

umstead park

UNITED CHURCH *of* CHRIST
a thoughtful and progressive community of faith

July 2017
8208 Brownleigh Drive
Raleigh, NC 27617
www.upucc.org

FAITH IN ACTION

UPUCC's July Full of Conversation(s) and Discernment: On Welcoming the Stranger... (What a concept!)

Usually a month of low attendance and canceled committee meetings, despite the summer slow-down July this year includes a number of conversations centered on what it means to be a people of extravagant welcome. Specifically, at the July 9 after-church forum we will host a representative of The US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants and learn not only of their good work, but how we can join their efforts. (*See the information in the article below.*)

Additionally, the UPUCC Coordinating Council is entertaining the possibility of offering our building as a sanctuary space not only for us but also for those in danger of sudden deportation.

Perhaps you read the story of Juana Luz Ortega, a 49 year-old mother living in Asheboro who has been offered temporary space at St. Barnabas Episcopal in Greensboro. (Link to the story [here.](#))

Our sister church, Congregational UCC in Greensboro, is assisting St. Barnabas and has done the legwork to stand ready to invite others in need into their own space. Congregational's pastor, Julie Peebles, wrote this opinion piece that recently ran in the Greensboro News and Record. (Link to article [here.](#))

Julie has agreed to meet with representatives of UPUCC and we are currently lining up the details of that gathering (possibly gatherings). With luck, her husband Paul will be able to join us as he has researched a great many of the legal issues involved. Paul and Julie may come to Raleigh and meet with us here, or we may take a group of UPUCC people to Greensboro... or both! Stay tuned as we are working out the specifics of those meetings. (It looks like later in the day, on July 9, may work. If you want to be sure to be included in these conversations, shoot Doug Long an email.)

A report and discussion of the ongoing Sanctuary possibility will be a featured part of our Summer Congregational Meeting and Potluck following worship on July 30.

July 9 After Church Forum- US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

Refugees are people who are forced to leave their home country to escape war, violence, or persecution can register as refugees. 60 MILLION people worldwide have been forcibly displaced. While the reasons and the regions may vary, the story and desperation are the same. All refugees are seeking safety, freedom, and the chance to reclaim futures for themselves and their families.

A fraction of refugees (less than 0.1%) win the bureaucratic lottery and are able to move to a third country, like the U.S., where they have opportunities to establish new homes.

USCRI (refugees.org) is one of several agencies that welcomes refugees as soon as they land in the U.S. and empowers them with everything they need to start new lives. They find refugees housing, help them navigate the new culture, and connect them with employment opportunities so that families become self-sufficient as quickly as possible.

During this forum we will hear about the work that they do and about ways that we can join them in accomplishing it.

*Recognize our identity as global citizens, intimately tied to and
partnered with all of God's children in every land;*

Inshallah, A Celebrative 4th of July

Nicki Norris and I had the extreme good fortune of attending an Iftar Dinner on a Sunday evening in the middle of Ramadan. Ramadan, the Muslim lunar month celebrating the revelation of the Quran, fell primarily in June this year. (Because it is a lunar month, shorter than a month in the Gregorian calendar, it slowly backs up a few days every year.) You probably know that the Muslim community fasts during Ramadan. Each day, from sunrise to sunset, no food or drink is taken. (Exceptions are made for health reasons, pregnant women, etc. but it is a truly remarkable practice.) Because of the full-day abstinence, the gathering to end the fast is significant and special... an 'Iftar meal' to 'break fast'. (The phrase itself reminds me that the only time I fast is when I'm sleeping. Muslims fast when they are awake!)



Nicki and I had accepted the invitation to join the community Iftar without realizing that it was also an unveiling of plans for the building of a Muslim Youth Community Center on the northeast side of Raleigh. While this meal was an intimate gathering of perhaps 100 persons, most of them from the Muslim community, it was also a concerted and specific effort to build relationships in the wider community. There were three Rabbis in attendance, a Catholic priest, a handful of Protestant ministers, a city official, the mayor of Rolesville, and last but far from least, David and Lisa Price. The theme of the evening was clearly stated in an organized booklet given to each attendee... "The Art of Living Together: Building Relationships."

As the event began at 6:00 p.m. and the sun set (at which time the fast could be broken) at 8:30, there was plenty of time for presentations. Reflecting back upon this time, the collection of perspectives was nothing short of remarkable:

- I heard an Imam explain that when he was in public and angry voices expressed that he should go back where he came from he calmly replied, "Do you mean Maryland?"
- The mayor of Rolesville stood in front of the crowd in a no-pretense-posture and style admitting this was a wonderful gathering because "When it comes to Muslims and Islam I 'know zero.'" He was clearly enthused by the hospitality and welcome.
- David Price spoke of a changing America and the need to hear other voices in order to practice true democracy.
- An Ethiopian Muslim spoke of his efforts to practice Interfaith acceptance.
- Many common myths and stereotypes regarding Islam were addressed along the way.

The presentation of the building plans were especially fascinating to me. As someone who has been engaged in building a new community of faith in North(ish) Raleigh myself, I was impressed by this community's vision and resolve. ...and I was personally struck by the location of the new center now underway... It is less than a half mile from the first home of my own remembrance, and just a bit north of the Baptist Church in which I was raised. (Now squarely in a bustling part of Raleigh between 440 and 540, in my childhood this location was well outside any urban boundary. It would have been categorized as farm country... and anything but diverse. ...'the times they are a changing'!!) (See the plans for the Muslim Community Center here: <http://mycc-rdu.org/>)

One of the most striking 'take-aways' of the 'Iftar evening' for me was the patriotism that ran through the event. From the recognition of the flag at half-mast (for the sailors killed in the naval collision) to the repeated references to their pride in the US, this embracing Muslim community refused to wallow in the target that has been placed on them by conservative voices but instead voiced *their* resolve to help America grow into the idea that it has always claimed... "One nation with liberty and justice for all" where all are created equal. *-continued on page three...*

from doug continued...

Continued from page two...

This month, when I celebrate the birth of our country, the strong image of these Americans will be at the forefront of my thoughts. Like them, I want to be part of moving our country toward living its ideals more fully, and thereby making America truly great.

In so doing I am sure I join with you in praying that God would bless not only our corner of the world, but all of creation.

...And how could we ever infer God would do anything less? God bless the World.

With partners like the Muslim community that invited me to break bread with them this past month, I have more hope than ever that America can be truly great.

Inshallah.

Amen.

Doug

PS In related thoughts, I highly recommend this article by George Yancey from the Opinion Pages of the NY Times explaining that “Building walls, banning refugees and ignoring the poor are the social expressions of bankrupt theologies.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/19/opinion/is-your-god-dead.html?smprod=nytcore-ipad&smid=nytcore-ipad-share>)

adult education

July Forums - *childcare provided in the nursery.*

No forum will be held on July 2.

July 9 - Following worship: In conjunction with Faith In Action, a discussion about the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, held in the library. See page one for details.

July 16 - 9:30 a.m. Religion in Alternative Universes: a conversation about religions and science fiction, led by Michelle Ellis* and David VandeVusse.

July 23 - 9:30 a.m. White Privilege Session Three. Free download of curriculum available [here](#).

No forum will be held on July 30 due to Congregational Meeting & Potluck.

*Michelle Ellis is also the contact person who is coordinating a group attending “SuperCon” Raleigh at the Raleigh Convention Center, July 14-16. See page 10.



children & youth

July Children's Church

During the month of July, our children will experience a variety of special activities led by Covenant Partners- Paul Foglia, Peg Arcari, and Christy Tucker. Also there will be a youth-led session coordinated by Anne Maust.

