

Faith United Church of Christ

*“An inclusive spiritual family shaping a better you for creating a better world.
A place to make a difference.”*

July 16, 2017

Sacred Fellowship 10:45 a.m.

We are delighted that you are here today! We hope you will find us an affirming, uplifting, and committed family of faith. Here we work to make everyone, without any exceptions, to feel accepted, inspired, and encouraged in their spiritual journey. In dialogue, we seek to understand. In encouragement, we seek to heal. In all things we yearn to live by love, for peace, with joy. This is a place where your intellect will be challenged, your heart will be nurtured, and your spirit refreshed. Varying beliefs are expressed openly and freely, and your doubts will not be suppressed. We trust that we are all, every person and part of creation, continuing to be blessed by God's grace; and that in community we can help each other to see this grace alive in our lives and relationships. We hope to share our gifts with you, even as we pray that you will want to share your gifts with us. Whoever you are and wherever you may be in your life's journey, we invite you to be a part of our lives and our spiritual home. Welcome!

POINTS TO PONDER

“That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea.”
— Matthew 13.1

“While not apparently connected to the meaning of the parable to come, this verse reminds us of the healthy habits Jesus had in taking time out from his activities to refresh himself and enjoy the beauty of creation.”
— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 7/12/2017

“And he told them many things in parables.”
— Matthew 13.3a

“Parables are brief comparison stories, drawn from nature or everyday life, that tease the imagination, challenge accepted values, or illustrate a point.”
— Warren Carter, *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*, p. 1880

“With Jesus, however, the device of parabolic utterance is used not to explain things to people's satisfaction, but to call attention to the unsatisfactoriness of all their previous explanations and understandings.”
— Robert Farrar Capon, *Parables of the Kingdom*, 20th century

“When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.”
— Matthew 13.19

“The *heart* was considered the region of thought, intention, and moral disposition.”
— Warren Carter, *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*, p. 1866

“The ‘evil one’ is really nothing but temptation. While it was common to personify temptation as a tempter in the ancient world, it is better understood in the modern context as ambivalence between competing values. Volition and intention, when they meet up with ambition and self-concern, produce confusion. Things get unclear, and we therefore become tempted to stray from what we believe to be right due to considerations as to what will be in our best interest. Good intentions don't go very far if we start to consider the possible consequences of our good actions. Morality and prudence are often at odds. Prudence is the primary tempter of keeping us away from the seeds of our higher moral selves.”
— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 7/13/2017

“As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.”
— Matthew 13.20-21

“There is no soil of character,
and so when the emotions wear off and some difficulty arrives, there is nothing to show for it.”
— Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of verse 21 in *The Message*

“How often do we and others get a thought we are excited about in doing some good in the world, and then we encounter obstacles which temper our enthusiasm? Or, do we ever adopt a moral principle that we tell ourselves is very important to who we are, only to discover that the cost of living by that principle is greater than we had anticipated? To hold onto any value will require sacrifice. Some naively believe that following the moral course will always be good for our welfare. Reality is that doing what is right often involves resistance and even persecution from others. What are we willing to hold true no matter what? Whatever that is, if it is honorable, is where our integrity lies.”
— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 7/13/2017

“As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing.”
— Matthew 13.22

“Who we surround ourselves with influences our behavior. Good people influence us to be our best selves, while self-absorbed people influence us to look after our own, and their, interests. Be wary of those who tell you they are trying to help you become wealthy, successful, or famous. They see in you someone who can help themselves, and they will choke good motives right out of your life if you let them. While you may become rich, victorious, or prestigious in following a single-minded ambition to follow the ways of the world, you will be spiritually empty and bereft for doing so. A soul imprisoned by a social scene of ‘thorny’ people, will suffocate spiritually. Seek out the people who have good values and virtues, the people of good soil, and you will find yourself enriched within the soil of your own heart, mind, and soul.”
— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 7/13/2017

“But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”
— Matthew 13.23

"There is a sense in which the person of good soil, of good values, is in effect transformed into a sower. By being a fertile ground on which the wisdom and virtue of others takes root, we take their seeds, grow into lush and abundant plants of good deeds, and then we reap our own spirits. We become the sort of person who passes on the love, peace, justice, compassion, and gentleness that has been passed on to us. Those who sow good things our way, will discover we were receptive; so much so that we became sowers of good things ourselves. All that we reap, as a good farmer knows, is not solely for our consumption. We gather some of the seed to replant for next year. We may feed many from our harvest, but we perpetuate this abundance, again and again, by sowing our own seeds in the lives (soils) of others." — Rev. Bret S. Myers, 7/13/2017

