

# GREENBELT COMMUNITY CHURCH NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2011

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## **PASTOR DAN'S LETTER**

Recently I joined a Simplicity Study Circle. Each of us is seeking ways to live more gently on the earth with less clutter and better balance.

The obvious place to begin was with physical clutter. Papers had been sitting on the stairs for weeks. I finally got around to filing them in my second floor office. The tool shed is organized. In the coat closet I mounted a rack for mops and brooms so they're not flopping all over the place. At times it's been difficult to decide what to keep and what to give away or recycle, but it's been worth the effort.

Then I began cleaning out mental clutter. I blocked emails from certain businesses and organizations and moderated my intake of news. I really don't need to know everything that's going on all the time. I'm listening to more music. And silence. I'm practicing doing just one thing at a time but haven't gotten very good at that yet.

What began as a vague desire to find simpler ways of living has brought unexpected spiritual benefits. I am more aware of the abundance of my true blessings and the presence of God in my daily life. I worry less. As the Psalmist put it, "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) Sometimes less is more.

Peace, Dan

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## **Calendar**

**September 5 – Luncheon-on-the-Lawn, following Greenbelt's Labor Day Parade**

**October 15 - Empty Bowls event**

**November 5 - Holiday Bazaar and Auction**

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## **DIRECTORY CHANGES**

Please add:

Stephanie Love



## **GCC SHOWS ITS HEART**

Greenbelt Community Church was once again among the top contributors to the Hyattsville CROP Walk this year! The Hyattsville 2011 CROP Walk raised over \$55,000 for CWS from 27 groups and churches.

Our 105 intrepid walkers and 13 brave dogs from GCC participated in this year's walk and raised \$17,298 for Church World Service/CROP! We had set the ambitious goal of raising \$17,000 so it is quite a triumph for our church. That amount included \$2300 donated for the SOUPER Bowl of Caring.

Grateful thanks to all who donated to Palm Sunday's One Great Hour of Sharing. This project, which raises money for worldwide service projects, disaster relief, and refugee relief, raised \$2,806!

The Heifer Project, by which the children raise money during Lent to support sustainable agricultural development, was very also successful this year. The goal was \$240 for the funding of two

sheep for a family in need, and the total was \$303.52. Grateful thanks to all who contributed, and to the Board of Christian Education for their assistance in this project.

Contributions to Help by Phone from the Pancake Supper and Lenten Agape Meals totaled more than \$1300. Many thanks to the Board of Worship, especially Stan Edwards, Sally Dodson, and Sherill Abramson for their efforts.

GCC provided another successful Christmas in April to a resident of our county in need of some home repairs and “sprucing up.” This was the first year for Eric and April Crompton to lead GCCs efforts, and they did a wonderful job!

Our members who have assisted the church by giving their time and talents to the Christian Education Program were recognized on Christian Education Sunday. A reception was held in the Social Hall after worship to honor their service. These members include: Paula Clinedinst, Amy Hansen, Leann Irwin, Louise Piper, Kathy Reynolds, Loriann Scheff, John Transgrud, Diane Wogaman, Mark Granfors-Hunt, Joe and Wendy Moore, Ken and Naomi Littlefield, Jane Young, Eric and April Crompton, Kim and Earl Taylor, Dawn Goodman Washington, Doug Tull, Carla Crompton, Alyssa Howard, Bob Candey, Jo-Anne Fournier, Karen Yoho, and Allison Colby.

We raised \$1308 for Church World Service’s emergency response to the earthquake and ensuing disaster in Japan during the spring.

On June 12, the Board of Missions sponsored an Offering of Letters. Jim Tilton spoke to the congregation about Bread for the World’s yearly Offering of Letters to Congress focusing on a particular hunger policy issue; this year the letters supported legislation currently pending in Congress that would reform U.S. foreign assistance to make it more effective in reducing poverty. Many of us wrote letters to our representatives in Congress, and several writers received lengthy replies.

## **YARD SALE AND BAKE SALE RAISED OVER \$4500**

by Barbara Ransom

The yardsale was a wonderful success because everyone helped so much. Our church members are just wonderful and provided so much assistance, especially on Friday night with pricing. Thanks to all those who pitched in and helped! We raised over \$1514.00. The remaining baked goods and hoagies were sold on Sunday after church. All told, it was a tremendous yardsale.



On May 8, we welcomed [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] into the church as adult members through the Rite of Confirmation.

