

Adding our treasure to help a neighbor in need

Some of you may recall the January news report about a shooting in Bightridge that took the life of a 12-year-old girl and seriously injured her mother when 42 bullets were fired into their home. The child's surviving sister, Rayneisa, was in the home during the incident but not physically injured. Rayneisa, currently in school, is working to finish her studies and become a medical assistant by the end of October. Because of the shooting incident, which actually has nothing to do with her, Rayneisa is now ineligible for her HUD-supported housing, and is in a financial situation that may preclude her from finishing her education.

Community House is standing in solidarity with other Northside churches to raise funds to help Rayneisa pay her \$400-a-month rent until October. Allowing Rayneisa to stay settled in her home and to complete her studies will help her build a better life for both herself and her young son.

The community gathered at Community House for Easter service was given the opportunity to contribute toward Rayneisa's future. Community House family and friends raised a generous \$332. Thank you to all who helped this one individual - this really does make a difference!

If you were caught without cash to contribute, or if you would like to make an additional contribution, please know that contributions are still being accepted by the United Christian Community Development Corporation, 616 West North Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15212. Checks may be made payable to the same organization. Please write "Rayneisa fund" on the memo line. For more information, feel free to call Reverend Keith Smith, who is coordinating this collection, at 412-321-7050.

News from the Session of the Community House Presbyterian Church

Rev. Wayne Peck has brought to the attention of Session a program that links children of all ages in an orphanage in Johannesburg, South Africa with sponsors all over the world. The program, Infinite Family Project, utilized the Internet to make frequent and timely "conversations" possible. The project is run by Presbyterian minister Dana Gold. Wayne is meeting with her to discuss ways the church can become involved. If you are interested in the prospect of sharing your life with a child in need of mentoring and an attentive ear, please see Wayne.

Look Mom, a Special Collection!

We will have a special collection on May 11, Pentecost Sunday, the birthday of the Christian Church. This collection will reimburse our Treasure stewardship coffers for the amount Community House owed to the Presbyterian denomination as its annual apportionment assessment. If you are concerned about what *your portion* of the apportionment might be, you might start with the figure suggested by the denomination of \$21.25 per communicant member. If you can be more generous to offset those who will find that amount to be out of reach, may you be richly blest. Any amount will be welcomed since the shortfall will continue to be a debt against our Treasure account. If paying by check, please mark "for Presbytery" on the memo line. If paying with cash, please use an envelope and label it accordingly. Thank you to everyone for your anticipated generosity.

Have you got an idea or article you'd like to see published in our newsletter? Please give your idea or completed article to Jen Saffron at jensaffron@comcast.net or Bobbi Donovan at bobbilee@comcast.net. Please get your ideas to either of the above women by the 15th of the month or articles by the 25th of the month for publication in the following month's Unity News. Please put "For Newsletter" in the subject line. Thanks.

Got a Church family?

Have you been consistently inspired by the messages you receive, both verbal and non-verbal, during your time at Community House? Has your spiritual nature been nurtured because of your interaction with members of the Community House family?

Maybe it's time to become a member of Community House and add your story to the story we are creating here.

The next round of New Member Conversations will be held on **two** consecutive Wednesdays, April 9 and April 16, starting at 6 p.m. at Community House.

The format of New Member Conversations has been enhanced to make them even more personal. In the new format, there will be two rather than three group sessions to share and discuss your aspirations as a progressive Christian and what it means to be a member of Community House.

The new format continues with additional sessions,

individualized with Rev. Wayne Peck and/or Rick St. John to discuss your personal spiritual journey and how Community House might support and nurture your spiritual growth toward discerning your calling and fulfilling your life projects. All those who are considering Community House membership are invited to participate!

The first two sessions are conducted during catered meals and are non-indoctrinating. Rather, they focus on deep and enriching conversation about our hopes and dreams on many levels - personal, familial, community. People leave the dinners inspired and ready to begin a new chapter in their life - pretty great!

