

GLAD TIDINGS



THE NEWSLETTER OF CENTRAL-ST. MATTHEW UCC

FALL 2009

Where Do We Stand?

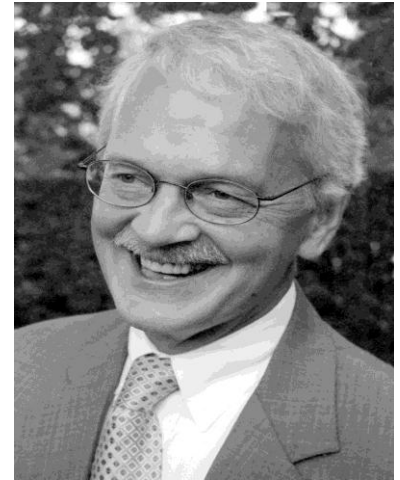
We stand at a very exciting and critical juncture in the lives of our two congregations. Last evening, August 25, we held a joint session of the Central Board of Governance and the St. Matthew Council. With 16 people present we went through the "New Covenant" line by line in order to make sure that we all understood and appreciated the significant step that it is for all of us. I must confess that I was deeply moved by the two boards coming together to discuss our common church life and future. It did this old heart good.

Since then, we have held two broad discussions on the New Covenant. The first on August 30 and the second on September 20. These were open discussions where each one of you was encouraged to ask questions, raise issues, or simply comment on the New Covenant and any other related matter. There were changes made to the New Covenant as a result of both meetings.

The leadership also talked about a vote in October. If approved, the New Covenant will serve as the foundation for a greatly enhanced unity and we will be in the position of moving forward. This moving forward will be exciting and hard. There will be by-laws to write, committees to form, financial arrangements to be worked out, new signs to be made and displayed, and we will have a new story to tell.

This is holy work you have been doing for a long time: You have been writing, often one word at a time, a new story of a new birth. Out of the fear and disaster, the mold and despair of Katrina comes the hope and possibility of a new church, a unified church, a church that refuses to be part of the most segregated hour in America.

Two churches with long and glorious histories are about to embark on a new and glorious shared future. The Word of God has



gone forth across this land, this city, and "it shall not return empty, but it shall accomplish that which the Lord proposes and succeed in the thing for which the Lord sent it." (Isaiah 55: 11)

You are on the verge of doing a new thing. With God's strength and grace sustaining you, God's word will be known here: "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:18-19)

Notice of October 18, 2009 Vote

During our worship service on October 18th, the combined congregations will be asked to vote on the New Covenant as revised September 1, 2009. The vote will be by show of hands and will require a 2/3 majority of those members present from Central Congregational United Church of Christ, St. Matthew United Church of Christ and "Central St. Matthew UCC " to adopt the New Covenant as our charter document.

This is a critical vote in the lives of Central, St. Matthew and Central St. Matthew and all are encouraged to study the New Covenant, attend the worship service and vote.



What is Worship Like for You?

The Worship Committee and I would love to know how you believe our worship experience is proceeding. Week after week goes by and it is easy to fall into patterns and ruts and to complacently believe all is well and the people of God are being served. Only by hearing from you can we who plan and lead worship know if what we are seeking to do is meaningful and fulfilling for you. Are we meeting your spiritual needs, your need for the fellowship of a faith community, your desire to experience the joy of being in God's presence? I know worship is often a complex and difficult experience to explain. In fact, it is often impossible to explain. However, we would truly appreciate your taking the time to let us know where we can improve (there is always room for improvement), where we can make additions or subtractions, and how we might better be able to help you worship God at Central St. Matthew.

Please feel free to write, email, call or visit with me, Andrea Gibson, Karen Wulff, John Pecoul, Dale Bonds or our Minister of Music, Beth Rota.

Thank you for your help and your love of Central St. Matthew,

Rev. Doug



“Buy a Key” Drive Successful!!

The fund raising effort in support of our piano and organ, announced early in the summer, was a phenomenal success! Our goal was to sell each of the 88 keys on the piano... we ended up selling over 94 keys! We will be determining how to mount our paper “piano” with everyone’s name on it. In the meantime, a great big thank you to everyone who purchased a key.

If you intended to donate and missed the opportunity, you can still support the instruments. Checks can be made out to St. Matthew UCC, with “instrument repair fund” or “buy a key” noted in the memo space, and the funds will go to build up the repair reserve against future repair needs.

The following individuals purchased keys:

Donation by ...

Shirley Adams
 Ellen Bentz
 Joseph Beslin
 Jim & Dale Bonds
 Kenneth Bowers

Noel Braning
 Shirley Carambat
 Alan Coe
 Ray & Ellen Cook
 Bythelda Davis
 Mike & Adele Engelbracht
 Mel & Joyce Engelbracht
 John & Carol Etter
 Arlean Fermanis
 Julie Gardner
 Lucille Gebhardt
 Andrea Gibson

Karen Giurintano
 Helen Smith Green
 Faye Kaufman
 Eugene & Elizabeth Kordahl
 Janice Lewis
 Tom Lilly
 Wilfred Lodrig
 Harold & Rhea Lucien
 Nancy Marks
 Doug Moore
 Harold & Linda Ostendorf
 John & Ellen Pecoul
 Robert Perry
 Evelyn Pittman
 Beth Randall
 Donald Reese
 Walter & Ingrid Schleh
 Helen L. Smith
 Julie Starr
 Richard & Paulette Tipton
 Marie Weatherspoon
 Gil & Leslie Wilson
 Mvrtle Winbush

In Honor of ...

Grace Rayfield & Jessie Adams
 Dorothy & Fred Kolman

Sarah Kost, Ruth Bowers, Katie
 Sax, Phil Bowers, Catherine
 Hudgens, Harvey Hudgens
 Hazel Many

Amelia & Matthew Giurintano

Wilhelmina Hoffler Lodrig &
 Herbert L. Gibson, Jr.

Eola Minor Davis
 Schroeder; Benoit
 Matt & Mia Montagnino

Hilda Goll, Ruth Ricks

Harold Ostendorf, Sr.

Beth Schiffer



Memorials from our Flock

"In Loving Memory of *C.J. Kerner* from Shirley Carambat"



A gift was made to the endowment fund in honor of *Elsie W Adams* as a Birthday remembrance from
Linda and Harold Ostendorf, Jr.



C.J. Kerner from Melvin Chaix



In memory of *the Anniversary of Dorothy and Fred Kolman* from Ellen Bentz and Nancy Marks



Lawrence 'Pat' Pier from wife Virgie and children



2005 victims of Katrina



In loving memory of *Evelyn Beets, Emile LaBranche, James Tilton and William Fairbank* from
John and Ellen Pecoul

Prayer List



Please continue to pray for:

- victims of flooding in Turkey and Brazil
- Teri Jackson and the Green family
- family of Jean Thompson
- Belinda Lazaro
- Bridget Naegel
- Loretta Mims
- Francis LaFleur
- Melvin Chaix
- Al & Ethel Creel
- Mary Graves
- Tom Lilly
- Lavera Kelly
- Marsha Quick
- Joan Fairbank

Current Plans for our Bienville Campus

As we approach a major vote on the life of our two (or is it three?) congregations it is important that all are aware of plans brewing on Bienville Street. Over the long, hot summer months the Central Board of Governance and its Properties Committee have been in conversation with Rev. Alan Coe of the South Central Conference Disaster Ministry and many others planning the resurgence of Central St. Matthew on Bienville Street.

BACKGROUND

Throughout its history, Central has been committed to Christian community service. For example, the Rev. Henderson H. Dunn founded the Hume Child Development Center in 1911, the first day-care center in New Orleans for African Americans. Many of today's community leaders, including the mayor, are graduates of Hume Center. With pride in its heritage and dedication to a mission of Christian service here and now, the future of Central promises to be as glorious as its past.

August 29, 2005 Hurricane Katrina brought total despair to the people of New Orleans and to the members of Central Congregational UCC. We all experienced considerable loss. The church itself did not flood, but the sub-flooring was damaged by water. The roof had significant damage and a portion of the kitchen ceiling collapsed.

The Hume Center was also damaged and left in need of repair. In total, the members of Central spent \$148,000 for the initial repair and restoration work at Hume. Central, as with so many others in New Orleans, is indebted to all of the volunteers who helped in this work by gutting, doing mold remediation and hanging sheetrock. Hume Center has been and will be Central's flagship ministry in the neighborhood and is clearly worth all of the money and effort put into its restoration.

All of the church's properties did not have flood insurance. The properties that did have flood insurance netted enough money to pay off indebtedness to Liberty Bank leaving approximately \$6000.00.

Present Project Scope & Finances

The plan is to focus on only three of the properties owned by Central Congregational UCC. By working on only these three pieces we will keep the project realistic in scope, the corner of Bienville Street and N. Tonti Street will be renewed and active, and the three

best parcels (excluding the Parsonage which is finished) will be the center of our attention. The plan will also create a safer and more attractive environment for the Hume Child Development Center located between 329 N. Tonti and the church. We have a needs assessment survey prepared for us by the City of New Orleans Health Department. This survey will help us determine the neighborhood's immediate needs that can be met by Central St. Matthew working with other agencies over time. We hope to have the survey results in hand by the end of October 2009.

At its regular meeting held on September 1, 2009, the Central Governance Board received estimates from Rev. Alan Coe, South Central Conference Disaster Ministry, for the complete rebuilding of 329 N. Tonti Street and 2415 Bienville Street. Based on the information provided by Rev. Coe at the meeting and previously, and information the Board has been gathering for some time, three motions were made and unanimously passed:

Sanctuary

To begin working on the church building at the corner of Bienville and N. Tonti St. by authorizing the Disaster Ministry to arrange for the roof to be repaired and to begin gutting work. The restorative work will proceed to conclusion.

Estimates Received:

August 7, 2006 - Doucette and Associated Contractors Inc. - Complete restoration \$480,000.

September 25, 2007 - Disaster Ministry - (not including plumbing, HVAC, fire alarm, sound system, and electrical wiring) \$76,515.98.

329 N. Tonti

To begin the work on 329 N. Tonti by authorizing the Disaster Ministry to arrange to gut the interior and to have the roof repaired as soon as possible. The restorative work will proceed to conclusion.

Estimates Received:

August 31, 2009 - Disaster Ministry - \$22,235.63 for the basic rebuild plus \$5000 for additional materials and equipment.

2415 Bienville Ave (former Church Office)

To begin the work on 2415 Bienville Street by

Plans for Bienville Campus (cont'd)

authorizing the Disaster Ministry to arrange for the immediate repair of the roof including the removal of all asbestos materials. The restorative work will proceed to conclusion.

Estimates Received:

November 10, 2008 - Disaster Ministry - \$30,999.42

Each of the three buildings needs to have its roof repaired and/or replaced as soon as possible to prevent further damage to the structures. Rev. Coe is currently seeking a cost estimate for the Church roof repair. The estimate for roofing 329 N. Tonti is \$3622 and for 2415 Bienville is \$2000.00

As of August, 2009, Central had \$52,329.14 available in its General Fund. In addition, we are hopeful of receiving up to an additional \$50,000.00 from the United Church of Christ for work on the sanctuary. If permitted, we would like to be able to use some of the funds being held by the UCC to repair the roofs on the duplex at 2415 Bienville and the house at 329 N. Tonti Street.

Proposed Ministry & Use

Once the sanctuary roof is repaired, the building will be in a stable condition. The Disaster Ministry office has notified us that gutting work and repair of damaged flooring will begin in October 2009. The church, working with Rev. Coe, will provide for the electrical and plumbing systems to be brought up to code. Volunteers will be used to sheetrock and finish the building. Once completed, the church will be used as a community resource center/place of worship for the neighborhood and will anchor the entire 2400 block on Bienville Street.

2415 Bienville Street is a duplex immediately adjacent to the church. It will be refurbished using volunteer labor, funds from Central Congregational and hopefully Central St. Matthew UCC. Once completed, the side nearest the church will be used as an office and community center probably for after school programs involving computers, food distribution, and perhaps senior outreach of some kind. The second side of the duplex may be dedicated to low-income housing working with Unity New Orleans, the NGO committed to ending homelessness in New Orleans. Rents paid through Unity are guaranteed by a Federal voucher system at market value. The rental income will be used in part to fund the completion of the restoration work on the Bienville property and on 329 North Tonti Street.

329 N. Tonti is a residential shotgun style home located next to the Hume Center. The house needs to be gutted and the same major work performed as on the duplex on Bienville Street. Funds from Central St Matthew and from any available rental income derived from the duplex on Bienville Street will be used in conjunction with volunteer labor to restore 329 N. Tonti.

Once 329 N. Tonti is refurbished, it will be used for neighborhood outreach purposes, which might include food distribution, a senior center, or possibly as a day care center house for migrant workers. It is highly likely that a wonderful relationship between a senior center and the Hume Center could be established to the benefit of all.

The Central Parsonage located on the corner of Bienville St. and N. Miro is completed. The Parsonage is a critical part of our plan to be present on Bienville in a significant and meaningful way. The second floor will be used for after school reading rooms, library (already installed) and computer lab. The first floor will serve as a temporary office for Central St Matthew UCC until the unit at 2415 Bienville is completed. We have also been put in contact with a possible youth ministry after school program through the City Department of Health and the Rev. Robert Collins.

Ultimately, the newly formed congregation, Central St. Matthew United Church of Christ, will carry all of this work through to completion. We are entering into a critical part of the unifying process. The combined congregations are now discussing a "New Covenant" and will be voting on this New Covenant on October 18, 2009. If approved, the New Covenant will give us the framework within which to join energy, money, and faith in a common effort that specifically includes the critically important effort to return to Bienville Street. We have also established a solid working relationship with the City of New Orleans Department of Health and are in constant dialogue seeking to find the right programs and uses for the Parsonage and the buildings to be refurbished.

May God bless this work and give us all the strength and grace to be God's hands and hearts in this time and place of great need and even greater opportunity.

Rev. Moore for the Central Governance Board

Say Hello to Geoffrey Black

The United Church of Christ is welcoming a new General Minister and President on October 1. His name is the Rev. Geoffrey A. Black.

Having served as the UCC's New York Conference Minister since 2000, Rev. Black was elected this summer at General Synod 27 in Grand Rapids to succeed the Rev. John H. Thomas, who is completing 10 years of service in the office.

A 15-year local church pastor, a college chaplain and a former national staff member, Rev. Black offers an infectious sense of humor, a gentle spirit, keen pastoral sensibilities, an ecumenical outlook, a commitment to church growth and evangelism, and a deep concern for justice and peace. He is also passionate about many eclectic interests, from cycling to jazz music, skiing to model railroading.

Rev. Black says he loves the United Church of Christ because it is a church that respects and affirms ones intellect, while affirming the presence of Jesus Christ in the midst of all that we do.

"The teachings of Christ - that's who we are," he said to one newspaper upon his election.

Rev. Black earned degrees from Lincoln University in 1969 and Yale Divinity School in 1972. Ordained in the American Baptist Church in 1976, he joined the UCC the following year.

He is the spouse of Patricia Williams-Black and the father of one adult daughter, Makeda Black.



Welcome Geoffrey A. Black!



FAREWELL to Our Outgoing General Minister and President the REV. JOHN THOMAS.

UCC Church House staff and visitors in Cleveland joined last Friday to say farewell to outgoing GMP, the Rev. John Thomas (who ends his ministry on September 30).

Rev. Thomas ends 10 years as our GMP and over 17 years as a member of our UCC national staff. "He was honored with stories, prayers, gifts and a song, "Walk Like John", performed by red-shoe adorned staff members in recognition of the "papal shoes" John received this summer at General Synod. He thanked those gathered for this final farewell, calling his last six months as "the great goodbye."

John Thomas will assume the role of Assistant to the President of Chicago Theological Seminary beginning January 1, 2010.

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 9 am to 2 pm

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 Call anytime, (802) 299-6152
DSmoore66@yahoo.com
 Office hours Tues. to Thurs.
 10am to 1pm

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.centralstmatthewucc.org

FALL HARVEST

- October 2-4 Back Bay Mission Celebration
- October 6 Central Governance Board Meeting
- October 10 New Orleans Association Fall Meeting
 Good Shepherd UCC - host
- October 16-18 Southern Regional Meeting of UCC Women
 Brenham, Texas
- October 18 Congregational Vote for unification
 All Church Blood Drive (8:30AM - 2:00PM)
- October 20 St. Matthew Council Meeting
- October 27 Women's Guild
- Sundays 11:30 AM - Book discussion
 6:30 PM - Book discussion
 "How Race is Lived in America"
- Thursdays
- Wednesdays 7:30 PM Choir rehearsal

****** Just A Reminder- Second Harvest Food Bank commodities for October are dried and canned beans.
 Remember Belle Reve on the third Sunday.

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COMPANY NAME
 STREET ADDRESS
 CITY, STATE, 00000