

BEACON NEWSLETTER

Worship
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A Multi-racial, Multi-cultural, Open and Affirming Congregation

FEBRUARY 2011

From the Pastor's Pen...

We've made it through the first month of 2011. Glory be to God!!!



We have been sailing our ships and we shall continue to set sail this month on the "Leadership", the "Friendship" and the "Stewardship." I hope that you will continue to sail with us on Sunday mornings. I pray you have found these "ships" edifying to your faith journey. Each ship is imperative to our growth.



Part of our intentionality to set sail is so that we may launch out into the deep. We have many important decisions to make this year. There is a lot of work to be done. However, I believe that with the help of God we can make it through.

Now is the time for us to step out on faith, with great courage, and do the things God is calling us to establish. We need faith and courage as we attempt to grow in mind, body and spirit. We need faith and courage as we search for a new Minister of Music. We need faith and courage as we begin dialogue about where our new church home will reside. We need faith and courage as we establish new leaders and new patterns for leadership.

Beginning this month we will begin our D.I.V.E. (Devotion, Imagination, Vision and Expectation) sessions and our Team meetings (iTeam, Multicultural/Multiracial, Open and Affirming). I am praying that you will attend the D.I.V.E. sessions and join a team. If our church is going to grow in spiritual maturity then we must be

committed to connect with the church beyond Sunday. I need your help. I need your support.

It is my prayer that you will continue to help EACC Reach Up (Worship), Reach In (Discipleship), Reach Out (Mission), Reach Across (Diversity) and Reach Beyond (with Imagination). We cannot "reach" the place God is calling us without your gifts. God has given each of us gifts. I pray that you will consider how you can use your gifts to the glory of God and for the upbuilding of God's Kingdom.

I look forward to setting sail with you. I cannot wait to D.I.V.E. into the important subject matters facing our congregation. I am excited to be your teammate. It's going to be a great time reaching for the things God has placed before us.

Let's do this together.

With hope for a bright future,

Rev. Courtney Clayton Jenkins

- Pastor**
Rev. Courtney Clayton Jenkins
- Interim Director of Music**
Charles Carr
- Director of Gospel Choir**
Joan Bacon
- Financial Manager**
John Peterson
- Church Secretary**
Diana Reid
- Custodian**
William Siggers
- Director, Saturday Fun**
Cheryl Wacasey
- Beacon Editors**
Kathy Baker
Mary Sherry
- Design Editor**
Cyndi Henderson
- Photographer**
Kathie Buckner

Sunday Schedule

8:45 a.m.

Adult Bible Study

10:00 a.m.

**Celebrative Worship
Service &
Church School**

Following worship
**Fellowship and
Refreshments**

Bus transportation
available to/from church

Preparing Our Ships To Set Sail



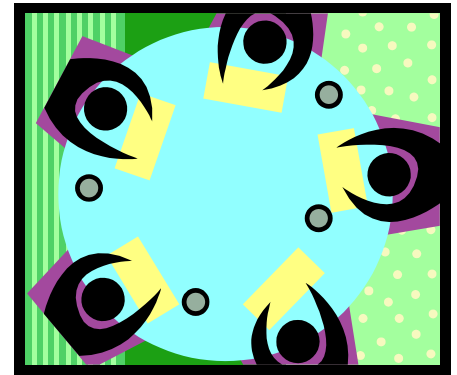
Worship

Discipleship

Leadership

Relationship

Stewardship



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Preacher: Rev. Courtney Clayton Jenkins

**Worship Theme: LeaderSHIP;
Are You Leading or Following?**

Text: Mark 7: 1-13

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Preacher: Rev. Courtney Clayton Jenkins

**Worship Theme: FriendSHIP;
Fascinating Friendship**

Text: 1 John 4: 7-21

Racial Justice Sunday

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Preacher: Persida Rivera-Mendez

**Worship Theme: FellowSHIP;
Formative Fellowship**

Text: Acts 2: 24-26

Hispanic Heritage Day

**Love offering for the UCC
Council of Hispanic Ministries
Academic Recognition Sunday**

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Preacher: Rev. Courtney Clayton Jenkins