There will be music, art, games, and one session entitled "Bugs for Lunch!"

Come join in the fun!

As always, we welcome newcomers to become part of our fabulous team of adult leaders! Contact peg@upucc.org for details!

July Youth Schedule

July 23 - 7-9 p.m.
Mini Golf & Ice Cream
Frankie's Fun Park

July 30 - 10:30 a.m.
Youth-Led Children's Church

Thank you to Greg and Kim Howes for a wonderful youth retreat last month!

(See photos on page nine)

Also, on page five find a photo of UPUCC and area UCC youth who spent the day in fellowship and service (packing hunger-relief bags and learning about hunger in the US.)



Building Bridges of Understanding & Hope at

Children's Church Camp August 11-13

- ◇ Friday, August 11 5:30-8:30 p.m. Family Fun Night Dinner & Movie.
- ◇ Saturday, August 12 10:00 a.m.- 2:30 p.m. Arts, Crafts, Music, Games!
- ◇ Sunday, August 13 - 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Share during Worship

Bring a friend. Cost and registration available soon. Questions? Email: peg@upucc.org

faith in action

United Church of Christ

The national church has issued a statement from the UCC leadership considering the President's decision to abandon the Paris Climate Accords.

http://www.ucc.org/news_ucc_leadership_an_opportunity_for_which_the_church_was_born_06022017

Common Cause NC

Common Cause NC sponsored an event at the state legislature that Peter van Dorsten, Ted Frazer, Richard Frazer, Lee Harrison and others attended. It was the People's Hearing on Fair Redistricting. The complete article can be found on page six of this newsletter. The nearly four minute video, including Peter's words can be found here: http://commoncausenc.org/articles/2017/6_7_17_peoples_hearing.php

School Kit Collection



Faith In Action, Children's Committee and Creativity Group are combining their efforts to host a collection of school kits (*thanks to Creativity Group for producing the kit bags!*) during the coming weeks on behalf of Church World Service. To contribute, please follow the link to the signup genius found [here](#). CWS works to ensure that newly arrived refugees, those affected by flooding or fires, homeless shelter guests and migrant workers have much-needed supplies. Your support makes an impact in the lives of those recovering from disasters or facing poverty or displacement around the world. Thank you!

youth continued from page four...



UPUCC and other area UCC youth spent the day in fellowship and service (packing hunger-relief bags and learning about hunger in the US.)

our wider community

LGBTQ Senior Housing Focus Group *(More details coming in UPUCC This Week email)*

Umstead Park UCC will be hosting a focus group facilitated by the SAGE Housing Initiative of the LGBT Center of Raleigh on Sunday July 23, at 12:00 noon. The purpose of this group is to provide an opportunity for LGBTQ seniors age 50 and older to share their concerns, their needs and their expectations when it comes to their future years. If you are a member of the LGBTQ community and 50 years or older, join us on July 23. So that we will know to expect you, please preregister by leaving an email at sage@lgbtcenterofraleigh.com.

UPUCC Advocacy Group Takes Action

On Monday June 5, Common Cause held a People's Forum on nonpartisan redistricting reform.

People came from across the state, from the mountains to the sea. From UPUCC, Richard Frazer, Lee Harrison, Peter van Dorsten and Ted Frazer joined some 150 North Carolinians packed a committee room on the 6th floor of the Legislative Office Building in Raleigh to do what legislative leaders refused to do – hold a public hearing on a plan to enact nonpartisan districting.

We heard about [House Bill 200](#) and Senate Bill 209 that would end gerrymandering in North Carolina by taking redistricting power away from the majority political party and instead giving it to nonpartisan staff. That independent staff would in turn draw the state's congressional and legislative districts using rules that prevent gerrymandering.

The measure has 39 bipartisan co-sponsors in the NC House, led by four Republicans. But since the proposal was introduced 15 weeks ago, House Bill 200 has been left untouched by the House Rules Committee, denied a vote or even a hearing.

At the Common Cause People's Forum Peter van Dorsten spoke eloquently and succinctly with these words:

“Our legislature appears to be addicted to gerrymandering, going back a long way. This latest round used an even more potent version of the age old process and the results have not been good for the state. The genius of our system of government is based largely on the checks and balances the framers established. Cracking neighborhoods and packing voters into partisan archipelagos defeats this fundamental principle.

If we want sound government, that balances the extremes, governs from the center, and provides efficient and effective policies for all the citizens of our great state, we must end the addiction of gerrymandering. Technology has provided a more effective gerrymander drug, but the effects cannot be sustained by any one party and we will surely swing back to the left with even greater force once the party ends for the GOP. In the meantime, we are less united and less effective as a state. Our brand has already suffered and it will continue to suffer until sober minds prevail.

I encourage all legislators to look beyond the rush of partisan advantage and consider what our addiction to gerrymandering has done and will do to our state. I urge the leadership to let this bill advance to a vote.”

Finally the UPUCC Advocacy Group is resolved to work on ending gerrymandering working with Common Cause on this issue.



*Richard Frazer, Ted Frazer,
Peter van Dorsten and Lee Harrison
attended Common Cause People's Forum.*

building & grounds

UPUCC Building & Grounds Committee wants you to know:

- ◇ On July 6-8 our parking lot will be undergoing a much needed make over. Precision Striping and Lot Restoration will patch, seal and restripe our lot. They'll do this in two sections (1/2 of the lot each day). The building will remain open (as usual), however parking in the lot will be limited. If all goes as planned we'll have a beautifully refinished lot on Sunday, July 9th.
- ◇ Reps from Building and Grounds as well as Worship and Music Committees have met with Justice Theatre Project to improve how we work together. As you know, JTP provides awesome programs and services and we support them by providing space. We've been in discussion recently about how to ensure the space meets their needs, as well as ours.
- ◇ The Creativity Group is planning some outdoor beautification efforts (e.g. bird bath, benches and plantings- see page....). Additional projects may be in the works from our Youth and/or Children's programs. We'll keep you posted as plans develop.
- ◇ Things leak, wear out or just break. We do our best to fix. Recent repairs have included:
 - Patching roof leaks (a work in progress)
 - Clearing debris from downspouts
 - Clearing the ditch by the driveway entrance
 - Unclogging the culvert under the driveway
 - Repairing toilets- two still awaiting repair
 - Planning for eventual replacement of our two A/C units. (\$20,000 each). Not to panic, merely preparing for future expenses!
- ◇ Our board looks at every penny. We recently reviewed our landscaping costs (cutting grass, weeding beds, leaf blowing, etc.) and received quotes from other companies. Our service provider will change July 1 to Landscape Matters. We will receive slightly fewer visits/services, but the changes will save \$800/year.
- ◇ We are planning another Fall Work Day, as we did last October (e.g. replaced carpet, deep-cleaned the kitchen, reorganized storage areas, replaced and repaired light fixtures, cleaned upholstered chairs, trimmed trees, etc.).
- ◇ Be on the lookout for our Fall 2017 plans!

-Sarah Hogan, Chair of Building & Grounds Committee

membership & publicity

Next Newcomers & Inquirers Session

...will be held Sunday, July 2 following worship. Membership & Publicity Committee hosts these gatherings in the church library. There is a short presentation of the history of the UCC as well as information about Umstead Park United Church of Christ.

upucc july volunteers

July 2

Altar Prep: Eleanor Smith
Communion Prep: Trish Breen
Coffee Set-Up: Matt & Rebecca Andrews
Greeters: Chris Ousley
Ushers: Sally Bean & Todd Smith
Sound System: Scott Andrews
Auditor: Gwen Vass
Assistant Treasurer: Lee Harrison
Clean-Team: Edward McFarland, Tracy Denson,
Melissa and Ethan Russell,
Mark and Melanie Stevens

July 9

Altar Prep: Leslie Heavey
Coffee Set-Up: Lori Del Negro & Roger Sommer
Greeters: Jeri & Bill Radke
Ushers: Daire & Tara Roebuck
Sound System: Chris Abram
Auditor: Frank McKay
Assistant Treasurer: Chris Ousley
Clean-Team: Dawn McCarthy, Chris Wilms,
Marcia Welsh, Mary Pat Peters

July 16

Altar Prep: Eleanor Smith
Coffee Set-Up: Roberta Ouellette
Greeters: Marianne Drexler
Ushers: Nick & Gina Kentopp
Sound System: Nevin Fouts
Auditor: Tim Champion
Assistant Treasurer: Dan Harrell
Clean-Team: Tim Champion & Dan Harrell, Chris Ousley,
Ada & Colin McKerrell

July 23

Altar Prep: Michael Lester
Coffee Set-Up: Leslie Heavey
Greeters: Rebecca Andrews, Chris Ousley
Ushers: Nik & Megan Everett
Sound System: Tim Champion
Auditor: Gwen Vass
Assistant Treasurer: Lee Harrison
Clean-Team: Nevin & Carol Fouts, Scott Pope,
Chuck & Deb Givens

July 30

Altar Prep: Michael Lester
Coffee Set-Up: Sarah Sydney & Jim Gattis
Greeters: TBD
Ushers: Gail & Jeff Holden
Sound System: Don Alderman
Auditor: Betty Gatano
Assistant Treasurer: Chris Ousley
Clean-Team: Nevin & Carol Fouts, Scott Pope,
Chuck & Deb Givens

Piano Lessons

Our pianist, David Wilson, is excitedly accepting new piano students of all ages! If you have always wanted to learn to play the piano, or want to pick up where you left off, contact him to schedule a lesson! It is never too late to learn, and David loves working with adult learners! For more information, contact David at david@upucc.org.



Wild Goose Festival | July 13-16 2017 | Hot Springs, NC

youth continued from page five...



***Youth enjoying their overnight
at Kerr Lake last month.***



all in the family



Linda Hébert

New Covenant Partner

One thing to know about Linda Hébert is that her name is pronounced "AY - bear" (both the 'H' and the 't' are silent). She is a native Raleigh-ite. Linda enjoyed serving in the Peace Corps in Central America before starting her career teaching Special Education for Wake County Schools.

In retirement, Linda's interests include genealogy, fitness, and working with the Creativity Group. What she likes best about UPUCC is the friendliness and caring attitude throughout the church.

july fellowship events

July 14 Picnic 7:30 p.m. & Movie 9 p.m. “Moana,”

NC Museum of Art

July 14-16 “SuperCon” Raleigh Convention Center.

Contact Michelle Ellis etaym@mac.com

for SuperCon arrangements.

July 15 - 9 a.m. Walking Group at Shelly Lake

July 22 - 9 a.m. Biking Group NC Museum of Art

July 29 Picnic 7:30 p.m. & Movie 9 p.m. “La La Land”

NC Museum of Art

all in the family continued...

Creativity Group

Thank you to all who continue to support our card ministry! We have purchased two benches, a barberry bush and a butterfly bush. In addition, a bird bath was purchased in memory of Tom Mastick. These items have been placed near Twila's tree.

This area is designed as a serenity garden- a place of reflection, conversation, and a spot to eat lunch.

Things you might not know about our Creativity Group:

- 1) Creativity Group meets the first and third Tuesday mornings (9:30-11:30) in the church library and welcomes anyone to join in for a time to work on their own crafts, make a card, or have a fun time socializing.
- 2) Creativity Group is not part of any formal church committee; they generate their own funds and use them to support programs that reflect the mission of UPUCC.
- 3) Once a month, the group goes to Healing Transitions, where materials for card making are shared with approximately forty ladies. By way of donations, the group is able to supply one postage stamp per person, as well as card making supplies and envelopes so that the residents have a way to connect with loved ones. Donations of postage stamps are ALWAYS appreciated! UPUCC members and friends are welcome to come for this worthwhile time. Contact those listed below or the church office for meeting dates and times.
- 4) While our most visible crafts are cards, other crafts now and then are offered at the table. In addition, one of the group has been busy working on special muffins for persons with Alzheimer's disease.
- 5) Last year we made over 550 special-order Christmas cards, as well as a number of one-of-a-kind holiday cards! We will be busy coming up with holiday designs this summer, with our “cards table” display returning the end of September. *In the meantime, if you need a special card, please contact one of us.*

Tricia Andrews hockeygalnc@hotmail.com

Linda Hébert LNHebert1@gmail.com

Gail Holden gholden@nc.rr.com

Alice Jermyn adjermyn@rocketmail.com

Marcia Welsh homeofwelsh@gmail.com

upucc july calendar

Sun.	July 2	10:30 a.m.	Worship & Communion: Peg Arcari preaching. Special music by Anya Frazer. Following worship Newcomers & Inquirers Session in the library.
Wed.	July 5	7:00 p.m.	UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.
Thurs.-Sat.	July 6-8		Parking Lot Paving. See page seven.
Sat.	July 8	10:00 a.m.	Meditation Group meets in the library.
Sun.	July 9	9:30 a.m.	Committee Meeting Time.
		10:30 a.m.	Worship: Recognizing the 60th Anniversary of the UCC. Special music by George Tucker. Following worship Forum: U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. See page one.
Mon.	July 10	6:30 p.m.	Evening Creativity Group meets in the library.
Wed.	July 12	6:00 p.m.	UPUCC Visioning Committee meets.
Fri.	July 14	7:30 p.m.	Picnic & Movie, "Moana," at NCMA. See page 10.
Sat.	July 15	9:00 a.m.	Walking Group at Shelly Lake
Sun.	July 16	9:30 a.m.	Forum: Religion in Alternative Universes. See page three.
		10:30 a.m.	Worship: Bill Yoder & the Jubilation Chorus lead a "rockin' worship!"
Tues.	July 18	9:30 a.m.	Creativity Group meets in the library.
Wed.	July 19	3:00 p.m.	Creativity Group to Healing Transitions. See page 10.
		7:00 p.m.	UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.
Thurs.	July 20	Midnight	UPUCC August Newsletter deadline.
Sat.	July 22	9:00 a.m.	Biking Group meets at NCMA.
		9:30 a.m.	Yoga in the worship space with Ellen Beidler.
Sun.	July 23	9:30 a.m.	Forum: White Privilege Session Three. See page three.
		10:30 a.m.	Worship: Christmas in July? Special singers bring "Carol of the Magi."
		12:00 p.m.	Affordable Housing for LGBT Seniors. Details on page six.
		7:00 p.m.	All Youth meet. See page four.
Sat.	July 29	7:30 p.m.	Picnic and Movie, "La La Land," at NCMA. See page 10.
Sun.	July 30	10:30 a.m.	Worship: "To Offer Sanctuary," Doug Long preaching. Special music by Christy Tucker. New members. Following worship Potluck and Congregational Meeting. See page one.
Mon.	July 31	7:00 p.m.	UPUCC Men's Group. Contact reedaltman@gmail.com for details.

UPUCC Women's Retreat led by Lynn Coye!

The UPUCC Women's Retreat will be held October 6 – 8 at the Blowing Rock Conference Center. A couple of spots have opened up, so let us know right away if you would like to attend as space is limited. Total cost for the weekend per person in a double room is approximately \$225; cost for a single room is approximately \$315.00. A deposit of \$100 is due by July 15. Please contact us if you have any questions.

lynnmariecoye@gmail.com
Roberta@nab.org