

# Glad Tidings



October 2008

The Newsletter of Central-St. Matthew UCC

## “Dun Good”



In a church I served in Connecticut, on a very large wall in a dusty attic that led up to the bell tower, church members had written stories on the wall about the church community. The writings went back over a hundred years. They reflected times of great joy as well as great sorrow. One story was about the Women’s Guild that brought food over to a grieving set of parents over the loss of their son during World War II. Several writings reflected joy surrounding baptisms. Other stories told of church folk gathered together to pray for someone that was ill.

I have always wished that all churches would keep some sort of scrapbook that tells the unfolding story of the ways that its ministry touches so many lives. This last weekend I saw the presence of God three times.

- On Saturday, I witnessed God in the eyes of two older people coming together in marriage. Their eyes beamed the presence of God in finding someone to share life with at this particular point in their spiritual journey.
- On Sunday, I witnessed God in church in the eyes of not only the family, but the whole church as I baptized a child.

- On Monday, during a memorial service, I saw God in the eyes of those who had just lost their father. God was visibly present throughout the service, both in music by Robert Perry, in the food by Tia Perry and in the fellowship afterwards where many stories were shared about Osborne Landix - a longtime member of Central Congregational Church.

It has been an amazing weekend for me, and I am very grateful to be a pastor.

It seems there have been a lot of “Dun Good” experiences in the church lately. Committees are coming together in new ways. Andrea Gibson is the new chair of Worship. The Transition Team is doing an outstanding job during this time. It has been wonderful to see our Minister in Training grow in his understanding of the church. I believe that we could not have better presidents/moderators at the helm in each of our two churches.

I hope and pray that our church community can see God is not only speaking, but that we are hearing and responding to the presence of Christ at Central/St. Matthew United Church of Christ.

In Christ,  
Rev. Fred

## A Message from Your Moderators



*“As children of God, a Resurrected people, we are all called to listen to the guide of our existence - that is the Holy Spirit.”*

September was a busy month. The Transition Team evaluated the 1<sup>st</sup> All Congregation World Café and met with the facilitators to plan for the 2<sup>nd</sup> one. The Transition Team has also begun to consider persons who are interested in serving as interim pastor at Central St. Matthew.

At the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Café on Sunday, October 19,<sup>th</sup> we will be building on the work done at the 1<sup>st</sup> workshop and at the leadership retreat. We realized we had to rework some logistics for event number 2, so two changes will include enlarging the worship space and providing child care. You will be receiving a letter with details on how the morning will be organized, and a survey for you to complete before October 19. We urge you to attend this 2<sup>nd</sup> event. It is the appropriate place and time for you to voice your opinions and feelings. We need you! Please help formulate the vision for Central St. Matthew in the next 3 years.

The Transition Team is currently studying the profiles of two persons who are interested in serving as an interim pastor at Central St. Matthew. They are both well qualified, having special training in interim ministry AND experience in interim positions. Within the next 6 weeks we will be interviewing them. But first we are in the process of discerning the qualities that are important to our congregation and forming interview questions. At the risk of being redundant, please remember that the Transition Team will recommend a candidate to both the St. Matthew Council and the Central Governance Board. Those governing bodies will then vote “to hire” an interim for a specific period of time, most likely one year. There will be no congregational vote at this time. Later, during the interim period, a formal search committee will be formed to look for a long term pastor. In accord with protocol, the interim minister cannot be a candidate for the permanent position.

It is necessary to form a transitional finance committee as both congregations plan budgets for 2009. Many of our expenses, including an interim minister, will need to be shared in a proportional manner. We need representatives from both churches to sit down and consider how we will financially interact in the coming year. Both churches’ governing boards have discussed the need for such a committee and have made suggestions. As soon as members agree to serve on the transitional finance committee, we will share their names with you.

As you can see, the transition team is making progress. Both of us are confident that Central St. Matthew will find the right leader to guide us during an interim period. We are also confident that we will formulate a practical vision to lead us forward. We ask for your continued prayers – for us, for the transition team, for Rev. Fred as he contemplates a new beginning, and for our entire congregation. Together we can pray, “Be Thou Our Vision.”

