

June 12, 2009

Pualani Muraki is a coffee farmer in the hills above the Kona Coast on the Big Island of Hawaii. She is also an active member of the Lanakila Congregational Church in Kealakua, a member of the Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ. In 1999, she was a delegate from the conference to General Synod in Providence. That was the year that the Massachusetts Conference brought forth a resolution to declare the United Church of Christ a fair trade coffee church. Pualani sat in on the committee that discussed the resolution. She approached Wally Ryan Kuroiwa of the Justice and Witness Ministries staff saying Kona coffee farmers needed to be involved. As a result, the Small Farmers Fund, supported by the sales of fair trade coffee in UCC congregations, has helped a group of those small farmers begin a cooperative with the hope that they can become a part of the movement.

Series 1

- 1 Samuel 10:1-8** Samuel tells Saul he will be king
- Hebrews 11:4-7** Without faith no one can please God
- Psalm 20** Victory for the anointed one
- Series 2
- 1 Kings 10:26-11:8** Cedars are more numerous than sycamores
- Hebrews 11:4-7** Without faith no one can please God
- Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15** The righteous are like a cedar of Lebanon

Our Church's Wider Mission: Changing Lives

June 13, 2009

For the months of July and August, in addition to the 9:30 am regular worship service, First Church of Christ, UCC in Sandwich, MA holds a 30- minute service in the patio garden adjacent to the church. Led by lay persons, the service consists of music (guitar, synthesizer and quiet drums), scripture, prayer and a meditation/ conversation time on themes such as hope, God's creation, earthly needs, and forgiveness. Designed for parishioners of all ages, the Summer Garden Service is particularly attractive to young families invited to "come as you are." Starting with a gathering of about 20 worshippers, the service grew to over 50 by end of summer. They comment that worshipping in a lovely outdoor setting provided inspiration and a closer feeling to God.

Series 1

- 1 Samuel 13: 1-15a** Saul disobeys God
- Mark 4: 1-20** The parable of the sower
- Series 2
- Genesis 3: 14-24** Deprived of the tree of life
- Hebrews 2: 5-9** Christ tastes death for everyone

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2009 A Calendar of Prayer for the United Church of Christ

Mysterious Encounter

June 7, 2009
Trinity Sunday



Pilgrim Pines Camp and Conference Center seeks to honor God and provide for all people a sacred space to follow their spiritual path to discover and discern God. This sacred land in which we meet calls us to act with concern for eco-justice for all creation. As a ministry of the United Church of Christ, Pilgrim Pines is welcoming of all persons without regard to age, race, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic position, handicap or denominational affiliation. "We're here for you!"

Groups are encouraged to make use of their own programs, however, the director, staff and program resource people at Pilgrim Pines are equipped and ready to assist in any way they can! Meals are served family or buffet style, three times a day. Setting, serving and clearing of tables are a shared camp responsibility requiring no more than 15 minutes before and after each meal. The food is creatively prepared and beautifully presented. A vegetarian alternative is always provided. Physical strength can never permanently withstand the impact of spiritual force. There are 6 meeting areas with capacities for 15-300 individuals.

Plan a hike, play volleyball or basketball, go swimming (in the summertime), organize an evening of music & dance. All of these activities are available to make your Pilgrim Pines experience full and enjoyable. A mile high in elevation, Pilgrim Pines is located on 160 acres in the San Bernardino National Forest. Neighboring towns Oak Glen & Yucaipa are well known for their apple orchards, cider mills, curio shops and magnificent scenery. Tall stands of pine trees, mountain streams & clean air provide the perfect environment for individuals from all walks of life to gather, celebrate & be at peace. The ropes course is a life-changing experience of team-building and personal growth. Both low and high challenge courses consist of a number of events which form a series of challenges of graduated difficulty. Completing these tasks with your group leads to feelings of self-esteem & respect for self and others.

