

July 2007

Glimpses of Faith Newsletter

Faith U.C.C.
970 N. Loop 337
New Braunfels, TX 78130

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Rev. Scott B. Martin



We have over 100 people attending General Synod from the South Central Conference! It is expected that 8-10 thousand will attend from all across the nation! Not only will this gathering include fun, fellowship and inspiring speakers and worship services, it will include numerous workshops and educational events. I signed up for one today entitled “Orchestrating Your Church’s Future.” It will be led by Craig Parsons: composer, conductor, and veteran of the famed Second City Theater in Chicago. His goal in this workshop is to help foster passion for the church’s work, nurturing fellowship and improving communication towards being stewards of the world.

The following comes from his brochure describing what he hopes to pass on to us from his experience as a symphony conductor and as a Christian.

1. **Performing as One:** Just as the symphony is made up of talented individuals who come to create something beyond the scope of one person, so is your congregation and its members efforts toward greater service and ministry. The better we work together the better the results.
2. **The Spirit of Play:** We play music, we don’t “work” it. Maintaining the sense of well being and positive energy while doing something work related is the key to fostering growth.
3. **Many Voices, One Song:** In a complex and noisy world a single voice is seldom heard. But together we can rise above the din and our message can be heard. A single voice can be drowned out, but when it combines with others, it is a force unto itself. It adds to and strengthens the music of the whole.
4. **Inspiration Comes from Unlikely Places:** Who observes our lives and perceives the possibility of a “new song” waiting to be heard? This is the nature of creativity – looking at the world around you and seeing it in a new ways then acting on a vision to create vibrant new directions.

Each of us can help Faith UCC make a “joyful noise to the Lord!”

Potluck and Darfur Update Sunday July 8th

Remember last year when we participated in the *Dear Darfur Campaign*? We raised almost \$1,000 to help feed the starving in Darfur. Dr. Timothy Nunn is the person who originated the idea in 2004 and later organized this nationwide effort. In the end \$2,000,000 was raised!

The movement has now expanded to include seeking justice for the people of Darfur. The Sudanese government is being tried in the International Criminal Court for genocide. This is the first time a sitting government has been put on trial for such a charge.



On Sunday July 8th, after church, we will have a potluck lunch. Timm will speak at 1 p.m. We will also show "*Judgment on Genocide*" a 15 minute documentary on DVD.

Circle of Faith Mission Project

The members of Circle of Faith are planning to join the women of the South Texas



Association in their annual project for agency support. Our project this year is the Back Bay Mission in Biloxi,

MS. The Mission continues to struggle with all of the problems caused by the devastation of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We invite anyone in Faith Church to join us in contributing to this cause. Speak to Norma Gilbert in the church office, Emma Lou Bizer, president, or any other member of the Circle of Faith. Thank you for your support.

Emma Lou Bizer

Thoughts and Prayers

Bruce Ridgley will be having surgery on June 29th.

Dorothy Rest will have cataract surgery on June 29th.

Elnora Meister was still in the hospital as of June 19th.

Courtney Swander was recently released from the hospital.

Kelvin Kramm is recovering at home from surgery.

Tom Ward is recovering from surgery.

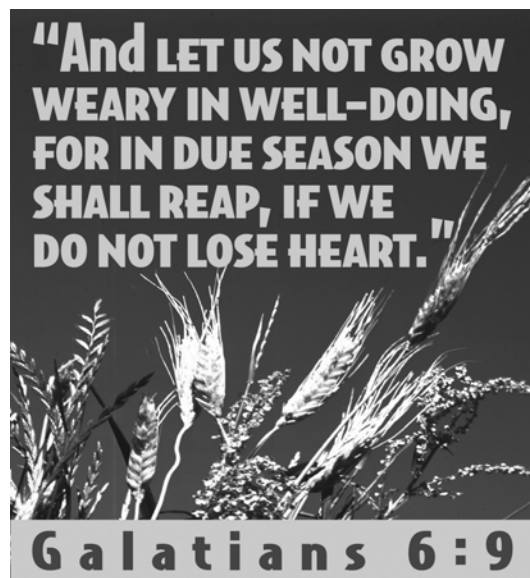
Friends of the Conference

The Board of Directors at its April 14th meeting approved the establishment of the “**Friends of the Conference,**” to encourage individual gifts to support the ministry of the South Central Conference. While we will work to encourage greater giving of our churches to OCWM significantly. Many UCC Conferences have individualized giving programs in place as a source of additional revenue for the Conference ministry.

