

February 2008

Glimpses of Faith Newsletter

**Faith UCC
970 N. Loop 337
New Braunfels, TX 78130**

**830-625-6761
www.faithuccnb.org
Rev. Scott B. Martin**



Every wonder why the date we celebrate Easter moves around? This year it is quite early, March 23rd. March 23rd is the earliest Easter of the whole of the 21st century! In case you are interested the latest Easter will be April 25th 2038. That means Easter can vary by more than a month! The big question is “Why?”

It all goes back to Council of Nicaea, convened by the Emperor Constantine in the year 325 A.D. One of his goals was to unify church practices and theology. Prior to this Easter was not necessarily celebrated on a Sunday. At this council it was determined that Easter should always be celebrated on the same Sunday throughout the world. To this end they developed a special table to determine which Sunday it would be in any given year. These tables, with some revision, have remained in use right down to the present time.

Okay, why didn't they just choose one particular Sunday, say the second Sunday of April each year? Then Easter would always be on the same Sunday, if not the same day, from year to year.

The church fixed the day of Easter to two other variables: (A) the vernal (spring) equinox in the northern hemisphere and (B) the first full moon

after this event. Now, as we know, the lunar month and the solar month are not the same, because the moon orbits around the earth at a different rate than the earth orbits around the sun. A lunar month can vary between 29 days, 6 hours and 35 minutes and 29 days, 19 hours and 55 minutes. Throw into this mix the necessity of leap years and you can see why the date of Easter changes from year to year. The earliest Easter can be is March 22nd and the latest it can be is April 25th. (The date the church sets for Easter is not 100% astronomically accurate for reasons we do not have time to go into here.)

Why go to all this trouble instead of simply choosing either the same day or at least the same Sunday each year? The church loves symbolism and making a theological statement. Just any ole day would not work. The vernal equinox marks the time when we move from winter to spring, from death to life. From this point on the days have more and more light (day) and less and less darkness (night). Jesus as the “Light of the World” works in this fashion in the world, pushing back the forces of darkness and bringing about fullness of life. As we move into the Lenten season let us contemplate how Christ brings light to our lives and to our world and pushes back the forces of darkness.

Red Cross Red Kettle Totals

On Saturday December 8th Faith church staffed Salvation Army Red Kettles all across the city of New Braunfels. We collected \$2,239.12 that day for the work of the Salvation Army here in New Braunfels! Well done! Our thanks to all of you who helped to make this possible. It took a lot of people to staff the 25 two hour slots we had to fill.



Giving
Hope
Today

Faith UCC to Use Lenten Devotion Book Developed by Rev. Roland Pantermuehl

Lent is not just a time to give up things. We give up things so that we can make room to add things like prayer, reading our Bibles, attending worship services and Lenten studies, etc. This Lent give up a little TV watching or sitting in front of your computer, to read and pray your way through *“God Still Speaks”* a daily Lenten devotion written by Rev. Roland Pantermuehl.

As most of you know Rev. Pantermuehl was a long time member of Faith UCC. You may not know that he served Cross UCC, then Evangelical and Reformed, in nearby Seguin, Texas. He wrote this particular Lenten Devotion, not just for his church in Seguin, but for the whole E & R denomination, one of the constituent bodies that formed the UCC. He wrote this devotion in 1947 and it was published by *The Commission on Evangelism*. May it be a blessing to you on your Lenten journey!

Understanding Islam: Judaism, Christianity and Islam Have More In Common Than You Think!

At no other time in recent memory is the imperative to understand those who think and worship differently from ourselves been more important. The Interfaith Network – Comal Area was formed in 2006 of local congregations that embrace a respect for all faith traditions practiced in our community and beyond.

On Thursday, February 7th, at 7 p.m. at Faith UCC, the Interfaith Network will sponsor our first speaker series to the community. Our guest speaker will be Nader Elmarhoumi, Imam of the Muslim Society of San Marcos and the San Marcos Masjid. Mr. Elmarhoumi is also a doctoral student in physics research at Texas State University as part of Office of Naval Research grant in a non-military application.



There will be a time for questions and discussion. There will also be a time for fellowship and refreshments.

To My Faith Church Family,

I thank you so much for the nice Christmas card and the Gift Certificate to my two favorite restaurants, New Braunfels Smokehouse and Mamacita's. Your thoughtfulness and kindness is deeply appreciated. Norma

Thanks from Church World Service

I want to thank you for your generous gift. As you know, the needs are great, but with your help, so much can be done.

Thanks to donors like you, we can provide food, shelter, health care, and clean water to refugees and others forced to flee their homes. With your help, we can support impoverished communities as they seek to improve their farming techniques, access reliable sources of safe water, and build a more sustainable future.



Though the evening news is often a litany of woe, I remain hopeful because of the courageous and creative work that we support around the world and because of people like you, who empower us to act on your behalf in our wounded world. May God bless you for your generosity.