Isaiah 6:1-8 Isaiah's vision and call

Psalm 29 Worship God in holiness

Romans 8:12-17 Living by the Spirit

John 3:1-17 Entering the reign of God

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2009 A Calendar of Prayer for the United Church of Christ

June 8, 2009

When was the last time you were surprised by God? God appears in ways we never expect but maybe during our times of distress, we stop looking and listening for God. Jim and Jayanthi Wilson, Global Ministries missionaries in Botswana, have known times when giving up seemed to be the only answer. Jayanthi experienced such a time when finances and leadership were in crisis at Sedibeng – a training center for disadvantaged youth and women where she worked. Then, unexpectedly, a call came from someone opening a restaurant who remembered the good accomplished at Sedibeng. Jayanthi was able to contact some former students who were then hired to work in the restaurant. Their hope was restored and Jayanthi found, once again, that her patience and openness were rewarded.

Numbers 9:15-23 God in the cloud and fire
Revelation 4:1-8 Heaven's holy, holy, holy
Psalms 20 The name of God

CENTERING PRAYER (June 4—10, 2009)

Holy God, the earth is full of the glory of your love. May we your children, born of the Spirit, so bear witness to your Son Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, that all the world may believe and have eternal life through the one who saves, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

June 9, 2009

Outreach for the youth fellowship at Grace United Church of Christ in Lancaster, OH means reaching out to the Fairfield County community and across the globe. Every month, the youth group participates in faith-based community service activities throughout the area. They work with local food pantries, humane societies and all those in need. "If somebody needs some help," said Julie Walter, director of Christian education at Grace United, "We just gather the troops and go." So it was only natural the "troops" gathered in August of 2007 to fight world hunger during a five-day stay at Heifer Project International Ranch in Perryville, Arkansas. Heifer Project International is a nonprofit organization that works to end world hunger and poverty by teaching impoverished communities how to care for the earth and food sources instead of using short-term relief. The group stayed in a makeshift global village that resembled a modern urban slum area. The trip to the ranch was about education.

Exodus 25: 1-22 God in the ark and its mercy seat
1 Corinthians 2: 1-10 God's wisdom revealed through the Spirit
Psalms 20 The name of God

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2009 A Calendar of Prayer for the United Church of Christ

June 10, 2009

The Ministry of Community Fine Arts works to foster and enhance the connection between the Sacred and the Arts in the community at large and Irvine UCC, Irvine, CA. (IUCC) This ministry seeks ways for IUCC and community artists to bring the spiritual dimension of the arts into a sacred venue; To create, plan, and promote opportunities for community artists to exhibit and perform at IUCC under the direction and when appropriate sponsorship of IUCC. This ministry helps to develop programs supporting children and youth in the Sacred Arts. The Community Fine Arts Ministry also promotes interaction with other religious and ecumenical groups through fine arts activities.

Numbers 6: 22-27 Aaronic blessing
Mark 4:21-25 Secrets come to light
Psalms 20 The name of God

CENTERING PRAYER (June 11—17, 2009)

Series 1—Mighty God, to you belong the mysteries of the universe, You transform shepherds into kings, the smallest seeds into magnificent trees, and hardened hearts into loving ones. Bless us with your life-giving Spirit, re-create us in your image, and shape us to your purposes, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Series 2—Creating God, your reign of love makes all things new. Plant seeds of confidence and gladness in our hearts, so that, trusting your word, we may live no longer for ourselves but for him who died and was raised for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

June 11, 2009

Hanapepe Hawaiian Congregational Church on the island of Kauai has always placed a strong value on music and dreamed of forming a children's choir. However, until recently, timing, commitment, and availability of people and resources made it difficult to get such a program going. All that changed last year when a mother in the church became inspired after hearing choirs from a local children's opera theater perform one Sunday morning during worship. She approached church leaders, who supported the idea, and two people were sent to a summer program at Azusa Pacific University, which offered training in the Kodaly Method, widely used to teach music to children. The Kodaly method starts with simple children's songs associated with their country and leads to the recognition of beat, rhythm, and melodic and harmonic intervals. The children's choir officially began in the fall of 2007.

Series 1—1 Samuel 9:15-27 Saul meets Samuel
Hebrews 2:5-9 Christ tastes death for everyone

Series 2— Genesis 3:14-24 Deprived of the tree of life
Hebrews 2:5-9 Christ tastes death for everyone

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