

# the *Visitor*...

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

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## *celebrate our membership on pentecost*

We will be having a Pentecost luncheon immediately following church on June 4th. We will be honoring our new members, Rob and Nik Knisely, as well as Michael Lane and Adina Benford who were not able to be with us at Epiphany. We will be having a vegan/vegetarian potluck, as it is the last Sunday of Outreach's "Touch the Earth Lightly" program. Come, bring a dish to share, and join us to honor these new members. Please RSVP to Jeanne or Allison.

## *outreach projects*

My thanks to everyone who responded to Outreach's last project, collecting entertainment items to send to troops in Baghdad. I know from prior participation in a similar project how much our soldiers appreciate our thinking of them. If you have not yet contributed but want to, it is not too late. Just let Helen know.

New project! There is a need in our community that came to my attention from a local foster care agency. It seems that when children are removed from their homes in an emergency situation, the foster care agency needs to have luggage available so that the children can collect their belongings. I was told that many times children have to use a black garbage bag to carry out their clothes and other belongings because the agency may not have a suitcase on hand. If you have any size suitcase or duffel bag that you no longer need, this would be a wonderful opportunity to fulfill a need.

With summer coming on, many of you may be considering buying new luggage, so please keep in mind that donating your old luggage will serve an important purpose. If you are bringing items to donate to the church's rummage sale, you can bring them in the luggage, taking care of two needs at once. If you have questions or donations, please call Helen.

## *congregational meeting June 25th*

Consider this your official notice of the congregational meeting scheduled for June 25th after church. Included in the business to be covered is the election of our church officers and leaders for the coming church year and a proposal from the evangelism committee regarding our congregation affiliating with The Center for Progressive Christianity. Please recognize the importance of this meeting and plan on attending.

## *special committee forming*

Carl is looking for anyone interested in designing a proposed Memorial Garden for our church grounds. We will look into other gardens in the area and try to come up with the best design for our needs. The design would then be brought in front of the congregation for review and discussion. Please let Carl know.

## *save the date: Relay for Life*

August 5th is the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, a 24 hour walk-a-thon that raises funds for cancer research and support programs. The evangelism group will be sponsoring a team to represent First Christian Church, and we will be asking everyone in the congregation - everyone! - to play a role. We will need walkers, sponsors, team members to look for sponsorships, and other support people. Our congregation has recently felt the loss that cancer can cause; participating in this event will be a great way for us to honor our friends and family members who have succumbed to cancer, those who have survived it, and those who are still struggling to overcome it. We will have much more information about the Relay for Life in the coming weeks, but for now, be sure to save that date: August 5th (all day and into the night!).

## *touch the earth lightly tip*

One of the most important philosophical questions of our time has asked us, "Paper or Plastic?" Well, the next time you go to the grocery store, the best answer is "Neither - I brought my own bag." If you take your own bags to the grocery store, you will be helping the earth - and yourselves, because you will get a discount for every bag you bring to the store that gets used for your groceries: at Raley's and Albertson's, 5¢ per bag, and at Safeway, 3¢. Over the course of a year, we would be amazed at what the savings could add up to! And for every reusable cloth or canvas bag we take, we are keeping several plastic bags out of a landfill, or reducing the amount of trees that need to be cut down. Albertson's is heavily promoting alternatives to the old, wasteful system: they sell re-usable canvas bags to encourage this practice, and they will also give you a discount for any bag you bring in and use - even old plastic grocery bags! So pick up a handful of sturdy reusable grocery bags - we'll have some with the church's name and logo on them for you to buy - and relish this new opportunity to Touch the Earth Lightly.

## *Thoughts Shared*

*from the pastor's keyboard*

**I've been thinking . . . about prayer.** The Oxford Bible Dictionary defines prayer as follows: The act of communicating in words or in silence with the transcendent God. Conversations between God and men are reported in the OT (e.g., Abraham, Gen. 15:1-6; Moses, Exod. 3:1-4; 33:11; prophets, 1 Sam. 3:4-9). OT prayer includes petition, intercession, confession, and thanksgiving, and set hours and days are prescribed for prayer. In the NT Jesus is reported to have prayed to his Father frequently and he gave the 'Lords Prayer' to the disciples (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). The epistles teach that prayer to God is offered through Christ (Rom 1:8). NT prayers include praise (Acts 2:47), thanksgiving (1 Cor. 14:16-17), and petition (Phil. 4:6). Prayer is not regarded as a method for compelling God to act but asking that his will be done and his kingdom come.

