



Central Connections

175 years... and still a frontier church

Volume 44 Issue 9

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

September 29, 2009

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Our sisters and brothers in the Jewish community have recently celebrated the festival of Sukkot, which commemorates the life of the Israelites in the desert during their journey to the promised land. During their wandering in the desert they lived in booths (*sukkot*), so Jews today build booths and for eight days do some of their eating and sleeping in them.

In an essay written after the terrorist attacks of September 2001, Arthur Waskow, director of the Shalom Center, talked about the *sukkah* as a fragile hut, the most vulnerable of houses. Vulnerable in time, since it lasts for only a week each year. Vulnerable in space, since its roof must be not only leafy but leaky enough to let in the starlight and gusts of wind and rain.

Rabbi Waskow goes on in words that I find helpful to read in the midst of economic crisis and war and new threats of violence and our personal struggles and fears:

In our evening prayers throughout the year, just as we prepare to lie down in vulnerable sleep, we plead with God, "Spread over us Your sukkah of shalom – of peace and safety."

Why does the prayer plead for a sukkah of shalom rather than a temple or fortress or palace of shalom, which would surely be more safe and more secure?

Precisely because the sukkah is so vulnerable.

For much of our lives we try to achieve peace and safety by building with steel and concrete and toughness: Pyramids. Air raid shelters. Pentagons. World Trade Centers.

But the sukkah reminds us: We are in truth all vulnerable...We all live in a sukkah. Even the wildest oceans, the mightiest buildings, the healthiest balance sheets, the most powerful weapons did not shield us.

There are only wispy walls and leaky roofs between us. The planet is in fact one interwoven web of life. The command to love my neighbor as I do myself is not an admonition to be nice: It is a statement of truth like the law of gravity. However much and in whatever way I love my neighbor, that will turn out to be the way I love myself..

Much of this applies to life in a congregation as well. There are only wispy walls and leaky roofs between us. Our vulnerability, when embraced, will be our strength. May God continue to bless us in our vulnerable life together.

Linda



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Worship: Sundays @ 10:30am
Study: Sundays @ 9:00am
Study: Wednesdays @ 6:30pm



Three Young Inquirers to be Baptized

Contact: Pastor
Linda McCrae

For several months, three of our younger members have been engaged in a study to learn the basics of the Christian faith and to decide if they wanted to be baptized. Olivia Adams, Ben Leraris and Molly Leraris have decided to be baptized and join Central Christian Church. Their baptisms will take place during worship on October 25.

In addition the Young Inquirers have decided to do a service project. They will be making blankets to share with children in need.

We celebrate the gifts these children bring to our community!

General Board Meeting News

Contact: Deborah Butt

The General Board met for its first meeting of the 2009-2010 year on September 17th at 5:45 p.m.

We voted on the following items:

- The dates for the coming year's board meetings were set :
November 19, 2009, February 25, 2010, May 27, 2010
- The date for the annual congregational meeting will be June 6, 2010.
- New members to the Pastoral Relations Committee will be Greg Nickel and Mary Harris.
- ByLaws changes that were approved were : a) The Human Resources Ministry Support Team is renamed the Volunteer Ministry Support Team, b) Finance Committee becomes a fourth ministry support team, c) Treasurer becomes a member of the Ministry Coordination Committee, and d) the Board secretary will keep all official documents and policies.
- Pastor Linda McCrae's housing allowance was approved.

Reports were received from the Ministry Coordination Council, the delegates to the General Assembly, the Building Committee, the Diaconate, the Elders, the Trustees, and Pastor Linda McCrae. The trustees' report concerned the need to purchase a new boiler. Because of the financial indebtedness of this need, a congregational meeting to approve funding is set for Sunday, October 4, after morning worship. More details about the need for a boiler are featured in another article in this newsletter.

If you have any further questions, please contact Deborah Butt, Moderator, (317) 865-0737, moderator@indyccc.org.



