

# BEACON NEWSLETTER

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

MAY 2011

**Pastor**

Rev. Courtney  
Clayton Jenkins

Interim **Director of Music**  
Charles Carr

**Director of Gospel  
Choir**

Joan Bacon

**Church Secretary**  
Diana Reid

**Director, Saturday Fun**  
Cheryl Wacasey

**Beacon Editors**  
Kathy Baker  
Mary Sherry

**Design Editor**  
Cyndi Henderson

**Photographer**  
Kathie Buckner

Beloved,

You have heard me share that my father's favorite poem was "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost. As a little girl, I would often catch him saying the words to this poem while knotting his necktie in the mornings. This morning, however, as I was getting dressed the last few lines rang loud in my own spirit, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and [we]- [we] took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference."



I want to commend you for making the conscious choice, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to travel a different road as it relates to our church. We are like the wise men, who after encountering Jesus decided that we must travel home a different way (Matthew 2:1-12 ).

For more years than we can count, 9606 has been our church home. In that space, fond memories were established of weddings, baby dedications, homegoing services and life transforming programming. Our time there can never be forgotten or replaced.

At the same time, we have decided that God has something new on the horizon for Euclid Avenue Congregational Church. God must be up to something. We are growing higher and we are gaining strength as a congregation.

I recently read that 90% of churches are on the decline because they are unwilling to do something different and to envision the type of church (architecture, people, programming, worship style, etc.) that will draw new people. I believe that that on April 27, 2011, we made the shift from the 90%, who are declining, to the 10% who are growing.

It may take some time to see the "fruit" that will come with our decision. I believe it will come. Let us keep imagining a future beyond what is and trust that God is not through with Euclid Avenue Congregational Church.

This is the not end, this is just the beginning!

With hope for our bright future,

Pastor Courtney Clayton Jenkins

**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

**ADULT BIBLE STUDY**

Al Parks' Adult Bible Study group who meet in the parlor Sunday mornings before worship will be discussing the following Scripture readings and topics in May:



- May 1 – The Christ Hymn** – Philippians 2: 1-11;  
..... Devotions -1 Peter 2: 18-25
- May 8 – Heavenly Worship** – Revelation 4: 1-2, 6-11;  
..... Devotions - Psalm 11
- May 15 – Thankful Worship** – Revelation 7: 9-17;  
..... Devotions – Psalm 23
- May 22 – All Things New** – Revelation 21: 1-8;  
..... Devotions – Isaiah 43: 15-21
- May 29 – Tree of Life** – Revelation 22: 1-9;  
..... Devotions – Ephesians 3: 14-21

**SATURDAY FUN**

Saturday Fun, a learning and enrichment program for children of all ages, meets twice a month under the leadership of Cheryl Wacasey and Cecilia Pritchett. In May they will be sharing in the following activities:

- May 7 – Mother's Day Craft
- May 21 – Fun & Stuff - \$10 fee
- Meet at the 3000 Euclid building at 10AM. Refreshments are served at all events. Call Cheryl at 216-513-8006 or the church office to reserve your spot.

**MEN'S COUNCIL**

In addition to their ongoing sales of fair trade coffee, the Men's Council is preparing for Men's Day Sunday, June 5, when the men of the church will be leading worship. A jazz ensemble will provide the music.

**WOMEN OF THE CHURCH HONORED**

On April 14th, Women of our Church's Women's Association were honored at the Annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon: "One Person Can Make a Difference". The women made and donated lap quilts for the residents at the McGregor facility. Also honored for her volunteer work was Linda Brewer.



**EACC VOTES TO MOVE**

At a meeting of the congregation on April 27, the members of the congregation of Euclid Avenue Congregational Church voted to sell the property at 9606 Euclid where our church building once stood and start exploring options for another location where we would either renovate an existing structure or build anew. After a 40-minute long discussion during which the four possibilities for our future were debated: 1) rebuild at 9606 Euclid; 2) build at another location; 3)renovate an existing building, or 4) merge with another congregation, Moderator Adrienne Brockway voted, placing green slips into the baskets of their choice. The final count: 5 for remaining at 9606, 4 for merging, and 57 for moving to another location.

Kathie Buckner then moved that an existing committee of the Stewardship Ministry (Rev. Courtney Clayton Jenkins, Al Parks, Dean Sieck and Charles Williams, with the assistance of our attorney Rick Taft), be authorized to negotiate the terms of selling the property at 9606 Euclid. This motion was seconded and passed.

