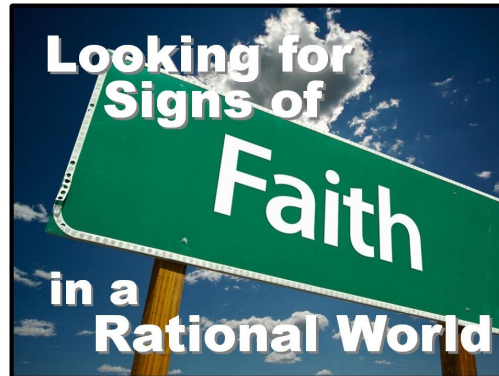


COMMUNIGRAM

VOLUME 44, ISSUE 9

DATE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2010

Coming up at CUCC...



Signs of Faith in a Rational World: Exploring Your Questions

Ever feel like you have so many questions about God that you're too overwhelmed to simply believe? You're not alone, especially here at Community UCC. We are a thinking people - people who aren't satisfied with easy answers and cheap grace. That's what inspired our next sermon series. Beginning September 12, our worship themes and Pastor Leah's sermons will focus on questions submitted by the congregation.

- September 12th - Signs of Faith in a Rational World: "I'm an agnostic... But I want to believe. A Progressive, Thinking Person's Approach to Faith."
- September 19th - Personal Relationships with an Intangible God: "I believe in the risen Jesus as my personal savior. Am I an oddball...?"
- September 26th - The Great Parent: "Do we cramp the great mystery by making it into the Great Daddy or Great Mommy?"
- October 3rd - The Problem of Free Will and Suffering: "If God loves us, why do we suffer?"
- October 24th - Discernment for Non-Mystics: "How do I know when God is speaking to me?"
- October 31st - What's Next: "I don't feel like I need to know about the afterlife... But what's our concept of that? And, if there is one, I need to believe in a system of justice that goes along with it."
- November 7th - Son of God: "About the 'divinity' of Jesus... Was Jesus 'God'?"
- November 14th - Death and Resurrection: "Jesus' 'resurrection': Optional? Important? Essential?"

The deadline for the next Communigram is September 23rd at Noon.

Letters from Leah

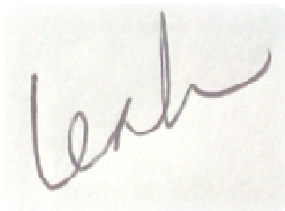
Dear Community,

The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us that there "is a season and a time for every matter under heaven." My family is entering into an unwelcomed season, but one that must arrive nonetheless. My mother's illness is escalating. Her chemotherapy treatments are becoming less and less effective. The surgery she had in the spring, which we thought had done wonders, we now know did very little. We are in a season of amazing sadness. Personally, I am in a season of resignation to the inevitable, but my mother still has the most marvelous seed of hope taking root in her. This gives me hope as I am awed by her determination. I am also thankful for the gift of our daughter who brightens even the dourest of days, especially for my mom.

Soon, and too soon, our time with my mother in this life will end. Meanwhile, as a family, we are determined to spend as much time together as we possibly can, knowing, of course, that I have responsibilities to you as your pastor which cannot be neglected or ignored. I have been working with the Personnel Committee and Moderator Michelle Franke to make contingency plans for time that I need to be away. A couple of times each month, I will be working from home on Thursdays doing sermon preparation so that we can travel to Jasper to spend time with my parents in their home. Although I will still be accessible via email, Rev. Deborah Owen of Champaign is willing to be on call for emergencies within the congregation (deaths, bad automobile accidents, the church building being on fire, etc.). Her number is (217) 714-1210. I will let you know in worship and via email when I will be gone. If Deborah is unable to be on call, I will notify you of that as well offering a different emergency contact person. Knowing that a time will come when I will need to drop everything to go be with my mother because our time is of the essence, I am lining up substitute preachers so they are ready to go. None of know when that time will come, but we will make plans so that you are well taken care of during that time.

