



The Outlook

University Circle
United Methodist Church

where all are welcome all the time

an edition of
The United
Methodist Reporter



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chalk talk



BY DR. KENNETH W. CHALKER

In the Gospel of Luke, specifically the last sentence of Chapter 12:48, there is this stand-out observation: "Where a man has been given much, much will be expected of him; and the more a man has had entrusted to him, the more he will be required to repay." (New English Bible) In "The Message" the observation is paraphrased in this succinct way: "Great gifts mean great responsibilities; greater gifts, greater responsibilities!"

So much of the time this statement, however translated, is called to mind in financial stewardship moments, when we are encouraged to think about the level of money we give in response to the needs of others. It is not at all an inappropriate way of thinking. But there is more.

The meaning in these remembered words of Jesus – words which encourage a humble self-awareness of gifts entrusted to our use – surely cannot be focused only on the level of a monetary response we may make toward fulfilling the many church-related needs about which we come to know. A sense of our place among the World-Wide Communion of Christ followers is just one example.

It is always quite sobering to realize that, as Christians who practice our faith here in the western hemisphere, we comprise a mere 1/3 of the total number of the world's followers of Jesus; just 1/3 of the total number of disciples! Not only this, but the other 2/3 of the total number of followers of Jesus live in countries and cultures defined as "third world" and in conditions which are often systemically in opposition to the way of love that Jesus teaches and to which his death and resurrection bears confirming witness.

So, when we think of the World Wide Communion of Christian people, it is clear that those of us who gather as a faith family here at University Circle United Methodist Church have an enormous number of gifts. For instance, we have the profound privilege of de-

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Fall 'Big Read' Reveals Einstein Discoveries

As part of an effort to offer a series of exciting programs designed to challenge our understandings of reason, faith, science and the heavens, the University Circle UMC "Big Read" choice for October is *Einstein's Telescope: The Hunt for Dark Matter and Dark Energy in the Universe* by Dr. Evalyn Gates, Executive Director and CEO of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.



Einstein's Telescope describes a radical new technique known as gravitational lensing that allows scientists to use space itself as a telescope. Einstein's description of space and time suggests how giant "cosmic lenses" can actually allow us to see the

invisible. Using Einstein's telescope, we may finally be able to answer the ancient question: What is the universe made of? The answer will almost certainly lead us to the next great revolution in our understanding of the universe.

In particular, the discoveries revealed in this book will come alive for you as you share an evening with Dr. Gates on Wednesday, November 2 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the church. See how your faith might indeed be influenced by this famed scientist's discoveries. You do not have to read the book to participate in this program; nor are advanced science degrees required. You'll find Dr. Gates passionate about science and appreciate her gift for making complex information and ideas accessible. All are invited to join us for a fascinating evening about the future of the universe!

Wednesday Renewal...for Body, Mind and Spirit

If you're one of those people who gets to Wednesday and you've just about *had* it, treat yourself to an evening of renewal and inspiration as University Circle UMC introduces a new, weekly program called Wednesday Renewal. You may attend any or all of these offerings between 5:30 and 7:30 pm:

- 5:30 pm—light supper
- 6:00 pm—choice of a stimulating class or yoga
- 7:00 pm—service of reflection led by Dr. Chalker

Just a sample of upcoming classes:

October 19: Nathan Motta, Assistant Director of the new Cleveland Playhouse production of "The Life of Galileo," discusses the significance of the life of natural philosopher Galileo who was persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church for his public declarations about his scientific discoveries. Participants need not see the play to join in this informative, entertaining presentation about the ongoing conflict be-

tween science and religion.

October 26: Jan Thrope, activist, author and founder of Inner Visions of Cleveland, presents grassroots stories of truth and hope she has written and photographed from the perspective of people living in some of the most economically challenged areas of Cleveland's east side urban core. These are stories of every-day life in the city. But they are also about the power of neighbors connecting with neighbors to create the life they envision. Extraordinary improvements accomplished by ordinary people include food-producing gardens replacing barren city lots, mentored students rising high above expectations and support groups that make neighborhoods stronger, safer and more cohesive.

November presentations will include Stained Glass Windows; Civil Rights; Advent Wreath-making—A Family Affair.

Be a part of these evenings of renewal each Wednesday this fall. You'll leave feeling re-centered, empowered...renewed.

