

Global Mission Moment

The Easter Message Reaches Year Around

By God's great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ... | Peter 1: 3b

I recently flew to East Timor for a week of teaching a group of lay preachers who were being prepared to administer the sacraments and provide pastoral care to the many tiny groups of Protestant Christians scattered throughout the mountains of East Timor. The Protestant Church of East Timor (IPTL) grew a good deal during the Indonesian occupation due to the presence and money of Indonesian protestants, but is now left with an unsustainable structure, empty churches in some areas and Christians, but no churches in others. They are in a long process of death and resurrection, and Global Ministries has been one of their most faithful partners in the struggle.

From East Timor I flew to the island of Ambon, where I worked with an interfaith program of "Preaching Peace," which involves pulpit exchanges between Christian and Muslim preachers. This is one of many creative responses by local people of faith to the devastating communal conflict that wrecked the area in the early 2000s. I worked with my friend Abidin, who is vice chair of the Muslim council in Ambon. He grew up in an area where Muslims and Christians had lived together in friendship for centuries and has spent much of the last ten years working tirelessly to restore those friendships.

As you can see, a lot of our work is being done among post-conflict communities. While churches here are often slow to respond to social events (as they were in the original crises 10 years ago), the churches are very good at providing the long-term commitment and care that is needed to restore these communities to life. The churches continue to plug away at healing the hidden wounds and listening to the silent voices of the victims.

We cannot overstate the power that the idea of resurrection has among traumatized Christian communities in Eastern Indonesia. It gives them the strength to strive for a future different than the one dictated to them by a history of terror and grief. When I work with these people I am convinced that the power of the life of Jesus is not confined to "long ago and far away," but a very present reality.

Together we pray for the hope and strength of the faithful people of Indonesia who help heal the wounds of trauma in so many.

John Campbell-Nelson serves as a Global Ministries Missionary as professor with the Evangelical Church of West Timor.

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!



Mission Moment—All Ages, All Saints!

August 1, 2010

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Proper 13)

People of all ages discover a spirit in the United Church of Christ of openness and welcome. Here are the discoveries of three saints of the UCC. What are the stories of saints in your congregation?

Dana, a teenage saint

"When I was younger, my Girl Scout troop met at this church. The more I got to know the building and the people in it, I realized that a church was more than an old building — it was a place where I could belong. At my church, there are so many people interested in what I'm doing and who I am."

Al, a middle-age saint

"One night I asked my wife, "Do you get the feeling that something's missing from our lives?" We decided to try a church where my friend was its newly installed pastor. When we got there, we saw people hugging each other. They hugged us, too. Neither of us had ever experienced anything like this and certainly not among so many different types of people. On our way home my wife said, 'They actually seemed glad to see us.' That's when I knew what we had been missing: Community."

Pete, an octogenarian saint

"As I reached my 80s, I had to see a new place for myself in a new world with new faces in the church I had grown up in. Because of the covenant created at baptism, I knew I could speak my mind and ask questions when I needed to — something I really cherished as I got older. My church treats me with honor, and I honor my church. I still feel a sense of community and commitment to my church. I'm committed to keeping the door to my mind and my church open."

Series 1

Hosea 11:1-11
Colossians 3:1-11
Luke 12:13-21
Psalms 107:1-9, 43

Series 2

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23
Colossians 3:1-11
Luke 12:13-21
Psalms 49:1-12

August 2, 2010

Camp Totokett is a free one-week camp for the "invisible" children of HIV/AIDS: children who, while not infected themselves, live in families where one or more family member is infected. At a very early age, these children must face the illness, and sometimes death, of a parent or other loved one, often in the isolation and silence that typically surround those suffering from AIDS. Founded in 1996 by The First Congregational Church of Branford and held yearly at Killam's Point, the Church's waterfront property in Branford, camp offers a respite from the enormous issues and responsibilities which these children face daily in their homes. In a stimulating, nurturing environment, children, ages 6-13, participate in seashore-based nature activities, arts and crafts, fishing and a daily music program. (Continued on August 3)

Series 1

Hosea 11:12 – 12:14
Colossians 3:18 – 4:1
Psalms 60

Series 2

Ecclesiastes 2:1-17
Colossians 3:18 – 4:1
Psalms 127

August 3, 2010

(Continued from August 2)

Since Camp Tokokett's inception, it has also had a primary objective to provide enrichment and leadership training to the older former campers. Previous Camp Totokett campers who are now in high school are eligible for a weekend enrichment program. The weekend takes place before the regular Camp Totokett week and is way to maintain the connections established in the past as the campers 'age out' of the regular program. Former campers join the Church's mission trip to Kentucky where they learn advanced leadership training skills, while giving of themselves to others in need. Camp Totokett also seeks to promote individual, family and community connections between urban and suburban participants. Camp staff (except for our waterfront director) is made up entirely of community volunteers, including high school and college students, teachers, nurses, physicians and clergy. (Continued on August 4)