In the Unity of the Spirit,  
Joan and Dale

## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR LEADERS ON THE TRANSITION TEAM

### Julie Darby and Sloan T. Letman, IV

#### About Julie Darby

I was born and raised in California. When I was 21, I moved to the Kentucky and Indiana area and spent 7 years there. It was during this time that I visited New Orleans while on vacation. The first day I arrived, I knew I had found "home." There is something unexplainable about this city and the way it seeps under your skin, the way it can claim your heart. I have said, ever since, that I didn't choose New Orleans, it chose me. I quickly made arrangements to move and have lived here since 1999.

While I do not have a church background (my upbringing did not include attending church), I have been deeply blessed by God's presence in my life. It is through my relationship with Him that I came to know that I needed a spiritual home, a place where I could not only deepen my relationship with Him, but also develop relationships with fellow Christians and my community. Hope and I both felt strongly that we wanted to be part of an active and vital welcoming church, one that had a diverse congregation consisting of people of many age groups and backgrounds. After visiting a number of other area churches, Hope found Central St. Matthew UCC's website and we were impressed by the personality and relevance it displayed. After visiting a few times, we knew we were in the right spot. We could feel the Holy Spirit at work. We loved the sense of family and kindred that was present. We felt at home amongst such a diverse and genuinely loving congregation. Hope and I joined Central St Matthew UCC in January of 2008 as members of both congregations.

Since joining, I have happily been involved in an effort to advance the church website to a new level of outreach and interaction. While that work is still underway, I am confident that we will be able to reach even

more people once it is up and running.

It is a great honor for me to be on the Transition Team. I am so blessed to be a part of this remarkable congregation, and I look forward to being a part of this family for a long time to come. Here, I am frequently reminded of one of my favorite Bible passages:

For we know that all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28

#### About Sloan Letman

Growing up in Chicago I could be considered what is called a "preacher's kid" but I prefer "Theological Offspring." Over the past year I have fallen in love with what is Central-St. Matthew. I can remember the first time I visited in the summer of 2007, Shirley Adams and Evelyn Pittman treated me like family as if I had always been there. I found it very telling that on that day I was given a member's name tag six months before I joined.

My favorite scripture verse is 1 Corinthians 2:9 "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

Since joining in February I become more amazed at God's majesty and planning skills. I have had the privilege to learn from the congregations, the pastors, and the presidents. To receive "in-care" status at Central and St. Matthew gives me the coolest opportunity to learn and see all of God's people come together in fellowship, in mission, and in love.

It has been a true honor to serve as a member of the transition team and as your minister in training.



Julie Darby

*"After visiting a few times, we knew we were in the right spot. We could feel the Holy Spirit at work. We loved the sense of family and kindred that was present."*



Sloan Letman



## Update on Ike - by Rev. Douglas Anders

### CONFERENCE OFFICE

The Conference office has been fully operational since Tuesday-September 23. Office Manager, the Rev. Tim Marquez, has now resumed regular office hours. St. Peter's UCC where the conference office is located sustained minimal roof damages and leaks brought about by Hurricane Ike.

### CHURCH UPDATES

As reported before, most of the Houston area churches received minor to moderate damage from Hurricane Ike. Most churches have dealt with needed repairs and clean-up. There are a few pastors Douglas Anders has not heard from directly, but he has left messages of concern. Rev. Anders did receive word that there were churches and areas around Houston and beyond, who did not have power for several days after Hurricane Ike. Friedens-Washington, TX; Evangelical UCC-Lyons, TX; and Friedens UCC-Gay Hill, TX were reported being without power for several days. These churches were not among the list of churches initially listed as affected by Hurricane Ike.

Florence Coppola, UCC Executive for Disaster Ministries, and Rev. Alan Coe, SCC Minister of Disaster Recovery, are planning to meet with Houston area clergy in early October to facilitate conversation and make connection. As soon as the meeting place, date and time are determined, the conference office will inform and invite clergy affected by Hurricane Ike.

Some continue to ask what they can do to assist:

1. Pray for all affected by Hurricane Ike
2. Receive a collection for the UCC 2008 Disaster Response Offering (which we are doing at Central St., Matthew.) But also, you can send a check directly to the Conference which will forward it to the national UCC. If SCC receives specific financial needs from churches in the Conference, Rev. Anders can forward those needs to the national UCC for consideration of some of the funds collected.
3. We are still securing names of persons interested in serving on a Conference Disaster Response Team. We will be meeting soon. If you are interested, send your note of interest with contact info to me: [andersd@sccucc.org](mailto:andersd@sccucc.org)

## Memorial Service

Many of you will want to know that a Memorial Service for Evelyn Beets will be held at St. Matthew on October 25, 2008 at 11:00 AM. Evelyn and Rev. Ralph were longtime active members of St. Matthew. She served as president of the Church Council and both were active on many committees. Due to health concerns following Katrina, Ralph and Evelyn moved to Houston. Ralph and their daughter, Becky, would be honored to see you.

