



United Church of Gainesville

NEWSLETTER

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

M A Y 2011

Larry Reimer & Sandy Reimer
Ministers

Andy Bachmann
Associate Minister

Vince Amlin
Associate Minister

Lisa Goldstein
Editor

Important May Events

- * New Worship Theme - "A New Way of Seeing"
- * Spring Congregational Meeting Sunday, May 15 at 10:35am. See page 2 for details
- * Annual Council Planning Conference for new officers and board chairpersons on Sunday, May 22 from 12:30 - 4:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Child care and lunch provided.

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Open Hearts, Open Hands

On April 26, the 39th annual Work of Heart Volunteer Awards banquet was held, celebrating people who make a difference in the Alachua County community. I am proud to report to you that the United Church of Gainesville received the award for Faith Based Volunteer of the Year for our Food 4 Kids program!

In her nomination and introduction of UCG, Liz Stark, Volunteer coordinator of the Alachua County School board said, "For the past two years, the United Church of Gainesville has been the driving force behind the Food 4 Kids program at Duval Elementary School. This program provides 525 meals every weekend for 75 children and families. More than 20 volunteers have logged over 500 hours filling backpacks with kid friendly meals. The individual child receives a filled backpack on Fridays at the end of the school day and returns them empty on Monday mornings. The church coordinates the donation of money, food purchasing and packing of backpacks to ensure that 100% of all funds go to the purchase of food. This program positively impacts attendance and provides children, who would regularly not get enough healthy food, the necessary ingredients to live a full and active lifestyle. For the past 8 years this church has also provided every 4th and 5th grader at Duval with a Christmas gift. The United Church of Gainesville is a blessing in the lives of many, many needy children and the recipient of the Faith Based Work of Heart Award." Congratulations to UCG, and to our outstanding volunteers who make Food 4 Kids a reality; and a SPECIAL congrats to our visionary and passionate leader, Reisa George.

In addition to this honor, I am pleased to report to you that work has begun on our Interfaith Habitat for Humanity home, and my hope is that you will join us for an opportunity to do not just theology with your sleeves rolled up, but engage in a little interfaith dialogue as well. We will be paired with a variety of different faith communities as we work, on Thursdays and Saturdays (and the occasional Sunday) building the home of Ms. Regina Stuckey. Sign up on Sunday mornings between services, or contact Cathy Keathley to get your name into the volunteer rotation.

It has been a real pleasure working with representatives from the different faith communities on this project. We are Baptists and Jews, Catholics and Episcopalians, UCGer's and Muslims, all coming together to make the world a better place. I thank you all for your support and work, especially our Endowment trustees, who make our financial support of programs like this possible.

It's been quite a year of outreach! Now that the congratulations are offered, let the service begin!

²What's Happening in May

- **Ken Bradley Annuity Collection on Sunday, May 8:** For the past five years we have had a special offering for an annuity for Ken Bradley, our custodian of 30 plus years. Beginning Sunday, May 8 and throughout the month of May, you may designate gifts to UCG for the Ken Bradley annuity. Funds are placed in an IRA at Ken's bank in Hawthorne.
- **Need a night out? PNO** is for parents of babies through 5th grade. The kids go to the UCG church school wing on **Friday, May 13 from 5:30 to 8:30pm** - where they eat pizza*, watch movies, play games, and have fun with their friends. The cost is \$10 for the first child and \$5 for each additional child. *Due to life threatening food allergies, no outside food can be brought in. To reserve your spot, please **RSVP by Tuesday, May 10 to alysonm@ucgainesville.org**.
- **Acts Bible Study Begins May 26th** - There is still time to sign-up for our study of The Acts of the Apostles, led by Vince Amlin, which meets for four Thursdays, beginning on May 26th, from 6-7:30. The Book of Acts begins with Jesus taking off into the sky and sending his disciples out to the ends of the earth. Their journeys lead them into battles with local magicians, conversations with eunuchs, and a shipwreck on the island of Malta. Meanwhile, at every stop, the good news of God's love is expanded and opened to more and more people. Come read some of the strange adventures of the apostles, learn the history of the early church, and find out why it's OK for us to eat shellfish! For those who would like to sign-up and did not do so in January, email Vince Amlin at vincea@ucgainesville.org

Official Call to our Spring Congregational Meeting

Sunday, May 15 – 10:35 am in Sanctuary

Chocolate and Child Care is provided.

