

February 2009

Glimpses of Faith Newsletter

Faith UCC
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This month we will be celebrating the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication *Origin of the Species*, which is the foundation for evolutionary theory. Here at Faith UCC we will be showing the documentary *Kansas vs Darwin* on Wednesday February 4th at 7 p.m. It outlines the battle in Topeka, Ks over including the teaching of "Intelligent Design" in the science classes. Many Christian conservatives, who believe that the theory of evolution negates a belief in God, have promoted this.

On one level they may be right. Rational thought and science might well challenge many traditional beliefs about God, but there is absolutely no doubt that millions of rational people continue to believe both in the science and religion. Two surveys of scientists, 80 years apart, one in 1916 and another in 1997, found that 40% of scientists believe in God. Clearly science and religion are not incompatible for many.

Thank God we do not depend solely on the Bible for truth and insights into this world or for methods to enhance the lives of people on this earth. How many would want to trade the gifts of modern medicine; politics, philosophy,

economics, technology, etc. to live in a world like that in which Moses, Jesus or Paul lived in? Not many I suspect!

It is a false choice to have to choose between rational thought and religion. How many would many want to live in a world ruled solely by the gifts of these selfsame rational developments, devoid of the benefits of religion, philosophy, art, and morality? There is no doubt in my mind that the world would be a far poorer place without these.

Dr. Jerome Groopman is the Recanati Professor of Medicine at Harvard University. He writes, "... as a **physician and researcher, I employ science to decipher human biology and treat disease. As a person of faith, I look to my religious tradition for the touchstones of a moral life. Neither science nor faith need contradict the other; in fact, if one appreciates the essence of each, they can enrich each other in a person's life.**"

I find it significant that Jesus reminded his listeners of the Old Testament admonitions, "**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, MIND and strength and love your neighbor as yourself.**"

Don's Corner....

"Fear not: for I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."
Luke 2:10

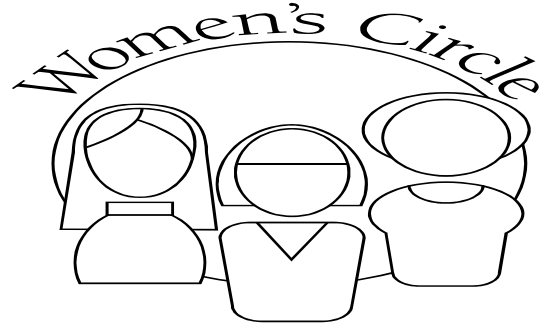
Before printing became computerized, the newspaper where I was a cub reporter kept its largest, heaviest type stored in a dusty corner unused. I was told it was being saved for the all-time ultimate news headline, CHRIST RETURNS. Half a century later the kind of type might proclaim WAR ENDS still is referred to as "Second Coming type."

In 40 years as a small town editor I never quite got used to hearing the complaint: "You in the news media report too much bad news. How about some good news for a change?" Of course community newspapers cover progress and good works as well as social problems. Each critic really was saying, "I don't like to read about all that bad stuff," while reading it nevertheless. Sometimes I felt grossly misunderstood, that readers somehow blamed me for bad things that happened.

At such times I took comfort, as I do today, in thinking of those large, stored-away letters arranged to read CHRIST RETURNS. "You want good news?" I imagine responding to a bad-tidings critic. "I'll give you good news. Just wait and see."

Prayer: Father, help me as a consumer of today's instant mass communication to weigh the events of each day from Your perspective. Amen.

Don Green



The Circle of Faith will gather on Thursday, February 12, from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. in Baese Hall. All the women of Faith Church are considered members of this group and are invited to join us. We will learn this month about the coming year's events of Church Women of Comal County and how our group is participating. Do bring a sack lunch and experience the fellowship, worship, study and fun that our group shares!



Second Sunday Potluck Feb. 9th

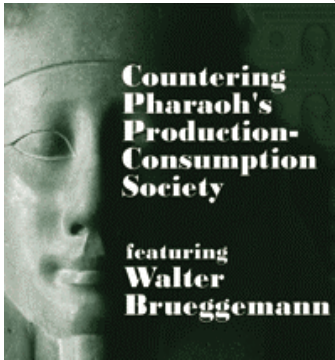
Our Second Sunday Potluck will have a Valentine theme. Nicolle Perry Clark is coordinating this event. She has asked that members email her photo's of "your valentine". This could be a couple, a parent, child, (even four-legged children), or any combination thereof! You are also invited to include a message with the photo. If you don't have a computer bring them to church. If you can help Nicolle with some Valentine themed deserts, punch, etc. let her know

(627-7177).

Lenten Studies Begin Sunday March 1st

This year we will be holding the Lenten Studies after church, beginning Sunday March 1st. A light soup and bread lunch will be served from 11:50 to 12:30. The program will begin at 12:30 and conclude no later than 2 p.m.

Given the economic scandals and downturn we will be looking at 5 session



DVD program led by one of the preeminent Old Testament scholars in the United States

today, Dr. Walter Bruggemann.