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.

Fortin, Joey, 22
Werner, Earl D., 38
Marks, Taylor D., 19
Selge, Todd W., 25
Shay, Jordan M., 22
Helton, Joseph D., 24
Smith, Shannon M., 31
Lyons, Thomas F., 20
Myers, Zachary T., 21
Thornsbury, Duane A., 30
Cote Jr., Michael S., 20
Courtois, Matthew R., 22

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

Jose Narosky



Keepers of the Ark

October 3

8:00 to Whenever

Contact: Terry Bradbury

Another opportunity to join the Keepers of the Ark is scheduled for Saturday, September 12. With the big push to welcome our General Assembly Guest over, we are focusing on the needed tasks to maintain the church and its grounds. There is a wide variety of jobs requiring a wide variety of skills – and some jobs requiring no skills! Come join us for breakfast and devotions at 8:00am. Work begins at 9:00am and goes until 12:00 noon. If you can't commit for the entire morning, drop by for an hour or two. See you Saturday, October 3!

Gas Fired Boiler Needs Replaced

Contact: Steve Cecil

A special meeting of the congregation has been called for Sunday, October 4, 2009 to discuss the replacement of the gas-fired boiler. The meeting will be held immediately after the worship service. Members of the Trustees, the Physical Assets Team and other appropriate church officers will be available to explain the problem, propose solutions and listen to concerns.

The problem: The week of September 14th it was determined that the existing gas-fired boiler that heats the entire facility is beyond repair and will require some type of replacement system. An inspection team which included members of the Physical Assets Team, the trustees, and a professional boiler consultant, concluded that the existing boiler (approximately 15 years old) had significant damage due to corrosion as a result of faulty gaskets and improper maintenance.

Proposed Solution: Consultation with the boiler experts resulted in a number of alternatives which included variations of the following: 1) Repair of the existing system (not feasible due to condition of the unit), 2) Replacement of the existing one-boiler system with an in-kind unit, 3) Installation of two smaller boilers along with a manifold system that would allow directing the heat to zones within the building thus adding efficiency.

The preferred alternative is 3), the installation of 2 smaller boilers. This alternative, while the more costly, will provide greater flexibility, greater efficiencies, as well as some redundancy (having a back-up in the event that one boiler fails).

Cost and Funding: The cost of the preferred solution has been estimated by the consultant as approximately \$62,000. This includes the removal of the existing boiler, the purchase of the new units and necessary piping, valves etc, installation, and a maintenance agreement.

The Trustees have proposed that funding be provided by obtaining a loan through Church Extension. This could be accomplished by re-financing and increasing an existing loan. The existing loan has a balance of approximately \$20,000 and monthly payments of \$417/month are paid directly from the earnings of the Endowment Fund. It is proposed that this loan be re-negotiated to an amount not to exceed \$100,000 thus increasing the loan by \$80,000. The \$80,000 would then be available to pay for the new boiler system and allow for a contingency of approximately \$18,000 that could be used for additional facility repairs and energy efficiencies.

The result would be an increased payment, making the total monthly payment approximately \$860. The Trustees have determined that the increased loan payment can be covered from earnings from the Endowment Fund.

Action Required: At the General Board meeting on Thursday, September 17, representatives of the Trustees requested that the Board authorize the Trustees to enter into this new mortgage agreement with Church Extension. During the discussion it was pointed out that any action resulting in the addition of new debt by the church requires the approval of the congregation. The Board approved the request contingent upon the approval of the congregation. Also, the Board requested that a project team consisting of 2 members of the Trustees and 2 members of the Physical Assets Team be designated to oversee the work.

The Trustees apologize for the urgency in which the congregational meeting has been scheduled and appreciate the sensitivity of the process; however, it is critical that the work proceed as the winter cold will soon be upon us.

