

# MESSENGER

Karen Fields, editor  
June 25, 2009

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& mailing



## THE PASTOR'S PARAGRAPHS

The harsh, unforgiving season we dare to call Spring in Chicago seems to have transmogrified into Summer, and I am reminded of George Herbert's aphorism that "One mile is two in Winter." The cupboards of the poor remain bare, the effects of the recession abound as people lose both jobs and homes, and Congress dawdles about universal health care.

I am continually sustained by St. Paul's declaration that "All things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). Those familiar words, I grant you, sound at first hearing banal and unrealistic and the kind of official optimism you expect from a pastor.

However. A book to which I keep returning is Dorothee Soelle's *Suffering*, which starts with a description of a childless woman in a small Austrian village. She is a devout Catholic who is beaten by her husband, tortures her mentally and denies to her a life of her own. Dr. Soelle asks whether we should term her continued suffering a reflection of Christian patience or just another typical example of Christian masochism.

Soelle goes on to ask the same question of suffering imposed by poverty and tyranny, but which some poor people perceive as their personal destiny designed by a God they devoutly worship. That leads to the all-important question: What kind of a God are they worshipping? There is more to life than waiting for a heavenly reward. There is more to the faith than conceiving of a God who causes suffering, a God who can only become great when we are made small.

**Marilyn** is fond of saying that she prayed for patience, and God answered her prayers by sending me. She had to develop patience if she were going to live with an impatient, hot-tempered, driven, difficult man.

Thomas Munzer, the man who led the sixteenth-century peasant revolt in Luther's name, made the distinction between the honeysweet and the bitter Christ. Munzer decried the apathy of the people, because he knew that apathy is necessary for exploitation to run its course smoothly—something we learned the hard way in this country for the past eight years. Munzer took out after you and me, the affluent: "Whoever does not want the bitter Christ will eat himself to death on the honey."

I cannot answer the problem of pain. Nobody can. I can only share it with those I love—by holding the sick and the dying, by protesting in the name of Jesus Christ war, hunger, torture, oppression.

We are blessed by God's love because we have a savior who shares our suffering, and those who suffer while believing that all things work together for good understand what love is all about.

Peace,  
**Gene**



**JAY WILCOXEN**  
**WILL TEACH "SACRED HISTORIES" THIS SUMMER**

A quite innovative and compelling series of classes will be taught at 9:30 a.m. June 28 through August 2 by our own Dr. Jay Wilcoxon. "The Sacred Histories of Israel and America" will bring new insights into both the biblical and Puritan understandings of God's destiny.

A renowned biblical scholar, Dr. Wilcoxon writes a weekly study of the ecumenical lectionary on the website of Protestants for the Common Good. Hundreds of preachers rely on his amazing biblical knowledge and acumen. His vast knowledge and his command of Hebrew and Greek open new vistas of understanding.

Written materials will be available each week as Jay will bring parallels to life between our understanding of the Bible and our nation.



**LOSING THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER**

The University of Chicago's Family Resource Center has announced that they will be vacating the facilities they have rented at University Church on December 31, 2009.

A major tenant of our building for the past several years, the Family Resource Center serves as a child care and education center for children of University parents. "They have been a wonderful tenant and we have had marvelous relationships with them," said Dr. Jay Wilcoxon, University Church's liaison to tenants. "This will mean a significant loss of income for us, but it will also mean a loss of an important ally in Hyde Park."

As University Church faces this new crisis in the same way that we faced the loss of the Blue Gargoyle several years ago, a special committee is at work to identify possible new tenants. The loss of over \$25,000 in income will seriously affect our 2010 budget.

If you can help identify possible new tenants or if you can increase your own giving to the church, that will make a huge difference as we plan for next year.



## **SMALL GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE**

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

At the May meeting the Governing Board of University Church decided to invite members and regular attendees of the church to participate in small groups for the purposes of nurture, growth, and furthering friendships. Cecily Wagner and Becky Schaller have agreed to organize the start up process. They will be assigning those interested to a small group based on their preferences with regard to location, time of meeting, and content of meetings. If you would like to participate in one of these groups, please fill out this form and return it to Becky by email at [bschaller@theriver.com](mailto:bschaller@theriver.com) or Cecily in person by Sunday, July 26, 2009.

We are setting these groups up to meet monthly. Each group will decide where they would like to meet and who will host the meetings. We encourage group members to take turns hosting, though that decision is left to the members. You will also decide how much you would like food to be a part of the meetings.

Please answer the following questions:

1. When is a good time for you to meet? Write a 1 in front of those times which you would like

to meet; a 2 in front of those times that are possible, but not your preference; and a 3 in front of those times when you would not attend.

\_\_\_\_\_ Monday evening 7-9

\_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday evening 7-9

\_\_\_\_\_ Wednesday evening 7-9

\_\_\_\_\_ Thursday evening 7-9

\_\_\_\_\_ Friday evening 7-9

\_\_\_\_\_ Saturday evening 7-9

\_\_\_\_\_ Sunday 1-3

\_\_\_\_\_ Sunday evening 7-9

\_\_\_\_\_ Sometime between 9-5 on Monday through Friday. Please specify the times that would work for you.

2. Where would you like for your group to meet? Write a 1 in front of that area where you would most like to meet; a 2 in front of any area which would be acceptable for you, but not preferred; and a 3 in front of any area where you would not attend.

\_\_\_\_\_ Hyde Park area

\_\_\_\_\_ North of Hyde Park area

\_\_\_\_\_ South of Hyde Park area

3. What would you like the focus of the group to be? Write a 1 in front of a topic for which you would like the majority of the group's time to be devoted to. Write a 2 in front of any topic that you would like to see included in the group. Write a 3 in front of any topics that you would like to see included minimally or not at all.

\_\_\_\_\_ A group that studies particular topics. For example, this might be a book study group. The topics would be decided by the group.

\_\_\_\_\_ Getting to know others in the group, and building community. A place to talk about what's going on in your life, hear about others' lives, and have some laid-back fun.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bible Study. Looking at questions about what the Bible has to say about our lives individually, as a church, and as a world. This may be based on the lectionary, or other focus. Alternatively, the group may decide to study a particular book of the Bible.

\_\_\_\_\_ Prayer/spiritual journeys. Devoted to prayer, and sharing and hearing the spiritual journeys of the members.

4. Is it important to you to be in the same small group as someone else in the church? If so, please write the name of that person(s) here \_\_\_\_\_.

## !!!YEAH YOUTH VOLUNTEERS!!!

The youth participated in an environmental project on May 2, 2009 at Sherman Park located at 55<sup>th</sup> St. & Racine. They prepared the park for spring by carrying wheel barrels of mulch, and spreading it out. They worked diligently and continuously for over three and a half hours.

We all definitely got plenty of exercise. Actually it was kind of fun with the positive outlook and the sing while you work attitude. There was not one complaint either. Well, we did get a complaint from a volunteer suffering from parched mouth.

Much thanks goes out to the Youth Volunteers: Jamal Carthen, Will Hall, Colleen Patikas, and Naeshun Sanders. And the Adult Volunteers: Phillip Miller, Cassandra Patikas, and Christine Belue. Christine organized this worthwhile project for us and is also a Chicago Cares Team Leader. I think everyone felt a gust of pride, for a job well done and giving back. I know I did.