In attendance at the table will be folks interested in having a conversation about membership, as well as members of Session, members at large, and Rev. Wayne C. Peck. We hope you will join us. Please RSVP by replying to James Buczynski at james.buczynski@highmark.com or Jen Saffron at jensaffron@comcast.net, so that we can reserve a place for you at the table.

On the minds and hearts of our members -- Congregation member's project receives grant

Claudia Detwiler and her colleague from the American Friend's Service Committee were recently notified that they were awarded a \$4,000 grant to work with area congregations to provide anti-torture education and witness.

The National Religious Coalition Against Torture (NRCAT) awarded the grant in response to their proposal for outreach to churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious institutions to do outreach and to put on a conference about torture.

The proposal was based on the contention held by Claudia and her colleague that, "We live in a country whose news media and politicians are complicit by their consistent use of euphemisms when referring to these physically and mentally excruciating and sometimes fatal practices. In order to open up the moral discussion that our country desperately needs, it is up to the rest of us to learn how to talk about torture and how to engage others in the discussion, until there is a groundswell of opinion that demands changes from our country."

The all-day conference, "Talking About Torture: How Can We Learn to Speak About the Unspeakable?" is planned for September 20. It will consist of a panel of speakers, small group workshops, a dramatic presentation, a visible witness, and a future-action component. The outreach component will span the spring and summer with a variety of area congregations.

Please watch for additional details in upcoming issues of Unity News.

What's coming up at Community House?

Welcoming Dinners - two Wednesdays in April : April 9 and 16, 6:00 p.m.

For the Bible Tells Me So -- Wednesday, April 23, 7:00 p.m. (see page 3 for details)

Race, Discrimination and Pittsburgh -- Moving Beyond 'Groundhog Day' April 30, 6:00 p.m.

Space for Grace Corner

DATE		PRESIDER	CHOIR
April	16	James B.	yes
	23	"For the Bible Tells Me So" 7:00 p.m. start	yes
	30	Taking <i>Action</i> Against Racism	no
May	7	Gay Task Force	yes
	14	Janet Edwards	yes

From Discussion to Action

Race, Discrimination and Pittsburgh -- Moving Beyond 'Groundhog Day'

Wednesday, April 30, 2008

6:00 PM, light meal

7:00 PM, Community Conversation

As the finale to the Community House Race Series, Community House member Dr. Herman Jones will encourage all those present to define and pledge to take concrete steps to break the "Groundhog Day" effect of our deliberations on race. Plans for the session were prompted by the belief that while discussions, reports, protests, workshops, marches, legislation and movements about racial justice in America have been going on for centuries, it remains a seriously unresolved issue. Herman will ask us to determine, as a community of sensitive and aware individuals, what can we offer to each other -- in terms of specific, concrete action steps -- that will move us beyond a 'Groundhog Day-like' discussion of race and towards a more just and equitable community.

A Fresh Perspective on Homosexuality and Christianity

For the Bible Tells Me So will be screened on Wednesday, April 23 at 7:00 p.m. at CHPC. The documentary explores such questions as: Can love between two people ever be an abomination? Is the Bible an excuse to hate? Is the chasm separating gays and lesbians and Christianity too wide to cross? *For the Bible Tells Me So* offer healing, clarity and understanding to anyone caught in the crosshairs of scripture and sexual identity.

Through the experiences of five very normal, very Christian, very American families -- including those of former House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt and Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson -- we discover how insightful people of faith handle the realization of having a gay child. Informed by such respected voices as Bishop Desmond Tutu, Harvard's Peter Gomes, Orthodox Rabbi Steve Greenberg and Reverend Jimmy Creech, *For the Bible Tells Me So* offers healing, clarity and understanding to anyone caught in the crosshairs of scripture and sexual identity.

Awards: 2007 Sundance Film Festival, Nominee, Grand Jury Prize; Seattle International Film Festival, audience Award for Best Documentary; Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, Kathleen Bryan Edwards Award for Human Rights; Provincetown International Film Festival, HBO Audience Award for Best Documentary; Outfest Los Angeles Audience Award for Best Documentary; Milwaukee International Film Festival, Audience Award for Best Documentary and Best Director for Documentary.

