



United Church of Gainesville

NEWSLETTER

WHOEVER YOU ARE, WHEREVER YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY, WE WELCOME YOU.

LATE JANUARY 2012

Larry Reimer & Sandy Reimer
Ministers

Andy Bachmann
Associate Minister

Vince Amlin
Associate Minister

Lisa Goldstein
Editor

WORSHIP THEME: "To A God Unknown"

We speak often and easily of worshiping "God, However Known" at UCG. In the book of Acts (17:23), which is the account of the apostles gathering the first churches, Paul notices a statue in Athens with the inscription, "To an unknown god," and commends the faith of the Greeks for including this element in their pantheon. In our new theme for January and February, we explore the elements of God that remain unknown, yet to be known, and perhaps even unknowable. It's always exciting and challenging to move into the mysteries as well as the certainties of faith. We look forward to sharing with you.

CALL TO WINTER CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 29 at 10:35am in the Sanctuary

Child care & chocolate provided

Agenda: We will be voting on the final budget and any other items of congregational business that are presented by Church Council.



OF INTEREST

- ◆ Adult Small Group registration begins January 15 - see page 2
- ◆ Pledge Update - see page 5
- ◆ Adult Winter Party January 28 - see page 2
- ◆ New Members Orientation February 1, New Members join February 12 - see page 2
- ◆ Women's Overnight February 4 - 5- see page 2

And the world cannot be discovered by a journey of miles, no matter how long, but only by a spiritual journey, a journey of one inch, very arduous and humbling and joyful, by which we arrive at the ground of our own feet and learn to be at home. ~ Wendell Berry

What's Happening in January and beyond...

Small Groups Registration Begins - Winter and Spring Small Groups are here! We have over 30 groups ranging from spiritual exploration to personal growth, book groups to fellowship and arts events. These groups meet one or more times between February and June, and they are one of the best ways to get involved and get to know others at UCG. Pick up a small groups brochure in church starting January 15th, and register for the groups you'd like to join by January 22nd. Be sure to only sign-up for the groups to which you can commit. If you have questions or would like more information, contact Vince Amlin at vincea@ucgainesville.org

Visitor's Lunch Sunday, January 15 at 12:15pm for those who have been visiting UCG. Lunch and child care provided. Sign up outside the church office and indicate whether you need child care.

Women's Overnight - "Do-be-do-be-do-be-do: The Elusive Quest for Balance" - As the new year begins, and we face yet again all those calls to do and look for those times to be, this Women's Overnight offers UCG women a chance to breathe and to reflect, to laugh and sing, to connect with others and with ourselves. If you have not yet registered, the deadline for registration is **Tuesday, January 17 at 4:00pm**. Registration forms can be downloaded from the UCG Website, picked up at the church office or sent electronically by calling the church office at 378-3500 or e-mailing info@ucgainesville.org. Registration forms must be accompanied by payment for the overnight. The cost is \$140 for a single room. \$98 for a double room, and \$85 for triple room. The cost to stay in a comfortable cabin with 8 other women is \$75. UCG members have first priority. Visitors may fill out a registration form and turn it in without payment; we will contact you if there is room for visitors to attend.

Kathy Funke and Michael Pellett are hosting the annual Post Lessons and Carols Party in their home, 3631 NW 23rd Place, on Saturday, January 21 at 6:30pm. - Come join in celebrating the successful conclusion of the 2011 Lessons and Carols worship services. Please, bring a covered dish and/or a beverage of your choice. As always, anyone who has heard the words "Lessons and Carols", or has sung during a UCG worship service, or has heard someone else sing is welcome to attend. Directions are available in the church office.

Adult Winter Party on Saturday, January 28, 2012, 6:00pm to 11:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Live Music, potluck dinner and cash bar. Get ready to eat, drink and dance, dance, dance to Little Jake and the Soul Searchers. Tickets on sale Sundays, January 8, 15 & 22 for \$10.00 in advance or \$15.00 at the door. Tickets also available in the office during the week. Purchase your ticket before Sunday 1/22 and receive a FREE DRINK coupon! Child care available from 6-11pm with advance notice.

