

June 26, 2009—27th General Synod begins

For many, General Synod is a family reunion where the UCC gathers to worship, to engage in service, to do the business of the Synod, to learn, to listen and to grow. "Immerse Yourself" is an apt theme for Grand Rapids as we gather along the Grand River and we immerse ourselves in exploring what it means to live out the call of Jesus Christ as a particular expression of the church. While each Synod includes some of the same elements, each one is an experience in its own right. This year, a spectacular River City Saturday will include an array of speakers, choirs, workshops, Bible Study and an outdoor festival. The day will end with a celebration that will include a time of thanksgiving for the ministry of the Rev. John H. Thomas who will conclude his service as General Minister and President. There will be a number of resolutions to consider that will speak to our witness in and to the world, and there will be several items of business that are related to our life as a denomination.

Series 1— **1 Samuel 20:1-25 Jonathan helps David escape**
2 Corinthians 8:1-7 Encouragement to be generous
Psalms 130 Out of the depths have I called

Series 2— **Lamentations 2:1-12 God's warning fulfilled**
2 Corinthians 8:1-7 Encouragement to be generous
Psalms 30 You have lifted me up

Our Church's Wider Mission: Changing Lives ***Father's Day***

June 27, 2009

Empowering people to live healthier, longer lives and teaching how to advocate for those receiving substandard care are part of the goals for the Holistic Health Project in Argentina. The program, conducted by former Global Ministries missionary to Paraguay Dr. Ines Sarli, offered training sessions through organizations such as the Ecumenical Center for Solidarity, the Women's Forum of the Center for Latin American Issues and local churches. More than 300 families received information on basic health care on issues such as environmental contamination, women's health, sexually transmitted diseases, respiratory illnesses and medical prejudice against the poor, handicapped and homosexuals. A women's workshop was so well-attended that it was extended for several months and culminated with training of 40 women in basic nursing techniques.

Series 1— **1 Samuel 20:27-42 Jonathan helps David escape**
Luke 4:31-37 The man with the unclean spirit
Psalms 130 Out of the depths have I called

Series 2— **Lamentations 2:18-22 Pour out your heart before God**
Luke 4:31-37 The man with the unclean spirit
Psalms 30 You have lifted me up

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2009 A Calendar of Prayer for the United Church of Christ

In the Boat Together

June 21, 2009

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Third Sunday after Pentecost – Proper-7



In an effort to give some new and positive identity to the UCC in the Catawba Valley area of North Carolina, four churches have joined together to seek creative ways to carry out ministry showing that Christ is among us. They have identified their efforts with the name "Linked In New Creative Ministry" (LINC Ministries). The churches involved are Bethel UCC, Church of the Master UCC, Faith Evangelical & Reformed, UCC of Hickory, NC and Memorial UCC in Maiden, NC.

A committee meets once a month to share ideas and plan programs that will better acquaint the people of the communities of faith and reach out to the wider community to acquaint people with the UCC. These four congregations have covenanted together to cooperate in areas of worship, fellowship, and mission and to look for ways to promote love and understanding. They first came together with the idea of supporting each other and helping strengthen the ministry of each of the churches. The group has planned and presented joint Christmas cantatas, pancake breakfasts and Christmas bazaars, Thanksgiving and Lenten services, and organized a mission trip to Back Bay Mission. One of the members of the organizing group stated: "we believe that God wants us to find common ground for carrying out the ministry of Jesus and we take seriously his prayer 'that they may all be one.'"

Series 1

1 Samuel 17:[1a, 4-11, 19-23] 32-49 David's victory over Goliath

Psalms 9:9-20 Refuge in time of trouble

2 Corinthians 6:1-13 Paul's defense of his ministry

Mark 4:35-41 Christ calming the sea

Series 2

Job 38:1-11 The creator of earth and sky

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

2 Corinthians 6:1-13 Paul's defense of his ministry

Mark 4:35-41 Christ calming the sea

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June 22, 2009

What better experience to share with a child than being in mission together? Christy Taylor of Altadena UCC (California) went to Ecuador twice to minister to and be ministered by the people of Ecuador. On her third trip, her mother, Sherry, made the trip along with seven other members of their church. Together they fell in love with the children at a mountain top orphanage known as "For His Children". Sherry said she always admired her daughter for the commitment she made but was unsure she could leave her comfort zone and do the same. Sherry took the risk, she pushed the boat out into the water and was brought safely to the opposite shore. Now Sherry, like her daughter, can't wait to go back to Ecuador and help the "tias" care "For His Children."