## News from the Flock

For the past few months the church has received numerous thank you notes which were posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. They are being printed in this newsletter for all to see in case you have not been able to read them.

Dear Central St. Matthew,  
Thank you for all of the many beautiful cards and prayers you sent to me during my recent illness. Your kindness is greatly appreciated. Hope to see all of you soon. Love, Ethel Creel

Dear Pastor and Members,  
The students, faculty, staff, and Board of Directors of Hume Child Development Center gratefully acknowledge your generous contribution of \$486.06. Without kindness such as yours, we would be unable to continue to offer child care and educational opportunities to the New Orleans community. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.  
Helen Smith Green, Executive Director

Note: This is not the first note Helen has written. She personally writes thank you notes for ALL contributions received at the Hume Center.

Dear Central Family,  
We sincerely thank you for your prayers, thoughts, flowers, food and diligent service. Because of you we've been sustained. We, too, love you unconditionally as you've proved you love us. Our prayer is that we continue to grow in faith, knowing that God can do all things. Bless you.  
Paulette, Richard and the entire Timpton Family

Dearest Sisters and Brothers in Christ,  
Thank you for all of the beautiful cards and words of comfort. It was such a blessing to come back home and find so many expressions of your love for us. I could picture each one of your faces and feel our connection. We are comforted by the assurance that we will see our daddy again in heaven. We are thankful that he is no longer in pain.  
With much love and appreciation,  
Hulen and Wil

Thank you for your hospitality and kindness. Worship on Sunday was an enriching experience – the union of St. Matthew and Central is a divine blessing.  
In Christ's love,  
First Congregational UCC of Waterloo, IA [from a recovery team worker]



### New Orleans Association Meeting

Saturday-October 11 at St. Paul UCC (Host Pastor is the Rev. Lynn Hyder)

9:30 A.M. Registration-Gathering

10:00 A.M. Business Meeting

11:00 A.M. Worship

Noon Fellowship Meal

RSVP through Rev. Cheryl Cramer at 504.920.1035 or [cqwcramer@bellsouth.net](mailto:cqwcramer@bellsouth.net)

## October Events

### **Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup>**

This is World Communion Sunday. We will be celebrating the Holy Sacrament of Communion at Central St. Matthew with pew communion. This is also the Sunday when we will receive a special offering for Neighbors In Need.



### **Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup>**

Rev. Alan Coe, our SCC (South Central Conference) Minister of Disaster Recovery, will be delivering the sermon. Alan will include an update on what is happening in recovery around the area and, also, help us to understand the future of disaster recovery for New Orleans.

Also on this Sunday, we are asking members and friends to bring items for a bake sale in the lobby following the service. Some items will be sold as is, and others will be broken down and sold individually. For example, someone may wish to buy a whole cake or pie, while someone else might just like to purchase a slice or two. Ellen Bentz will be organizing the event. We just need you to participate by bringing baked goods on Sunday before the service. Items do not have to be home-made. We will be happy to sell any donated items.

Proceeds from the bake sale will be sent to CUE Seminaries of the United Church of Christ. The CUE seminaries are Chicago (located in the heart of Chicago), United (located in St. Paul, Minnesota), and Eden (located in St. Louis, Missouri). Faculty, staff, and students alike benefit from the gifts that come through CUE. The mission of these seminaries includes preparing new leadership for our churches, nurturing and supporting current leaders and maintaining and adding to the tradition of theological scholarship in the United Church of Christ. Thanking you in advance for your faithful support of that mission. And please continue to hold our seminaries and their faculty, staff and students in your prayers.

### **Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

On this Sunday we will hold the 2<sup>nd</sup> All Congregation World Cafe. As at the first, it will be held in Fellowship Hall, beginning with an abbreviated worship service with communion. This time, however, we will expand the worship area, and we will offer child care. The children will decorate pumpkins during the workshop time. Lunch will be provided with a free will offering taken. You will be receiving a mailing soon that will give all the details on this very IMPORTANT workshop. Please mark your calendars.

