

Glad Tidings



January 2009

The Newsletter of Central-St. Matthew UCC

Introducing our Interim Minister: Douglas Stewart Moore

The Transition Team has worked tirelessly since June, 2008. We have put our thoughts together on what we wanted in an interim; we received, read and discussed about seven profiles of prospective candidates; we interviewed three of those candidates; and lastly, we came to an agreement. Our choice is Rev. Douglas Stewart Moore, retiring pastor of Norwich Congregational United Church of Christ, Norwich, Vermont.

Doug grew up in the Evanston, IL area and then went off to Yale University to do his undergraduate work. Graduate studies took him to Vanderbilt Law School in Nashville, TN where he received his JD. His call to ministry came much later after serving in the Marines and working as a successful lawyer. Seminary training was at New College, University of Edinburgh.

Two churches in Vermont have had the benefit of Rev. Moore's ministry, Sharon Congregational United Church of Christ, Sharon, VT from 1992 thru 2001 and Norwich Congregational United Church of Christ, Norwich, VT from 2002 to present.

Douglas and his wife Judy spent four months (over several occasions) here in New Orleans as Partners In Service volunteers, working with the UCC South Central Conference Disaster Recovery Ministry.

The Moore's are the proud parents of five children. The three youngest children are adopted Koreans. They also have a Cambodian foster son who now



lives in Colorado. Their first grandchild, "Maddie", was born December 3, 2008 in Chicago, IL

A wonderful item from Doug's profile reads: "My journey call is actually a series of returnings. I am constantly seeking to return to my anchor in Christ, to return to that place and moment when I feel truly surrounded by the love and faithfulness of Christ. As I return, I realize it is not a step backward. It is always a step forward, a step in the right direction. Growth of the spirit for me is not linear. It is constantly traveling inward to the center. It is when I roam too far from the center, compelled by ego or lulled by spiritual sloth that I find myself adrift."

Doug and Judy will join us on March 1, 2009.

A Message from Your Moderators

Dale Bonds and Joan Fairbank



The month of December was extremely busy for all us. We started the month off with a wonderful retreat in which we discovered our "God given gifts". We moved to the bon voyage brunch for Pastor Fred and Julie. We then moved into our live nativity and Christmas Eve service. What a month and in the middle of it all we had snow!

Our retreat on December 6, 2008, took place at Xavier University in the Student Activity Center. Our gathering started with prayer and a discussion on "What is your soul?" We further shared with each other answers to other questions concerning the soul, like what is its function? What color is it? Exactly what is it? How provocative!

The next several hours of our time together was spent determining our mind style, learning the natural gifts of each and the roles and responsibilities natural to each mind style. Each mind style has an important role in the life and leadership of the church. Three minutes was the time given to us to rank a word matrix. There was no right or wrong answer, just the real, deep-down YOU that was revealed through a first impression of the words.

The four mind styles are Concrete Sequential, Abstract Sequential, Abstract Random, and Concrete Random. It all has to do with the way we perceive the world and process data. Each of us as individuals exhibit both abstract and concrete perceptual abilities as well as sequential and random ordering abilities regardless of color, culture, creed, race, or sex. However, some are more naturally one more than the other.

We ended our day looking at our eight vision components. We clarified the first quarter action items and each of us committed to work with at least one vision component.

Part of our farewell to Pastor Fred and Julie, was the unveiling of a banner capturing Pastor Fred's ministry at St. Matthew. The thinking behind that banner is captured here. "At the October meeting of the St. Matthew women's guild, the members were asked to help Joyce Engelbracht design the banner to be hung for Fred. It did not take long for one member to suggest Psalm 46 verses 1-3.

Psalm 46: 1-3

1. God is our refuge and strength

An ever present help in trouble.

2. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains

Fall into the heart of the sea,

*3. Though its waters roar and foam and the mountains
Quake with their surging.*

Our experiences through Katrina and its aftermath certainly did feel as though the earth had given way and that the waters had roared, and it was Fred who captained this ship, our congregation, through that turmoil. His quick action on his return to get St. Matthew up and running, his tireless energy in fund raising and spreading the word of our needs to others, his welcoming with open arms the joint leadership of Pastor Brown and the congregation of Central and his steady guidance helped us get up on our feet and meet our new future without fear and with our eyes on God as our refuge.

Even before Katrina, Fred had been instrumental in keeping this building afloat. As he began his call here in 1998, the physical plant at St. Matthew was in need of repair and of good management. Fred's skills in managing this facility have helped not only the building but also our mission in this community. Thanks to his efforts, our building has been home to many community groups, the community theatre, I to I, Head Start for many years, community associations, PFLAG, the German Service, MCC and, since Katrina, a housing facility for recovery groups.

