

All Peoples
United Church of Christ
SOJOURNER NEWS

A Central Oregon House Church

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IT'S BIGGER THAN THAT! *Excerpts from a piece by The Rev. Dr. Patrick Duggan, UCC*

Recently, the UCC Church Building & Loan Fund hosted a training session for church leaders who are within two years of starting a building project. These sessions always create a sense of excitement and possibility. I was a speaker for the event, so I devoted a lot of thinking to my remarks.

What could I possibly say to... 60 or 70 church leaders... (who) came together to learn all they could about church building projects. ...And that is exactly what happened. But that is not all that happened.

It's bigger than that. *(Editor's bold type.)*

We church folk are so used to being on the defensive that we occupy a rut of low self-esteem. Religion is irrelevant. The bible

is anachronistic. People are not interested in going to church. Denominations are shrinking. Giving is down. Progressive Christian ideas cannot stand up to the Religious Right. Like lemmings moving toward a cliff, we continue with the observances of our faith; but the background, music of gloom and doom is always playing in the soundtrack of our minds.

It's bigger than that.

Do we gather, meet, fight for justice, sing, dance, worship, preach and regularly affirm our covenant with God and each other for the small reason of habit? For personal edification? Because grandmamma and 'nem did it? Because we like the music? Because

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we're the 1 percent who like getting up on Sunday mornings? Or because we feel like we're the last bastion of Christianity before the secular humanists take over?

It has to be bigger than that.

Whenever we pray for wars to end, we affirm God's intent for peace. Whenever we fight for LGBTQ rights or for Palestinian self-determination, we declare the superiority of God's vision for human relationships. Whenever we drink from the symbolic cup and share the bread we don't buy, we assert God's abundance as the preeminent economic principle. We worship, we live and we love so that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Most bible versions say "the kingdom of heaven" or the "kingdom of God." Some of us get that nobody knows what a "kingdom" is anymore, so we say "realm of God." If Jesus would rewrite his words in 2014 American English, he would probably call it "God's Economy." And he would tell us to keep pouring out our lives until God's Economy emerges as the ultimate global reality.

A New Heaven and a New Earth.

That is how big it is.

THE REV. DR. SALLY GODARD AT APUCC

The third Sunday in October brought one of APUCC's occasional visiting pastors over from the Yamhill County area to inspire and enlighten us about the immigration situation in the northern Willamette Valley.

As an ordained UCC pastor with a PhD in psychiatry, Sally has been moved by the plight and spirit of her local Hispanic community. She leads "Just Journey... a Ministry of Justice and Advocacy" UCC. Her work is part of Unidos, an organization that brings together Latino and non-Latino families for education (especially language literacy), political advocacy, international shared relationships and social service support (citizenship classes among other services).

The Unidos website is:
unidosyamhillcounty.org

Thanks, Sally for an inspiring AND informative service.

You are forgiven for your happiness and your successes only if you generously consent to share them.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Yesterday, handbills for two local Christmas bazaars arrived in my email. Here, amidst the marketing hype over Halloween, came notices of fund-raising enterprises “trading on” Christmas. Immediately, memories of the excitement and bustle of Christmas bazaars in my past flooded in. But, those thoughts quickly faded as my evolving perspective on the meaning and origins Christmas made the idea of a Christmas bazaar, a church fundraiser no less, seem inappropriate. However, one bazaar gives all profits to feed the hungry.

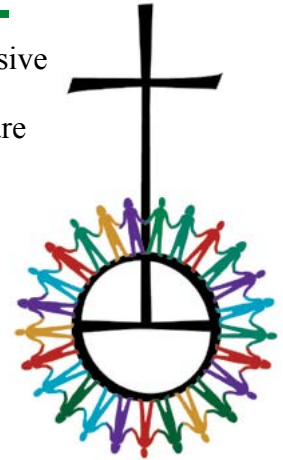
Bible Bookworms studies of progressive theologians have fostered reconsideration of how the Christmas narratives may fit into personal theology. At the same time, the huge impact of American *cultural* Christmas comes into sharper focus.

Just as All Peoples seeks to know and understand the historical Jesus it would appear that understanding the role of the Christmas story in a progressive faith may call for re-evaluation.

What can/should a progressive make of the Christmas scriptures? How valuable are the various birth narratives of Jesus, written so long after his birth? How come the charming story of shepherds watching over their flocks out on the hills by night would hardly have happened in December since keeping sheep out in the hills at night only happens in warmer seasons in that country? How come recent scholarship suggests that Jesus was probably born in Nazareth, not Bethlehem? ...and so on!

