



Central Connections

175 years... and still a frontier church

Volume 42 Issue 13

A Sign of God's Kingdom in the Heart of the City

July 15, 2007

Scripture

July 22

Amos 8:1-12

Psalm 52

Colossians 1:15-28

Luke 10:38-42

July 29

Hosea 1:2-10

Psalm 85

Colossians 2:6-15, (16-19)

Luke 11:1-13

August 5

Hosea 11:1-11

Psalm 107:1-9, 43

Colossians 3:1-11

Luke 12:13-21



Central Christian Church

Rev. Linda McCrae

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Worship: Sundays @ 10:30am

Study: Sundays @ 9:30am

Study: Wednesdays @ 6:30pm

This Saturday I fly to Fort Worth, Texas for the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). I haven't counted up, but I think at least twenty of us from Central will be participating in the Assembly – including the General Minister and President of our denomination and the major planner of the Assembly.

This gathering, which takes place every two years, is a time for the church to come together and remind ourselves of a few things. One, we remind ourselves how many and varied we are. We fill up a convention hall! And we in Indianapolis are not the only kind of Disciple. Neither are the ones we meet from Omaha or the South Bronx or Conway or Greensburg or San Diego. We learn about each other, what we're involved in, what we care about.

Two, we remind ourselves that we are essentially the same. Biologically, someone mentioned to me recently, all human beings are 99% identical. Sitting in a huge room and singing or praying with thousands of other Disciples helps make the point for me in church terms. We may differ on the specifics of theology and politics and anything else we might discuss, but we are created with the same hopes and dreams and longings – and need to be together.

The other reminder comes from the theme scripture of the General Assembly, the story in which Jesus starts with five loaves and two fish, takes and blesses and breaks and gives, and a crowd of thousands is fed with twelve baskets of leftovers. At General Assembly (as in weekly worship) we remind ourselves of what we know at our core – that God's love is unconditional, God's care deep and unending.

If you're heading for Assembly, enjoy! If you're not, please hold this gathering in your prayers. In two years the General Assembly will be held in Indianapolis, and we'll all have the chance to participate!

Blessings,
Linda



A congregational planning retreat will take place on Sunday afternoon, September 23. It will begin with lunch, immediately following worship, and end by 4pm. ALL ARE INVITED!!!! This is the opportunity to have input into the programs, projects and ministries of Central during this coming year. More details will be forthcoming, but please put it on your calendars now.

Covenant of Welcome and Affirmation

The Circle of Action after morning worship on July 15 began work on a Covenant of Welcome and Affirmation.

After three Circles of Inquiry on the question of being formally an Open and Affirming Congregation, the consensus was that the issue is larger than one related mostly to sexual orientation and gender identity. The Circle of Action intends that a Covenant of Welcome and Affirmation give flesh and inclusiveness to the mission statement of Central Christian Church as we “extend God’s boundless hospitality to all.”

A small writing group will craft the wording, another Circle of Action will respond to that work, and a process will be designed to seek the wisdom of everyone at Central Christian Church as we “wrestle” with these particular questions of faith.

For more information, contact Patti Case (926-4844, caseadams@ameritech.net) or Leon Riley (255-7213, LRiley4@msn.com).

Finding Wholeness - Body and Soul

(A new service at Central Christian Church)

Stress is the bane of modern life and can be a barrier to our health - emotionally, physically, and even spiritually. A new service to reduce stress is now available at Central: Teresa Survance has begun offering Therapeutic Massage at the church on Thursday evenings. Her rate is \$50 per hour (and a portion of that—\$8.00—goes back to Central!). To make an appointment, call Teresa at 374-3103. (Her number is also in the church directory.)

David Licht

Mission Is Everywhere

The word “mission” often implies traveling to another country to teach and work. The work done in foreign missions is important, of course, but we can’t all make the trip. What we can do, however, is be faithful servants where we live. Mission is about putting the face and name of Jesus in front of those who don’t know him. We can do that in many ways — any place and any day.



Penny’s Care Team is hosting a baby shower open house for Penny & Jeremiah on August 11th from 1 to 3 at the home of Debbie Abbott and David Licht. Penny will be registered at Target later this week.

If you would be interested in participating in the purchase of a larger gift or have questions about how to be helpful, please contact a member of Penny’s Care Team:

Debbie Abbott
Lori Adams
Mary Hays
Mindy Hamm
David Licht
Marily Porter
Glenda Survance



Regardless of our politics, we remember and pray for the families of those who died in military service since the last newsletter. We also remember the countless innocents from every nation who have died in war whose names we will never know.

Raymond R. Buchan, 33
Victor A. Garcia, 22
Jonathan M. Rossi, 20
Michael L. Ruoff Jr., 31
William C. Chambers, 20
Juan M. Garcia Schill, 20
Jeremy L. Tinnel, 20
Christopher N. Rutherford, 25
Steven A. Davis, 23
Andrew T. Engstrom, 22
Scott A.M. Oswell, 33
James M. Ahearn, 43
Keith A. Kline, 24
Michelle R. Ring, 24
Jeremy L. Stacey, 23
Anthony M.K. Vinnedge, 24
Jeremy D. Allbaugh, 21
Steven A. Stacy, 23
Gene L. Lamie, 25
Eric A. Lill, 28
Jon M. Lockey, 44
Bruce C. Salazar Jr., 24
Kory D. Wiens, 20
Le Ron A. Wilson, 18
Steven Phillip Daugherty, 28
Jason Dale Lewis, 30
Robert Richard McRill, 42
Roberto J. Causor Jr., 21
Jason E. Dore, 25

Should It Be So Hard to Ask for Help?

Serving recently as an elder at the Lord's Table, I discovered I was in trouble.

Offering a public prayer always, for me, fires some adrenalin into my nervous system. That touch of excitement can be valuable. It gives focus, stimulates verbal creativity, perhaps makes me more bold in how I pray. Adrenalin also may make anyone tremble.

This Sunday, I found that the tremor I've been living with for many years was amplified by the adrenalin. The prayer went all right. But when I tried to remove a communion cup from the tray, the cup's contents splashed across the tray. Using two hands to steady the cup didn't help enough. I asked the deacon to place a cup on the table for me.

I was coming close to tears with the awful realization that I couldn't take communion. Then I whispered to pastor Linda, asking her to hand me another morsel of bread. As we drank in unison, I dipped the bread in my cup and received the precious liquid by intinction.

Lots of people share this common malady. As tremors become more severe, handling the little communion cups can become a challenge. I doubt that I am alone in this discovery. It would be tragic for this very ordinary physical disability to be a barrier that prevents anyone from joining with the community of Christ at the table of our savior.

When I am sitting in a pew, I may ask a neighbor also to take a cup for me. Perhaps it is particularly fitting to ask for help. It gives the other person an opportunity to perform an act of compassion — an act of ministry. In Jewish tradition, it is asking for a *mitzvah*, a good work. You are, in fact, giving a gift to the one who then can offer you a service.

Asking for help also acknowledges that we are not simply individuals coming to commune with God. We are a *community*. Doesn't God's grace usually come to us through someone else? It comes to us in reassuring words or in a smile. It comes in an assisting hand. It comes in small gestures of kindness and in large acts of sacrifice. Each of us, whether a follower of Jesus or not, can be an agent of God's love for another child of God.

Perhaps letting another help us at this table, which is at the center of the community of Christ, also moves us from *taking* communion to *receiving* communion. If so, it moves us toward accepting love which surely has its origin in the very heart of God.

'Disciplesworld' to Provide Online News from Assembly

DisciplesWorld Magazine will offer daily news updates from the 2007 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). DisciplesWorld plans to report on the major plenary sessions at the Assembly, including business discussions, worship services, banquets, dinners and awards, missions projects, youth programs and other major news events. Although the General Assembly is not scheduled to begin until Saturday, July 21, DisciplesWorld will begin coverage on July 18 and will report on several pre-events. For more information about DisciplesWorld Assembly news that will be available online, visit: www.disciples.org/dns/Releases2007/07106.pdf (PDF)

NorthWest Churches Lead in Raising Money for Congo Hospital

A handful of Disciples churches in the Northwest Region have begun raising money to help rebuild the Bolenge Hospital in the Congo. A major section of the hospital, which is located south of Mbandaka, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was destroyed by fire in June of 2006. The hospital was the center of life for many in the community there, as well as for those with the Congolese Disciples Church, known as the Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo (CDCC).

Recently, the Bolenge Hospital rebuilding project was not selected by American Express as one of the 50 programs in which the financial corporation would invest funding. Therefore, about \$2.5 million will have to be raised to restore the hospital from all sources, including international and Congolese health organizations and the Congolese government. For Disciples in the Northwest, the fundraising campaign is being led by First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Bellingham, Wash., in coordination with Global Ministries. Two other Northwest Region churches, Mount Vernon First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Greenacres Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), also are helping. Gifts to the Bolenge Hospital Project may be sent to Office of Resource Development, Global Ministries, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

Maria I. Ortiz, 40
Courtney T. Johnson, 26
Jeffrey R. McKinney, 40
Allen A. Greka, 29
Christopher D. Kube, 18
John R. Massey, 29
Benjamin B. Bartlett Jr., 25
Robert D. Varga, 24

*"In war, there are no
unwounded soldiers."*

Jose Narosky



Volunteer Needed

Community Outreach is seeking some to help with the donations/expenses for this area of ministry. Last year the Community Outreach budget was \$1,800 but spent in excess of \$6,000 thanks to generous designated gifts. We are looking for a volunteer to write thank you notes, and to insure that designated gifts are distributed to those areas of the ministry the donor intended. This would be an hour or so a month other than in December/January when the donations from the Alternative Giving market are recorded and distributed.

If you would be willing to assist in this important area of ministry, please contact Glenda Survance at 317.413.1139 or communityoutreach@indyccc.org.



Our mission statement:

Celebrating the unconditional welcome we receive from God through Christ, we join together in worship, community & witness to wrestle with deep questions of faith, to grow in love for God and one another, to confront oppression and injustice, and to extend God's boundless hospitality to all.

21st Century Vision Team Wants Your Opinions About Church Identity

Because identity is a concern for all parts of the church, the 21st Century Vision Team wants to hear from you. The Team has been working for more than a year to identify the marks of a faithful church. It believes a church's identity must be firmly rooted in scripture and yet be flexible enough to adapt to changes in culture and shifting demands of mission. "We want to be able to see how Disciples view themselves," said Adonna Bowman, a team member and Executive Director of the Office of Disciples Women. "Where does our consensus lie? In what ways can we create this common language that all can live with?"

The team's goal is to create an identity statement that all parts of the church will find acceptable. As a first step in this process, the team has developed a survey that will be widely distributed during this month's General Assembly in Fort Worth. The survey can be completed by going to the Cyber Café located in the Disciples Home Mission exhibit area. Interested persons also can access the survey by going online at:

www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=jPYbty63FJ3u4JtG9DrDkg_3d_3d

Those who want to know more about the work of the 21st Century Vision Team, appointed by General Minister and President Sharon E. Watkins and moderated by Cynthia Hale, founding pastor of Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Ga., can attend a 90-minute workshop on Tuesday afternoon, July 24 in Room 100 of the Fort Worth Convention Center.

Disciples Center for Public Witness Forms Governors Council

The Disciples Center for Public Witness has formed a "Council of Governors" to help guide and support its ministry. The council consists of nine members, all of whom are leaders of congregations and other units that partner in and support the shared ministry of the center.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the Center will benefit tremendously from their leadership and support," said Ken Brooker Langston, director of the Disciples Justice Advocacy Network (DJAN) and coordinator of the Disciples Center for Public Witness. Several members of the Council will be present at a special after-session for Disciples advocates on Saturday night, July 21 at the General Assembly in the Fort Worth Convention Center. To read more about the center's new council, see: www.disciples.org/dns/Releases2007/07104.html

Brutal Attacks Continue on Villages in Darfur

By Charlotte Brudenell, ACT-Caritas

Nyala, South Darfur, June 25, 2007 - In South Darfur, another 3,000 people have been forced to flee their homes because of brutal attacks on their villages, adding their number to the more than 2.5 million others who have suffered the same fate. The conflict has killed at least 200,000 people since violence escalated in 2004.

Responding to reports that villagers had been forced from their homes in and around Edd el Fursan, UN agencies and ACT-Caritas carried out an assessment mission in the area last month. "One village was completely empty," said Simon Egadu, ACT-Caritas Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinator. The inhabitants of the villages now gather their families under trees in a nearby town.

"On Saturday, we were attacked by people with guns riding in three land cruiser vehicles, and on horses and camels" said one villager. All the other villagers reported the same sequence of events. Some men and children had poorly bandaged wounds from bullets that had gone right through a limb as they ran. "When we were attacked, we just ran in any direction. I have lost a child and my sister. I have not seen them for ten days now," said one woman, weeping.

In the bush just outside another small town, the situation is the same. About 1,700 people from another village camp out under trees. Why did they come here? "The Janjaweed," says one man.

The local authorities initially provided some basic assistance with food. However, the displaced fear that if organizations help them by providing water, cooking utensils, blankets or other essential items, the armed militias will be tempted to attack and try to steal anything they have.

ACT-Caritas workers say that people need shelter - protection from the sun and heat in the day and from the wind and cold at night. "Protection is a critical issue. The people are in fear. Armed men are moving around as close as five kilometers away from them, and there are threats that they will be attacked again," said Mr. Egadu.

Many people want to go to Nyala, the capital of South Darfur, where they will be safer and where basic services are better. The rainy season has begun, making travel to remote locations to deliver humanitarian aid to the displaced extremely difficult. One Omdah (head sheikh) from a neighboring town and some people in Nyala were able to send trucks to the area to collect the people and transport them to Nyala, where they are settling in established camps for internally displaced persons. However, some villagers report that they have been blocked when trying to travel to Nyala.

The assessment team later met with the local authorities, who said they had not been hindering movement of the displaced in any way. But they did not rule out that another "security body" might be doing so.

With the situation unclear, further assessments in the area will be carried out to determine how to respond. ACT-Caritas is already providing blankets and essential household items for the new arrivals in Al Salam camp outside Nyala.



A Huge Thanks to the Worship & Wonder Coordinator. Debbie Abbott has agreed to take the responsibility for coordinating the Worship & Wonder program for our children between the ages of 3 and 2nd grade. She will be coordinating resources and volunteers. If you'd like to be part of this important ministry to some of our youngest worshippers, please contact Debbie and lend your support.

Newsletter submissions may be left in the church office or by eMailing
Crusader@indyccc.org.

We welcome articles, notes of congratulations or concern, biographical sketches... anything for the good of the church family.

Deadline for next newsletter
July 29, 2007



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Newsletter Mailed

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