

umstead park

UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

a thoughtful and progressive community of faith

January 2018

8208 Brownleigh Drive

Raleigh, NC 27617

www.upucc.org

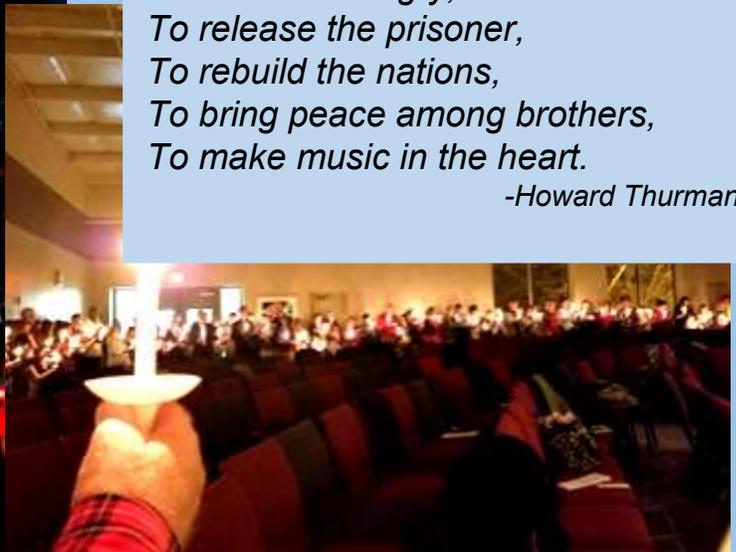
FAITH IN ACTION



The Work of Christmas

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.*

-Howard Thurman



...may we continue to share in this work together. Please, read on...

Real Community

Please indulge this longer than normal monthly offering from me. I've thought a lot about it over the holidays because it addresses issues that often strengthen or erode/crumble congregations.

Beth Mastick offered a most wonderful faith journey in a mid-December forum. She presented pieces from her journaling and among the offerings was a dictionary of terms. One of the words defined was "community."

Said Beth: *COMMUNITY-This is a state of being in which I and you are at times indistinguishable. Community is where people who are drawn to me and to whom I am drawn are a manifestation of the possibilities I hold for the world and the instruments by which those possibilities may be realized.*



Wow! ... This UPUC community as ***"a manifestation of the possibilities I hold for the world and the instruments by which those possibilities may be realized."***

I have been asked several times in the last few weeks (by friends, colleagues in ministry and the Press as well) what the impact of inviting an undocumented immigrant into our church building has had on our congregation. Though it is an open-ended question, I realize that the one asking often assumes responses related to challenges, stresses or conflicts.

Each of those assumptions is far off-base.

The single greatest impact I have experienced from welcoming Eliseo and Gabriela among us is a deepened sense of community. Lively before, we have become more lively. Committed before, we have become more committed. Supportive of each other before, we have become more supportive. In a deeper and still deepening way, we are... *"a manifestation of the possibilities [we] hold for the world and the instruments by which those possibilities may be realized."*

Of all the pressing needs left to us by the world from 2017, my greatest hope and desire for 2018 is that we deepen this community still more. To do so requires patience, listening, speaking our truths and listening for the truth of others. ... ***There*** is the challenge!

Last August I had the privilege of offering The Charge to the Congregation at the Installation of Jenny Shultz as pastor of Community UCC here in Raleigh. If you aren't aware, Community UCC has quite a storied tradition. For decades, persons within their congregation have led the Greater Raleigh movements of justice and peace. Still, I had a little serious-fun addressing them in the context of recognizing their new minister. Here are excerpts (true also for our own Congregation!):

Jenny will love you and she will tell you publicly how wonderful you are. You are special.

But I also want you to know something else ministers often think when parishioners come into their office or take them aside to offer the unique agenda on their minds:

You are not special. (...and if you think that applies to everybody BUT you, it ESPECIALLY applies to you... You are not special!)

*So I want to deeply know the love that Jenny will, and already has, no doubt, showered upon you **and** I want you to say this now and feel it deeply.... "I am special." (Say it.)*

And now, the further truth... I am not special.

Say it! "I am not special."

-continued on page three-

from doug continued...

...Sometimes, for fun, when people ask me how my church is going I say, "It's good, except for the people!" ...Well, sometimes church would be easier if it weren't for the people. Where there are people, there are imperfections.

*You, Congregation of Community UCC, are
EITHER
'a never before assembled, first time in the history of the world group of perfect human beings',
OR
'you are a gathering of good, imperfect people.'*

...When conflict occurs, be gentle with each other....

...And if you find yourself in need of offering a different opinion... then express it in love.

...If you can't figure out a way to say it in love.... It's best not say it.

Honesty with love, Community UCC.

That what it boils down to... being honest and loving. If you can do that, the rest will fall into place.

**You, Congregation ..., are EITHER
'a never-before-assembled, first-time-in-the-history-of-the-world
group-of-perfect-human-beings',
OR
'you are a gathering of good, imperfect people.'**

You get it, right?!

Individually, we are good, imperfect persons and collectively, we are a group of good, imperfect human beings. That's just the way it is.... even at our very best!

How well we deepen this gift of community in the coming year largely depends on how well we listen to and acknowledge the truth in each other. And IF we model a better and more civil discourse for our fellow human beings, then our community indeed could be "a manifestation of the possibilities [we] hold for the world and the instruments by which those possibilities may be realized."

May it be so.

May it be so.

Amen.

Doug

Beginning Monday, January 22 Pre-Lenten Series on Prayer

Pre-Lenten Series 'What IS Prayer?' on three consecutive Monday evenings offered by Betsy Thigpen and Doug Long, beginning Monday January 22, 7-8:30 p.m. in the library.

We will be using a section of this excellent video by Richard Rohr to organize our discussion each evening:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPb3Z51gLcY>

(Feel free to bring a bag supper and eat prior to or during the session, if it makes it more convenient for you.)

youth

Youth January Schedule

January 7 at UPUCC
11:30 am- 1:30 pm

January 12-15
UCC Youth Winter Retreat
Blowing Rock

January 28 at UPUCC
1-4 pm Bowling



Youth celebrating during their Tacky Christmas Party.



Youth work to renovate their new room, dubbed the 'dungeon.'



children



Children enjoyed Parent Date Night last month (a fund raiser hosted by the Youth and several adults).

Children's Church On the Move

- Following the outpouring of support for Heifer Project, Children's Committee will work with Faith In Action on a new mission project in the coming month.
- Most of the focus scripture readings in Children's Church will come from the Gospel of Mark this season. Children will have an opportunity to explore stories of Jesus' baptism, the call of the fishers, and the beginning of his ministry as well as a chance to ponder the mystery and wonder of these stories and reflect on their own experiences of God's presence in their lives.
- Due to the retirement of three volunteers, new teachers and assistants are especially welcome! For details, please email peg@upucc.org.



Children presented their Christmas Program to the congregation on the Sunday of Peace, December 10.



faith in action

2018 Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

United Way of the Greater Triangle is once again helping organize activities as part of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, bringing volunteer opportunities to our area with the purpose to transform Dr. King's life and teachings into community service that helps empower and strengthen our towns and cities.



On the King Day Observance, United Way of the Greater Triangle will host over 2,800 volunteers among 35 projects located throughout the Triangle. Go to the website below to volunteer your time, and make this "A Day On, Not a Day Off."

http://unitedwaytriangle.galaxydigital.com/aem/general/event/?doc_id=4550

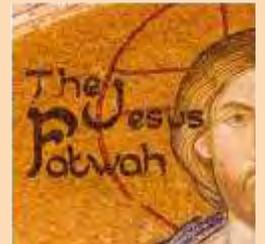
FIA would love to hear your stories or see pictures from any service event in which you participate!

adult education

Forums - *Childcare is available in the nursery.*

January 7

9:30 a.m. "Jesus Fatwah: Love Your (Muslim) Neighbor as Yourself" DVD. *"In The Jesus Fatwah, Islamic and Christian scholars offer reliable information about what Muslims believe, how they live out their faith, and how we all can be about building relationships across the lines of faith."* (quote from Living the Questions) Tricia Andrews hosting.