Worship Theme: StewardSHIP

Text and Title: TBA

Seminary Sunday

NEW MEMBERS ORIENTATION

Those interested in becoming members of Euclid Avenue Congregational Church are invited to attend two New Member Orientations, one at 8 AM on Saturday, February 12 and the second at 8 AM on Saturday, February 19 at 3000 Euclid Ave. Both session must be attended consecutively. Those who are interested should RSVP to the church secretary.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The officers and Ministry members, both new and ongoing, who will be leading our congregation in 2011 are urged to attend a Leadership Training meeting at 10 AM on Saturday, February 19 at 3000 Euclid Avenue. Leaders should contact the church office about ordering curriculum in time for the first class. (*The Making of A Leader by Frank Damazio*). Please read chapter 1 before the first class.

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

Pastor Jenkins would like to take a current assessment of our congregation through a survey that has been distributed by the ushers at worship. An honest assessment of our past, present and future will assist in making 2011 a more productive year. If you have not yet turned in a survey, and you would like to participate, please call the church office.



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT SUNDAY

On Sunday, February 20, we will be recognizing those in our congregation who have been achieving academically this school year. Students of any age who have received all As and Bs are asked to show their report cards to Charlene Higginbotham no later than February the 13th, so we can be sure to recognize their achievement on the 20th.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

The Adult Bible Study group that meets every Sunday Morning at 8:45AM under the leadership of Al Parks will be reading and discussing the following scripture passages and topics in February:

February 6 – Jesus is the Messiah – Mark 8: 27-38; 9:1
..... Devotions – Psalm 106: 40-48

February 13 – This is My Beloved - Mark 9: 2-13
..... Devotions – Malachi 4: 1-5

February 20 – Jesus Came to Serve – Mark 10: 35-45
..... Devotions – John 13: 3-16

February 27 – Coming of the Son of Man – Mark 13: 14-27
..... Devotions – Isaiah 2: 5-12



SATURDAY FUN

In February, the Saturday Fun kids will be enjoying these activities:

February 5

Monsters hockey game - \$10 fee

February 19

Ice skating - \$5 fee

Children of all ages are invited to these events. Please call Cheryl Wacasey at 216-752- 0314 or the church office to reserve your spot. Refreshments are always served!

DEVOTION, IMAGINATION, VISION AND EXPECTATION

D.I.V.E. Sessions will be every Wednesday for 60-90 minutes. There are two sessions available each Wednesday: 12:00 PM Noon Session / 9411 Euclid Avenue

7:00 PM Session / 3000 Euclid Avenue. The subject that is discussed at noon will also be discussed at 7:00 PM.

February 2, 2011 - *"Imagine A Church: Let's Grow Together"*

February 9, 2011 - *"Sunday Worship: How we Flow"*

February 16, 2011 - *"Sunday Worship: Music - Part I"*

February 23, 2011 - *"Sunday Worship: Music - Part II"*

March 2, 2011 - *"EACC and the Greater Cleveland Community"*

March 9th, 2011 - No Noon D.I.V.E. Sessions - Ash Wednesday

March 9th, 2011 - *"What is God calling us to do with our future property?"*

March 16, 2011 - *"What if God is Calling us to Stay at 9606?"*

March 23, 2011 - *"Fire Anniversary Healing Service (No D.I.V.E. Sessions) 6:00 P.M. at 9606"*

March 30, 2011 - *"What if God is Calling us to Build a Church beyond 9606?"*

April 6, 2011 - *"What if God is Calling us to Buy A Church?"*

April 13, 2011 - *"What if God is Calling us to Merge with Another Church?"*

April 20, 2011 - HOLY WEEK / No D.I.V.E. Sessions

April 27, 2011 - *Congregational Meeting about our Future in the evening.*

THANK YOU, 2010 OFFICERS AND STAFF!