Series 1

Hosea 13:1-16
Colossians 4:2-6
Psalms 60

Series 2

Ecclesiastes 3:16 – 4:8
Colossians 4:2-6
Psalms 127

August 4, 2010 (Continued from August 3)

Through the bringing together of diverse urban and suburban groups, Camp Tokokett serves strongly as a bridge spanning geographic, socioeconomic, racial and religious lines. All participants develop new understandings, compassion, lasting friendships and respect for each other. There continues to be a significant need in the greater New Haven community for children and families living with AIDS/HIV. Camp regularly reaches out to newly affected families, but also serves as a long term support base to campers, the majority of whom return for multiple seasons. Camp offers stability to children coping with the multiplicity of changes that AIDS can bring, including (as has been the case with some of the campers) the death of a parent or loved one. (Continued on August 5)

Series 1

Hosea 14:1-9
Luke 12:22-31
Psalms 60

Series 2

Ecclesiastes 12:22-31
Luke 12:22-31
Psalms 127

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

August 5, 2010

(Continued from August 4)

Camp Totokett plans to continue its support to those who find themselves living in the midst of AIDS for as long as there is a need in our community. As a mission project of the First Congregational Church, the Camp Tokokett depends on volunteers for staffing and on donations of food, services and dollars from not only the congregation but also the wider community. It is funded in part by the Children Affected by AIDS Foundation, the Fresh Air Fund of the New Haven Register, the Woman's Seamen's Friend Society, private donations and, in the past by the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and the Branford Community Foundation.

Series 1

Isaiah 9:8-17
Romans 9:1-9
Psalms 50:1-8, 22-23

Series 2

Job 21:1-16
Romans 9:1-9
Psalms 33:12-22

August 6, 2010

U.S. Navy Chaplain Homer Yearick was stationed on the island of Tinian during WW II. The B-29 aircraft that carried the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki took off from Tinian. From that day forward, God's children in Japan held a special place in Homer's heart—a compassion that he passed on to his four children. Following his death, Homer's family established an endowment in his memory to benefit the Asian Rural Institute (ARI) – an organization whose mission it is to build an environmentally healthy, just and peaceful world. On this day, Hiroshima Day of Remembrance, we reflect on the lives lost, the lives forever changed and those, like Homer Yearick, who invested a lifetime in service to others. Contributions to the Reverend Homer and Lorraine K. Yearick Endowment Fund can be directed to Wider Church Ministries, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115.

Series 1

Isaiah 9:18 – 10:4
Acts 7:1-8
Psalms 50:1-8, 22-23

Series 2

Ecclesiastes 6:16
Acts 7:1-8
Psalms 33:12-22

August 7, 2010

For former UCC missionaries Richard and Martha Lammers, "To dream is to be alive. To act upon a dream can renew one's life." Renewal came to pass when they traveled to Japan in 2008 – the 60-year anniversary of the first time they set foot on Japanese soil. It was also their 60th wedding anniversary. The Lammers say it has taken a while to realize that their God-given purpose is to serve as catalysts for bringing people together "so they can create new and before-unimagined relationships and understandings. "To live and work for some 40 years among those who were considered our enemies has been the greatest privilege in my life," says Lammers. "I pray constantly that the youth of our day can have the privilege of living amongst those we now call our enemies and learn more deeply of our common humanity."

Series 1

Isaiah 1:2-9, 21-23
Matthew 6:19-24
Psalms 50:1-8, 22-23

Series 2

Genesis 11:27-32
Matthew 6:19-24
Psalms 33:12-22

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

August 13, 2010

The Church of Northern India (CNI), the main Protestant denomination in Northern India and partner to Global Ministries, was established in 1970 and has 26 dioceses, operates 65 hospitals, nine nursing homes, three technical schools and 250 educational institutions. Despite those fairly impressive numbers, Christians represent only about 2 percent of the population in India. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, missionaries came to India to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Reverend Oscar Lohr was one of those missionaries, sent by the German Evangelical Mission from the United States in 1863. He journeyed first by boat, from New York to Mumbai, then by train to Nagpur and last by bullock cart – for 260 miles! – to Bistrampur. It was in Bistrampur that Rev. Lohr built the first church, and now, nearly 150 years later; it is in great need of repair.

