

Communigram

SEPTEMBER 20, 2006

VOL. 38 No. 15

From the Desk of Rev. Mike Mulberry...

Entering the Circle

Last year we began an adult education process that borrowed from an action/reflection model used in liberation theology. That process begins with observing the world and God's activity in the world, continues with discerning the path God has prepared for us, acting faithfully and in a way that walks that path, and, finally, celebrating the path we have walked to reenergize us to enter the process all over again. We call this process CO-DAC—Community Observes, Discerns, Acts, and Celebrates.

We used that process surrounding issues of food justice. We were already buying food shares from a local, organic farm and delivering them to social service agencies. Last year, we watched the award winning movie "Strong Roots, Fragile Farms," and studied the new curriculum from Church World Service entitled, "Just Eating?: Practicing Our Faith at the Table." Individuals who participated in the curriculum shared how this observation and discernment led to more intentional action and decision-making in their personal and familial lives.

From this observation and discernment process, we then offered an alternative communion service during

the summer with organic strawberries, fair trade chocolate, and home-made flatbread.

Finally, our observation, discernment, and action led to a celebration at a local, organic farm where over 110 Community UCC members and friends picked strawberries, sampled wine and cheese, and shared in the feast. Those who participated in the "Just Eating?" curriculum hoped that this feast would invite others to more intentional action and decision-making in their personal and familial lives.

Now It's Up to You! The Circle Continues

Now we need the rest of the congregation to take a chance on opportunities to continue this process. On Saturday, October 7, Laurence Mate, leader of the local Slow Food convivium will lead a group of Community UCC folk through the Urbana market (meeting at 9 am) and then return with the group to the church building to cook a meal. Due to a grant from the Valparaiso Project, the cost for each person will only be \$5. First of all, Laurence is a great cook! So Laurence will not only share his wisdom and knowledge about organic and local farming and slow food philosophy, but also prepare a great

meal. Second, Diann Moore, one of the farmers from Prairieland (where the church gets it shares), will be with the group to share how Community Supported Agriculture work and function for her family. Contact the church office (344-5091) if interested.

The other opportunity we will offer is a Community Supported Agriculture share from a local, organic farm at less than half the price. We do that using the remainder of the Valparaiso Project Grant. That means you will get fresh, organic food every week from May to October 31 for \$142 (half the price of a regular share)! If you split the share with another individual or family, as some folks in our congregation do, you will get fresh vegetables for about \$70 over the course of 27 weeks! We want folks to sample, to try, and to take a chance. We want to get you hooked on spiritual practices which benefit you, your community, and our world.

My grandest hope is that you will celebrate the process in such a way that you will help Community UCC start the circle all over again.

Shalom,

Mike



Moderator Musings

Now that my oldest daughter is three and attending preschool, I am very excited about the happenings in the children's Sunday school programs. If you haven't signed up to be a secret pal, check with Ellen Kordik to see if there is still time. The rooms look great, the nursery is being led by an excellent person, and all the children I saw coming out of classes on Sunday were happy and smiling. This is definitely a vibrant part of our church.

On Sunday evening we had our September administrative committee meeting.

It was very nice to have six members (not on the committee) in attendance to participate or observe in the proceedings. Jennifer Kelleher and Karen Kelsky were there to present the desire to have Kleen-Rite clean the carpeting in the fellowship hall to make it better for our children (as they do things like Yoga on the floor).

We approved their request and expanded the cleaning to the elevator and hallway in front of the offices. While this approximately \$400 of cost extends our building maintenance budget line further into the red, we feel that it is important to a growing church to spend money on things like this.

Our parking lot was on the agenda this month and we came to some decisions. The request put before us was to see about changing some of the "church use only" spots on the North side of the building into rental spots for church members only. Because our non-rented spots are limited to 10 spaces (two are designated handicap and our church staff must park in these also), the committee decided that two actions would be taken. We decided instead of assigning more spots, that church members would have priority for spots as they became available. The other action

was to approve our understanding of a parking policy for the North spots - that they should be for church use only. A formal policy will be presented at the October administrative committee meeting; please contact Vicky Robertson if you want input into the policy. The general policy is that you should only park in the "church use only" spots for church business. If a car is parked in the lot for non-church business, it may be towed. More information should be in this or upcoming communications.

To close my musings on a positive note, I was very happy to hear Eileen Gebbie's update on the visioning/discernment process. If you haven't participated in the process yet, I highly recommend it. I enjoyed talking about their questions. It will be very insightful when their full report is presented in November.