March 1: The Way Out

March 8: The Decalogue

March 15: Countering Caesar

March 22: An Act of Imagination

April 1: On Not Doing God Any Favors

Walt Brueggemann says, "It is a journey from slavery to covenant that we keep making over and over again... [because] Pharaoh has immense power always to draw us back into slavery." - *Walter Brueggemann*



Join us for the Ash Wednesday service on Wednesday February 25th at 7 p.m. The service will include the traditional imposition of ashes.

This ancient observance marks the beginning of the Lenten Season.

Faith UCC Votes to Become an ONA Church!

We are now the 16th UCC church in the South Central Conference to officially become ONA! We are the second church in the South Texas Association to vote to become ONA. The vote to become ONA was 27 for, 2 against and 2 abstentions.

Conference Minister, Rev. Doug Anders, called to congratulate the church on becoming ONA. He observed that many of the ONA churches in the conference are among the most "vital" churches in the conference. Several notes of congratulations have already been received from two other UCC churches and individuals.

Voting to become ONA is not the end of the process it is the beginning. Now we need to begin to live out the goal of being an ONA church in our mission and outreach. Let us extend God's extravagant welcome to all who come to our services and who wish to participate in the life and ministry of Faith UCC.



Ushers:

- 2-1 Karen Kramm; Evelyn Krueger;
Richard & Kathy Leber
- 2-8 Sheri Haynes; Don Green
Susan Schlameus; & Bruce Ridgley
- 2-15 Sol Fuss; Albert Hennig
Betty Triesch; Darlene Stephens
- 2-22 Joe & Mikki Ward
Judy Anderson; Lois Swander

Liturgist:

- 2-1 Julie Allison
2-8 Jan Hunley
2-15 Jim Gossett
2-22 Tim Marlow
2-25 Steve Foster (Ash Wednesday)

Council Rep:

- 2-1
2-8 Joe Ward
2-15 Nicolle Perry-Clark
2-22 Sheri Haynes
2-25 Tim Marlow

Communion Assistants

Richard & Kathy Leber

Acolytes:

- 2-1 Kayce Lewis
2-8 Larissa Hunley
2-15 Brady Storms
2-22 Cody Allen

2-25

Greeter:

- 2-1 Eveylyn Krueger
2-8 Sheri Haynes
2-15 Sol Fuss
2-22 Mikki Ward
2-25

If you can serve on the designated date/dates shown, please try to find a substitute. If that is not possible please call the church office 625-6761.

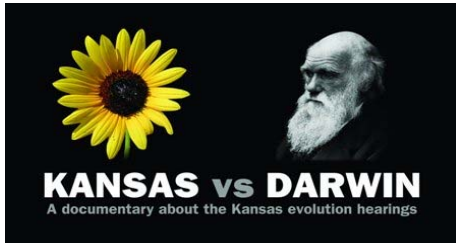


- 2-2 Sandy Ludwig
2-5 Karen Campa
2-13 Louise Dworaczyk
2-20 Roger Richter
2-25 Michele Gilbreth
2-26 Merle Kosler

**Faith Church Passes
Increase in Budget**

Thanks to the generosity of our membership we ended 2008 with a positive balance. (The annual report shows a deficit, but this was due to paying the first quarter of the pastor's 2009's pension and health insurance premiums.) Our thanks to all of you who helped make this possible!

The budget that was passed at the annual meeting was \$117,178 (up from \$104,955). The increase is due to our adding a paid pianist/song leader position, a child care attendant, and a cost of living raise for the pastor. Please prayerfully consider what you can give in 2009.



**Wednesday February 4th
at 7 p.m. at Faith UCC**

Darwin finished his book *Origins of the Species* years before it was eventually published. He held it back knowing what a furor it would create in religious circles and in the wider society, because it would challenge many commonly held beliefs about God as the Creator. He was right not only about the theory of evolution but also about the furor it would create.

We all either remember or have learned about the Scopes trial of 1926, in which a Tennessee high school science teacher was put on trial for teaching evolution. He was convicted of breaking the Butler act which said that no state funded school could “*teach any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals.*” That may have been 1926 but the battle still rages today. There have been numerous similar cases all across the United States in recent years.

In 2005 this came to a head at the Kansas State Board of Education. A documentary was made, which fairly and objectively gives both sides a chance to speak their piece. As the film synopsis says, “**The film is a heady, absorbing swirl of politics, science and religion,**

frequently pushing the viewer from one, compelling point of view to its polar opposite. The result is a piercing dialectic with a center of surprising, stunning humanity. Audiences will experience discomfort as they face their ideological ‘enemies’ in a thrilling plunge to the epicenter of the American culture war.”

The Texas Freedom Network reports on their website: “The Stand Up for Science campaign has chalked up a major victory for education in Texas. In a key preliminary vote, a majority on the State Board of Education has rejected efforts by creationists to require that students learn phony “weaknesses” of evolution in their public school classrooms. With a final vote set for March, however, evolution opponents are still trying to dumb down the state's science curriculum.”

If you know anyone in the education community invite him or her to this program! Those who wish may sign postcards supporting TFN’s “Stand Up for Science” campaign. The campaign calls on the Texas State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education to adopt science standards that:

- Are based on sound, peer reviewed scholarship
- Do not undermine instruction on evolution, a concept that is critical to the understanding of all the biological sciences; and
- Leave instruction about religious beliefs to our families and congregations

This event is being co-sponsored by the Comal County Unitarian Universalists and Faith UCC.

