

COMMUNIGRAM

VOLUME 41, ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 1, 2009

Coming up at CUCC...

November 29th - First Sunday of Advent: Luke 21:25-36
“Signs of Things to Come”

December 6th - Second Sunday of Advent: Luke 3:1-6
“Make Ready”

- Communion will be given during the service
- Stewardship Sunday



December 13th - Third Sunday of Advent: Luke 3:7-18
“Look Forward”

- The annual Christmas Cantata will be performed by the Chancel Choir and The Chime Choir

December 20th - Fourth Sunday of Advent: Luke 1:39-45
“Moving with Mary’s Song”

- “A Charlie Brown Christmas” will be performed by the children of the Church. The show will begin at 10:00 am and all are encouraged enjoy their talents!

December 23rd - “The Longest Night” Worship Service

- “The Longest Night” worship service will take place at 7:00 pm at CUCC. This service provides a safe place for people in the community to come together and find comfort and consolation together.

December 24th - Candlelight Christmas Eve Services followed by Wassail Service

- Christmas Eve services will begin at 6:30 pm and will be directly followed by Wassail Service. We look forward to celebrating with you and your families!



The deadline for the next Communigram is *December 18th at Noon.*

Letters from Leah

The day after our Service of Farewell at First Congregational UCC, Battle Creek, I opened my wallet to find my debit card missing. I panicked for about ten seconds, until I realized that my church credit card was still, curiously, there. You see, during the Service of Farewell, there is an exchange of symbols. As a visual reminder of the power and responsibility I was relinquishing, I handed in my keys and church credit card...or so I thought. In my haste, I had handed in my own debit card instead.

Realizing my mistake that morning, I left David at the house with the movers and hopped in the car. I walked into the office of the Director of Business and Finance with a big, goofy smile on my face, waving the card, saying, "Oops! Here's the card you need, I handed you my debit card instead. Sorry 'bout that."

The Director's eyes widened and her mouth dropped open. "I cut it up," she said. "I didn't even look at it." We were leaving for Champaign the next morning, and my debit card was in shards at the bottom of a trash can. I went to the bank and after an hour and a half, left with a temporary card.

And that was only the beginning, it got worse.

Later in the day, I pitched a pair of jeans into a suitcase, felt my wedding ring fly off my finger and heard a clear, metallic "PING" as it ricocheted off the wall, landing God knows where in our vastly messy bedroom. After an hour of feverish searching, we found it. Then, later in the afternoon, as I left the house to run an errand, I rolled down a window in my parents' mini-van only to find it not able to roll up again. I had to go to a friends' office, have her come out to the van, and tug on it while I pressed the button until it finally went all the way up.

Wednesday morning, we thought we were doing really well: the movers got done early, we were packed and ready to go. It seemed like all of our bad luck was relegated to yesterday and we could leave town easily. It seemed like that, until David's car ran out of gas on the by-pass headed toward the interstate. The good news is that not everyone in town has a green Grand Am with a hitch and a bumper sticker that says, "Ordain Women or Stop Baptizing Them." Not one, but two First Congregational folks came to a screeching halt on the by-pass so they could pull over and help.

In her book *Traveling Mercies*, Anne LaMotte talks about a spiritual principle that states when it seems like everything is going wrong, when it seems like everything is breaking, that's the Universe trying to distract you because the Holy Spirit is trying to birth something amazing in your life. When our last few days in Battle Creek were filled with one mishap after another, I couldn't help but be reminded of this modern proverb. I began to wonder, with great anticipation and awe, what amazing thing was gestating in the Spirit's care.

As we move through Advent and prepare ourselves for the birth of Christ, I would encourage you to remember this modern proverb, too. Undoubtedly, in your preparations for the holidays, you will have moments when it feels like *everything* is breaking. On those days, remind yourself that it is not the holiday, but the Holy Day that most matters. When things start to go wrong, take a step back. Prepare your self for the birthing that the Divine is doing in you during this season of preparation and anticipation. It is then that we will experience the love of the incarnational God, the one who came and walked in our shoes so that we may know Life and know it abundantly.

Have a blessed Advent and a most merry Christmas. May we all know God's blessings in the New Year.

Talk With Leah

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser would like to meet with each and every one of us! Of course, that will be a real challenge in the next few months...but Leah is setting aside some small group meeting times that she hopes will be easy for all of us to choose a time to meet in December and January. Getting acquainted sessions will all be held in the parlor and are an hour long for visiting and sharing your visions for our church in the New Year with Leah!

Pick a date and sign up! Sheets will be posted in the parlor for sign up, or call the church office and speak to Hailee to get your name on the date of your choosing! We'd also like a "host" for each session who might be willing to provide refreshments. Spots are limited to 12 participants per session – only because Leah wants to get to know *YOU!* *Sign up today!*

Moderator's Musings

Stewardship Sunday is December 6th

The phone rings. It is during dinner, or middle of the afternoon on Saturday. You answer and there is a slight pause after you say "Hello." The a voice comes on the phone and says something like "Hello Is Mr. Thomas Ward there? I am a professional fundraiser for _____ (fill in the blank)." I then let the caller go through his script before I tell him that I have already made my decisions about charities I can support this year and unfortunately for him, his charity is not on my list. Jeanne and I keep a list inside the kitchen cabinet near the phone so that we can review the list every time the phone rings. We'd like to be able to help everyone that calls, but that just can't happen.

Then I think about the parable from Jesus, *Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me."*(Matthew 25:45)

The parable reminds me that when we feed one hungry person or make sure someone is clothed, sheltered, visited, healed, or given hope, we are caring for Jesus. Like most of us, I done those things with my checkbook or occasionally through personal involvement at church or some other volunteer opportunity. Is there more I can and should do?

Just having come through the Thanksgiving holiday, I realize I have a lot to be thankful for. My family is doing pretty well, I have a good job, I have supportive friends, I am watching my girls mature into beautiful, strong young women. Life is good.

But I know that is not the case for all. I know a lot of people right here in C/U have lost their jobs, have lost their house, have unsettled health issues. What can I do to help them? I can't help them all.

But I can help others help them. And that is where I hope my church steps forward. When I contribute to my church, I know that I am helping people here in C/U as well as around the world. This has been a tough year economically. Unemployment is up to the highest level in decades, medical costs continue to sky rocket. And salaries are not keeping up. It would be an easy year to cut back on our pledge. And some may have to. But then I look at how good I really have it and wonder if there isn't more I can do. I wonder who else I might help clothe or shelter or feed.

I hope you will wonder those same things. And we won't even call during dinner.

From the Pastor's Desk

Thank You and God Speed From Your Transitioning Transitional Pastor

"Thank our God for sisters, brothers, one by grace, in harmony; joining heart to heart with others, making strong community. With the cross of Christ our standard, let us sing as with one voice; glory, glory, yours the promise: we who are the church rejoice."

On Sunday, December 6th we will welcome our new pastor to her new pulpit. Leah's official first day is Tuesday, December 1st and I know she is already preparing to meet each of you and to come to know you and your household. I know you, our CUCC family and friends, join me in preparing our hearts to joyfully welcome Pastor Leah and her husband, David and their daughter, Chloe, into the folds of our church family.

Even though I will be in the house with you in the days to come, it will be in a different, more singular capacity-- as church member and the campus minister of the UCC Campus Ministry (though I will continue as Church School teacher of the Youth Group class). This turning of focus is important on several levels but none more important than to honor and support our new pastor as she begins to lead us into our future.

My affection for each of you does not diminish as I move from pulpit to pew. In contrast, I now get to sit with you as together we celebrate all that is to come!

Welcome, welcome, Pastor Leah! This is truly a wonderful new reality that God is beginning among and through us.

Moving on with joy~

Your friend and sister in Christ-

Pastor Karen



'Recipe for Success'...CUCC's 2010 Annual Stewardship Campaign

“From Jesus’ fullness we have all received grace upon grace.” John 1:16

2009 has been an extraordinary year of challenges and blessings for us at CUCC, we have seen our church grow and change. We have accomplished things that even the most optimistic of us doubted our ability to do. We did it with faith and determination. And now we have not only a beautifully renovated building to show for it, we have the knowledge that our congregation provided meaningful work for those in the building trades that they otherwise might not have had; we have built a stronger community. We have discovered that the ingredients in our recipe for success are each other. If everyone individually does their part, together we can accomplish anything.

2010 also promises to be a year of challenges for us. As we welcome Pastor Leah Mosser-Roberts and her family to our congregation, we will also face the future without some of those who have defined us as a people of faith for many, many years. Who will we become? Where will God lead us? What part of the recipe will you add to help build CUCC today and in the future?

Fall is Stewardship “season” for most churches. It is the time of year when we reflect on our contributions of time, talent, and treasure for the year that is slipping away and for the year that is fast approaching. Each Sunday in November during our worship service, members of our congregation are presenting Stewardship Messages about the ingredients that make our identity as a congregation what it is and asking those present to think about their relationships with God, with one another, and with the values we hold in common. On December 6th we will join together in a promise to those relationships for the future.

As we did last year, the Financial Development/Stewardship Team asks that each participant in the congregation prayerfully consider making a financial commitment to our beloved church. If you have never offered a Stewardship Pledge before, please do it this year. If you offered a pledge last year, please consider adding to it this year – just a little. Together all of our small change can create big change.

If you have any questions about making a pledge, please let us know.

Michelle Franke & Vicky Robertson
Financial Development Team

It's Not Always “The Most Wonderful Time of the Year”

The holidays can be a painful time. For many reasons, the holiday season, especially Christmas time, proves to be difficult for many. It may be the first Christmas without family or friends who have died. Likewise, the uneasiness of change, the pain of isolation, the grief of broken relationships, the anguish of betrayal, the weariness of illness, the insecurity of employment, the unstable economy, or the pressure of holiday preparations can make us feel alone in the midst of celebrations of the season.

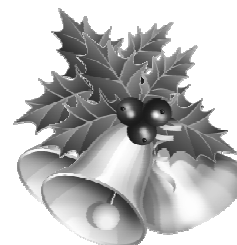
These difficulties need not be ignored, but acknowledged with a reminder that amidst the sorrow and sadness there is hope. In the darkness, there will be light.

“The Longest Night” Service of Worship, held on Wednesday, December 23rd, 6:30 p.m., provides a safe place for people in the community to come together and find comfort and consolation together. Know that you are not alone in your grief and struggles this holiday season. All are welcome to come and join us for a time of special music, candle lighting, scripture, reflection, silence, and prayer.

“The Longest Night” Service of Worship
Wednesday, December 23rd, 7:00 p.m.
Community United Church of Christ
805 S. Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820
Website: www.community-ucc.org
Phone: 217-344-5091

A time of fellowship will follow
Grief resources will be available

“The Longest Night” Service of Worship
...So that none of us will have to spend our Longest Nights alone...



Scenes from Seminary by Eileen Gebbie

When my Hebrew Bible professor, Ken Stone, began his lecture on Chronicles 1 and 2, I did not expect to leave class excited. On the surface, these books appear to be a repetition, with some supplementary material, of previous books. When compared closely, though, significant differences appear, including Satan taking the place of God in the otherwise identical story of the threshing floor. Again: God was replaced by Satan in a key narrative role.

Dr. Stone went on to argue that we are not tradition's passive objects but its agents because our tradition has never been a single, unchanging body of material. To be faithful, we must have the freedom to and responsibility for reinterpreting and reshaping it to meet the needs of this time. We are faithful when we disagree: it is disagreement that produced the Bible, our collection of divergent texts.