### **Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>**

This day is Stewardship Sunday when all members of Central and St. Matthew are asked to return their pledge cards detailing each person's commitment to the budget for 2009. Having pledge cards enables the finance committees and councils of both churches to realistically plan a budget. With changes this year, in particular, it will take some real effort to establish a budget. There is much to be considered. You can help by making a commitment.

**Children’s Education:**

The Christian Education Committee is pleased to announce plans for Central St. Matthew’s children. They will continue to offer child care in the cry room during the entire worship service every Sunday for infants through 3 year olds. A schedule of volunteers is being compiled.

In addition, a class will be held for children over four. We are asking children to sit with their parents through the anthem. Then Beth will play “Jesus Loves the Little Children” and the children (and parents or grandparents) will come forward for the children’s story. Helen Green has graciously volunteered to do the story. Following the story the children will go with adults to the craft room for a Sunday school class.

Also, on the first Sunday of each month, we are asking for a family with young children to acolyte at the beginning of the service. We hope this will be a meaningful activity for the children by developing their sense of participation in the worship service. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month, the children will continue to collect food donations. What a joy to nurture these young lives.

**Adult Education:**

**Bible study** led by Rev. Tom Lily will continue through the 16<sup>th</sup> of October. Meeting time is 7:00 on Thursday evenings in the library.

*Living the Questions* sessions will begin after the service on Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. This adult curriculum with media is for both seekers and “church alumni/ae” convinced that Christianity still has relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This educational series will continue for 4 weeks, and longer if participants so desire. It will conclude one hour after beginning; it will consist of a film followed by discussion.

❖ Please consider taking advantage of both adult educational opportunities.

**Looking ahead to November:** The very popular **potluck and silent auction** will be held this year on **Sunday, November 16<sup>th</sup>**. Please be creating or finding special items you would like to donate to the auction. Your items can be brought to the church at any time. Just be sure they are labeled “For the Auction.” The Sunday before, on November 9<sup>th</sup>, the items will be displayed in the lobby area for folks to preview. Nothing will be sold that day, but everyone can get an idea of what will be available. This year proceeds will be given to Hume Center.

**PRAYER LIST**

Victoria Capdeville, Melvin Chaix, Rev. Davida Crabtree, Ethel Creel, Lavera Kelly, Phyllis Maloney, Verna Sileci, Vicki Weeks, those affected by the hurricanes.

**ALTAR FLOWERS DURING OCTOBER**

- October 05 Fred C. Kolman from Nancy Marks and Ellen Bentz.
- October 12 Birthday remembrance for Jimmy Adams from Shirley Adams.
- October 19 Birthday remembrance for Dr. Richard Tipton, Sr. from his family
- October 26 Family members from John and Carol Etter.



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

Pastor:  
Call anytime, (504) 615-1634  
[fredmeade@aol.com](mailto:fredmeade@aol.com)  
Office hours Tues to Thur. 10am to 1 pm

***We're on the Web!***

See us at:  
[www.centralstmatthewucc.org](http://www.centralstmatthewucc.org)

## Worship Service Commitments

- 10/5/08 Ushers: Shirley Carambat, Leslie Wilson, Mrytle Winbush, Fay Kaufman  
Reader: Shirley Adams  
Pew Communion Servers: Rodney Plummer, Karen Plummer, Carol Etter, John Etter, Andrea Gibson, John Pecoul  
Acolyte: Family  
Greeters: Helen Green and Helen Smith
- 10/12/08 Ushers: Shirley Carambat, Leslie Wilson, Mrytle Winbush, Fay Kaufman  
Reader: Sloan Letman  
Acolyte: Stuart Harrison  
Greeters: Helen Green and Helen Smith
- 10/19/08 Ushers: Shirley Carambat, Bill Jeffrion, Mrytle Winbush, Fay Kaufman  
Reader: Karen Giurantano  
Communion Servers: Transition Team  
Acolyte: Stuart Harrison  
Greeters: Lucille Gebhardt and Shirley Adams
- 10/26/08 Ushers: Shirley Carambat, Bill Jeffrion, Mrytle Winbush, Fay Kaufman  
Reader: John Pecoul  
Acolyte: Stuart Harrison  
Greeters: Lucille Gebhardt and Shirley Adams

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