That 2010 was a challenging year for Euclid Avenue Congregational Church is not likely to get any argument from any of us. We started it off in our beloved building at 96th and Euclid, assuming our congregation would be there for another couple of hundred years at least, and ended it up with a different worship space, a different office location, a different pastor, different music director, a different custodian, and a lot of questions about our future. Several hard-working church leaders and staff members are to thank for getting us through these difficult months to our current feeling of hopeful optimism, and now that many of them are moving out of their positions of leadership we want to thank them:

- Dean Sieck, our Moderator, who patiently listened to our many concerns and anxieties while putting in countless hours helping to solve the many problems that started with the fire but by no means ended there;
- Calvin Humphrey and Al Parks, Council of Ministries Co-Chairs, who without complaint attended meeting after meeting and made decision after decision that had certainly not been in their original job descriptions;
- Eleanor Dees and Calvin Humphrey, Bob Henderson and Al Parks, Ann Drysdale and John Merritt, Ruby Brooks and Kathie Buckner, Cyndi Henderson and Carolyn Smith, who as co-chairs of the various ministries found themselves having to carry out programs of the church in an unfamiliar space with none of the usual resources;
- Diana Reid and John Peterson, who carried on without missing a beat, for a while working out of their own homes when their offices and records were destroyed.
- All the members of the ministries, especially the outgoing members: Ruth Ann Hampton, Julia Haynes and Dean Sieck of Christian Education; Dave Buckle, Calvin Humphrey and Helen Humphrey of Church in the World; Noreen Roderick, John Merritt and Vivian Taylor of Fellowship; Ruby Brooks, Nancy Nigosian and Manny Roderick of Stewardship; and Juanita LeFloria, Carolyn Smith and Sandra Thomas of Worship and Arts who kept attending meetings and doing the work of their ministries despite many frustrations.

Much gratitude!

NEW OFFICERS

The slate of officers proposed for 2011 to be voted on at the January 30 Annual Meeting:

Moderator – Adrienne Brockway

Vice Moderator – Charles Williams

Clerk – Brenda Bagby

Ministry Members: *(for 3-year terms unless otherwise indicated)*

Christian Education: Ruth Ann Hampton

Calvin Humphrey

Manny Roderick - 1 year term

Cheryl Wacasey

Fellowship & Community Life: Robin Crowder

Martha Edwards

John Merritt

Stewardship: Leon Bibb

Dave Buckle

Dean Sieck

Church in the World: Kathy Baker

Linda Huston

Yulanda Powell

Worship & Arts: Marguerite Bibb

Noreen Roderick – 1 year term

Catherinlu Russell

Carolyn Smith – 1 year term

Madge Potts Williams

Church Representatives: *(1-year terms, eligible for renomination)*

Western Reserve Association – Nathaniel Martin

Alma Mozley

Ohio Conference – Joan Southgate

InterAct – Kathy Baker

Charlene Higginbotham

HOMELESS STAND DOWN

The Homeless Stand Down 2011, designed to provide many essential services to Clevelanders who are experiencing homelessness and poverty this winter, is under way. There are two HSD dates in February: the 12th and the 18th. We are hoping for 100% participation from EACC members. Here are some of the ways you can help:

- bring needed items to church with you on Sunday morning no later than February 6 – toiletries, teddy bears, diapers, baby wipes, and/or infant formula.
- contribute money that will help pay for some of the above plus bus tickets. Cash is, of course, welcome; make checks out to EACC with Homeless Stand Down on the memo line.
- donate your time at one of the Stand Downs. Register online at www.interactcleveland.org
- help assemble 50 personal care kits after worship on February 6.
- come to the Homeless Stand Down display in the parlor after worship with your donations, questions, and willingness to help.

ENLISTMENT COMMITTEE

The “not-quite-final” results from the enlistment campaign show that estimates from members now total \$107,507, bringing us within 97% of our goal for the year. This is probably the highest total we have ever achieved at this stage, bringing very encouraging news for the coming year. Many thanks to EACC members for their very generous support of our ministry!