Children and Youth News



Children's Choir Sings Christmas Songs

Our thanks to Leslie Woods for forming and leading the Children's Choir! It is wonderful having them sing at our worship services.

Pastor and Youth to Attend Confirmation Camp February 6-8th

Pastor Scott and youth from Faith UCC will be attending the annual conference Confirmation Camp at Slumber Falls Camp February 6-8th. It will be led by Pastor John Roberts from Friedens UCC.

Confirmation classes will begin at Faith UCC on Wednesday night February 11th at 5:30 p.m. The student books have arrived. We are accepting students from 6th to 9th grade. The class is also open to any adult who would like to attend. We will continue to meet on Wednesday nights from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Let Pastor Scott know if you are planning to attend.

The Slumber Falls Camp Schedule Is Out

Thanks to the Gilbert Fund, Faith UCC will cover half the cost for any child or youth to attend Slumber Falls Camp this summer. If your child is planning to attend please register early so we can get the "early bird special."

Make your plans now the camp schedule is listed below:

Streams of Faith I (juniors, 9-11)
June 7-13

Creeks in Creation (junior high, 12-13)
June 14-20th

Eco-Camp (ages 10-12)
June 14-20

Roaring Rapids (senior high, 15-18)
June 21-27

Spring Alive (tenderfoot, 6-8)
June 28 to July 1

Streams of Faith II (junior, 9-11)
July 5-11

Living Waters (midhigh, 13-15)
July 12-18

Specialty Camp (ages 9-11)
July 12-18

Creeks in Creation II (junior high, 12-13)
July 19-25

Streams of Faith III (junior, 9-11)
July 26-August 1)

Music, Arts & Drama (ages 15-18)
July 26 - August 1

Family Camp September 25-27th

New Banner on Faith UCC Tower

You may have noticed lately that our “God is still speaking banner” outside was beginning to look a bit “faded.” A new banner was ordered and the old one replaced. Our thanks to Rick and Nathan Leber and Tim Marlow for getting this job done. The new banner looks great!



New Kiva Loan Made!

We are now well into our second round of Kiva loans! The original loans are rapidly being paid back and we are in the process of re-loaning the paid back money!

Mukhtor Yormatov, in Isfara, Tajikistan, is married and has three children whom he is very proud of since they are fighting to get ahead. With the faith that his children should go to college to get ahead, he started a business processing and selling dried apricots to be able to make enough money to pay for their schooling. This is

why he started this business 14 years ago. He is experienced in this kind of business and that allows him to expand his clientele day by day. Right now Mukhtor is requesting 1500 Somoni (450 USD) for a term of 8 months. He is going to spend the loan on purchasing dried apricots for processing and sale. With your help, Mukhtor will be able to feel proud that through much effort, his children went to college and are honorable people.

Faith UCC has loaned Mukhtor Yrmatov \$100 of the \$450 he has been loaned.

Iluminada Iglesia, in Asuncian, Paraguay, will be getting a \$700 loan through the Kiva program, which we have provided \$50. She will use these funds to purchase items for her small store to sell. Here is her story:

Mrs. Illumindada lives in a neighborhood below the capital, a neighborhood named La Chacarita, where she relies on her provisions shop for economic improvement. The provisions shop has a selection of various types of merchandise, of which the strong point is the sales of well-chilled drinks. She began with a small kiosk, after which, thanks to her earnings, the shop began to grow, and she was encouraged to take out a loan for the shop. The actual loan is for buying more merchandise, things like fruits, vegetables, meat, chickens, non-perishables, and other types of merchandise. She thinks it worthwhile to point out that the shop has been growing with the help of the Paraguayan Foundation.

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February 2009 Calendar

- 2-1 Souper Bowl of Caring & Communion
- 2-4 *Kansas vs Darwin* at 7 p.m.
Choir (contemporary) 6-6:30 p.m.
Choir regular 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- 2-5 Lectionary Study 9-10:30 a.m.
- 2-6-8 Confirmation Retreat
Slumber Falls
- 2-7 Children's Choir 9:30 a.m.
Church & Second Sunday
Potluck
- 2-11 choir (contemporary)
6-6:30 p.m. (regular) 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Confirmation 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- 2-12 Lectionary Study 9-10:30 a.m.
Women's Fellowship 11-1 p.m.
- 2-14 Men's Breakfast 8 a.m.
- 2-15 Children's Choir 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
- 2-18 choir (contemporary) 6 p.m.
Choir (regular) 6:30 p.m.
Confirmation 5:30-6:30 pm.
- 2-19 Lectionary Study 9-10:30 a.m.
- 2-20 SOS Food Bank 1-4 pm.
- 2-22 Children's Choir 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
- 2-25 Choir (contemporary) 6 p.m.
Choir (regular) 6:30 p.m.
Ash Wednesday Service 7 p.m.
- March 1** Children's choir 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Lenten Soup & Program 11:50 a.m.