Finally, to assist the New Beginnings Committee ( Eleanore Dees, Charlene Higginbotham, Rev. Jenkins, Dean Sieck, Kathy Stoll and Charles Williams) in their exploration of possible properties for us to renovate/build on, we voted, again using color-coded slips, on whether or not we prefer an urban, a suburban, or a "borderline" location. The New Beginnings Committee will come back to the congregation at the end of the summer to report their findings.

This meeting was the culmination of a series of D.I.V.E. sessions (Devotion, Imagination, Vision and Expectation) at which the various options were discussed at length. ***D.I.V.E. session will discontinue for the summer and resume on Wednesday, August 24, with both noon and 7PM meetings. Please mark your calendars.***



## **PASTOR JENKINS' INSTALLATION AND THE INSTALLATION MASS CHOIR**

Anyone who loves to sing or has a gift to do so is invited to join the Installation Mass Choir who will be singing at Pastor Jenkins' installation as our settled pastor on June 5, under the direction of Mr. David Thomas. The Chancel and Gospel Choirs will of course be participating, but the Whosoever Will Choir, as well as any of our youth and community members who would like to join in, are also encouraged to add their voices. The rehearsal schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, May 4, 7-8:30PM

Wednesday, May 11, 7-9PM

Wednesday, May 18, 7-8:30PM

Wednesday, May 25, 7-9PM

Wednesday, June 1, 7-9PM

Saturday, June 4 – time to be announced.

Plan to attend all the rehearsals and to have a wonderful time!



## **EACC PICTORIAL DIRECTORY COMING SOON!**

Photo dates will be on Sundays, May 1, May 15 and May 22. To sign up for a photo shoot, please see Adrienne Brockway after worship in the parlor.

## **FIRST FRIEND OF EACC**

Our congregation is growing. In an effort to retain our new members we are asking you to be a "First Friend" to those who join EACC. First Friends will give new members a phone call, help them become acclimated to the church and help them find a place to serve. To become a "First Friend" please call Mary Guen at 216-561-0857.



## **"THROUGH THE FIRE" VIDEO**

The video that was made to commemorate the first anniversary of the fire that destroyed our church building at 9606 Euclid captures our past, present and future as a church family. The film contains reflections from members and pieces of the Hope and Healing Service that was held March 23, 2011. DVDs are now available for distribution at \$15 each. Call the church office to order your copy; please make checks payable to JR Productions.

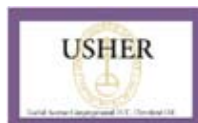
## **NO FIFTH MONDAY MEAL IN MAY**



Even though there will be a fifth Monday in May, we will not be serving a Fifth Monday Meal at Calvary Church on May 30 because Calvary will be closed that day in observance of Memorial Day. The next Fifth Monday Meal will be served on August 29th.

## **USHERS MINISTRY**

Due to the Memorial Day Holiday, the Ushers will meet on Sunday, May 15th in the sanctuary from 11:45-12:30PM. Please let your Team Leader or Charlene know by May 8th if you will not be able to attend. Also, we do not meet during the summer months, but need to know if you will be on vacation on the Sunday you would normally usher.



## **GIVING STATEMENTS**

On April 6, the church office mailed statements of members' giving for the first quarter of 2011. Please call the church office if you did not get your statement.

## **STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY**

EACC remains in solid financial condition as of the end of the first quarter. Expenditures for the period were \$9,069 under budget; income for the quarter was \$40,817 under budget because we did not need to take two month's worth of endowment draws. Personnel issues headed the list of Stewardship Ministry concerns. We are presently involved in filling three staff positions: financial manager, minister of music, and part-time custodian. We hope to have positive results to report in next month's BEACON. In addition, the Ministry approved a proposal for three exterior signs at 3000 Euclid Avenue; we are pleased to note that they are now in place.

*John Baker, secretary*

## **CHURCH IN THE WORLD MINISTRY**

Committees of this ministry have been busy. One such initiative is the recognition of students who achieved grades of A and B for the previous grade period. The number of students achieving these grades is growing as is the excitement surrounding learning. Another outreach effort is our continuing support of the Early Childhood Development Center and the Dolphin Depot. Pastor Courtney Clayton Jenkins attended a public meeting along with parents and staff of the Center in an effort to express their concern about closing the school. It was later disclosed that the school was being transferred to another building because its current building was in poor structural shape. In another outreach effort, members of our church, along with members of Peace Action Cleveland, took part in a rally and parade around the Old Stone Church highlighting the need for our government to "Save Our Communities – Books, Not Bombs; Jobs not Jails; Families Not Foreclosures!" It was a noteworthy event.

