

January 23, 2009

The Council for Health and Human Service Ministries of the United Church of Christ (CHHSM) announces the recent consecration of seven new graduates of its faith-based leadership program for executives and senior managers of health and human service ministries affiliated with the United Church of Christ. The program confers the Diakonal Minister credential; the term refers to the service ministry of deacons in the church. The year-long Diakonal Minister course of study augments managers' professional and subject area job skills with study in eight areas that research has identified as essential to successful leadership of faith-based organizations: passion for justice, spiritual integrity, leadership for change, sense of vocation (call), ethical reflection and action, covenant building skills, faith values foundations, and organizational skills.

Jeremiah 20: 7-13 Jeremiah denounces his persecutors

2 Peter 3:1-7 Scoffers doubt God's message

Psalm 62: 5-12 In God is my safety and my honor

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Ecumenical Sunday—January 18, 2009

January 24, 2009

Prior to the start of Liberia's first civil war in 1989, the Christian Health Association of Liberia (CHAL) assisted its member hospitals and clinics by operating a supply chain that placed bulk orders for pharmaceuticals. With peace restored, thousands of internally displaced persons are returning to their homes and needing the services offered by health facilities, including access to medicines for illnesses and injuries. Thanks to Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc., (IMA) a nonprofit organization providing comprehensive assistance for overseas health programs, CHAL will receive support from the One Great Hour of Sharing offering to re-establish their pharmaceutical purchases.

Jeremiah 20: 14-18 Jeremiah curses the day of his birth

Luke 10: 13-16 Woe to those who reject God's messengers

Psalm 62: 5-12 In God is my safety and my honor

Known and Loved

January 18, 2009

Second Sunday after Epiphany



"Believe, Care, Do" describes the theology of many of the church members at the Congregational Church of San Mateo, CA. Our congregation serves as an extravagant sign at both the local and national levels, working for justice and peace, hoping to create a more compassionate world.

At the Congregational Church of San Mateo there are many tangible ways we put our faith into action. Our church is part of Peninsula Interfaith Action, a coalition of congregations on the Peninsula working together to address pressing issues in our community. With the help of PIA we were able to create an after-school tutoring program at three sites in the city. Currently, our Local Organizing Committee (LOC) is addressing the critical issue of the lack of "affordable housing" on the Peninsula.

Seeing this as a justice issue, we go to city and county meetings, speak with "those in the know and with power," to gain insight into the issues at hand helping others to be known and loved.

1 Samuel 3: 1-10 [11-20] The Calling of Samuel

Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18 You have searched me out

1 Corinthians 6: 12-20 Glorify God in your body

John 1: 43-51 The calling of the first disciples

JANUARY 19, 2009

The United Church of Christ has received \$6,142,675.21 to address the needs of people impacted by the 2005 hurricanes. The funds received continue a UCC presence on the Gulf Coast for the long term recovery. These generous gifts of UCC members and friends represent hope for thousands of people affected by the 2005 hurricanes. The major role of the church in this disaster continues to be the rebuilding and repairing of homes for persons identified with "un-met needs" people who have no insurance or who are under-insured. One of the best ways local churches can respond to this need is to send a work group to help rebuild or repair homes. How would Dr. King respond to this outpouring of love by UCC family and friends? He would probably encourage us to show our neighbors that they are known and loved by us. The UCC has been able to develop work group repair and rebuild opportunities thanks to the generous donations to the One Great Hour of Sharing special fund, Hope Shall Bloom.

1 Samuel 9:27-10:8 Samuel anoints Saul king
2 Corinthians 6: 14 – 7:1 Believers are called out
Psalm 86 Walking in God's way

CENTERING PRAYER (January 15-21, 2009)

Insistent God, by night and day you summon your slumbering people. So stir us with your voice and enlighten our lives with your grace that we give ourselves fully to Christ's call to mission and ministry. Amen.

JANUARY 20, 2009

Diane Faires, a Global Mission intern to Sri Lanka, had many experiences while volunteering to see attitudes transformed and lives changed. Her experiences at the Jennifer Girls Home in Sri Lanka brought her a new understanding of the miraculous power of blessings. These young girls, some who saw a parent killed right before their eyes during the war, others whose homes were destroyed and lived in the forest or became refugees – have found safety at the Jennifer Girls Home. The comfort they have experienced has compelled them to reach out to others with less. On a visit to the home, Diane found the girls roasting grains to prepare flour to give to poor families at a church-operated nursery school. These grains come from the girls' own lunches from which they each set aside a handful to share with those less fortunate. It is what their local pastor, Joshua, calls a lesson in "nesam" – which means love of family.

1 Samuel 15: 10-31 Samuel rebukes King Saul
Acts 5: 1-11 Ananias and Sapphira judged
Psalm 86 Walking in God's way

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2009 A Calendar of Prayer for the United Church of Christ

JANUARY 21, 2009

The Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) is a network of churches and synagogues in Gainesville organized to provide shelter for homeless families in their facilities for a week at a time on a rotating basis. The Gainesville IHN coordinator screens families for admission into the IHN program, and the whole process is thoroughly organized. Our church hosts families about three or four times a year. Prior to each hosting there is an opportunity for anyone to sign up for bringing breakfast or dinner, driving the IHN van in the morning and afternoon, spending the evening, spending the night, or many more. A typical IHN week involves 80-100 volunteers. This is a uniquely rewarding experience of being able to provide direct service to people in need. Most volunteers come away feeling they received as much as they gave, if not more. The IHN program at UCG is coordinated by a volunteer committee as part of our board of outreach.

Genesis 16: 1-14 Hagar sees God and is blessed
Luke 18: 15-17 Jesus blesses little children
Psalm 86 Walking in God's way

CENTERING PRAYER (January 22-28, 2009)

God of the prophets, you call us from evil to serve you. Fulfill in us your commonwealth of justice and joy, that the light of your presence may be revealed to all nations, to the glory of Jesus' name. Amen.

JANUARY 22, 2009

Pictures are worth a thousand words, and they provide a priceless pictorial diary of times in our lives. Called to follow Christ, Alex Morse, a Global Ministries intern who served in **Dominican Republic**, took thousands of photos while working with Caminante Outreach Ministry in Boca Chica. The memories they evoke are bitter-sweet – from times before Tropical Storm Noel hit the island to more recent events such as "the day of happiness"—an event sponsored by Consorcio NINA, a group whose usual focus is educating children living in poverty on issues such as AIDS prevention, hygiene and abuse. But this event simply let the kids be kids – games, dancing, stilt walking and painting. Some things Alex experienced don't need pictures to create a memory. Especially vivid to him was the time he spent with Osvaldo – an HIV/AIDS patient who died just two days after Alex played guitar and sang for him – a promise he made months before.

Jeremiah 19: 1-15 Jeremiah announces disaster
Revelation 18: 11-20 Lament over a fallen city
Psalm 62: 5-12 In God is my safety and my honor

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