Recently a member of our congregation asked me to preach about prayer. Now, that doesn't sound hard, on the face of it. After all, we pray all the time—don't we? Some of us pray morning and evening, some at regularly scheduled times, others rather "on the run." Some of us read prayers, others merely "think into the silence." Some of us feel prayer should be silent, others like prayers spoken aloud. And some of us probably don't think about prayer much at all, except on Sunday morning. In fact, there is no one way or time to pray. Over my years at FCCV I have seen many people who were once uncomfortable praying aloud embrace this tradition. Others still feel comfortable asking for prayers for their concerns, rather than addressing their prayer concerns directly to God. We pray corporately, in the Lord's Prayer, and we pray individually. But many of us, in spite of having made prayer a regular part of our lives, have questions.

Part of our Regional Transformation program calls for personal, as well as congregational transformation. Enriching our understanding of prayer, and perhaps making it a greater part of our lives is a wonderful opportunity for spiritual renewal. Beginning on June 25th, we will have a three-week emphasis on prayer in Sunday morning worship. Additionally, we will have opportunities during the week for small group discussion groups on prayer. My thought is to have one evening group on Wednesdays, and perhaps one after church on Sunday. These would not be prayer meetings, but would be discussion groups, time for sharing about prayer in our lives and exploring ways to deepen our experience. I hope you will plan to be part of one of these groups, as each of us possesses gifts that need sharing, even if we don't suspect it! Let me know if another time would be better for you. As always, you are in my prayers, and I ask that I be in yours.

Shalom,  
*Judith*

## *fair trade is worth the effort*

I hope our celebration of World Fair Trade Day was an eye-opener for all of us, that we see how much of a difference we can make in the lives of people around the world with our buying power here in this country. Remember to look for the Fair Trade Certified logo (printed below) on your coffee, chocolate, tea, sugar, and other products. Fair

trade products are easier to find than you might expect; for example, most grocery stores - and many other retailers - in Vallejo offer fair trade coffee. Find it at Albertson's, Raley's, Safeway, Costco, and Starbuck's.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Fair Trade Food Quiz, and congrats to everyone who won a prize. If you weren't able to attend, and would like a copy of the quiz (or the answers), let Vince know. Here's another game from Fair Trade Day:

E N A C T E K S A B S G A B  
 T S T R A O S P O N G E S I  
 A C E O U P R W A O C O C B  
 L I G S Y R L E W E J A M S  
 O M A S A S B S S N E M E Y  
 C A S E S V N E T A L U L R  
 O R R I N G S M U F L G D U  
 H E E F F O C A N D Y S N P  
 C C A R V I N G S T E A A I  
 P I N S T R U M E N T S C C  
 T E K N A L B C H U T N E Y

In this 14 x 11 grid are hidden the names of 34 items that are imported by SERRV (A Greater Gift) that are all FAIR TRADE items. The names may be forward or backward, up or down, or diagonal. When you find a name, circle it within the grid and cross it off from the list below. ANSWER: The 7 left-over letters, if placed in order top to bottom, will spell out a key term that deals with many edible items imported by SERRV.

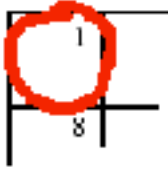
- |         |           |             |         |       |
|---------|-----------|-------------|---------|-------|
| ART     | CANDY     | COFFEE      | MUGS    | TOYS  |
| BAGS    | CANE      | CROSS       | NUTS    | VASES |
| BASKET  | CARVINGS  | FAN         | PINS    |       |
| BEANS   | CASES     | GAMES       | RINGS   |       |
| BIBS    | CERAMICS  | INSTRUMENTS | SALSA   |       |
| BLANKET | CHOCOLATE | JAMS        | SPONGES |       |
| BOWLS   | CHUTNEY   | JELLY       | SYRUP   |       |
| CANDLE  | COCOA     | JEWELRY     | TEA     |       |



### *news & notes*

It was a treat to have our former pastor Karen Stanley join us for worship on May 7th. Karen is now the associate pastor at FCC Redding and came on behalf of that congregation to accept our "blessing carton" which we have been filling since Annual Meeting 2005. The funds collected will go to a mission project of the Redding church's choosing. This was a neat project to help forge a connection between our congregation and another church within our region, and it would be great to have more of these ideas in the future.

The May peace prayer service focused on the middle east as we welcomed Ricky Muyot who came to pray with us and share his experiences in Israel and Jordan (his group was there last year when the hotels were bombed!). We collected \$20 to send to the Middle East Children's Alliance. Please join us for our next service in June as we pray for another part of the world in need of our prayers for peace.



*mark your calendars*

June

- Fri. 2 - Rummage sale set-up. Starting at 5 p.m.
- Sat. 3 - Rummage sale. 7:00-3:00
- Sun. 4 - Pentecost Dinner. After worship.
- Mon. 5 - Peace Prayer Service. 7 p.m. in the sanctuary.
- Sat. 17 - Church work day. 9 a.m. Bring a lunch!