2010 FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY		
Expenses Compared to Budget		
	Jan - Dec 2010	
	Actual 2010	Budget 2010
INCOME		
CONTRIBUTIONS	120,683	128,300
ENDOWMENT INCOME USED	215,451	284,445
OTHER INCOME	1,095	5,200
Total RECEIPTS	337,230	417,945
EXPENSES		
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES		
Total PERSONNEL	222,748	245,660
Total BUILDING MAINTENANCE	41,794	85,375
Total OFFICE	8,183	10,550
Total OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	13,763	23,750
Total ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	286,488	365,335
PROGRAM & MINISTRIES EXPENSES		
Total CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY	8,925	12,100
Total FELLOWSHIP & COMMUNITY LIFE MINISTRY	5,547	8,050
Total CHURCH IN THE WORLD MINISTRY	25,293	26,950
Total WORSHIP & ARTS MINISTRY	2,685	5,510
Total PROGRAM & MINISTRIES EXPENSES	42,450	52,610
Total EXPENSE	328,939	417,945
Surplus or (Loss)	8,291	0

Tell of Our Past, Present and Future!

Get out your writing pen...

In an effort to continue our healing process here at EACC, Pastor Jenkins would like to collect your testimonies, your excitements, and your hopes for EACC. We will begin the process of developing a book that will chronicle your testimonies from the past, your excitement for our present, and your hopes for our future. Members are asked to submit their written testimony with a maximum of 150 words. You may submit up to 3 testimonies regarding each subject of our past, our present, or our future. Please email or snail mail your testimony to the Church office no later than Friday, February 25, 2011. Please indicate at the top of each submission if it should be filed under past, present, or future.

CHURCH IN THE WORLD MINISTRY

The Dolphin Depot, this ministry's outreach to the Early Childhood Development Center, continues to be an exciting place for the children of the school. Principal Sommer Edwards reported that this initiative has had a positive effect overall on school attendance. Students are also learning to invest their “dolphin dollars” more strategically in that they are not spending all of their dollars at once but are learning to save, to hold onto their dollars and accumulate more in order to purchase higher priced articles.

In the coming year members and volunteers hope to bring up the attendance record for the school and to continue tutoring students and strengthening their skills in math and reading. Volunteers are welcomed and asked to call Miss Sommer Edwards at 216-231-4416 for more information.

Other outreach programs such as Fifth Monday Meals, Citizen Circle, and Healthy Connectors will be ongoing while the congregation embarks upon a series of discernment seminars surrounding what it will do in the near future and how it will proceed.

*Eleanore Dees, Co-Chair,
Calvin Humphrey, Co-Chair.*

2010 OUTREACH SUMMARY	
OCWM	17,500
Interact	3,500
Hunger Offerings	4,858
Great Hour of Sharing	2,263
Strengthening the Church	393
Other Special Offerings	5,930
Minister's Fund	370
Christmas Offering	370
Neighbors in Need	330
TOTAL OUTREACH	35,844

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

We wrapped up our 2010 year by reviewing John Peterson's year-end financial report which showed that members' contributions fell just 6% below the initial target, but still enabled us to forego the November and December endowment draw-downs and end the year with a positive balance of more than \$8,000. The most pressing challenge facing the ministry is the replacement of John Peterson who plans to leave us in February. A team of ministry members will meet with the pastor to develop a plan for temporary assignment of John's duties and a plan of action to find a suitable replacement as quickly as possible. We also passed a motion offering hearty thanks to outgoing co-chairs Ruby Brooks and Kathie Buckner, secretary John Baker, and most of all, John Peterson for his devoted service to the Stewardship Ministry and the EACC congregation. He will be sorely missed and difficult to replace.

John Baker, secretary

EXCITING NEWS

FROM RESTORE CLEVELAND HOPE

Restoration of the Cozad-Bates House, the pre-Civil War house on Mayfield which some day will be Restore Cleveland Hope headquarters, is well under way.