■ Cassandra Patikas



## **PENTECOST SUNDAY**

**May 31, 2009**

**The morning started out with the sun bright but a chill in the air. Over two dozen of us gathered at the 31<sup>st</sup> Street beach to be witness to the baptism of Jamal Carthen and Colleen Patikas.**

**Rev. Eugene Winkler was present to perform this important step in their lives.**

**The morning continued with services at 10:45 a.m. where Jamal and Colleen were officially welcomed by the congregation and where Naeshun Sanders, Jr., having been baptized as an infant, was confirmed and also officially welcomed into our faith community.**

**The same morning we were witness, in the sanctuary, to the baptism of Anglalina Travis and Tiara Gray, using the baptismal font brought to us in the union of South Church and University Church in 1980.**

**We then welcomed into membership: Jean Newcomer, June Hubbard, Garry Sparks, and April Lewton.**

**The morning concluded with birthday cake in social hour and bubble blowing in the courtyard in celebration of the birth of the church.**

**Thanks be to God for this wonderful morning. And another welcome to Jamal, Colleen, Naeshun, Anglalina, Tiara, Jean, June, Garry and April.**

**We are truly blessed by your presence and your faithfulness and look forward to being with you on this part of our spiritual journey.**

## **AND THEN ON JUNE 21<sup>ST</sup>!**

**Paul White, who could not be here on Pentecost Sunday, was confirmed in worship services on Sunday, June 21, 2009. We welcome him and have been blessed by his presence as we have watched him grow up here. You, too, make us more whole.**



## **MARCH FOR A JUST PEACE IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE** **OAK PARK, 2009**

(“Two powerful interfaith experiences that I have had this past month, that I wanted to share.”)

Break the Silence. Break the Blockade was the title for the Walk for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine, May 17<sup>th</sup> in Oak Park. Following are notes I took when listening to the four speakers. I hope my notes do them justice.

- 1) **Cecilie Surasky** is the force behind Muzzlewatch, a blog documenting efforts to silence open debate about Israel-Palestine-U.S. politics. The U.S. gives unconditional support to Israel. It is a battle over hearts and minds. Congress believes Israel is the only friend that they have in the Mideast, and Israel is the only democracy. I do believe our faiths are permanently entwined. Our speakers are being monitored because they are weak not strong. We give lie to stories of hate. Change happens all the time
- 2) **Rev. Jeremiah Wright** served 36 years as Senior Pastor of Chicago’s Trinity United Church of Christ. He got involved 34 years ago in apartheid in South Africa. The movement for freedom took so long, seemed futile, was against government leaders, ANC were called communists, seemed destined to fail. It is the same today about the Israeli-Palestinian situation. Keep on working for

peace, and that the U.S. government to play a leadership role. He told of having a banner in front of the church “Free South Africa.” After prisoners were released from Robbin Island, a group came to Chicago after being in jail 10 years. The man said that he had heard about a church with this sign and agreed they would visit the church if they got out of jail. They did!!

- 3) **Bill Ayers** is a Professor of Education and Senior University Scholar at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Inaction is amoral. The public square belongs to us all. We have a responsibility to talk with each other. It is not that some of us are real Americans – we all are!! Common sense has nothing to do with reality. Now, are you against slavery? Women voting? Time has made these issues no issue. What are we accepting now and not seeing? The facts fulfill the familiar. What if the headline in the newspaper read – Easy access to assault guns puts kids at risk. The myth is so powerful that there is a land with no people – we said this about America and the West – Parallels what Israel is saying. Art and questioning are the enemies of orthodoxy. We need to teach Palestine. Where is Palestine, who lives there, draw Palestine – if we don’t know, how can we learn? He said that the knowledge of geography is so limited in our students he wants a law – you can’t bomb what you can’t find on a map. The goal is not balance in the classroom but is seeking the truth through evidence and argument. It is right to think all is in doubt. We must fight for the freedom to think.
- 4) **Reem Salah** specializes in national security and civil rights law. Washington will not change unless we demand they change. Palestinians do not want revenge – they want justice.

-- Linda Larson



## **SPERTUS INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH STUDIES**

I went to the Spertus Institute for Jewish Studies to hear **Eboo Patel** speak about Interfaith Leadership in a Time of Religious Crisis. Mr. Patel is a Muslim who has created the Interfaith Youth Core. He said that the goal of the Parliament of World Religions is to see that the world religions will not make war against each other but against the ills of mankind. He believes we live in a time that this can be made real. He spoke of 4 trends in our world today:

- 1) Religious revival
- 2) Breakdown of socioeconomic patterns – the life of our parents is not our life today. What will my job be? Who am I?
- 3) We live in the most interactive time of history.
- 4) There is a youth bulge – the median age in Iraq is 19.5, 70% of the population in Iran is under 30.

The task of the world’s religions is to find a way to react to these four events:

- 1) A bubble – the Amish – this is really hard to do. The kids are living 2 lives – “I grew up with this...” the speaker said.
- 2) A barrier – right wing (not conservative)
- 3) Bombs
- 4) A bridge – We need to figure out a language to articulate ways to enrich the world... “The only thing that is settled after a cultural clash is the dust.”

People are taught to hate. Your religious identity should be a bridge. We need to find people who can concretely bring people together. Diversity is the fact of our world. The challenge of Iraq and parts of India, Sri Lanka and elsewhere is the lack of religious pluralism. You have to actually build it. There needs to be an alternative to the “clash of civilizations” framework. There needs to be a knowledge base through our religious traditions, our American history. There needs to be a skill set – an ability to put it into practice. Pluralism is an achievement. It involves respect for each other, relationship between groups, and commitment to the common good.

Obama said that “our patchwork nation is strength, not a weakness.”

Pluralism vs. the extremists – the extremists of all religions belong to the extremist religion.

-- **Linda Larson**



## **!!!!CONGRADUATION!!!!**

Congratulations! God speed! Best wishes! Our 2009 graduates, if you please:

**Desiree Purnell-Sandi**, who graduated from eighth grade at Bret Harte and will be attending Kenwood High School in the fall.

**Julia Miller**, who graduated from Jones College Preparatory High School on June 5<sup>th</sup> and will attend Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana in the fall.

**Tracey Bell**, who graduated from Lincoln Way East and will be attending Michigan State in East Lansing, Michigan in the fall.

**Clare Miller**, who graduated from Illinois State University on May 9<sup>th</sup> with a degree in Early Childhood Development.

**Dana Williams**, who graduated from the University of Illinois in Chicago on May 10<sup>th</sup> with a BA in Sociology and Political Science.

And to **Eugene and Marilyn Winkler's** grandson, **Samuel A. Winkler**, who graduated from high school in Fairfax, Virginia; and to **Bobby and Karen Fields'** grandson, **Michael Foreman**, who graduated from Bolingbrook High School and will be attending Southern Illinois University in the fall.



## NEWS AND NOTES



- ◆ THANKS BE TO GOD! And thanks for all the prayers. **Gloria and Santos Par's** son, **Nicolas**, underwent a CT Scan on Friday. The results were confirmed yesterday. His lung, that was possibly going to need surgery, has healed itself! What a great joy!
- ◆ The Campaign to End the Death Penalty (CEDP) is moving its meetings to varied Loop locations to try to broaden its membership base. **The next CEDP meeting is Tuesday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, at Chicago Temple, 77 West Washington. For more information contact Julien Ball at 773-955-4844.**
- ◆ **Borrowed tables?????** The church seems to be missing two or three of its folding dining room tables. Any clues??
- ◆ The Spring Rummage Sale made just over \$1,100. A special thanks to **Harvey and May Lord** and to **Pat Wilcoxon** for being there first thing Friday at “crunch time” and thanks to all who donated/worked/sorted/priced/hung/folded (and shopped!) at this sale. **There is a Book Sale scheduled for October 2-3 and a fall rummage sale for October 9-10.** Your help will be needed. Remember, it is never too early to start getting your donations ready.
- ◆ **WE ARE GOING TO DO A NEW PICTORIAL DIRECTORY!!! THE DATES FOR PHOTOGRAPHS TO BE TAKEN HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup>, 16<sup>TH</sup>, 17<sup>TH</sup>. Watch for further details but think about your schedule now. Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> and Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> would be from 3-9 p.m. Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> would be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Viewing/ordering immediately follow picture taking. MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!! We would like EVERYBODY to be a part of this.**
- ◆ **REMINDER:** If you are not now receiving this newsletter via email and would like to, please send us your email address.
- ◆ **Matthew Reed** sent us a copy of an article from SFGate: “SoCal Pastor Protests Ban on Gay Marriage - Pasadena, Calif. - The pastor of a San Marino church has said he will not perform any more wedding ceremonies in California until the state’s same-sex marriage ban is overturned. **The Rev. Art Cribbs**, pastor of the 60-member San Marino Congregational United Church of Christ, says he has been marrying couples for more than 20 years but the wedding ceremony he performed on May 23<sup>rd</sup> would be his last until gay couples are given the same right. Speaking to reporters and a small crowd of church members Friday, Cribbs said he felt Proposition 8, upheld Tuesday by the state Supreme Court, crossed a boundary between religion and civil law. San Marino is about 10 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles.

- ◆ We ask for your prayers for the **Hall** family. **Senneca Hall's** father, **Thomas Hollins**, passed away on May 16, 2009. Tommy was 59 years old when he lost his battle with cancer. Senneca can be reached at 7218 S. Evans Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> fl., Chicago, IL 60619.
- ◆ We received a very detailed report from **Rev. Luna Dingayan**, President, Ecumenical Theological Seminary in the Philippines. He shares that it is the 13<sup>th</sup> year of life for the Seminary and lists their seven stages of historical development, updates from the last year, and some future plans. The full report can be found on the east aisle table or if you would like a copy mailed, let the church know.
- ◆ **Norman Hurd** fell and broke his left hip. He had total hip replacement at the U of C on April 1<sup>st</sup>. He spent two weeks in re-hab at Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge and then returned home. They report that he is well on his way to total recovery. Norm and **Barbara's** daughter, **Jennifer**, was married to **Brian Glick** on May 24<sup>th</sup> in Glenview, IL. They will reside in DeKalb, IL where Brian is an administrator in the office of the Vice President for Judicial Affairs of Northern Illinois University. On May 28, 2009 Norm and Barbara celebrated their 32<sup>nd</sup> Wedding Anniversary. They were married here by **Harvey Lord**. What an eventful spring this has been! Our best wishes to you and our prayers for your full recovery.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Christ and John Modschiedler's** daughter, **Christian Hayward**. Christina was named the winner of the 2009 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching. She was one of 10 winners from a pool of 972 nominees from Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will counties. She has been teaching at the University of Chicago Lab School for eight years. Her award includes a tuition-free spring-term sabbatical at Northwestern University, a personal computer, and \$3,000.
- ◆ We have gotten greetings and good wishes from **Linda Noonan**; and **Denise Andersen** who is still at Clackamas UCC, in Milwaukie, OR and reports that **Steve** is working too hard, but has a new partner so anticipates some ease in his work load. **Caitey** has just finished her first year as the Dufur School to Celilo Indian Village Liaison. She is moving into the new school at Celilo. **Ryan** just finished his first year at Berklee College of Music in Boston.

## HAPPY JULY ANNIVERSARY

July 20 - Madeline and Bill Hamblin  
 July 30 - Barb and Charlie Havens

## HAPPY JULY BIRTHDAY

July	1	-	Icy Cade-Bell
	2	-	Sara Pitcher
	4	-	Diane Herrmann
	6	-	Isaiah Fields (8)
	12	-	Grace Cain
	14	-	Gabriela Rangel
	18	-	Janet Howe
	20	-	Mary Stainton
	22	-	Sally Fish
	23	-	May Hunter-Smith
	26	-	Shannon Bennett
	31	-	Howard Savage