Please plan to attend.

Agenda items include:

- * vote on and approve our next three year plan
- * appreciation to the officers, chairpersons and board members
- * election of incoming officers and new board members & adoption of Annual Report



Sandy Reimer Nominated for Antoinette Brown Award

In 1853, Antoinette Brown was the first woman ever ordained in America, and that happened to be by the Congregational Church, a predecessor denomination to the United Church of Christ. At each General Synod, the UCC bestows the Antoinette Brown award upon a woman who demonstrates remarkable gifts for ministry. This year Sandy Reimer was one of those nominated. While she did not receive the award, the letter informing Sandy of her nomination states, "you are one of the outstanding clergy-women of the UCC and your gifts and leadership have been recognized and appreciated throughout the church." We congratulate and celebrate Sandy in this recognition of her ministry.

The Seventh Trumpet

I've got three things to sound my horn (as in "Seventh Trumpet) this month. First is a story that relates to parking. In a discussion at our council executive committee one Wednesday, Sally Simonis mentioned that one morning she was coming to church, rather early, and she saw Anne Casella walking along 17th Street. She offered Anne a ride. Anne said, "Oh thanks, but I come early and park a few blocks away. I like to walk and this leaves room for people with children, or those who aren't able to walk distances, or who are getting here at the last minute."

Now what a great idea! Anyone who can get here a little early, doesn't have folks either too young or too old to walk a few blocks, and who enjoys a little exercise themselves can park a block or two away and take the pressure off our parking lot for those who need it.

Second, this is the month that Sandy, Andy, Vince and I plan themes for next year. We go off for a morning and think of the popular book titles, issues that are prominent in the news, questions of faith and personal growth that we've heard from you, and what we've been wrestling with in our own spiritual journeys. From this, we brainstorm until themes begin to emerge. We go home with the grand list in our heads and return a week later to turn it into a short list. In the midst of this, we'd like to hear your ideas for themes. What would you like us to address, and what images capture your imagination? Send them to us or to info@ucgainesville.org before May 12. Your specific words may not make it onto the final list, but believe me, everything we receive goes into our planning.

Third, speaking of planning, our spring congregational meeting is May 15, at 10:35 right after the 9:30 service. In that meeting we'll be presenting the new three year plan. This plan is the result of our all church survey and the input you gave on priority Sunday in February. Nancy Dana and the Congregation and Ministry Review Board set up a calendar last year at this time scheduling each element of input and development to bring us to this point. Please come to get a sense of our goals and projects for the next three years.

At this meeting we elect new officers and board members. I am so thankful to Tim Martin for his year as Moderator. His blend of spirituality and organizational skills has been fantastic. Thank him whenever you get a chance. We welcome Sally Simonis, our Moderator Elect to the role of Moderator. And we will elect Taylor Stein as our new moderator elect. All good stuff.

Let us continue to work, pray, and hope that the work of our hands at UCG will bless the world with an inclusive spirit.

Larry

Pet Blessing Sunday, May 22, 9:30 – Larry Reimer

Our 9:30 service on May 22 will be a Pet Blessing, held in the fellowship hall. This is our way of recognizing the gifts our pets bring us. Bring your pet, of any variety, boxed, caged, or leashed, whichever is appropriate. We will have sections designated for all different varieties of pets, careful to keep natural predators as far apart from each other as possible. I need about four people to help me with animal control. Please call the church office to volunteer. We will call each person and pet combination forward for a blessing, by the animal's name. It is a wonderfully wild and beautiful service. **At 11:00 Sandy will lead a service on "A New Way of Seeing" in the Sanctuary.** The choir will sing, and we will share Communion.