MENS Forum: Judge Joan Synenberg

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Joan Synenberg addresses our fall MENS Speaker Forum on Sunday, October 9, at 9:30 am. According to *Cleveland Magazine*, Judge Joan has "the intelligence of a top trial lawyer, the charisma of a Clinton—and a style all her own." As a Republican who defeated four Democrats to become a Cleveland judge, Judge Synenberg says there is no room for politics on the bench. Her philosophy is that people are complex and that the "law invites you to take a look at them individually." She is known for treating everyone who comes before her with respect, searching for the good in them while offering words of encouragement.

Men Engaged in Needed Service (MENS) sponsors quarterly speaker forums featuring noted Greater Cleveland personalities. These forums are open to men and women alike and include time for questions following presentations.



Judge Joan Synenberg

'Jazz in the Heights for Human Rights'

In support of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), our church's own FullCircle Combo plays jazz, theater and singer/songwriter hits from 7-10 pm, Sunday, October 23, at Nighttown (Cedar Hill in Cleveland Heights). Sponsored by our church's Gay-Straight Alliance, this evening of fun with friends raises awareness and support for the cause of equal rights, with all proceeds going to HRC.



Advance tickets are available online for \$10 by clicking on the HRC logo found on the church's website, www.churchinthecircle.com. Check with the church office to see if advance tickets will be available for purchase Sunday mornings. Tickets at the door are \$15. Plan now to show your support for human rights by being a part of this special event.

UCUMC Welcomes Reconciling Ministries to Open Table

University Circle UMC "draws our circle wider" as we welcome the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) to our Open Table Worship Service, October 9 at 5 pm. Lovingly created to honor those who support full inclusion of all God's children in our church, this service will welcome guests from all over Ohio who want to participate in this important time of affirmation and communion. Traditional and contemporary elements join with heart-warming music and an inspirational message by Dr. Chalker to make this a truly meaningful worship experience. A reception immediately follows in the Parlor. Before this Open Table Service, RMN holds its board meeting at 3 pm; it is open to all.



Deadline for the next *Outlook* issue is Monday, October 17, 2011, 12 PM.
outlook@churchinthecircle.com



Generations of Involvement

They Jump for Joy on Rally Day!

We thought it wasn't possible, but the MENS group outdid itself again this year with a wonderful Rally Day lunch, complete with gourmet hotdogs and the addition of a Bounce House. Kids flocked to this fun part of the day's festivities and yet another reason to feel like "church is cool."

This year, alongside MENS group members of similar "maturity" were young sons—a significant addition to the dynamic of those helping out with this annual event. Smiling sons speak volumes about the inclusiveness of this congregation and the example set by parents and "elders" in this church.

Following worship, folks stayed to enjoy this end-of-summer "rally"—to catch up and fill up on what are certainly the world's most "delicious dogs" ever. Thankfully, none of the kids who ate them left any behind in the Bounce House.

"We all survived. We had no broken bones or concussions and no one threw up!" reports Amy Wheatley, Director of Education. "Kids were still jumping as the last MENS group members were



Having Fun at Church

walking out the door, and they *continued* to jump until 2:30 when the guys came back to pick up the bounce house. Everyone had a great time."

Sounds like one more memorable experience at University Circle United Methodist Church.

'Galileo' Makes You Laugh...and Think

It's UCUMC Night at the Cleveland Playhouse, Tuesday, October 4, at 7 pm in its new home at the Allen Theater. Our church family has been invited to attend this Cleveland Playhouse production of "The Life of Galileo"—an exciting blend of drama and humor about the conflict between reason and religion. UCUMC Director of Music & Arts, Nathan Motta, is the Assistant Director of this production and member Aric Floyd is in the cast. Although you may not be able to get seats with fellow church members, you may still be able to purchase tickets for the production and plan to arrive at 6 pm for Nathan's pre-show talk about the show. Call the Allen for more information.

Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., to Speak

University Circle UMC is honored to have theologian, pastor and civic leader, the Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., as our guest, Sunday, November 6. At 9:30 am, Dr. Chalker's class welcomes Dr. Moss to speak about his beliefs and life experiences. He'll provide the morning message for our 11 am service of communion and worship and join us at our First-Sunday Potluck in the Great Hall at 12:30 pm.