(continued on August 14, 2010)

Series 1

Isaiah 3:1-17
Hebrews 10:32-39
Psalms 80:1-2, 8-19

Series 2

I Samuel 5:1-12
Hebrews 10:32-39
Psalms 82

August 14, 2010

(Continued from August 13, 2010)

Befitting Bistrampur Church's place of honor in the history of Christianity in India, the church is being restored rather than replaced. An engineer's report has identified the crucial issues and problem areas for implementing the restoration. The church's many arches and windows require special attention and will be addressed individually with repairs estimated at \$200 per window and \$600 for each doorway arch. Total repairs, without labor costs, are estimated at below \$11,000. The more immediate work on the church to ensure its stability has begun. The less crucial but no less necessary repairs will be addressed as funds become available. Although India's first exposure to Christianity came via the preaching of St. Thomas, there is no doubt that, with your help, the Bistrampur Church will be restored and the legacy of the Reverend Oscar Lohr will continue.

Series 1

Isaiah 3:18 – 4:6
Matthew 24:15-27
Psalms 80:1-2, 8-19

Series 2

I Samuel 6:1-16
Matthew 24:15-27
Psalms 82

Weekly Prayer

*Judge eternal,
you love justice and hate oppression;
you give peace to those who seek it,
and you condemn the rage of violence.
Give us courage to take our stand
with all victims of bloodshed and greed,
and, following your servants and prophets,
look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Amen.*

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for the Mission of the United Church of Christ is made possible; thank you!*



Mission Moment—UCC Hospitality

August 8, 2010

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Proper 14)

KEEP OUT.

Two bitter words that cut and sting.

KEEP OUT

The words send a chill through us, and we hurry along our way.

United Church of Christ congregations tend to emphasize welcome and hospitality.

Here is a sampling of the sayings on some of our churches' signs:

Jesus Welcomed All...So Do We!

Warm Hearts, Open Minds

Intentional in Faith, United in Diversity

A Family of Faith for EVERYONE

God Accepts You as You Are and So Do We

Our Door is Opened Extra Wide!

Where God Loves, a Church Cares, and People Are Friendly

There is a Place Here for You!

A Family Church Where All Are Welcome!

How does your congregation announce that it's ready to welcome everyone?

Series 1

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20
Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16
Luke 12:32-40
Psalms 50:1-8, 22-23

Series 2

Genesis 15:1-6
Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16
Luke 12:32-40
Psalms 33:12-22

August 9, 2010

The Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) in North India has been supported by Global Ministries since 2006. The Centre serves 300 men and women who farm the rural areas of the Diocese of Sambalpur. Living at or below the poverty line, the farmers struggle due to damaging weather, globalization, and high interest rates imposed by local moneylenders. Often, they are forced to migrate and find work in hazardous industries.

The Centre utilizes experienced resource persons in agriculture, cooperatives, resource mobilization, organization, community development, health issues, and mother and child care. The hope is that these programs will help provide area farmers with better food security and income, thereby halting the need for families to migrate to find employment. In its first 20 months, results are encouraging, though funds are still needed to allow for additional programming and to financially assist the farmers as they implement what they've learned.

Series 1

Isaiah 2:1-4
Hebrews 11:1-7
Psalm 11

Series 2

II Chronicles 33:1-17
Hebrews 34:22-33
Psalm 89:1-18

August 10, 2010

The Center for Progressive Renewal has launched an ambitious project to plant new congregations and renew existing churches. In its first four months, the Center lined up more than 15 webinars and workshops on church planting; renewal through spiritual direction; evangelism in communities; and a broad range of other topics keyed to church growth. The Center is funded by Local Church Ministries, the UCC's Southeast Conference and "Hope for Peace and Justice." Its leadership includes the Rev. Cameron Trimble, CEO and executive director, and the Rev. Michael Piazza, executive director for church multiplication. "CPR aims to train leaders – both ordained and lay – in the skills they need for church planting and congregational renewal," says the Rev. David Schoen, leader of the UCC's Congregational Vitality and Discipleship Team.

(Continued on August 11, 2010)

Series 1

Isaiah 24:1-13
Hebrews 11:17-28
Psalm 11

Series 2

II Chronicles 34:22-33
Hebrews 11:17-28
Psalm 89:1-18

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

August 11, 2010

(Continued from August 10)

"Church multiplication" – the founding of new churches by existing congregations – is one of CPR's key strategies. Working in partnership with seminaries and the UCC's regional conferences, the Center will recruit, train, mentor and coach pastors and lay leaders with a particular vocation for new church development. The Center will also support existing churches with a commitment to renewal. "We'll be drawing on the skills of the best ecumenical practitioners in church development and renewal who can serve as a pool of consultants and coaches for the denomination," says Trimble. "At present, there is no ecumenical center serving the development of new congregations in progressive denominations. This is a vacuum we aim to fill."