Without question, content is important, but so is the process of "traditioning" that predates and created the Bible. How do we insert ourselves? "Repetition with a difference." This is not a flippant attitude toward tradition. We have a responsibility to actively engage the text. Saying, "that's what the Bible says" is not an option. Such uncritical recitation of scripture (or refusal to use portions) is itself an interpretive decision with consequence. Passivity is a pretense.

Quite a few minds were blown that day. We all left feeling deep invitation and inspired responsibility, which I am now extending to you. You have a stake and a voice in our ancient faith. Read, reflect, and speak!



Message From the Faith Community Nurse

Advent is a time to think about, and experience, the immense blessings that God wants to give us. God wants to shower us with love, and shine light into our hearts. Our work is to slow down, simplify, and listen to God.

Here are some ways you can pray during Advent for simplicity:

- Pray for attentiveness to what truly matters, without being distracted by trivial things.
- Pray for opportunities to learn something new regularly.
- Pray for discernment of how God would like you to set your priorities and the ability to focus on them consistently to fulfill God's purposes in your life.
- Pray for the grace to be able to rest, become aware of God's presence, and enjoy it.
- Pray for peace in all situations, no matter what the circumstances.
- Pray for an enlivened imagination that helps you contribute to the world in creative ways.
- Pray for freedom from all that burdens you—past mistakes, fears, destructive habits, hurts other people have inflicted, and more.
- Pray for joy and a sense of humor.
- Pray for confidence in God's love for you and trust in God's power to work things out for the best in your life.
- Pray for a clear mind and the ability to clearly communicate what you value to others.
- Pray for openness to the Holy Spirit's guidance.
- Pray for a genuine awareness of God's grace in your life and humility.
- Pray for a passion to pursue justice.

(Adapted from "When True Simplicity is Gained: Finding Spiritual Clarity in a Complex World", 1988, Martin e. Marty)

I recently attended our annual Parish Nurse retreat, a Sunday afternoon set aside for the care and nurturing of the area's parish nurses. We were asked to think about the prayer we each had for our church family. This is my prayer for CUCC: I pray that we welcome, listen to, and accept with open hearts and minds---our new pastor, Leah. Amen.

May the spirit of this Holy Season be in your hearts, Linda Morgan, Faith Community Nurse



Coming Soon...Recipe for Success CUCC's newest cookbook!

Featuring 325 incredible recipes from our Congregation's amazing collection of cooks! Although we do not yet have a date for delivery, these hardcover cookbooks will be arriving for Christmas and at a cost of just \$10 will undoubtedly make the perfect gift. Don't miss out on this chance to own a piece of CUCC history. Supplies are limited. All sale proceeds will go to support the CUCC General Budget.

If you would like to preorder, please send your payment along with the order form below to:

Financial Development Team
Community United Church of Christ
805 S. Sixth St.
Champaign, IL. 61821

CUCC's Recipe for Success Cookbook Order Form

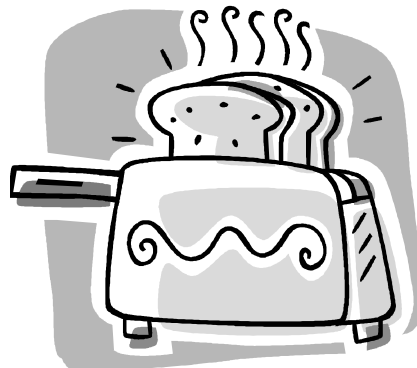
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Total Number of Cookbooks Ordered: _____

