

CHRONICLER

Cape Girardeau, Missouri

www.evangelicalucc-cape.org

OCTOBER 2009

Progressive Or Faithful ?

I met the new leader of the UCC, Rev. Geoffrey Black at the Cleveland headquarters a few months back. He seemed like a nice man and I certainly wish him well. He is assuming leadership at a time when the denomination is experiencing a financial crisis at every level. I recently attended the Persons In Ministry [PIM] retreat [Thanks for sending me!] where the lead speaker was a former employee of the national office. He had been laid off after he was selected to lead the conference and the unplanned need to cover his expenses put the conference in the "red." Similarly, this past Sunday's Eastern Association meeting was the last meeting where the Association will have its own Associate Conference Minister [Many thanks to Krista Betz for all her work.] And the Biennial meeting of the Missouri Mid South Conference at the end of October will be asked to approve deep cuts in the Conference budget.

Some of these problems are due to the continued decline in UCC church and membership numbers. There are just fewer churches and church members to provide support to the denomination. However, there is also a trend for churches to cut or eliminate giving to Our Churches Wider Mission [OCWM] the primary source of funding for the denomination. Evangelical UCC has continued to maintain its giving to OCWM, although we do not meet the recommended standard of 10 percent of our operating budget.

Rev. Black has committed himself to dealing creatively with the UCC's financial crisis. He recently stated in the *Washington Post*, "Growing smaller and having less money to spend limits our capacity to do some things. ... Yet, even with those

limitations, we are finding new ways to engage in our mission effectively and to stay connected, bearing witness to our unity. Indeed we are finding that these circumstances are opening us to new possibilities within our own communion. Additionally, we are exploring partnerships across denominational lines that we and others would not have considered in earlier, more flush days." As we continue to support the denomination through OCWM, it is good to know that we have a leader who wants

to get the "best bang for the buck."

I don't believe that Rev. Black expects to reverse the long term decline in UCC numbers. He points out that this decline started in the 1960s. I would add that this decline is something we have in common with all mainline Protestant denominations. All mainline denominations [Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Disciple, Methodist] are going to continue to lose churches and members for the foreseeable future.

In the face of this reality, it is not surprising that Rev. Black wants to, "stay the course" as far as the fundamental direction of the UCC. He stated, "We are fully cognizant of the decline and instead of denying it, we are beginning to adapt to our new reality with renewed hope and determination. And we believe that renewed hope can lead us to a place where progressive, inclusive visions of faith will be embraced."

I respect the fact that Rev. Black and the UCC leadership are committed to stay true to their vision, regardless of whether it will accelerate or slow the decline of the denomination. The UCC has an admirable stubbornness and goes its way regardless of where the "religious marketplace" dictates.

Continued on Page 2



Continued From Page 1

A good illustration of this is the new UCC publication, **“Sing! Prayer and Praise: A New Praise and Worship Music Song Book for Pastors, Musicians and Worship Leaders.”** This publication was introduced with much fanfare at the PIM. We spent some of our free time trying out the songs and incorporated them into our worship. However, as someone who listens to a great deal of Christian praise music and has attended many praise services, I had to conclude that the title was deliberately misleading; very few, if any, of the songs fit the popular definition of praise music. Although the songs were simplified by having only one treble clef part, they feature complicated melodies and rhythms that are unsuited to praise worship. Praise music needs to be simple because the congregation learns the songs by ear and sings along with the band with only the lyrics projected on the screen. **The stubborn refusal to, “dumb down”** these songs makes them useless for praise worship.

Rev. Black and the majority of UCC leaders and clergy are committed to a progressive vision. This vision says that change is good and that the future is better than the past. This vision holds that human history is a story of progress, of movement towards a better world. Most of them would **call this better world the “Kingdom of God.”** The model for progress is the growth of scientific knowledge. Because of the increase in scientific knowledge, we are better educated, more enlightened, and more insightful than our ancestors were. This view endorses a strong role of the national and [someday] world government in creating a more rational, better planned, and humane society.

The progressive viewpoint places no special value on tradition in any form. Things are not better because they are old. In fact, the older something is, the more likely it is to need correction. At the recent Eastern Association meeting, I was pleased when we were called to our feet to sing **“How Great Thou Art.”** However, when I saw the lyrics on the projector screen, I was shocked to see **that we were singing “How Great You Are.”** Throughout this beautiful hymn, the lyrics were updated to more contemporary and inclusive language. I did my best to sing the original lyrics from memory!

This points to one of the key elements of the progressive approach of the UCC, the idea of

an **“inclusive faith.”** The UCC intends to be a church for all people. The intention of the denomination is to progressively eliminate anything that will exclude any particular group of people. In practice, this has meant eliminating any language that we can imagine would offend any group. Vast portions of the Bible, both Old and New Testament are excluded from discussion **because they are not “politically correct.”**

The paradox of inclusivity is that its major impact is to exclude any tradition that has the **potential to offend.** **“God the Father”** almost always excluded because it is gender specific and some **people have abusive fathers.** **“Son of God”** and **“Son of Man”** are similarly rejected. **“Lord”** is also unacceptable because it implies that God is an authority figure. The characterization of Christians as **“slaves”** or **“servants”** is unacceptable because it implies a positive side of social oppression. **“Fear of the Lord”** and the **“Wrath of God”** are also excluded because they may offend those who have been abused or frightened by authority figures. **“Sin”** is excluded because the idea of sin involves blaming the victim of oppression. The traditional **Holy Trinity of “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost”** is replaced by **“Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.”**

As I observed worship at the PIM, I noticed that **“God”** is the preferred term in worship, although **“creator”** and **“spirit”** tend to be used interchangeably. **“Christ”** is used more frequently than **“Jesus”** is. **There were at least two worship events at PIM where neither “Christ” nor “Jesus”** were mentioned in the liturgy. None of the worship event liturgies included any of the fundamentals of the passion story: the cross, the blood, and the empty tomb. To me, some very important things were missing!

The implications of progressive and inclusive faith are broad and deep. First, the Bible has no special authority because so much of it is scientifically obsolete and culturally outdated. The voice of God in the Bible is so limited by the historical setting in which it was written that it has **less authority than the “Still Speaking God”** who speaks to the church today and endorses the progressive and inclusive vision. Second, none of our traditions of worship—creeds, liturgies, hymns—have any privileged status. All of them can be altered or discarded if they are not in harmony with the progressive vision.

Continued on Page 3

Continued from Page 2

Finally, although the vision of the UCC is shaped by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the church is not under the authority of the living person of Jesus, the one who sits by the right hand of the Father. Many UCC leaders and clergy reject the traditional view of the Trinity, as well as the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

According to UCC leaders, the progressive and inclusive vision of the UCC is the result of a process of discerning God's will for the denomination. In his statement in the Washington Post, Rev. Black states, *"the United Church of Christ articulates a progressive faith stance today as a result of decades, even centuries of prayerful reflection, rigorous scholarship and dialogue, courageous action, thoughtful proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus and openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst."* [I have to note that this is his only use of the name "Jesus" in his statement. He also does not refer to the Church as the "Body of Christ" and he does not refer to Christ as the "Head of the Church."]

I have to admit that I completely reject the progressive vision outlined by Rev. Black. I consider myself a moderate and traditional Christian. I sit on the old Anglican three legged stool of **"scripture, reason, and tradition."** I love the old creeds and hymns. I appreciate the rich heritage Evangelical and Reformed churches have given this congregation. I also appreciate the traditions of the UCC: congregational independence, freedom of the pulpit, individual conscience, reason, Biblical scholarship, and concern for social justice. However, I reject the UCC's position that the US government and the UN can bring the Kingdom of God any nearer through more legislation, regulation, taxation, social services, and income transfer.

I also reject the claim that Jesus has a specific vision for the UCC as a denomination apart from the rest of his Church. I notice that in most meetings, UCC leaders refer to the denomination and the Church interchangeably. I don't believe that denominations are part of Christ's plan for his Church. The Church actually consists of local congregations who create working groups for ministry and mission. Together these congregations make up the **"Church Militant,"** which struggles to follow

the leadership of Jesus Christ in this world. My allegiance is to the Church, the Body of Christ, not to this or any other denomination.

I do not believe that we can discern God's Truth apart from Jesus. For me, the Truth is a living person, Jesus Christ. The authority of Jesus over this Church and this world is complete, for it comes from his Father. The ruler ship of Christ over the Church is through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to interpret the Bible so that the Church can live out the will of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of John describes the way in which the Holy Spirit speaks to the Church. The Gospel makes it very clear that everything the Holy Spirit says to us comes from Jesus. John 14:26, *"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."* John 16:13-14, *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you."*

I expect that this congregation will remain part of the UCC and continue to support the denomination through OCWM. I will support the UCC not because I believe what Rev. Black believes but because I value the tradition of faithful service that is symbolized by our support of the denomination. If I were shopping for progressive causes, we could probably find groups we could support with much more impact on the world than the UCC. I propose that we continue to give to OCWM not because we are progressive but because we are faithful. In this way, we will remain true to the commands of Jesus Christ and the traditions of our mothers and fathers in faith.