(Continued on August 12)

Series 1

Isaiah 24:14-23
Luke 12:41-48
Psalm 11

Series 2

Jeremiah 33:14-26
Luke 12:41-48
Psalm 89:1-18

August 12, 2010

(Continued from August 11)

The Leadership Institute will offer two tracks: one for new church leadership and one for renewal of existing congregations. Workshops will include: Church Planting 101; Transformational Worship; Social Networking and Web Design; Fundraising and Stewardship; Spiritual Discernment and Decision-Making; 21st-Century Faith Formation; Turning Your Church Inside Out; and Rediscovering Your Community.

The Center's mission statement defines "progressive Christianity" as "a faith that believes God's family includes all people; God's people are responsible for caring for the environment, the poor, sick and vulnerable; that education, health care and civil liberties are vital to abundant life and therefore the desire of God for all people; and that truth is found more often in honest grappling with the questions than in absolute hierarchical pronouncement of the answers." "We believe that this is the type of faith for which millions of Americans hunger," Trimble says.

Series 1

Isaiah 2:5-11
Hebrews 10:26-31
Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19

Series 2

Joshua 7:1, 10-26
Hebrews 10:26-31
Psalm 82

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

August 20, 2010

(Continued from August 19)

Created in response to a 2005 General Synod resolution calling for a church-wide praise song book, a diverse group of musicians, pastors and theologians were given the task of bringing the project to life. Initially, a contest was held to generate interest in the song book, with two songs -- "Hush" by James F.D. Martin and "You Are" by Mark Unbehagen -- selected as winners. Over a two-year period, hundreds of songs were evaluated, both from previously published sources and new submissions. More than 100 of the songs have not been published previously.

The 217-song collection includes music of praise that encompasses traditional religious vocabulary but also explore non-traditional, contemporary religious images, said the Rev. Susan A. Blain, minister for worship and spiritual formation and a member of song book's advisory team.

Series 1

Jeremiah 6:20-30
Acts 17:1-9
Psalms 71:1-6

Series 2

II Chronicles 8:12-15
Acts 17:1-9
Psalms 103:1-8

August 21, 2010

Oh Baby!

The pastor of First Congregational Church of Bethel, CT was getting a haircut from the same hairdresser as they had for many years. They would always play catch-up on what is new in their lives. The pastor was telling "Anthony" about a recent sermon and some of the other causes near and dear to their heart, the Daily Bread Food Pantry and how the number of grocery bags full of food distributed has increased from 60 bags a week to over 200 bags a week. Concern was expressed that so many people are finding themselves in such difficult financial straits and how there was need to provide more food for the pantry. As the bill being paid, Anthony reached behind the counter and pulled out an envelope marked "Food Pantry". He handed the pastor fifty dollars and told them to do whatever I thought was best. "What a gift!" said the Rev. Lori Cipot. Baby food was purchased, then delivered to the Pantry just in time to distribute food to over 75 people. God does work in mysterious ways!

Series 1

Jeremiah 1:1-3, 11-19
Luke 6:1-5
Psalms 71:1-6

Series 2

Nehemiah 13:15-22
Luke 6:1-5
Psalms 103:1-8

Weekly Prayer

*Living God, you formed us in the womb
and appointed us to be prophets to the nations.
Stretch out your hand to cure our infirmity
and dispel our fear,
that we may know the freedom of serving you in Christ
and proclaim the wonders you have done. Amen.*

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Mission Moment—Restore Us

August 15, 2010

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Proper 15)

How does your congregation announce that it's ready to welcome everyone?

Generosity: Best Practices

A "practice" is often something you do every day—getting better and better at it. Is it possible to become a more generous person by "practicing"?

Of course! In fact, there's really no other way...

Generous giving goes along with generous living.

If you're interested in exploring generous living, consider ordering "The Big Secret of Giving: Hidden Treasures in Life and Church," a 30-day devotional with reflections, prayers, and quotes.

(Order from UC Resources by calling 800-537-3394; cost is \$3).

Written especially for church members, you'll find "The Big Secret of Giving," by William C. Green, former UCC Executive for Faith and Giving, original and thought-provoking. And . . . it will help you "practice"!

Series 1

Isaiah 5:1-7
Luke 12:49-56
Hebrews 11:29 – 12:2
Psalms 80:1-2, 8-19

Series 2

Jeremiah 23:23-29
Hebrews 11:29 – 12:2
Luke 12:49-56
Psalms 82

August 16, 2010

Although this prayer is from a Liturgy for Australian Brushfire victims in 2009, the words speak across time, distance and circumstance to all who pray for restoration and comfort.