Community House Kitchen

This is a new section that will be included when a particular recipe catches the attention of members of Community House. We know the power of sharing food prepared with love, so that power is now transferable. Please enjoy! This is from Bobbi Donovan who brought them for coffee hour on Palm Sunday.

Cream Scones

Ingredients:

2 cups flour
 1/4 cup sugar (add'l to sprinkle on top)
 1T baking powder
 1 1/2 t salt
 3/4 dried fruit (apricots, apples, raisins, peaches, mango, etc.)
 1 1/4 cup cream (I use 1 cup cream, 1/4 cup milk)

Topping:

2T butter, melted
 Sugar

Combine powdered dry ingredients. Add fruit. Add cream. Stir to moisten. Dump onto floured surface and knead 10 times. Pat out into a 12" circle. Brush with melted butter, Sprinkle with sugar. Use pizza cutter to cut into 12 wedges. Place on cookie sheet

Bake at 425 degrees for 15 minutes or until lightly golden. Cool before bagging. Store in cool, dry place.

A Call to Knit and Pray our Way to the General Assembly in San Jose!

Something anyone or everyone can do right now...

Last summer the Lutherans held their Churchwide Assembly. Before that gathering, Lutherans Concerned/North America, More Light Presbyterians sister organization, proposed to their supporters the knitting of lovely rainbow scarves to mark their hopes and prayers for that assembly. Now it is our opportunity to combine the truth of GLBT inclusion and the beauty of handcrafted creativity into an unmistakable visual sign of God's all embracing love. The GLBT supporters were clearly marked at the Lutheran Assembly—let's be marked too at our General Assembly!

Challenge from Janet to Knitters/Knitting Groups across our land:

This is a social justice project, knitting us all together, compassionately, with our GLBT sisters and brothers who suffer so from the rejection of gifts for service to the church, judgment of loving relationships and silencing of voices among us. More Light Presbyterians challenges you to create as many rainbow scarves as you can, according to the directions below, between now and June 9, 2008. Experts and beginners, like me, can pray and knit our way to San Jose, establishing a solid fabric of spiritual support for the efforts at our General Assembly for full inclusion of GLBT faithful.

Yarn: Red Heart Supersaver Multicolor; the color is Mexicana (0950).

The yarn is online at the following website, www.coatscollection.com. If you type in the search engine on the page DB010527 (both are zeros, hope they don't look like Os) it takes you to the type of yarn and then you can find Mexicana (color 0950). If the site won't let you see all the pages of yarn, you can select on the page, see all (as opposed to 12 yarns per page) and Mexicana is listed. Also online on Joanne's Fabrics and available at their stores and Michael's. Please use only this yarn, as this, along with Jesus' love, is the thread running between us all!

Knitting Instructions:

The scarves can be any size between 3 to 6 inches across and 48 to 68 inches long, using needles between sizes 8 and 11. Remember as you choose your stitch that these will be used in summer in San Jose, mostly inside the air conditioned conference center.

Comments from Tammy Besser, one of the veteran Lutheran knitters: For straight knit on size 10 and 11 needles I'm casting on 10-14 stitches. Everyone is welcome to use whatever stitches, patterns, etc. you wish for these...it is a great project for trying out something new! My favorite to date is made with seed stitch, cast on 13 stitches on 10.5 needles alternate stitches (knit, purl) beginning with Knit on each row.

Crochet Instructions

⌘; ⌘; hook (can use larger or smaller depending on size of stitch desired)

⌘; Triple Crochet (TC) in 5th ch from hook and in ea ch across ⌘; Ch 4, turn, TC in ea st across; at the end of the row work last TC in top of turning ch* ⌘;

*repeat until desired width is reached

Make as many chains as you think will create a stole between 40 and 60 inches in length. Width can be anywhere between 3 and 6 inches.

Peace be with you all, Janet Edwards

Questions/comments direct to;

Janet Edwards, MLP board member: JMEA08@comcast.net, 412.302.3827

Mail finished scarves, soon but **no later than June 9, 2008**, to
Janet Edwards 5701 Fair Oaks St. Pittsburgh, PA 15217