

What a Weekend!
March 23rd - 25th

John Dominic Crossan, Palm Sunday, and
the Beginning of Our 20th Year as a Community of Faith!!

John Dominic Crossan
March 23-24

First Reformed United Church of Christ Burlington, NC

Consider these quotes from John Dominic Crossan:

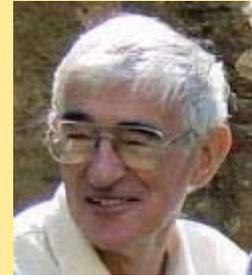
“My point... is not that those ancient people told literal stories and we are now smart enough to take them symbolically, but that they told them symbolically and we are now dumb enough to take them literally.”

“Jesus the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount preferred loving enemies and praying for persecutors while Jesus the Christ of the book of Revelation preferred killing enemies and slaughtering persecutors. It is not that Jesus the Christ changed his mind, but that ... Christianity changed its Jesus.”

“Jesus called for nonviolent resistance to Rome and just distribution of land and food. He was crucified because he threatened Roman stability - not as a sacrifice to God for humanity's sins.”

Author of numerous books and one of the world's foremost theologians, rarely will you have the opportunity to be with someone with this balance of scholarship, faith and wit.

See page five for details and registration.



Our 10th Annual Rise Against Hunger/
Stop Hunger Now Effort



It has been a tradition at UPUC to host a meal packaging event each spring for Rise Against Hunger (formerly Stop Hunger Now). 2018 will mark our 10th event, and we will be on track to cross the **100,000** meals packaged mark!

Our 2018 event will be held on **Sunday, March 25** immediately after worship. Rise Against Hunger works to meet immediate nutritional needs today and empower the ability to build strong, resilient communities tomorrow by promoting sustainable solutions to hunger. ***Their goal is to end hunger in our lifetime.***

At this fun, family-friendly event we will package over 11,000 nutrient-rich meals for distribution to the undernourished through the Rise Against Hunger global network. Our goal is to raise \$3,195.00 to pay for the meals, and donations can be made directly at our event website: <http://events.stophungernow.org/UPUC>

Consult page five for further important details about the event.

Two Lenten Reflections On the Soul of America

-On Billy Graham, from Doug Long's sermon, Feb. 25, 2018

As a teenager, I was in his choir... (He held a crusade in Raleigh in the early 70's... and I, for real, sang in the choir each night.)

Billy Graham was a fine and honorable man in so many ways. I think he was sincere. I do not mean to imply otherwise and certainly would not want to tarnish his memory especially so close to his death... but it cannot be denied that he was also responsible for 'wedding' Christianity and Country in ways that were beneficial to the State and blinding for Christianity.

Billy Graham's interpretation of Christianity was so inseparable from patriotism and nationalism for huge portions of the American public that no US president, Republican or Democrat, could afford politically to alienate him. In that manner, they used Christianity for the purposes of the State. Billy Graham became, especially in his later years a (if not 'the') benevolent face of National Civil Religion. It was and is an equation so powerful and 'sacred' that to speak otherwise is rare.... Even as Graham's son rides on his coattails and legacy in frighteningly dangerous ways... all in the name of "Jesus."

But what Jesus? ... a Jesus that is the only true way to God, a Jesus that is lock-step with the American Government and military.

-Because of the Sanctuary ministry of UPUCC, I have been invited recently to speak at a number of immigration events. From those, I've developed a bit of a 'stump' speech. It goes something like this:

Americans are facing a national crisis as crucial as any in our history.

The crisis is this: We are in danger of losing our very souls.

The reason? We have forgotten that there is an identity more important than our citizenship to this country ...and that deeper identity is our common *humanity*.

When we use children as pawns in our politics,
when we destroy good families needlessly and irreparably,
when politicians are more concerned with power than people,
with campaign contributions than contributing to a better world,
when they are more concerned with standing for election than standing for truth-
then we are well on our way to losing our soul.