Individuals who contribute a gift of \$100 (or more) will become members of the Friends of the Conference. Friends of the Conference gifts should be sent directly to the Conference and not included in any OCWM remittals from the local church. The Conference will acknowledge all Friends of the Conference gifts and a listing will appear in the Conference Annual Report.

As of the Conference Annual Meeting \$7,180 had been received for “Friends of the Conference!”

If you would like to join the “Friends of the Conference” send your check to the Conference office at 9022 Long Point Road, Houston, TX 77055. Be sure to indicate your church membership when sending your offering and designate your check for “Friends of the Conference.”

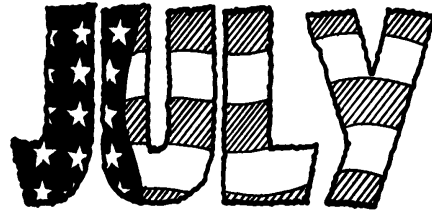


Summer Is Here

Summer is here and people are heading hither and yon on vacations, weekend camping, and receiving visitors. Don't forget your church in the midst of all of this. If you have visitors, ask them if they would like to come with you to church. If you are going out of town remember to send in your tithe and offering. Many of us will be gone on vacation, but the cost of ministry does not take a vacation.

By the way, if you take an interesting vacation, write a little something up for next month's newsletter.

- What did you see?
- Did you attend another church while gone?
- Did you see some of the beauty of God's creation?
- How did it touch you?



Ushers:

July 1: Steve & Nancy Foster;
Bonnie Stark; Michele Gilbreth
July 8: Joe & Mikki Ward; Don
Gregg; Sheri Haynes
July 15: Jo Anne Brown;
Evelyn Krueger; George & Mary
Dare
July 22: Richard & Kathy
Leber; Richard Hitz; Julie
Allison
July 29: Helmuth & Betty
Heinemeyer; Sherry Heinemeyer;
Bruce Ridgley

Liturgist:

July 1: Steve Foster
July 8: Mikki Ward
July 15: Michele Gilbreth
July 22: Jim Gossett
July 29: Bennie Harst

Council Representative:

July 1: Bonnie Stark
July 8: Joe Ward
July 15: Michele Gilbreth
July 22: Jim Gossett
July 29: Bennie Harst

Communion Assistants July 1

Bonnie Stark
Michele Gilbreth

Acolytes:

July 1: Bonnie Stark
July 8: Joe Ward
July 15: George Dare
July 22: Richard Leber
July 29: Betty Heinemeyer

Greeters:

July 1: Nancy Foster
July 8: Sheri Hanynes
July 15: Mary Dare
July 22: Kathy Leber
July 29: Bruce Ridgley

Notice: If you cannot serve on the date/dates shown, please try to find a substitute. If not, please call the church office as soon as possible. (625-6761)

We are need of people to serve coffee and cookies after church in July. All Sundays are open! You can sign up on the kiosk in the entry way.





July 3 Meta Heinemeyer

July 4 Chrissy Gossett

July 9 Jim Frederickson

July 9 Kai Perry-Clark

July 10 Karen Kramm

July 10 Wilton Warnecke

(If we do not have your birthday listed please contact the church office.)

United Christian Church Austin Becomes the Newest Open and Affirming Church in the South Central Conference

On June 10, the United Christian Church (DOC & UCC), Austin, TX, voted unanimously to become an Opening & Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. It becomes the thirteenth ONA congregation of the South Central Conference. The Rev. Tim Tutt is the Pastor of the United Christian Church. Rev. Tutt shares in an announcement of the church's recent vote: "The congregation talked about this statement being, not an ending point, but a significant marker along the road of faith. This statement is a word of hospitality to a world in need of

welcome. It is one way in which our congregation can reflect the Good News of God expressed in Jesus, the Christ. ... We ask your prayers as we seek to live into this statement."

Currently 14.94% of South Central Conference churches are Open & Affirming (our percentage is ahead of the national average of UCC of approximately 10%).

South Central Conference Annual Meeting

Ken Triesch and Joe Ward represented Faith Church at the conference annual meeting. They, along with Pastor Scott, joined approximately 200 other delegates and visitors at the meeting in San Antonio June 1-3.

Among the highlights of the meeting was the official installation of our new Conference Minister Rev. Doug Anders on Friday night. Rev. Gene Bartels, from the Neighborhood Houses in St. Louis preached.

Rev. Anders writes in his annual report: "I share with you the reality of what I face as a Conference Minister. There is certainly an enormous challenge before this conference yet amid all the struggles, laments and difficulties is God's gift of hope that reminds us that a different world is possible. I am a firm believer that if you can imagine it then it is possible. My vision for this conference is not one of radical transformation but slow growth and movement towards God's community of grace, care and love. I see the potential and possibility that God makes possible."

General Synod Resolutions

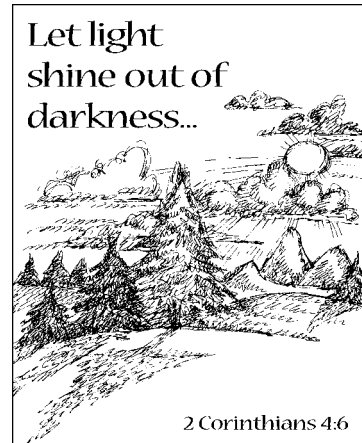
While this synod is primarily a celebratory gathering because of the 50th anniversary of the UCC it will nonetheless have a full business agenda as well. There will be budgets to vote on, officers to elect and reports made. There will also be a number of resolutions that will be explored in committee, amended and voted on. Here is the list going in:

- A Call to End Migrant Deaths and the US Blockade Strategy of Border Enforcement
- Against Depleted Uranium Weapons
- A Reaffirmation of Marriage Based on the Word of God
- A Reaffirmation of the Historic and Ecumenical Perspective on Marriage
- Call for a More Humane United States Immigration Policy
- Changing the Composition of the General Synod
- In Support of Immigrant Communities
- Legalization of Physician Aid in Dying
- Reaffirmation of Our Faith to Retain Our Churches
- Regarding the Tar Creek Superfund Site
- Renewing the Covenant with the Rural Church
- Returning To Unity and Diversity In the United Church of Christ

Something to Think About



You can go on line to the national UCC website and find the full text for all these resolutions. You can also follow the synod through web-streaming. Remember that the General Synod only speaks **TO** the Church **not FOR** the Church.



We have four people from Faith Church Attending General Synod. Rev. Ralph Ludwig is a delegate. The following will be going as visitors: Rev. Frank Dietz; Rev. Sandy Ludwig; and Rev. Scott Martin.

Sometime in late summer or early fall we will set up a time for a General Synod Update from all who attended. Be looking for this date in future newsletters.

Flowers For Sunday Worship

Many of you have beautiful flowers growing in your summer gardens. We could use some flowers for the Sunday morning worship services, both on the altar and in front of the lectern and pulpit. If you have some flowers you would like to share bring them with you on Sunday morning. Flowers are a reminder of the beauty of God's creation.



This is the official logo for the United Church of Christ. You see it on letterheads, bulletins, banners, etc. but do you know what it symbolizes and where it comes from? The following explanation comes from the UCC website.

The symbol of the United Church of Christ comprises a crown, cross and orb enclosed within a double oval bearing the name of the church and the prayer of Jesus, "That they may all be one" (John 17:21). It is based on an ancient Christian symbol called the "Cross of Victory" or the "Cross Triumphant." The crown symbolizes the sovereignty of Christ. The cross recalls the suffering of Christ—his arms outstretched on the wood of the cross—for the salvation of humanity. The orb, divided into three parts, reminds us of Jesus' command to be his "witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The verse from Scripture reflects our historic commitment to the restoration of unity among the separated churches of Jesus Christ.

Sharing Esperanza Stories Or Can We Really Change the Whole World?

I don't know about you but sometimes the problems of this world just seem so huge as to be totally insolvable. It is so easy to become totally pessimistic about what we can realistically accomplish. What can we do about world poverty, hunger, global warming, injustice, etc., etc. etc.

At our closing worship on the Esperanza trip Mike and I gave the young people a small starfish. We asked if anyone knew the story about a man throwing starfish back into the sea. One of the youth remembered the story and told the story from start to finish. You probably know it too.

A man was slowly working his way down the beach. Periodically he would bend over and pick something up and throw it into the sea. Another man was observing this and wondered what the man was doing. He drew closer and saw that the first man was throwing starfish back into the sea that had washed up on the beach.

Wondering at the seeming futility of this gesture the second man said to the first, "Why are you doing that? Don't you know that there are probably thousands of starfish just on this beach alone, let alone all the beaches in the world. You can't save them all! Your actions are futile and meaningless."

The first man simply bent over and picked up another starfish and as he tossed it back in the sea he said, "It's not meaningless to this one."

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1853: First woman pastor



Antoinette Brown is the first woman since New Testament times ordained as a Christian minister, and perhaps the first woman in history elected to serve a Christian congregation as pastor. At her ordination a friend, Methodist minister Luther Lee, defends "a woman's right to preach the Gospel." He quotes the New Testament: "There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

