

Glad Tidings



February 2009

The Newsletter of Central-St. Matthew UCC

In Anticipation of the Ministry of Rev. Douglas Moore

Douglas Moore and Central-St. Matthew have signed a formal contract which has been reviewed by our South Central Conference minister, Douglas Anders. Reverend Douglas Moore's tenure will begin on Sunday, March 1st. At this writing we do not know where he and his wife, Judy, will be living. But we do know that they are looking forward to their time in New Orleans and at Central St. Matthew, just as we look forward to their help and presence in 2009. We feel it is important to share some of the specifics in the contract so that everyone understands what is anticipated and expected. We have goals for Rev. Moore; he has expectations for us.

First, it is important to know that the length of this contract is one year. After that it will be renewed monthly until shortly before the arrival of a permanent pastor. The interim pastor's responsibilities include:

- Working with both governing bodies to maintain the schedule of worship services/preaching, education and pastoral care
- Providing special services (weddings, funerals), calling on the sick and shut-ins and visiting newcomers
- Providing administrative oversight of all staff
- Participating in each congregation's governing body's meetings
- Providing the primary leadership of worship while insuring that others are scheduled to participate
- Encouraging and providing leadership for the training of lay ministers



- Participating in activities involving the Association, the Conference, and the local community that will benefit Central St. Matthew.

In addition, there are important developmental tasks for the interim period. Quoting directly from the contract:

"The time of transition between permanent pastors is an opportunity for healing, renewal and re-energizing the Congregation in its life and mission. Beyond maintaining effective ministry during this period, the Central Governance Board, the St. Matthew Church Council and Interim Pastor shall work together with the Search Committee to prepare for a healthy transition to the next permanent pastor. Specific tasks to be addressed include:

- 1.1. Coming to terms with the history of the congregations and their relationships with previous clergy, lay leaders, and with each other.
- 1.2. Assisting each congregation regarding calling a permanent minister, including helping the two congregations to determine if they wish to work together to call one minister, or if they will be working to seek individual ministers.

1.3. Exploring and discovering the identity of the covenanted community and each congregation's special identity, traditions, and history, and enabling the execution of the vision of the covenanted community and churches, apart from previous clergy and lay leadership, as part of preparing for new leadership.

1.4. Dealing with shifts in leadership roles that naturally evolve in times of transition, allowing new leaders to come to the fore constructively, and integrating these potential new leaders of the Church with those who have previously borne this responsibility.

1.5. Developing and completing a process to consider specific alternative models for the future relationship of Central and St. Matthew and achieving a congregational consensus and commitment to a preferred model.

1.6. Building and developing commitment to the leadership of the new Permanent Minister(s) in order to prepare the congregations to move into the future with openness to new possibilities of joint mission and ministry.”

The overall goal of the Interim Pastor's ministry is to prepare the congregation for the coming of the next permanent pastor(s). The Interim Pastor is NOT eligible to be a candidate for the permanent pastor position.

There is also language in the contract about our responsibilities:

“All ministries other than those reserved to ordained leadership (i.e., administering the sacraments) are understood as mutual ministries of the laity of both Congregations and the Interim Pastor. The Congregational Governing Bodies shall lead the laity to support, cooperate and work with the Interim Pastor in pursuit of Congregational goals and in the performance of the developmental tasks of the interim period. The Congregational Governing

Bodies are the legal agents for each Congregation in all matters concerning its corporate property and in its relationship with the Interim Pastor. The Congregational Governing Bodies will see that the Interim Pastor is properly supported, personally and organizationally, as well as in the Congregational Governing Bodies' financial obligations to the Interim Pastor.” (Quote from contract.)

The bottom line is that we are responsible to each other; we need each other in order to move forward. Neither Rev. Moore nor we can do this by ourselves. To that end there will be a mutual review of the total ministry of the Congregation at least twice a year in order to:

- Assess how well we are fulfilling our responsibilities to each other and the ministries
- Evaluate progress on the developmental tasks and adjust goals
- Isolate areas of conflict or disappointments which have not received adequate attention
- Clarify expectations of all parties to help put any future conflicts in manageable form
- Plan healthy closure for the interim ministry and prepare for the coming of the new pastor

The entire five page contract is available for any who wish to see it. Please speak to an officer of either governing body. (Officers are listed in the insert of this newsletter.) If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask them.

