

# umstead park

UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

*a thoughtful and progressive community of faith*

July 2018

8208 Brownleigh Drive

Raleigh, NC 27617

[www.upucc.org](http://www.upucc.org)

## FAITH IN ACTION

### Covenant Partners Creating in these Times



*Art work created by Michael Lester*

God,  
The world is full of such suffering and so much beauty  
We so want to decrease the former and expand the latter  
It is so hard to know what is ours to do  
And what we can leave to others  
It is hard to sleep some nights  
Knowing how much there is left to do  
How many there are  
Still suffering  
Still hungry  
Still imprisoned  
Still separated from family and home and peace  
But we know the Scriptures include this about Jesus:

When it got to be too much  
He got into a boat  
And sailed away  
And the crowds followed Him with their eyes  
Hundreds of them  
Thousands  
Hungry for more  
They would have wrung Him out entirely  
They hung on his every word  
Drained Him dry  
Absorbed anything?  
Hard to say how much  
They were waiting for Him to act  
To make their lives better  
He pulled away  
Escaped  
To sleep  
To relax  
To be renewed  
With a few friends in a boat  
A meal and conversation  
He explained  
I do only what I see  
My Father doing  
Even with the ability to work miracles  
**He didn't heal all of them**  
He didn't speak to everyone

**He didn't touch each one who pressed in close**  
He walked through towns and the countryside  
He chose some  
But not others  
Were these boundaries?  
Practicalities born of humanity?  
An example for those of us coming later?  
What was that withdrawal?  
Because in the end...

In the end there were no boundaries  
**In the end, every person He hadn't healed**  
Every person who waited for His words  
**Every person He hadn't touched**  
Received His ultimate sacrifice  
Maybe, partially, uncomfortably  
What it means

**Is that we can't just connect the dots**  
Follow the rules  
We can't simultaneously withdraw  
And give everything we have  
Maybe it only makes sense  
While we do this part in the middle  
Watch for what the Father is doing  
Reach out in tandem with Him  
Join in His program already in progress  
**Otherwise, we'll never know**  
When to walk away from the crowd  
And when to lay our lives down  
For our friends

So may we watch  
May we find the places to work  
May we find the silence to connect with the divine  
May we work for justice and mercy and beauty and grace  
Amen

*-Prayer written by Bridget Blinn-Spears*

### The Gifts Among Us

Like many of you I was fortunate enough, at noon on June 20<sup>th</sup>, to gather with an Interfaith Coalition protesting the separation of children from their families at the Southern border. There were many aspects of this gathering that gave me hope: the number of you that were there, a clear Interfaith presence of welcome and inclusion, the patience and persistence of the audience on a very hot afternoon when multiple speakers articulated why they could not be silent in the face of such injustice, and a genuine spirit of “*this-is-what-truly-makes-America-great!*”



More thanks: The event was coordinated by Jenny Schulz-Thomas, pastor of Community UCC and one of her former colleagues at The United Church of Chapel Hill, Susan Steinberg. These two minister-mothers were joined by Jennie Belle of Church World Service and our own Michelle Brainard. I am delighted and truly thankful that so many capable women are primary faith leaders among us! Their voices of prophetic compassion are not just helpful but more so are absolutely necessary to counter much of the intolerant testosterone of our day.

And let me explain one more unexpected gift of my time there, and pass along what will be a gift (albeit sobering) for you as well.

The Press Conference began at Open Table United Methodist Church and, after a number of poignant speakers, proceeded to the NC Legislative Building. I found myself walking alongside Mohamed AbuTaleb, Imam of The Islamic Association of Raleigh. Earlier this year when I was with the Imam he explained an event at the Mosque that I then incorporated into a sermon. (If you were in church for that sermon, you may remember me relaying the story of some protesters standing outside the Mosque with *bacon* attached to their hats. The bacon, they reasoned, would keep the infidel Muslims away from them!)

Walking to the Legislature I asked the Imam if there had been more protestors recently. “Thankfully, no,” he replied. Then he added that, quite coincidentally, a news crew had been there the day the protesters had come and captured some of the event. “Really?!” I exclaimed. “Is there footage online?!”

The Imam shared how to find the link and, sure enough, I found and watched the ridiculous but transformative encounter. (It happens at about the 25:40 mark in the show.) What I was not prepared for, however, was the rest of the story included in the program.

**I CANNOT RECOMMEND MORE HIGHLY THAT YOU WATCH THIS KATIE COURIC PIECE IN ITS ENTIRETY. (IF I COULD REQUIRE EVERY PERSON IN THE U.S. TO WATCH THIS, I WOULD.)** Link <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/u/kc3hgrel4c2G8VPCbKhImL04Cu8f5yqmc5TtWV1vn1ssJ7Ecws08B89g4SaU6ePPrUW6gRy7K-ZEVfpQmItDiic2facZmO1RwcY/>

A further comment the Imam shared on our walk was his appreciation that the Raleigh community and clergy had forged such meaningful Interfaith bonds. This, he expressed, was sadly unique in his wider experience. In the face of ubiquitous Islamophobia, I cannot begin to fathom the depth of grace Imam AbuTaleb exudes. (This is all the more evident if you’ve viewed the Katie Couric piece referenced above.)

May we not squander the incredible gifts he and his community offer.

Walking with you, as we walk with others on the journey-

# youth

## Youth On the Move...

*Scenes below depict activities from the June work trip to Johns River Valley Camp.*

*In July, the group will take a mini backpacking trip to the Appalachian Trail and Wild Goose Festival.*



***Fearless leaders:  
Anne Maust and Mary Nations***



***The sacred  
journey is our  
home.***

## children & youth

### Summer Fun In & Around UPUCC!

*Eliseo's children are with him full time over the summer with Gabriela joining on weekends. Several good folks have offered possibilities for the children outside the walls of the church (trips to museum, swimming pools, etc.). If you would like offer opportunities, between now and July 10, please contact Colleen Frazer at [colleenjfrazer@gmail.com](mailto:colleenjfrazer@gmail.com). After July 10, please contact Sarah Sydney at 919-434-3358 or [sarah62278@hotmail.com](mailto:sarah62278@hotmail.com).*



### More Summer Happenings

Thanks to everyone who made our June 3 All Church Picnic & Carnival such fun!

During July:

- Nursery will be available every Sunday for infants and toddlers.
- Children's Church will be held July 8, 15, 22 and 29 (given adequate staffing)

### Coming in August!

#### **UPUCC Vacation Church Camp for Children, Youth and Young at Heart! August 10-12**

**Building Bridges II:** Connecting with the rhythms, stories and wildlife of Puerto Rico  
Children's Committee joins with Faith in Action to collect hygiene kits for Puerto Rico through Church World Service. Link to hygiene kit components [here](#).\*

- \* *Friday Evening a catered meal and drumming fun for all ages.*
- \* *Saturday Morning for children and youth- games, art, yoga, wildlife and more!*
- \* *Sunday Worship- share about our weekend.*
- \* *Cost \$10 for Friday night dinner or \$25/family plus one (or more) hygiene kit\**

Registration form [here](#), for 2018-19 Children's Church and Vacation Church Camp.

## faith in action

### Request to Consider Boycott

The Faith in Action Committee has received a request that UPUCC support the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) in its efforts to gain justice for tobacco farm workers by endorsing a boycott of the Reynolds American e-cigarette VUSE. Many of these workers suffer from exploitative and abusive conditions. As a result of poverty wages, many children have to pick tobacco to support their families, exposing them to toxic levels of nicotine and pesticides. Moreover, thousands of the workers experience work-related sickness and injuries, and many women farm workers face sexual harassment on the job. The boycott aims to get Reynolds American to sign an agreement with FLOC guaranteeing farm workers a voice in the workplace without fear of retaliation. Various faith communities in our region have officially endorsed this initiative as part of their commitment to social justice. Endorsing the boycott entails signing on officially as a congregation and sending a letter on behalf of the congregation to Reynolds, indicating the church's reasons for supporting the boycott.

We will be voting on whether to endorse the boycott as a church at our next congregational meeting. If you're interested in learning more about the FLOC and the Reynolds boycott, please come to the Adult Education forum on **July 15 at 9:30 am**, which will feature Tom Harris, a member of Pilgrim UCC and volunteer with Triangle Friends of Farmworkers. Between now and the congregational meeting, Faith in Action would like to hear from you! If you have questions, concerns, or feedback, please contact Sarah Sydney ([sarah62278@hotmail.com](mailto:sarah62278@hotmail.com)) or Peter Van Dorsten ([pv2049@gmail.com](mailto:pv2049@gmail.com)). We especially invite those with concerns (for example, how this boycott may affect local franchise operators who sell VUSE e-cigarettes, such as Kangaroo or Circle K) to share those with us.

To learn more about the FLOC's efforts and how you can get involved, please visit: <http://www.floc.com/wordpress/boycottvuse/>.

### UPUCC Advocacy Task Force *Highlights of member activities in June include:*

- Working with Justice Theater Project to do voter registration at Oliver performances with the objective of good voter turnout in November.
- Attending the June 4<sup>th</sup> Durham City Council meeting when the Durham City Council voted 7-0 to support churches offering sanctuary and Eliseo was recognized by two of the four presenters.
- Attending the June 5<sup>th</sup> Democracy NC rally at the NC General Assembly lobbying against new judicial gerrymandering laws being proposed.
- June 10 Adult Forum featured Bob Phillips, Executive Director of Common Cause of NC, who spoke on Redistricting Reform efforts through the court systems, the legislative process and grassroots lobbying. He asked UPUCC to join in challenging November candidates (Democrat and Republican) to state on the record they will support redistricting reform if elected. When Common Cause rolls out this project the Advocacy Task Force will take part along with our normal Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign in late September, October and November.
- One youth joined our UPUCC Advocacy Task Force and we are actively looking forward to find ways to support their passion issue - gun safety legislation.

#### *Update on the Supreme Court Decisions...*

Bob Phillips has worked for years to end gerrymandering. So, when the Supreme Court announced their decisions on the Wisconsin and Maryland gerrymandering cases, we got in touch with Bob for his interpretation. His response (June 18<sup>th</sup>): *Regarding today's Supreme Court decisions— important to note that both Wisconsin and Maryland challenges were remanded back to the lower courts based on technicalities. And those technicalities have nothing to do with our challenge of - Common Cause v Rucho.*

*In fact today's decision makes CC v Rucho all the more pivotal in having a case finally be the gold standard for partisan gerrymandering being deemed unconstitutional. So, we expect to have our full day in court this fall. A decision about that could come as early as this Monday (June 25).*

*-Bob Phillips, Common Cause North Carolina, 919-836-0027*

## faith in action continued

### *from the Creativity Group*

Thank you to all who made donations for our cards during June. Due to your generosity, we are able to contribute \$200 to Eliseo's family. We are also fortunate to have raised \$160 by offering our cards at two productions of The Justice Theater Project's *Oliver* performances, with two more offerings after the deadline for this newsletter. These funds will also go to Eliseo and family. We are deeply grateful for all donations.

The Creativity Group now has a spot on the FIA bulletin board. Meeting times are listed, as well as our wish list. Currently we are seeking Tombow Dots Adhesive (PINK dispenser), either individual dispensers or refill packs. You can use coupons for JoAnn Fabrics or Michaels to help us! Thank you.

## adult education

### July Forums

**July 1 - 9:30 a.m.** "The United Shades of America." In our ongoing commitment to educating ourselves about others' experiences and beliefs, the Adult Ed Committee is showing an episode of the CNN series, Kamau Bell's "The United Shades of America," in the library. This episode provides a nuanced portrayal of the Sikh experience in America. The Sikh religion is a monotheistic religion that originated in India. A male disciple of the Sikh religion is most recognized by the wearing of a turban and is often misunderstood as being of the Muslim faith. This episode helps educate mainstream America about Sikh values and beliefs that have enabled Sikhs to overcome adversity and thrive in this country for over a hundred years. Come learn about a faith that promotes the belief of divine unity and equality of all humankind, engaging in selfless service, striving for social justice for the benefit and prosperity for all and honest conduct and livelihood in this life. Please join us!

**July 8 - following worship.** "Faith and Politics: The Rise of the Christian Right." Have you ever wondered how the Christian Right came to have such influence in politics? Join us to hear how the social and economic upheavals of the 70's and 80's shook white conservative Protestants. The Christian Right mobilized to try to reduce the trend of secularism and reintroduced religion into public discourse, polarizing the nation and profoundly changing American politics. We'll be taking a look at the beginning years and critical events that helped to shape the movement into what it is today.

**July 15 - 9:30 a.m.** FLOC's Proposed Reynolds Boycott. Details on page five.

**July 22 - 9:30 a.m. First Light-** Discussion and video series featuring theologians John Dominic Crossan and the late Marcus Borg.

### **July 29 - 9:30 a.m. The Big Bang Theory**

The Big Bang theory is the prevailing cosmological model of our universe and its origin. It has been the standard model for more than 50 years. David VandeVusse plans to outline some of this model, including how it developed within the field of astrophysics and then ask us to think about what this may say about the nature of God (if anything).

*Adult Ed Committee welcomes your ideas or suggestions for future forums. Contact Tricia Andrews [HockeygalNC@hotmail.com](mailto:HockeygalNC@hotmail.com) or Michelle Ellis [Mellis3221@gmail.com](mailto:Mellis3221@gmail.com).*

# sunday service calendar

## July 1

Altar Prep: Eleanor Smith  
Communion Prep: Trish Breen  
Coffee Set-Up: **TBD**  
Greeters: **TBD**  
Ushers: Laura Duval & Sue Hathaway  
Sound System: Nevin Fouts  
Auditor: Chris Ousley  
Assistant Treasurer: Martha Eller  
Clean-Team: Edward McFarland, Linda Hébert, Robert & Elaina Richardson, Mark and Melanie Stevens

## July 8

Altar Prep: Leslie Heavey  
Coffee Set-Up: Elaina & Robert Richardson  
Greeters: Julie & Miles Schumacher  
Ushers: Leslie & Mike Heavey  
Sound System: Peter van Dorsten  
Auditor: Susan Hathaway  
Assistant Treasurer: Dan Harrell  
Clean-Team: Marcia Welsh, Mary Pat Peters , Eliseo Jimenez

## July 15

Altar Prep: Eleanor Smith  
Coffee Set-Up: Julie & Miles Schumacher  
Greeters: **TBD**  
Ushers: **TBD**  
Sound System: Nevin Fouts  
Auditor: Chris Ousley  
Assistant Treasurer: **TBD**  
Clean-Team: Tim Champion & Dan Harrell, Chris Ousley, Ada & Colin McKerrell

## July 22

Altar Prep: Laura Duval  
Coffee Set-Up: **TBD**  
Greeters: Marianne Drexler  
Ushers: **TBD**  
Sound System: Chris Abram  
Auditor: Gwen Vass  
Assistant Treasurer: Lee Harrison  
Clean-Team: Nevin & Carol Fouts, Scott Pope, Doug Long & Janice Odom

## July 29

Altar Prep: Laura Duval  
Coffee Set-Up: **TBD**  
Greeters: **TBD**  
Ushers: Nick & Gina Kentopp  
Sound System: **TBD**  
Auditor: Chris Ousley  
Assistant Treasurer: Dan Harrell  
Clean-Team: Nevin & Carol Fouts, Scott Pope, Doug Long & Janice Odom

## **New Covenant Partner**



*Eliseo Jimenez*

# july calendar

Sun.	July 1	9:30 a.m.	Forum: “The United Shades of America,” video and discussion. See page six.
		10:30 a.m.	Worship & Communion: “Maintaining a Balance,” Jane Weidig preaching. Jubilation Chorus, music.
		Following worship	Newcomers & Inquirers Session in the library.
Tues.	July 3	9:30 a.m.	Creativity Group meets in the library.
Wed.	July 4		Holiday
Thurs.	July 5	6:30 p.m.	Enneagram Journey in the library.
Sun.	July 8	9:30 a.m.	Committee Meeting Time.
		10:30 a.m.	Worship: “My Country ‘Tis of Thee,” Doug Long preaching. Special music by Bill Coye.
		Following worship	Forum: “Faith and Politics: The Rise of the Christian Right.” See page six.
Mon.	July 9	6:30 p.m.	Evening Creativity Group meets in the library.
Thurs.	July 12	TBD	Youth Backpack to Appalachian Trail & Wild Goose. See page three.
		6:30 p.m.	Enneagram Journey in the library.
Sat.	July 14	10:00 a.m.	Meditation Group meets in the library.
Sun.	July 15	9:30 a.m.	Forum: FLOC’s Proposed Boycott. See page five.
		10:30 a.m.	Worship: “The Cinematic Gospel,” Doug Long preaching. Special music by David Wilson and Gail Holden.
		12:00 p.m.	Worship & Music Committee meets in the library.
Tues.	July 17	9:30 a.m.	Creativity Group meets in the library.
Thurs.	July 19	6:30 p.m.	Enneagram Journey in the library.
		Midnight	UPUCC August Newsletter deadline.
Sat.	July 21	9:30 a.m.	Yoga in the worship space with Ellen Beidler.
Sun.	July 22	9:30 a.m.	Forum: First Light- Crossan & Borg Video Series. See page six.
		10:30 a.m.	Worship: “Ordinary Time,” Doug Long preaching. Special music by Joe Foglia.
Mon.	July 23	7:00 p.m.	Coordinating Council meets in the library.
Wed.	July 25	3:00 p.m.	Creativity Group to Healing Transitions.
Thurs.	July 26	6:30 p.m.	Enneagram Journey in the library.
Sun.	July 29	9:30 a.m.	Forum: David VandeVusse leads. See page six.
		10:30 a.m.	Worship: “A Letter to Martin: II,” Doug Long preaching. Special music by Neil Hall.
Mon.	July 30	7:00 p.m.	UPUCC Men’s Group. Contact <a href="mailto:reedaltman@gmail.com">reedaltman@gmail.com</a> for details.