

December 2010

Glimpses of Faith Newsletter

Faith UCC
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Christmas is the Season of Light

Easter is the most important Christian Holy Day theologically but I suspect that for many of us Christmas is our favorite Holy Day (holiday). Even when I was a teenager and going to church was not among my “favorite” things to do, I loved going to the Christmas Eve service. First Congregational UCC in Bradenton, Florida’s original church sanctuary was built in the 1960’s. Its architecture reflected the Florida lifestyle. The sanctuary had sliding glass doors down both sides of the building. This was to let the cool morning air in but I can’t remember them every being open!

On Christmas Eve the sanctuary was packed with people. Folding chairs had to be brought out and placed in the aisles and in the back of the church. As in other churches everyone was given a candle. The lights would be extinguished. Near pitch darkness would descend. The only light in the sanctuary was the Christ Candle shining in the Advent Wreath. The pastor would light his candle from the Christ candle and pass the light to the youth group members who then went down the aisles lighting the candles of those on the end of the pews. The light was then passed from person to person throughout the sanctuary.

Once everyone’s candles were lit the pastor would ask that everyone raise their candles high in the air. It was a glorious sight. Not only could you see all the candles that everyone held high but those candles were reflected in the sliding glass doors like mirrors. It literally looked like the candle light was going out into the darkness of the world and filling the world with the light of Christ!. It was a sight to behold. When I close my eyes I can see it like it was yesterday.

The Gospel of John begins

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
And the Word was God. He was in the beginning with
God.*

*All things came into being through him,
And without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in him was life,
And the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
And the darkness did not overcome it.”
John 1:1-5 NRSV*

May the light of Christ-mass be with you always!



Church Potluck & Movie on Sunday December 12th

Bring your favorite holiday dish to share at our Christmas potluck December 12th. Also, please bring a favorite holiday ornament, crèche, etc. to decorate the tables. After lunch we will adjourn to the church sanctuary to watch Jonathan Flanders movie, based on the story of Ruth. Jonathan has updated the story to highlight issues around “illegal” immigration. A discussion will follow the showing. Faith Church donated \$330 to help Jonathan make this movie.

“Illegal” immigration may seem a strange subject for a Christmas potluck but the Gospel of Matthew includes Jesus and his family “escaping” to Egypt to avoid the deadly oppression of King Herod. **“An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.’”** (Mt. 2:13b) The first Israelites went there to avoid dying of hunger (i.e. economic issues).

Thank Yous.....

Thank you were received from Eden Hill and Slumber Falls for recent contributions from Faith Church.



Our Christmas Eve service will be at 5:30 p.m. The choir will perform a cantata “I Hear the Prophet Callin’”. The cantata covers the Christmas story from prophecy to fulfillment. It was written by Pepper Choplin who writes, **“...I have called upon folk styles to celebrate the story, you will hear those distinct musical flavors: Appalachian, Irish, Latin, Cajun, and Early American. Something stirs within my soul as I hear these timeless rhythms, harmonies, and melodies. It seems a natural fit to pair this authentic and sometimes earthy music with the true story of the Gospel.”** Our thanks to Wendy Reinke, Ken Triesch and the choir for working so hard to make this musical testimony possible.

The Christmas Eve service will conclude with the traditional singing of Silent Night and candlelight service.

Our thanks to Steve Anderson and family for providing so many wonderful poinsettias for the church sanctuary!!!

November Financial Report

General Fund	Balance	11/1/10	\$6,378.15
	Income & Deposits		10,859.68
	Disbursements		7,417.04
	Balance	11/30/10	\$9,820.79
Building Fund	Balance	11/1/10	\$10,355.97
	Income & Deposits		00.00
	Disbursements		0.00
	Balance	11/30/10	\$10,355.97
Memorial Fund	Balance	11/1/10	\$3,419.24
	Income		00.00
	Disbursements		0.00
	Balance	11/30/10	\$3,419.24
Savings Account	Balance	11/1/10	\$2,716.08
	Income		0.00
	Interest		0.00
	Balance	11/30/10	\$2,716.08
Marie Rose Remmel Trust Bond	10/29/10		\$13,123.69
Gilbert Trust Fund Money Market	9/24/10		\$12,345.21



Offering envelopes will soon be available in the entryway for the coming year. Pick a box up if you want one. Please write down your name and the number of the box you have chosen on the sheet provided.