Faithfully yours,
Rev. John L. McCullough
Executive Director & CEO of
Church World Service



(This note was received for a gift of \$100 to CWS's Tool & Blanket Program)



Dear Faith UCC,

We extend a very special thank you for your recent contribution of \$125 that we received on December 29, 2007. We are certainly blessed by friends like you who keep us in mind. ...

Together with God's grace and your willing partnership, we will continue the ministry of Slumber Falls Camp.

Sincerely,
Rev. Charles Stark



On Wednesday February 6th at 7 p.m. we will have an Ash Wednesday service at Faith UCC. This service will include the traditional imposition of the ashes, for those who wish to come forward to receive them.

**Paradise Lost:
The Religious Life
of Charles Darwin
Wednesday March 5th 7:30 p.m.**

On Wednesday night March 5th we will be showing *Paradise Lost: The Religious Life of Charles Darwin* in Baese Hall. This program is being cosponsored by Faith UCC and Comal County Unitarian Universalists.

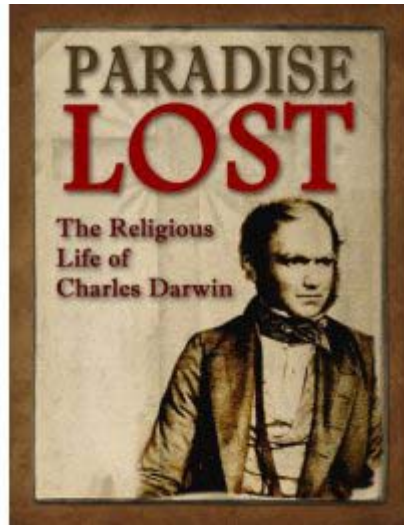
Despite significant contributions to modern science, the implications of Darwin's theories on religious thought are of greatest interest to most people. Hence all the controversies over teaching evolution in the schools and the pushing of so called "Intelligent Design" by conservative Christian groups. What better way to explore this timely issue than through Darwin's own religious journey? Spanning the fields of science, theology, sociology and philosophy, *Paradise Lost* tells of one man's struggle to comprehend a world explained by both religion and by the science that bears his name.

This would be an excellent program to invite friends to, especially any teachers you know who have had to struggle with these issues.

There will be a time for discussion after the DVD.

Here is a closing thought to ponder that comes from the great poet, Alfred Lord Tennyson:

**"There lives more faith in
honest doubt, believe me, than in
half the creeds."**



- 2-2 Sandy Ludwig
- 2-5 Karen Campa
- 2-13 Louise Dworaczyk
- 2-20 Roger Richter
- 2-25 Michele Gilbreth
- 2-26 Merle Kosler
- 3-1 Aurora Hall
- 3-2 Sonny Heinemeyer
- 3-3 Betty Heinemeyer
- 3-5 Fischer Roland Marlow
- 3-7 Curt Leonhardt
- 3-8 Lucile Marburger
- 3-9 Julia Pantermuehl
Frances Ruley



Ushers:

- 2-3 David & Sally Pena;
Julie Allison & Ray Bizer
- 2-6 Ash Wednesday:
Richard & Kathy Leber
- 2-10 Darlene Stephens; Jo Ann Brown;
Robert & Emily Deninno
- 2-17 Sol Fuss; Bruce Ridgley
Sheri Haynes; Chrissy Gossett
- 2-24 Norma Gilbert; Mikki Ward;
Richard Hitz; Albert Hennig

Council Representatives:

- 2-3 Bonnie Stark
2-6 Joe Ward
2-10 Michele Gilbreth
2-17 Jim Gossett
2-24 Tim Marlow
2-25

Communion Assistants:
Julie Allison & Ray Bizer

Liturgist:

- 2-4 Bonnie Stark
2-5 Steve Foster
2-10 Karen Kramm
2-17 Michelle Perry-Clark
2-24 Betty Triesch

Greeter:

- 2-3 Emma Lou Bizer
2-10 Darlene Stephens
2-17 Dorothy Rest
2-24 Norma Gilbert

Acolyte:

- 2-3 Don Green
2-10 Cody Allen
2-17 Dorothy Rest
2-24 Tim Marlow

Movie Night
7p.m. Friday February 29th

On Friday night February 29th we will gather in Baese Hall at 7 p.m. for a movie and discussion on "*Chocolat*." This movie has an excellent cast, including Johnny Depp and Judith Dench. It was nominated for an Academy award in 2000.

This is a powerful movie about how religion can be twisted in such a way as to deny life, it is about change and finding joy in life through the goodness of God's creation. It is a great movie for Lent, which is the setting for the movie and it just plain good watching!

We will have refreshments and deserts. What else CHOCOLATE! Bring your favorite chocolate concoction to share! Imagine that, instead of giving up chocolate for Lent we care going to have chocolate for Lent!

This Lent indulge the cravings of your soul!