The initial phase of the Cozad-Bates House' multi-phased rehabilitation has been completed. The first step to rehabilitate the home included a critical replacement of its slate roof, guttering systems and construction repairs to the belvedere and chimneys. This four-month long, \$200,000 project was completed in August 2010. Funding for this project was made possible by a state capital appropriation of \$100,000 and donations by private donors. This project was necessary to stabilize and protect this historic home as we continue to raise funds for its complete rehabilitation.

Currently work is being done on the house's interior. This work includes structural restoration to the basement/foundation areas, repairs to the front porch, and interior preparation work that will enable us to adequately renovate the interiors during a later phase. By taking these steps now, we will ensure the property is preserved until additional funds can be raised for the complete restoration.

The estimated cost of the current work is \$250,000. This project is being primarily funded by UCI with Cleveland Restoration Society (via a private donor) contributing \$10,000 towards the front porch work. Excepting any delays in the schedule, we anticipate the work to be completed by the end of May 2011.

Meanwhile, Restore Cleveland Hope continues to provide educational programs to schools and other interested groups on the Underground Railroad and Cleveland's proud anti-slavery past.



WORSHIP AND ARTS MINISTRY

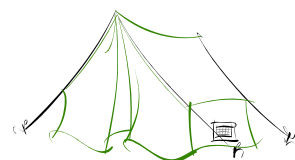
In the coming months we will be working with Pastor Jenkins on some adjustments to the worship service. Communion Service will alternate between intinction and prepared communion cups for the near future. You may have noticed that a new UCC flag has been purchased for the sanctuary. We hope to have stoles for the choirs in the near future to help them appear more uniform.

Please lend your speaking talents by being a liturgist. The new Liturgist and Flower Charts are by the entrance to the sanctuary. We also need our youth to volunteer as acolytes. Please see Marguerite Bibb.

Carolyn Smith and Cyndi Henderson, co-chairs

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY

PLAN NOW FOR SUMMER CAMP. A variety of summer camp opportunities are available this summer. See Cloggie Crowder for more information.



AMBER GREEN AND THE INTERACT YOUTH FELLOWS

InterAct, Cleveland's interreligious network to which EACC belongs, helps promote appreciation and understanding among people of different religious faiths through many of their programs and projects. One of these is the Youth Fellows, which gathers together young people of many different faiths to learn about other religious traditions while impacting the community through direct service. Amber Green, a Senior at Cleveland's School of the Arts, is our representative to that group. Amber has made room in her very busy schedule to attend these monthly gatherings all this school year.



"At first I felt a little strange," she said about the Youth Fellows. "I was the only African-American and there were Jews, Hindus, Muslims, all religions and cultures. But we played some games and pretty soon we were all talking to each other easily and it seems that everybody is the same after all."

Other activities that are competing for Amber's time are her job at Lucky's Café in Tremont, the youth program at West Side Ecumenical Ministry, and her school responsibilities that include singing in the R. Nathaniel Dets Concert Choir, directing and choreographing the Pep Rally and the Talent Show, serving as Homecoming Queen, and applying to colleges. She would like to get a degree in International Business and Fashion Marketing, preferably at Virginia State.

In January, Amber and the other Youth Fellows met at Park Synagogue and volunteered at the Homeless Stand Down. Before the year is out they will have met at Shiva Vishnu Hindu Temple, Cleveland Catholic Charities, the West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church, the Jain Society, the Friends Meeting House and the Islamic Center of Cleveland. Be sure to ask Amber about her experiences.