In the April Beacon we described the beginning of a series of informational meetings for our congregation. They will take place after the morning service and during the reception and fellowship time. Representatives of the various programs and services that Euclid Avenue Congregational Church takes part in will describe these efforts. Stay tuned. These sessions will begin in late May. Each week a program and/or a service will be highlighted and we invite your attendance and questions. These sessions are planned so that we can be more informed about the organizations the church supports.

*Eleanore Dees, and Judy Sieck, Co-Chairs*



Join Healthy Connectors after worship on May 22 for "Power Sunday" - fun and easy exercises for everyone, healthy snacks and information to take home and share with members of your family. The American Heart Association is encouraging heart healthy education on the prevention of strokes during the month of May. YOU have the Power to prevent strokes!

## **CHURCH WOMEN UNITED'S "2011 MAY FELLOWSHIP DAY"**

All women of the church are invited to attend "2011 May Fellowship Day" on Friday, May 6 from 9:30-1PM at Simpson United Methodist Church, 8519 Clark Avenue. The theme of the event is "Living Our Friendship, Passing on the Key," and the program will include Fellowship of the Lost Coin, presentation of the 2011 Award of Honor, and the installation of officers for 2011-2012. The cost of the event is \$12. Mail reservations to CWUGC, 1540 Rydalmount Road, Cleveland Heights 44118.

## **WORSHIP AND ARTS MINISTRY**

A job description for a Ministry of Music has been posted and the committee is starting to receive resumes. The Worship and Arts Ministry thanks Charlie Carr for serving as our interim Music Director and hopes that he'll come back and play the organ for us occasionally. Thanks are also due the many people who helped with the Maundy Thursday service on April 21, in particular the members of the Fellowship Ministry who did a lot of the food preparation.

We are still looking for people to sign up to bring altar flowers and to serve as liturgists. Sign up charts are in the parlor.

On Sunday, May 1, Communion will be served by intinction.

*Carolyn Smith and Claude Brewer, Co-chairs*

## **LOBBY DAY FOR EQUALITY 2011**

"Gays and lesbians don't live in my district"

"Gay rights aren't important to people in my district"

"I don't know any gay, lesbian or transgender people"

These are actual quotes from state legislators. We need to let our elected officials know that LGBT people and our allies live throughout Ohio and we support pro-equality legislation.

This year, we expect at least two pro-equality bills to be introduced in the legislature -- the Equal Housing and Employment Act and the Comprehensive Safe Schools Act, which would apply to bullying in schools on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. We need your help to move these pro-equality measures forward.

Sign up today to join Equality Ohio for Lobby Day on May 18, 2011.

We will help you prepare and provide you with important information to make sure that you are comfortable and ready to talk to your elected officials. We will also assign you a Lobby Day team so that you will have the support you need and be able to share the Lobby Day experience with like-minded people.

Lobby Day will conclude with a reception where many of our elected officials and community leaders will join us. Register for Lobby Day now! You can make a difference. For information call 614-224-0400 or visit [info@equalityohio.org](mailto:info@equalityohio.org)

## **MOTHER'S DAY PEACE PARTY MAY 8**

All are invited to the Fourth Annual Mother's Day Peace Party to be held in the Indian Cultural Garden (the one with the statue of Gandhi) on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive on Sunday, May 8, from 2-4PM. Come enjoy music, speakers, refreshments, and activities for the children; have your photo taken at the Gandhi statue; congratulate our own Joan Southgate as she receives the Mother of the Year award. Bring your mother or the mothering person in your life but don't bother bringing your wallet – it's all free.



## **THE SACRED SIDE OF JAZZ – MAY 7**

The Oikos Ensemble and the Rev. Geoffrey Black, President of the United Church of Christ, will be celebrating the unique kinship between America's original art form and the spiritual journey on Saturday, May 7th at 7:30 p.m. at Liberation United Church of Christ, 13714 Madison Avenue in Lakewood.