But, and please hear me now, I believe we are also 'soul-sucking'
when we callously and repetitiously demonize those who disagree with our positions,
when we shout and scream that only we are righteous,
when we claim that all politicians are self-serving or all Republicans are evil.

Then, too, we are no less guilty of de-humanizing large swaths of our fellow beings and becoming less human ourselves in the process.

We must ground ourselves first and foremost NOT in our citizenship but in our humanity.
That is what *makes* America great!

So I ask this question- **Where are the borders of our humanity?!**

Unless we open those borders fully, we are simply helping to build a wall that will always keep the other estranged. In order to proceed and succeed, we must first tear that wall down.

We must seek out voices of good will among us on all sides, and issue an invitation so authentic it cannot be discounted.

May each of our souls be restored in this Lenten journey,



youth & children

March Youth Schedule

March 4 - 11:30 am-1:30 pm
Meet at UPUCC

March 11 - 2-5 pm
Skating at Jellybeans Super Skate

March 18 - 11:30am - 1:30 pm
Meet at UPUCC

March 25 - after worship
Rise Against Hunger Event

Seeking Donations & Bidders!

In preparation for our upcoming Spring Fundraiser (to coincide with Youth Sunday), our Youth Ministry is actively seeking services or larger-ticket goods to auction.

If you can offer a gift certificate, host a dinner party, make custom jewelry or art, or have a professional skill you can donate, please let Anne know by **April 8th!** Funds raised from this event will help us finish the "Dungeon," subsidize our June service trip to Johns River Valley Camp, and allow us to continue to expand our growing program! anne@upucc.org



Youth enjoy the spring temps playing pillo polo.



In February, nine older youth participated in a Faith & Sexuality weekend retreat. We shared many laughs, had thoughtful discussion, and considered how the core tenets of our faith shape our sexuality and relationships. Along the way, we stopped for some fun at Frankie's Fun Park and spontaneously sang "Lenten Carols" at Jane Weidig and Paula Womack's house in Garner!



Sign Up Open!

Thanks to Erica Stuckey, UPUCC Children's Committee has formed a team for the April 28 Undie Run at Dorothea Dix Park. All children, youth and adults (!) can join our team to participate in Note in the Pocket's annual **Socks & Undie Rundle** Event. This gathering supports the outreach of this local organization which provides clothing to Wake County children in need. The link to **register** for the Kids' Fun Run, Dog Trot or 5 K events is [here](#). General information on the event- [here](#).

During Lent, the elementary children share in a variety of opportunities to assist with the worship service by leading the call to worship, lighting the altar candles, and ushering. They have also engaged in yoga and mindful meditation with the help of Trish Breen, Lori Del Negro, and Renate Andrews. The children will present palms on March 25 and join in a cooperative egg hunt on Easter Sunday.

We believe that Church is a place that should be fun, because fun is good.

And finally, we believe that questions are good, and that church is a great place to ask them...

And we have lots of questions.

-a portion of the UPUCC Children's Covenant

membership & publicity

Get Acquainted Potluck

The Membership and Publicity Committee invites all new Covenant Partners and frequent visitors to a Get Acquainted Potluck on St. Patrick's Day, Saturday, March 17 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Children are welcome and there will be organized activities for them after the meal. Please plan to bring a covered dish to share and join us to get to know some new friends! If you didn't receive an evite invitation, please contact Arlene Peters at arlenepeters@gmail.com.



UPUCC Spring Softball

UPUCC is recruiting players in the LGBT friendly, co-ed North Carolina Softball League. This is the same league we played in last year, except this year we will be in the Recreational Division which should allow us to be much more competitive! Games will be on Sundays, starting April 8 and will be played at Millbrook Exchange Park. Based on a 15 player roster, the cost will be \$60.00 per person and the registration deadline is March 18. Please contact Gary Sanders at sandersgarya@gmail.com if you are interested.



adult education

March Forums

Childcare provided in the nursery.