Yet the symbolism of Advent as a time of preparation for the coming of Christ into the world seems so appropriate... a time to revisit, refocus and reformulate.

Bible Bookworms will focus on the progressive meanings of Advent on Nov. 16th, Dec. 7th and 21st! The UCC Writers Group, a team of particularly erudite and progressive pastors, has produced some



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messages about Advent and Christmas that will serve as springboard to some lively discussion and perhaps rekindle some enthusiasm for a fresh and more meaningful Christmas spirit. Stand by for some thoughtful, spirit-filled discussion at Bible Bookworms! Amen and SO BE IT!

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

See You at the Dawg House II—The last Monday of the month, Nov. 24th, APUCC friends gather for fun and supper at the Dawg House II restaurant, 507 SW 8th St, in Redmond. The staff reserve a special area for us and give great service. Because November is a month of Jericho Table service for All Peoples, we will gather at 6:15 to allow our volunteers time to complete their Jericho Table duties and join us.

Mission giving in October came from both congregational budget and from individuals. Church budget: The Bethlehem Inn—\$125, Jericho Road—\$50.

Individual donations: St. Vincent de Paul in Bend (\$55) and St Vincent dePaul in Redmond (\$25), and Jericho Road (\$30) .

JERICHO TABLE VOLUNTEERS

Jericho Table servers for November are:

Nov. 3—Fran Davis, Sue & Dean Flory and Melanie Fielzer

Nov. 10—Laurie Power, Liz Douville and Melanie Feilzer

Nov. 17—David and Nancy Cook and Melanie Feilzer

Nov. 24—Liz Douville, Mike Lovely, Judy Morgan and Melanie Feilzer

Calling ALL Jericho Table volunteers!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for November 21st from 5 to 6 p.m. at the Redmond Grange. By way of training, the Jericho Road Board will demonstrate serving the hungry in the Grange setting by serving the volunteers a free dinner!

HOW THE NEW PLAN WORKS—

Tate and Tate caterers delivers the food; volunteers serve the hungry; Tate and Tate hauls away all the leftovers, etc.!

FINDING THE GRANGE—It is directly south of Fred Meyers in Redmond. From the south, turn left at the Veterans Way light; right at the next light; wind around till you see the Grange on your left.

APUCC CHURCH RENEWAL TEAM STARTS WEBINAR!

The Center for Progressive Renewal's next class on church renewal began this Tuesday after a one week postponement. Thanks to a grant from the Local Church Ministries team, Kathi Bumblis, Nancy Cook and Laurie Power are registered for the webinar. Delay due to slow enrollment has not deterred the team's eagerness to get started.

In spite of the APUCC's atypical organization the hope is that even a few fresh ideas will emerge to boost our congregation's visibility and growth.

NOVEMBER 2ND BRINGS ANOTHER VISITING PASTOR TO ALL PEOPLES

Be sure to join worship on Nov. 2nd when the Rev, John Hickox of Dufur, OR. will share his experiences in the Holy Lands.

John is a member of a speakers bureau following a trip to Palestine and Israel by a group of interested UCC pastors and lay people. John currently works as a chaplain with a hospice service out of The Dalles. He will stay with Cooks on Saturday night.

"GROUNDSWELL" UNITES SANCTUARY SHELTERS

"I know that with God, nothing is impossible. That's why I came to church." That's how Luis explains his decision to seek Sanctuary in a church in Arizona.

Some faith communities are taking emergency moral action by sheltering immigrants whose families are threatened to be torn apart due to deportation of one or more members. Others face almost certain death if returned to the terror they fled.

While APUCC can't offer sanctuary, we need to stay informed about what our brothers and sisters in faith are up to. The following link lists the top 10 things this faith-based movement wants you to know:

<http://www.groundswell-mvmt.org/faihtshare/sanctuary-101-how-churches-and-synagogues-are-stopping-deportations/>

Another link— A woman doctor tells her story of working at the Mexican border to help immigrants.