The Oikos Ensemble, a nationally acclaimed jazz group led by Cleveland area saxophonist, the Rev. Clifford Aerie, will offer a Sacred Side of Jazz concert in preparation for their performance at Tri-C JazzFest on the following day. The Rev. Geoffrey Black and Rev. Aerie will discuss the historical relationship of jazz and the church, the link between improvisation and prayer, the spiritual depth of jazz to inspire worship, and the power of the music to address contemporary issues.

"Jazz has its roots in the church," states Rev. Aerie, who led his first jazz worship service in 1971. "Spirituality and improvisational exploration are at the core of jazz. For years the church has been the formative foundation for many jazz musicians and yet the religious community has failed to embrace this legacy. The Sacred Side of Jazz will offer an opportunity to reunite the spirit of improvisatory jazz and the quest for connection with the Holy. I look forward to a compelling conversation with Rev. Black that will engage the audience and segue into the music itself."

The concert is free and open to the public. A free-will offering will be received to help benefit the Center for Spiritual Enrichment. Additional information may be obtained by contacting Liberation United Church of Christ at 216.521.5556.

## **GOODBYE, CHARLIE!**

Charlie Carr became our interim Director of Music when Tim Robson left in late October of 2010, with the understanding that he would serve in that capacity until the end of the year. In fact he has been with us for five additional months; his last Sunday playing the organ and directing the Chancel Choir will be May 29. He is looking forward to a summer of travel and visiting with family. First he and his wife will vacation in Mexico, a trip they had to postpone this spring. Then they will be spending as much time as possible in a family cottage in Michigan, with their children and 3½ grandchildren. Whatever time is left will be devoted to home renovation projects.

Charlie has enjoyed his stay with us and wishes us well as we discern what our next steps will be, musically as well as all other ways. We in turn will miss his incredible flexibility, his skill on both the organ and the piano, his insistence that the Chancel Choir give every consonant its due, and his jazzy hymn renditions during prayers. Thank you, Charlie!

**EACC'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

At Pastor Jenkins' invitation, several friends and members of EACC have written about our church's present, past, and/or future. The following is by Rev. Randy Hyvonen, who became a member of EACC in 1978 and served as our pastor from 1983-1993:

March 16, 2011



"Dear EACC,

I'm sitting in a hotel in Indianapolis – part of a fascinating group of 66 people of faith focused on the leadership training that has grown out of the thoughtful writings of Parker Palmer with his decades of focus on building community and supporting habits of the heart.

As this time in our retreat we've been invited to write a 'love letter' to a faith community that has been significant in our lives, and this was a no-brainer for me...not only because of the ways you helped shaped my ministry and family for nearly 15 years but also because one week from now we will all remember the pain of losing that beautiful building we all loved so much.

I hope that one year out you have moved beyond the shock and pain of loss to a realization that what has made you so special over many decades was not the building but instead the special witness you have given to the City of Cleveland, to the Western Reserve Association, to the Ohio Conference, and indeed to all of the United Church of Christ.

You made a decision over 50 years ago to stay in the city to bear witness to integration and to serve those who have had to live with less, and you have done so with class and substance, - notably with the music that has permeated your life (chancel choir, gospel choir, children's choir, Music and Meditation series, and classical music of all sorts): and then also your annual arts festivals, chancel drama, day care center, openness to 12-step groups, Saturday Fun, InterAct (formerly ESIM), and multiple other ways you have served the community.

The building may be gone, but all that has happened in it over the years can still happen. May God be with you as you work to make it so!

Lenten Blessings – Randy Hyvonen (and Karen sends greetings and blessings, too)

**THANK YOU, EACC**

Dear Members and Friends of EACC-UCC,



Thank you for your support of Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries! These seminaries provide a vital ministry in the UCC by training and equipping leaders for ministry with individuals, congregations, and in the wider world. Each school is a vibrant, caring and challenging place in which to pursue theological education.

With gratitude,  
Kiely Todd Roska  
Development Coordinator



"Mark your Calendars" for Pastor Jenkins' Installation. It is scheduled for Sunday, June 5th at 6:00 PM at 3000 Euclid Avenue. Rev. Dr. Otis Moss Jr., pastor Emeritus of Olivet Institutional Baptist Church will be preaching.

MAY 2011			
(birthdays/wedding anniversaries noted herein)			
		Event	Special Day
1	Sun.	8:45 AM - Bible Study, 10:00 - Worship Fellowship and Photo shoot Worship & Arts	Karl Steckmann Julia Haynes
2	Mon.	--	
3	Tues.	10:00 - Women's Association	
4	Wed.	6:00 - Gospel Choir 7:00 - Mass Choir 8:30 - Chancel Choir	
5	Thus.	6:30 - COM	
6	Fri.	9:30 AM - Church Women United	
7	Sat.	10 AM - Saturday Fun - Crafts 7:30 PM - Sacred Side of Jazz	
8	Sun.	8:45 - Bible Study, 10:00 - Worship Christian Ed, Fellowship & Comm. Life 2 PM - Mother's Day Peace Party	Ann Drysdale
9	Mon.	Citizen Circle - 6:30	Precious Bogard
10	Tues.	10:00 - Women's Association 6:30 - Pastoral Support Team	
11	Wed.	7:00 - Mass Choir	Nancy Nigosian
12	Thus.	--	Jessica Stevenson
15	Sun.	8:45 - Bible Study, 10:00 - Worship Fellowship and Photo shoot Ushers mtg Stewardship	
16	Mon.		
17	Tues.	10:00 - Women's Association	
18	Wed.	Lobby Day for Equality 7:00 - Mass Choir 8:30 - Chancel Choir	
21	Sat.	10AM - Saturday Fun - Fun & Stuff 10:00 - Leadership Training	
22	Sun.	8:45 - Bible Study, 10:00 - Worship Fellowship and Photo shoot "Power Sunday"	
23	Mon.	6:00 - Restore Cleveland Hope	
24	Tues.	10:00 - Women's Association	
25	Wed.	7:00 - Mass Choir	Rhonda Crowder
26	Thus.	--	
27	Fri.	--	
28	Sat.	Men's Council	George Barnum
29	Sun.	8:45 - Bible Study, 10:00 - Worship	
30	Mon.	--	
31	Tue.	10:00 - Women's Association <b>Installation day of service from 6:30 PM</b> We will partner with Christ the King Church and serve meals to the homeless at 17th and Payne from 7:00 PM-9:00 PM as a church family. We could meet at the church at 6:30 and carpool down. People will be able to purchase matching EACC T-shirts (\$15.00) we will wear for the service. (And to be walking billboards).	
June 5th - 6:00 Installation - <b>MARK YOUR CALENDAR</b>			

## \*\*\* JOYS \*\*\*

**Gavon Johnson**, the grandson of **Phyllis Graham** and the son of **Sonja Graham Everett**, is on the Dean's List at Notre Dame College. Congratulations, Gavon!

**Kathy Baker** was happy to deliver two large boxes and numerous smaller bags of toiletries to Women's Re-entry Network, donated by the staff of one of Cleveland Clinic's hospital wards. They had watched our building burn down in March of 2010, and felt moved to contribute to one of the charitable causes they saw listed in our online Beacon, first at Christmas of 2010 and then again during Holy Week of 2011.

**Charlene Higginbotham** is proud to report that on April 17, sixteen EACC students were recognized for obtaining all A's, B's or a combination of both for the 2nd grading period. Some of the same students were also recognized during the 1st grading period in February. Next and final recognition for this academic year will be in June. "Will they make it a triple A/B year? Encourage, assist and cheer all our students on to become scholars," Charlene urges.

**Barbara Smith Weems** would like to thank the members of our congregation for "their prayers, well-wishes and cards. Thanks for caring!"

**Dean Sieck** and **Joan Southgate** participated in a street theater production that was part of the "Save Our Communities" program on April 15. They marched around Public Square carrying umbrellas that bore signs saying "Bring Our War Dollars Home!"

**Mary and Paul Sherry** are the proud great-grandparents of **Megan Olivia Sweeney**, born March 17 to grandson **Ryan Sweeney** and his wife **Stephanie** in Pittsburgh. Mary writes that she's already in love, and she hasn't even met **Megan Olivia** yet.

Maybe it was the Easter Bunny, and maybe it was **Mary Guen**, but someone brought Easter gifts to our church school children this year.

**Jared Lavender**, son of **Brenda Bagby**, will complete his second season playing for the Central Hockey League team, the **Missouri Mavericks**, in May. Meanwhile his sister **Heather Lavender** continues as a nurse at the University of Alabama Medical Center. Mom **Brenda**, in her new role as trainer and QC Specialist with Research Pharmaceutical Services, is contracted to **Pfizer** and has added international travel to her duties. She was in South Korea in April and plans to visit Brazil this summer.

## \*\*\* KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS \*\*\*

- ◆ Georgia Bibb
- ◆ LaDoris Dantzler
- ◆ Hazel Dockery
- ◆ Christine Fant
- ◆ Lavera Hampton
- ◆ Ruthann Hampton
- ◆ Amanda Harris
- ◆ Anthony Harris (grandson of Christine Fant)
- ◆ Family of Calvin Humphrey
- ◆ Hallie K. Jones
- ◆ Hudson McComb
- ◆ Doris Simmons
- ◆ Dan Southgate
- ◆ Barbara Smith Weems
- ◆ Family of Elizabeth Stuart
- ◆ Meredith Washburn
- ◆ CMSD School District

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

**OUR GRADUATES**

**Jessica Martin**, daughter of **Nathaniel Martin**, will graduate from Kent State University on May 7 with a BSN degree. Her next challenge will be passing the test that will give her a license as a registered nurse. She hopes to get a job here in Cleveland, either at Cleveland Clinic or University Hospitals.

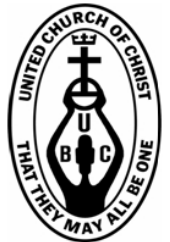
**Melissa Logan**, daughter of **Brenda Bagby**, will graduate on May 29 from Brown University where she majored in international relations. She hopes to get a job in DC in her field, but will settle for a job teaching Spanish if all else fails. She would love to have the chance to return to Costa Rica.

**Amber Green**, daughter of **Jewell Green**, will graduate from the Cleveland School of the Arts on June 5. Her future plans include attending Kent State University this fall where she will have a double major, fashion design and international studies.

**Jeremy Southgate**, grandson of **Joan Southgate**, will be graduating from Lincoln West High School on June 2. He will be taking some special IT courses that will result in a summer follow up program and internship if he is one of four students chosen. "He is very very very cute and so tall I accidentally kissed him on his adams apple when he bent down during passing the peace Sunday," says Grandma Joan.

Please let the Beacon staff know about any other graduations, so we can include them in the June issue.

The Greater Cleveland Chapter, UBC would also appreciate your turning in the names of EACC students graduating in the following categories: entering or leaving high school, college, technical school or graduate school. Please include the date of graduation and any special recognition being awarded. Please submit the names to **Cloggie Crowder** or **Charlene Higginbotham** as soon as possible.





Sunday, April 17, 2011

## **MORE ABOUT THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE FROM HAZEL DOCKERY**

Hazel shares with us this favorite poem:

‘Life is a book in volumes three:  
The past, the present and the yet to be.  
The ‘past’ is read and stored away,  
The ‘present’ we are reading day by day,  
The ‘future’ is locked away from sight –  
God holds the key.’



## **GREATER CLEVELAND CONGREGATIONS - JUNE 6**

Joining with 35 other congregations, EACC has the opportunity to make significant improvements in Cuyahoga County. Greater Cleveland Congregations, an aggregate of Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim institutions throughout the county, is organizing on a broad band of issues, which initially are education, jobs, health care, criminal justice, and hunger. Over the summer, specific actions on those issues will be translated to specific actions that we can work on. The more people involved, the bigger the impact will be on political systems in Cuyahoga County.

Greater Cleveland Congregations goes public at an assembly June 6 at 7 pm. EACC folks will have just celebrated the installation of our pastor, but it's important that we be among the 1800 people gathered, along with media and elected officials.

For more information, contact Ruth Garwood, rgarwood@att.net or 216/402-5466



# EASTER SUNDAY



## NEW INDOOR PLANTINGS

❖ The Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership (CCSP) conducted the FACT 2010 survey and analyzed responses from a variety of faith traditions in the United States. The survey updates results from surveys taken in 2000, 2005, and 2008 and is the latest in CCSP's series of trend-tracking national surveys of U.S. congregations.

The 2008 recession extended a decade-long erosion of the financial health of American congregations, with just 14 percent of the 11,077 randomly sampled congregations saying in 2010 that their financial health is excellent.

Of those who characterize their financial health as declining between 2005 and 2010, a full 80 percent reported a negative impact from the recession. However, FACT 2010 found that one in ten congregations reported that they had already begun to recover from an initial recession-driven dip in income.

Since the period of the 2008 recession 60 percent of UCC congregations surveyed said their congregational income "declined a lot or a little," 10 percent said they "declined then rebounded," and 30 percent reported "no change or growth."

