

August 2017

Glimpses of Faith Newsletter

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Pastor's Page

As I write this I'm considering the various parables from the end of Matthew 13 and like last week Jesus includes a line or two on "hell" for evildoers. **"The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."** (Mt 13:49)

As I ponder this it is also "hot as hell outside" with the temperature reaching 100 for the seventh day in a row!. Actually if there is a hell I'm sure it is probably hotter than 100 but it is certainly a good metaphor on the heat we are experiencing!

There is no concept similar to "Hades" or "Hell" in the Old Testament. This concept did not develop until much later in Jewish history, a century or two before the time of Jesus. In the Old Testament there is a place, usually thought of as being underground, where the ALL of the dead go, but there is no fiery torment, or separation of the good and the bad and accompanying reward and punishment. It simply is a shadowy realm for the spirits of the dead. It does not seem to have played much of a role in Old Testament thinking about God. The ancient Jews were more interested in the relationship of God with human beings in the here and now, not in the hereafter.

In this sense, on the question of hell I probably have a more Old Testament view than I do an New Testament view. British theologian Dr. N.T. Wright holds a pretty traditional Christian view on most theological topics. He had a rather interesting reaction when asked about the reality of hell:

"Why are Americans so fixated on hell?" Far more Americans ask me about hell than ever happens in my own country. And I really want to know, why is it that the most prosperous affluent nation on earth is really determined to be sure that they know precisely who is going to be frying in hell and what the temperature will be and so on. There's something quite disturbing about that, especially when your nation and mine has done quite a lot in the last decade or two to drop bombs on people elsewhere and to make a lot of other people's lives hell. So, I think there are some quite serious issues about why people want to ask that question."

I wish he would have said more about what these "serious issues" might be. Wright went on to say he wasn't a "universalist", a person who believes everybody will go to heaven but then he goes on to quote another theologian who was asked if he was a universalist, who said, **"I'm not a universalist, but maybe God is."** I rather like this. Personally I tend to believe that in end God's will will be done and that everyone will be saved, for I believe that is God's will for everyone. How long this will take I haven't a clue. Guess I could flip the previous quote and say, **"I am a universalist, but maybe God isn't."** Again, I come back to the Old Testament approach and worry more about my relationship with God in this life and I leave the rest up to God.

United Church of Christ 2017 Southern Region Women's Retreat Joyful Expectation! Peaceful Inspiration!

October 20-22, 2017, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Mo Ranch Retreat Center, 2229 FM 1340 Hunt, Texas 78024 (www.moranch.org)

Dear UCC Sisters in Christ,

You are welcome to experience JOY and PEACE unspeakable, at the 2017 Southern Region Women's Retreat. United Church of Christ Conferences participating are Southeast, South Central, Southern and Florida. The beautiful hill country with fall foliage will give you a new revelation about God and His Creation, at the historic MO Ranch Retreat Center which is a little more than an 1 hour east of San Antonio, Texas.



We will experience a time of relaxation, refreshment, renewal, and revelation together. Find JOY and PEACE in this place. There will be time for fellowship, with old friends, and an opportunity to make new acquaintances, in addition to the enrichment of your soul that will benefit you, your church, your association, your conference and your community.

Of course, you want to know: Will there be dancing just like we experienced in 2015? Will there be crafts? Silent Auction? Well worry no more. There will be all kinds of activities that will lift your spirits, and engage your hearts in new exciting ways. Remember we are UCC, so you already know we are always connected to the Divine in all that we do, as we recognize the source of JOY and PEACE in our lives.

Mark your calendar, as we want to see you at this exciting event of : **Joyful Expectation! Peaceful Inspiration! Bountiful Blessings**

Register online at the South Central Conference website sccucc.org

Registration for the full retreat, meals, and lodging \$200 per person (double occupancy)
After September 5, the registration will be \$210.00
\$65.00 registration with no lodging
T-shirts \$18.00, plus sizes \$20.00
Bags, \$10.00

2017 Southern Region Women's Retreat UCC Women Planning Team South Central Conference



August Birthdays!!!

