

July, 2006

the *Visitor*...

. . . bringing into your home the news and ministries of
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Vallejo

Relay for Life team forming

Already, we have seven team members for our Relay for Life entry (August 5th-6th), but we want to recruit a few more. What does being a team member entail? Team members will function as our congregation's official representatives as well as primary fundraisers. But even if you are unable to be a team member, here are some ways you can help make this event a success: sponsor one of our team members; ask your friends and neighbors if they would be willing to donate to help our team; make a donation of \$5 or more in honor of a cancer survivor or in memory of someone who has passed away and their name will be placed on a luminaria which will be lit over night; place your loose change in our Relay for Life jar that is in the sanctuary; come to the Relay for Life, visit with our walkers, and shop and donate at the many booths that will be set up that day. And of course, if you can take a turn walking on behalf of our team - whether for one hour, or one lap - your support is greatly needed!

Remember this is a 24 hour event - because cancer never sleeps. So we will be there, at the track at St. Patrick's high school camping out overnight which should be a lot of fun, and a great way for our team members to grow closer together. If you want to be a part of what I'm sure will be an unforgettable event, or if you can make a donation, please talk to me.

memorial garden design committee formed

The members who have volunteered to serve on this committee are: Laura Woolverton, John and Beth Grose, Mary Atchison, Judith and myself. We will be looking at ways to improve the landscaping around the church and to include a Memorial Garden and labyrinth as well as a sitting area. We will keep the congregation informed.

FCC on tv? with your help it will happen

Many of you have heard that Vallejo now has a community access television station (channel 27) that will soon be airing programming produced by the members of our community. Our church can be one of the early content providers for this exciting venture - but we need your ideas and help to make it happen. To begin with, we will be airing episodes of the "Speak from the Heart" series of interviews Fred produced. Each episode will feature a standard opening segment about our church. So what do you think that should look like? Sound like? Feel like? What images should we use, what messages about our congregation should we convey? If you have any ideas, however large or small, general or detailed, send them to me as soon as you think of them!

Thoughts Shared *from the pastor's keyboard*

I've been thinking . . . about new adventure

Remember those old westerns about pioneers setting out from the East, heading West in covered wagons to build new lives? An inevitable scene in many of those "oaters" was the crossing of a wide, fast river. You remember, the drivers would crack their whips over the backs of the unfortunate horses, urging them to plunge into the rushing water. The wagons would tilt and crash against the rocks, almost falling over, almost sending those trying to drive the wagons into the drink. Everywhere men on horseback would be riding around the wagons, yelling and urging and pulling, trying to get everyone—horses, wagons and of course, people—across the raging river. This memory of many movies past popped into my head as I contemplated the end of our church year and the new officers taking over the many tasks that keep the church moving forward. Now I don't say the change-over from last year's officers to this year's is anything like as chaotic as those old movie crossings—Praise God! But we are, every June, standing on the banks of the river of change, getting ready to cross over to the other side.

In some ways it is confusing to have so many new beginnings. We have the church year beginning in July with new officers. We have the financial church year beginning in January with all the new promises and pledges to make building the kingdom for one more year a reality. We have Advent, at the close of each year, with its promise for a new beginning of faith, and again at Easter our faith is called to rise up and be new again. And then on Pentecost—new again, a new beginning for the birthday of the church. We truly have a God who loves to shout—"behold, I am doing a new thing!"

As all of you know (at least, I hope you do), this year (whenever you want to start counting) is the first of a three year regional commitment to transformation. This is not a program, nor is it a promotion, nor yet just another new buzz word for the same-old, same-old problem/opportunity for church growth. Transformation means taking what *is* and making something new. Transformation means seeing the new potential that is yet untouched, finding in ourselves and our churches new meaning and power and grace. Transformation is a process, not a list of answers. We have been invited to join other churches in our region in affirming a three-year covenant to engage in this exciting adventure. We will have an opportunity to explore the meaning of

Transformation as a process when Sandhya Jha, minister of transformation for the region comes to our church. She will be with us on Sunday, July 9th for a special sermon and after-church presentation. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet Sandhya, to discuss what transformation means for the region and for our church. Please plan to be in church on the 9th, and to stay for Sandhya's presentation.