Series 1— **1 Samuel 18:6-30 Saul becomes David's enemy**
Acts 27:13-38 Paul and the storm at sea

Series 2— **Exodus 7:14-24 God turns the Nile into blood**
Acts 27:13-38 Paul and the storm at sea

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 23, 2009

If only the waves of violence and the storm of hostility in the Middle East could be calmed as Jesus calmed the waters and the disciples' fears. In March 2008, the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative faxed a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice commending her efforts to extend a temporary ceasefire between Palestinian and Israeli forces into a permanent agreement. The statement, signed by UCC General Minister and President the Rev. John H. Thomas, says, in part, that escalating violence in the region has jeopardized a negotiated peace. A comprehensive ceasefire is an essential first step to renew people's hopes that peace is possible. Signers of the letter pledged their support for active, fair and firm U.S. leadership for Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace and for a two-state solution to the conflict.

Series 1— **1 Samuel 19:1-7 Saul plots David's death**
Acts 27:39-44 Safe arrival on land
Psalms 119:113-128 Do not leave me to my oppressors

Series 2— **Exodus 9:13-35 God sends hail**
Acts 27:39-44 Safe arrival on land
Psalms 65 God silences the seas

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2009 A Calendar of Prayer for the United Church of Christ

June 24, 2009

The UCC's motto, "That they may all be one" got a little closer to fruition in Missouri during the summer recently. Kirkwood UCC's pastor Gene Ostendorf and Professor Gulden Ilhan, who teaches in St. Louis, decided to blend Muslim and Christian faith traditions into one worship service. It all started when Professor Ilhan came to Kirkwood to teach a course on Islam for the Adult Education Program. A conversation that began with anxiety and mistrust gave way to mutual respect and sharing. The readings came from both the Bible and the Quran – words of Jesus and Muhammad – spoken in English and Arabic. Instead of accentuating differences, worshippers concentrated on similarities – reciting The Lord's Prayer and the story of Jesus' birth from both faith traditions. The church was crowded that Sunday – like an Easter worship gathering it was, a resurrection experience.

Series 1— **1 Samuel 19:8-17 Michal helps David escape**
Mark 6:45-52 Jesus walks on water
Series 2— **Joshua 10:1-14 God makes the sun stand still**
Mark 6:45-52 Jesus walks on water

CENTERING PRAYER (June 25—July 1, 2009)

Series 1— God of hope, you are ruler of night as well as day, guardian of those who wander in the shadows. Be new light and life for those who live in the darkness of despair, for prisoners of guilt and grief, for victims of fantasy and depression, that even where death's cold grip tightens, we may know the power of the one who conquered fear and death. Amen.

Series 2—Companion in life and death, your love is steadfast and never ends; our weeping may linger with night, but you give joy in the morning. Touch us with your healing grace that, restored to wholeness, we may live out our calling as your resurrection people. Amen.

June 25, 2009—52nd Anniversary of the UCC

What is in the UCC Archives? The records, photographs, resources, and objects from around the time of the creating Union in 1957 onward. A selection of a few of the vast resources include: Records from the national offices, UCC Yearbooks, General Synod Minutes, Executive Council Minutes, resources developed by national offices, documentation about the formation of the UCC, and records of projects and initiatives. It also has: Collections from national UCC organizations, committees, councils and groups, the Council for Health and Human Services and the UCC Historical Council. It maintains: Personal papers of people involved in the work of the national setting of the denomination, including those from the Rev. Arthur Clyde's collection of hymnals and the Rev. Harold Wilke's papers documenting his work in the UCC. The UCC Archives works closely with other archives that hold the records of the denominations that united to form the UCC.

Series 1— **1 Samuel 19:18-24 Samuel helps David escape**
2 Corinthians 7: 2-16 Grief leads to repentance

Series 2— **Lamentations 1:16-22 The Lord is in the right**
2 Corinthians 7: 2-16 Grief leads to repentance

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