Submitted by Terri Armstrong, Financial Secretary

December Birthdays

- 12-1 Cody Allen
- 12-11 Devyn Perry-Clark
- 12-13 J.D. Foster
- 12-15 Mikki Ward
- 12-22 Tiffany Gilbreth
- 12-23 Dennis Krueger, Jr.
- 12-26 Richard Leber



If your birthday is not here let the pastor know so it can be added for next year.



The Christmas Fund: Veterans of the Cross & Emergency Fund

For 198 years, the Christmas Fund Offering for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a means by which we, as members of the United Church of Christ and its predecessor bodies, live out the mandate to be Christ's Body in the world. The Christmas Fund, one of four Special Mission Offerings received annually in the United Church of Christ, is a ministry of compassion and care to those who serve our church. Your generous giving to the 2009 Offering enabled the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance program, on behalf of the whole church, to provide \$1,504,420 to individuals and families in need.

Lower income retirees continue to feel most keenly the financial stress brought about by the current economic climate. Because of that, we ask you to prayerfully consider your response to the 2010 Christmas Fund Offering and give to the best of your ability. Reflect upon the ways in which your life has been touched by a retired pastor, a former youth leader, a Christian Education Director, a church secretary, a custodian, or minister of music, and honor their ministries in a way that will help them and others like them in these challenging times.

On behalf of the nearly 1,600 clergy and lay individuals and families who received some form of Ministerial Assistance since the last Christmas Fund Offering, I express heartfelt thanks to you for your generosity. May you continue to experience the blessings of Emmanuel – the One Who is with us, now and always.

Michael A. Downs
President/CEO
Pension Boards-UCC



What I'm listening To: Donna Nall

Have you ever heard the Christmas song **What Child Is This** or **Greensleeves**? Well they are the same song! No one knows who wrote **Greensleeves** but we do know that it was probably written sometime during the middle ages. The song is about a lady of the night. This particular woman wore green sleeves because she was somewhat wealthy and green happened to be one of the most expensive dyes of the day. The man who wrote **Greensleeves** was in love with her and wrote this song for her. He could not openly admit to being in love with someone of ill-repute so he simply named his song **Greensleeves**, in reference to her attire. Well, this song ended up becoming a very popular tune, at the time, and when the church realized this they had to act. They couldn't have their followers singing a tune about un-chaste women! So, the words and the title were changed to **What Child Is This**. I think that both versions of this song have a beautiful meaning for Christmas and all year round. One is about a man who is in love with a less than perfect woman and the other about a Child who has come to save our less than perfect world.



We currently have \$1,355.46 in loans outstanding. 67.2% of our loans have gone to women and 32.8 to men. We have made a total of 61 loans for a total of \$4,175.61! Out of the 61 loans only one loan has defaulted and the other 60 have either been paid off or are being paid off! Among our recent loans are:

1. A loan of \$75 of a \$1,800 Kiva loan to a man in Iraq to help him improve his dairy by building a small barn and buying another cow. He is 30 years old and has 3 children. His family has owned this farm since 1980. The loan will be paid back over a 14 months.
2. We loaned \$100 of a \$1,225 loan to a group of 4 women in the Dominican Republic. One of the women is Miguelina who is very excited to be getting her third loan from Esperanza Internacional after having been invited by several neighbors to be part of a loan that would help improve her business. She is planning to use the fund to buy several health products and medicines, but all natural ones. She will use the profits to reinvest in her business and to help meet household expenses. Her dream is to own a natural products pharmacy. This loan will be paid back over 8 months.
3. We loaned \$50 of a \$1,150 Kiva loan to Juan Gonzalez in Caacupe, Paraguay to help him with his carpentry business which makes picture frames, bathroom cabinets and mirrors. He has owned his business for 8 years.