Total Amount of Payment: \$ _____





DECEMBER 2009

Community United Church of Christ Events Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>CUCC Office Hours Monday Through Thursday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm</p>	<p>1 6 pm Operation Snowball (Fellowship Hall, Conference Room, and Classrooms)</p>	<p>2 7 pm Choir Rehearsal 8 pm Campus Ministry Sanctuary</p>	<p>3 7 am Men's Fellowship @ Urbana Gardens 10 am International Group 2 pm - 4 pm Campus Ministry Open House</p>	<p>4 5 pm UCC Campus Ministry 6:30 pm Hanging of the Greens with Campus Ministry</p>	<p>5 9 am Women's Book Group</p>	
<p>6 *See Schedule Stewardship Sunday</p>	<p>7 Campus Ministry Choir (Time, TBD)</p>	<p>8 6 pm Operation Snowball (Fellowship Hall, Conference Room, and Classrooms)</p>	<p>9 12 pm Bulletin Deadline 6 pm Chime Choir Rehearsal 7 pm Choir Rehearsal 8 pm Campus Ministry Sanctuary</p>	<p>10 10 am International Group 1:30 pm Women's Fellowship 2 pm - 4 pm Campus Ministry Open House 8 pm AA</p>	<p>11 5 pm UCC Campus Ministry</p>	<p>12 9 am Women's Book Group 1 pm Women's Fellowship Meeting</p>
<p>13 *See Schedule</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 11 am - 2 pm CM Open House 6 pm Operation Snowball (Fellowship Hall, Conference Room, and Classrooms)</p>	<p>16 11 am - 2 pm CM Open House 12 pm Bulletin Deadline 7 pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>17 10 am International Group 11 am - 2 pm CM Open House 8 pm AA <i>Communigram Deadline</i></p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19 9 am Women's Book Group</p>
<p>20 *See Schedule 10 am Performance of "A Charlie Brown Christmas"</p>	<p>21 12 pm Bulletin Deadline</p>	<p>22 6 pm Operation Snowball (Fellowship Hall, Conference Room, and Classroom)</p>	<p>23 6 pm Chime Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm "The Longest Night" worship service 7 pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>24 6:30 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service followed by Wassail</p>	<p>25 <i>Merry Christmas</i></p>	<p>26 9 am Women's Book Group</p>
<p>27 *See Schedule</p>	<p>28 12 pm Bulletin Deadline</p>	<p>29 6 pm Operation Snowball (Fellowship Hall, Conference Room, and Classroom)</p>	<p>30 Rehearsal 7 pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>*Sunday Schedule 9:00 am Sunday School 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 7:30 pm AA</p>	

Dear Sunday School Parents,

Thank you for all your support in these first few months of Sunday School. Whether you are a shepherd, a volunteer teacher, or just making that commitment to get your little one(s) here every Sunday, please know your efforts are appreciated. The children appreciate the continuity and comfort of having as many of the same faces around them every week. The past rotation was "David the Shepherd King." The rotation we are working on presently is "Christmas Journeys".

Here is the final cast for the 2010 CUCC production of "A Charlie Brown Christmas". Based on responses and interest, the parts were assigned with each child's abilities and ages in mind. Please come pick up your child's script if you haven't already during church hours or on Sunday. It will be in the church office on top of the grey metal filing cabinets. If you could please start rehearsing with your child as soon as possible ...learning lines is going to be the hardest part of all of this.

The cast is as follows:

Lucy-Lauren Kordik
 Charlie Brown-Coleman Solis
 Linus-Brady Andersen
 Sally-Bella Solis
 Violet-Lauren Kelleher
 Peppermint Paddy-Jake Robbennolt
 Schroeder-Dale Robbennolt
 Frieda-Emily Kelleher
 Pig Pen-Noah Dobson
 Snoopy-Adric Mosher
 Shermy-Rose Chapell-Franke
 Woodstock-Benjamin Brady-Kuchma
 Chorus: CUCC Children Ensemble

The rehearsal schedule for the production of "A Charlie Brown Christmas" is as follows:

Tuesday Dec. 1st 6:00- 8:00 pm
 Thursday Dec. 3rd 6:00-8:00 pm
 Tuesday Dec. 8th 6:00- 8:00 pm
 Thursday Dec. 10th 6:00- 8:00 pm
 Sunday Dec. 13th 9:00 am-10:00am
 Tuesday Dec .15th 6:00 pm- 8:00 pm
 Thursday Dec. 17th 6:00 pm- 8:00 pm
 Dress Rehearsal Sunday Dec. 20th 9:00 am-10:00am
 Performance Sunday Dec. 20th 10:00 am



Although I realize there will be conflicts, I would ask all members of the cast to participate in as many of the practices as possible. Along with learning lines and blocking there will be musical numbers to work out and props/lighting/set etc. to coordinate.

Thank you for all that you do!

-Ms. Sarah J. Noceda
 RE Director
sjnoceda@yahoo.com

Women's Fellowship Meeting

The Women's Fellowship Group will be meeting on December 12th at 1:00 pm. The meeting will be held at the home of Karen Bush which is located at 2714 N. Salisbury Ct., Champaign. Trevor Bush will entertain us with a selection of classical pieces on the piano along with a Christmas favorites sing-along. Please bring an unwrapped children's present for the Crisis Nursery and, if possible, cookies or other snacks to share with the group. Thank you!

December Deadlines

Please note that the deadline for the January Communigram is earlier than normal due the holidays. In order to mail the Communigram on time, please email all materials to info@community-ucc.org by 12:00 pm on December 17th. In addition, please submit all entries for the December 27th Bulletin by December 21st and all entries for the January 3rd Bulletin by December 28th

Thank you for your cooperation and have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

~Hailee



Parking Availability

Several parking spaces in CUCC's renter's lot have become available or will be available when this leasing term is up. If you or anyone you know is interested in renting a space from the Church, please have them contact Hailee in the office at info@community-ucc.org or 344-5091.

Daily Bread Soup Kitchen

The Daily Bread Soup Kitchen volunteers ask your help this year in providing Christmas backpacks to the men, women and children they service five days a week at New Covenant Fellowship. Filled backpacks might contain items like warm caps, gloves, scarves, socks, toiletries, shampoos, a small packages of bus tokens, a flashlight, or books and candy. Women's backpacks could also include cosmetics. For children, a small toy. Backpacks can be prepared for men, women, and children with men's being the most needed. Please label appropriately. Please bring filled backpacks by December 21st to the home of Ellen McDowell at 710 S. Elm Blvd., Champaign. She can be reached at 356-7107.



Message From Jack Good

Dear Friends,

The Flowers you sent for Diana's memorial service on November 6th were stunning. They framed one of my favorite photographs of Diana on the altar during the service. Their beauty helped make the worship a time of celebration of the life of a remarkable, loving woman.

I was overcome with emotion when I saw Elizabeth Easley and Christy Brinkley. That they would travel so far to help celebrate Diana's life and to support me was more than I ever could ask. I felt that all of you were represented in their presence.

Thank you for remembering Diana and me so warmly during the time since my retirement. Knowing that you held us in your thoughts and prayers was a key factor in allowing us to endure these past, difficult years.

On another subject, congratulations on selecting a new settled pastor! Please know that you have my prayers for a long and productive relationship.

Grace and Peace,
Jack Good



COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
JUST PEACE, PROGRESSIVE,
LGBTQ OPEN AND
AFFIRMING



805 S. Sixth Street, Champaign, IL 61820
Phone: (217) 344-5091 ~ FAX: (217) 344-5008

SUNDAY REGULAR SCHEDULE

9:00 am Sunday School

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

Non-Profit Organization
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Permit No. 18

Label

The next Communigram will be mailed out on December 28th

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Faith Community Nurse:
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Community Life Calendar Keeper:
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calendar@community-ucc.org

Child Care Providers: Jessica Bush,
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Children's Choir Director:
Christina Vergilio
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UCC Campus Ministry

Campus Minister:
Rev. Karen Bush



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