## **REPORT ON CENTRAL ATLANTIC CONFERENCE**

by Louise Piper

The Central Atlantic Conference was held at the University of Delaware the weekend of June 11, 2011. Rev. Mark Granfors-Hunt and Louise Piper attended on Saturday June 11th. The theme of the conference was "Wake up! A New Church is Possible." Rev. Geoffrey Black, general minister and president of the UCC, brought greetings from the national office. He commented that the Still Speaking initiative affirms who we are. There is an initiative to partner congregations who are different to form sustained relationships. Local churches provide the extravagant welcome we promote. There will be changes in the governmental structure of the UCC. We have some big, holy, audacious goals:

1. Deep theological engagement
2. Speak with a bold public voice
3. Excellence in leadership
4. Excellence in congregational life
5. Passionate environmental care
6. Cultural diversity for a global movement

We need to learn to let go of what is not working and engage in new works. We should serve God made manifest in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Robert Orr, the Assistant Secretary-General for Planning and Policy Coordination at the United Nations, was the keynote speaker. Dr. Orr grew up in the UCC in southern California. He stressed that we must live out our religion.

In international affairs the horizon is closer than in the past. Climate change is affecting sustainability for life on our planet. There are currently 18 U.N. peace-keeping missions where NATO will not send troops. Food, security, and medical assistance are being provided. In the last four years, over 500 United Nations employees were killed. The United Nations used to be considered neutral and respected; now, employees have become targets. On a positive note, women's and children's health is improving. In Nigeria polio is targeted for eradication.

Thank you for OCWM funds. These funds support association, conference and national ministries. There will be a search committee for an interim conference minister. There is discussion between Protestants and Catholics in the understanding of baptism.

Mrs. Jill White is president of the conference, Mr. Bradley Thomas is vice president and Rev. Dr. Joseph David Stinson is moderator.



At the Fourth of July party hosted by the Hulls

## **REPORT ON THE POTOMAC ASSOCIATION SPRING MEETING**

by Louise Piper

The Potomac Association spring meeting was held on May 7<sup>th</sup> at Faith UCC in Washington, DC. Your representatives, Rev. Mark Granfors-Hunt, minister seeking standing in the UCC, and Louise Piper attended the meeting. The theme of the meeting was “Our Ministry Grows Where Our Treasure Flows.” There were presentations from Shaw Community Ministry, United Campus Ministries of Northern Virginia and United Campus Ministry at the University of Maryland. Greenbelt Community Church contributes to these important ministries.

Members were elected to Potomac Association boards and committees. Felicia Simms will be the new moderator and Chuck Myers is the associate moderator. Anne Holmes was elected to the Central Atlantic Conference Board of Directors.

The Social Action and Mission Committee held a hearing about a resolution to make the Potomac Association Open and Affirming as an association. This is current UCC policy, but not specific Potomac Association policy. There was no vote; that will happen at a later meeting. Mark is on the Social Action and Mission Committee and you will hear more about this initiative from him in the near future.

From the Installation of Officers litany:

“Affirmation of ministry is the act whereby a local church of the United Church of Christ recognizes the diverse gifts of its members and celebrates the particular ministry of each person in the life of the church or in various settings in the life of the world. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them.

“There are different ways of serving, but the same God is served.”

“The Spirit’s presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.”

“All of us are Christ’s body, and each one is a part of it.”

## **ANOTHER AFTERNOON OF BEAUTIFUL MUSIC BY OCTTAVA PIANO DUO**

GCC organist and choir director, Wei-Der Huang, and her friend and colleague Hsien-Ann Meng gave us another beautiful performance as the Octtava Piano Duo on April 10 in the sanctuary. This year the concert included selections by Poulenc, Chabrier, Bizet, Debussy, and Bedard.

Jim Giese reviewed the concert in the “Greenbelt News Review” and praised Wei-Der’s and Hsien-Ann’s “skill, dexterity, and musical virtuosity,” and “highest quality of performance,” and concluded that the concert was a “perfectly delightful and well-executed musical afternoon.” GCC couldn’t agree more!

And congratulations to Wei-Der for becoming a United States’ citizen in May!

## **GREEN TEAM NEWS**

by Jane Young

Our Green Team has been more active lately. We decided to meet briefly after church about once a month, and keep in touch by emails. We welcome input from everyone. For example, recently Suze and Jim Marley decided to collect dead batteries and then take them to MOM’s for recycling, announced the plan in church and gave instructions about taping the ends of the batteries before they’re donated.

GCC has a bike rack, courtesy of Mike Crompton and Lester Tanner, for anyone who wants to save gas and get some exercise.

We are saving lots of trees, energy, and money by washing dishes after church on Sundays. Judy Dixon donated small plates. People can sign up individually instead of being assigned by their Boards. There is a sign-up sheet by the cupboard by the kitchen door, and instructions over the sink. We still have many empty slots. If you sign up and find you can’t help that Sunday after all, it’s easy to find a replacement. Remember, this is instead of regular board rotation. Please recycle paper plates, plastic utensils, and both paper and plastic cups in Greenbelt.