December 2010 Worship Assistant Schedule

December 5th

LITURGIST: Kathy Leber ACOLYTE: Larissa Hunley COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE: Jan Hunley
GREETER: Richard Leber HOSPITALITY: Sheila Angerer COMMUNION ASSISTANTS: Mikki Ward
USHERS: Kathy Leber, Richard Leber, Jan Hunley and Larissa Hunley AUDIO VISUAL OPERATOR:
Mikki Ward

December 12th

LITURGIST: Mikki Ward ACOLYTE: Emma Storms COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE: Karen Kramm
GREETER: Evelyn Krueger HOSPITALITY: Pot Luck USHERS: Karen Kramm, Evelyn Krueger,
and Denise Leonhardt
AUDIO VISUAL OPERATOR: Charles Stark

December 19th

LITURGIST: Julia Allison ACOLYTE: Brady Storms COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE: Don Green
GREETER: Jennifer Marlow HOSPITALITY: Tracey Ferich USHERS: Don Green, Jim Gossett,
and Michelle Perry
AUDIO VISUAL OPERATOR: Tim Marlow

December 24th

LITURGIST: Charles Stark ACOLYTE: Devyn Perry COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE: Joe Ward
AUDIO VISUAL OPERATOR: Joe Ward GREETER: David Pena USHERS: David Pena, Al Hennig,
and Robert Deninno

December 26th

LITURGIST: Curt Leonhardt ACOLYTE: Quin Perry COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE: Nicolle Clark
GREETER: Lois Swanders HOSPITALITY: Kathy Leber USHERS: Nicolle Clark, Joe Ward, and
Richard Leber AUDIO VISUAL OPERATOR: Mikki Ward

"NOTICE: If you cannot serve on the designated date/dates shown, please try to find a substitute. If that is not possible, please call Joseph Ward (830-305-0214) or leave a message at the church office (830-625-6761) as soon as possible. If you would like to be removed from all or part of the Worship Assistant List, please contact Joseph Ward at 830-305-0214"



\$4,300 Raised By New Braunfels Crop Walk!!!

40-50 walkers turned out to walk in the November 14th Crop Walk! A total of \$4,300 was raised! That is far more than last year.

Faith UCC raised a total of \$895! Congratulations and mucho gracias to Carol Gates who went to the Church world service website and set up a contribution account. Thanks to her World Wide Web friends she raised \$375 of Faith Church's \$895! Way to go Carol. Thanks to Carol's example I am going to set up such a site for next year's walk. It works! Let's get some more folks signed up next year.

It is also worth noting that the Eden Hill Chapel raised \$1,209 for the CROP Walk! Way to go Chaplain Ralph and all who attend the chapel! Our thanks to Eden Hill for once again hosting the walk! The cookies were great!

Since 25% stays in New Braunfels, eventually \$1,075 of the total raised will be going to the SOS Food Bank!

December Calendar

- 12-1 Church Council 6:30 p.m.
- 12-2 Eden Hill Clergy & Spouse Lunch noon
- 12-4 SOS Volunteer Day & Lunch 9a.m. to 1 p.m.
- 12-5 SS 9:30 Worship 10:30 Salvation Army Bell Ringing 1-7 p.m.
- 12-8 Choir Practice 6:30 p.m.
- 12-10/11 Salvation Army assembles Christmas Food baskets at Faith UCC
- 12-11 Men's Breakfast 8 a.m. (In main building due to above)
- 12-12 SS 9:30 Worship 10:30 Potluck & Movie after church
- 12-14 Salvation Army Life Skills Graduation in our sanctuary 10-2 p.m.
- 12-15 Choir 6:30 p.m.
- 12-16 ONA meeting at Faith UCC 10 a.m (planning for January 22nd)
- 12-17 SOS Faith UCC staffs it from 1-4 p.m.
- 12-19 SS 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m.
- 12-24 Christmas Eve Service 5:30 p.m.
- 12-25 (fellowship hall is rented)
- 12-26 SS 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m.