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant."
— Robert Louis Stevenson, 19th century

CALLED TOGETHER AS SPIRITUAL FAMILY

Welcome and Announcements

*Please sign the registration pads at the ends of the pews on the center aisle.
We ask that you please shut off cell phones and practice quietness during the service.
Please join us for fellowship and refreshments after the worship
in Romig Hall (lower level of elevator or stairs).*

* = You are invited to stand as you are able

Prelude "Keep us Lord, by Thy Word" D. Buxtehude

Welcoming the Light of Love in Our Midst *(acolytes light altar candles)*
*We prepare ourselves for communing with the sacred as love's light is brought into our awareness.
The light of love burns within and among each of us, and we carry that light into our sanctuary; visually reminding us of the image of the divine that lives in our hearts, minds, and souls – and that we nourish through our faith-filled fellowship.*

Affirming God's Presence in Us All "You Matter!"

Sharing Christ's Peace
As a sign of our reconciliation with God and one another, greet and welcome those around you and share "the peace of Christ."

***Centering Our Souls**
You, O Spirit, who profligately sows seeds on all soils, remind us of the blessing of non-judgment and generosity.

You do not consider whether the soils are worthy, but rather you sow your seeds of compassion wherever you go.

You do this not because the seeds of grace and benevolence are never wasted.

Whenever goodness is done anywhere, whether it is recognized and appreciated or not, the one who sows is ennobled.

You do not consider whether the birds of short-sightedness, those who don't recognize that they'll benefit more by letting the seed grow, will eat the seeds before they can be planted; you just keep on sowing.

You sow even on those whose souls are rocky and have little soil of character, trusting that even they may surprise and produce something good.

Even when plants spring up and quickly wither due to shallowness of soil, you keep on planting; for you focus not on the results but on the goodness of giving.

Thorns may choke some of your seeds, but you are not deterred by seeds you sow that don't bear fruit, for you do not see kindness given as lessened when it is not reciprocated.

When your seeds fall on good soil, you are overjoyed – for not only have you lived up to your calling to give, but those who have received have made you aware of their blessing.

Goodness is multiplied when it is sown, nurtured, harvested, and given again. This is the blessing of abundant life – to give profusely, not expecting it to be returned, and to then be amazed at what becomes of the gift.

Serendipity always surprises us, and reminds us to be our best selves; for in doing so, we help others to be their best selves.

May our love be boundless, our peacefulness limitless, and our kindness prodigal. May it be so; now and always throughout our lives.

***Hymn for Being a Blessing** "You Are Salt for the Earth, O People" #181

Our Stories of Random Acts of Kindness & Intentional Deeds of Compassion

WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES

A Time for All God's Children

Prayers
Sharing Our Joys and Concerns
Silent Meditation: The Prayers of the People
Pastoral Prayer
Unison Prayer: "Poetic Prayer in the Spirit of Christ"

Loving Spirit, who is here and there,
 we're grateful for your tender care.
 Your virtues rise, your values prized;
 near and far, and everywhere.
 Feed our bodies, and feed our souls.
 And by forgiveness make us whole.
 And may we all evils deplore,
 as we search and sail for mercy's shore.
 May peace and love within us rule,
 and justice be your Spirit's tool;
 Now and always, for us and others,
 and for all creation.
 May we make it so, all as one,
 by your inspiration.

***Hymn for Sowing Seeds** "Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast" **#318**

Scripture Lesson Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23

Message "Soils and Sowers"

***Hymn of Being Good Seed** "You Are the Seed" **#528**

**WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO GOD'S SERVICE
 THROUGH FAITHFULNESS**

Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

*"Generosity arises from gratitude like heat arises from fire. Like fire, gratitude is lovely to see;
 but when it warms others with generosity, that is when it becomes a true blessing."*

Offertory Organ Improvisation

***Song of Dedication** *Tune: Old Hundredth; p. 7*

The light of love does shine most bright when all are siblings in our sight;
 We are one fam'ly on this earth; we are God's children from our birth.

***Unison Prayer of Dedication**

By the Spirit's inspiration, we give of what we have that your blessings may abound and that goodness may flourish. Instill in us a spirit of generosity that we may do our part to help all who are in need. Pour out your Spirit upon us that we may envision one world, the world of all of Your children. Let our lives be a testimony of the unifying nature of your love to all that we meet along our life's way. Amen

***Encouragement for the Journey**

Go to be a blessing! This is your calling.

