

June 2008

Glimpses of Faith Newsletter

Faith UCC
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“The Poor
Shall Always Be With You”
(Matthew 26:11a)

This is one of the most misused bits of Scripture in the New Testament. It is often used to deride programs, either government or nonprofit, that help the poor. Used in this fashion the person quoting it suggests that there is no point doing anything to help the poor because even Jesus said there will always be poverty and poor people. In other words, why bother when it won't eliminate poverty.

Clearly, given what we know of Jesus, this is a misinterpretation of the text. No doubt there will always be poor people, but Jesus clearly teaches that people of faith should do everything in their power to help the poor. I would say this applies not only to our charitable giving as individuals but also to our participation in the political process as citizens. We are called to help the “poor” not because we wish to eliminate “poverty in the abstract” but to help a fellow human being. We are to help the poor because this is what people of faith do!

The context for “the poor will always be with you” is the woman with the

alabaster jar anointing Jesus with costly nard. Jesus says she has done a good thing when the disciples object that this nard could have been sold and given to the poor. Jesus reason for saying it is a good thing is “For you will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.” (Mt. 26:11)

It is very clear that Jesus does not reject the disciples reasoning. Jesus would be all for our “living simply so others may simply live,” to borrow a phrase. Jesus would be all for our selling off our luxury items to benefit the poor. Indeed, we know that early Christians did precisely this, as the book of Acts outlines in the opening chapters. Something tells me that Jesus would be all for our government reducing its military budget and eliminating corporate welfare and tax breaks for the wealthy to bolster helping the poor.

No, Jesus does not reject the disciples reasoning, he rejects their timing. Once he is gone, which will be quite soon, they are welcome to institute this kind of budget making process.

Given this, what does this mean for our budget making as individuals, as a church and as a nation that often considers itself “Christian?”

**Race Unity Day Picnic
Sunday June 8th at 1:30 p.m.**

You are cordially invited to participate in a celebration of God's love for all His people and the unity of mankind,.... This event is being organized by the Bahai's of Comal and Guadalupe Counties and the surrounding area, and is being supported by the Interfaith Network – Comal Area.

You are invited to come together with others on June 8th to listen to songs by noted musician Larry Magee and Los Nice Guys of San Antonio. We will join hearts to sing songs, pray, dance, and tell stories, thanking God for His diverse Human Race, and the strides we humans have made in fostering *Race Unity*.

For further information contact Dona Evans at 708-9802 or at devans37@satx.rr.com

**Countryside UCC
Youth Choir
In concert
At Friedens UCC
Tuesday, June 3rd
7 p.m.**

(Friedens UCC Christian Ed fundraiser meal at 6 p.m. Come early for the meal and stay for the concert.)



**Rev. Dr. Mike Miller to Preach
Sunday June 8
And Stays for the Hotdog**

Lunch and Program

Rev. Miller is the Campus

minister at Texas State University in San Marcus. CCM Wesley serves a student population of 25,000, with a variety of programs. This program is supported by the Methodist, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ. Jennifer Marlow has been the office manager there for a number of years and Pastor Scott Martin is one of two UCC members on the board of directors.

Rev. Miller and the students recently returned from a mission trip to central Mexico, where they conducted a VBS and inspected the lavender plants they help the local people plant last year. There will be a hotdog lunch following the church service. Donations accepted for the Darfur refugees. Rev. Miller will talk about campus ministry and the recent mission trip.



Dorothy Rest has moved to

Seven Habits of Highly Effective Churches

Taken from the UCC Church Vitality booklet: *“The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Churches”*. If you turn the booklet over it shares: *“The Seven Habits of Highly Ineffective Churches.”* This was written by the Rev. Anthony B. Robinson.

1. STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVING CHRIST

Effective churches are churches where people enjoy what they are doing and do it well.

2. CULTIVATE A SPIRIT OF INNOVATION & EXPERIMENTATION

Be open to new ideas that advance your mission. Remember, if you're not failing at something, you're probably not trying anything new.



3. TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE AND GROUPS IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY BEYOND YOUR CONGREGATION

Refuse to be isolated. Get involved in the community. Meet new people. Be curious about what is going on in your neighborhood.

970 ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR MISTAKES, LEARN FROM THEM, AND IN ALL THINGS, LET GRACE ABOUND.

Making mistakes is not the worst thing that can happen. We often learn from the most from our failures. In the end it is about God's grace, not our achievements.

5. ALWAYS BE PREPARED TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE HOPE THAT IS WITHIN YOU. (1 PETER 3:15)

Look for where love, energy, and life are flowing and focus on that. Be people of hope, trusting in God to find a way even when we can't.

6. BE WILLING TO LET PEOPLE GO IN ORDER TO STAY FOCUSED ON YOUR core mission than it is to make everyone happy. Some people may be better off in another congregation. When folks are unhappy, connect, talk and pray and if things remain stuck, let them go with your blessing in order to give priority to your mission.

7. SPLASH IT ON!

A hospice nurse told a story of bringing an elderly woman home for her final days of life. Noticing a large bottle of perfume on the woman's dresser, the nurse asked, "Would you like me to dab a bit of that behind your ears?" "Honey," said the woman to the nurse, "Why don't you just splash it on." God loves cheerful givers. So (contribute

and) spend money wisely, well and freely in God's cause.

IRS offers UCC complete vindication

Written by J. Bennett Guess

The Internal Revenue Service has concluded that the UCC did not violate tax laws when U.S. Sen. Barack Obama addressed the denomination's 50th anniversary General Synod in Hartford, Conn., in June 2007.

"Based on your response to the inquiry, we have determined that the activity about which we had concern did not constitute an intervention or participation in a political campaign – and that the United Church of Christ continues to qualify as an organization described in section 501©(3)," according to a [May 13 letter](#) from the IRS.

The IRS determination outlined several steps taken by the UCC that indicated compliance with the law. The letter said the UCC's invitation to Obama came "well before he announced his candidacy and that [he] was invited to speak – in a non-candidate capacity, on how his personal faith intersected with his public life."

"You further established that the United Church of Christ had verbally communicated to those in attendance that Senator Obama was there as a member of the church and not as a candidate for office, that the audience should not attempt to engage in any political activities, and that the church's legal counsel had advised Senator Obama's campaign on the ground rules for the speech," the IRS determined.

The letter also concluded that the UCC did not authorize campaign volunteers to set up tables near the entrance of the Hartford Civic Center. "The activity was conducted on public property outside the control of the Synod and therefore was not attributable to the church," the IRS said.

The IRS also noted that the UCC's website provided a link to the IRS fact sheet on prohibited campaign-related activities by non-profit groups and that the church's legal counsel had properly advised UCC leaders of these rules.

"We are pleased that the IRS reviewed the complaint quickly and determined, as we expected, that the church took every necessary precaution and proactive step to ensure that Senator Obama's appearance at General Synod was proper and legal," said the Rev. John H. Thomas, UCC General Minister and President. "This is very good news."



Women's Circle Meeting

The members of the Circle of Faith will gather for their last meeting before the summer break in the home of Karen and Frank Dietz on Thursday, June 12, at 11:00 a.m. Some may want to meet at Faith Church and carpool to the Dietz' that morning. Please call Karen at 626-6833 or 515-8237 for directions and to let her know if you will be able to come.

Rev. Ralph Ludwig Installed as Eden Home Chaplain June 22nd

The Board of Directors of Eden Home is pleased to invite you to attend the Installation Service of the Rev. Ralph E. Ludwig as our new Chaplain and Pastor of Eden Home, on Sunday June 22, 2008 at 3 p.m.

This will be a time of celebration as we officially affirm our sacred covenants of ministry between our residents, families, Eden Home, the United Church of Christ and the many affiliated faith based congregations of the residents we care for. The Rev. Bill Burns will be delivering the message and The Rev. Douglas Anders, Conference minister of the South Central Conference UCC will also be participating in the service. Clergy are encouraged to wear robes and red stoles, if you have them and process with Chaplain Ludwig at the beginning of the service.

There will be a reception at Eden Home immediately following the service.

Sincerely,
Franklin Demuth
Chairman Eden Board of Directors



Nursery Care During the Summer Months

We will be providing nursery care during the church service for those children who are **5 years old and younger**. There will be four adults who have volunteered to do this on a rotational basis. When Larisa is available, she has offered to assist. Because we have some very young children, we will find it difficult to manage any children older than five. Please keep this in mind and have your older children participate in the church service.

There has been some discussion regarding the availability of a time during church for the older than five children to participate in a Veggie Tale movie time. We would like to have this be a time of discussion and viewing rather than simply a play time for them. In order to make this possible, we would require more adults to volunteer. If this sounds like a project you would be interested in, please contact Chrissy Gossett, Kathy Leber or Jennifer Marlow. The more adult supervision we have, the fewer times any one person will be asked to assist. Many thanks.

Kathy Leber

Worship Assistants for June

Ushers:

6-1 Jo Ann Brown; Don Green;
Julia Allison; Ray Bizer

6-8 Robert & Emma Deninno
Evelyn Krueger

6-15 Sol Fuss; Bennie Harst
Richard Leber; Bruce Ridgley

6-22 Betty & Sherrie Heinemeyer
Kathy Hoffmann; Tim Marlow

6-29 Jan Hunley; Judy Anderson
Steve & Nancy Foster

Communion June 1 Julia Allison
Ray Bizer

Liturgist:

6-1 Curt Leonhardt
6-8 Mikki Ward
6-15 Jim Gossett
6-22 Nicole Perry-Clark
6-29 Kathy Leber

Council Reps:

6-1 Michele Gilbreth
6-8 Michelle Perry-Clark
6-15 Joe Ward
6-22 Tim Marlow
6-29 Sheri Haynes

Greeter:

6-1 Jon Brown
6-8 Joe Ward
6-15 Bennie Harst
6-22 Betty Heinemeyer
6-29 Jan Hunley

Acolyte:

6-1 Cody Allen
6-8 Joe Ward
6-15 Brady Storms
6-22 Steve Foster
6-29 Larisa Hunley



Juen 2 Don Green
June 6 John Stark
June 10 Jim Gossett
June 12 Kyle Kramm
June 13 Heather Stewart
June 16 JoAnn Brown

Condolences to the Jahncke Family

Word has been received on the death of Kenneth Jahncke of West Bend, Wisconsin. For a number of years Ken and Harriet spent their winters in New Braunfels and were regular visitors at Faith Church. After Ken's health began to fail, they had to stop their travels; but they never forgot us here at Faith Church and have kept up a correspondence with several church members.

If you wish to write Harriet, her address is:

Mrs. Kenneth Jahncke
5577 Home Drive, Apt. 210
West Bend, WI 53095

They were/are a part of the Cedar Community, Cedar Bay East, a UCC retirement community in West Bend.



**Men's Group to Conduct
Worship Service
June 15th**

April Treasurer's Report

General Fund Balance 3/31	\$1,465.99
Income & Deposits	\$9,395.33
Disbursements	\$9,752.42
Balance 4/30	\$1,108.42

Building Fund Balance 3/31	\$3,355.00
Income & Deposits	750.00
Disbursements	\$1,250.00
Balance 4/30	\$2,810.00

Memorial Fund Balance 3/31	\$1,874.00
(no change) Balance 4/30	\$1,874.00

Savings Balance 3/31	\$7,776.75
(no change) Balance 4/30	\$7,776.75

Loan Balance Approx. 4/30 \$38,795.02

Respectfully submitted:
Terri Armstrong
Financial Secretary

Keep up the good work! We have stayed in the black through the first five months of the year. We do have the pastor's health insurance and pension coming due soon. Let's try and stay current as we head into the summer months.

**Thanks to All for Darfur
Sunday!**

If you were not in church on Sunday May 18th you missed a wonderful Sunday! Ken Triesch and Richard Leber had the Tent of Hope for Darfur set up and children and adults alike painted messages of Hope on it. Soon it will head to Slumber Falls Camp for the summer camping season. Our thanks to Sheri Haynes for providing the **Save Darfur pins, which are still available for a contribution in the church narthex.** Thanks also to Sheri and Michelle Gilbreth for organizing the hotdog lunch after church. Thanks to Bonnie Stark for arranging for Senator Bob Krueger to come and speak and for decorating the sanctuary.

We still have "Save Darfur" pins available. Pick up a pin from the table in the narthex and leave a donation. All donations will go to helping refugees in Darfur. Wear your pin as a testimony of your concern for the people of Darfur.

All in all the Spirit was really moving that Sunday! If you have not read the Krueger's book *From Bloodshed to Hope in Burundi* be sure and do so!

**Help With a Click of a
Computer Mouse!**

Check out these websites:
www.thehungersite.com
www.thebreastcancersite.com
www.thechildhealthsite.com
www.theliteracysite.com
www.therainforestsitesite.com
www.theanimalrescue.com

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Pastor Scott Goes on Annual Mission Trip to Tijuana, Mexico

This is the 13th year that Kansas-Oklahoma youth have gone on this mission trip! This trip is organized by Rev. Mike Poage, Fairmount UCC in Wichita. Pastor Scott has been on every trip since it was first organized. He has continued to go since moving to Texas and hopes that next year youth and adults from Texas will join those from K-O Conference.

Each year the group works with Esperanza International which does

community organizing and construction, especially homes.

Families purchase the homes with the help of no interest loans. Each family manufactures ALL the cement blocks for the home. They also work with the groups from the U.S. that help on the house. In addition they, with help from other Esperanza families, provide lunch for all the groups, every day. Families, on the last day have chance to share what is on their hearts. Invariably they all say something like “Now you are part of our family. We will always remember you.” We are indeed all one family!