A Time to Join UCG - The church is a container for our joy and our grief, our passages and transitions. The church holds us and shelters us when we need comfort, challenges us when we need to grow, and provides a direction for life's journey and a vehicle in which to take that journey. **We will have a special service on Sunday, February 12 at 11:00am to welcome new members into UCG. The orientation session for this new members' Sunday is Wednesday, February 1 at 7:00 in the Fellowship Hall.** Child care is provided. Please call or e-mail the church office (info@ucgainesville.org) if you are interested in joining.

UCG Book Sale -- Sunday, February 19 - Collection begins on Sunday, January 29th for our annual UCG Book Sale: for smaller quantity donations, collection boxes will be in the Library and Foyer for your gently used books, DVDs, CDs, etc. For larger quantity donations, please send your items in boxes or sturdy bags, if possible. This is an opportunity to "refurbish" your personal collection while helping to raise funds for the start up of UCG's "Mommy Reads" program, and to help pay for new, relevant offerings in our Church Library. To volunteer to help with sorting, hauling or with the sale itself, a sign up sheet will be posted on bulletin board outside the church office beginning Jan. 29. Contact person for book sale is Ellen Louis, n.ellen.louis@gmail.com.

Cont'd on pg. 5

Other Church News

3

Christmas Eve Recap

We changed our Christmas Eve worship schedule this year from 7:00, 9:00 and 10:30 to 4:30, 7:30 and 9:30. Our count indicates that over 820 people attended the three services. All three services continue to grow. The church was beautifully filled with poinsettias thanks to Claudia Barrett, Jim Barrett, and Joan Rothrock. Music filled each service. And thanks to your generosity \$3,200 was raised in Christmas Eve offerings for the Emergency Loan Fund. This is money we use to help people inside and outside the church who are in financial difficulty.

Supplemental Pledge Campaign

This year 364 pledging units pledged \$617,414, about \$48,000 short of our 2012 budget goal. Board of business voted hold a supplemental pledge campaign to make up the difference. We ask everyone to support the important ministries of UCG and turn in your pledge cards by January 21. Our life together is a sacred trust supported by our mutual giving. A good guideline is to give 10% of your pledge to the supplemental pledge.

Mommy Reads: New UCG Prison Service Project

Imagine giving birth all alone without friends or family, being forced to give up your newborn in less than 24 hours, and then not seeing her again for years. What if you were a five-year-old boy who had never heard your mother read a bedtime story? These are typical situations for the families of women in prison.

Lowell Correctional Institution, one of the largest women's prisons in the world, is just thirty minutes to our south. Beginning in March we will partner with Trinity United Methodist Church in their quarterly visits to Lowell with the "Mommy Reads" program. The principle of the program is simple. We take a variety of children's books to the prison and help women there pick out age appropriate ones for their children. We then use MP3s so the women may record the stories in their own voices. We box up the books and recorders and mail them to the children on the outside. This allows the mothers and children to maintain a connection that can be played over and over again, and promotes reading in homes where often there are few, if any, books available.

The Social Justice committee has provided \$2,200 to initiate this project and four members of UCG have accompanied Trinity UMC to Lowell in the past year in order to observe and participate in the program. The opportunity to work with these inmates is poignant, and quickly destroys many stereotypes about the differences between those who are in prison and those who are not. We will need 12-15 volunteers each quarter. While we will need a few people with some technical skills (see below), the most important qualification is the willingness to relate to these women and be committed to bringing a few minutes of kindness and humanity into their lives while we are at the prison. The visit takes about eight hours on a Saturday, returning by early to mid afternoon. As of this writing it is doubtful that men will be allowed to participate in the prison visits but we will know that by the time of our orientation session in February.

Important dates Feb. 12, 11:00 AM: General orientation seminar to the program; Feb 26, 12:15 PM: Mandatory training (approximately one hour) for those who will be going to the prison; March 3, 7:45 AM: Meet at church to carpool to Lowell.