FEBRUARY 2011*


(birthdays/wedding anniversaries noted herein)

		Event	Special Day
1	Tue	10 AM - Women's Association	
2	Wed.	12:00 D.I.V.E. 6:00 Gospel Choir 7:00 D.I.V.E. 8:00 Chancel Choir	Mary F. Guen Cynthia Goard
3	Thu.		Kenneth Crowder
4	Fri.		Bettie Baker
5	Sat.	10:00 Saturday Fun	
6	Sun.	8:45 - Bible Study, 10:00 - Worship Recognizing (Outgoing) Servant Leaders Assemble personal care kits for HSD	Raven Baker
7	Mon.		
8	Tues.	10 AM - Women's Association 6:30 Pastoral Support Team	
9	Wed.	12:00 D.I.V.E. 6:00 Gospel Choir 7:00 D.I.V.E. 8:00 Chancel Choir	David Buckle
10	Thu.		Barbara Goard Samuel Nordstrom
11	Fri.		
12	Sat.	Homeless Stand Down 8:00 New Members Class	
13	Sun.	8:45 - Bible Study, 10:00 - Worship	
14	Mon.	6:30 Citizens Circle	
15	Tues.	10 AM - Women's Association	Barbara Edwards
16	Wed.	12:00 D.I.V.E. 7:00 D.I.V.E. 8:00 Chancel Choir	Noreen Roderick
17	Thu.		
18	Fri.	9 AM - 2 PM Homeless Stand Down	
19	Sat.	8:00 New Members Class 10:00 Leadership Training 10 AM Saturday Fun	Preston Howard
20	Sun.	8:45 - Bible Study, 10:00 - Worship Council for Hispanic Ministries Sunday Academic Recognition	
21	Mon.		Loretta Weems
22	Tues.	10 AM - Women's Association	
23	Wed.	9 AM - 10 AM - Rev. Jenkins Preaches at the National Office in honor of Black History Month 12:00 D.I.V.E. 6:00 Gospel Choir 7:00 D.I.V.E. 8:00 Chancel Choir	Sha' Derrick Calles 
24	Thu.		
25	Fri.	Fellowship Friday	
26	Sat.		
27	Sun.	8:45 - Bible Study, 10:00 - Worship -	Joy Higginbotham McGhee Nik Southgate
28	Mon.		

*** KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS ***

- ◆ LaDoris Dantzler
- ◆ Christine Fant
- ◆ Aaron Goard (son of Barbara Goard)
- ◆ Lavera Hampton
- ◆ Ruthann Hampton
- ◆ Amanda Harris
- ◆ Anthony Harris (*grandson of Christine Fant*)
- ◆ Barbara Hughley
- ◆ Grace Humphrey Cutts (*mother of Calvin Humphrey*)
- ◆ Hallie K. Jones
- ◆ Antonio Murrell and his mother Gayle Murrell
- ◆ Doris Simmons
- ◆ Dan Southgate
- ◆ Barbara Smith Weems
- ◆ Meredith Washburn

Please call the church office if you wish to put someone on the prayer list.

ELIZABETH STUART 1957-2010

Liz Stuart died suddenly on December 28, leaving behind a daughter, Alexandra, a partner, Russell Bryan, and other family members. Liz received a bachelor's degree at the University of Cincinnati's Conservatory of Music and a Master's Degree at the Cleveland Institute of Music. She worked for WCLV radio in advertising sales and projects for 14 years. She sang professionally with various ensembles in the area and had a studio for vocal students. While at WCLV, Liz fostered a number of special projects, the foremost being the annual Jubilation Church Choir Festival. In her honor, WCLV is naming the Festival after her. Liz was the one who arranged for our Chancel Choir to sing at the Festival last May, and for a collection to be taken to help us replace the music library and choir robes that were lost in the fire in March.



Because we lost our records in that fire, we are not sure when Liz became a member of EACC, but her photo appears in a membership directory as early as 1988. We know that for many years she sang in our Chancel Choir before joining the choir at Trinity Episcopal Church. She never left EACC's membership, however, and in the fall of 2008 she returned to our Chancel Choir. She often brought daughter Alexandra to church with her, and participated in many church programs in addition to the musical ones.

Over 200 people attended her memorial service in our sanctuary on January 8.

AN OPPORTUNITY

The good news: an all-expenses-paid summer program for high school student journalists from low-income backgrounds that will take place for 10 days in August on the campus of Princeton University is available.

The not-so-good news: the deadline for submitting an application is February 4.

To be eligible for the program, students must meet the following qualifications:

- They must currently be juniors in high school.
- They must have at least an unweighted 3.5 grade point average (out of 4.0).
- They must have an interest in journalism.

For more information, go to www.princeton.edu/sjp

❖ On the final day of its Jan 18-20, 2011 plenary meeting in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Churches Uniting in Christ members discussed a draft proposal for action related to the previous day's panel discussions on the intersection of race, church, and contemporary issues.

The group came up with several possible actions in the areas of international policy, civil discourse, and the mutual recognition and reconciliation of ministries. Some ideas were specific such as urging elected officials to extend Temporary Protected Status for Haitians in the United States beyond July 2011, when it expires. Broader ideas included calling on member communions to support local pastors and laypeople "in speaking prophetically to our society and world."

The intersection of race, church, and mutual recognition and reconciliation of ministries remains a high priority for CUIC. But the ecumenical group put this work on hold in 2007 because members perceived the need to address concerns about racism within these conversations about ministry. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church suspended its participation that year because its representatives felt CUIC was not making progress on racial justice issues. CUIC's members agreed to continue reaching out to the AME Zion Church.

During Thursday's session, some questioned whether resuming the conversation about recognizing and reconciling ministries would be a productive use of time. The Rev. Robina Winbush, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) said the group's work in the area of reconciling ministries need not take away from other priorities. "My real hope is that we don't let ourselves off the hook by saying we're going to set it aside," she said.

After some debate, members decided to have CUIC's Coordinating Council continue the efforts in this area.

❖ A producer for The Ellen DeGeneres Show has contacted the UCC's communications director, asking for more information about the UCC's campaign to get the popular TV personality to attend the denomination's national General Synod, July 1-5, in Tampa, Fla.

"Evidently, it was a news report in Tampa about our campaign that finally got through to Ellen and her staff," said the Rev. J. Bennett Guess. "We were contacted by one of Ellen's producers and asked to submit more information about our request of her."

After telling the producer about General Synod and why the UCC's planning committee thinks Ellen should address the UCC, Guess received a written response: "I just wanted to let you know I passed your information and request along to our executives. Our staff here deals with the show, but Ellen's life outside the show, including appearances, is handled by a different team. I know they are aware of your request and hopefully will be in touch with you."

Tampa's major league baseball team, the Tampa Bay Rays, may be lending a hand to the UCC's efforts. Guess said he was contacted recently by a team representative who expressed interest in having DeGeneres toss the first pitch at a game when she comes to Synod.

"Getting the whole city of Tampa involved could really give our invitation a boost as well as ensure that the region won't miss the fact that the UCC is coming to Florida," Guess says

❖ The Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. a group of church leaders, who were in Birmingham Jan. 11-14, 2011, to examine the issue of domestic poverty through the lens of racism, noted that apparently no one has ever issued a clergy response to Dr. King's famous letter. They, therefore, issued a response.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s letter was an answer to a message from a group of clergy in Birmingham in 1963. In their "Call for Unity," the clergy appealed for restraint and "common sense," and a withdrawal of support for the civil rights demonstrations.

In their one-page letter, the church leaders remember with gratitude the sacrifices of the leaders of the civil rights movement, who demonstrated

the power of Christian, nonviolent action. They also express repentance that "some of us have not progressed far enough beyond the initial message from the Birmingham clergy."

"Too often our follow-through has been far less than our spoken commitments. Too often we have chosen to be comfortable rather than prophetic. Too often we have chosen not to see the evidence of a racism that is less overt but still permeates our national life in corrosive ways."

In their experiences at the Civil Rights Institute and the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, the church leaders, who were of multiple races and represented a wide range of church backgrounds, found inspiration and renewed commitment. They describe two windows at the church – one where the face of Jesus had been blown out from the bombing in 1963 that killed four girls, and the other that depicts a Christ figure who with one hand rejects the injustice of the world and with the other extends forgiveness.