One Great Hour of Sharing

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have,” says the writer of Hebrews to the community of faith. The call was personal, a reminder that our actions as Christians speak as loudly as our words and worship services. God desires our participation in the lives of others, an expectation made even more pointedly by Jesus when he tells his followers, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40, NRSV) Of course, the ‘least of these’ don’t just live in our community. God’s call to share what we have encompasses people everywhere. The people fleeing violence in Sudan, suffering from AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, reeling from devastation in Indonesia, starving in poverty in India, and recovering from any number of disasters around the United States – we are called to make a difference in their lives. We can do this through our special offering, One Great Hour of Sharing.

As each of us gives to One Great Hour of Sharing we help families and villages around the world to build lives and communities that are healthy, safe and sustainable. Sharing our resources really changes lives!

Nine Christian bodies work alongside Church world Service, transforming lives in this country and around the world. Our gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing:

- Create sustainable sources of income for rural villages


- Provide micro-credit to women to start poverty-escaping businesses
- Teach trades and job skills to people maimed by landmines
- Offer children a chance to survive past the age of 5 and go to school
- Help rebuild communities ravaged by natural disasters
- Resettle refugees into new lives and much more!



March 2nd is the official day to receive the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Special envelopes are in the pews and on the table in the narthex for this offering. Doing good and sharing what we have gladdens the heart of God, who promises that those who respond “shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.” (Isaiah 58:11, NRSV)

Statements with your 2007 giving to the church have been mailed out. These are for your use in filling out your Income Tax Forms. We have discovered that some of the envelopes did not have complete addresses. If you have not received yours by the time you get this newsletter contact the church office and let us know so we can get you a duplicate.

Lenten Bible Study



We will have a four part Lenten Study on a very important theme:

The Will of God. Does every thing that happens, good or bad happen because God wills it? Is it God's will that someone die of cancer, or that there is a war, or an epidemic? If not, are there things that happen that fall totally outside God's will? What do we mean when we even talk about God's will? These are just a few of the questions we will be exploring on this very important topic.

To help us on this journey we will be using Dr. Leslie Weatherhead's book: *The Will of God*. Each family that participates will get a copy of the book. The books are \$5 a piece.

There will be four sessions. Each will be on a Sunday night and will begin with a simple meal, soup and bread at 6 p.m. The actual study will begin at 6:30 and end no later than 8 p.m. You are welcome to come just for the study or come at 6 p.m. and join us for the meal.

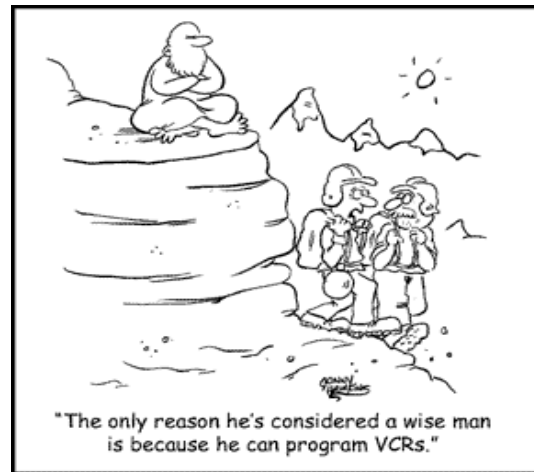
Please note that the sessions are not consecutive. We will skip the Sundays we have potlucks after church. Here are the dates for the Lenten studies:

Sunday Feb. 17th Introduction

Sunday Feb. 24th
The Intentional Will of God

Sunday March 2nd
The Circumstantial Will of God

Sunday March 16th
The Ultimate Will of God



Power of a Penny!

The local Roots and Shoots youth group is participating in "Pennies for Peace." They are collecting pennies for this project of the Central Asia Institute that builds local schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

A penny is not much to us but it can buy a pencil in Pakistan and help a child learn to read and write. Put enough pennies together and it can build a



school or pay a teacher's salary. If you would like to help bring your pennies and place them in the designated jar in the church narthex (entry way.)

**Faith UCC
970 N. Loop 337
New Braunfels, TX 78130**

February 2008



Tents of Hope Campaign

Two years ago, with the help of a Lenten Calendar, we raised over a \$1,000 for refugee aid in Darfur, in the Sudan. Once again, during the 2008 Lenten season, we are encouraging church members to use a Lenten calendar as part of their Lent discipline. We will be collecting money for Darfur. The crisis is still real. It has not gone away.

Also, you recall when Tim Nonn spoke at our church on the situation in Darfur. He proposed that a “Tents of

Hope” campaign would be created in 2008 and he encouraged us to participate. We are. A “Tents of Hope” tent has been ordered and will be here soon. The idea is to give youth and adults at our church and later in the summer at Slumber Falls Camp, a chance to paint pictures and words of hope on the tent. Many of these tents from all around the country will be taken to the Washington Mall to be displayed. The purpose is to provide an opportunity to explore the issues around Darfur crisis in a creative and hopeful way. Be looking for more info on this in the coming weeks.