

June 2007

Glimpses of Faith Newsletter

**Faith U.C.C.
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Rev. Scott B. Martin**



The United Church of Christ is 50 years old! Of course the four denominations that merged to make the UCC go back some 400 years! There is so much that we have to be proud of when it comes to the history of the UCC. I hope that each of you have taken some time to learn a little about our denomination. When someone asks you about the United Church of Christ what do you say? Who are we? If you don't have much to say there is a simple remedy. Read our church newsletter, read the UC News, check out the website, ask the pastor, attend association and conference meetings, read the bulletin board, read the back of the bulletin each Sunday, etc.

I am looking forward to attending the General Synod meeting in Hartford, Connecticut this month. It will be a marvelous opportunity to learn more about the UCC, past, present and future. It will be a time to celebrate who we are.

I'm hoping to attend a pre-synod "Bon Voyage" Celebration for the Freedom Schooner Amistad. I hope you know this story. In 1839 a band of slaves were being transported from Havana to a plantation in Cuba. They

broke their chains and took over the ship. The ship was captured off the East Coast. The ship's owner sued in U.S. courts to have the slaves returned as "property." Congregationalists and other Christians organized a campaign to free them and return them to Africa. The case eventually went to the Supreme Court, where the court ruled they were not property and freed them. This story was poignantly told in the Steven Spielberg movie "Amistad."

The UCC was one of the major donors to have a replica of the "Amistad" built to help tell this story and to help ensure that we all learn the lessons of this historical event. One June 21st the Schooner Amistad will hoist sails in New Haven and depart for Sierra Leone, West Africa. This is where Sengbe Pieh and his fellow captives were from. The "Amistad" will carry the message "Confronting the Past; Transforming the Present", which is the message of the whole "Amistad Project." This voyage is part of the commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in England. We do indeed wish the "Amistad" and all who sail on her, a safe and successful voyage.

Tim Marlow Will Soon Finish the SCC Lay Ministry Program

Two years ago I began the UCC Licensed Lay Ministry program of Texas. This is a two-year program that meets once a month for four hours of classroom time and is led by ministers and lay people of the Brazos Association of the South Central Conference. I was given a reading and writing assignment for each class. The classes I took ranged from church history, ethics, stewardship, pastoral care, preaching, and theology, to bible study and UCC polity.

I started taking these courses shortly after Jennifer and I became the youth leaders at Faith UCC. I felt that I needed more tools to better be able to work with the youth of the church. As I became more involved with the classes, I discovered how much I truly enjoyed the material and how it could help with my service to the larger church body. Now, as I near the end of my course work, I am looking forward to sharing what I have learned with others and would like to do so in an official capacity.

[Plans are underway on creating a lay minister's position at Faith UCC. The following are some initial thoughts by the pastor, church council and Tim.]

I recently met with Pastor Scott and the Church Council, and together, we developed the role of Minister of Social Justice & Action. In this capacity I will work closely with Pastor Scott to ensure continuity with his ministry and vision.

As the Minister of Social Justice & Action, I will organize monthly

volunteer opportunities for members of the congregation to share their talents with our local community. These actions will support such organizations as SOS Food bank, Community Service Center, and Church World Service. I will also be sharing with the congregation the work of the UCC Justice and Peace Action and will bring awareness of some of the issues they and the larger church are currently addressing; issues such as Global Concerns, Racial Justice, Economic Justice, Peacemaking, Civil and Human Rights.

In addition, I will continue my current outreach activities to members and visitors through maintaining the Faith UCC website and creating the Sunday morning slideshow of announcements.

I look forward to hearing from the congregation as to how we can further develop this role. I am open to suggestions and look forward to serving Faith UCC. Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Tim Marlow



Our thoughts and prayers are with Denise Leonhardt and her family, upon the death of her mother Natalie Phelan.

Our thoughts and prayers are also with the family of Elvira Russel, who passed away at Eden Home on Monday May 7th.

Update From Back Bay

Greetings and peace to you from Back Bay Mission! I want to thank you for your recent donation to our ministry. Every gift we receive is a blessing to us and to those we serve.

It is already more than a year-and-a-half since Hurricane Katrina. From afar, the impression may be that life has moved back to normal in the areas devastated by that storm, that somehow all has been healed and recovered. The truth is something far different, as even all this time later our region struggles to rebuild and recoup neighborhoods and lives. Progress is being made, to be sure, but tens of thousands still call FEMA trailers home, and equal numbers face a very uncertain future. For those Back Bay Mission serves, life is even more fragile, with limited resources available to confront enormous obstacles in their path.

Back Bay Mission is here beside them, though, laboring every day to serve, advocate, and spur constructive change. We are working tirelessly to expand our reach and impact, struggling to keep up with the need constantly in front of us, making a compassionate difference in everyday lives. And we are bringing innovative leadership to some of the most difficult foundational issues of our context: homelessness, affordable housing, and just, equitable redevelopment.

We are able to do what we do only because *you* have also remained at our *side*. Thank you for continuing to remember us in

prayer and with your stewardship of gifts. We remain ever grateful.

Peace, Shari Prestemon



South Central Conference Annual Meeting June 1-3

The theme of this year's meeting is "Let It Shine!" It will be held at the Doubletree Hotel, 37 N.E. Loop 410 (at

McCullough, near the airport). Visitors are welcome and given the nearness of the meeting I hope many of you from Faith Church will attend.

Rev. Doug Anders will be installed as Conference Minister Friday night at 8 p.m. Rev. Gene Bartel from the UCC Neighborhood Houses in St. Louis will preach at this event as well as give the keynote address Saturday morning at 10:45 a.m. The Sunday morning worship service will be at 10 a.m.

New UCC Church In Austin

Church of the Savior in Austin recently joined the United Church of Christ. Their motto is: Open Minds, Faithful Hearts, Working Hands. They are located in Cedar Park. They give an impressive 12% of their church offerings to various charities and missions and engage in many hands on mission projects in Austin.. Check out their website at www.icots.org

May Circle of Faith News

We studied Christian symbols in our stained glass windows and on the two banners that hang in the sanctuary during our program on May 10, 2007.



The ladies enjoyed the program and had a good discussion about what the symbols all meant. Those who donated the stained glass windows and banners were gratefully acknowledged.

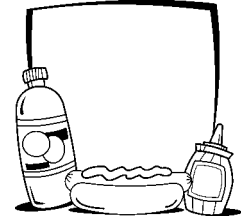
In our business meeting, we authorized Norma to pay First Protestant what we owe them for the cost of the meal that they prepared for the Church Women of Comal County Luncheon. We also decided to send our Least Coin project money to Frank and Karen Dietz's niece in New Orleans for her Books for Children project.

Next month, Joe Ward will give a presentation on his and Mikki's trips to the Dominican Republic with Cross Church, where they helped supply necessary medical equipment, clothes, and other necessities to the people there.

Sandy Ludwig

Friedens UCC Annual Church Festival

Friedens Church will have its annual Church Festival on Saturday June 16th. Lunch will be served from 11-1:30 p.m.



Supper will be served from 5-7 p.m. Sausage plates are \$7 and include coleslaw, potato salad, beans and tea. Homemade desserts are available.

There will be an auction at 7 p.m. A children's carnival will be available with lots of fun games. There will also be entertainment and a country store and raffle. For more information call 303-7729 or look on the web at www.friedens-church.org

Church Workday a Success

A good crew of workers showed up for a pancake breakfast at 8 and worked until almost 3 p.m. A great deal was accomplished at the recent church workday. The grass was cut, weeds pulled, and the weed whacker was in use. The shed was painted and the trim that had come loose was fixed. We also replaced some burned out lights in the sanctuary and re-aimed some of the floodlights to light the back corners of the sanctuary. Trees were trimmed and brush hauled away. Our thanks to all of you who worked that day!

June Sunday Volunteers



Ushers

June 3 JoAnne Brown; Sol Fus;
Albert Hennig; Norma Gilbert

June 10 Robert & Emily Dennino;
David & Sally Pena

June 17 Bennie Harst; Bruce Ridgley;
Mikki & Joe Ward

June 24 Ray & Emma Lou Bizer;
Courtney & Lois Swander

Liturgist

June 3 Jim Gossett
June 10 Betty Heinemeyer
June 17 Mikki Ward
June 24 Tim Marlow

Council Representative

June 3 Michelle Gilbreth
June 10 Jim Gossett
June 17 Bennie Harst
June 24 Tim Marlow

Communion Assistants

June 3 Albert Hennig & Norma Gilbert

Acolytes

June 3 Tiffany Gilbreth
June 10 Cullen Leonhardt
June 17 Bennie Harst
June 24 Ray Bizer

Greeters

June 3 JoAnne Brown
June 10 Merle Kosler
June 17 Darlene Stephens
June 24 Emma Lou Bizer

We are in need of volunteers to serve coffee and cookies after church in June. You can sign up on the kiosk.

June Calendar

June 1-3 South Central Conference
Meeting in San Antonio

June 3-11 Pastor is on his annual
mission trip to Tijuana, Mexico

June 3 Hymn Sing at church 10:30 am

June 7 Women's Circle 11 a.m.

June 9 Men's Breakfast 8 a.m.

June 10 Rev. Peter Olson preaches at
the 10:30 worship service

June 17 Worship at 10:30 a.m.

June 20-27 Pastor Scott is at General
Synod in Hartford, Connecticut

June 24 50th Anniversary of the UCC!

June 24 Worship 10:30 a.m.



June 6 John Stark
June 10 Jim Gossett
June 12 George Lombardo, Jr.
June 12 Kyle Kramm
June 14 James Lewis
June 16 JoAnn Brown
June 20 Carol Ann Staats
June 27 Kevin Morris



On Sunday June 3 we will have an old fashioned hymn sing. There will be no sermon that day. The congregation was asked to submit their three favorite hymns on Sunday May 20th. Over 40 hymns were suggested, with some receiving multiple submissions!

Naturally we will not be able to sing them all on June 3rd! We will try to do as many as we can that Sunday and work in the others over the next several months. A special thanks to those of you willing to share in the service on June 3rd why the hymn you suggested is one of your favorites. We look forward to hearing from all five of you who said you were willing to share.

Martin Luther once said that singing a hymn was like praying twice. He probably had something there. If so we will be doing lots of singing and praying on June 3rd!

Pastor Scott To Go on Mission Trip to Tijuana, Mexico

For over a dozen years now Pastor Scott has made a yearly mission trip to Tijuana, Mexico. He will join the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference Youth Mission trip scheduled for June 3-11th. Each year his friend and colleague Rev. Michael Poage organizes this trip. This year 14 people will make the journey to build houses with Esperanza.

The following is a testimonial from Lupe Nolazco Coda. Her house was built in 1994.

"Para mi Esperanza fue
For me Esperanza was a door of salvation for my life and for my family. It signifies a door for a future for my children...

cuatro paredes... four walls

Llegaron con el corazon en la mano... They came with their heart and their hand...

Esperanza... llego a cumplir mis suenos
Esperanza arrived to fulfill my dreams."

"Darle a mis hijos una casa digna..."
Giving to my children a dignified house

"Esperanza fue el primer paso para lograr parte del sueno que yo tenia..."
Esperanza was the first step to achieve part of the dream I had

"Gracias, mil gracias Esperanza, con amor" a thousand thank yous, with love, Guadalupe & hijos

Immigration debate: Church 'sanctuary movement' of 1980s seeing revival



Written by Ecumenical News International

Friday, 11 May 2007

Members of the U.S. religious community are reviving the "sanctuary movement" of the 1980s by launching a national drive to protect undocumented workers who face possible deportation from the United States.

The sanctuary movement two decades ago offered protection in the United States to refugees fleeing wars in Central America. The new effort will be based on local congregations, and will provide assistance to undocumented workers who face the threat of being deported because they do not have the proper papers to work legally.

"We are responding to a broken system that is increasingly creating broken families, and broken lives," said the Rev. Alexia Salvatierra, a leader of the New Sanctuary Movement, which was launched on May 9.

The movement is multi-faith, with Jewish, Muslim and Christian groups involved. More than 50 congregations in the US have committed themselves to the campaign.

According to some estimates, there are about 12 million undocumented persons in the United States. Places of worship that will participate in the New Sanctuary Movement say they hope to offer shelter, financial help, assistance from immigration lawyers, and, in some cases, actual physical sanctuary.

Qualifying families will be those with at least one parent facing a deportation order.

However, Ira Mehlman, a spokesperson for the Federation for American Immigration Reform, an advocacy group, criticized the latest sanctuary move. "Churches and religious workers, like everyone else, are subject to the laws of the United States, and what they are engaged in is harbouring of fugitives," Mehlman told Ecumenical News International. "They certainly have a right to their points of view but they are not above the law."

The announcement of the new initiative came the same week that a newly formed coalition, Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, called for changes to U.S. immigration legislation.

The coalition said changes were needed to allow undocumented workers "to come out of the shadows and pursue the option of an earned path towards permanent legal status and citizenship upon satisfaction of specific criteria."



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