"In the spirit of this loving Jesus, and in the spirit of those who committed their very lives to that love, we renew our commitment to ending racism in all forms. We begin by taking time on Monday, January 17, to reread the 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'—along with the message from the Birmingham clergy that prompted King's letter—and to reflect on its meaning for us today. We urge all within our churches to do the same."

Formed in 2007, CCT is the broadest Christian fellowship in the country, with members from the Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Historic Black, and Evangelical/Pentecostal families. In addition to 36 national communions, its membership includes six national organizations – the American Bible Society, Bread for the World, Evangelicals for Social Action, Habitat for Humanity, Sojourners and World Vision.

❖ Citing the hard work of poor people themselves as one of the principal factors in improving their lives, the Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, says "Given the opportunity to improve their communities and provide a better life for their children, they will seize it."

Bread for the World launched on Jan. 12 its annual Offering of Letters campaign to urge Congress to reform U.S. foreign assistance in a way that more effectively benefits hungry and poor people worldwide.

Thousands of churches representing nearly 50 denominations nationwide are expected to participate this year. As part of a worship service or Mass, Christians will write letters that will be placed into offering plates and dedicated to God.

Generating hundreds of thousands of letters to Congress annually, Bread for the World seeks change on four fronts:

- A stronger U.S. government focus on reducing poverty
- Clearer accountability for how U.S. aid dollars are spent and their results
- A transformed U.S. development agency
- U.S. aid that meets the needs and wants of local people

"God is calling us to make sure U.S. foreign aid reaches those who need it most," said Beckmann, "and that it supports their efforts to lift their communities out of poverty."

❖ The Associate General Minister search committee has announced the nomination of Mr. W. Mark Clark of Tucson, Arizona, to succeed Ms. Edith Guffey whose term as Associate General Minister expires on Sept 30, 2011.

The Wider Church Ministries executive minister search committee has nominated the Rev. James Moos, Senior Pastor of Bismarck United Church of Christ, to lead Wider Church Ministries, and be Co-Executive of the Common Global Ministries Board.

The Local Church Ministries Executive Minister search committee has nominated the Rev. J. Bennett Guess, the UCC's Director of Publishing, Identity and Communication, to serve as LCM's Executive Minister. Prior to joining the UCC's national staff more than 10 years ago, Ben served as a local church pastor for 12 years.

All three, if elected, will join the five member Collegium of Officers.

FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES

(see inside for more details)

- 2 - 12 noon - D.I.V.E. Session
7 PM - D.I.V.E. Session
- 5 - 10 AM Saturday Fun
- 6 - assemble personal care kits for HSD
- 9 - 12 noon - D.I.V.E. Session
7 PM - D.I.V.E. Session
- 12 - Homeless Stand Down
8 AM - New Members Meeting
- 14 - Citizens Circle
- 16 - 12 noon - D.I.V.E. Session
7 PM - D.I.V.E. Session
- 18 - 9 AM - 2 PM Homeless Stand Down
- 19 - 10 AM Saturday Fun
10 AM - Leadership Training
- 23 - 12 noon - D.I.V. E. Session
7 PM - D.I.V. E. Session
- 25 - Fellowship Friday
Each Tuesday
10 AM - Women's Association
Wednesday Evenings
Choirs Rehearse

**YOUR HEART GOES OUT TO
INSIGNIFICANT AND LITTLE THINGS, TO
CHILDREN, TO THE POOR – THESE ARE
YOUR KINGDOM. FOR YOU BECAME
YOURSELF DEFENSELESS AND HUMBLE,
RESEMBLING A HUMAN WORD, A PIECE
OF BREAD, A NAME THAT HAS TO DIE.
WE ASK YOU THEN, LET US RESEMBLE
YOU, LET US IMPERFECT AS WE ARE,
BECOME YOUR CHILDREN, YOUR OWN
BELOVED...**

HAUB OSTERHUIS

**EUCLID AVENUE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
9411 EUCLID AVENUE
CLEVELAND OH 44106 -2044**