Peace, David Gerstenecker



Youth Group

We always have a great time when we gather together! If you are in 6th-12th grade, please join us each Sunday evening from 6-8 pm in the Tower Room for a time to relax, connect with each other, and explore the ways that we are called to be a people of God.

Here's what we're doing in the weeks ahead...

Sep 24: "Something Wicked This Way Comes" Movie at the Offenbecher's home. Be there at 6, show starts at 6:05! Bring a snack to share (sweet, salty or something to drink)

Oct 1: Care packages for Youth Group Alum. I'll supply the containers, you bring silly toys, snacks, photos, etc. We'll package them up and mail them off so that Travis, Karl, Beth, Katie, Emily, Linnea and David know that we're thinking of them.

Oct 8: We're starting our new book, "Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens." We will read one chapter each month, and spend a youth group session discussing and exploring. I think you're going to like this book!

Oct 15: Planning for our Dinner Theater!

Oct 22: Travel to Bloomington for the Creatures Crypt Haunted House. Cost is \$10, check out their website at creaturescrypt.com

Oct 29: Dinner Theater Rehearsal

Nov 5: Dinner Theater Performance

Nov 12: Way to Live, chapter 2

Nov 19: 12th Night Rehearsal

Nov 24: *Possible* Campout

Nov 26: No Youth Group, enjoy the Thanksgiving Holiday with your families

Confirmation

We are pleased to announce our 2006/2007 Confirmation Class is beginning. A wonderful group of young people will be spending the next nine months learning about this congregation, our denomination, the Bible, and what faith

means for them and for their communities. At the end of this journey, they will be deciding if they want to make the commitment of membership to this congregation.

Please join in celebrating the beginning of their journey during the October 15th Worship Service.



Moses: Birth, Rescue and Call Exodus 1:1-3:15

During the months of September and October, the Sunday School children (Preschool – 5th grade) will be exploring the story of Moses.

Moses' story is heroic in a way, but not in the way we are accustomed to experiencing heroism. The amazing events are attributed not to Moses' power but to God's who is at work shaping Moses' call through people in his early life who play significant roles. Women, in particular, exhibit strength, courage, and wisdom as they seek life in the midst of death.

Each week, the children will gather under the tent to hear the story for the day. They will then move to a different learning center to explore the story. During the Children's Time, the young people will have a chance to share the story with the congregation as we discover together how to stand up, and speak out. How can families and caregivers show they support a child's learning?

Treat projects with respect. Be sure they arrive home safely and give it a special place in the family living space for the coming week.

With your child, plan a place for projects to go when it comes time to take it down. Will it go into the family archives, be recycled, or sent to relatives?

It is not necessary for children of any age to "explain" their projects. Rather, ask the children how it relates to the story of Moses.

Do you need to brush up on the story of Moses? The Disney animated movie "Prince of Egypt" is a beautiful retelling of the story. Why not have a Family Movie Night, and enjoy this movie with your children?

Secret Pals

Thanks to all who have signed up to participate in our Secret Pal program. If you have not done so already, please see Ellen Kordik to pick up a "Secret Pal Stationery" packet. This packet has some specific questions and themes that you are invited to write about.



Each Sunday before worship, bring your letter to the Secret Pal table and place it in the folder marked with your name. After worship, check your folder again to see if your Secret Pal has a letter for you.

Theological Speaking. . .

(Jennifer A. Little, M.A., M.T.S., M.Div.)

Process theology is one of the most interesting areas of theology. Process theology has its philosophical roots in process thought developed by A. N. Whitehead. The basis of process theology is, you guessed it, "process": everything that is (including God) participates in "becoming." This is exciting! There are possibilities!! To say that God is in "process" means that God is *not* absent ("Deus Absconditus" God who "did it and ran"), nor is God so absolute (immutable, impassable, all-powerful) that God can't relate to us. For process theology, God understands change *in* God's self. So God really does know what it is like to be affected by pain, by joy, by loss, by choices, by love, by prayer!

Process theologians are quick to point out that God is still more powerful than anything we humans could ever conceive of, but they argue that if God is *all-powerful*, then God can't be affected by prayer or our love. The problem of an all-powerful God also complicates the issue of free will and choice by humans. Process thought suggests an

elegant and simple explanation of God's nature: God is affected by us—God is in true relationship with humanity and nature.