Hold our hands, Lord. / Walk us through the pain / and the valley of our sorrows. / Hold on to us when we are too afraid / to think about the future. / Let us lean on you, Lord, / when we're too weary to continue. / Hold our hands, Lord, through the night / until we see the light of dawn. / We ask this through Jesus Your Son, / the one who knows what it is to suffer.

The gospel reflection from Michael Hansen, of Lavalla Catholic College in Traralgon, Victoria reminds us that God does have a special love for poor, the marginalized and the most vulnerable. Our faith moves us, he says, to demonstrate God's love for those pushed to the brink through our generous giving and our deep solidarity with their pain.

Series 1

Isaiah 5:8-23
I John 4:1-6
Psalm 74

Series 2

Jeremiah 23:30-40
I John 4:1-6
Psalm 32

August 17, 2010

Imagine what it would take to replace all of your belongings if you lost everything. In some parts of the world, it takes surprisingly little to restore, or even improve, living conditions. For the last nine years, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) – Mozambique Synod in partnership with Global Ministries, has administered a livestock-raising project to help alleviate the financial difficulties of church members.

Sixteen cattle are distributed among church members to provide financial assistance to families living in extreme poverty. Some of the funds for this program designated for development opportunities had to be used for veterinary care because many of the animals were ill or dying from lack of medical care. Now the cattle thrive and the families benefiting grows each season.

Series 1

Isaiah 5:24-30
Acts 7:44-53
Psalm 74

Series 2

Jeremiah 25:15-29
Acts: 7:44-53
Psalm 32

August 18, 2010

The National Spiritual Council of Churches of Haiti (CONASPEH) is the umbrella organization for the country's 5,000 Protestant churches. This Global Ministries partner advocates for its member churches, and also develops projects in health care and education. Its medical clinics provide patients with physicals and first-aid care. CONASPEH purchased a mobile laboratory that provides the diagnostic testing that patients currently can't afford. The mobile lab also helps train nurses. At the same time, CONASPEH's Collège André gives scholarships to students for the advanced study of medicine and other sciences.

The school offers a basic curriculum, plus courses in informatics, typing, plastic arts, and music. It fills a deep void in Haiti: education is free and compulsory for children between 6 and 11, but cost prevents many students from attending school. CONASPEH provides a way for people in Haiti to access health care and education.

Series 1

Isaiah 27:1-13
Luke 19:45-48
Psalm 74

Series 2

Jeremiah 25:30-38
Luke 19:45-48
Psalm 32

August 19, 2010

Celebrating the culmination of four years of work, the UCC's national staff dedicated the denomination's new expansive-language "[Sing! Prayer and Praise](#)" song book at its fall all-staff day in Cleveland just one year ago. The morning service marked the beginning of a day of volunteering at work sites throughout the city as a commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the UCC national setting's 1989 move to Cleveland. "We send it into the world!" said the Rev. Geoffrey A. Black, general minister and president, as he presided over a litany of dedication for the song book with about 200 staff members crowded into the first-floor Amistad Chapel. "We pray in hopes that 'Sing!' will be a continued source of inspiration to many."

"A true labor of love is a true labor in community," said the Rev. Kimberly Whitney, minister for community life at the UCC's Church House, after recognizing staff who had shared various roles in the planning, production, publication and promotion of the book. Whitney paid special tribute to the leadership of the Rev. Scott A. Ressler, the UCC's minister for worship, music and liturgical arts, who edited the project and convened its advisory team.

(Continued on August 20)

Series 1

Jeremiah 6:1-19
Hebrews 12:3-17
Psalm 71:1-6

Series 2

Numbers 15:32-41
Luke 6:1-5
Psalm 103:1-8

August 27, 2010

(Continued from August 26)

"The ministry of your church (Old First, Springfield, Mass.) is not over," said the Rev. Stephen Sterner, executive minister of the UCC's Local Church Ministries, in an email to the congregation. "Every church and every person that receives the blessing that will come from your generous gifts will be a continuation of the faithfulness and ministry of your church and the whole church." In addition to the gift to the UCC, Old First gave generously to many charities and ministries in the Springfield, Mass., area. Members hope these gifts will keep the spirit of their church alive and provide for the upkeep of the historic building, now owned by the City of Springfield. "As we are painfully aware, funding for church development and assistance for struggling churches is greatly needed," said Susan Saunders, moderator of Old First. "Our prayer is that other congregations will be assisted." in order to avoid closure."

