

Ezekiel 39:21-29**Hebrews 6:13-20****Psalms 139:1-12, 23-24****I will restore the fortunes of Jacob****The certainty of God's promises****You have searched me and known me**

Over the years Acton Congregation UCC, in Acton, Massachusetts, has established a history of outreach. The Missions and Outreach Program at Acton Congregational Church has been a vibrant part of our church's ministry for over 20 years.

Mission & Outreach Programs represent our church's financial support of local, national and international projects, programs and people. In addition, Acton Congregational Church encourages, sponsors, and supports hands-on involvement by our church members who want to volunteer in both secular and religious organizations.

ACC has always been active in reaching out into the local community to make real the Christian commitment to the service of God and God's people. The list of volunteer opportunities is endless - hospital volunteers, board members, Scouts, ESL instructors, local government, food programs, and Sunday morning bus drivers to name a few. Many times gifts of time and talent are unheralded, but God's call is undeniable.

P R A Y E R :

O God of Jacob, you speak in the light of day and in the dark of night when our sleeping is filled with dreams of heaven and earth. May Jacob's vision remind us to be open and watchful, ready to discover your presence in our midst. Amen.

Exodus 14:9-25**Matthew 7:15-20****Psalms 139:1-12, 23-24****God's protecting angel at the sea****A tree and its fruit****You have searched me and known me**

Will our grandchildren find vital and healthy United Church of Christ congregations when they look for a church to attend? The Indiana-Kentucky Conference (IKC) is working hard to insure that they will by establishing new congregations in our conference. Our goal is "20 by 2020," that is, twenty new churches by the year 2020.

To date, New Hope UCC in Owensboro, KY was received into our Conference in 2003. Trinity UCC Gary held their first worship in September 2004. We are currently planning for a new church start in East Fishers, Indiana, a fast growing community northeast of Indianapolis and exploring the Lexington, Kentucky area for another church start.

Each IKC church is asked to invite its members to participate by giving at least five dollars once a year. Just as Apollos "watered" the seed that Paul planted so that God could give growth to the church, in like spirit we ask IKC church members to "water" the seeds that are being planted around the conference so that God can give growth to them.

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Abundant Possibilities

Genesis 25:19-34**Psalms 119:105-112****Romans 8:1-11****Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23****Esau sells his birthright to Jacob****Your word is a lamp to my feet****Living according to the Spirit****The parable of the sower and the seed**

In July of 2006 58 members of the Southbury, Connecticut United Church of Christ Senior Pilgrim Fellowship and 14 chaperones traveled to Volusia County, Florida to help rebuild houses damaged by a series of four hurricanes in 2004.

Five local churches and 25 local businesses were recruited and joined in on the effort. By providing food and shelter, they helped make it possible for our volunteers to donate more than 2200 hours of labor and thousands of dollars in building materials to repair three homes in the Daytona Beach/Port Orange area that had been heavily damaged by the storms. The missionaries had the privilege of assisting three grateful families restore their homes to livable condition after almost two years of hardship. One family was living in a home with boards nailed over blown-out windows. One family continued to collect rainwater by the bucketful inside their home because they could not afford to replace the roof, and one family whose home had been nearly destroyed was still living in a F.E.M.A. trailer in the front yard.

It was the largest team of missionaries that the U.C.C., Southbury had ever sent out into the world, and what wonderful work they accomplished. Led by skilled chaperones their tasks included roofing, carpentry, dry walling, painting, plumbing, electrical, and landscaping. Divided into three teams, they worked from sunrise to sunset leaving their mark on the hearts and souls of the homeowners. It was a trip that this dedicated group of volunteers will never forget... God blessed everyone involved... Mission

P R A Y E R :

O God of mercy, in Jesus Christ you freed us from sin and death, and by your Holy Spirit you nourish our mortal bodies with life. Plant us now in good soil, that our lives may flower in righteousness and peace. Amen.