Early volunteers needed We need to identify several people early on who are willing to bring their laptops to the prison and assist with the transfer of stories from recorders to the MP3 players. This is not hard to do, but it is critical for making the program work and takes a little practice to standardize. We can also use volunteers who are willing to assist with collecting and sorting books to take to the prison.

More information If you think that you may be interested in helping with this project either at the prison or with the advance preparation, please look for the Mommy Reads display that will be available in the courtyard most Sundays during January and February, or contact Rachele Amlin (rlamlin@yahoo.com), Becky Johnson (rjohnson5510@gmail.com), or Karen Johnson (kjredstart@yahoo.com).

Other Church News cont'd on pg. 5

January Youth Happenings

4

Youth United

- January 13-15** 18 members of Youth United will be on our annual Mystery Trip!
January 28 1 pm-2:30 pm we will have a rehearsal in the Sanctuary for our worship service on the 29th
January 29 Help lead worship at 9:30 am, followed by our Progressive Dinner at 5 pm!

MSG

- January 8** Games, However Known and topic discussion on Social Justice
January 15 Guest Speakers, sharing their reflections on the Civil Rights Movement
January 22 Worship preparation for January 29 and Walk & Talk
January 28 1 pm-2:30 pm we will have a rehearsal in the Sanctuary for our worship service on the 29th
January 29 Help lead worship at 9:30 am

A Little Child Shall Lead Them

UCG Children's Program

Heidi Stein, Director

The children are just beginning a Rotation using the story of Esther and the Jewish tradition of Purim to teach the importance of standing up for what you believe in, helping others, being brave, and learning from other religious traditions. Keri Trosper has generously written this rotation. After the lesson set there will be a big event that features some of the mitzvot (obligations) of the day of Purim from the Jewish tradition. If you are not familiar with this story take a minute and read it and share it with your family.

A big THANK YOU to the many, many people that make Christmas a special time of year for our UCG Children and Families.

Calendar

- 01-15-12** - Begin Esther Rotation
01-22-12 - Continue Esther Rotation
01-29-12 - Continue Esther Rotation
02-05-12 - Guest Artist, Studio Percussion
02-12-12 - Esther Big Event



Campus Ministry at UCG

My name is Natalie Saltmarsh. I graduated from UF in 2009. I first came to UCG about 3 or 4 years ago. I didn't think I wanted to attend a church, but when I sat in my first UCG service and heard the ministers playing guitar and singing while members of UCG danced, my heart sang and danced with them, and I realized how much I appreciate a spiritual community. I write this today as the newly appointed Campus Ministry point person. I will be reaching out to young adults to get together after service for lunch and plan gatherings to support one another as we explore our spirituality. I will greet young adults at 11 a.m. services and be available to treat us to free lunch after the service on the follow dates: Jan. 8, 22, Feb. 12, March 18 & 25, April 1 & 15 (with other possible dates as well). For more information, contact me at nataliesaltmarsh@gmail.com or [407-221-7657](tel:407-221-7657).

What's Happening, cont'd

5

Workshops brought to you by the Board of Adult Programs...

On Friday, January 27th at 7pm, UCG will host author and lecturer, Jon Mundy, speaking about his new book *Living A Course in Miracles*. Jon is the executive director of All Faiths Seminary International in New York City, and the publisher of Miracles magazine, and he has agreed to come to UCG as part of his speaking tour in Florida. He says, “Living A Course in Miracles means integrating the principles of the Course into our lives. The Holy Spirit’s voice is as loud as our willingness to listen. As we have over-learned the lessons of the ego, we have a bit of work to do to engage in a reversal of the thinking; heal the terrorist within; learn a new lesson from a Perfect Teacher and do what God would have us do. We cannot behave appropriately unless we perceive correctly and then do what God is asking us to do. It is the only way to true happiness.” The cost for the evening is \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. Sign-up on Sundays or RSVP to info@ucgainesville.org

On Saturday, February 25th UCG will host a day-long workshop entitled, “Living in the Light of Death” with author and transpersonal psychologist, Kathleen Singh. Kathleen Dowling Singh will lead a day-long workshop examining the spiritual transformations that occur during the time of dying and the conditions that seem to facilitate those transformations. Our focus will be on examining the relevance of these insights to our daily life. Practicing the same conditions that facilitate transformation at the end of life while still in the midst of life, we can enter deeper levels of being, fuller opening to the present—giving and taking, in living and in dying, with fewer gimmicks and simpler truth, with less frivolity and more joy, with less suffering and more gratitude. The workshop will offer teachings and sharing, group experience, and contemplative practice. **This event is generously sponsored by the UF Center for Spirituality and Health. Register through the small groups brochure or contact Vince Amlin at vincea@ucgainesville.org for more information.**

Other Church News, cont'd

Sandy, Larry, Vince and Andy on Continuing Education in January

All four ministers are attending a workshop sponsored by the National Transitional Ministry Network in Delray Beach from January 23-26. We should return much smarter about how ministerial transitions affect congregations.

Wanna Party? Join the Fellowship Committee

The Fellowship Committee meets once a year and helps to plan and carry out all UCG’s great parties. 4th of July Ice Cream Social? That’s us. Gathering of Waters Brunch? You betcha. The upcoming Winter Party with amazing soul music from Little Jake and the Soul Searchers? Uh huh. You too could help plan any or all of these amazing events. Just come to our yearly meeting, Tuesday February 28th at 6pm. For more information or to RSVP contact Vince Amlin at vincea@ucgainesville.org

Outreach Update

Thank you to all who supported our numerous Outreach offerings during the month of December. Here is what we accomplished:

- ◆ **200+ gifts** were distributed to the 4th and 5th graders at Duval Elementary School and the Shands Children’s Medical Services department.
- ◆ **176 tube socks** filled with personal toiletries and snack items were passed out to the homeless.
- ◆ **\$2500+** was given to financially challenged individuals, families and organizations through our Christmas Mini-grant program.
- ◆ Christmas parties were hosted for two group homes of developmentally disabled friends at Tachachale.
- ◆ **Almost 2000 lbs** of food was donated to the Gainesville Community Ministries food pantry.
- ◆ **\$1045** was donated to Ray Meeks., a church member who is on death row.
- ◆ **\$3200** was given to support the United Church of Gainesville Emergency Loan Fund

Sundays in January

6

REGULAR SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:15 - 12:15	Nursery & Toddler Care
9:30 & 11:00	Worship
9:45 - 10:45	United Tribes - after the children's story
10:30	Fellowship Time
10:45 - noon	Children's Activity Time
11:00	Middle School Group

Sunday, January 15

IHN Hosting ends

8:30 – Meditation in the Chapel

9:30 and 11:00 Worship Services - Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday and the beginning of a new Worship Theme "To A God Unknown - Sermon by Sandy Reimer

11:00 - Friendship Group

11:00 - Adult Seminars:

An American Gospel - Larry Reimer and Paul George will lead a seminar on the book, *An American Gospel*, written by Erik Reece. The book challenges many aspects of what might be called traditional Christianity, affirms much of UCG's 'theology,' and suggests a number of steps that might be taken to enhance our religious, political, and environmental lives. Participants will receive an abstract/summary of the book at the seminar, or get an advance copy of the abstract at: pgeorge8@cox.net.

Goal Setting and Vision Boards for the New Year with Tim Smith - Have you felt disorganized about your future? Do you want to achieve your goals and dreams faster? In this seminar we will explore how to set realistic, measurable goals, and turn them into a vision board to create our future. We will learn how our past is a beacon that has led us to our present, our present is the opportunity to create our future, and our future is filled with unlimited possibilities. Dare to dream and see it come true in this dynamic process!

Noon - Visitor's Lunch

12:15 - Middle School Team

Sunday, January 22

8:30 – Meditation in the Chapel

9:30 and 11:00 Worship Services "Blues in the Night" - Larry Reimer. Special music by a jazz ensemble and adult choir.

10:45 - Retreat Committee leaves for Warren Willis Camp for a site visit and planning.

