries. Our goal is to meet the needs of seniors in as many ways as possible, always carried out in a warm and friendly spirit."

Proverbs 8:22-31

Psalms 148

I John 5:1-12

December 28, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of Central Union Church, Honolulu HI.

"Central Union Church welcomes visitors and members to join in worship with our open, caring congregation in the spirit of aloha and Jesus Christ.

Worship offers opportunities to connect with God as part of a loving Christian community.

That connection is encouraged through music, prayer, preaching, offering, confession, praise, and sacraments that remind us of our life and love together as God's people.

At Central Union we affirm that the authority of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and interpreted with the aid of the Holy Spirit, stands above and judges all human culture, institutions, and laws. We recognize our calling both as individuals and as the church to live in our community.

Central Union Church - Ministering to the needs of the community, contributing to the welfare of all, being enriched by those aspects of culture that help to make human life more human, and working to reflect God's just and loving purposes for the world."

Isaiah 49:13-23

Psalms 148

Matthew 18:1-14

A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ

December 29, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of The Church of Christ at Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH.

"The purpose of our congregation, as stated in our bylaws, "is to show forth the love of God in the world through worship and service." The ministry of this congregation is "the responsibility of all its members, individually and collectively, as each and all strive to embody the love of God within the human community."

As an open and inviting church, we seek to share with all people the essence of our Christian heritage. Through worship, music, education, fellowship, and service we are dedicated to creating an environment where a living faith in Jesus Christ can grow and be strengthened.

Because we believe that all church members are ministers, we strive to do God's work in the world, relying on God's grace. Locally, we support a food depot, help with community dinners, organize special offerings, and respond to a variety of needs as they arise. As a congregation of the United Church of Christ, we support the work of our homeland and world ministries through our financial contribution to Our Church's Wider Mission."

Jeremiah 31:15-22

Psalms 20

Luke 19:41-44

December 30, 2010

Today we pray for the ministry and mission of Nu'uuanu Congregational Church, Honolulu, HI.

"Nu'uuanu Congregational Church is a diverse, open congregation of faithful Christians who seek to:

- affirm all persons as children of God;
- respond to the needs of the community and congregation;
- respect all views and ideas;
- make and nurture disciples; and
- spread God's word using our talents and resources.

With over 500 active members, the church is divided into two language speaking groups. The English-speaking congregation, which comprises about 95% of the total membership, has its worship service each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. Over 200 persons attend these services. The Nichigobu (Japanese-speaking congregation) has its service at 10:30 a.m. with an average of 30 in attendance. NCC offers Christian Education for all ages. It has an average of 34 children from nursery to grade six. An ethnically mixed but predominantly Japanese congregation, the membership is open to anyone who desires to commit to membership. The staff and leadership embrace the church's multiracial ideals. There are approximately 20 in the high school group, grades 9-12. Church and community resource persons offer a diverse curriculum for the adult program. Bible study is offered in Japanese and English on weekdays and Sundays at the church and in members' homes."

Isaiah 26:1-9

Psalms 20

II Corinthians 4:16-18

A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