Series 1

Jeremiah 12:1-13
1 Peter 4:7-11
Psalms 81:1, 10-16

Series 2

Proverbs 18:6-12
1 Peter 4:7-11
Psalms 112

August 28, 2010

Have you ever wished your church could make a statement or endorse an action in a timely manner when no congregational meeting is scheduled? Church of the Good Shepherd, Carbondale, Ill., adopted a Witness for Justice policy which enables them to do just that, thanks to modern communication methods. The statement is first approved by the Justice and Witness Team and presented to the pastor and the president of the church council. The message is then sent out to church members by electronic mail, along with background information and explanation. Active members without e-mail are contacted by phone. If the need for response is not immediate, the issue is also shared through the church newsletter. The message includes contact information and a deadline for responding. If the issue requires more than a simple agree or disagree, alternative suggestions are allowed, which are then passed on so everyone can be part of the discussion. Agreement of 75% of the responses to the final format is needed for approval. Good Shepherd has used this policy to seek endorsement of a Smoke-Free Carbondale resolution, and others.

Series 1

Jeremiah 2:1-3, 14-22
Matthew 20:20-28
Psalms 81:1, 10-16

Series 2

Proverbs 21:1-4, 24-26
Matthew 20:20-28
Psalms 112

Weekly Prayer

*God of majestic glory,
in humility you have revealed yourself
in the incarnation of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who took the lowest place among us
that we might be raised to the heights of divinity.
Teach us to walk the path he prepared for us,
so that we might take a place at the table with all who seek the joy of his kingdom.
Amen.*

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Mission Moment—Back to School!

August 22, 2010

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (Proper 16)

It's August—time to buy one last ice cream cone at the corner stand on the way to get school supplies. If there's a child or teen in your life, there's something more you can do this month to prepare them for school, and beyond that, for adulthood. In the midst of back-to-school purchases, invest some time talking about financial decisions. Young children need to know a safe place to carry lunch money and how much lunch costs at school.

Teens need to learn how to balance short-term and long-term desires. College students face a dramatic increase in financial responsibilities and choices. In a time of record-high credit balances and bankruptcies, young people can use guidance more than ever. If handling money seems like an odd topic for the church to raise, think again. Gospel reports of Jesus' ministry reveal that he talked about money and possessions more than anything else except for love! Learning the wise use of our assets is part of the faithful Christian life.

Children learn about money at home. Think back to your own childhood. Maybe money was never discussed in your family; you learned to be secretive about finances. You might have been encouraged by a parent to set aside some money for college; you learned that saving can bring rewards. Perhaps your parents fought about money a lot; you learned that money is a source of power, controversy and pain.

Money messages like these come from daily life. Busy parents don't often give much thought to what they're teaching by their own actions. This month, be intentional about the money messages in your household. Talk about the ways we use money and how to make those decisions. Consider together what the instruction of Jesus means for money management in your family: see Matthew 6:19-21 and 24.

Series 1

Jeremiah 1:4-10
Luke 13:10-17
Hebrews 12:18-29
Psalms 71:1-6

Series 2

Isaiah 58:9b-14
Luke 13:10-17
Hebrews 12:18-29
Psalms 103:1-8

August 23, 2010

For the price of a used car, about \$5,200, life-saving medicines and tests could be provided to some of the world's poorest people. The National Spiritual Council of Churches in Haiti (CONASPEH), a long-time partner of Global Ministries, operates a clinic in Port-au-Prince where physical exams and basic first aid care are provided. The problem is, most people are too poor to afford lab testing and, even if the tests are run, patients must return to the clinic for the diagnosis and treatment. The cost of the tests, the medicine and the return trip are unaffordable for most people in Haiti. Through Global Ministries private donations have supplied a mobile laboratory project which includes equipment and supplies to test for common life threatening diseases in Haiti such as malaria, TB, anemia, HIV and others. The supplies fit into a small suitcase, equipped with a solar panel for use in places without electricity. The kit is used by the Bentrôts, our missionaries, in rural areas outside of Port-au-Prince.

Series 1

Jeremiah 7:1-15
Hebrews 3:7 – 4:11
Psalm 10

Series 2

Ezekiel 20:1-17
Hebrews 3:7 – 4:11
Psalm 109:21-31

August 24, 2010

A massive fire apparently ignited by lightning has claimed the historic structure that housed the Euclid Avenue Congregational UCC in Cleveland.

Clevelanders awoke Tuesday, March 23, 2010 to TV news reports that the impressive stone structure — home to a diverse, multiracial congregation tucked within the sprawling Cleveland Clinic medical center campus — had been destroyed. Although there were no significant injuries in the blaze, one firefighter was treated for an eye injury. In addition, eight patients at two adjacent Cleveland Clinic buildings were moved because of smoke in the hospital's ventilation system, and the street was closed due to fear that the front of the building would collapse. Founded in 1843, Euclid Avenue Congregational UCC was one of the first racially integrated churches in Cleveland. The congregation has about 200 members, including the Rev. Paul H. Sherry, UCC president from 1989 to 1999, and his wife, Mary, who have attended Euclid Avenue for the past 20 years.