Storytelling May Hold Key to Central's Next Steps in Intentionally Welcoming All

Contact: Patti Case

Next steps for Central Christian Church in living out the decision to be a congregation that is open and affirming of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning community may be to share its story. About 30 Centralites gathered for last Sunday's Circle of Action called by the Elders. They remembered together how the congregation moved from the late-1980s era of fear and disagreement over sexual orientation to the recent vote to become a congregation that publicly claims status as an "Open & Affirming" congregation.

"I remember that we began to open up and share our stories," said long-time member, Kerry Armstrong, who serves as vice moderator and elder. "In the context of that kind of transparency, attitudes began to really change." Apparently honest conversation and storytelling continues to transform.

"My heart is singing just because we are having this conversation," said one regular worshipping guest, who participated in last Sunday's Circle of Action. "I was part of a congregation that was not even having the conversation. But here, I find hope and healing," she added as tears streamed down her face. "This may be just what makes me decide to join this church."

The group came to consensus around story sharing as a strategy for living out the intention to be a welcoming congregation. To that end, the group brainstormed ideas to consider as the planning moves forward:

- Script a dramatic, theatrical piece based on true stories to perform or make available to others to perform, and pair it with a follow up session that empowers genuine and intimate audience conversation and further story sharing.
- Invite the church's fellowship groups, especially "dinners of eight" to encourage intentional story sharing during the small-group gatherings.
- Invite members and friends to tell their own stories and submit them for possible publication in the church newsletter and/or other appropriate venues.
- Partner with the wider church to host video interviews for use online and in educational contexts around receiving diversity as God-given.
- Look into "print-on-demand" options available for collections of stories that inspire new ways of thinking about seeing diversity as a God-given gift.
- Share news about a letter drafted by the Elders and already sent to the Indiana Regional Board about the Region's policy that makes sexual orientation a condition upon which one's ordination can be denied, or standing revoked.
- Explore options to teach story telling skills so Central members are equipped to tell the congregation's or their own story in a short enough version to get the point across quickly: a story that can be shared on an elevator ride for example.
- Engage Indiana story tellers in helping Centralites learn the craft of story telling for any number of venues.
- Encourage Central Elders to contact the other Indiana Open & Affirming congregations, with an eye to others beyond the state borders.
- Continue ongoing conversations on establishing an Indiana chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Affirming Disciples Alliance, which currently is a national organization of Disciples.

With the Circle of Action conversation and idea-generating process as a starting place, Elder Pat Carrithers will draft a communication strategy by Oct. 10 to bring to the Central Communication Team to help the congregation determine next wise action on how to live into its claim as an Open & Affirming congregation.

Lectionary Scripture



October 4

- Job 1:1; 2:1-10
- Psalm 26
- Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12
- Mark 10:2-16

October 11

- Job 23:1-9, 16-17
- Psalm 22:1-15
- Hebrews 4:12-16
- Mark 10:17-31

October 18

- Job 38:1-7, (34-41)
- Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c
- Hebrews 5:1-10
- Mark 10:35-45

October 25

- Job 42:1-6, 10-17
- Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22)
- Hebrews 7:23-28
- Mark 10:46-52



Open & Affirming

Those with ideas to share may send them to Pat Carrithers at pncarr@sbcglobal.net, or to Patti Case at pcase@ogmp.disciples.org

Cookies for Friends

Autumn is the perfect time of the year to sow kindness and reap a "harvest" full of friendships. Make this special treat to share with someone.

What you need:

- An adult to help
- ½ cup butter or margarine
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup cooked or canned pumpkin
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1½ cups diced, roasted almonds
- 1 cup chocolate pieces
- Raffia or fall-colored ribbon (optional)

What you do:

1. Cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy.
2. Beat in egg, pumpkin and vanilla.
3. In separate bowl, mix flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, nutmeg and cinnamon.
4. Add dry mix to creamed mixture.
5. Add almonds and chocolate pieces; mix thoroughly.
6. Drop by teaspoons onto well-greased cookie sheets.
7. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until lightly browned.
8. Cool on racks. Makes about six dozen.
9. Stack two cookies on top of each other. Then tie them like a present with the raffia or ribbon. Give the cookies to friends and family to thank them for their friendship.



Autumn brings many visible changes. God makes lots of foods and grains ready for harvest. He also tells us that if we sow in peace, we, too, can raise a harvest.

Find and circle the bold (dark) words from James 3:17-18, NIV.

"But the **WISDOM** that comes from **HEAVEN** is first of all **PURE**; then **PEACELOVING**, **CONSIDERATE**, **SUBMISSIVE**, full of **MERCY** and **GOOD FRUIT**, **IMPARTIAL** and **SINCERE**. **PEACEMAKERS** who **SOW** in **PEACE** raise a **HARVEST** of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**."

C	S	P	E	A	C	E	L	O	V	I	N	G	F
O	U	E	U	X	W	C	E	Y	T	P	R	W	R
N	B	A	U	L	T	J	C	O	R	E	I	I	U
S	M	C	P	R	X	K	F	W	I	A	G	S	I
I	I	E	M	E	R	C	Y	I	I	C	H	D	T
D	S	T	C	E	R	U	D	M	Z	E	T	O	S
E	S	I	V	X	J	C	U	P	W	M	E	M	D
R	I	H	E	A	V	E	N	A	W	A	O	H	P
A	V	M	P	J	M	K	L	R	T	K	U	V	W
T	E	O	C	G	O	O	D	T	G	E	S	S	L
E	H	A	R	V	E	S	T	I	B	R	N	Y	O
X	H	D	D	R	Q	Q	E	A	Z	S	E	D	B
S	I	N	C	E	R	E	E	L	S	Y	S	O	W
G	I	P	U	R	E	S	O	Y	C	E	S	E	F



The 30th Annual Indianapolis CROP Hunger Walk is Sunday, October 18. This interfaith effort raises over \$100,000 each year to support hunger-relief and development around the world. One-fourth of the funds raised stay in Marion County to support food banks and similar ministries here at home.

The 3½-mile walk is a great opportunity for fellowship and raising money to help Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty (CROP). You can also support those who are walking. Here's the online link: <http://tinyurl.com/Centralcropwalk>

Because all the expenses for the CROP WALK are covered by other sources, your contribution goes a long way. Please be generous with your donation to this important ministry.

Here are some examples of what your dollars can provide:

- \$ 5 A blanket for a refugee or disaster victim
- \$15 Farming tools (hoe, shovel, and rake) so several families can feed themselves
- \$25 400 oral rehydration kits to save scores of children suffering from diarrhea
- \$50 500 baby fish (fingerlings) for a fish farm that will help feed a village

Those interested in walking include:

- Karen Sanford
- Bob Van Tuyl
- Selena Bartelson
- Judith Mayans
- Brad Catt

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Jim Higginbotham, 439-3905 higgija@earlham.edu or Marilyn Porter, 255-8170, c.m.porter@att.net.

Local programs share CWS grant

Five local hunger-fighting programs received grants from Church World Service equivalent to one-fourth of the funds raised in the 2008 CROP Hunger Walk. More than \$31,212 was shared by these agencies :

Gleaners Food Bank (9%) Gleaners serves as the fiscal agent for our CROP Hunger Walk expenses.)

Indiana Christian Leadership Conference (4%) Volunteers from this program help on Walk Day.)

Second Helpings (4%) Volunteers and staff serve at our water stop located at the Unitarian Universalist/Indianapolis church.

St. Vincent de Paul Society (4%) SVDP provides special logistical services for our Walk.

The Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis (4%) CFGI holds a contract with the Walk to pay our Walk Assistant.)

The CROP Hunger Walk Organizing Team has designated these five agencies to share in the CWS grant from the 2009 Walk. We appreciate each agency's willingness to help make our Walk Day a success!



Michael Dodds for leading worship, and to Steve Cecil for giving the children's moment during the month of September.

Our faithful Free Clothing volunteers, including Lydia Brasher, Delbert Crocker, Phyllis Crocker, Mindy Hamm, Mike Marlow, and Clark Williamson.

Marvin Williams and Darrel Crouter for offering special Sunday school classes related to the history of the Stone-Campbell movement.

Jim Higginbotham for hosting the Circle of Action on September 27, and to Kerry Armstrong and Mary Schilling for providing the meal.

Ed Groves and Matt Barth, for organizing the pasta dinner and speaker on WalBiCus Weekend.



All are invited to a

Planned Giving & Wills seminar on Sunday, October 11 following worship.

Lunch will be provided, and questions will be answered, such as:

Why is a will important?
Can a will be changed?
Can I write a will myself?
What happens if I die without a will?

Ellen Mitchell of Church Extension will be the presenter.

Alternative Giving Market 2009 Cancelled?



Alternative Giving Market

Contact: Glenda Survance

For the past several years Central has hosted an Alternative Giving Market the first three Sundays of Advent. The goal of the market was 3-fold:

- To educate on a variety of ways to celebrate Christmas more simply
- To raise money for the ministries of Central, the larger church and ecumenical organizations with which we partner
- To move the focus of gift giving from retail gifts to gifts that make a difference throughout the world

Each year we have raised an average of \$2,000, giving gifts of lunches, animals, memberships, vaccinations, school supplies, medical kits, tents, rent for refugees, movies, etc.

This year, we have not had a coordinator volunteer to organize the event. We have volunteers for some of the tables, volunteers to make the soups, procedures that have been used for the past few years and a congregation that has participated well. Without a volunteer coordinator for the event, this successful ministry will be put on hold for this year.

If you have an interest in this ministry, please contact Glenda Survance and she will provide you with the details on what is involved. While this opportunity may take several hours to get started, it quickly provides a great sense of fulfillment just a few weeks later when the details of where the gifts will be distributed is collected.



Elders' Retreat

Contact: Verity Jones

Servant leadership was the theme for the Elders retreat on August 29, 2009. Central's twelve Elders — elected by the congregation annually to provide spiritual care — gathered at Christian Theological Seminary for the day with Pastor McCrae to reflect upon and plan

their work for the year.

Reflecting on Mark 9 and 10, Jim Higginbotham led the Elders in a discussion about the qualities of servant leadership that they may strive to exhibit for the congregation, including humility and a willingness to step up to responsibilities, the desire to build up others, taking the time to help create community, and envisioning where we are going together as a congregation.

In coordination with Pastor McCrae, the Elders also organized their visitation to church members who are homebound, and the portion of the congregation that they will shepherd throughout this year.

The Elders are also planning another Circle of Action regarding the congregation's Open and Affirming witness. Stay tuned for more information.

Darrel Crouter is the chair of the Elders this year. Other Elders include Kerry Armstrong, Pat Carrithers, Jim Higginbotham, Verity Jones, Miki Mathiodakis, Greg Nickel, Scott Nickel, Leon Riley, Mary Schilling, Barb Weatherspoon, and Beth White.



Contact: Sarah Murphy

GIDA Habitat for Humanity has selected its build site for 2009 and has scheduled the work days. The site for the Tekie Kismu family home is 2223 Morgan (west side of Indianapolis). Work schedule is Wed, Sep 30; Sat, Oct 24; Thu, Oct 29; Fri, Oct 30; and Thu, Nov 5. If you would like to volunteer or if you have any questions, please contact Sarah Murphy at sarah.murphy@prodigy.net.

Message form homeowner:

My name is Tekie Kismu. I am from Eritrea , East Africa . I was born in 1972 in Asmara , Eritrea . I made eighth grade. In Eritrea I worked in import-export. I was married to Mibret in 2001. I have one daughter. Her name is Delina Tsfai. She was born March 28, 2003.