Having a pastor who is experiencing major loss in her life is not easy for a congregation. However, through intentional planning and open communication, we can all get through this time together. Therefore, if you have any questions about any of the above information, please ask. I would like to thank Michelle Franke (Moderator); the Personnel Committee: Nancy Cattell (Chair), Jenn Robbennolt, Tom Ward; the Pastoral Relations Committee: Gabriel Solis (Chair), Ruth Fischer, Anna Mehl, Deb Townsend, Tom Watembach; and the members of the Parish Care Committee who were at our last meeting: Linda Morgan (Chair and Parish Nurse), Ruth Gilbert, and Becky Sheridan. Thank you all for your cooperation, care and support as you have helped shape a plan with the needs of both the congregation and my family in mind. On behalf of David and myself, thank you CUCC for your care and compassion thus far.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leah", is centered below the text. The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ALL-CHURCH WORK DAY!

Saturday, September 11th please plan to stop by from 9am-1pm to help the Christian Ed team beautify the Sunday School rooms for our new school year. We hope to finish up the church nursery and do some cleaning, painting, organizing, and decorating in other areas. Many hands make light work! We will be in need of tools, painting supplies, strong arms, and creative minds! Childcare will be provided. Any questions? Please contact Sarah Isaacs.



Leadership Retreat, Part II: Thursday, September 16, 5:30-9:00 pm

In July, the Leadership of our church gathered for a two day retreat. The time away granted perspective and energized us for what's to come. We didn't our work, however, and decided to reconvene to finish what we began. We will meet at CUCC on Thursday, September 16, 5:30-9:00 pm to do our Prayer Walk through CU-U neighborhoods and conclude our work with Paul Nixon's book "I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church." If you are on the CLB, chair a committee/team, or serve as staff at CUCC, you are invited to attend. Please RSVP to the church office (info@community-ucc.org) by Monday, September 13.

The Blind Pig Pub Discussion Group is moving to Crane Alley, 115 West Main Street in Urbana, starting Monday, September 20th. 7:15pm in the upstairs loft. We will be discussing the questions for the sermon series "Signs of Faith in a Rational World". There will be a sign up sheet in the parlor.

Eileen Gebbie will be preaching on October 17. It's always a joy to have her back. Mark your calendars and don't miss it!



On September 12th come out and meet our new office manager, Dana Major, and her family, as they join us for worship.

Dear CUCC,

On Monday, August 30, Sarah Noceda submitted her letter of resignation, effective immediately. Upon receiving her letter, Personnel Committee members Nancy Cattell (Chair), Jenn Robbennolt and Tom Ward discussed the matter with Pastor Leah. (Note that Jim Carnahan is on the Personnel Committee but is currently on sabbatical.) We accepted Sarah’s resignation and thanked Sarah for the work she has done. We asked her if we could provide you, her congregation, an opportunity to do so as well. As of this time, she has declined that offer. We care for Sarah as a congregation and I want to thank her personally for the work she has done among us. We invite you to share your appreciation with her if you get an opportunity to do so. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to talk with any of us. We understand that any change in personnel generates concerns and we will work together to address these concerns. As with any Personnel matter, we will respect confidentiality and are, therefore, limited in what information we can share with you concerning Sarah’s decision to resign.

Sincerely,
 Nancy Cattell (Chair)
 Jenn Robbennolt
 Tom Ward
 Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

SAVE THE DATES... more details to come later...
from the Community Building Team....



ALL CHURCH TRUNK OR TREAT HALLOWEEN PARTY

Friday, October 29 - 6:30 p.m.

Get your costume ready - fun, games & snacks for everyone!

ALL CHURCH ADVENT WORKSHOP/DUMP SOUP SUPPER

Sunday, December 5 - 3:00 p.m.

Christmas crafts, soup supper & tree lighting - something for everyone!



Church Life Board

The Church Life Board meets once a month, generally on the 3rd Sunday. If you would like to see the CLB minutes, you have two options. To get a copy by email, let me know at daw30410@yahoo.com and I will add you to my distribution list. A copy of the most recent minutes will also be posted on the Church Life Board bulletin board in the Narthex.