In 1971, Dr. Moss served as co-pastor with



Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr.

the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Sr., at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta and also served on the staff of his son, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1975 he was called to Olivet Institutional Baptist Church in Cleveland where he served as senior pastor until his retirement in 2008, but where he continues to contribute his service and wisdom to this day. Dr. Moss has tirelessly advocated for civil and human rights and traveled the world encouraging non-violent social change. He is one of America's most influential religious leaders and a highly sought-after public speaker whom we are privileged to have join us to share his observations on a lifetime of giving to others.

GRACENOTES

BY NATHAN MOTTA

The tag "all are welcome, all the time" is not a simple cliché designed to make visitors and members alike feel welcome. It is a statement of inclusion that we all must actively make come alive in all aspects of our ministry to this diverse city.

This principle is especially applicable to our Music & Arts program. Each ensemble is a welcoming, encouraging community, full of fellowship for those who wish to worship God and lead this congregation by means of the arts. Singing in a choir, playing an instrument or dancing in the aisles should not feel like a burden or never-ending commitment. Every rehearsal is actually an opportunity to worship and be in fellowship with others.

Join us for a week, for a season (Advent or Lent) or pop in and out when you can make it. You'll find that sharing your talents with your church is an uplifting experience. Please join us!

October is full of enriching, inspiring events. This includes Wednesday night renewal services of reflection at 7 pm beginning on the 19th. Here's what else we've

planned:

Sunday, October 2: World Communion Sunday ~ Worship in an atmosphere of numerous languages, sounds and movements! Celebrate communion with the rest of the world with African drums and uplifting music to move your soul!

Sunday, October 9: Open Table Service ~ After morning worship, join the FullCircle Combo at 5 pm for the United Methodist Reconciling Ministries Open Table service which celebrates our diversity and equality.

Sunday, October 16: New Vision Sunday ~ We celebrate new members of our congregation as well as the vision for the physical and programmatic future of UCUMC.

Sunday, October 23: *Jazz in the Heights for Human Rights* ~ Check out our FullCircle Combo as they perform a benefit for the Human Rights Campaign at Nighttown in Cleveland Heights. This event is open to all.

Sunday, October 30: All Saints Day ~ We recognize All Saints Day with some incredible and glorious classical, church music.

We look forward to leading the congregation in an amazing month of faith-filled experiences!

Editorial ~ A Service of Remembrance

No one expected it. No one thought it was possible. No one here wants it to ever happen again.

When 9/11 invaded our innocence and our lives were changed forever, we vowed to honor those lost on that blue-sky day with words of love and respect for as long as forever. Ten years later, we gathered to do just that in a service of remembrance that would have few rivals.

Solemn words and music... a dimly-lit sanctuary with candlelight in every hand... a message of forgiveness that empowered us to let it go and let us grow without putting energy into hate... it all came together through music, word and dance in a service that held close those we lost, even if we didn't know them... even if we thought we could move beyond them. We can't. They died. We lived. We honor what they could have been. We honor their sacrifice. We always will.

chalk talk

Continued from front page

veloping our souls amidst a social setting and climate of enormous blessing and encouragement; hard won and difficult to maintain to be sure, but enormous in blessing and encouragement all the same. And, while there are many challenges we may face individually and collectively, it is just the plain truth that 2/3 of the world's followers of Jesus live out their faith within a setting and climate of often extraordinary disadvantage and outright hostility. So, certainly for us, "great gifts mean great responsibilities; greater gifts, greater responsibilities."

Is there ANY reason that we should **not** be, within this privileged circle of the city and within this privileged part of the world, a bright light of hope for the world? Is there ANY reason that we should **not** be a place where the transforming presence of Jesus Christ, in both symbol and substance, is in evidence IN A REALLY BIG WAY?

So many gifts have been entrusted to us. From us, through us and with us, so much is justifiably expected, needed and even REQUIRED. We are under enormous obligation, AS A FAITH FAMILY, to succeed, prosper and grow. The world-wide communion needs such a witness. In this world-wide sense FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION!

The great biblical scholar of the twentieth century, Charles Barclay, once commented that "sin is doubly sinful to the man who knew better; failure is doubly blameworthy in the man who had every chance to do well."

Barclay's meaning, complete with his gender-inclusive use of the word "man", should be crystal clear: as men and women of faith we have every opportunity to thrive as followers of Jesus. Our collective witness in this enormously privileged setting, city and country in this Western hemisphere of the world has no excuse to accomplish any other thing than doing well.

To be sure, within the world-wide community, we have been given and are being given, day by day, COUNTLESS chances. Let's be sure that we are taking them!

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