Hebrews 13:7-8, "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

Your Friend in Christ,
Pastor Dan



What's Going On?

Mary-Martha Circle

Mary Martha Circle ladies are pleased with their collection of socks and underwear for Love, INC. The girls came out the winners!!

Girls Underwear — 94
Girls Socks — 100 pair
Boys Underwear — 28
Boys Socks — 43 pair

This is a total of 265 articles. There were 55 articles donated by others in the church, for a total of 320 gifts for children in our areal. Thank you to all who donated.

Circle members also purchased food for the FISH Food Pantry. The offering for the September meeting was matched from the treasury, and 85 items of food were purchased.

Thursday, October 1st is our next meeting at 1:30 PM. The devotions will be given by Ramona Brinkopf. Hostesses are Jobyna Daume, Mary Huckstep and Ida Mae Jordan. We always enjoy “Company”, so “You All Come!”

Love INC

“Love In The Name of Christ”

Dear Ladies,

Thank you for your generous donation of children's underwear and socks. Your gift came at the perfect time, just as Grace's Kids Closet was responding to increased needs as a result of the beginning of the school year.

Working together we can make a significant difference in the lives of the people we serve. Your support of our ministry to mobilize the Church to transform lives and communities In the Name of Christ is invaluable!

*In His service and yours,
Eva L. Hillis
Executive Director*

Meals On Wheels

Thanks to all who helped deliver Meals On Wheels: Roxie Lindsay, Maxine Hale, Jim & Marilyn Garner, Rhonda Bolton, Gary & Clodine Metje, Ramona Brinkopf, Bob & Velma Roloff, Grace Coy, Kaye Lee, Verla Sailer, Marilyn Propst, Lori Siebert, and Jobyna Daume. This is a very important community service that gives those in need not only a hot meal but the opportunity to see and talk with someone for that day.

Co-Coordinators
—Bob & Velma Roloff

Friendship Circle

The Friendship Circle will meet on Tuesday, October 13th at 5:00 PM to roll dumplings. We plan on making around 15 batches of dumplings to sell. Please join the ladies to help with rolling out the dumplings. Thanks in advance for everyone's help.

Our church secretary, Susan Spinks, has a new list started for dumpling orders. Give her a call to place your orders.

Remember, the Friendship Circle will be taking orders for the Rada Cutlery. This cutlery is very nice and so durable. The knives make nice wedding gifts, house warming presents, and are wonderful to use around the house. To place an order or look at a catalog, call Verla Sailer at 334-2050 or Jo Daume at 334-8844

Hay Ride at the Best Farm

Join us on Saturday, October 3rd at 5:30 PM at the Best Farm for good food, great company, and the annual hay ride. Remember to bring lawn chairs, a jacket, a dish to share, and **drinks. Mulligan's Stew** will again be furnished as well as hot dogs. See you at the Best Farm!

Special Mission Opportunities

Neighbors in Need Special Offering

The Neighbors in Need offering, which we will receive during the month of October, 2009, supports **the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States**. **Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.** Through UCCTakeAction.org, our national Justice and Witness Ministries office offers resources,



news updates, and action alerts on a broad spectrum of justice issues. Working with members of the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network [a network of thousands of UCC justice and peace advocates], Justice and Witness continues its strong policy advocacy work on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties, and environmental justice. Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC. **One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries [CAIM].** Historically, forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota,

Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hocak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, and northern Nebraska. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These churches and their pastors are supported by CAIM. CAIM is also an invaluable resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations in the U.S.



Jamaican Christian Medical Mission

TEXTILE RECYCLING: Remains Trailer—Evangelical UCC parking lot.

September 25th—October 9th. Trailer unlocked and open during the day.

What: Donate your used clothing, household linens [bedding, curtains, drapes, towels], paired shoes [soles intact with no holes], **belts, purses, backpacks & toys [less than 12", single type toys, soft or hard; NO books, puzzles, or board games].** *Items cannot be wet or mildewed.*

How: Place items in garbage/trash bags and take to the trailer in the parking lot of Evangelical UCC or give to any JCMM member.

PIONEER HARVEST DAY: Saturday, October 3rd — Jamaican Christian Medical Mission will have a food stand from 8 AM to 4 PM.

SHOP FOR A CAUSE: **ALL DAY Saturday, October 17th @ MACY'S @ West Park Mall in Cape Girardeau, MO.**

What: **Receive an all day shopping pass ... off regular, sale & clearance apparel, jewelry, luggage, kitchen, crystal, china, fashion accessories, and 10% off furniture and electronics. 25% off any one item.** Day filled with music, fun, and special events.

Cost: Tickets may be obtained from the church office for \$5.00, any medical mission team member, or Ann Albrecht 833-6094.

DUMPLING ROLLING: Tuesday, October 20th starting at 5:00 PM. The JCMM along with the help of Evangelical UCC members will roll dumplings starting at 5:00 PM. We invite everyone to help and have some fun socializing with other Christians. Do you know anyone who would be interested in becoming a member of the Jamaican Christian Medical Mission? If you do invite them to come help roll dumplings and meet other members.

Council Financial Report

Beginning Check Book	Balance 8-1-09	\$10,302.96	Edward Jones Transfer <hr/> ** \$2,500.00 From the Expansion Fund for Missions ** \$2,250.00 From the Organ Fund for the Carillion. [automated sys- tem for playing the bells in the bell tower]
Deposits	August	\$6,430.92	
	Interest	\$0.09	
	Transfer Edward Jones	\$4,750.00 **	
Total Deposits for July		\$11,181.01	
Disbursements	August	\$8,883.10	
Ending Check Book	Balance 8-31-09	\$12,600.87	
Wachovia Securities/ A.G. Edwards {Memorial Fund}	Balance 7-1-09	\$10,227.66	
	Interest	\$0.11	
	Deposits	\$100.00	
Landscaping Materials	Disbursements	\$0.00	
Ending Balance	As of 7-31-09	\$10,327.77	
Check Book Balance	As of 9-15-09	\$8,240.56	

Calendar Information

2009	4th	11th	18th	25th
DIACONATE	Barbara Oberbeck	Bill & Rhonda Bolton	Kaye Lee	Michael Bodine
GREETERS	Margie Eakins	Bob & Velma Roloff	Bill & Jane McMillan	Dorothy Klein
LITURGISTS	Brian Stahlman	Bill / Rhonda Bolton	Kaylyn Sneathen	?
COMMUNION PREP TEAM	Gary Metje Calvin & Verla Sailer	—————	—————	—————
USHERS	CAPTAIN- Michael Bodine Bill Bolton Rhonda Bolton Louis Geldmacher Maxine Hale Kaye Lee Gary Metje Barbara Oberbeck Helen Owens Tammy Popp Calvin & Verla Sailer Rebecca Schild Tom Schild Brian Stahlman Bonnie Wilkening	CAPTAIN- GORDON WALTON Rhonda Bolton Bill McMillan Barbara Oberbeck Van Sander	CAPTAIN- PAUL PROPST Bill Bolton Frank Maevers, Jr. Jeff Sneathen Alvin Spencer	CAPTAIN- RANDY COY Michael Bodine Cayleigh Bolton Bob Roloff Lori Siebert


Prayer List

In case of hospitalization or surgery please notify our church office. When being admitted to a hospital be sure to tell them that you are affiliated with this congregation. * indicates a new request. *Please note: after six months names will be removed from the prayer list, unless an update is made to the church office.*

Please Pray for those on our Prayer List.

Jerry Baker; 03-09
 *Marvin Best, JR; 09-09
 Ruth Bierschwal; 07-09
 Dora Briggs; 07-09
 Aleene Ellinger; 08-09
[Jane McMillan's mother]
 Lillian Graden; 09-09
 Virginia Heise; 08-09
 Joan Hope
 *Howard Huffman; 09-09
 Dr. Bill Johnson [JCMM]; 04-09
 Ernie & Ida Mae Jordan; 07-09
 Michael Juegens; 05-09
[Lisa Spencer's brother]
 Vergie Kies; 04-09
 Bettie Mehrle Family; 06-09
 *Cindy McMillan Morris; 08-09
[Rhonda's Cousin]
 Ester Nussbaum
 Willa Dean Propst; 04-09
 Jean Ratliff; 08-09 [Jamaican CMM]
 Vernon Robert; 04-09
 *Bob Roloff; 09-09
 David Sailer; 06-09
 Irene Siemers; 04-09
 Slaughter Family; 07-09

*Chris Spivey; 08-09
[Michelle's Nephew]
 Jeff Strickert; 04-09
 Margaret Tallent; 07-09
 Marjorie Thompson; 07-09
 *J.D. Treadwell; 09-09
 Norma Trickey; 05-09
 Burnell & Elizabeth Turner; 07-09
 Winfield Family; 07-09