The Board of Trustees decided to purchase wind power through Clean Currents under a 2-year contract, and we'll actually save money. YAY! Homes in Greenbelt are leading in the initiative to purchase wind power. Can GCC lead in Greenbelt? We've already printed the names of 8 GCC members who buy wind power, and 2 more congregants' households signed up recently: Lynn Clinedinst; and Diane Wogaman and Jo-Anne Fournier. Do you or anyone else you know of in the church buy wind power, whether you live in Greenbelt or not? It's still a little cheaper to purchase wind power; you can lock into lower prices, and help save the environment.

Greenbelt's Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability [Green ACES] is striving to make the Greenbelt Labor Day Festival as green as possible! Public Works will provide both trash & recycling bins, placed in sets side-by-side. Vendors will provide mostly recyclable dinnerware. Volunteers (you'll recognize them by their "green personas") will encourage people to put their refuse in the correct bin. Here is what you can do: If your waste is recyclable—and most will be—please discard it into a recycling bin, and not the trash can. Look for the chart on the recycling bins showing in green the items to recycle, and in red the few you can't.

### **Help Us Encourage Others to Recycle -- Volunteers Needed**

Green ACES is seeking volunteers to help people "recycle the recyclables" and "trash the trash." Training is provided. People may provide their own costumes; we'll provide a green sash & face painting. We'd like to hear how you could best help. For students or any other volunteer we will be glad to sign community service hours and/or provide a recommendation as appropriate that you are part of an environmental team. We expect mainly students as volunteers so we need adults to provide light supervision. Please contact: Luisa Robles, Greenbelt Sustainability Coordinator: 301-474-8004 or [lrobles@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:lrobles@greenbeltmd.gov) or Jane Young & John Lippert, Green ACES: [gccjane@aol.com](mailto:gccjane@aol.com) or 301-507-6765.

The Green Team and most of the Sunday School and Youth Group kids said they'd help with this too. We'll need all the support we can get! Of course we need to make sure our own church is being as green as feasible for the Luncheon-on-the-Lawn and other events, mainly by making sure we're using recyclables and have enough recycling bins out.

### **Holey Cow Moosings**

The Junior Youth Group, a/k/a the Holey Cows, has been busy, and we've enjoyed getting to know each other more and meeting other people along the way. We continue to have our monthly meetings in which we play games and visit, but sometimes these meetings are extra-special: We made origami cranes one night when Honora Hammett, a Greenbelt resident, and her family came to our meeting. Honora's goal of making 1,000 cranes for Japanese disaster relief was helped along by the Cows' contribution of close to 200 cranes.

We continue to walk shelter dogs from time-to-time and this year we added Clyde Breon to the mix as Susan "won" the dog-walking sessions at the Fall Bazaar. Clyde seems to be enjoying making new friends, and we figure we've helped get a few dogs adopted along the way.

We went snow tubing to Whitetail Resort with the Mishkan Torah youth group, and we look forward to planning more events with them. (Stay tuned for details on a "Rock-A-Thon" in the fall.) We headed out to Antietam Creek in Harpers Ferry, WV, this summer for the other tubing extreme, and we are happy to report that there were no lost shoes this year.

We took our first overnight trip to a Heifer Village/Global Gateway. Shepherds Spring Retreat Center in Sharpsburg, MD, partners with Heifer International to create this simulated third-world village where we slept in a mud hut and made our own food over a fire. Twenty-four hours of no iPods, cell phones, or videogames was tough, but the experience was one we will never forget. We held a carwash at church and, thanks to all who let us wash their car and donate so generously, the proceeds paid for a large portion of our costs.

Alma, Sam, Abigail, and Mairead will "graduate" to the Senior Youth Group in the fall. Thanks, girls, for paving the way and initiating the group that started out as "the chicks" and have become "the cows"!

## Prayer While Using the Gift of Water

submitted by Leeann Irwin

*Dear God of Creation,*

*I thank You for this gift of water which cleanses, refreshes, and sustains my life. Keep me mindful of the needs of all Your people, especially those who do not have clean and abundant water. May I always reverence and preserve Your gift.*

We invite you to join those working to become better stewards of the precious gift of water by using it conservatively and wisely.

### Chancel Choir Concert was Beautiful Music

On June 5, the Chancel Choir proved us with an evening of beautiful music. From favorite hymns to lovely cello arrangements to Liberian and Zulu folk songs, there was something to inspire and delight every listener. Lorian Scheff and Katy Chiang added lovely instrumental music to complete the evening. Wei-Der was given a standing ovation for her work as choir director.



Everyone enjoyed the luau hosted by Kathy Reynolds!

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