11:00 - Adult Seminars

Dr. Terry Wahls - Minding Your Mitochondria a TED talk viewing and discussion with Erick Smith - Can eating a certain way cure disease? Dr. Terry Wahls learned through research, trial and error how to properly fuel her body. Using the lessons she learned at the subcellular level, she used diet to cure her MS and get out of her wheelchair. Join Erick Smith for a 20 minute video, followed by a group discussion.

Sunday, January 29 Winter Congregational Meeting

8:30– Meditation in the Chapel

9:30 – One Worship Service - **10:35** – Winter Congregational Meeting

No Adult seminars

PASSAGES:

- ◆ Congratulations to Pat Urbano and David Lawson who were married on Saturday, November 12 in the afternoon at Pat's home in the presence of their family, including Pat's mom. Their friend, Erich Werner, a notary public, officiated. We surround Pat and David with our good wishes and blessings!
- ◆ Blessings to Mira Lenstrom and Kai Lenstrom, daughter and son of Eric Lenstrom and Marthe Walters, who were baptized by Larry Reimer and Sandy Reimer on Sunday, December 18 at the 11:00 service.

JANUARY 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				12 Confirmation 7pm	13 Lunch Groups 12pm YU Mystery Trip Departs	14
15 Worship 9:30 & 11:00 Friendship Group 11am Visitor's Lunch 12pm MS Team 12:15pm YU Returns	16 Office Closed Martin Luther King day 3rd Monday Project Night 6pm	17 PFLAG 6pm Alzheimer/ Dementia Support 7pm	18 Church Council 5:30pm	19 Choir Rehearsal 7:15pm Confirmation 7pm	20 Lunch Groups 12pm Parent's Night Out* 5:30pm	21 Lively Arts Party 7pm
22 Worship 9:30 & 11:00am	23	24	25	26	27	28
	Larry, Sandy, Andy, Vince - Continuing Education					
			February Newsletter Deadline 12pm	Choir Rehearsal 7:15pm	Lunch Groups 12pm John Mundy Lecture 7pm	Adult Winter Party 6-11pm YU/MSG Rehearsal 1-2:30pm
29 Worship - one service at 9:30am Congregational Meeting 10:35am YU Progressive Dinner 5pm * Pre-registered Adult Small Group	30	31 ONA 6pm BAP 7pm	1 Newsletter Folding 10:30am Council Exec 12pm New Member Orientation 7pm	2 BPM 5:30pm Choir Rehearsal 7:15pm Confirmation 7pm	3	4 Women's Overnight 12pm

With Much Gratitude.....

Dearest UCG Friends, Thank you for your thoughts and prayers, sweet cards, and gifts. Your love and care over the past 3 months have lifted us up and helped us through a very challenging time. You have been a gift of grace to us. We are so grateful! ~ Sincerely, Glenn Thomas and Teresa Donaldson Thomas

The four of us thank you, UCG, for the wonderful Christmas gift delivered to each of us a few days before Christmas Eve. Each package included a beautiful card of appreciation for our ministry. The Congregation-Ministry Review Board does this on behalf of the congregation, and it means a lot to us to receive this appreciation, especially during the Christmas season. ~ Sandy, Larry, Andy and Vince

Nearly two years ago Steve Bates began a part time maintenance position with UCG. In that time he has completed dozens of projects which have kept our buildings and grounds in tip top shape. Steve has decided to move on to focus on his work as a "Handy Man Extraordinaire." We wish him much success in this endeavor and thank him for all the hard work and devotion he gave us. ~ The UCG Staff

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8:30 - 4:30

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25
FOR FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Looking Ahead:

- ◆ **Wednesday, February 1** - New Member's Orientation at 7:00pm
- ◆ **Sunday, February 12** - Confirmation and New Members join
- ◆ **Sunday, February 19** - UCG Annual Book Sale
- ◆ **Wednesday, February 22** - Ash Wednesday services at noon and 7:00pm
- ◆ **Sunday, April 8** – Easter Services at 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00am
- ◆ **April 27-29** – Annual Church Retreat at Warren Willis Camp, Fruitland Park, FL

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25
FOR FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS