

**June 19, 2009**

**S**ome seeds take a long time to break through the ground and come to fruition. Shortly after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, the UCC's Hope Shall Bloom Fund was established and funds began to be distributed in the gulf coast. After more than three years, a Long Term Recovery Organization is still active in Southeast Louisiana and the Hope Shall Bloom funds are still being distributed to those in need. Grant proposals, typically in the amount of \$25,000 are requested through the LTRO and funds from Hope Shall Bloom are used for those grants. But treasure isn't the only asset being used by the National Disaster Ministries team. In 2008, the ministry had a total of 3107 volunteers who logged \$1.4 million worth of volunteer labor in New Orleans. Their new t-shirt designed for National Disaster Ministries volunteers says it all – *Rebuilding Homes. Rebuilding Hope.*

*Series 1*

**1 Samuel 17:55-18:5 David becomes one of Saul's officers**

**Acts 21:1-16 Paul is warned about future persecution**

**Psalms 9:9-20 Refuge in time of trouble**

*Series 2*

**Job 29:21-30:15 Job laments his losses**

**Acts 21:1-16 Paul is warned about future persecution**

**Psalms 107:1-3, 23-32 God stilled the storm**

## ***Our Church's Wider Mission: It's Who We Are***

**June 20, 2009**

**C**onnecticut Conference's Silver Lake Conference Center Co-Director Tim Hughes said he always wanted to spend his 50th birthday in a warm place. Last summer he and his wife Anne discovered an email from Hawai'i Conference Associate Conference Minister Dorothy Lester inviting them to Hawai'i to lead a mid-winter youth camp. The camp began January 6, Tim's 50th birthday. Tim and Anne, along with Hawai'i Conference adults, welcomed 37 junior and senior high school youth, representing nearly a dozen ethnicities from five islands to the three-night, four-day camp. Outdoor ministry, say Anne and Tim, is important because it is an experience youth don't often find in other places. It is timeless, it reaches youth in new and exciting ways, and it is vital for the future of the church. "We [wanted] the young people of the Hawai'i Conference to have an experience that was transformative and will make them want to come back for more," said Anne.

*Series 1*

**1 Samuel 18:1-4 Jonathan covenants with David**

**Luke 21:25-28 The roaring of the sea and the waves**

*Series 2*

**Job 37:1-13 Elihu extols God's power**

**Luke 21:25-28 The roaring of the sea and the waves**

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**2009 A Calendar of Prayer for the United Church of Christ**

# **Flourishing**

**June 14, 2009**

**Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Second Sunday after Pentecost – Proper-6**

**T**he Long Beach, CA First Congregational Church's "Downtown Associated Youth Services Committee" (DAYS) is responsible for projects that respond to the needs of young people living in the neighborhoods around the church.

Their annual Summer Day Camp has been a program of love; concern and care to foster personal growth for children ages 4-16 living in downtown Long Beach. Over 10,000 children from some of the city's poorest neighborhoods have participated in the program.

Each year approximately 150 youth spend Monday through Friday, flourishing, for five to nine weeks in a balanced nutrition program with breakfast and lunch provided. Reading and math skills, creative crafts, recreation and field trips keep the campers busy and challenged throughout the summer months.



*Series 1*

**I Samuel 15:34-16:13 David anointed by Samuel**

**Psalms 20 Victory for the anointed one**

**II Corinthians 5:6-10; [11-13]14-17 In Christ a new creation**

**Mark 4:26-34 The parable of the mustard seed**

*Series 2*

**Ezekiel 17:22-24 The sign of the cedar**

**Psalms 92: 1-4, 12-15 The righteous are like a cedar of Lebanon**

**II Corinthians 5:6-10; [11-13]14-17 In Christ a new creation**

**Mark 4:26-34 The parable of the mustard seed**

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## June 15, 2009

On a winter night in 1988, as a favor to a friend who could not attend, Elizabeth Sheff, then a Hartford elementary school mother, made her way to a meeting of the Connecticut Coalition for Educational Equity, where she has said, “What I learned at that meeting changed my life.” Stunned by the statistic that 70 percent of Hartford’s students were reading at the remedial level, Elizabeth submitted her name and phone number when attorneys asked for volunteers to serve as plaintiffs in a future lawsuit. *Sheff v. O’Neill* has slowly yielded the nation’s most successful interdistrict magnet school problem and additional structured opportunities for children across Hartford and its suburbs to learn together. For nineteen years, Elizabeth has maintained her witness for justice by persisting as an active plaintiff. Elizabeth Horton Sheff is a true witness for justice.