I came to the United States in September, 2003 because I had serious problems with my eyes. I have had diabetes since I was seven years. I had surgery on my eyes in Indianapolis in 2004 and after surgery I lost my eyes. I am totally blind now. I had been living in Indiana for three years when I got into school for the blind. I was in blind school for six months. Mibret and Delina came to the United States from Eritrea in 2006. I am working now in Bosma Enterprises and Mibret is working at IUPUI.

I am from a large family. My mom, two brothers and two sisters are alive. My wife has three brothers and three sisters. Her mother and father are still alive. We are Orthodox Christian, which is the oldest Christian religion. In Indianapolis we have a church. We go every Sunday. The church is life. Praying is important and we pray for everybody, for the whole world.

I like America and I like Indianapolis . My feeling is better now because I am getting a new house. I found out about Habitat from my friend Fsha who is from Ethiopia and who has a Habitat house. I am excited to be getting a house.



Our Coffee Cart - A Reminder of Its Story

Contact: Barbara Williamson

Each Sunday in fellowship hall there is a cart with bags of coffee, boxes of tea, hot chocolate, baking cocoa, chocolate bars, nuts and dried fruit. This isn't just convenient - this is a justice ministry in which Central participates. The items on the cart are produced using the Fair Trade charter - meaning that everyone who participates in the production is paid living wages and the process is done with a priority of environmental stewardship. The interesting part is that in addition to supporting workers a world away, we are getting superior product at prices less than we would pay at local grocery stores for the same product. The proceeds from the cart provide the coffee served at Central during fellowship time and other Central events.

A huge thanks to Mindy Hamm, Barbara Williamson, Kim Watkins, Marilyn Porter and Sandy Heidenreich who staff and stock the coffee cart making our participation in this ministry as easy as walking through fellowship hall.



Contact: Glenda Survance

In September we served 85 bags of food, 244 individuals in the households receiving the food and 24 of those were seniors over the age of 60.

We need your help. The need is greater so our food runs out more quickly. You can help by making a donation and marking it "Food Pantry on the envelope or memo line of your check.

If you want to pick up the items we need include:

- Macaroni & Cheese
- Pasta & Pasta Sauce
- Soup
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Vegetables

Brown paper bags (we use 100-160 each month)

Simply bring to Central and place in the shopping cart in fellowship hall.



MCC Report

Contact: Kerry Armstrong

The Ministry Coordination Council (MCC) met on September 21st. Dan Mosely led the council in a discussion on recruitment and maintaining effective leadership in a church organization. How to identify, ask and inform potential leaders to perform particular tasks were discussed. Lydia Brasher and Jennifer Riggs are the leaders of the Volunteer Ministry Team. They have formed a group called Central Matchmakers to help identify members of the congregation who might have particular gifts at leadership in a particular ministry. There are many opportunities to serve the church either in a long term capacity or in the short term (ie. a one time event). If you have an interest in being a part of the Thanksgiving dinner preparation team (a one time event), would like to oversee the Food Pantry organization and preparation (a longer commitment) or would like to manage and oversee the annual Alternative Giving event in December (a short time commitment) please see Jennifer Riggs or Lydia Brasher.



If you enjoy reading what others are doing in the church, you can help spread the word.

Following any event, simply send a couple of paragraphs to newsletter@indyccc.org and we will include in in the newsletter for all to share.

Its through this sharing that others will learn of opportunities to get involved and the happenings in the life of the church

Please mark your calendars for these upcoming events:

- Oct 3 – Keepers of the Ark – 8am to 12Noon
- Oct 4 – World Communion Day
- Oct 4 – Adult Education – Darrel Crouter – Sunday School
The Thirteen Propositions on Christian Unity by Thomas Campbell –
- Oct 10 – AIDS Walk – Vermont and Meridian – 11am
- Oct 11 – Finance Ministry Team - Seminar on Wills & Planned Giving – Ellen Mitchell
- Oct 18 – Crop Walk – CTS 1:45pm
- Oct 18, 25 & Nov 1, 8 – Discussion on Cross – Following Services –
Clark Williamson
- Oct 19 – MCC Meeting – Church Conference Room – 5:45pm
- Nov 7 – Keepers of the Ark – 8am to 12Noon
- Nov 19 – General Board Meeting – Parlor – 5:45pm
- Nov 22 – Thanksgiving Dinner
- Nov 28 – Hanging of the Greens

Some Thoughts from Me

By Lydia Brasher

We have been spending a lot of time lately talking about the youth of our church. I can remember years ago Glenda Survance saying “we will grow our own youth group.” This memory was brought back to me during worship on April 26th, when during the service to celebrate our mission, several people witnessed to how they experience living out Central’s Mission Statement. Lori Adams talked about the phrase in our Mission Statement, “to grow in love for God and one another.” She lifted up two people one of whom was Glenda (Survance). Lori told us about how nine or ten years ago Central had very few children. “Glenda’s passion was sharing the Good News with children. Glenda speaks her faith and the children believe her. Taking up this calling she grew God’s church.”

That has been happening over these past several years. We have a group of people who serve our youngest family members in the nursery each week. Worship and Wonder, under the leadership of Glenda, is an integral part of the lives of the younger children with additional faithful people to help lead this program. The next step is Young Disciples for young people in grades two through six. The past few years Young Disciples has gone

through several incarnations. On Sunday, August 30th, a group of young people and adults met to plan for next year.

Can it be that teenagers are not far behind?

So it was that I read with interest an article by Randy Kuss, in the June, 2009, DisciplesWorld, entitled, “Hanging Out, The Art of Nurturing Teen Faith.” Rev. Kuss is a former staff director for the DHM Youth Ministries and currently the youth minister at Speedway Christian Church. I am quoting extensively from this article. He quotes a Native American, “If you want to teach children what it means to be an Indian (Cree, Cherokee, Navaho) – you take them to an old Indian (Cree, Cherokee, Navaho) and they spend time together. They eat together, play together, share stories and questions, go about the daily business of life. And in those moments together a child learns what it means to be Cree, Cherokee, Navaho – to be an Indian.”

Rev. Kuss quotes Walter Brueggeman, “If you ask almost any adult about the impact of church school on their growth, they will not tell you about books or curriculum – the central memory is of the teacher, learning is meeting.”

The Youth Ministry and Spirituality Project at San Francisco Theological Seminary suggests that one of the primary purposes of youth ministry is to foster Christian communities, which “accompany young people in the Way of Jesus.” Accompanying young people is not the same as teaching them. It is not the same as directing or leading, coaching or counseling. Nor is it being a buddy or playing games and having good times. There are times young people will need all these things from us, but accompaniment is something different. We walk beside them as they find their own path. They do not need to learn to walk our walk. They need to explore, see, hear, feel, and find their own path, the walk God calls them to walk. There are bits from our walk that may help. But many times they need us just to walk with them, literally or figuratively. And sometimes they need us to get out of the way, drop back, and let them go on ahead.

He then quotes Mark DeVries from his book, Sustainable Youth Ministry. “What matter most is that we provide opportunities for young people to hang out with Christian adults. For it is in the hanging out, in the being together and walking together through whatever serious or silly moments that are at hand, that things happen, that life is changed.”

Rev. Kuss goes on to say, “God did not send a proposition or a checklist to us; God sent a person. We need the gift of simply being old Christians hanging out with our kids. We need to know how to meet them and let them meet us, how to place-share as we accompany them in exploring their own call and path.”