January 14 - following worship

Members of LGBT Center of Raleigh's **SAGE** (Service & Advocacy for GLBT Elders) Chapter will be speaking about issues related to being LGBT and in the elder demographic. Snacks provided. Tricia Andrews hosting.

January 21

9:30 a.m. Evangelical Christianity 101: The Rapture of the Church. Why are Evangelical Christians considering Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital a beginning of the "end times"? We will discuss what Evangelicals believe is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy that can bring about the rapture of the church and the beginning of the Tribulation period; and what do those words even mean?!? Please notice the **101** part of the title...this discussion will be as simplified as possible and will not be a deep dive into Evangelical biblical prophesy, but rather more of a basic introduction of the vocabulary and beliefs. Hosted by Gina Kentopp.

January 28 - Forum will not be held due to Congregational Meeting following worship.

Invite all to participate in the choices which shape us, sharing decisions equally and responsibly, and, in so doing, reclaim the constructive use of power;

upucc advocacy task force

Making a Difference in 2018

A key thing about politicians is that they pay attention to their constituents. After all, one of their highest priorities is to get reelected. With this in mind, the Advocacy Task Force will be arranging meetings with North Carolina Senators and Representatives, so members and friends of our congregation can get to know them, build a relationship, ask questions and share views.

Early in 2018 we want to have meetings with Senator John Alexander and Representatives Chris Malone and Nelson Dollar. (We have more members in these Districts than others.) If you live in one of these districts, you will be contacted and asked if you are willing to go to such a meeting and when would be the best time for you. The people leading these efforts are Reed Altman (Alexander), Nick Kentopp (Malone) and Meredith Pope (Dollar).

We keep these meetings with Senators and Representatives very positive so that even if we disagree on things we still build relationships for continuing conversations. It can be a very worthwhile experience and we hope you are able to participate.

Also, consider attending one of our Advocacy Task Force meetings, held after church on the first Sunday of each month.

building & grounds

Clean Team Members Needed

We are blessed to have over a dozen people working each month to clean UPUCC.

Teams of three to five people come each week, usually sometime between Thursday and Saturday. They vacuum carpeted areas, dust, wipe down (library) tables, clean up classrooms, kitchen, worship space (pick up trash, straighten chairs, sweep, mop, etc.), clean front windows and glass doors, take out trash, etc. Cleaning the nursery restroom is included; however the large common restrooms are NOT part of the tasks.

If you can help approximately one and a half hours per month, please contact Sarah Hogan at carolandsarah@msn.com or the church office office@upucc.org. Thank you!

fellowship

Potluck Luncheon

Bring a dish to share on Sunday, **January 28**, following worship for the UPUCC Congregational Meeting. Fellowship Committee provides drinks and table ware. Youth plan to provide childcare for the older children. Childcare for children under age five will be provided in the nursery.

Save the Date! Fat ~~Tuesday~~ Sunday, February 11 (an after-church Mardi Gras Celebration for all ages)

sunday service calendar at upucc

January 7

Altar Prep: Eleanor Smith
Communion Prep: Trish Breen
Coffee Set-Up: Lori Del Negro & Roger Sommer
Greeters: Jeri & Bill Radke
Ushers: Leslie Heavey
Sound System: Nevin Fouts
Auditor: Martha Eller
Assistant Treasurer: Dan Harrell
Clean Team: Edward McFarland, Tracy Denson, Linda Hebert, Mark & Melanie Stevens

January 14

Altar Prep: Leslie Heavey
Coffee Set-Up: [REDACTED]
Greeters: Marianne Drexler
Ushers: Julie & Miles Schumacher
Sound System: Dan Harrell
Auditor: Julie Schumacher
Assistant Treasurer: Chris Ousley
Clean Team: Dawn McCarthy, Marcia Welsh, Mary Pat Peters, Eliseo Jimenez

January 21

Altar Prep: Eleanor Smith
Coffee Set-Up: Julie & Miles Schumacher
Greeters: Marianne Drexler
Ushers: [REDACTED]
Sound System: [REDACTED]
Auditor: Gwen Vass
Assistant Treasurer: Lee Harrison
Clean Team: Tim Champion & Dan Harrell, Chris Ousley, Ada & Colin McKerrell

caring Volunteers awesomekind

Want to make a New Year's Resolution that is easy to keep?

Can you give the gift of your time to UPUCC?

Signing up to volunteer has never been simpler!

Please take note of the volunteers needed on the January (and beyond) Sunday service calendar.

Follow the link [HERE](#) to volunteer!

Choose among these tasks for dates convenient to your schedule.

Volunteers receive a reminder a few days ahead.

- *Communion element preparation*
- *Coffee preparation*
- *Greeters*
- *Ushers*
- *Sound System set-up*
- *Pastoral Care*

Complete instructions are listed for each task as well as ways to re-schedule when necessary.

January 28

Altar Prep: Michael Lester
Coffee Set-Up: Roberta Ouelle
Greeters: [REDACTED]
Ushers: Julie & Miles Schumacher
Sound System: Peter van Dorsten
Auditor: Frank McKay
Assistant Treasurer: Dan Harrell
Clean Team: Carol & Nevin Fouts, Scott Pope, Doug Long & Janice Odom

all in the family

New Covenant Partner

Beth Mastick became a UPUCC Covenant Partner in November. She speaks of being drawn to UPUCC in order to support her late husband Tom's Christian faith "in an environment that would also welcome her as a Neopagan/Jew."



Beth Mastick

Beth lives with her son in Northeast unincorporated Raleigh, in an older blue collar neighborhood on "the happiest house on the block," bright yellow with red shutters.

Beth shares she was a computer production and design artist for years. After developing fibromyalgia, she is no longer working. She says she has always loved working with animals and has volunteered with wildlife education and rehabilitation at various times. She says at her core, she is a visual artist and has worked in oils, acrylic, wood, metal and even trash. Her special interests include cooking and Solitary Wicca, a nature-centered spiritual practice.

Beth says her son is her extra-ordinary 15 year old son, who is an engineering student at Southeast Raleigh High School. He is her joy and her most rigorous teacher.

Creativity Group

Thank you to all who continue to support our card ministry! Our fall donations will enable us to send \$1000 to the UCC Disaster Relief Fund. Your donations also help support our monthly craft/card making time with the ladies at Healing Transitions.

We welcome anyone who would like to go with us on our Wednesday, January 10 visit to Healing Transitions. We will have our table in the atrium on January 28, February 4, and February 11. Think Valentines!

our wider community

Did You Know?

- The Mission of The Justice Theater Project is to use the performing arts to bring to the fore of public attention the needs of the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed.
- The Justice Theater Project provides over 400 seats a year free of charge to organizations like TROSA, Passage Home and other area nonprofits.
- The Justice Theater Project strives to carry out their vision of connecting, inspiring and impacting our community through engaging performing arts outreach, education and advocacy.



Bent

By Martin Sherman • Directed by Joel Rainey
February 9-18 Umstead Park United Church of Christ

Bent, a JTP production here at UPUCC beginning February 9 (and accompanying book discussion at [Quail Ridge Books](#) February 2: *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals*, by Richard Plant.) The title of the play refers to the slang word "bent" used in some European countries to refer to homosexuals. The play takes place in 1934 as Hitler moved aggressively to consolidate his power (AKA...The Night of the Long Knives.)
As these are adult themes, the play is geared to adult audiences only.

Workshop with Rabbi Rami Shapiro at Temple Beth Or- February 23 and 24

Rabbi Rami Shapiro, Ph.D., award-winning author of over thirty books on religion and spirituality, is a professor of religious studies, student of the Ramakrishna Order of Vedanta Hinduism, and a congregational rabbi. (More can be learned from his website: oneriverfoundation.org.)

Wednesday, February 21, Quail Ridge Book Store, 7:30 pm

Lecture and book signing: *Perennial Wisdom for the Spiritually Independent*:

Friday, February 23, Temple Beth Or (5315 Creedmoor Road, Raleigh), 7-8:30 pm

Religion as Language: a New Model for Understanding the World's Religions.

Saturday, February 24, Temple Beth Or

Saturday Morning Learning Sabbath Service, 10:30 am-12N Jewish Spiritual Practice & World Spirituality with Q&A
12:15-1 pm Optional Box Lunch for pre-purchase @ \$11 (125 space limitation).

1-3 pm Perennial Wisdom and the Five Questions that shape the human search for meaning. Perennial Wisdom for the Spiritually Independent - Religion as Language: a New Model for Understanding the World's Religions.

[Sponsored by: Wake Forest Christian Church • Temple Beth Or • The Theosophical Society in America
Pullen Memorial Baptist Church • Umstead Park United Church of Christ]

John Dominic Crossan at First Reformed UCC in Burlington, NC- March 23 and 24

"The Challenge of the Christian Bible" Individual lectures will include:

- * Original Sin: Sexual Temptation or Escalatory Violence?
- * Covenantal Law: Human Destiny or Divine Sanction?
- * God's Kingdom: Violent Revolt or Non-Violent Resistance?
- * Christianity's Criterion: Historical Jesus or Apocalyptic Jesus.

Registration information will be available later in January.

january calendar at upucc

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|------------|-----------|---|
| Mon. | Jan. 1 | New Year's Day |
| Tues. | Jan. 2 | 9:30 a.m. Creativity Group meets in the library. |
| Wed. | Jan. 3 | 7:00 p.m. UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space. |
| Sun. | Jan. 7 | 9:30 a.m. Forum: Love Your (Muslim) Neighbor as Yourself. See page six. 10:30 a.m. Worship & Communion: "Past Epiphanyes- Present Longings," Doug Long preaching. 11:30 a.m. Newcomers & Inquirers Session in the library. 11:30 a.m. UPUCC Advocacy Task Force meets in the atrium conference room. 11:30 a.m. Youth meet. |
| Mon. | Jan. 8 | 6:30 p.m. Evening Creativity Group meets in the library. |
| Wed. | Jan. 10 | 7:00 p.m. UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space. |
| Th-Mon. | Jan.11-15 | 2018 MLK Jr. Day of Service. See page six. |
| Fri.-Mon.. | Jan.12-15 | Youth Winter Retreat at Blowing Rock |
| Sun. | Jan. 14 | 9:30 a.m. Committee Meeting Time. 10:30 a.m. Worship: "The Ramparts of Race," Doug Long preaching. Following worship Forum: SAGE. See page six. |
| Mon. | Jan. 15 | Martin Luther King Jr. Day |
| Tues. | Jan. 16 | 9:30 a.m. Creativity Group meets in the library. 7:00 p.m. Coordinating Council meets in the library. |
| Wed. | Jan. 17 | 7:00 p.m. UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space. |
| Thurs. | Jan. 18 | Midnight UPUCC February Newsletter deadline. |
| Sun. | Jan. 21 | 9:30 a.m. Forum: Evangelical Christianity 101. See page six. 10:30 a.m. Worship: "Progressive Prayer?" Doug Long preaching 12:00 p.m. Worship & Music Committee meets in the library. |
| Mon. | Jan. 22 | 7:00 p.m. Pre-Lenten Series, "What IS Prayer?" See page two. |
| Wed. | Jan. 24 | 7:00 p.m. UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space. |
| Sat. | Jan. 27 | 9:30 a.m. Yoga with Ellen Beidler in the worship space. |
| Sun. | Jan. 28 | 10:30 a.m. Worship: "The Real Work of Building Community," Doug Long preaching. Following worship UPUCC Congregational Meeting & All-Church Potluck. See page seven. 1-4 p.m. Youth Bowling. |
| Mon. | Jan. 29 | 7:00 p.m. UPUCC Men's Group. Contact reedaltman@gmail.com for details. 7:00 p.m. Pre-Lenten Series, "What IS Prayer?" See page two. |
| Wed. | Jan. 31 | 7:00 p.m. UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space. |

***Seek, in our quest for truth, the presence of the divine:
in worship and prayer;
in all of creation;
in every person, sacred in worth; and
in faiths and traditions other than our own;
while always appreciating with awe the mysteries inherent in life.***