July 14

Micah 1:1-5
1 Thessalonians 4:1-8
Psalm 142

Judgment for Jacob's transgression
A life pleasing to God
God my refuge and portion

Bible stories we hear repeatedly take on new significance when put in a modern-day context. The story of the prodigal son was made real to missionaries Bruce and Linda Hanson while teaching in Honduras. During the lesson, questions are asked of students who act out the bible story. One mother in the class did not have to stretch her imagination to answer why the prodigal son left his family - her own son had done that very thing. "He left in search of abundant possibilities." And why did the parents have a party when he returned home with nothing? "They were crying that he was back, crying and suffering with him because he felt such a failure," this Honduran mother answered. "Sometimes you dance to keep away the tears."

PRAYER:

O God of mercy, in Jesus Christ you freed us from sin and death, and by your Holy Spirit you nourish our mortal bodies with life. Plant us now in good soil, that our lives may flower in righteousness and peace. Amen.

July 15

Jeremiah 49:7-11
Ephesians 4:17-5:2
Psalm 142

Edom, children of Esau, punished
The old life and the new
God my refuge and portion

Promoting sustainable agriculture can increase a farming community's short-term and long-term yield. The Rural Leaders Training Program in Japan teaches its students the importance of organic agricultural methods along with community organizing, conflict resolution and other leadership, development and agricultural topics. The program, a project of the Asian Rural Institute in Japan – a long-time partner of Global Ministries – graduated its 34th class in 2006. The 26 students came from throughout Asia and Africa. After the eight-month course, the graduates return to their home communities to pass along what they learned. Perhaps most important in their training is the knowledge that a rural leader must be dedicated to the people and the community, have a strong conviction to overcome difficulties and show responsibility toward the next generation.

PRAYER:

O God of mercy, in Jesus Christ you freed us from sin and death, and by your Holy Spirit you nourish our mortal bodies with life. Plant us now in good soil, that our lives may flower in righteousness and peace. Amen.

July 16

Obadiah 15-21
Matthew 13:10-17
Psalm 142

Israel's triumph at Edom's expense
The purpose of parable
God my refuge and portion

Pace Village is an inter-faith, multi-racial, multi-cultural day camp held the third week of July each summer to teach the way of non-violence to children ages 6 through 13. Peace Village was created by the Congregational Church UCC of Lincoln City, OR in 1996 and in 2006 served 80 students with a teaching staff of more than 40 volunteers. The core curriculum consists of Meditation/Yoga, Non-Violent Conflict Resolution, Media Literacy, and Ecology. They learn about the lives of peace heroes, including: Jesus of Nazareth, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Peace Pilgrim; and hear religious leaders speak from a variety of traditions: Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Moslem and Native American.

Peace Village, Inc. is a non-profit corporation which seeks to establish Villages in cities and states throughout the U.S. In 2006, 8 Peace Villages were held in 4 states. For information, please contact: Darren Reiley, Executive Director, PO Box 2635, Eugene, OR 97402 or www.peacevillageinc.org.

PRAYER:

O God of mercy, in Jesus Christ you freed us from sin and death, and by your Holy Spirit you nourish our mortal bodies with life. Plant us now in good soil, that our lives may flower in righteousness and peace. Amen.

July 17

Isaiah 44:1-5
Hebrews 2:1-9
Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24

God's blessing on Israel: "Do not fear"
Warning to pay attention
You have searched me and known me

During 50 years of ministry, the Rev. Matthew Fong learned to depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Those years included 22 years of leadership at the YMCA in Hong Kong, and service with the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China. Rev. Fong was honored on November 19, 2006 at his home church, the Chinese Congregational Church UCC in Chinatown, San Francisco, on the 50th Anniversary of his ordination. His advice on ministry is to plant the seed of Christianity and let it blossom and grow in the soil and culture of that place. He cautioned against making the mistake of Christian missionaries in China who at one time tried to plant not the seed, but the whole plant and the pot, too.

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