**Series 1—1 Samuel 13:23-14:23 Jonathan attacks the Philistines**  
**Galatians 6:11-18 A new creation is everything**  
**Series 2— Ezekiel 31:1-12 Evil can be a towering cedar**  
**Galatians 6:11-18 A new creation is everything**

### CENTERING PRAYER (June 11—17, 2009)

*Series 1—Mighty God, to you belong the mysteries of the universe, You transform shepherds into kings, the smallest seeds into magnificent tress, and hardened hearts into loving ones. Bless us with your life-giving Spirit, re-create us in your image, and shape us to your purposes, through Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*Series 2—Creating God, your reign of love makes all things new. Plant seeds of confidence and gladness in our hearts, so that, trusting your word, we may live no longer for ourselves but for him who died and was raised for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## June 16, 2009

We can only guess whether a member of the Rev. Paul Elonda’s mission group knew that by repairing a bridge on the Congo River that future bridges of ministry and hope would follow. As leader of the Disciples of Christ in the 1960s, “Pasteur Paul” envisioned a strong youth program and the development of rural ministries in the Congo. His dream began to come true after that bridge was built in Ikengo and a group of youth began to meet there for overnight retreats. That ministry, the Pilot Farm, grew with the time and efforts of its first director, Jean Lompala. That ministry today known as the Ikengo Farm continues to flourish because of grants from OGHS and the hard work of the young Congolese director. This agro-pastoral project provides food and hope for the surrounding community – still fulfilling Paul’s dream.

**Series 1—1 Samuel 15:10-23 God rejects Saul**  
**Revelation 21:22-22:5 The tree of life**  
**Psalms 53 God will restore Israel’s fortunes**

**Series 2— Jeremiah 21:11-14 A fire in Judah’s forest**  
**Revelation 21:22-22:5 The tree of life**  
**Psalms 52 Like an olive tree in God’s house**

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2009 A Calendar of Prayer for the United Church of Christ

## June 17, 2009

The Asian Rural Institute (ARI) of Japan and partner of Global Ministries is flourishing, and the Rev. Dr. Toshihiro Takami, credits volunteers as a key ingredient to ARI’s success. Volunteers give their time, talent and support to the mission of ARI – building a just and peaceful society through the training of rural community leaders. ARI achieves its goal by sharing resources in farm management, food preservation and community leadership. Volunteers have come from all over the globe including Germany, Korea, Spain and the USA. Work Camp groups come from churches, boy scout troops and universities, elementary, mid-high and high schools. The camps allow these volunteers to interact with a multi-cultural community, gain a broader world perspective and become more personally involved in and aware of how the food they eat is grown.

**Series 1—1 Samuel 15:24-31 Samuel refuses to go with Saul**  
**Luke 6: 43-45 A tree and its fruit**  
**Series 2— Jeremiah 22:1-9 The evil will be cut down**  
**Luke 6:43-45 A tree and its fruits**

### CENTERING PRAYER (June 18—24, 2009)

*Series 1—God our protector, you stood by David in the time of trial. Stand with us through all life’s storms, giving us courage to risk danger to protect those who are oppressed and poor, that they may know you as their stronghold and hope. Amen.*

*Series 2 -Keeper of our lives, you know the hardness and gentleness of human hearts. You call your people to faithful living. Through the storms of life that bring suffering and fear, joy and laughter, teach us to turn to you for all we need, so that we may come to know your presence even in the midst of the trials that surround us. Amen.*

## June 18, 2009

Early in 2008, Doug and Liz Searles, long-time Global Ministries missionaries, began what they call a faithful journey towards new horizons, casting their nets in uncharted waters. The Searles felt called to a new ministry to train leadership and laity with the Evangelical Reformed Church in Poland. Fewer than 1% of Poles are Protestant, and in the post-Soviet era, ERC churches there have struggled to not only recover but to grow spiritually and in number. To accomplish this goal, the church leadership asked for a partnership with Global Ministries and the Presbyterian Church, USA. Initially, Doug and Liz trained others to work with small group development, church music and English language teachers. Now, they hope to form an exchange, connecting those that sent them to Poland with those being served. This connection will complete a circle of hope made by throwing wide our arms and opening our hands and hearts to the ERC in Poland.

**Series 1—1 Samuel 16:14-23 David plays the harp for Saul**  
**Acts 20:1-16 Paul’s travels**  
**Series 2—Job 29:1-20 Job makes his defense**  
**Acts 20:1-16 Paul’s travels**

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