March 4 - 9:30 a.m. "Letting Go," Mary Nations speaking.

March 11 - Following worship. Doug will offer a talk-back session on his sermon of the morning, "The Cross and Christ-Crucified."

March 18 - 9:30 a.m. "Spiritual Bucket List? WHAT?" Tricia Andrews presenting.

March 25 - 9:30 a.m. "Sand In My Soul - Desert Spirituality and Lent," Eleanor Smith presenting.

all in the family

Creativity Group

Thank you to everyone for your continued support. We were able to donate \$200 to the FIA Fund at the end of our Jan-Feb. display of cards. Our table will be out again in mid- March, with donations once again going to the FIA Fund. We continue to go to Healing Transitions once a month to enable the ladies to make and send a card to someone special. Please feel free to join us March 7 at 3 p.m. (we leave UPUCC at 2:30 p.m.) for our next visit!

faith in action

One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing is the Lenten Offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief for rehabilitation. Recent relief projects stretched from Indonesia to Kenya to Bolivia to Michigan.

The UCC, six other Christian denominations and Church World Service work together to develop common promotional materials thereby sharing ideas, costs, and a commitment to faithful service. Each denomination receives and manages its respective offerings, and together raise over \$10 million annually.



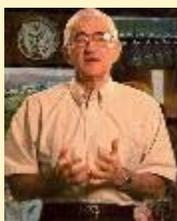
UCC congregations throughout the nation have a special collection to support this mission, which will take place this year on **Sunday, March 11**. We will have special collections envelopes in the sanctuary, but you can also add "One Great Hour of Sharing" in the memo line of a check that you submit. For more information on One Great Hour of Sharing, visit <http://www.ucc.org/oghs>

More Details regarding Rise Against Hunger / Stop Hunger Now Effort:

In order to participate in the event, please register online using the link [here](#). Our goal is to have 65 volunteers assisting with the meal packaging. Feel free to share this link with other friends, families or business organizations that would like to donate to our event (some businesses offer matching donations for employees who donate).

For more information about Rise Against Hunger's work, visit: <http://www.riseagainsthunger.org/>

John Dominic Crossan Event*



The Challenge of the Christian Bible March 23-24

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Fri. 7-8:30 pm | Covenantal Law:
<i>Human Destiny or Divine Sanction?</i> |
| Sat. 9-10:30 am | Original Sin:
<i>Sexual Temptation or Escalatory Violence?</i> |
| Sat. 11 am-12:30 pm | God's Kingdom:
<i>Violent Revolt or Non-Violent Resistance?</i> |

<http://www.123formbuilder.com/form-3368347/Event-Registration-Form>

Cost: \$10 for Friday only; \$20 for Saturday only; \$25 for BOTH days

Payment options:

Visit www.firstreformeducc.org

Click the tab "On-line Gifts"

Type the word CROSSAN in

"add special instructions to the seller"

Mail check to:

OR First Reformed UCC

513 W. Front St.

Burlington, NC 27215

For more information: email fruccev@bellsouth.net or call 336-226-7346

****Stay tuned for opportunities to carpool to this event!***

upucc sunday volunteers

March 4

Altar Prep: Eleanor Smith
Communion Prep: Lori Del Negro
Coffee Set-Up: Elaina & Robert Richardson
Greeters: Leslie Langley & Melanie Halloran
Ushers: Gina & Nick Kentopp
Sound System: Nevin Fouts
Auditor: Martha Eller
Assistant Treasurer: Dan Harrell
Clean-Team: Edward McFarland, Tracy Denson,
Mark & Melanie Stevens, Linda Hébert

March 11

Altar Prep: Leslie Heavey
Coffee Set-Up: Julie & Miles Schumacher
Greeters: Ada & Colin McKerrell
Ushers: Michelle & David Brainard
Sound System: Dan Harrell
Auditor: Gwen Vass
Assistant Treasurer: Lee Harrison
Clean-Team: Dawn McCarthy, Marcia Welsh, Mary Pat Peters, Eliseo Jimenez