The crosses in the corners of this banner are baptismal crosses which symbolize new birth and regeneration. We have used them in this banner because we thank Fred for giving this facility a new birth and an expanded purpose in our community and we thank Fred for his leadership in our post Katrina world which is getting us ready for the birth of a new Central/St Matthew, whatever form that may take.

We dedicate this banner to our pastor and our friend, the Reverend Fred Meade."

We ended the month in a traditional way with our "Living Nativity" which had to take place in the sanctuary, due to high winds and a chill in the air, and our Christmas Eve service with the reading of scripture and singing of hymns. We pray your Christmas was blessed.

It has been an honor for us to serve you this year as president and moderator. We have shared our visions, hopes, and fears and helped to hire an Intentional Interim, who will guide us through this next year.

Blessings to you all in the New Year!
In the Unity of the Spirit,

Dale and Joan

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 biographical information on Katherine Schroeder, whose life was intertwined with St. Matthew's history.

Katherine Deuchert Schroeder

Born: July 19, 1911 Died: November 1, 2006

The Christmas tree in the sanctuary has been decorated for over 20 years with handmade ornaments made by Katherine D. Schroeder. Who was Katherine Schroeder? How long was she a member of St. Matthew United Church of Christ? What St. Matthew events occurred during Katherine's lifetime?

Katherine Schroeder was a lifelong member of St. Matthew. She joined the choir as a teenager and was a faithful member for over 70 years. This may well be a record for our church, which began as "German Evangelical Congregation of Carrollton" June 2, 1849. Only extreme health limitations prevented her participation during her last years.

In 1957 Katherine and Earl Schroeder were contributing members supporting the construction of the Educational Building, now known as the Roland Pantermuehl Educational Building. In 1969 a long overdue renovation of the church sanctuary was completed. In 1979 a decision was made to replace the Moeller organ which had served the congregation since 1925. Katherine was a major contributor in making this addition possible.

Katherine was married to Earl Schroeder. Earl died in 1971. They had no children; however, she served as a Youth Fellowship advisor and assisted in directing many of the St. Matthew's Young Peoples' plays. Katherine was one of the first females to be elected to the council, and as such, held several offices, most importantly that of church treasurer. During this period, when a \$2,050.00 note was due each month on the educational building expansion, it was Katherine who was able to keep the ship afloat.

Katherine started the Young at Heart group beginning in 1971 and presided over this group well into the 1990's. Each year she handmade ornaments, a very time consuming process and presented them to members of the Young at Heart. Each of the ornaments on the *Katherine Schroeder Christmas Tree* was handmade by her. This church, St. Matthew United Church of Christ was Katherine's life for a lifetime. In death, she willed a considerable sum to the St. Matthew Endowment Fund.

The Katherine Schroeder Christmas Tree is but a small reminder to all of the life, dedication and contributions of this fine lady.

(Submitted by Ray Cook)



One Great Hour of Sharing tour of Gulf Coast highlights recovery efforts

Written by Jeff Woodard
December 22, 2008

Fifteen UCC members from eight states traveled to New Orleans and coastal Mississippi Dec. 8-11 to learn firsthand of the progress made and the complex challenges still facing residents more than three years after Hurricane Katrina.

The group – composed of Conference ministers, Disaster Ministries administrators and church members – visited a half dozen work sites supervised by UCC National Disaster Ministries staff. Also on the three-day itinerary of the "Hope Shall Bloom" educational mission trip were visits to Little Farms UCC and Beecher Memorial UCC; a tour of a new multi-purpose facility for the homeless downtown; and a day trip to Biloxi and Pass Christian, Miss.

The group gathered in the sanctuary of Little Farms for an overview/orientation, with the Rev. Alan Coe, minister for Disaster Recovery; the Rev. Bernice Powell Jackson, interim pastor at Beecher UCC; and Florence Coppola, national executive for Disaster Ministries, providing updates on the physical, psychological and spiritual aspects of recovery and rebuilding.

"There's a lot of anger," said Coppola. "People are feeling like, 'I don't know why I don't have my home back.' It's very difficult." Jackson, former executive minister for UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, called present-day New Orleans "the largest mental-health crisis this nation has ever had in one place at one time. It is like ground zero for every racial, social, economic and environmental issue in America."

The trip featured a tour of the Rebuild Center, a one-stop service center for the area's homeless, whose numbers are now estimated at 12,000. The center offers restroom, shower, laundry, telephone and food-service facilities. Drop-ins can also see a doctor or a lawyer, get a new state ID, receive mail and obtain help finding housing and jobs. Natural wood siding and rich vegetation throughout the complex give it a warm, inviting feeling – and nearly all of its \$1 million cost was raised by community and religious organizations. "Homeless people rarely go to a nice place that was built just for them," said center director Don Thompson.

The day trip to coastal Mississippi included stops and site visits in Biloxi, East Biloxi and Pass Christian. In Biloxi, the group visited Back Bay Mission, hearing stirring stories of clients' hardships and meeting with the Rev. Shari Prestemon, executive director, and the dedicated staff there.

