

May 15, 2009

Nearly three years ago, 22 members of David's UCC in Canal Winchester, OH visited Nicaragua on a mission trip sponsored by Global Ministries' People to People partnership program. They went, David's Pastor David Long-Higgins said, expecting that their hands would be needed. What he and his congregation found was that it was their hearts that were wanted – and they gave them whole-heartedly. After returning home, the mission group found themselves drawn to a partnership with the Iglesia Mision Cristiana – a denomination structure in Nicaragua addressing religious, social and cultural needs of its people. What began as a mission trip to give time, energy and compassion became a relationship of mutual benefit to share prayer, support and friendship.

Isaiah 42:5-9 God declares new things
Acts 10:34-43 God shows no partiality
Psalms 98 Shout with joy to God

Mother's Day / Festival of the Christian Home

May 16, 2009

Welcome to the West Norwalk Nursery School, serving families in Norwalk, CT and the surrounding communities, for over 40 years. Located in the lower level of The United Congregational Church, Norwalk, CT the school is nonsectarian and open to all children regardless of race, religion, creed, or national origin. Their program is designed to serve children aged three to five years old. The school offers a healthy and safe environment for all children while providing a comprehensive program characterized by the natural curriculum flow from the development of pro-social skills to nurturing the skills necessary for a successful Kindergarten experience.

Deuteronomy 32:44-47 Take to heart the command of God
Mark 10:42-45 Jesus came to serve
Psalms 98 Shout with joy to God

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2009 A Calendar of Prayer for the United Church of Christ

Abiding in Love

May 10, 2009
Fifth Sunday of Easter



Seven women from St. Luke's UCC, Burlington, Iowa make up the Peace Fellowship Group. "The women believe that as people of God we can relieve some of the brokenness in the world," said Deloris Blaufuss on behalf of the group. "They also believe in a vision for a world where there can be peace and justice for all people".

Every year the Peace Fellowship Group chooses a mission project to support. Last year they chose the crisis in Sudan/Darfur, and contacted UCC Wider Church Ministries to provide some educational materials. The Sudan/Darfur Crisis has been supported by the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

As part of a fund-raising event, the group set up educational opportunities about the issues emphasizing the importance of the project. The group set a goal of \$2,000. Projects supported in previous years included a Leprosarium in India where a meal was provided each day for one year; a women and children's co-op near Guatemala City, and the "Raising the Roof" project that supported earthquake recovery in Pakistan.

One of the largest fundraising projects that Peace Fellowship has had is an International Gift Fair. They work with fair trade organizations and sell their items at local festive events, sharing their message of "peace and justice for all".

Acts 8: 26-40 Philip teaches and baptizes an Ethiopian

Psalms 22: 25-31 All shall turn to the Lord

1 John 4: 7-21 Loving one another

John 15: 1-8 Christ the vine

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2009 A Calendar of Prayer for the United Church of Christ

May 11, 2009

The Ecumenical Foundation for Peace and Justice (COPJ) encourages youth in Haiti to have compassion, to sow mutual respect, and to consider the good of the whole. Jesus is held up as the ultimate example of goodness – showing the importance of truth, generosity, solidarity and peace. Forty community leaders and 70 students participated in a peaceful conflict resolution and human rights seminar sponsored by COPJ. Thirty youths turned away from a violent lifestyle because of what they learned. COPJ also provides assistance through House of Hope I and II, training young girls in the art of sewing and embroidery and vocational education. Most of all, COPJ provides Haitian youth with self worth and dignity – the very things they need to end the cycle of childhood domestic slavery – an enormous problem in Haiti. Global Ministries supports COPJ in its work with Aba System Restavek – a network of 15 national organizations helping to liberate Haitian youth.

Isaiah 5: 1-7 The unfaithful vineyard
Galatians 5: 16-26 The fruits of the Spirit
Psalms 80 Israel, the vine

CENTERING PRAYER (May 7—13, 2009)

God, you sent your Son into the world that we might live through him. May we abide in his risen life so that we may bear the fruit of love for one another and know the fullness of joy. Amen.

May 12, 2009

The Ruth Dudley Resource Center (RDRC) serves the churches of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. It is ecumenical and no membership is required. The center offers a variety of print and video materials geared towards pastors, church educators, youth workers, church leaders and members of the local church. Topics range from adult, children, outdoor, teaching, and youth ministries; family life, mission, hunger, justice, peace, social issues, stewardship and worship education; and U.C.C. Resources. Print Resources may be borrowed for a period of thirty days. The RDRC catalog also includes items in the Connecticut Conference Archives. These materials do not circulate, but are available for reference.

Isaiah 32: 9-20 A fruitful field
James 3: 17-18 Wisdom is full of good fruits
Psalms 80 Israel, the vine

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2009 A Calendar of Prayer for the United Church of Christ

May 13, 2009

Even after living in the Middle East for 28 years, Global Ministries missionary Alison Stendahl is still struck by hearing church bells ringing in one ear and the call to prayer resonating in the other. The mixture of the Christian and Muslim world makes her appreciate the complexity of the society in Turkey where she lives. Two events made Alison especially aware of this complexity – celebrating the Near East School of Theology, NEST's 75th anniversary and attending the Week of Christian Unity's closing ceremony. Both events represented a calm inside the storm. NEST's joyful celebration and hospitable atmosphere made it almost possible to forget the explosions and violence occurring outside the church walls. The ecumenical fellowship of Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic standing side by side, praying and enjoying one another's traditions for the Week of Christian Unity was a sight to behold. These events are a reminder that our faith may be the only hope that carries us through the darkest of nights.

Isaiah 65: 17-25 God's people like a tree
John 14: 18-31 Keeping God's word
Psalms 80 Israel, the vine

CENTERING PRAYER (May 14—20, 2009)

Teacher God, continue to put those people and experiences in our path, which create bridges of understanding and friendship. Inspire us to give our hearts as freely as we give our opinion on things we know only casually. Amen.

May 14, 2009

Through the non-profit organization "Corazon" (In Spanish, "Heart") First Congregational Church of Ramona, CA is very active in ministry in Northern Baja California. Twice a year, First Congregational Church builds a simple, lasting home for a needy Mexican family. Each April and November they accomplish the home build in a single long, but exciting day. In 2005 they celebrated the building of our 25th home. In addition to the homebuilding mission, this church sponsors an elementary, middle school and high School youth and provides for the costs of their education. They also collect blankets and jackets for folks in the Tijuana colonias who need that gift of warmth. As Corazon says: "There are no Borders on Dreams and No Boundaries on Hope."

Isaiah 49:5-6 A light to the nations
Acts 10:1-34 Peter and Cornelius
Psalms 98 Shout with joy to God

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