This article reminded me of the first sermon Pastor Linda preached at Central. In that sermon she gave us some of her background. In the early 90’s, after ten years as refugees in Mexico as a result of The Scorched Earth Policy waged by the Guatemalan army against their own people, these Guatemalan refugees wanted to go home. The army was still there. Some things had changed. It was safe to go back but not safe enough to go alone. Linda, with her foreign passport accompanied (walked beside) a group back to Guatemala. I quote Linda, “out of that experience accompaniment has become my model of ministry. There are many shadows in the valley of death—we need each other to get through those valleys.”

In my mind these stories have come full circle.
Thanks for listening, Lydia Brasher

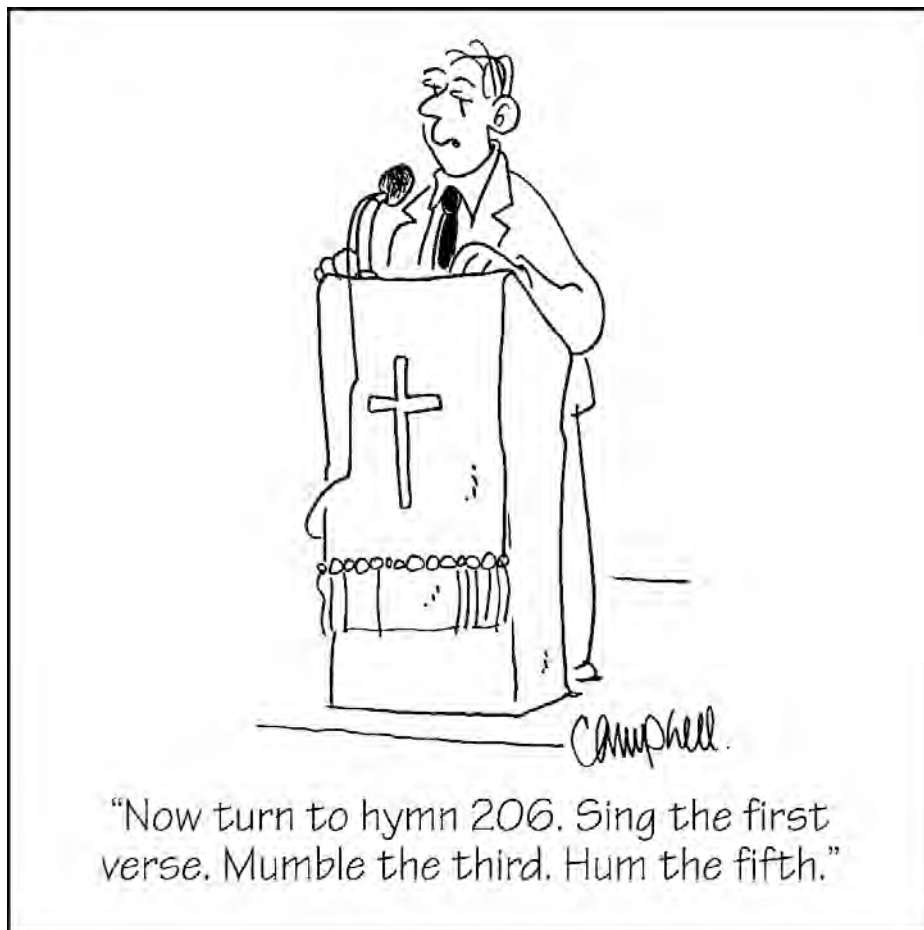


A huge thanks to everyone who participated in the videotaping and interviews regarding Children’s Worship and Wonder on Sunday.

As a result of our willingness to participate, Disciples of Home Mission has given us the Baptism Story for use in Worship and Wonder. It is a wonderful story with well crafted pieces that will serve us for years to come.

Newsletter submissions may be left in the church office or by eMailing newsletter@indyccc.org. We welcome articles, notes of congratulations or concern, biographical sketches... anything for the good of the church family.

**Deadline for
next newsletter
October 25**



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