



All Peoples
United Church of Christ
SOJOURNER NEWS

A Central Oregon House Church

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AMERICANS UNITED SHOULDERS WATCHDOG ROLE AGAIN

Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AU) stands like Horatio at the bridge to assure that recent Supreme Court rulings on freedom to marry are not viewed as religious freedom to discriminate. At a meeting of the National Press Club in early July, the Rev. Barry Lynn, AU's executive director, announced a new initiative called Protect Thy Neighbor saying:

“While I applaud this action by the court (*marriage equality*), I've worked in the civil liberties field long enough to know that even a landmark ruling like this one is often far from the last word, as we learned in 1962 and '63, when the high court handed down rulings banning coercive forms of government-backed prayer and Bible reading

in public schools, and in 1973 after the court legalized abortion.”

Protect Thy Neighbor defends the idea that everyone should be free to believe or not believe but no one's religious beliefs should be used to harm others. AU's legislative team commits to watching legislatures and executive bodies throughout the nation for policies that allow discrimination in the name of religion. Such actions will bring down upon them a law suit filed by the AU legal team.

Under the U.S. constitution, religious liberty assures that no one will be harmed by the religious beliefs of others in terms of denial of service, jobs, health care, or government services that taxes have paid for.

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Rev. Barry Lynn points out that religious-right groups have redefined religious freedom on their terms. He says that raising up the grandmotherly florist and the local bakery as victims of the freedom to marry law is designed to feed the “perpetual outrage machine” of the religious right. In the process, zealots profit as a thriving industry of anti-gay businesses watch the anti-gay customers flood in the door.

AU says “when these groups succeed, others suffer.” In the process, the misguided goal

of a theocratic America comes closer and closer. Where is the concern for **all** our neighbors within such policies? They are cruelly selective. Women’s health, access to lodging, jobs and other civil rights suffer from religious-right discrimination.

Director Rev. Barry Lynn, an ordained UCC minister, says that AU is prepared to defend the rights of all in court, in legislatures, and wherever else the extremist campaign to restrict civil rights rears its archaic head. ▲

POPE FRANCIS AND ENVIRONMENTAL NAY-SAYERS

Once more, the “environmental pope” is making headlines. His whirlwind tour of South America and points beyond has drawn the ire of environmentalists for the large carbon footprint generated by the numerous plane flights required to make the tour possible in such a short time.

While the 14,900 air miles involved rack up an enormous carbon footprint, some humorous elements appeared in the criticism of environmentalists. One pointed out that high speed train would be a less offensive mode of travel; the last reporting listed no high speed trains crossing the Atlantic or the Andes.

On the plus side, papal reporters point out that the many measures the Holy Father has taken to make Vatican’s operations more environmentally friendly still make the pope an outstanding role model.

Let us hope that we can all find more ways to enrich our own earth-friendly life styles. ▲

On Sunday, August 2nd, APUCC welcomes Rev. Kimberly Brown as worship leader. Kimberly has preached at APUCC in the past; we warmly look to her return.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

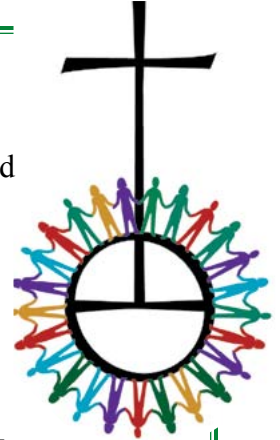
In the Genesis story of the Garden of Eden, God grants to humankind dominion over the land, the plants and the animals. Have we just “taken,” or have we taken the responsibility that goes with such a charge? One morning recently, I found a rat-sized rodent of some sort caught in the deer netting that we have used to encircle our garden. One hind leg was caught in the mesh. Clearly, it had struggled there most of the night; the creature had stripped the hide off of the trapped leg in it’s efforts to get free. We dispatched it quickly to put an end to its suffering. Caring for earth’s creatures—even those who would bring mayhem upon our garden if they could get in—brings forth pity.

Last week, one of our UCCers posted a photo of a handsome, 8-point buck on her Facebook page. The deer was meandering through her backyard and “trimming” the shrubbery. After all, deer seem to think that is part of their job description. The

posting prompted a distressed response from a Facebook friend. The gist of the note was that their town was completely overrun by deer and the nuisance value far outweighed the “lovely” sight of such wild creatures wandering close to humanity.

(Hint: What became of the natural predators that hold creation in balance?) Deer swarming a town does not sound like dominion; it sounds more like a failure of stewardship.

Stories abound of wildlife run amok or of extinctions due to habitat loss and over hunting. News of animal abuse or of out-of-control pets appears all too often. Somehow, our love of animals combined with our inability to understand the precious stewardship responsibility granted in the Genesis story suggest that the idea of “dominion” is sadly misplaced. Like naive



children, we have romped through our richly diverse, living planet playing with resources; as entrepreneurs, we have done much heedless “taking” and less “giving.”

Whether it is caring for neglected pets and domesticated animals or defending the Arctic wilderness from mining interests, we can still do a great deal to protect and preserve. There is joy to be found in caring for the parts of creation that we understand and humility in admitting that some creation systems are beyond our ken. ▲

UCC VOTES DIVESTMENT FROM BUSINESSES IN ISRAELI-OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

At the recent General Synod of the UCC, representatives from our nearly 1-million-member denomination voted to join the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in shedding all investments in companies that profit from the Israeli occupation and to boycott products of Israeli companies based in the West Bank. The vote was 508 to 124 representing broad support for the measure.

