

Faith IN ACTION

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A LETTER FROM MYSTIC CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

FEBRUARY 7, 2007

#6/2007

SNIPPETS OF HISTORY: The UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

Doing justice, seeking peace and building community are central to the identity of the United Church of Christ.

Throughout its history, from early engagement in the movement to abolish slavery to modern campaigns for civil rights and social justice, the UCC in every setting of the church has been engaged in ministries of compassion, advocacy and reconciliation. While there is a deep respect in the UCC for the right of every individual member to form her or his own views on these issues, there has always been a recognizable passion across our church to "make things right" - as a testament to our faith in God, our hope for God's future, our love for God's creation. In this way, we seek to apply the commandment of Jesus Christ to love our neighbors as ourselves. *(From the UCC Website)*

FEBRUARY HISTORY

1971: Task Force on Women in Church and Society is created. As the role of women changed in our society, the United Church of Christ created a place for conversation and prophetic witness. It was part of the long tradition of Congregationalists affirming the skills and gifts of women: in 1853 Antoinette Brown was the first woman ordained by the Congregational Christian Church.

1972: Common Lot was first published. Common Lot is a journal supporting and strengthening the mission of Worship and Education and United Church of Christ Women in Mission. It is published quarterly.

William R. Johnson becomes the first openly gay person to be ordained. Standing strong in the congregational tradition that acknowledges God's call in persons of faith, the church takes a brave stand to extend ordination on the basis of call and faith.

Proposed Boston Bus Trip Canceled

There has not been enough interest in the proposed March 17 bus trip to Boston to make it economically feasible. We needed 50 people to cover the cost of the bus and only 11 have expressed interest, so we will not be going. We will consider another bus trip, perhaps to Boston, New York or somewhere else, for later in the spring. Anyone who has suggestions or is willing to help organize a trip can send an email to xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx.

Dear Friends,

Our lectionary readings lead us through the Gospel of Luke and Jesus' invitation to discipleship. It is as powerful today as it was 2000 years ago. His upside-down Kingdom where all are welcome is as much a beacon of hope to our world as it was to the first hearers. In Jesus' world view, power and acceptability were rooted in the graciousness of God rather than in the standards set by the world. It's still radically good news.

It's also the foundation of what we do in mission. In the last few weeks, I was reminded again of the strength of our mission witness, caring for those in need. Through countless volunteer hours and thousands of dollars, the mission witness of MCC reaches into the local community, and through our UCC partnership to the whole world.

As Central Florida faces more devastation from storms, our UCC mission partners are already there providing relief, helping secure homes, and installing blue tarps to protect from further water damage.

We stand in an ever moving river ... doing our part and affirming those who went before us and those who come after us. I was moved by a reflection by Kristina Malins, writing for Medical Missionary Magazine. I share it with you as encouragement for your ministry.

"Ours is the pain of constantly pitching our tent and folding it up again, of befriending strangers and bidding them good-bye, of loving the world but never being truly satisfied with it, of pouring our heart and soul into a project others have begun and still others will finish. If we would not be torn in two by the tension of this truth, we must learn to live provisionally -- to measure the road well. We need to make the most of occasions when we can gather by the roadside to break bread and compare directions. Joy must be discovered in the going as we never really arrive, not even in a lifetime."

Grace and Peace.

Pastor Pat