(Continued on August 25)

Series 1

Jeremiah 7:16-26
Revelation 3:7-13
Psalm 10

Series 2

Ezekiel 20:18-32
Revelation 3:7-13
Psalm 109:21-31

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

August 25, 2010

(Continued from August 24)

"One never knows what the next day will bring," said Sherry. "There is a deeply rooted grief over the loss of this building that has served so many for so many years. This was a beloved building for so many people." Sherry moved to Cleveland in 1989 when the national offices were relocated from New York. "We joined Euclid Avenue shortly thereafter," said Sherry. "My installation services took place there. The church has meant and means a great deal to us." Sherry marveled at the immediate support received from "so many UCC people and beyond. There is such a commonality of faith, an ability to support people in times of loss. Though we grieve, we continue to trust that God will help us find a way forward. In that trust, we hope, indeed, to see a brighter tomorrow." The church accepted an offer of worship space at a recently vacated Methodist Church building nearby. Fire destroys Cleveland's historic church in Cleveland by United Church News staff reports Leon Bibb, news anchor for Cleveland's ABC affiliate, is a longtime member of the church. "That's just the building. The church is the people," Bibb said in an early morning interview. "Maybe God is still talking to us."

Series 1

Jeremiah 7:27-34
Luke 6:6-11
Psalm 10

Series 2

Ezekiel 20:33-44
Luke 6:6-11
Psalm 109:21-31

August 26, 2010

When Old First UCC in Springfield, Mass., decided to close its doors after 370 years in ministry, there were a few questions to be answered.

At the top of the list was how the church would honor its legacy and who would be the beneficiary of the sale of its property and liquidation of about \$1.8 million in assets. With a spirit of generosity, the congregation has donated substantial financial resources to many ministries, including more than \$250,000 to the UCC's New and Renewing Churches Endowment Fund. The church, which opened in 1636, officially ceased worship at the end of 2007. Upon closing, they voted to give back to the community and help partner ministries. An advisory council met monthly to wrap up the loose ends of church business and traverse the difficult legal process of dissolving a nonprofit corporation. They distributed the church proceeds during the last half of 2009.

(Continued on August 27)

Series 1

Jeremiah 11:1-17
I Peter 3:8-12
Psalm 81:1, 10-16

Series 2

Proverbs 18:6-12
I Peter 3:8-12
Psalm 112

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

September 3, 2010

(Continued from September 2)

The LAWG's unique role is as coordinator, implementer, and catalyst. They bring partners together to plan and implement effective strategies to influence the policy debate. LAWG also provides critical information to activists across the United States to expand the role that U.S. citizens play in debating U.S. foreign policy. Their relationships on Capitol Hill help open doors for Latin American civil society activists and allow them to contribute firsthand perspectives to U.S. policy debates. LAWGEF helps to provide international support for local human rights workers in the region. Their collaboration with human rights networks throughout the region helps to ensure that the work reflects the needs of Latin American partners and the values of coalition members.

Series 1

Jeremiah 16:14 – 17:4
Colossians 4:7-17
Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18

Series 2

Deuteronomy 7:12-26
Colossians 4:7-17
Psalms 1

September 4, 2010

Theological Education by Extension (TEE) College of South Africa – located in Johannesburg and supported by Global Ministries – provides theological education to mainline and independent church ministers. The school, founded in 1976, maintains an extensive network of ministers, churches and denominations across most of South Africa.

The College has over 3,000 students taking nearly 7,000 courses. Students have initiated and been involved with teen-age boys living in foster care; helping the homeless; working with victims of domestic violence; providing support to people with AIDS; teaching business skills; assisting the elderly; and helping the unemployed find jobs.

Series 1

Jeremiah 17: 14-27
Matthew 10:34-42
Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18

Series 2

Deuteronomy 29:2-20
Matthew 10:34-42
Psalms 1

Weekly Prayer

*Creator God,
you form us on the wheel of life
as a potter molds the clay.
Shape us into holy vessels,
bearing the mark of your wise crafting,
that we may remain strong and useful through years of faithful and obedient service
in Christ's name. Amen.*

*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!*



Mission Moment—Open Table

August 29, 2010

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Proper 17)

Expecting the Unexpected

"The coming of the Son of Man will be like a thief in the night." 1 Thessalonians 5:2

"But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that time to surprise you like a thief." 1 Thessalonians 5:4

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:2

"Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which Christ is coming." Matthew 25:13

When the water got to the farmer's bottom windows, a neighbor rowed over to rescue him. The farmer declined: "I'm a man of faith. God will save me."