- 8-1 Joshua Coble 8-2 Jan Ziegler 8-7 Donna Myer
- 8-14 Karen Dietz 8-19 David Lamensky 8-19 Reed Hoke 8-23 Nora Compton Grace
- Perry-Clark 8-25 Peter Bauer

If your birthday is missing let us know so we can get it in next time!

Three Great Loves initiative launched to 'embody love and incarnate justice' to build a just world

July 3, 2017 Written by **Connie Larkman**

To follow God's call to build a just world for all as a united church, United Church of Christ General Minister and President John C. Dorhauer is calling the entire denomination to pull together under a new, shared mission — the Three Great Loves initiative.

"What is Three Great Loves? It is a call to the love of children, to the love of neighbor, and to the love of creation," Dorhauer told the gathering on Saturday morning, July 1. "During the next biennium, we want to discover what an entire denomination committed to Three Great Loves can do to change the world."

Launching today at General Synod and continuing until the 2019 gathering in Milwaukee, Three Great Loves seeks to build on and amplify the sacred work UCC churches are already doing in their communities to care for children, reach out in welcome to their neighbors, and act as good stewards of the earth and all creation. Dorhauer invited participation around this shared mission, urging congregations and other ministerial settings to explore new ways to embrace those commitments with a clear intent and shared purpose in a dedicated call to action over the next two years.

"There will be three significant requests of you: three occasions in which we invite us all to participate as one in a collective effort," Dorhauer said. "Each of the Three Great Loves will have a dedicated call to action with three components: an invitation to give, an invitation to act, an invitation to connect."

He outlined three initiatives — in the winter of 2017, a denomination-wide drive to provide basic human needs items to shelters housing refugees or the homeless; next fall 2018, there will be a denomination-wide school supplies drive to address inequalities in our education systems, and at Synod in 2019, a sponsored 5K walk to raise money and awareness for the earth.

Over the course of the two years, on the Three Great Loves [website](#), the national setting will be collecting stories from commitments to the love of children, the love of neighbor, the love of creation, and how those ministries have had an impact. The UCC is also looking to lift up Three Great Loves Heroes, and will be taking nominations, looking for members who have made a difference in the world.

"Our hope is to be able to document 50 percent congregational participation by Synod 2019; to collect 3,000 stories from across the denomination about how we are building a Just World for All through love of children, love of neighbor, and love of creation; to collect 100 stories from other covenant partners, like our CHHSM agencies; and we want to name 300 Three Great Loves Heroes, asking you to nominate somebody who is working to care for children, for neighbor, and for creation."

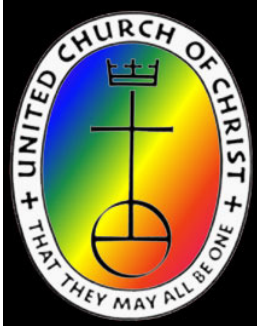
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"Three Great Loves is an invitation to act as one and to deepen our impact by pulling together in love, for justice, and with purpose," Dorhauer said "As disciples of the Risen Christ, we call ourselves to embody love and incarnate justice."

"Hey, United Church of Christ. The Holy Spirit is relying on you, and envisions a future in which you matter."

Camdyn Sisco-Martinez's Confirmation Speech

The part of the UCC Statement of Faith that Camdyn chose to speak about was **"You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant, faithful people of all ages, tongues and races."** Here are Camdyn's reflections on this....



"What this means to me is that God made a church with no building and no name, so that everyone could come and worship. Before becoming a member of this church we were once members of the Marble Falls Church of Christ. Me and my two sisters Caddy and Robynne were born into that church, in fact it was the church my mom had attended since she was my age, and where my grandfather was a deacon. We were so incorporated into that church that it had become part of our family, we had 400 grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. We participated in every function from vacation bible school to every youth group and Sunday School. Never would I have imagined that our extended "family" would not be part of our lives. The day my sister Robynne came out as gay, was the day our family of 400 turned to a family of 5. It was incredible how fast the church turned their back on us. We were told not to come back until Robynne had moved on from her phase. That's when we learned we weren't with faithful people because John 13 verse 34 Jesus says "love one another". That's it. So when we moved to New Braunfels and attended this church we were scared to get involved. but what we see is all different people with different backgrounds, skin colors and sexual orientations, and ages, all coming together as a family. God has bestowed on all of us his Holy Spirit and we are all bound together as faithful people....."

August Calendar

- 8-6 Worship (communion) 10:30 a.m. Indivisible meets in Baese Hall at 2 p.m.
- 8-8 Clergy Jam 7 Bread St. John's Burton 10 a.m. (carpool from church at 7:45 a.m. back at 3:30 p.m.)
- 8-9 Church Council meets at 7 p.m.
- 8-13 Worship 10:30 a.m. Christian Ed meets after church
- 8-15 La Leche League meets in Baese Hall at 6:30 p.m. (N.B. Chorus practice in sanctuary 6:30 p.m.)
- 8-17 PFLAG meets in Seguin at 7 p.m. (ask pastor for location)
- 8-18 SOS Food Bank 1-4 p.m. Volunteers needed - Bunco Night in Baese Hall at 6 p.m.
- 8-20 Worship 10:30 a.m. Cora Ren Walker to be baptized (Parents James & Ellen Walker)
- 8-22 N.B. Community Chorus practice in the sanctuary 6:30 p.m.
- 8-27 Worship 10:30
- 8-29 September Newsletter articles due (newsletter goes out 9/1) N.B. Chorus in Sanctuary 6:30 p.m.

Heart of Texas Association News

The churches of the Heart of Texas Association follow God's call to ministry in ways we are often unaware of outside our immediate communities. Of course, many of our churches have magnificent ongoing ministries to those around them. I want to share here a few unique and joyous things our churches are doing.

The members of St. Peter's Church of Coupland sponsor several children and raise additional money to support Family Village Farm, an orphanage and school in South India through our UCC/Disciples of Christ Global Ministries partnership. The church has been offering this support for several years. Recently, a retired Methodist minister who travels to the mission frequently as a volunteer teacher visited St. Peter's and shared a video of the kids they sponsor, told them more about the orphanage, and told them of how the place also gives a home to elderly widow women who do not have families for support and who are "grannies" there, helping to care for the children. The poverty these children and widows face otherwise is extreme. This visitor came while on a trip to Texas because a staff member at Family Village Farm told him St. Peter's sponsors more children there than any other church.



Faith UCC New Braunfels is hosting the first stop on a display of the art reflections of women and children refugees claiming asylum in a south Texas detention center. Those whose art is on display are people who have come to this country to escape threats and violence they have witnessed and suffered from gangs, the drug trade, and other terrible situations. Rev. Dr. Helen Boursier, a Presbyterian minister who is close to the Faith UCC community, and Rev. Sabrina

Jennings of our Association worked in this ministry as volunteers in 2015 and 2016. Since very few people are allowed access to these facilities, Faith is giving a unique space for expression and voice through art to many of these people. For those unable to go to the exhibit, you can view the artworks and read the testimonies at www.RefugeeArtBlog.com.

Over 60 youth and adult chaperones from United Christian Austin, Friends Congregational College Station, Congregational Church of Austin, and Church of the Savior Cedar Park (joined by the youth from University Christian Austin to make the group even larger) went on a mission trip run by Reach Beyond Mission to Washington, DC at the beginning of July. Small groups of youth and adults traveled all over DC by subway and bus each day working at food banks, breakfast programs, homeless shelters, and other ministries to the enormous poor population amid the wealth of our nation's capital. The group also toured the Capitol, attended a presentation at the UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, had a speaker come from the Baptist Joint Committee on the Separation of Church and State, and had a presentation from Tim Tutt, former Senior Minister of United Christian and current Senior Minister of Westmoreland Congregational in Bethesda, MD -- all to educate about and encourage the group to participate in justice advocacy.

Let's rejoice in the living of the gospel by these churches and by the many ways all of our churches are seeking to bring God's joy, justice, love, and hope to those around them.

Blessings in Christ, Liz Nash, Association Minister

Bunco Night At Faith Church

August Adult Fellowship Opportunity--Join us for a night of fellowship and Bunco on Friday, August 18, at 6:30 p.m. at the church! Bunco is a fun, exciting game and easy to learn. No experience is required.

We'll have a potluck sandwich supper. Please bring your favorite sandwiches, chips, side dish, or dessert to share. Drinks will be provided.

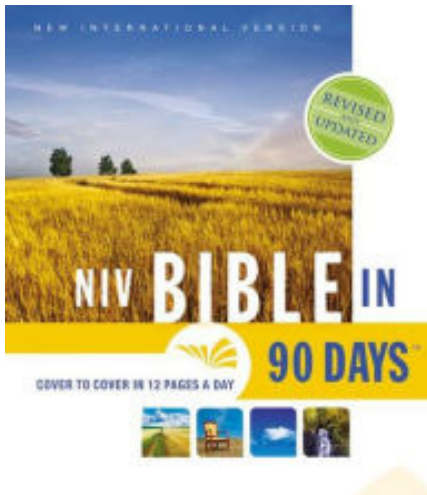
Each player should bring \$5 for cash prizes for the winners--most games won, most games lost, most buncos, most snake eyes, and last bunco. Please sign up in the narthex. For more information contact Dan or Vicky Geisler at 817-925-3222.

Thanks, Vicky



Coming this Fall to Faith Church: *Read the Bible in 90 Days*

The weekly Bible study for lay persons is an invitation and challenge to literally read the Bible from cover-to-cover in 90 days. Mike Boursier will lead the study group one evening a week **beginning after Labor Day**. The study includes independent reading of the Bible—starting in Genesis and marching right through to Revelation.



The weekly group sessions include a teaching session by biblical scholars via DVD as well as a small group discussion. Mike has led this study three times before, and he said it is energizing for everyone who participates. The emphasis for participants is lay persons so that “people in the pew” can become more familiar with, knowledgeable about, the Bible.

The study was developed using New International Version, but participants are welcome to read whichever version—The Message, New Revised Standard, New International Version, King James, etc. **The day will be set based upon interested participants, with the timing (approximately) 6:30 to 8 p.m.** There is no cost other than to bring your own Bible. Contact Mike Boursier at

Mikeb@boursier.us or ask him about it after

Our Thanks to All Who Helped With the Art Exhibit!

The Refugee Art/Reflections: Power of Hope exhibit was a huge success! There was an excellent turnout. With people coming and going from 4-7 p.m. accurate numbers are hard to come up with but it is estimated that 50-75 attended. A huge thanks to the Rev. Dr. Helen Borsier for her work at Karnes and for putting this exhibit together. It is a powerful testimony to the refugees stories. Thanks also to all those who helped with setting up, refreshments and hosting! The exhibit will be at Faith UCC for two Sundays and then head out to tour Texas.

July 2017 Treasurer's Report

Assets	As of Jun. 30, 2017	
General Fund	\$11,115.73	
Building Fund	\$1,027.47	
Income & Expenses	As of Jun. 30, 2017	As of Jun. 30, 2016
Total Income	\$62,573.82	\$71,453.18
General Fund Offerings	\$59,276.60	\$69,037.24
Total Expenses	\$69,640.61	\$69,065.49
Net Income	(\$7,066.79)	\$2,387.69

With several large expenditures this year, including a new HVAC and sealing of the parking lot, and increases in operating expenses, such as insurance and payroll, the church's financial position is weakened compared to this time last year. The Council respectfully requests your consideration in giving to grow both the general fund and the building fund to strengthen our church's future.

As always, the Council appreciates the congregation's support of Faith's mission.
Sincerely, Kyle Kramm, Faith UCC Treasurer

Raffle for Michael Heras

Louie and David are having a raffle for Michael on August 26th to help him and his family financially to continue his battle against sarcoma. You may remember we held a bingo and raffle for him last year which was a great success and we'll likely be having another in a few months.



If you would like to purchase raffle tickets please contact Louie at lheras67@hotmail.com or David at qdreed@msn.com or contact one of us through Facebook or at church service.

Tickets (Pink): \$5 each for a chance to Win a Wine Gift Basket, Loteria Gift Basket, Back To School Gift Basket, Movie Gift Basket or Liquor Gift Basket.

We will also raffle off (One) Grand Prize Tickets (Yellow): \$10 each for a chance to Win a Sanyo 50" LED LCD HDTV!

The raffle will be held on August 26th and a time will be announced closer to that date. The drawing will be held live on Facebook so it is not necessary to be present to win. Follow Michael's page on Facebook at [facebook.com/michaelsfightstrongerthansarcoma/](https://www.facebook.com/michaelsfightstrongerthansarcoma/) or Welcome to "Michael's Fight", where giving up is not an option. 100% of all proceeds will go to help pay for Michael's treatments

Thank you all so much and God Bless!!!

Thank You From a Family Promise Family Dear Friends, Thank you so much for allowing us to be part of your lives for two weeks. You all made us feel so welcome and special. The food was great! And the company was even better. With Love, Becky & Liberty Moore

August Worship Assistants

8-6 Liturgist: Bob Manning Acolyte: Will Gossett Council Rep: Kyle Kramm
Greeter: Shirley Manning Hospitality: Chrissy Gossett AV: Kyle Kramm
Ushers: Bob Manning; Jim & Will Gossett; Kyle Kramm Nursery: Larissa Hunley
Communion: Sheila Angerer

8-13 Liturgist: Ralph Ludwig Acolyte: Joe Ward Council Rep: Mikki Ward
Greeter: Eddie Martinez Hospitality: Mikki Ward AV: Joe Ward
Ushers: Mikki Ward; Ralph Ludwig; Eddie & Carol Martinez Nursery: Larissa Hunley

8-20 Liturgist: Julia Allison Acolyte: Will Brown Council Rep: Will Brown
Greeter: Hulen Brown Hospitality: Kathy Leber AV: Tim Marlow
Ushers: Wil & Hulen Brown; Richard Leber; Julia Allison Nursery: Larissa Hunley

8-27 Liturgist: Jason Chapel Acolyte: Dan Geisler Council Rep: Dan Geisler
Greeter: Bob Manning Hospitality: Shirley Manning AV: David Reed
Ushers: Dan & Vicky Geisler; Bob & Shirley Manning Nursery: Larissa Hunley

If you cannot serve on the date(s) shown, please try to find a sub. If that is not possible, please leave a message at the church (830-625-6761) as soon as possible. If you would like to be added or removed from all or part of the Worship Assistant List, please contact the church office.

Dear Members and Friends of Faith UCC, we need your support.

Our church has incurred a debt of \$9312.00 that will need to be paid off by January 2018. One of our air conditioners in the sanctuary had a bad evaporator coil and the unit had to be replaced. The council received three comparative bids and chose Tri-County AC & Heating to do the work due to their reputation and willingness to allow six months same as cash to repay the dept. We have paid one third down for the installation. The church was already dipping into its reserves to cover operating budget expenses, and this added debt will severely deplete our safety net. Anything you can do to help will be greatly appreciated so we can all enjoy a cooler experience in worship. **2 Corinthians 9:7 ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**

Sincerely, Mikki Ward, Church Moderator