Commenting on their current financial health 29 percent of polled UCC congregations said they had "some/serious difficulty," 46 percent said times were "tight," and 25 percent reported "good or excellent" financial health. Of all faith traditions polled, the UCC's 25 percent "good or excellent" rating was the lowest, with the exception of Reform and Conservative Judaism which both reported 17 percent "good or excellent" financial health.

The most frequently employed mechanism when a congregation encounters financial distress is digging into savings and investments, followed closely by salary freezes or personnel reductions and postponed capital projects.

Nine percent of congregations reported staff layoffs or furloughs because of the recession, and just over 25 percent reported salary freezes or reductions. Assuming an estimate of 350,000 congregations in the United States, employing an estimated 1.5 million staff, that equates to more than 500,000 people who lost their jobs or had their salaries reduced.

A common fear is that mission and benevolence spending will be the first thing cut but this is not the case. FACT 2010 shows virtually no difference between congregations negatively impacted by the recession and congregations spared the recession's financial toll in the likelihood of offering outreach services. Mission remains a priority even in times of financial distress.

In addition, 41 percent of congregations reported that the recession had a major or moderate impact on unemployment among members.

This stark impact led to an increase in requests for cash

assistance, pastoral counseling, and emergency housing. Nearly half of all congregations experienced an increase in requests for cash assistance, underscoring the importance of American congregations as a social safety net.

As several sacred observances converged in Holy Week, an interfaith effort spearheaded by the UCC's Office of Communication, Inc. "So We Might See Project" is encouraged families to fast from excessive use of screens, from television to smart phones.

In collaboration with the national Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood, OC, Inc. said this invitation is offered at a time when statistics point to alarming childhood obesity, health conditions from increasingly sedentary lifestyles, as well as a growing obsession with "screens" not only by children and teens, but also adults.

According to Andrea Cano, chair of OC, Inc., "Our religious, philosophical, and social principles converge when thinking about family and community. This year in the wake of a transformative season of fasting and contemplation, Screen-Free Week coincides with Holy Week and Passover," she says. "We encourage wide promotion and participation in this timely and beneficial activity so that we may return to the basics of relating to one another with human sensitivity and response and in new venues to do so. We also welcome stories how creatively this activity was embraced."

The Rev. Jim Antal, the UCC's Massachusetts Conference Minister and member of the OC, Inc. Board, encourages UCC congregations to get involved. "There can be no more appropriate time for all of us – whatever faith tradition we may claim – to enter into the 'brave old world' of un-mediated connection ... with one another, with God's creation, and with the God of many names," he says.

❖ The United Church of Christ Cornerstone Fund presented a gift of \$102,992 for Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support at the April 7 Local Church Ministries' board of directors meeting in Cleveland.

With its board of directors present, Cornerstone Fund President and CEO Gordon J. Gilles presented the oversized check to Local Church Ministries saying that it was a joy to be able to support the United Church of Christ in this way. The Fund gives a tithe of its net income to Our Church's Wider Mission each year, and this year's gift represented a significant increase over the \$40,708 contribution in 2010.

Founded in 1995, the Cornerstone Fund operates much like a credit union within the UCC, accepting investments from UCC-related organizations and individuals. It then makes real estate-secured loans to UCC churches and organizations seeking to improve facilities and expand ministries.

## **MAY ACTIVITIES**

*(see inside for more details)*

- 1, 15, 22 - Photo shoot
- 6 - Church Women United
- 7 - 10 AM - Saturday Fun - Crafts  
7:30 PM - Sacred Side of Jazz
- 8 - Mother's Day Peace Party
- 9 - Citizen Circle - 6:30
- 10 - Pastoral Support Team
- 13 - Fellowship Friday
- 18 - Lobby Day for Equality
- 21 - Saturday Fun - Fun & Stuff  
- Leadership Training
- 22 - "Power Sunday"
- 23 - Restore Cleveland Hope
- 28 - Men's Council
- Women's Association 10 AM Tuesdays
- Choirs rehearse Wednesdays
- 31 - 6:30 PM Installation day of service

**ALL THOSE WHO DIE LIKE JESUS,  
SACRIFICING THEIR LIVES OUT OF  
LOVE FOR THE SAKE OF A MORE  
DIGNIFIED HUMAN LIFE, WILL  
INHERIT LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS.  
THEY ARE LIKE GRAINS OF WHEAT,  
DYING TO PRODUCE LIFE, BEING  
BURIED IN THE GROUND ONLY TO  
BREAK THROUGH AND GROW.**

**LEONARDO BOFF**

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