In a similar action, the synod voted to boycott games and merchandise from the Washington Redskins football team until they change their name to something less offensive to Native Americans. ▲

EEOC RULE SUPPORTS LGBT

In the wake of the South Carolina massacre of nine church members, the Employment Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued a ruling extending civil rights to LGBT folks in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, funding, credit, education and jury service.

While the EEOC ruling lacks the full force of law, Oregon’s Jeff Merkley and other senators placed a bill, the Equality Act, before the senate that would back up the EEOC ruling with the rule of law. While passage of the Equality Act may be long in coming, it is important to note that EEOC rulings do not apply to federal courts or to businesses with 15 or fewer employees. Thus passage of the Equality Act becomes urgent. APUCCers should watch the congress and take any action available to promote passage of this vital bill. ▲

REPRESENT APUCC AT CPC'S ANNUAL MEETING IN PENDLETON—9/25–27/15

Once more the Central Pacific Conference (CPC) annual gathering will convene at the Pendleton Conference Center. This year, the meeting will focus on strategies for revitalizing the local church. Keynote speaker will be Cameron Trimble of the Center for Progressive Christianity. In addition, workshops will cover a wide array of other topics of interest to churches and individuals. The gathering allows for meeting old friends and making new ones

from UCC congregations all over Oregon, southern Washington and southern Idaho. Our congregation is permitted four voting delegates. As in past years, Pris Hardin plans to go. Laurie Power and Nancy Cook are checking schedules in hopes of going, too. Anyone else interested should let Pris or Laurie know as the Oxford Suites and other near-by lodging will fill up fast. We can carpool and share lodging. Registration materials will be available soon. ▲



PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER ON GAY MARRIAGE



At a recent book signing, 90-year-old, former president Carter showed his colors (rainbow that is) by commenting that he thought Jesus would approve of gay marriage!

“I think Jesus would encourage any love affair if it was honest and sincere and was not damaging to anyone else, and I don’t see that gay marriage damages anyone else,” Carter said in a HuffPost Live interview interview with Marc Lamont Hill. ▲

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Mission giving in July came from church budget: The Bethlehem Inn—\$125 and Jericho Road—\$50. Donations from individuals: St. Vincent de Paul—Bend (\$60) and in Redmond (\$30) + Jericho Road (\$35).

Jericho Table Service

Volunteer servers worked along side Melanie Fielzer, APUCC’s Jericho Table coordinator, to serve meals to the hungry every Monday night in July. Thanks to every volunteer.

SOUTH CAROLINA SLAYINGS AFTERMATH

Besides the removal of the Confederate flag from the SC capital, other, less symbolic acts have emerged from that tragic event. One of the most impressive is the comprehensive sermon— “The Painful and Dangerous Message: Only Black Deaths Matter”—by the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II. This piece by one of the nation’s remarkable Disciples of Christ pastors is long but absolutely worth the time to read it all. Look up:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/07/17/1402350/--Only-Black-Deaths-Matter-Rev-William-Barber#>

Prepare to sign up for APUCC’s Jericho table service in September.

“Last-Monday” Get-together in July

In search of a quieter venue, APUCC met for fellowship and supper at Izzy’s Pizza in Redmond. Fifteen of us gathered for the senior menu at the buffet/grill. As first-time diners, some of us struggled to understand the menuless pricing but the meeting room did offer the quieter environment that we had been seeking for hard-of-hearing members. ▲

A THANK-YOU NOTE FROM MINNESOTA!

Dear All Peoples UCC members and friends,
Greetings in this Ordinary Season in the liturgical year. May this time be one of paying attention to the routines and rhythms of our lives in the hope they draw us deeper into connection with our God and one another.

Thank you all so much for all of your loving supportive prayers during my search and call process. I've been called to serve as Senior Minister at Lynnhurst Congregational United Church of Christ in Minneapolis, Minnesota. We are very excited to build our lives in what has been called "the pacific northwest of the Midwest." We continue to give thanks for the amazing community of faith of All Peoples UCC! Your witness of being God's hands and feet, heart and mind in both your local community and beyond is simply inspiring.

And thank you for your faithful, prayerful supportive presence since the beginning of my pastoral calling. Thank you for shaping and molding me as pastor. Such a life-affirming gift you all have grace-fully given over all of these years.

Thanks be to God! God's grace and peace to you and yours,
Cynthia, Celeste and Emerson



AUGUST 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 will be in Redmond at St. Charles Hospital's Juniper Room.

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, 3rd 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 the hospital parking lot.
- **From east on Hwy 126 or west**, go north on 5th and follow south-side directions.
- **Finding the Juniper Room**—Enter at the main entrance or the next door on the left. Go left to the end of the hall and then right to the first room on left, (opposite the rest rooms.)

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- August 2nd**—11 a.m. Worship Leader—
Rev. Kimberly Brown
10 a.m. Discussing Chapter 8 of *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor.
Laurie Power leading discussion
- August 16th**—11 a.m.
Worship leader—David Cook
10 a.m. Chap. 9 of *An Altar in the World*. Nancy Cook leading.

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All Peoples United Church of Christ
PO Box 1287, Bend, OR 97709
allpeoplesucc@gmail.com

Please join us every first and third Sunday.
Worship is at 11 a.m.; discussion group at 10 a.m.
For additional information and location/date
of the next worship service,
email the above.

Moderator: Gloria Olson: gloryo@peak.org
Newsletter editor: Pris Hardin, prisbill@earthlink.net
Facebook: facebook.com/allpeoplesucc
Website: www.allpeoples-ucc.org