THRESHOLDS

SANDY REIMER

Fresh Eyes Seeing – Fresh “I”s Being - Retreat 2011 – and what a fresh and refreshing week-end it was! With the unexpected gift of cooler temperatures, and a fresh breeze off the lake all week-end, we soaked in the clear blue skies, the sun glistening on the lake, the arching oak trees, the dances and marches of the resident cranes, the sunsets and sunrises, the stars including the night time clarity of Saturn seen through Chuck Broward’s telescope and the just-before-sunrise trio of the waning moon framed by Venus on one side and Mars and Jupiter overlapping just below the moon, seen by several of us from the Maguire dock. We were two hundred eight-three kindred folks, engaged in a week-end apart from routine and distraction, to connect and reconnect with one another and with our own souls – to see with fresh eyes and to be with a fresh sense of our lives and our spiritual journey.

Time was a gift rather than a schedule, a chance to enjoy and share: the opening session where we met one another in numerous combinations and blessed the week-end; the Friday night communion of planting fresh seeds in our lives; the fun and engaging activities for preschoolers, children and youth; the sixteen adult workshops that weren’t work but precious opportunities for exploration; the relaxation of free time, including swimming in the pool; great evening snacks; the always entertaining and surprising Variety Show followed by an intergenerational dance and a resurrected participatory music/sing-along/ jam; and ending with Larry’s annual retreat story and Communion in our closing worship by the lake under the cathedral oaks in North Camp. And, for those of you with past memories of Retreat, we are happy to report that the food has improved dramatically and featured more fresh veggies, salads and fruit.

We set some UCG Retreat records this year: more people camping (16 tents and 14 folks in pop-ups/RVs); 9 babies/toddlers and 15 preschoolers; 16 (!) child care aides and more 20-30 something folks than ever before. Add to that 29 elementary schoolers and 21 youth; 70 parents of all those children and 5 chaperones of the youth - and 81 other adults who stayed in the motel rooms – and you can see that we had a fresh generational mix!

I want to thank every single person who was there and who helped in specific ways to make this Retreat so enjoyable! And special thanks to Vince, Andy and Larry; to the Retreat Committee – Carol Barron, Susan McNeil, Ian Baldwin, Barbara Beynon, Salina Briseno, Jerry Hill, Jean Epling, Christine Denny, Joyce Henry-Hettel, Shanna Johnson, Kaydie Vistelle, Sue Schackow, Sue Littell, Kari Ward, Will Dougherty, Wendy Young and Ellen Louis; to Wayne Nagy for Sound; and to Lisa Goldstein and Alyson McElwain!

One of my favorite poets, Mary Oliver, writes: *Sometimes I need only to stand wherever I am to be blessed.* I think we all felt that blessing on Retreat – and I send that along to each and every one of you as we begin this month of May, which is filled with transitions and with blessings. May we stand where we are – and see, with fresh eyes, all the ways we are blessed.

MAY MUSINGS: A MESSAGE FROM ANDY

In the post retreat bliss that is May, I am once again grateful to be a part of such an amazing spiritual community. Hats off to all the organizers and overseers and volunteers for this years All Church Retreat.

In looking through our calendars for May I am always reminded of the wrap-up of the academic calendar. Youth groups begin their great wind down, and summer plans are being drawn up all over the place.

We will incorporate all our new team members onto the Middle and High School teams for an extended session on Sunday, May 15 from 12:15 to 1:45pm. Come on out, you newbies, and help us mark out our plans and vision for the fall! We will meet in the West Wing.

IHN has another hosting for the year the last week of May. Please find a spot where your time and talents can be utilized in making UCG a welcoming place for our guests.

