



The UCC Campus Ministry at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Spring & Fall 2008

New this semester:

- Just Desserts is born!
- Campus Ministry parties it up with our first unofficial lock-in!
- Miracles Take Action Commission goes green!
- A triumphant return to the beauty of Allerton in the springtime!
- Seniors reflections on breakaway!
- Trip to Southern Illinois!
- Interfaith worship at Hillel!

Contents

Worship at Allerton	2
Outreach Team	2
Just Desserts	3
Alternate Unofficial	3
MTAC	3
Breakaway 2008	4-5
Thanksgiving	6
Habitat for Humanity	6
Camping at Shades	6
SOIL	7
Worship at Hillel	7
Karen's Corner	8

Spring 2008

Frozen Waves, Toasty Cabins

Erik Hansen

Sherman, IL
Molecular and Cellular Bio

The Winter Retreat gathered the student community into the warm confines at Tower Hill once more. The night before we headed out, a winter storm had swept over the area, blanketing the location with almost a foot of snow! The early cars gathered at a local Greek restaurant before returning to our weekend home. Once reunited with our late-car companions, we had candle time, letting the worries and weights associated with school and Champaign melt away with the wax of each candle preparing everyone for a fun and spiritual weekend.

Games and activities were interspersed between group and individual worship. The aforementioned snowstorm froze the

coastal area of Lake Michigan creating enormous frozen waves stretching almost a mile out into the lake and icing over the sand dunes to form one heck of a sled ride. After some much needed warm up time and a hearty dinner, SET led us in the Laughing Game (also known as haha), School Bus, and Mafia.

Small groups privately conversed on a topic presented by the SET leaders in times of worship, and when they'd thoroughly exhausted those discussions, took some time to bond and decorate bags.

As the events wound to an end, the group gathered for Pizza God before starting the trip home. New faces and old had gathered for the weekend but it

was time to head back to the blur of campus life. Luckily, the group would be together again in no time (in fact, we met up on the



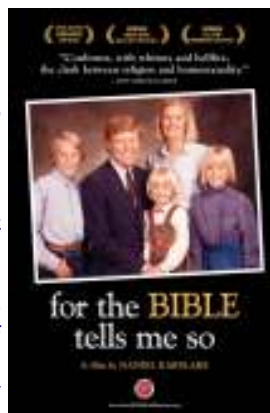
way home when we stopped at Culver's!). Rejuvenated spirits and happy hearts left Tower Hill to rejoin the community of Champaign.

Jesus Loves Me, This I Know...

Colie Huppertz

Glen Ellyn, IL
Integrative Biology, French

For our movie and discussion night this semester, we watched a documentary titled *For the Bible Tells Me So*. This film, released in 2007, attempts to explain to viewers what the Bible really says—and doesn't say—about homosexuality. The film follows the stories of several families, all of whom are religious and have a gay child. The families are interviewed, telling stories



about the religion they grew up with, how difficult it is for a gay person to come out in such circumstances, and how they currently are able to reconcile their sexual orientation and their faith. Several theologians were also interviewed, and we all learned a lot about the Bible. But even so, I think that the movie was maybe less about the Bible, and more

about acceptance, and the love, growth, and healing that can happen within a family. When the movie ends, the families in it show a large range of acceptance levels for their now-adult children. While some parents are out marching in protests against intolerance, others continue to struggle to accept their children for who they truly are. Still, the movie is inspiring and hopeful—there is always more work that can be done, yet great progress is constantly being made for the loving acceptance of all people into their own families, and into religious communities they so desperately want to be a part of.

Allerton Strikes Back Margie Mathewson

Athens, IL
Bioengineering

Our outdoor spring worship service and picnic is quickly becoming a beloved annual event. Despite a bit of confusion on the part of our fearless leader concerning how to get to the park, the day was a wonderful break from the end-of-the-year stresses that always appear around finals



time. This year, the weather couldn't have been more beautiful. The gentle wind, blue sky, and soft new grass were the perfect backdrop for Karen's relaxing message focused on using our senses one-by-one to appreciate the world around us. After singing to finish the service, we dug into a delicious lunch of sandwiches, chips, and cookies. Our meal was followed by tree climbing, garden exploring, and fu dog viewing. As the weather cooled off,

The weather couldn't have been more beautiful

we packed up and headed home, full, relaxed, and more in touch with ourselves and the world around us.



Student Outreach Team

Caroline Nalezny

Chicago, IL
Integrative Biology, Animal Sciences

Spring semester 2008 spawned a new committee within our Campus Ministry called the Student Outreach Team. Our mission is to let UIUC students know that the UCC Campus Ministry is here on campus (many do not know of the United Church of Christ and always wonder what that large yellow building on 6th and John is all about), celebrate diversity within our campus and our own group, educate our own group on what it means to be a Progressive Christian, welcoming others and more! We started over the summer by writing letters to incoming freshmen from all over Illinois. We also set up a free lemonade stand on a hot day out side the church and passed out lemonade with a little message about the Campus Ministry—just a friendly, 'have a nice day and nice to meet you' gesture! Our team has lately refocused our efforts into exploring Progressive Christianity. Part of this has



been accomplished by watching and discussing the dvd series "Living the Question". The Community U.C.C. itself has been airing episodes with thoughtful discussion afterwards. I, myself have found Living the Question to be incredibly interesting and it caused me to think of my faith in a new way. If you'd like to check it out, we encourage you to see the following website: <http://www.livingthequestions.com/>. We've also been exploring other ways of examining our progressive faith through open and understanding discussion of where each of us individually comes from in our beliefs and what has led us here. All along the way the outreach team supports and promotes the message, "whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here". That is our mission and our ultimate goal! :)

Simply Delectable

Robyn Reuter

Skokie, IL
Chemistry

This semester the campus ministry experienced a fundraising first with Just Desserts. The event, held over at St. Peter UCC, featured dozens of delicious desserts donated from local bakeries, restaurants, and stores. Guests enjoyed samples of each dessert and bid on their favorites. At the end of the night, a duplicate version of each tasting dessert was auctioned off to the

highest bidder. Musical entertainment, including piano, guitar, and vocals, was provided by the campus ministry students throughout the evening. The campus ministry students would like to extend many grateful thanks to Nancy Knop, Jeanne Ward, Peggy Wade and Becky Duffield - the moms who contributed so much time and effort into making this fundraiser a resounding success.

If you somehow missed out on the luscious line up of local specialties this year, don't fret – Just Desserts is slated to make a comeback next April.

Alternative Unofficial

Nichol Chontofalsky

Centralia, IL
English, Creative writing

What to most people around the world occurred as an unassuming leap day (February 29th), was, to the UIUC campus, a time for the annual unofficial St. Patrick's Day celebration. This year, for the first time, the campus ministry made a focused effort to provide a safe, fun alternative to the normal drunken revelry of the occasion. We abandoned the madness at the fringe of campus-town following chapel for dinner and a



sleepover out at KB's house. Over the course of the evening we devoured homemade cupcakes, watched Across the Universe (the recently released Beatles musical), and ventured out to see a play at the Armory Free Theatre directed by our very own Jen Goheen. In the end, the event proved to be a big hit and a huge step toward creating an alternate -unofficial students can look forward to in years to come.

MTAC is Where it's At Heather Goetsch

Williamsville, IL
Environmental Engineering

This past semester has been an active one for the Miracles Take Action Commission. MTAC is a subset of the UCC Campus Ministry that focuses on environmental and social injustices in and around the community. This semester we have focused on making our campus ministry a little



greener. We have been collecting money to purchase a set of dishes that can be used during our spring break trips, camping trips, and

sporadic weekly events that may need dishware. We will use these dishes instead of the paper, plastic, or (God-forbid) styrofoam dishes and cutlery. The dishes will be purchased at the beginning of next semester for use throughout the year. In addition to the dishes, the making and selling of cloth bags to the community is in the works. We plan to buy cloth bags, have fun in decorating them, and sell them to the community so that they can be used for groceries or other items bought at the store. We hope to encourage our community to use less plastic and paper at the store by promoting reusable items. Our meetings have been spiced up by Captain Planet screenings during Earth Week and a dinner at the Red Herring, a campus vegetarian res-

taurant. Even though this part of the campus ministry is still young, it's rapidly growing with new and exciting ideas, while having lots of fun all the way.



Breakaway 2008: A Return to NOLA



This year saw a return to New Orleans where the campus ministry took up residence for the week in a house in the midst of St. Bernard Parish renovated to house volunteers. Continuing in last year's tradition, I thought it best to let the seniors of the trip tell you about the life changing journey that was our week in the Big Easy as the community continues its struggle to rebuild.

Next to each person's name I've included the name of their beloved work group. The muddy buddies worked on the James house, team awesome worked at the Tramontanas, and team more awesome at the Aguilers,. Updates for all the houses and families, as well as more information on the continued efforts of our friends at the St. Bernard Project can be found at www.stbernardproject.org.

Shattering Expectations

Mark "Tex" Goodwin (Team More Awesome)

Sugarland, TX
Mechanical engineering

Over Spring Break this year, the UCC Campus Ministry once again left our safe lives in Urbana-Champaign in order to help others and learn more about the struggles of our brothers and sisters. Not too surprisingly, this trip to New Orleans was the most fulfilling Breakaway that I've ever attended. Many of us expected to go down and see that the city had not yet been rebuilt, but we had no idea what was in store for us. Entire streets were left untouched since Katrina broke the levees two and a half years earlier. Tents were set up beneath I-10 where more than a hundred people still resided. We met many wonderful, struggling people who showed us exactly what it meant to be a child of God. One such person was the resident of the house my group was helping rebuild. Rudy Aguilar, along with his loving wife and three beautiful children, did not fit the stereotype of those in need in

New Orleans. His house was larger than the one I grew up in. He is an environmental engineer, which is not exactly a struggling profession. Yet his family was in need. The government wouldn't give him money because he had insurance. The insurance company wouldn't give him money because the damage "wasn't covered" in his policy. They scrounged up what money they could to fix the house, then hired a contractor who stole their money and tools without performing the work he was supposed to perform. This is a man who refused to evacuate so he could help his neighbors; he did this because he felt it was his duty and it was the right thing to do. As a result he has health problems that make him feel like he can't even stand up some mornings. This was a man who did everything right and gave his family a good life, only to see his hard work destroyed. But he still managed to take time out of his day to talk to us and share his life with us. Rudy taught us a lot about life, love, determination, and the meaning of "life isn't fair" (though he'd never admit

to us that his life wasn't fair). If I had to share one thing I learned from this trip, it would be that things aren't always what they seem. We all expected to see devastation in New Orleans and be affected by this experience for the rest of our lives. I just never thought that the person I would learn the most from would be an engineer living in a two-story house located in a town where there had not been a murder in the twenty years prior to Hurricane Katrina. But I did, and I will never forget Rudy or take my experiences with him for granted.



The Moments that Stick with You Cory Hinz (leader of the Muddy Buddies)

Glenview, IL
Mechanical Engineering,
Russian

This year's Breakaway trip was different than all the rest I have known. Other Breakaways have always been composed of fun times at our residence, interesting tourist adventures, and very close bonding with one another, all centered around a week of arduous, rewarding labor. These things were not absent from our journey this year, but I cannot describe it in the same way. The hard work we put in each day seemed only a small part of our post-Katrina New Orleans experience. Don't get me wrong, the muddy buddies were a great team and we did a heck of a lot of mudding throughout the week, but there were so many powerful in-between moments flavoring our trip that the service projects came simply on the side.

One of most powerful moments for me came when we had finished handing out homemade sandwiches to homeless Tent City denizens under the highway and delivered what remained to the

work-program residents of a local hotel. We were about to leave the city to return to our house when Karen called us back from the vans to have a prayer. We gathered in our usual circle, including in our tight ring a young man, a young father in fact, who found himself homeless for the first time in his life. As the tears accumulated in the corners of his eyes, he explained that he had not seen his daughter in weeks and obstacle after obstacle crept up before him as he tried to make a living "the right way."



Sometimes I realize how much I have here at the U of I, but often I don't. Theft and robbery are not things that present themselves to me in a light of overwhelming temptation every day. But for this young man, not much older than me, life was, and is, much more dangerous. His commitment to make it, for himself and his family, and make it "the right way," is a conviction that I cannot even pretend to understand. Before we pulled away, I got back out of my van and went up to him and told him exactly how much I thought of him for trying to do it clean. Alfred is a

good man, and I hope he does make it.

Moments like these depicted reality in our hearts, painted over the conceptions we had brought with us. Of course there was Jackson Square, the French Market, Bourbon Street, Preservation Hall, and more to brighten our week. Friendships on Breakaway once again grew exponentially. Carl's magic, Adam's dancing, barbecuing and sandwich making at the house drew us closer and closer. But despite all the laughs and smiles we shared, we also absorbed something deeper that we carried home with us. And when the hammers, brushes, and knives

Awesome Memories

Jen Goheen (leader of Team Awesome)

Sugarland, TX
Theatre studies, Cinema studies

As one of this year's Breakaway seniors, I was given the responsibility of heading up a crew of Campus Ministry volunteers in New Orleans, LA. On our first work day, myself and my team (appropriately dubbed "Team Awesome") headed to our work site – The Tramontana Home. When we arrived we met our fearless leader Josh (an Ameri-corps volunteer) who told us that our homeowners were temporarily staying with relatives in another part of Louisiana, but had qualified

for St. Bernard's Project help because both of the parents had acquired disabilities post-Katrina and were still responsible for taking care of their young children. So even though we did not get to meet the family, our team felt a real calling to put forth our best effort to help our deserving homeowners. Much of the week consisted of "mudding," laying the flooring, and texturing/painting. While we had a blast with everything we did, there were a few workweek highlights.

Team Awesome Memorable Moments:

1. Breaking down the scrap pile with a sledgehammer
2. An unexpected visit from Campus Ministry alums Kevin and Alison Rockmann
3. Touring the neighborhood (what was left of it)
4. The Great Snack Ambush (Mark's work team)
5. Getting to know our site leader Josh and spending time with each other

This was by far my favorite Breakaway and I really enjoyed working closely with my Campus Ministry brothers and sisters!!!

A Reason to be Thankful...

Mark Goodwin

Sugar Land, Texas
Mechanical Engineering, Mathematics

This past November the UCC Campus Ministry gathered before our Thanksgiving Break to once again celebrate the joys in our life. This semester has been filled with ups and downs all around us – from the 2008 Presidential Election to the economic crisis – but our Thanksgiving dinner allowed us to take a step back and appreciate the little things in our lives. We all have a group that loves and respects us, we have the opportunity to pursue higher education, and on that day we had a delicious meal to share with one another! We all left with unbuckled belts and a renewed spirit of gratitude for the world around us.



Habitat for Humanity

Amy Balek

Mahomet, IL
Environmental Design

Before the weather became too cold, some of the campus ministry ventured out to the Habitat for Humanity Restore to help them "restore" some of their cleaning and setting up needs. Before the store opened Saturday morning, we

mopped and mopped the vast floors of the restore, cleaned the front windows, and filled the air with the fresh scent of Pinesol! We all had plenty of fun teaming up and racing with the mops, singing to old-school grooves, and using the

lift to empty and refill our buckets. I even had a great discussion, on how being a janitor and mopping stores could be a fun retirement job! We were thankful to serve a need in our community- if only more would speak up! Our mops are ready!

Camping in Shades State Park

Jesse Kappel

Palatine, IL
Biology, Secondary Education

This fall the Campus Ministry took their annual camping trip to Shades Park, Indiana. We took the time to get connected with nature and enjoy each other's company. We drove out there on Friday afternoon and set up our campground full of multiple tents and created a circle of picnic tables. Evening festivities included roasting hot dogs and telling stories. We also had the pleasure of drinking hot chocolate and hot cider made by Scott Bush; which involved heating water in a pan over the fire. This was my personal favorite moment since a sore throat caused a loss of voice for me that night.



The morning arrived; we packed up our gear and took time to go hiking. We were able to go on a few trails and really take in the beauty of fall. The leaves were changing colors, the sun was out, and we could see the fish in the clear stream below us. The experience was truly amazing and it is always nice to get off of campus for a weekend to relax and enjoy time with friends and fresh air.

Southern Illinois Trip

Adam Hughes

Lindenhurst, IL
Mathematics and Spanish



Our trip to SOIL (Southern Illinois) was one of the most memorable and enjoyable I've had with my friends here at UCF. Our ride up included such code-names as "Snow Bear" and "Snow Fox" for our vehicles and—pending arrival—more fun still. We were treated to a ride around our own Kimmy's grandparents' farm and some explanations of farming technique, wherein Tom Ward naturally arose (Hi Mr. Ward!). And then it was time for the Ultimate Show-

down of Ultimate Destiny...or at least laser tag. Sporting colors of red, blue, green, and "yellow"—it was totally orange—we strafed, took cover, and took several 'last stands' in our quest for utter dominance of the laser arena...unfortunately little children were

there and they fight dirty so my team didn't always do so hot... : (But—on a lighter note—there was pizza! That night we met the host families and played games with them along with a spectacular dinner where one could eat the right way: drumsticks—I ain't talkin' chicken either—then other stuff (if one so desired). Our host family had a further connection which Icebawx "Joe" Newcomb and I discovered: they went to school with his great uncle (small world

eh?). The next day found us in a spirit of worship, where we experienced an amazing contemporary service with the worlds best weed-killing tool and then a great traditional service which we ran and which further contained the worlds best choir (ours, naturally). After a brunch with the Church, we set off once again for home, after a great time of bonding with friends and spreading our gifts further into the world and getting so much from all the great people we met along the way. Thanks again everyone, for making our trip simply divine



Hillel

Kim Vogler

New Athens, IL
Psychology, Business

This semester's Interfaith outreach was with our Jewish peers of The Hillel Foundation. They invited us to join them in worship on a Friday night (this is their typical time of worship) so we gladly complied and took the 1.2 minute journey through our backyard to the Hillel Foundation (located on John Street). They warmly greeted us upon arrival and gave us a tour of their home. We were guided through their extensive, very well-stocked library of Jewish texts, their café area open weekly to all UIUC students, as well as their rooftop patio complete with deck chairs, fresh air, and a beautiful view. Hillel offers three Shabbat evening services including Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. We attended the Reform service, which is the most relaxed of the three.

The Reform service was full of great music on guitar and voices singing in unison. Their style of "hymns" are very different from our own . We found it re-



-freshing to sing along not knowing where we were going next. In fact, most of the service was singing. The messages of the service were profound and filled our

hearts with joy. Many of our new friends helped us to navigate the Hebrew hymnals for we were unaccustomed to reading from right to left, back to front, in another language. Still we were able to pick out some familiar words such as, "adonai"—someone whom both Jews and Christians love and adore! It was quite a learning experience. After the service, they invited us for a feast, completely free of charge (as it is every Friday night at Hillel), of scrumptious foods like couscous and falafel. Over dinner our group split up and mingled with others and several of us had very deep theological conversations. I myself was fascinated learning about the origins of their traditions. It was a wonderful evening of Interfaith worship and we are all hoping to unite with them again very soon!



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Karen's Korner

Dear UCC Campus Ministry family and friends,

First of all, to all our generous donors out there, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. Every single dollar you give greatly increases what we can offer-- both in terms of the actual programs and in the scholarships we can provide to those students who simply can't swing our biggest opportunities for growth and learning such as Tower Hill retreats and BreakAway Service trips. Now that our ecumenical monies of \$9000 a year have pretty much dried up out of our little pool of resources, we need and depend on you more than ever.

I am especially hopeful and trusting every single one of our alumni who ever felt that their involvement in UCF enriched their life and college experience to please take a moment to regularly give back so that future generations of UCC and other students on campus can benefit and enjoy many of the same experiences and communities that you did through the generosity of those who went before you.

Please know that EVERY dollar, EVERY gift makes a significant impact not just in our pocket book, but an even deeper one in our spirit (especially my spirit). Just know there are people out there who value this ministry and who care about its welfare and future effectiveness.

Secondly, I want to give a shout out to all my alumni family and invite you to Alumni Retreat 2009! As always it will be held the first full weekend in May -- this year's dates are Friday May 1 through Sunday May 3. We will be returning to beautiful Lake of the Woods but starting this year we are expanding to a much larger and more comfortable lodge complete with a full kitchen, huge great room and our own play ground for all my lovely adorable "grand children"!

Mark your calendars now!!

Our alumni continue to be not just the past but very much the present and future of our campus ministry community!

We remember you (especially me)-
Please remember us!

Hugs and blessings now and always~

your own,

Rev. KB

(alias Karen Bush)

Blessings,

Karen

Reverend Karen Bush

Campus Minister/Campus Ministry Director

Who are we? We are a ministry of the Illinois Conference United Church of Christ. As a progressive Christian organization, we embrace all who wish to participate in a Campus Ministry, regardless of personal circumstance. We love to spend time together in fellowship, worship, service and outreach. There are chances to gather nearly every day of the week, with each activity offering an opportunity to nurture friendships and grow spiritually.

UCC Campus Ministry Mission Statement:

The purpose of the UCC Campus Ministry is to explore faith, perform social service, and experience fellowship in the spirit of God's love.

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