NURSING HOME & HOUSE BOUND

<p>Ratliff Nursing Home 717 N. Sprigg Street Cape Girardeau, MO 63701</p> <p>Polly Wilmsmeyer</p> <p>Fountainbleau Lodge 2001 N. Kingshighway Cape Girardeau, MO 63701</p> <p>Alta Proffer</p>	<p>Veteran's Home 2400 Veterans Memorial Dr Cape Girardeau, MO 63703</p> <p>Frank Maevers, Sr. Kenny Mehrle</p>	<p>Lutheran Home 2825 Bloomfield Road Cape Girardeau, MO 63703</p> <p>Dorothy Cole Viola Geiser Leonard Moore Esther Nussbaum</p>	<p>House Bound</p> <p>Loyd Bollinger S. G. Coy Mary Huckstep Helen Owens</p>
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Evangelical United Church of Christ
33 South Ellis Street
Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63703-6201

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION
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Pastor Daniel Johnson
Church Phone: 573-335-5611
Church e-mail: eucc-cape@sbcglobal.net
Church Web Site: evangelicalucc-cape.org

Church Times
Fellowship 9:00 AM
Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM
Adult Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship Service 10:35 AM



Quarterly Congregational Meeting

Please plan on staying for our next Quarterly Congregational Meeting on Sunday, October 25th. It will be directly after church services are complete.

September 25, 2009

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your phone calls, cards, visits, and prayers during my recent heel injury. I really appreciated your thoughtfulness.

*In Christian Love,
David Sailer*

Blue Sky Church

Celebrating God's Good Creation
Stories & Songs Under the Heavens

Community Wide Worship
Sunday, October 4, 2009 @ 4:00 PM
"Saint Francis Day"
Capaha Park Bandshell



Blessing of the **Pets**

Bring your pets
for a blessing.

Bring a chair;
picnics optional
Brought to you by
the congregations
of the Downtown
Council of Churches



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Mary Martha Circle 1:30 PM	2	3 UCC Hay Ride @ <u>Best Farm</u> , 5:30 PM JCMC Food Stand @ Pioneer Harvest Day, 8 AM-4 PM
4 Communion JCMC Fund Raiser @ <u>CiCi's Pizza</u> <u>Neighbors In Need</u> Blue Sky Church	5	6	7 Confirmation @ EUCC at 6:30 PM	8 Bible Study, 6:30 PM	9	10 MO Mentoring, 10 AM-1 PM Lower Auditorium
11	12	13 Friendship Circle, Dumpling Rolling 4:30 PM	14 Confirmation @ EUCC at 6:30 PM	15 Bible Study, 6:30 PM	16	17 Festival of Sharing @ Sedalia, MO JCMC—Shop For A Cause @ <u>Macy's</u> —All Day
18	19 Council Meeting, 7:30 PM	20 <u>Diaconate</u> , 7:00 PM Jamaican C. M. M. Dumpling Rolling, 5:00 PM	21 Confirmation @ EUCC at 6:30 PM	22 Bible Study, 6:30 PM	23	24
25 Quarterly Congregational Meeting	26	27	28	29 Bible Study, 6:30 PM	30 ASAP Shannondale <u>Mission Trip</u> Pastor Dan attending UCC Bi-Annual Meeting	31 ASAP Shannondale <u>Mission Trip</u> Pastor Dan attending UCC Bi-Annual Meeting St. John's UCC Chili/Stew Supper, 4—8 PM

October BIRTHDAYS	
1	Kara Fulton
3	Brian Stahlman
6	Eula Hoffmeister
8	Diane Lindsay & Ashley Stahlman
10	Mary Huckstep
12	Gordon Walton
16	Vergie Kies

October BIRTHDAYS	
18	Haylee Hale
19	Burnell Turner
20	Jim Garner
23	S. G. Coy
29	Chance Lantz
30	Bonnie Stricker
31	Adam Lindsay, Rosemary Sander,

October ANNIVERSARIES	
15	Alvin & Lisa Spencer

“Revised Common Lectionary-Scripture Readings”

DATE	OLD TESTAMENT	PSALM	EPISTLE	NEW
Oct 4	Job 1:1; 2:1-10 Or Genesis 2:18-24	Psalm 26 Or Psalm 8	Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12	Mark 10:2-16
Oct 11	Job 23:1-9, 16-17 Or Amos 5:6-7, 10-15	Psalm 22:1-15 Or Psalm 90:12-17	Hebrews 4:12-16	Mark 10:17-31
Oct 18	Job 38:1-7, 34-41 Or Isaiah 53:4-12	Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c Psalm 91:9-16	Hebrews 5:1-10	Mark 10:35-45
Oct 25	Job 42:1-6, 10-17 Or Jeremiah 31:7-9	Psalm 34:1-8, 19-22 Or Psalm 126	Hebrews 7:23-28	Mark 10:46-52