With skilled leadership to guide us and a commitment from us to work with Douglas, let us begin the next stage of our journey.

In the Unity of the Spirit,

Joan and Dale and the Transition Team

Our Shared Histories

In the months ahead we plan to present stories of Central's and St. Matthew's history in the newsletter. A part of the Vision Statement includes preserving the heritage of both churches. This month we present a historical sketch of Central Congregational UCC.

Central Congregational Church was founded in 1872 by the American Missionary Association, an affiliate of the Congregational Church, which had come to New Orleans right after the Civil War to work among the freedmen and persons of color in Louisiana.

In 1869, the AMA opened Straight University on Esplanade Avenue and North Derbigny Street. As head of the theology department, the Reverend Charles H. Thompson, D.D., a Negro, came in contact with the Reverend Jacob A. Norager, pastor of a small group from St. James A.M.E. Church. These six men and twenty-six women, along with a few from University Church, organized Central Congregational Church with Dr. Thompson as its minister. The date is usually given as June 30, 1872.

The AMA purchased a handsome three story brick edifice from the Fourth Presbyterian Church for \$20,000. It was one block from Canal Street, the main business street of New Orleans, on South Liberty and Gasquet (Cleveland) Streets. The building, 90 x 120, had a large and commodious sanctuary on the second floor with a balcony around three sides and a seating capacity of approximately 1200. This was Central's home for sixty-two years.

The start was auspicious: the University Church merged with Central and remained for fifteen years (1872-1887). An account in the Annual Report of the AMA for 1872 reads: This house is commodious and centrally situated. The people are well united in their pastor. A fine Sabbath School was formed under the management of Mr. S.S. Ashley (acting president of Straight). From the beginning there were good congregations on the Sabbath and a good attendance at all meetings of the church. It

is hoped this will be a model of the Pilgrim polity for Louisiana and the Southwest.

The building which was far too large for the small congregation served for sixty-two years as the cultural central for the entire Negro community, being the largest meeting place in the city. Commencements, conventions, grand lodges, recitals and lectures were held the year round. In 1921, Central's Open Door policy permitted the Southern Sociological Congress to hold its convention there when no other place of comparable size would accommodate the integrated group. A city-wide banquet for Booker T. Washington in 1915 was held in the spacious ground floor rooms.

In 1934, during Dr. Norman A. Holmes' pastorate, the Liberty Street site was sold when the area became commercial. Fortunately, Straight College on Canal Street was preparing to merge with New Orleans University to form Dillard University and its chapel was available for use by Central. The congregation remained there ten years until the Canal Street property was sold in 1944. The church moved in with its sister church, Beecher Memorial Congregational Church, which graciously offered its facilities and cordially welcomed the weary traveler. This amicable arrangement lasted two years.

The present church site on the corner of Bienville Avenue and North Tonti Street was purchased in 1930 but World War II intervened and it was not until 1944 that ground was broken.

To be continued in a future newsletter ...



Following is a letter that Rev. Meade sent on January 20th. It was shared at the St. Matthew annual meeting, but it addresses Central folks as well.

Dear Members and Friends,

2008 was one of the most memorable years in my career. The community of St. Matthew had a few years earlier (before Katrina) produced a vision statement under the direction of Carol Etter which read that St. Matthew seeks to develop a membership that reflects the community in which we live.

2008 shall be remembered as the year where that dream of St. Matthew came to fruition. The transition team, working with both the leaders of Central and St. Matthew, agreed to hire one pastor. For me it was a dream come true and a step moving toward unification of both churches.

I feel very blessed having the experience of working not only with Rev. Wilmer Brown but also all of the Central community. There is aliveness now in church because of the creative tension that exists. I believe that God is looking down on the Central/St. Matthew community and is smiling even in meetings where we didn't always agree with one another.

When Wil and I announced our resignation in late March, it was one of those moments that I will not forget. I had to step out in faith hoping that I could be hired by another church. There was some fear in my heart, but I also knew that ministry is always about call, and I had begun to sense another call earlier that year.

I did not know it would lead me to shoveling snow a few times a week or having to listen to people with funny Boston accents...but here I am in Cape Cod on a warm 32 degree day (it has been down to 5 degrees) watching snow gently fall through our living room window.

I am ever so grateful for all the kindness that was shown during my final days at the church. The financial gifts, the cards, the food and the hugs made parting not an easy task. Yet when the Spirit of God calls I have learned to respond even if it means I now have to wear long underwear.

Of course I am more familiar with the leadership of St. Matthew. Joan Fairbank provided a strong but compassionate base for all of us to work from. The congregation of Central/St. Matthew owe a debt of gratitude to both Dale and Joan for all that they have done.

I am ever so grateful for the ten and a half years I served. Thank you.

In Christ,
Rev. Fred

Fred and Julie Meade
155 Old Main Road
North Falmouth, MA 02556
1.508.299.3479

2008 St. Matthew Women's Guild Report

Following is a report that did not get included in the St. Matthew annual reports.

A memorial was given for Evelyn Beets.

Money was sent to Adopt A Family Uniform Drive in order to buy school uniforms for children who could not afford to buy them. Monetary Christmas gifts were given to our Church Secretary Pat Godfrey and to our Maintenance Supervisor, Michael Duplessis.

The ladies of the Guild discussed what Bible verses and emblems would best describe Rev. Fred's tenure at St. Matthew; and Arlene Fermanis offered one that we discussed and voted to use. Then Joyce Engelbracht made the beautiful and meaningful banner which now adorns our sanctuary.

Shirley Adams sends cards to anyone in our congregation who is ill or has a specific need, or to just wish someone something special. Money from our penny fund is always being used to help our church or others in need.

We always look forward to doing even more next year.

Respectfully submitted, Shirley Carambat

How did the Bread Ministry rise to where it is today?

Rev. Hilary Cox, formerly of Little Farms UCC, had a great desire to attack hunger and poverty in the greater New Orleans community. Realizing that many stores have an abundance of products that cannot be sold after a certain date, she felt that these products could be used to alleviate this problem. Unfortunately, due to unscrupulous practices and "sue-weary" merchants, some choose to dispose of their "day old" products that are still consumable rather than offer them to missions.

However, almost five years ago through the urging and pleadings of Rev. Cox, Whole Foods Market agreed, and hence the project was initiated. Each day, a different mission is permitted to pick up donations at the Magazine Street store. When brought to the attention of the New Orleans Association, Pastor Wilmer Brown joined in the effort

and signed up for Thursday pick up; thus the Bread Ministry at Central began. Central and Hume Center have been blessed by these efforts.

Since 2008 we have been excited and pleased to expand our gift to our St. Matthew family.

Feel free on Thursdays to stop by Hume and partake or wait until Sunday at church--you may have noticed the breads and/or sweets on the table in the foyer.

Enjoy!!!

We never know how much or what the products will be, but whatever it is,

"It is a blessing!"

Thanks Hilary & Wil!!!!!!!!!!!!



For Your Information

Just a little about Judy Moore ...



Though we have hired an interim minister he does have a lovely spouse. Judy is a wonderful, energetic spirit. She is bilingual, English and Spanish, and has an Ed. D degree. Judy actually started her own school. She is one of two volunteer disaster relief coordinators for the Vermont Conference. Two things Judy does for recreation are walking and playing tennis.

We are excited about our new interim family and hope you will be also.

The Central Carrollton Association recently sent a check for \$150 and a thank you note. The St. Matthew Council voted to put the check into the Capital Repair Fund.

“The Central Carrollton Association is very grateful to be a part of your community and we appreciate your support. We will miss Pastor Fred, and hope we can continue our friendship and camaraderie. CCA looks forward to offering our assistance on a clean-up day at the church. Please arrange to use this donation the way the church sees fit.” H.V.Nagendra

Financial Operations at Central and St. Matthew.

One of the action items emerging from the vision plan involves financially managing our partnership. It reads as follows: *Combining operational financial management and practices to support informed decision-making for a collective ministry.* At the December leadership retreat, participants signed up to take responsibility for vision items. Those who chose financial management came up with two goals for the first quarter of 2009:

1. To develop a joint expense budget and
2. To educate the congregation about our joint finances

The first goal has been accomplished. To accomplish the second goal, the treasurers from both congregations, the existing financial committees from both churches, plus Jim Bonds, John Etter and Michele D’Aquin have all agreed to begin posting monthly reports of our finances on the bulletin board. Please check these documents frequently throughout the year and address any questions you may have to one of the persons listed above. The goal is to educate and keep everyone informed about our financial status.



The 2009 Building Management Plan for St. Matthew.

Chris Englebracht has agreed to be the St. Matthew building manager handling security, keys, major maintenance and repairs. Our secretary, Pat Godfrey, will handle scheduling and keep a calendar of groups using the facilities on a regular basis and for special events. Rev. Moore will schedule most weddings and funerals. In addition, there are liaisons from the St. Matthew Council to each group renting space in the building for the purpose of keeping lines of communication open. **If Central and St. Matthew members wish to use the building for any purpose, it will be necessary for you to check on availability with Pat Godfrey.** Everyone’s cooperation will hopefully make this a manageable building use plan.

“From War to Peace” offers perspectives on Iraq war

Written by Gregg Brekke
January 26, 2009

The Global Ministries Office for the Middle East and Europe has released a United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) resource highlighting the perspective of partners and church voices primarily affected by the war in Iraq. "From War to Peace: Iraq and the Church's Voice" contains over 20 reflections by Global Ministries partners, refugee advocates, military chaplains and peacemakers. "The purpose of the resource is to draw attention to aspects of the war that are not often treated in other places," says Peter Makari, Global Ministries' Executive for the Middle East and Europe. "[It] gives church partners in the Middle East a chance to offer reflections from their perspectives..."

Of particular concern in this resource is the human cost associated with the war in Iraq. The mass displacement of Iraqis, in conjunction with the political and economic consequences for Iraq, are coupled with the ever-growing need to engage in peacemaking activities with Muslim and Middle Eastern nations, and care for our military personnel and families. "Our churches have a particular competence to speak on the situation due to ongoing relationships with churches and other partners in the Middle East, and special ministries of healing and relief for the people of Iraq who have been negatively impacted by the war," says Makari. That competency in healing and relief, Makari says, is extended to "members of the UCC and Disciples ... deployed to serve in the armed forces in the Middle East, both as soldiers and as military chaplains."

Global Ministries is a joint venture of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, responsible for nurturing relationships with international partners on behalf of Disciples and the UCC. In 2008, Global Ministries had a total of 139 missionaries serving in 42 countries, which included 60 fully supported missionaries, nine global mission interns (young adults ages 18-30), nine long-term volunteers (one year or more) and 61 overseas associates. This resource is available at globalministries.org/mee/from-war-to-peace/

Prayer List

Shirley Adams, Veronica Cromwell, Leslye Crowley, Dennis, Irving and Anne, Jesse Jackson, Michael Johns, Jessica Lappen, Amy Liu, Nelsy, Cliff and Dot Puderer, Rocky Stewart, David Swanson, the family of Clarence Weiser, Sr., for the life, example and teachings of Gandhi, the people of Palestine and Israel.

Flowers for February, 2009

Feb. 1 In memory of Maddie Lasiter from Shirley Adams
Feb. 8 In memory of Thaddeus from Myrtle Winbush
Feb. 15 In memory of Florence Kraus and Bert Pittman from Evelyn Pittman
Feb. 22 In memory of Hilda Goll from Nancy Marks



Memorials

Our covenanted community extends sympathy to Diane and Vernon (Sonny) Haynes and family in the death of Diane's mother, Georgiana Gurtner, long time member of St. Matthew. Georgiana died on January 21, 2009. Our prayers are with you.

For: Clarence Weiser
From: Evelyn Pittman
 Shirley and Lou Carambat

Ushers: all month - Linda Ostendorf, Myrtle Winbush, Michele D'Aquin, Andrea Gibson
Communion on 2/15 - Karen and Rodney Plummer
Scripture: Sylvia Warren 2/8; Sloan 2/15, Shirley Adams 2/22
Acolyte: Stuart Harrison
Greeters: Shirley Adams and Lucille Gebhardt 2/8; Helen Smith and Helen Green