March 18

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

March 25

Altar Prep: Michael Lester
Coffee Set-Up: **TBD**
Greeters: Ada & Colin McKerrell
Ushers: Gail & Jeff Holden
Sound System: **TBD**
Auditor: Martha Eller
Assistant Treasurer: Dan Harrell
Clean-Team: Nevin & Carol Fouts, Scott Pope,
Doug Long & Janice Odom



Among the UPUCC'ers who attended HKonJ last month.



Ongoing Opportunities to Assist via the links below:

[Sunday Volunteers](#)

[Sanctuary Volunteers](#)

upucc march calendar

Sun.	Mar. 4	9:30 a.m. Forum "Letting Go" Mary Nations speaking. 10:30 a.m. Worship & Communion: "Revisiting John 3:16," Doug Long preaching. 11:30 a.m. Youth meet. 12:00 p.m. Newcomers & Inquirers Session in the library. 12:00 p.m. UPUCC Advocacy Task Force meets in the atrium conference room.
Tues.	Mar. 6	9:30 a.m. Creativity Group meets in the library.
Wed.	Mar. 7	3:00 p.m. Creativity Group to Healing Transitions. 7:00 p.m. UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.
Sat.	Mar. 10	10:00 a.m. Meditation Group meets in the library.
Sun.	Mar. 11	2:00 a.m. Daylight Saving Time begins. Clocks move forward one hour. 9:30 a.m. Committee Meeting Time. 10:30 a.m. Worship: "The Cross and Christ Crucified," Doug Long preaching. Following worship Forum: Sermon Talk-Back. 2-5:00 p.m. Youth: Skating at Jellybeans Super Skate.
Mon.	Mar. 12	6:30 p.m. Evening Creativity Group meets in the library.
Wed.	Mar. 14	7:00 p.m. UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.
Sat.	Mar. 17	9:30 a.m. Yoga with Ellen Beidler in the worship space. 5:00 p.m. St. Patrick's Day Potluck at UPUCC. See page four.
Sun.	Mar. 18	9:30 a.m. Forum "Spiritual Bucket List? WHAT?" Tricia Andrews presenting. 10:30 a.m. Worship: "The Historical St. Patrick," Doug Long preaching. 11:30 a.m. Youth meet. 12:00 p.m. Worship & Music Committee meets in the library.
Tues.	Mar. 20	9:30 a.m. Creativity Group meets in the library. 7:00 p.m. Coordinating Council meets in the library.
Wed.	Mar. 21	7:00 p.m. UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.
Fri.	Mar. 23	John Dominic Crossan at First Reformed UCC Burlington. See pages one and five.
Sat.	Mar. 24	
Sun.	Mar. 25	9:30 a.m. Forum: Sand In My Soul - Desert Spirituality and Lent, Eleanor Smith presenting. 10:30 a.m. Palm/Passion Sunday Worship. Following worship Rise Against Hunger Event. See page one and five.
Mon.	Mar. 26	7:00 p.m. UPUCC Men's Group. Contact Reed Altman reedaltman@gmail.com for details.
Wed.	Mar. 28	7:00 p.m. UPUCC Choir rehearsal in the worship space.
Thurs.	Mar. 29	6:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Observance in the library. Bill Coye and Jane Weidig leading.

Missed the Birdhouse Auctions?

No worries! Eliseo continues to create one-of-a-kind bird sanctuaries.

If you would like to pre-order one (for a minimum suggested donation of \$200), Eliseo would be delighted to continue creating these working pieces of folk art.

To place your pre-order, contact Doug Long via email at doug@upucc.org.

You are encouraged to share this information with others who may also like to assist in the support of Eliseo's family. The complete story can be found at

<http://upucc.org/newsalendar/eliseo-bird-sanctuaries>