<http://www.texasobserver.org/brownsville-texas-border-doctor-stories-fear-love/>

AMERICANS UNITED FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE STANDING GUARD

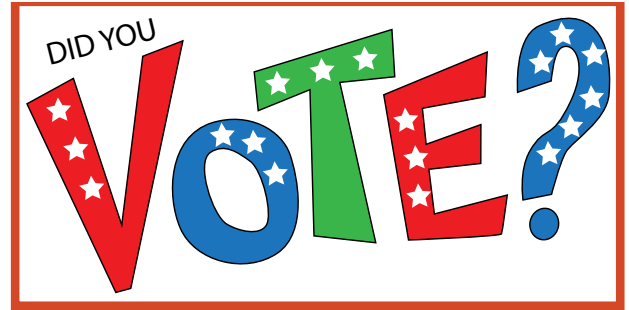
Houses of worship should obey federal tax law and stay out of partisan politics during election season, Americans United for Separation of Church and State says.

Americans United sent more than 84,000 letters to clergy across the country to remind them that federal law prohibits tax-exempt entities, such as houses of worship, from *endorsing candidates* for public office.

“The tax code is very clear when it comes to churches and politics,” said the Rev. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United. “A house of worship can’t endorse or oppose candidates for office. Our letter simply reminds religious leaders about what the law requires, why it makes sense and how it could affect them.”

APUCC WORKERS GETTING OUT THE VOTE

While APUCCers tend to have strong party affiliations, they are also active “good citizens.” Some are working non-partisan phone banks to get out the vote this election.



ORGANIZED BACKLASH AGAINST EQUAL RIGHTS!

“Manif pour tous” is the French version of an anti-gay movement sweeping across Europe. The UK, France, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, Croatia and Latvia are countries where the radical right group have a toehold. The group seeks to cancel gay marriage and remove their children!

“All Out” seeks to stop the movement before it ignites more vulnerable countries. Strategy steps are: 1–Expose their lies. 2–Cut them off from international networks. 3– Get leaders fighting for love. 4– Rally everyone who believes in love and equality to the cause.

The website is: https://www.allout.org/stop_hate

SIGNS, SYMBOLS AND STORIES OF WAR WHEREVER YOU LOOK

Consider the photo on the right—Israeli tanks and troops massed on the eastern border of the Gaza strip in 2008.

Change the banners and flags to black and you have the military hardware of ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Reconfigure the tanks, banners and gear just a bit and you have American Marines posed to move out of Afghanistan. Shift again and the image is of Turkish war machines lined up on the border north of Syria. Or, image Ukraine, Somalia and, perhaps, soon, Hong Kong.



What ever happened to PEACE? Prayers for peace around the world are our acknowledgement that this is an imperfect world, out of balance, clogged with “the normalcy of civilization” (a term borrowed from John Dominic Crossan) and in need of God’s steadying hands of love and justice. Pray... and act whenever the opportunity presents itself.

“Prayer does not change God, but it changes the one who prays.”

Soren Kierkegaard, 19th century

CLIMATE CHANGE NEWS—

The Pentagon has just released a climate report labeling global warming “an immediate risk” to national security! The Pentagon voice joins voices of faith, science, education, business, and more in calling for an end to the carbon and methane pollution. On the other hand, according to Thomm Hartmann, National Public Radio has reduced it’s climate reporting staff from three plus an editor down to one half-time reporter! We wonder if the Koch brothers or other fossil fuel magnates give to National Public Radio.

NOVEMBER WORSHIP PLANS

All Peoples UCC meets to worship the first and third Sundays of the month at 11 a.m. Bible study meets from 10 to 10:45 a.m. Worship in November will be at the Juniper Room of the Redmond Hospital

FINDING ST. CHARLES HOSPITAL IN REDMOND

- **From the north**—From Hwy 97 reroute in Redmond, right on Larch; first left on Canal, right on Kingwood, 2nd right into parking lot.
- **From the south**—coming north on Redmond Hwy 97 reroute, exit left at Glacier, right on 5th all the way north through town to Kingwood, right on Kingwood, go 1.75 blocks, and turn left into hospital parking lot.
- **From west** on Hwy 126, left on 5th and follow southside directions (above).
- **Finding the Juniper Room**—Enter at the main entrance or the next door on the left. Go left to the end of hall and then right to the first room on left, across from the drinking fountains and rest rooms.



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Nov. 2nd—

11 a.m. Worship—

The Rev. John Hickcox, visiting pastor sharing on the Israeli/Palestine conflict

10 a.m. Closing discussion of Zealot, by Reza Aslan + selection of next book(s).

Nov. 16th—

11 a.m. Worship—Liz Douville

10 a.m. First Advent Study & discussion

SOJOURNER NEWS

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Please join us for worship every first and third Sunday.

Sunday worship is at 11 a.m.

For additional information and location/date of the next worship service, email the above.

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