In its original articulation, Whitehead's *Process and Reality* (1927) process thinking is difficult to understand. Not to worry --there are contemporary theologians who have embraced process theology and have come up with much more user-friendly applications. Clark Williamson's book *Way of Blessing, Way of Life: A Christian Theology* (Chalice Press, 1999) stands out as the best blend of systematic and process theology that is eminently readable for all adults.

Other theologians, including John Cobb, Jr, Marjorie Suchocki, David Ray Griffin, have worked hard to develop the implications of a God that is intimately involved in "becoming" or "process" for social justice and personal faith.

We can see the ideas related to process theology in our history in the United Church of Christ. As a denomination we have sought to understand God's ever-present call for

faith and justice as we have often questioned the status quo. We understand ourselves as Christians in continuous conversation with the God of the universe, attempting to hear and respond to God's aim for humanity and the universe.

"God is Still Speaking," can be understood as a "process" concept. God is alive, luring, becoming, acting, responding, speaking. . . God is *not* dead, fixed, absent, absent-minded, unaffected by who we are and what we do. As a denomination, we have a strong history and identity based in this understanding: witness our heritage of social justice.

One doesn't have to "get" process theology to feel the possibilities of a God that is present and working in our world--a God that is "Still Speaking." Think about it --if God is "Still Speaking," God is Still Listening, Feeling, Learning, Loving—this is the other part of our UCC identity that goes right to our Reformed roots!



Prayer Protest Continues!



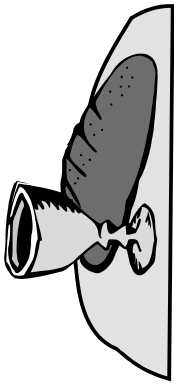
Each Wednesday at noon for the past two years members and friends have met at the north-east front entrance of the Church to provide campus folk with "Gorp" or "Trail Mix" containing Words of Compassion for those suffering in Iraq. Bring your sack lunch and join us in distributing "food for thought" and some lively conversation. If you are interested in providing "gorp" or "trail mix" please drop it off in the church office. You could also make a monetary contribution to help with the cost of the mix.

Volunteer Delivery of Agricultural Shares

Drivers are needed every Wednesday during the growing season (May 3rd to November 15th). Shares are picked up between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m. and delivered to Women in Transition, and A Women's Place. It takes less an hour for pick-up and deliveries. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board outside the Office Door. You will be provided with detailed directions. If you have any questions please the church office (344-5091).

*Sunday Schedule
 9 am Sunday School
 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal
 10:15 am Worship
 11:30 am Coffee Hour
 6 pm Sr & Jr High Youth

October 2006



SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

1 World Communion *See Schedule Above 11:30 am Blood Pressure Screenings 9 am CODAC: Scriptural Study, "Who Wrote the Bible?"	2 10 am Communion Dead-line 6 pm CODAC: Empowering Couples Program/Marriage Enrichment	3	4 Noon Prayer Protest 6 pm Chime Choir 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	5 **See Schedule Below 7 am Men's Breakfast at Urbana Gardens	6	7 CSA Cooking Class 9 am Women's Book Club at Espresso Royale by Krannert
8 *See Schedule Above 9 am CODAC: Scriptural Study, "Who Wrote the Bible?"	9 6 pm CODAC: Empowering Couples Program/Marriage Enrichment	10 6:30 pm Visioning/Discernment Task Force Group	11 Noon Prayer Protest 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	12 **See Schedule Below	13	14 9 am Women's Book Club at Espresso Royale by Krannert
15 *See Schedule Above 9 am CODAC: Scriptural Study, "Who Wrote the Bible?" 11:30 am Visioning TF 7 pm Adm Cmt Mtg	16 6 pm CODAC: Empowering Couples Program/Marriage Enrichment	17	18 Noon Prayer Protest 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	19 **See Schedule Below 11:30 am Women's Fellowship Luncheon at Clark Lindsey Dining Room	20	21 8:30 am New Member Orientation 9 am Women's Book Club at Espresso Royale by Krannert
22 *See Schedule Above 9 am CODAC: Scriptural Study, "Who Wrote the Bible?"	23 10 am Communion Dead-line	24	25 Noon Prayer Protest 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	26 **See Schedule Below	27	28 9 am Women's Book Club at Espresso Royale by Krannert
29 *See Schedule Above 9 am CODAC: Scriptural Study, "Who Wrote the Bible?"	30 7 pm CODAC: Claiming the Promise: Open & Affirming Identity Series	31		**Thursday Schedule 9 am Bulletin Deadline 9:30 am Preschool Play Group 8 pm AA		CUCC Office Hours Monday-Thursday 9 am-3 pm

You are invited to attend one of two small house meetings to work on answering...

* Why did you come to Community? *Why did you stay at Community? *Where is God leading us/Community?

Saturday, 30 September from 10-11:30am. Hosted by Carla Barnwell and Eileen Gebbie in Savoy (505 Van Buren St), there is room for nine more attendees. Please let them know if you need childcare.

Sunday, 15 October immediately after worship downstairs. Hosted by Lisa Treul, Eileen Gebbie and Carla Barnwell, there is room for 32 attendees. Childcare and lunch provided.

Contact the church office if interested.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered Social Group

The first meeting will be **Sunday, September 24**. This group will meet at 4:15 pm in the Church Parlor. For more information, please contact the church office (344-5091).

Chime Choir

CUCC's Chime choir is planning to re-group and start practicing again. Our first practice is **Wednesday, October 4, from 6-7 pm** in the church sanctuary.

Anyone interested in joining us? We have a core group of folks of all ages, but could use a few new chimers. The ability to read music is helpful but not required. If you are looking for a fun, unique way to enjoy music in the middle of the week, come join us and share your talents! Contact Elizabeth Easley or Linda Morgan if you have questions.

World Wide Communion Sunday—October 1st

We will be celebrating World Wide Communion on Sunday, October 1st by sharing breads from other countries. If you would like to volunteer to bake or purchase a loaf of bread to share from another country, please call the church office (344-5091) no later than **Tuesday, September 26th**. If you would like to bake, but need a recipe, please contact Mike.

Please bring the bread on Sunday morning, October 1st by 9:45 A.M.

Thanks
Worship Leadership Team

On Call for Rev. Mike Mulberry

Rev. Mike Mulberry and Rev. Tracy Heilman will be out of town September 21 through the 23rd. You may contact Rev. Deborah Owens of the Westville Trinity United Church of Christ (217-267-7717), should you have a pastoral emergency. Thank you.

Vacation



Cindy, Office Manager at CUCC, will be on vacation the week of (September 25-28th). She will not be able to access any email or any phone messages from September 24 through October 1. Any information for the October 1 bulletin should be sent to Rev. Mike Mulberry (mike@community-ucc.org).

CSA Cooking Class!

You are invited to join Laurence Mate for purchase of fresh, locally-grown, pesticide-free produce from the Urbana Farmer's Market **9 am Oct. 7th**, for transport to Community United Church and instruction on preparation of a lunch at the Church by Laurence Mate of the Slow Food Group. Cost for this event will be \$5. We hope all of you can join us for this fun and informative meal together. Contact the church office if interested (344-5091) or info@community-ucc.org.



October 1 is Neighbors In Need Sunday

Neighbors in Need is the foundation of a strong, multi-issue peace with justice movement in the United Church of Christ.

The Neighbors in Need movement is made possible only with your help!

In the Illinois Conference, ten percent of our NIN special offering goes to the Conference's Justice and Peace Fund; two-thirds of the remaining supports the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries at the national level; and one-third supports the UCC's Council of American Indian Ministries.

God is still speaking through Neighbors in Need. IMAGINE. We can make another world possible!

Opportunity for Giving!

During the summer, a church study group carefully examined the book, *The Devil's Highway*, which puts a face on immigration issues, the many reasons for illegal immigration, and particularly on the often disastrous attempts of immigrants to cross miles of desert in order to enter the United States. At the end of the study, as well as writing letters to our congressmen about immigration reform, our group voted to make a contribution to an organization based in Tucson, called Humane Borders. This organization does humanitarian work to try to ensure that no more migrants die during

these desert crossings. One of the very practical things they do is to maintain and fill water tanks placed strategically along the desert paths often used by migrants. During the hot months, Humane Borders uses more than \$100 per day in gasoline in order to make daily runs to keep the tanks filled with water which often saves lives.

We would like others to have the opportunity to participate in some sort of regular contribution to this organization, which will surely need to continue its operations, at least until more humane immigration legislation

is in place and operational. (If you noticed during the children's time in church on the 17th, the children's offering will be going to Humane Borders during this current unit.) If you would like to contribute on a one-time, or regular (bi-monthly?) basis to this group, please make your check out to Humane Borders, and give to someone from the study group. We will plan to send our next contribution in by mid-October. Thanks so much!

Nathan Welsh, Pat Syoen, Mike Mulberry, Ellen Kordik, Bruce and Faith Roberts, Ruth Gilbert, Linda Morgan, and Jeanne Ward

Stewardship

This is the second of a Stewardship Series of notes about the budget that will be coming to you via the Communigram. In anticipation of Stewardship Sunday on November 12, each member and friend of the congregation is given an opportunity to think through what part he or she might play in the financial cost of maintaining our strength as a congregation that offers Worship, Welcome and Witness. Our Welcome is unconditional. It does not depend upon how much you chose to contribute. We don't charge rent for the pews. But many people simply have no idea how much it costs to maintain the operation of an organization of our size. So, here (and in subsequent Communigram articles) we will

share with you the facts and figures of the budget and how we hope to enhance it in the coming years.

The budget for 2006 is \$288,786

Of that, \$206,000 comes from regular givers (pledge units/ regular givers). The rest comes from other income sources such as rental of 510 Daniel property.

There are 70 pledge units (including a few who give regularly but do not pledge). You can figure out that it works out to average giving of \$2943 per unit per year or \$245 per month.

For the last two years our church budget has not covered the real cost of the music program in that we have

not had enough money to cover the payments we make to choir section leaders/soloists. We have had to depend upon a major contribution being made by an individual to make up the difference between what we can cover in the budget and what it costs us in payments to these young people who so strengthen our music program. The shortfall is \$5,845 annually. In order to move the real cost of the music program into budget, we would need to see each pledge increase by \$85 annually, or we would need to increase givers by 2 average pledge units.

Watch for the next note on budget in the upcoming Communigram.

Paul Street

“The Repair of Broken Societies Begins at Home”

(A critique of U.S. foreign policy with analysis of worsening social conditions and erosion of democracy at home.)

Tuesday, September 26

7:00 pm

United Church of Christ

805 S. 6th Street, Champaign

Free & Open to the Public

Mr. Street is a researcher, writer, speaker and historian.

He is the author of Empire and Inequality: America and the World Since 9/11 (2004),
Segregated Schools: Educational Apartheid in the Post-Civil Rights Era (2005);
and Racial Apartheid in the Global Metropolis (2007).

For more information see: AWAREPresents.com

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UNITY MARCH III

THE PEOPLE'S PARADE:

“THE END OF ALL WARS”

- ❖ The Iraq War The Drug War The War on the Poor
- ❖ The War on the Environment The War in Sudan
- ❖ The War on Civil Rights The War on Labor Unions

Join your fellow citizens in a walk for peace, justice and unity.

Saturday, October 7
12:00 PM Noon

Meet at the Corner of Bradley and Prospect, Champaign

"The Ground Truth" at the Illinois Disciples Foundation Wednesday, October 11, 2006 at 7 pm

"The Ground Truth" is a powerful film that documents the experiences of veterans who have served in the war in Iraq and the effects that service has had on their lives. It stunned audiences at the 2006 Sundance film festival, and this will be its first public showing in Champaign-Urbana.

The Progressive Resource/Action Cooperative (PRC) is organizing this showing in conjunction with other public showings around the U.S. on October 11th, to mark the fourth anniversary of the Congressional authorization of "Use of Force Against Iraq". For more information about the film, check out <http://www.thegroundtruth.net>. This screening will be free and open to the public.



COMMUNITY
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

*A Just Peace, Progressive,
LGBT Open and Affirming Congregation*



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Communigram

Non-Profit Organization
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Urbana, IL
Permit No. 18

The next Communigram will be mailed out on October 4.

Sunday Schedule

9:00 am ~ Sunday School

9:30 am ~ Choir Rehearsal

10:15 am ~ Worship

11:30 am ~ Coffee Hour

6-8 pm ~ Youth Group

New Member Orientation

We invite all those interested in new membership to contact the church office (info@community-ucc.org; 344-5091).

New member orientation will begin with a short meeting (ten to fifteen minutes) after worship on Sunday, October 15, right next to the pulpit. Please wait for Rev. Mulberry to greet people before he meets with you to hand out introductory information for the time we spend together on Saturday, October 21.

On Saturday, October 21, we will begin at 8:30 a.m. learning more about the United Church of Christ denomination, the Illinois Conference, the Eastern Association, and Community United Church of Christ. Breakfast, lunch, and child care will be provided. The orientation will finish at 12:30 p.m.