Newsletter Costs

Below are costs for printing and sending our Central St. Matthew monthly newsletter in black and white and color. We printed it in color for 6 months in 2008, and now need to consider how it will be printed in 2009. The response to the color has been positive, and it is a good marketing tool. However, as you can see, color copies are more expensive to produce.



Newsletter Costs:

Color copies are \$.08 a page; black and white copies are \$.01 a page

8 page newsletter in color = .64 per copy: we print 100 copies = \$64.00

8 page newsletter in black and white = .08 per copy X 100 copies = \$8.00
Postage = .42 x 100 = 42.00

100 copies in color = \$64.00; with postage = \$106.00

100 copies in black and white = \$8.00; with postage \$50.00

We have 2 options. The first one is for more people to receive the newsletter on line, saving both postage and printing costs. An obvious advantage to this method is that

there is no wait to receive it. Currently 31 people receive it on line. If 25 more did so, our cost would reduce to \$48.00 per month for color copies plus \$31.50 for postage = \$79.50 total. Some like to have a hard copy to read. If that is the case for you, you might wish to consider printing your own copy.

Another option is to invite persons to donate to a "Color Newsletter Fund." St. Matthew already has one generous donor who would like others to join him.

Still a third option is to return to printing the newsletter in black and white. (Those who currently receive it on line would continue to get it in color.)

So, let us hear from you. The Finance Committee will make a decision based on your comments, the number of people who are willing to receive it on line, and/or other donors that might emerge. Please speak to a member of the Finance Committee: John Etter, Carol Etter, Michele D'Aquin, Ellen Bentz, Janice Lewis, Joan Fairbank and John Pecoul.

'Little Mike' throws in the towel

Katie Urbaszewski

News Editor

Published: Thursday, October 2, 2008

Updated: Sunday, December 14, 2008

Anyone nicknamed "Little Mike" must have a big following.

WFF worker Mike Duplessis, better known as "Little Mike" and "Mr. Mike" to the Communications/Music Complex where he works, retired this week. Duplessis came to Loyola in 1984 from Tulane University, where he worked since 1962.

"Loyola's a lot better than Tulane," he said. Not only did Loyola treat him well, he said, it also provided invaluable help for his wife who needed a heart and kidney transplant. "She's doing very well. With the insurance that we have, Loyola pays for that, so we had no problems," he said. "I'm blessed by that. And she's carrying on."

But after 24 years working on Loyola's campus, Duplessis has decided it's time to leave. "I'm 65 now. It's time for me to relax a bit," he said. "The type of work I'm doing here, cleaning carpet, it's a lot of bending over, and it gets to your back. I feel I better save my back

and move on." But he'll miss the people he's grown close to during his time here. "Miss Sally, Miss Sheila, Miss Pearl, Miss Phyllis, Bob Thomas," he said, "Good people."

"I'll miss lots of students that I made friends with. My heart is here because I've been here so long." And he's also leaving with a lot of fond - and hilarious - memories. "There were a lot of incidents with students hurting themselves with vending machines while I was here. They would shake them, and the machines would fall down on them. That's why they're bolted to the floor now."

According to Bob Thomas, interim director to the School of Mass Communication, Duplessis has maintained carpets in our building since it was built. "He's one of the most dependable workers we've ever had in this building," he said. "He's always smiling, he always makes you feel good. He'll be sorely missed."

Fortunately, Duplessis said he's been training an apprentice to take his place. But it'll take him a long time to build up the fan club that Little Mike is leaving behind.

Katie Urbaszewski can be reached at ceurbasz@loyno.edu.



* * * *

REMINDER

Annual Congregational Meetings

January 18, 2009 Central

January 25, 2009 St. Matthew

FIVE FOR FIVE

According to the Stewardship and Church Finances Ministry Team of the UCC Local Church Ministries Office in Cleveland, Ohio, MORE THAN 1,265 UCC CHURCHES ARE “5 for 5.”

Central St. Matthew is one of them.

1. UCC BASIC SUPPORT

Provides funding from congregations for Conferences and the national ministries of Wider Church Ministries, Local Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, General Ministries and the Pension Boards.

UCC SPECIAL MISSION OFFERINGS

Part of Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM), these four offerings sponsor vital ministries that bring hope to people around the world.

2. The Christmas Fund

Helps provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retired church workers, emergency assistance to clergy families in need and Christmas checks to hundreds of annuitants; administered by the Pension Boards.

3. One Great Hour of Sharing

Channels resources for international programs in health, education and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response; administered by Wider Church Ministries, Global Sharing of Resources.

4. Strengthen the Church

Grows the UCC’s future by supporting new and revitalizing congregations, programs for youth and young adults, leadership development and God is Still Speaking activities; administered by UCC Conferences, Local Church Ministries and the Stillspeaking Ministry.

5. Neighbors in Need

Supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States including the Council for American Indian Ministries, justice and advocacy, and direct service projects supported by Justice and Witness Ministries.

A Just Peace Church

The Just Peace Church vision is a hallmark of United Church of Christ theological identity.

For nearly two decades, the Just Peace Church program has been a grassroots movement of UCC congregations committed to corporately naming and boldly proclaiming a public identity as a justice-doing, peace-seeking church.

The movement traces its history to the 1985 General Synod, when a [Just Peace Church Pronouncement](#) called upon all settings of the UCC to be a Just Peace Church, underscoring the words of Dr. Robert V. Moss, the second president of the UCC, who wrote in 1971, "We now need to put as much effort into defining a just peace as we have done in the past in defining a just war."



United Church of Christ
Justice and Peace Action Network

The General Synod defined "just peace" as the interrelation of friendship, justice, and common security from violence. The pronouncement called the church to a vision of shalom rooted in peace with justice and placed the UCC General Synod in opposition to the institution of war.

Over the years, the Just Peace Church identity has become an important symbol for many of our congregations, as both a means of shaping congregational identity and as a theological framework for doing justice-based theological reflection.

For many Just Peace congregations, this identity has helped to underscore their ministries of direct service, legislative advocacy, and courageous witness. The approach has differed from place to place: Some became immersed in anti-war and anti-militarism issues, while some focused their energies on U.S. policies affecting Central America. Others strengthened their multi-racial, multi-cultural witness. Some developed neighborhood ministries, while others translated their just-peace identity to be a fitting starting place for eventually becoming "Open and Affirming" or "Whole Earth" churches. Justice and Witness Ministries is committed to a revitalized Just Peace Church movement, wherein congregations will be empowered and resourced to create an even stronger justice and peace witness for decades to come.



In coming months, we hope you will be hearing more about the Just Peace movement in the UCC—as conversations expand and deepen in various settings around our church.

What does it mean to be a Just Peace Church in times like these? This is the question we have been asking ourselves and others. Your responses are most helpful in shaping the new directions of our collective movement.

Does your church consider itself to be a Just Peace congregation? Do you have thoughts to share about the direction of the Just Peace Church program? Contact the Rev. Loey Powell at 216-736-3715 or powell@ucc.org.



Prayer List

Irmgard and Anne, Baby Ingrid, Melvin Chaix, Demies, Ethel and Al Creel, Jessica Fair, Carolyn Messner, John and Gisela Meyer, Bridget Neigel, Dr. Rodney Plummer, people travelling for holidays, the Transition team.

Flowers for January

- Dec. 21 In memory of Victoria and Charles Kerner from Bertha Finnin
 In memory of Ed Finnin and Lydia Alexander
- Jan. 11 In memory of Nolan Chaix, Jr., Melvin Chaix, Sr., and Kenneth Chaix,
 Sr. from Melvin Chaix
- Jan. 18 In honor of the Central/St. Matthew congregation
- Jan. 25 In memory of the anniversary of Dorothy and Fred Kolman from Nancy
 Marks and Ellen Bentz

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 850527
New Orleans, La 70185-0527

Phone:
(504) 861-8196
Central Church Office:
(504) 861-9980

Fax:
(504)861-8197

E-Mail:
stmatthewucc@aol.com

Office Hours:

Church Secretary:
Wed. and Fri. from 8 am to 12 pm, Thurs. 8 am to 4 pm

Pastor: Interim Pastor's hours will be posted in March.

Souper Bowl of Caring

Mission Statement: Utilizing Super Bowl weekend to mobilize youth to fight hunger and poverty in their local communities.

Vision Statement: Transforming Super Bowl weekend into the nation's largest youth-led weekend of giving and serving.

BELIEF:

- The idea for the Souper Bowl of Caring is a gift from God
- Young people have the ability to serve and should be given opportunities to lead their communities in helping others
- Every dollar collected through the Souper Bowl of Caring should be donated directly to a charity selected by each participating group
- People of all backgrounds and beliefs can work together
- Hunger and poverty have a negative impact on individuals and the communities in which they live, yet there is joy in serving and giving to those in need
- The excitement and energy surrounding the Super Bowl can be used to engage young people in service while producing lasting hope for all people

[Get involved in this simple, yet powerful movement of caring.](#)

As you leave the sanctuary on Super Bowl Sunday (February 1, 2009), please drop a dollar or your spare change in the SOUP pot held by our youth.

OUR GIFTS WILL GO TO SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK OF
GREATER NEW ORLEANS.

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.centralstmatthewucc.org

ST. MATTHEW UCC
P.O Box 850527
New Orleans, La 70185-0527

**COMPANY NAME
STREET ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, 00000**