When the waters rose to the second story windows, another neighbor appeared in a motor boat. Again the farmer refused to be rescued: "I'm a man of faith. God will save me."

Finally the man sat on top of the roof. A helicopter flew over and lowered a ladder. Once again, the farmer declined. "I'm a man of faith. I'm certain that God will save me." The next thing he knew, the farmer found himself at the pearly gates. "What happened?" he moaned to St. Peter. "Why didn't God save me?"

St. Peter shook his head sadly, saying, "Listen here, we sent a rowboat, a motor boat, and a helicopter!"

Series 1

Jeremiah 2:4-13
Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16
Luke 14:1, 7-14
Psalms 81:1, 10-16

Series 2

Sirach 10:12-18
Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16
Luke 14:1, 7-14
Psalms 112

August 30, 2010

The Grantville (Penn.) Area Food Pantry, housed at Faith UCC, broke ground for an expansion August 2009. Faith's pastor George Robertson said it was never dreamed back in 1999 that they would outgrow the former parsonage of the church helping people in the community with food and assistance. In 1999, the pantry began serving six or seven families a month in one room. They now serve close to 100 people a week and have 125 volunteers who work Wednesdays to unload the food and shelf it and then come back Thursday nights and Friday mornings to serve those in need. The expansion is funded by a grant of \$188,000 given to East Hanover Township derived from gaming proceeds at Hollywood Casino and Penn National Race Course. The addition is needed to meet increasing demand for the services the pantry provides, including clothing and hot meals, and to make the pantry handicapped-accessible.

(Continued on August 31, 2010)

Series 1

Jeremiah 2:23-37
Hebrews 13:7-21
Psalms 58

Series 2

II Chronicles 12:1-12
Hebrews 13:7-21
Psalms 119:65-72

August 31, 2010

(Continued from August 31, 2010)

Joining members of Faith UCC in the groundbreaking ceremony were members from several other Grantville churches who participate on the organizational committee or volunteer at the food pantry. State Representative Ron Marsico, who helped the pantry obtain a feasibility study grant last year, was also in attendance. Members of Faith and the operating committee helped Rev. Robertson and local officials break ground. The Grantville Area Food Pantry has expanded beyond their walls. Each Monday evening, except for the summer months, volunteers from the Pantry go to Penn National Race Course and serve the track workers and their families a hot meal. In summer months, picnics are held on Mondays with the volunteers, including many youth from the area churches playing soccer and softball with the track families. Dauphin County Commissioner George Hartwick read a proclamation naming August 20, 2009 Grantville Area Food Pantry day in Dauphin County.

Series 1

Jeremiah 3:1-14
Titus 1:1-9
Psalms 58

Series 2

Isaiah 2:12-17
Titus 1:1-9
Psalms 119:65-72

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

September 1, 2010

Through our generous gifts to Neighbors In Need, the United Church of Christ is offering hope to millions of people; we are transforming lives, the nation, and our world. Grant recipient for March 2010 through the Central Atlantic Conference is The Latin America Working Group. It is one of the nation's longest standing coalitions dedicated to foreign policy. The Latin America Working Group (LAWG) and its sister organization, the Latin America Working Group Education Fund, carry out the coalition's mission to encourage U.S. policies towards Latin America that promote human rights, justice, peace and sustainable development. LAWG promotes the interests of over 60 major religious, humanitarian, grassroots and policy organizations to decision makers in Washington. They are a trusted voice in Congress, and provide guidance to policymakers who want their decisions to be grounded in human rights.

(Continued on September 2, 2010)

Series 1

Jeremiah 3:15-25
Luke 14:15-24
Psalms 58

Series 2

Isaiah 57:14-21
Luke 14:15-24
Psalms 119:65-72

September 2, 2010

(Continued from September 1, 2010)

Founded in 1983, LAWG was a major player in opposing the U.S. role in Central American wars of that decade, and in supporting the negotiated peace settlements that took hold in the region by the 1990s. Since then, LAWG has gained U.S. support for peace accord implementation aid, over a billion dollars in disaster relief, and the declassification of U.S. documents that shed light on human rights abuses in Latin America and U.S. policy. They have helped to ease restrictions on the sale of food and medicine to Cuba and have helped to change the balance of U.S. aid to Colombia, decreasing military aid and increasing aid for development and for victims of violence. The Latin America Working Group Education Fund organizes briefings, forums and other public events and coordinates visits by Latin American civil society leaders. The LAWGEF also provides information to the press and publishes reports on Latin American issues and related U.S. policy.

(Continued on September 3, 2010)

Series 1

Jeremiah 15:10-21
Philippians 2:25-30
Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18

Series 2

Genesis 39:1-23
Philippians 2:25-30
Psalms 1

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