Do not worry whether your task is difficult, or your efforts are successful.
 Life is serendipitous; so what you may think will or has failed may actually renew a life.
 Advocate for justice for those unlike you.
 Work for peace with those opposed to you.
 Kindness offered and love delivered can transform relationships.
 Trust in this! Live by this!
 Let God be responsible for the outcome;
 just commit yourself to the journey of sacred living.
 If you do, you will find that you will have not only been a blessing to others,
 but that the synergy of life will have created a blessing for you.

Postlude

***The Light of Love Goes into the World**

Love's light is not extinguished from our worship, but is transferred from the flame of the candles to the passion in our hearts that we may go forth to let the light of love shine through us as we go to serve in the world!

**WE GO FORTH AS PEACEMAKERS
 TO CREATE JUSTICE FOR ALL**

*Our worship is fulfilled, and our purpose is confirmed,
 through our service as God's stewards to the world and all creation.
 Use the blessings God has given you as you share
 the joy in your heart, the wisdom in your mind,
 the love in your spirit, and the peace in your soul.*

Thank you for sharing sacred fellowship with us.

Faith UCC is an open and affirming church, embracing diversity in our congregation and community, and affirming the dignity and worth of every person. We are an inclusive community of faith that celebrates God's presence through worship and the sharing of God's word. We welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of the church, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, capability, or circumstance of life.

Our Ministry

Ministers — All the Congregation
 Ushers —
 Liturgist —
 Acolyte —
 Fellowship — June Irvin

Pastor — Rev. Bret Myers
 Trustee — Larry Bair
 Children's Message —
 Nursery — Lois Bair

Church Staff

Custodian — Scott Luzier
Choir Director – Colin Ruffer
Administrative Assistant — Jeff Stormer

Church School Coordinator — Barbara Chellman
Organist—Mark Ferraguto

The liturgies for this morning's worship, along with the Song of Dedication, were written by Rev. Bret S. Myers except where otherwise noted.

Prayers for healing and wholeness:

The Family of Linda Merchant, Jean Weller, Lisa B. (JoAnn's daughter), Brandon G., Lisa Neidigh, Bunnie Hartswick, Katelynn Wilson, Darlene Ripka, April S., Randy Brown (Aimee's Dad), the Parrish Family, the Piggot family, Robert Zupp (Eileen Pfaff's nephew), the family of Ruth Tressler, the family of Susan Meyer, and Bob Dunham



Welcome to all first-time (and returning) guests to Faith UCC! We would like to get to know you and for you to get to know us. Join us after worship for coffee and conversation.

There is free parking on Sundays at the meters and at the McAllister & Pugh Street parking garages – so, we hope you'll worship with us again next Sunday!

Electronic Giving Options: During the offering time in the service, you may place your offerings on the plates the ushers will bring around. If you prefer to give electronically simply **scan the QR code** with your smart phone to be directed to our online donation page.



July Special Offering

Out of the Cold: Centre County (OOTC³) is to provide the homeless in our community with a warm and safe overnight accommodation and nourishment within a welcoming atmosphere as a supplemental option to locally established shelters.

Last year, 13 congregations provided overnight shelter for 95 adults.

Since its beginning in 2011, over 400 volunteers have been trained to support this effort.

Please note "OOTC" in the memo line of your check or on the giving envelope.

Thank you for your consideration and financial support!



- July 16 Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
- July 23 Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
- July 30 Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
- August 1 Trustees Meeting, 7 pm

Get In Touch with Us!

Faith United Church of Christ 300 E. College Avenue State College, PA 16801

Tel: (814) 237-3904 Websites: www.faihucc.info facebook.com/SCFaithUCC

Church Office Email: faihucc@comcast.net Pastor's Email: revbmyers@yahoo.com

Church Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Fridays

Please make an appointment with Rev. Myers if you would like to meet with the pastor. You may call the church office, or his cell at 608-370-9472.

Nourishment for the Journey

*"Where there is no extravagance there is no love,
and where there is no love there is no understanding."*

— Oscar Wilde, 19th century

The quote above by Oscar Wilde may be an illuminating way of interpreting this Parable of the Sower passage from Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23. So often we try to figure out who the sower, seed, ground, harvest, birds, path, rocky terrain, thorns, and good soil are to try to understand the story in our own world. This exercise is always intriguing, and we generally see how we ourselves can fit into this parable in various ways. Unfortunately, we also tend to typecast others in our lives as to where they fit into the story. But what if this parable is also an allegory about spiritual generosity and stewardship?

Jesus has been out teaching and healing people, and he has found some respite in a house where the crowds supposedly can't get to him. Yet he may be feeling cooped up, for he decides to go out to sit on the seashore. But rather than getting some rejuvenating alone time in the beauty of God's creation, the people see him go, follow him there, and soon he has a whole crowd at the beach. Or, perhaps everyone else was at the beach already getting their own rest and relaxation, then recognize him and see it as a prime opportunity to get some quality time with the guy they have heard so much about.

Whatever the circumstances may be for the crowd, he decides to get into a boat to give himself some private space while also satisfying their hunger for his wisdom. From the boat he teaches them "many things in parables." Between the parable of the sower and its explanation, Jesus has a

short discourse about why he speaks in parables to the masses. His words, however, though not parabolic are still so mytho-poetic that his reasoning for why he speaks in parables is likely as confusing to his disciples as if he'd told them another parable. Parables and other mytho-poetic language have a different purpose than discursive and descriptive language. They prod us to use our imaginative skills in interpreting them. They suggest that there may be many meanings or truths that can be gained from them if we will only consider them carefully and open-mindedly.

Interestingly, the parable of the sower may actually be a parable about why to tell parables. Presumably, the teacher (in this case, Jesus) sows these mytho-poetic words on the ears and hearts of his listeners. They, of course, want him to plainly tell them all the truths and wisdom he can; but he is unwilling to indulge them in this request. Too many people believe that wisdom can be handed to us or taught to us, but sages from all different religious and cultural traditions, throughout the eons, remind us that while knowledge can be dispersed in this way, wisdom cannot be.

We can't be listeners only and acquire wisdom. We have to be engaged in the process of thinking about what is said, asking questions about how congruent wise words are with reality, and applying the things that pass for universal truths to our own circumstances to see if they make sense. Most sages recognize that words which are wise for one context may actually lead one astray when considered from another context. This may be true not only for different persons, but even the same person. "Live passionately!", for instance, may be very inspiring to one who has been in a rut and feels that life has become too routine. However, the very same words, if given to someone who needs to carefully consider how to respond to another who has just undergone a tragedy, may be terrible advice. Giving a passionate, rather than conscientious, reply to one grieving may do more damage than good. Moreover, telling them to "live passionately" when they are confused and torn in their emotions and thinking may just lead them to do something rash.

Wisdom consists in saying and doing the right things at the right time. Any truth flippantly said regardless of the context may be not only unsuitable, but detrimental.

The crowds are looking for easy answers from Jesus. They want him to make all things clear to them. But he does not give them what they want, but what they need. Oh, if only every pastor always had the courage, fortitude, integrity, and wisdom to do this!

Jesus speaks to the crowds in ways in which require that they have to think the truths out for themselves. He knows that to obtain wisdom requires a yearning and striving after it, not merely a listening session in the presence of wise people.

Seen from this perspective, people in the crowd are the various kinds of soils Jesus speaks of in his parable.

Some of them are the path. There is nothing wrong with paths. Paths are needed to get where you want to go. And good paths make things easier in life. But paths can also have their downside. An interstate highway may quickly get you to where you want to go, but you may have missed the substance, beauty, and grace of the places you travelled through if you go too fast. A slower, curvy, and narrower road may help you to appreciate more of the beauty around you; but even these can be traversed so quickly as to not be able to hear the murmuring brook or the loveliness of the songbird. I have found that bicycling allows me even more enhancement in perceiving the beauty around me than I could ever get in a car; and yet hiking is still a better way to slow down even further and take in the micro-environments that are so full of diversity and splendor. However, even on a hike, if one is not attuned to one's surroundings and focus, one can allow the birds of distraction to keep the seeds of wisdom from ever gestating in our consciousness. Sometimes on the

path we become so preoccupied with being on the path that we can't see where we are going, or understand the place in which we are traveling. Opportunistic "birds" (often our own preoccupations) see our distraction, and come and change our focus. What good seed may have been planted along our path gets plucked away before our very eyes; or we get confused and see the good seed as only another thing that is keeping us from getting to where we think we want to go.

Some of them are the rocky ground. Rocky ground people are also fine for the most part. They are solid, stable, strong, and those who are incredibly 'grounded.' If seeds are thrown their way, they may be receptive to them and let them find a crevice in which to find a place in their lives. But the drawback is that they can be so rigid that, while initially welcoming, they can be too harsh for the seed to grow into a full-fledged plant. Everything has to be by the rules, and this stunts creativity and spiritual growth. Eventually, the seeds, though they may quickly sprout, wither and die. There just is not enough willingness to let the seeds take root, for doing so could break apart our life as we know it and this may be too scary for us to face – even if others regard us as rock solid.

Some of them are the ground infested with thorns. The soil where thorns grow can actually be pretty good soil, but the thorns are all those other values in our life that keep us from living up to our highest values. There may not be anything horribly wrong with having thorns growing in our soils (in fact, many love to plant roses because of their fragrance and beauty); but if the thorns choke out the other flowers and food plants in our lives, we can end up feeling pretty empty. Too many worries, concerns, and busying tasks can consume our lives so that all the good we intended to do gets choked out by all the time we spend in doing less important things. Smelling roses and appreciating their beauty is very nice; so long as it does not take up *all* of our time. The saying is, "Stop, and smell the roses." This implies that we were doing something else, maybe something more purposeful and meaningful, and that needed to "stop" doing that momentarily to appreciate the smaller things of life. What it does not imply is that when we stop and smell the roses that we decide to just stay there smelling them instead of continuing on our way to more important matters! Solipsistically smelling roses all day every day without doing anything else is like a disciple of a great sage who decides that meditation is all s/he needs to do in life. The purpose of meditation is not to treat it as an end in itself, but as a means of helping you to be wiser and calmer in living out the rest of your life. A true disciple will meditate to learn the truths s/he needs to go and act on love, compassion, kindness, gentleness, etc. Just feeling or experiencing these states of being without doing anything about them is not the teachings of any of the great teachers of the world's religions. We need to take action, and practice our faith in the real world.

Lastly, some of them are the good soil. They are the ones who understand the purpose of the seeds, and see them as not something to consume for one's own benefit alone, but rather to plant, weed, nurture/water, prune, and enjoy the benefits of creating even more seeds from these seeds so that one can pass on and multiply what has been given to oneself. Good soil people don't think about how they can possess the seeds for themselves and use them only for their own benefit. They think about how the seeds they have been given can be multiplied to help others, even as they themselves have been helped. By passing on the goodness from other sowers that they have received, the good soil people are actually transformed/resurrected into sowers themselves.

This spiritual transmogrification allows one to see oneself as all elements within the parable. Each one of us, in greater or lesser degree, but being all things at certain times in our lives, are the path, rocks, thorns, good soil, seeds, sower, etc. Rather than typecasting ourselves or others as just one element in the story, we can see ourselves as all of these elements. This awareness of how we

can be all of these things increases our wisdom, and therefore our empathy for others. As we come to see them as all of these things, we do not judge them for being in the path, rocky, or thorny times of their lives; for we see them as having the good soil of God's image within them. We see that they can be the seeds for others. We come to understand that they may one day be sowers themselves if we can just sow enough compassion, kindness, and peacefulness in their direction.

Well, this is what I came up with, this time, in thinking about Jesus' parable of the sower. What did you come up with? There is so much to learn from parables that are good soil and seed for our spiritual lives. Whatever we each learn from the parable, I pray it will make us generous sowers of goodness in our lives. Are we not all to be generous sowers who are more concerned about sowing goodness than whatever we will reap? Isn't this the attitude of the sower in the story who sows on all types of ground; abundantly, extravagantly?

Love and peace,

Rev. Bret S. Myers, 7/13-14/2017

Announcements and Upcoming Events

Interested in being a new member of Faith UCC?



start here

As Faith UCC welcomes a new interim pastor, we also welcome new members to join in our community of faith. If you are interested in becoming a member of our family, please let Rev. Myers know of your interest. If you are unsure whether you would like to take this step now or later, Rev. Myers will be glad to speak with you regarding your questions and concerns.

COFFEE HOUR AT WEBSTERS – IICC Coffee Hours return on Monday, **July 24**

Please note the date change!

This month's topic: What's MOST important to you in interfaith relations today, especially in our local area? What has become less important? What would you like to see more of or get more involved in with interfaith friends?



If you haven't already picked one up, the new red church parking permits are available in the church office!

Please note that parking will be strictly enforced once the students return the 3rd week of August.



Disaster Relief Needs



Dear Friends,

We are in need of volunteers in Ottawa, IL to assist with rebuilding for families who were impacted by an early 2017 tornado.

This is the site where we (UCC, Disciples, Brethren) deployed our pilot project Disaster Recovery Support Initiative (DRSI) with the goal of shortening the time between response and recovery. We have been successful in doing so but now need volunteers.

The current need is for a small team of skilled roofers (5-6 individuals). Housing is provided and there is currently a skilled DRSI construction advisor on site. If you have a team or teams that can assist **please contact Tim Sheaffer at 717-713-3834**

Thank you for your attention to this need.

Peace,

Zach Wolgemuth

Executive, UCC Disaster Ministries



The ONA Congregations of Central PA once again will have an information and outreach booth at **Pride Festival of Central PA!** This year's festival will be held in Riverfront Park in Harrisburg on **July 29, 2017 (date corrected!)**. Festival hours are **11:00 am - 6:00 pm**.

Volunteers are needed!! All ONA Congregations are invited to participate in staffing the booth, talking to other festival attendees, and distributing information on your congregation.

Please contact [Shirley Keith-Knox \(skeithknox@comcast.net\)](mailto:skeithknox@comcast.net) if you would like to participate in this year's Pride Fest activities. If you cannot participate in the booth, be sure to stop by and say Hello. We look forward to seeing you there!



Heart & Soul Gatherings: As the first major necessary step of the interim process, we will be gathering in small groups of 8-10 to get to know each other better “heart and soul.” Each member and attendee of the church is to select a time to sign up for one of these meetings led by Rev. Myers. This is both an opportunity to get to know each other better, and to recognize the diversity we have within our church as we each tell the story of our own spiritual journey from birth to the present in a confidential group. This sharing time will help us to identify what is most valuable to us and to others in our spiritual journeys, which will be important to creating a context of self and other-understanding for which we can later address the historical and current successes and challenges within the life of our congregation as a whole. Sign up sheets will be on the table at the Locust Lane entrance. You may call the office to have your name put on the list. Please choose to be in a group of persons in which you do NOT know each other well. Therefore, long-term friends should not be in the same group. Couples may attend the same group. You may choose from the following schedule:

Tuesday, July 18th 1-3:30 p.m. or 6-8:30 p.m.
Sunday, July 23rd After church: approximately 12-2:30 p.m.

If you cannot make these times, please contact Rev. Myers to let him know times you would be available.

It is important that **EVERY** person in our congregation attend one of these Heart & Soul Gatherings.



Sign up for the church picnic at Tudek Memorial Park Sunday August 13th at 4PM!



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

A Just World for All

November 11, 2016
Written by **John Dorhauer**

At the end of a full year of open dialogue that engaged covenant partners across the full life of the denomination, the United Church of Christ Board affirmed a Purpose, Vision, and Mission statement for the denomination.

If you haven't seen them yet, here they are:

Purpose: To love our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; and our neighbor as ourselves.

Vision: United in Christ's love, a just world for all.

Mission: United in Spirit, inspired by God's grace we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.

How beautiful is this? Love and justice are clearly seen by us as our missional imperatives. These commitments of offering a redeeming, transformative love to all, and in that love working to establish a just peace for all: this fully expresses why it is we were called into being.

The United Church of Christ Board would like to invite every setting of the denomination to begin prayerfully discerning this: in your setting for ministry, how do you and your worship family live out their call to build a just world for all?

I have the privilege of witnessing week in and week out how our local churches fulfill this mission. Even before we had the language that captured our mission impulse, we were bearing witness to the power of love to change the world.

In recent weeks, I have seen this love in action...
In a communion service held at the wall separating the US from Mexico where over 85 UCC members gathered from all across the country;

On the Dakota lands where tribal leaders and pastors led young activists to the front lines at the Standing Rock reservation on horseback and gave them a sense of pride, purpose, and identity;

In a 400 year old church in Barnstable MA where the worship space also serves as the town hall gathering place and a long time relationship with a sister church in Sri Lanka calls them to

service a half a globe away;
At Holy Covenant UCC in Charlotte NC where I met one of the couples that successfully challenged
the state's laws criminalizing clergy for performing same gender weddings;
At the Samoan Church of Hawaii on the west shore of Oahu where every Sunday the faithful gather
to sing their praises to the Creator;
With a group of clergy in Vermont who spent three days in the early fall processing the manifestation
and impact of white privilege and making deeper commitments to becoming allies for racial
equity.
What an honor to serve in this way and to bear witness to our ongoing commitment to build a just
world for all. We are truly united in spirit and inspired by grace, and therefore welcome all, love all and
seek justice for all.

We are the United Church of Christ.



About the Author

The Rev. John C. Dorhauer is the General Minister and President of the
United Church of Christ.