So—here we go again. A new church year. A new church vision. New saints ready to drive the wagons! A new horizon beckons. Wagons, ho!

Shalom,
Judith

celebrating the child - July 30th

The Stewardship Committee is involved with plans for our next 5th Sunday event. The celebration will include drums, guitars, and special music from within the church family. With the focus on children and youth each of us will have the opportunity to connect with our "inner child."

The 5th Sunday celebration is intended to emphasize the meaning of being a Christian steward. Lois Artis in her DisciplesWorld article "Do We Practice Stewardship or Fundraising?" speaks to me. Let me quote: "Stewards give in response to God's love, God's generosity, and God's grace. Stewards understand that blessings are not just for the self but for the entire world. Stewards give time, talent, and treasure for the purpose of allowing the Reign of God to transform the world. Stewardship is about bringing heaven to earth 365 days a year." A special offering will be taken on the 5th Sunday for the Disciples Mission Fund, which supports the outreach/mission efforts of our national church.

outreach spotlight

The Outreach program to lift up this month is Roots of Peace. You've heard about this organization before, and some of you may have met their representatives at our Peace Fest last October (I was touched by the involvement of so many high school students coming from Marin to staff their booth). As important as their work is, I want to once again bring your attention to this ministry. Their mission statement follows:

"Roots of Peace is dedicated to the eradication of landmines worldwide. Our mission is to turn minefields into prosperous farmland. By restoring the land's economic viability, we strengthen community values and restore a sense of peace. We also try to help restore dignity to mine victims by supporting their employment in the age-old cycle of planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops."

It is said that the presence of Roots of Peace in formerly war-torn countries has saved lives. They replace the seeds of destruction with the seeds of life. You can send contributions to 1299 4th Street, Suite 200, San Rafael, CA 94901 or donate online. Visit the Roots of Peace web site at www.rootsofpeace.org and learn more about how they are "Turning Mines into Vines."

touch the earth lightly tip

This month we suggest that you work to cut down the amount of junk mail you receive. Getting junk mail can be annoying, but it is also bad for the environment. Yes, you can recycle the junk mail you get (and we hope you do!), but it would be better for them not to make it in the first place. Here are some things you can do: When you get catalogs you don't want, call their 800 number and ask to be removed from their mailing list. Call your credit card company and make sure they don't sell your name and address to businesses. When you send money to a nonprofit or fill out a warranty card or other similar form, write on it "DO NOT SELL MY NAME OR ADDRESS." For other tips, do a search on the internet for "stop junk mail." Reducing the amount of junk mail will be better for you - and for the Earth!

kids have great time working at CGC

On June 10th, Angel, Nikolas, Rob, Nikolas, Mark, Ted, Doug and I took off to help the Lafayette church at CGC (our regional campground). The project was to redo the sitting area around the fire circle. The existing circle was made up of old tree trunks which were filled with termites, ants and many other types of insects. We cut those trunks into small pieces and put them into piles for future fires. Then we helped cut down two trees which were cut into 8' pieces, load them on a truck (they were very heavy), unload them, and place them into the new circle. It took ten people to lift each piece. We all worked hard, but the satisfaction of a complete job is a great feeling. We had such a good time, we all want to do it again next year. Even though we worked hard, there are many more things at CGC which need doing. If you ever have a chance to go to CGC, check out the new fire circle near Bobbitt Hall.

yard sale nets needed funds

I wish to thank again everyone who made the yard sale a complete success. We made over \$1400 dollars of which half will go to scholarship funds for our youth to go to camp. The day was awesome from start to finish. I would especially like to thank Vince, Jon, Ron, James, and a friend from work, Joe, who carried all those tables from the fellowship hall to the front lawn. Things were not light. Also, thanks to Andrea, Allison, Jeanne, Jean and Angel for their unrewarding time. We'll try again next year!

FCC to list among progressive churches

At a recent congregational meeting, we voted to register our church with The Center for Progressive Christianity's online directory of progressive churches for one year. This was the culmination of our study on what it means to be a progressive congregation, which we undertook earlier this year. We hope that this affiliation will help people looking for a church like ours to find us.