~David Willcox, Clerk

THE CHRISTIAN ED CORNER

Rally Day is right around the corner. The Christian Education Team is excited about a new year, complete with a new curriculum and new schedule. But....before the fun can start, we have some getting ready to do! Our **CE Work Day** is September 11, 9:00am -1:00 pm. (Childcare will be provided.) Please come help us freshen up our classrooms.

Rally Day will kick off the new year of Sunday School with a party following worship on September 12. At the party, we will be making our own t-shirts with special iron-ons, so remember to bring a clean white t-shirt.

Registration packets for Church School, including paperwork for each family, were sent out in August. Completed registration packets may be turned in to the folder attached to the Christian Education office door anytime before Thursday, September 9. If you have any questions or have not yet received a packet, please contact the church office and Dana would be happy to help you.

The Christian Education team as made some **changes to the Sunday morning flow of Church School** at CUCC. Here's how the new Sunday morning schedule works:

- 9 am – Confirmation Class meets and the Nursery opens
- 10 am – Church School Children can check in and get their “Passport to WOW” stamped in Fellowship Hall
- 10:15 am – Worship begins. Church School Children should be seated with their parents/guardians or playing quietly at the craft tables.
- 10:30ish (it varies) – Children’s Moment happens in worship after which are children are sent to Church School
- 11:15-11:30 – Church School is dismissed and teachers will bring their classes upstairs to the Parlor

Two **additional childcare providers** have been hired, in addition to nursery alums Amanda and Jessica. We will introduce our new staff in worship on September 12.

We have so many opportunities for the adults of our church to **spend quality time with our young people** as teachers and shepherds in Church School. Would you like to teach or shepherd? We have a brand new curriculum that you’ll love. In the interterm while we search for a new Director of Religious Education, Pastor Leah will be partnering with Sarah Isaacs (Christian Education Chair) and the CE Team to make sure all runs smoothly. Thanks for your cooperation and patience as we move forward.

Thanks to **the Justice League for leading worship on August 29th**. With their myriad talents they told us how their lives were changed by their Mission Trip to Chicago. Thanks to Mike Allen, David Gerstenecker, and Sarah Noceda for leading their trip and helping plan worship. Lastly, the Justice League wants to welcome our new 6th graders to Youth Group. Come join us on Sunday evenings! We’re glad you’re here!

“Scenes from Seminary” by Eileen Gebbie

(egebbie@ctschicago.edu, 217/714-5629)

My heart and mind are both overflowing with the experiences and learning of my summer’s hospital internship. The capacity of human bodies and spirits to endure pain and loss, and hold out hope, is vast. Unfortunately, and understandably, so are the capacity for denial, fear, and indecision in the face of death and dying. I saw families unable to make medical decisions on behalf of their wives, daughters, and mothers. I saw families that did not know how their fathers, brothers, or husbands would want to be treated, or not treated, if their hearts failed or lungs needed support.

I urge you to read a recent article by Atul Gawande, “Letting Go,” published in *The New Yorker* earlier this month (http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/02/100802fa_fact_gawande). In it, Gawande explores the capacity of doctors to talk to patients about quality of life, misconceptions of hospice care, and our shared fears about the dying of our loved ones.

However, as the article shows, knowing how those closest to our hearts want to live is essential in helping them when it comes time to die. Right now, today, is not too soon for the conversation. Use the stories in the article as a starting point for your own hopes, fears, and absolutes with those who will be your voice if you are ever silenced. In the words of Ecclesiastes, “For no one can anticipate the time of disaster. Like fish taken in a cruel net, and like birds caught in a snare, so mortals are snared at a time of calamity, when it suddenly falls upon them” (9:12, NRSV).

NEWCOMERS GROUP

Whether you are a true newcomer to Community UCC, or whether you already have been with us for a while, please join us for newcomer group sessions held on a regular basis throughout the year. Newcomer classes are a chance for you to share your story, for us to share Community’s story with you, and for you to find out what membership in this faith community is all about! Enjoy a simple lunch while you meet others like yourself, meet Pastor Leah and other church leaders, and have an opportunity to ask questions. Please contact Denise Oligney-Estill (denise.oe1@gmail.com) or the church office if you are interested in participating in the Newcomers Membership Group.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE DAY



The Worship Committee is in conversation with the Central Illinois Mosque and Islamic Center (CIMIC) to plan an interfaith peace service to which our two faith communities and the public will be invited. We are still working on details, so mark September 21 on your calendar and look to the bulletin for time and place to be announced. In recent correspondence with CIMIC on behalf of the Worship Committee, Pastor Leah said, “It seems to me, especially in this season, that, those of us who believe in peace, cooperation, and understanding ought to be public about such things. I am particularly aware of the urgent need for interfaith dialogue and interfaith partnerships in light of the opposition to the Islamic Community Center in New York. Our congregation wants to witness against hate and fear.” As a church that lifts a Just Peace up as one of Core Values, this seems like a timely witness for us to make in partnership with CIMIC. We are still working on details and hope this event will be successful.

Conscious Awareness of God

Albert Edward Day

God is not real to most of us because of the condition of our consciousness. God is closer to our minds every moment than our own thoughts. God is nearer to our hearts than our own feelings. God is more intimate with our wills than our most vigorous decisions. If we are not aware of God, it is not because God is not with us. It is, in part, because our consciousness is so under the sway of other interests that it cannot turn to God with the loving attention which might soon discern God.

Did you ever encounter, on the street, a friend whose physical eyes looked at you without seeing you? You walked right into him before the alien look on his face changed into one of recognition. Then he confessed that he had been so absorbed in thought about some other matters that he had not been aware of you, until your intentional collision with him. You were there, yet he did not see you. Though actually in your presence, he was nevertheless as unconscious of you as if you did not exist.

That is a persistent failure of the unemancipated consciousness. It can be so preoccupied by lesser realities that it does not sense the presence of the divine Reality surrounding and sustaining it. Something has to happen to end that absorption in other affairs, so that it can turn its attention to God.

Sometimes events will do it. One encounters God in a crisis that, as we say, "brings one to one's senses." Death, disaster, sickness, the collapse of friendship, are like the collision on the street. They shatter the tyranny of an idea or a dream, and release consciousness for the awareness of something greater than the idea or the dream--God himself.

It would be a very poor sort of life that was aware of people only when life collided with them, or was brought up standing by some decisive act of theirs. And it is a tragic life that becomes conscious of God only in those events that shatter its habitual thoughts and dreams and compel it to recognize God's presence and activity.

What makes life splendid is the constant awareness of God. What transforms the spirit into God's likeness is intimate fellowship with God. We are saved--from our pettiness and earthiness and selfishness and sin--by conscious communion with God's greatness and love and holiness.

This excerpt is taken from a collection of daily meditations on the lectionary scriptures called A Guide to Prayer, edited by Rueben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck.

Source: Discipline and Discovery

Thanks from your Identity and Mission Team!

After the encouraging response from passers-by who noticed our rainbow flags and stopped in to check us out, it became clear that we also needed flags to represent some of our other identities as a church, that of Progressive Christianity and Just Peace. Thanks to all of you who were able to contribute when we held a 1-Sunday pledge drive to support the purchase of 2 other sets of flags, one with the Coexist motto, and the other with "Pray for Peace, Act for Peace". "God is Still Speaking" flags are also in the works at the national UCC, and we have hopes to purchase a set of those when they become available as well. Several of you had other great ideas of types of flags we might consider in the future, so it is clear that this will be a work in progress as we continue to move our church from presenting as a "fortress" to a "frontier" instead. If by chance you didn't get a chance to contribute, and really want to, feel free to put a check to C.U.C.C. in the offering plate with the word "flags" in the memo line.

***Sunday Schedule**

9:25 am Choir Rehearsal
 10:15 am - 12:00 pm Worship and Community Time
 6:00 pm CUCC Youth Group
 7:00 pm SET Meeting

SEPTEMBER 2010

CUCC Office Hours

Monday Through Thursday
 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Community United Church of Christ Events Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7pm Choir Rehearsal	2 10am International Group 8pm AA	3 10am Jean Creswell Funeral 7pm Cocaine Anonymous	4 9am Women's Book Group
5 *See Schedule 11:30am Blood Pressure Screening in the Jack Good Library	6	7 6pm Operation Snowball	8 12pm Bulletin Deadline 3pm Conversation and Communion @ Clark Lindsey 6pm Chime Choir 7pm Choir Rehearsal	9 10am International Group 8pm AA	10 7pm Cocaine Anonymous	11 9am Women's Book Group
12 *See Schedule	13	14 5:30 Pastoral Relations 6pm Operation Snowball	15 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7pm Choir Rehearsal	16 10am International Group 5:30pm-9:00pm Prayer Walk 8pm AA	17 7pm Cocaine Anonymous	18 9am Women's Book Group
19 *See Schedule	20	21 6pm Operation Snowball	22 12pm Bulletin Deadline 6pm Chime Choir 7pm Choir Rehearsal	23 10am International Group 8pm AA <i>Communigram Deadline</i>	24 7pm Cocaine Anonymous	25 9am Women's Book Group
26 *See Schedule 11:30am Confirmation Workshop	27	28 6pm Operation Snowball <i>International Peace Day - Service Time/Place TBA</i>	29 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7pm Choir Rehearsal	30 10am International Group 8pm AA		

W.O.W!!!



What: September 12th is RALLY DAY!!!!

Why: Come kickoff the start of a new Sunday School year! Check out all the fun stuff we have planned for this year! Remember to bring a clean white t-shirt for a special project!

When: After the 10:15 service

Where: Fellowship Hall

Who: YOU!!! We can't wait to see your smiling face!



**COMMUNITY UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST**
A JUST PEACE,
PROGRESSIVE, LGBTQ OPEN &
AFFIRMING CONGREGATION



805 S. Sixth Street, Champaign, IL 61820

Phone: (217) 344-5091

FAX: (217) 344-5008

Website: www.community-ucc.org

Email: info@community-ucc.org

SUNDAY SUMMER SCHEDULE

9:25 am Choir Rehearsal

10:15 am Worship

After the Children's Time, children up to 4 years old are welcome in the nursery.

11:30 am Community Time

6:00 pm CUCC Youth Group

Return Service Requested

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Permit No. 18

Label

The next Communigram will be mailed out on September 28.

CUCC CHURCH STAFF

Pastor:

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser
leah@community-ucc.org

Religious Education Director:

Sarah Noceda
sarah@community-ucc.org

Choir Director:

Robert Smith

Organist:

Linda Vaughn
lindavaughn@community-ucc.org

Office Manager:

Dana Major
info@community-ucc.org

Faith Community Nurse:

Linda Morgan

Child Care Providers:

Jessica Bush and Amanda Dexter

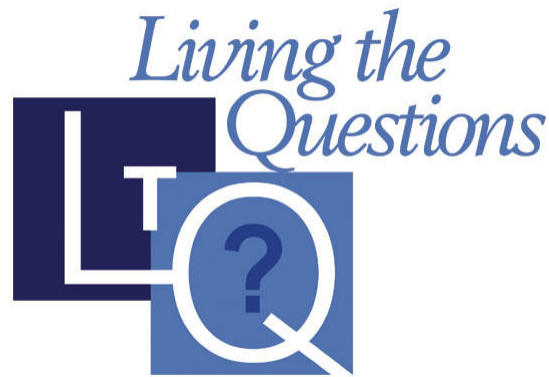
Children's Choir Director:

Jodi Prosser

UCC Campus Ministry

Campus Minister:

Rev. Karen Bush
karen@community-ucc.org



LtQ is an open-minded alternative to studies that attempt to give participants all the answers and instead strives to create an environment where participants can interact with one another in exploring what's next for Christianity.

The CUCC Adult Ed Team would like to offer the Living the Questions Series for exploration in small groups. If you are interested in joining a small group, please sign up in the parlor, or for questions, please see Jan Dobson or Pastor Leah.