MSG	YU
May 8 - Mother's Day! Come make a gift for Mom!	May 15 - Senior Sunday planning and practice. Possible viewing Work Tour 2011 video. Check the bulletins for more details
May 15 - Games at JJ Finley—Bring a water bottle!	June 5 - High School Senior Sunday and end of year party
May 22 - Post Easter sightings, God However Known with Andy	We will try to organize a Habitat work day for YU in late May. Check FB for more details!
May 29 — Memorial Day - No Group	

IN VINNY VERITAS.....

VINCE AMLIN

With Eastertide upon us, I want to look back and give thanks for the Wednesdays of Lent here at UCG and all those who helped to make them special and meaningful. We started Lent with two beautiful Ash Wednesday services in which Sandy helped to give focus to the season by challenging each of us to take on some practice for the next 40 days. We ended the season with a beautiful Tenebrae service on Maundy Thursday, led by Larry and our Board of Parish Ministry. In between, every Wednesday, over 70 UCGers gathered at the church between 6-8:30 for one of six different small groups: Contemplative Prayer, Art Journaling, Agnostics Anonymous, Integral Yoga, Parenting without Spoiling or Spanking, and The Bible for Skimmers.

It was truly magical each week to see people streaming into the courtyard with their Bibles, their yoga mats, their art supplies, and their Christopher Hitchens books- a vision of true community! One of the highlights for me was to see many parents of younger children able to participate thanks to the excellent childcare from our childcare aides (arranged by Joyce Henry-Hettel!) Thanks to those who led groups this Lent: Dar Mikula, Sandy Reimer, Larry Reimer, David Dean, Bev Preston, Heidi Stein, Nitya Bernstein, Paul George, Fred Gregory, and Andy Bachmann. And thanks to the Small Groups Committee: Reisa and Paul George for recruiting all this wonderful leadership!

~ A Little Child Shall Lead Them ~
UCG Children's Program
Heidi Stein, Director

Where would we be?

A big thank you to the many volunteers both in the classroom, on the Board of Children's Ministry and behind the scenes that have made this another incredible year for the children's program. Our children are so blessed by your gifts. What an incredible community to raise children in.

Who's camping?

This summer, on weekdays from August 1st through the 12th, we will again enjoy our amazing summer camp program, Tribal Camp. Tribal Camp is a fun and safe, multi-faith and multi-cultural camp with a commitment to peace, justice and a connection to the earth. Group continuity, team building, reflections on faith and a wide variety of games and activities will be a part of each day for each child. Some activities will be led by camp counselors and some by adult volunteers to create a true community experience. At the end of each day all tribes will come together for a camp-wide gathering with the director, Cam Parker, for songs, announcements and acknowledgements. Children entering Kindergarten through 6th grade are invited to attend.

Tribal Camp is a "whole village" program – not just parents and children. Last year many older and/or childless church members volunteered and participated.

If you would like to know more, would like to sponsor a camper or would like to volunteer and join the fun please do not hesitate to contact me at steinags@cox.net or 373-3058.

What's old?

Thank you so much for your donations of t-shirts and egg crates. The children really enjoyed their resurrection egg activity on Palm Sunday which required over 60 recycled egg crates. They used the old t-shirts to make some great art. Check it out in the Art in the Library during the month of May.

Calendar

5-8-11 - Mother's Day Craft

5-15-11 - UT: K-5 - All Tribe choir practice
Pre-K -Teachers Choice

5-22-11 - Last Day of United Tribes - Children's Choir Performs.
End of year Party & Satisfaction Survey
Pre-K - End of Year Celebration



PASSAGES:

- ◆ Haley Chance, daughter of Dean and Kristen Chance, granddaughter of Mike and Sandi Chance, was baptized on Sunday, April 3 by Rev. Larry Reimer & Rev. Sandy Reimer. Our love and joy surround Haley and the Chance family.
- ◆ Congratulations to Kathy Carroll on becoming the legal second parent to Olivia Provost and Jillian Provost on January 24, 2011. We surround Kathy, her partner Nicole and Olivia and Jillian with our blessings.

CHURCH BOARDS & COMMITTEES

CMRB

As the result of a marvelous UCG 3-Year Plan development process that began almost a year ago, CMRB has completed a draft of the next UCG Three-Year-Plan that was approved by Council on April 20, 2011. The plan covers three priorities for UCG to address over the next three years (2011 – 2014). Please visit the UCG website to read the plan in its entirety. Hard copies of the plan are also available in the Church Office. The congregation will vote on the plan at our May Congregational meeting on Sunday, May 15th. See you then!

Social Justice Committee

Job Seekers: Are you or someone you know looking for a job or maybe you want to change fields?

Employers: Do you have a position to fill but can't find the "right person?"

Post your need on the Job Board located in the foyer on the west side of the Fellowship Hall. This board is a form of networking. It is visual and will spread by word of mouth. If you have any questions, please contact Sally Johnson at 352 258-6609.

Other Church News.....

Want to Join UCG? Our next new member Sunday will be June 12. Those interested in joining should attend the new member orientation on Wednesday, June 1 at 7 pm in the Fellowship Hall. This orientation is an opportunity to learn what it means to be a member of our congregation and to prepare for joining on the 13th. Sign-up on the bulletin board outside the church office.

Sewing Circle at UCG - A group of UCG members is meeting one Saturday a month during the summer as a take off on the Come Sewing with Me! small group led by Ann Lusk this spring. If you have a sewing machine and are interested in clothing construction, call Ann (219-8725) for details and to reserve your spot. Dates: 5/28, 6/25 and 7/23

Help Plan Small Groups for the Fall - The Small Groups Committee is looking for 1-2 more people to join and help plan small groups for the Fall. Contact Vince Amlin at vincea@ucgainesville.org for more information or to sign up.

Wherever you are this summer- in your own yard, at the beach, in another state or country—**remember to gather a small amount of water to bring to our annual "Gathering of Waters" service on August 14.** This service is our ritual of re-gathering as a church community at the end of the summer.

Community News

Interested in World Peace? Build a bridge of peace by hosting a high school student from across the world! For More Information contact Florida International Student Coordinator: Natalie-Saltmarsh.pax@gmail.com 407.221.7657

Interfaith Habitat House Dedication



Members of UCG and other faith communities gather for the dedication of the Interfaith Habitat home in Celebration Oaks.



Youth United Work Tour 2011



UCG high school youth spend their Spring Break in New Orleans helping with recovery from Hurricane Katrina.

Sundays in May

Regular Sunday Schedule

9:15 - 12:15	Nursery & Toddler Care
9:30	Worship with Children's Story
9:45 - 10:45	United Tribes Church School - after Children's Story
10:30	Fellowship Time
10:45 - noon	Children's Activity Time
11:00 - noon	Worship, Adult Seminars, Middle School Group
Noon	Campus Ministry

Worship Theme – A New Way of Seeing

Sunday, May 8th - *Mother's Day*

8:30 Meditation in the Chapel

9:30 & 11:00 Worship "Seeing Through the Rearview Mirror" with UCG member Rev. Martha McInnes. Services coordinated by the Board of Parish Ministry

10:00 - 12:30 LifeSouth Blood Drive

11:00 Adult Seminars:

- **China: All aboard, Ready for Take-off** - Join Joanne and Richard Pohlman, who traveled in China for 24 days in the Spring of 2010, as they share photos and stories of their visits to large cities and rural villages, with emphasis on observations of Chinese language, culture, and customs.
- **Organize your Stuff with Julianne Weisberg**

12:15 IHN Steering Committee

7:30 Crystal Bowl Concert with Cindy Bergbower in the Sanctuary

May 15th - *Spring Congregational Meeting*

8:30 Meditation in the Chapel

9:30 ONE Worship Service with Andy Bachmann

10:35 Spring Congregational Meeting

11:00 Friendship Group

12:15 Middle School & High School Teams

5:00 Board of Children's Ministry at Suzanne Stapleton's house

5:30 Youth United - Fellowship Hall

May 22nd

8:30 Meditation in the Chapel

9:30 Pet Blessing in the Fellowship Hall. Bring your leashed, caged or boxed pets.

11:00am Worship with Sandy Reimer in the Sanctuary. Includes Communion and the UCG Choir

11:00 Adult Seminars:

- **Technology and Kids: What's the scoop? With Heather Remer** - Is too much technology going to ruin my kid's brain? Should my baby be watching "Baby Einstein?" Would I know how to recognize if my child is becoming addicted to video games? Heather Remer had some of the very same questions. Join Heather as she presents some surprising facts about technology's effects on children, and then stick around after for an open forum discussion!

12:30 - 4:00 –Annual Planning Conference - for incoming officers and board chairs in the Fellowship Hall. Child care and lunch provided.

Sundays continued

May 29th - IHN Hosting Begins

8:30 Meditation in the Chapel

9:30 & 11:00 Worship with Vince Amlin

11:00 Adult Seminars:

- **Making a Mini-Scrapbook with Jeanne Marie Ritter** - Want to capture precious family memories this summer, but don't have the time/patience/supplies for a full-fledged scrapbook? We'll make a mini-scrapbook that you can fill with jots, photos, and other memorabilia from your summer adventures. This is also a great way to encourage little hands to write a sentence or two about their experiences!

June 6th - Senior Sunday - One service at 10am

9:15 Meditation in the Chapel

9:45– 11:30 Child care available

10:00 One Worship Service - Senior Sunday led by Youth United and Andy Bachmann

11:00ish - Fellowship and Beverages

MAY 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 All Church Retreat No Worship in Gainesville	2	3 ONA Task Force 6pm BAP 7pm	4 Council Exec 12pm	5 BPM 5:30pm Choir Rehearsal 7:15pm	6 Lunch Groups 12pm	7
8 Mother's Day Worship 9:30 & 11:00am IHN Committee 12:15pm Crystal Bowl Concert 7:30pm	9	10 Budget Summit 1:30pm SJC 6:30pm CIA 7pm BoB 7:15pm	11 Lively Arts Planning 3:30pm	12 Choir Rehearsal 7:15pm	13 Lunch Groups 12pm PNO 5:30pm	14
15 Worship 9:30 Congregational Meeting 10:35am Friendship Group 11am MS/HS Teams 12:30pm BCM 5-7pm YU 5:30pm	16 3rd Monday Project Night	17 Alzheimer/ Dementia Support Group * 7pm	18 Kairos Meeting 7pm	19 Choir Rehearsal 7:15pm	20 Lunch Groups 12pm	21
22 Pet Blessing 9:30am Worship 11am Planning Conference 12:30 - 4pm	23	24 CMRB 5:30-8:30pm at Nancy Dana's house	25 Newsletter Deadline 12pm	26 Acts Group* 7pm	27 Lunch Groups 12pm	28 Sewing Group Time TBA
29 IHN Hosting Begins Worship at 9:30 & 11am	30 Memorial Day Office Closed	31	1	2	3	4
IHN Hosting May 29 - June 5						
			Newsletter Folding 10:30am New Member Orientation 7pm	Acts Group* 7pm		

UNITED CHURCH
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**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 25
FOR JUNE NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS**

Looking Ahead

- ♦ **June 1** **Orientation Meeting for New Members at 7:00pm**
- ♦ **June 12** **New Members Join at 9:30 & 11:00am**
- ♦ **July 3** **Annual Fourth of July Evening Service followed
by Ice Cream Social**
- ♦ **July 10** **Summer Schedule Begins - One service at 10:00am**
- ♦ **August 21** **Gathering of Waters Services - 9:30 & 11:00**

**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 25
FOR JUNE NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS**