

THIS WEEK AT THE CREEK

March 5, 2009

YEARNING FOR THE WAY

"The biblical sages understood that the anxiety of not-knowing is the beginning of wisdom. There isn't a single character in the Bible who understood beforehand the outcome of any journey he or she underwent. What makes these characters so special is not that they are somehow superhuman, wiser, or more evolved. It's that they don't scale their dreams to the size of their fears. They are masters of the dance between uncertainty and certainty. Every one of them is reluctant to go on his or her journey; every one of them takes a risk without knowing how things will work out; every one of them has massive doubts along the way and needs reassurance that things will be okay; and none of them fully completes what he set out to do."

-- Rabbi Irwin Kula, YEARNING: EMBRACING THE SACRED MESSINESS OF LIFE

Dear Cross Creeker:

This month we celebrate two staff anniversaries at Cross Creek. Congratulations to [SUE VOISARD](#) and [KENNY ROADEN](#). On March 1, Sue completed 12 years, and Kenny completed 7 years, of service to our church. It is with deep gratitude commemorate and honor their many hours of labor and care our church experience. [Denise Resources Committee](#), has put Sue which will be presented to weekend.

To recognize these two staff great joy for me, but it is laced friendship forged out of a shared not know this, but both Sue and Southern Baptist church which I from which I was summarily that I understood myself to be a



and thanksgiving that we faithful ministries among us and the they give week after week to enrich [Bowell](#), chair of our Human together a little gift for Kenny and them during the worship services this

members in particular is not only a with memory and a long and intimate pilgrim journey. Many of you may Kenny were on the staff of the organized and served as pastor, and "fired" in 1995 for refusing to recant gay man.

Sue was part of that small group of people who left the Baptist church a few months after my firing and invited me to be their pastor and to help them start a new church, which eventually evolved into Cross Creek Community Church, United Church of Christ. Sue, [Paul and Kim Heiligenberg](#), and [Melissa Heaton](#) were all a part of that initial group and are still connected with Cross Creek. [Steve Donegia](#), Sue's husband, was also a part of the Baptist church, but it was his marriage to Sue that eventually brought him to Cross Creek.

Both Sue and Kenny tried to make the most out of the "mess" of my firing. Sue had just started as the Minister to Single Adults two weeks before I was let go. A few weeks after that episode, she led in a baptism and prayed in the name of the "Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit." Because she dared to use inclusive language, praying "Creator" instead of "Father" complaints rose up in the church that there was not only a "gay" problem but that there was also a "feminist" problem. She actually had a Bible thrown at her! You'll have to ask her about that sometime! To say the least, it didn't take long for Sue to be fed up with the increasingly narrow and rigid theological atmosphere of the church.

It was June when that initial small group of people left the Baptist church and we started to meet to form a new church. And when we met, we gathered in Sue's condominium complex's clubhouse. Sue was an integral part of every decision in the start and shaping of Cross Creek. She officially started serving as a staff member on March 1, 1997 in preparation for the church's grand opening on the weekend of March 22-23, 1997. Sue has been on our church staff ever since, faithfully guiding, caring, serving and just being "Sue" through all the highs and lows, successes and disappointments that come in

the creating of a new church. Sue has been, and remains, a stalwart friend and trusted colleague in ministry to me.

Kenny remained at the Baptist church long after my firing, continuing to serve in many roles there, and was actually the “preacher” until their new pastor was called. I will never forget Kenny’s support of me in that final Church Board meeting when I was forced out. Kenny was appalled at the lack of support by the Church Board and said, “When Mike gets on Oprah we need to be there supporting him, not having thrown him out.” Eventually, Kenny and his first wife divorced and he found himself exiled from the Baptist church as well. I became Kenny’s pastor in exile. We stayed in touch and I shared with him some of my new and exciting learning about progressive Christianity, which he was eager to absorb and understand.

When our church located to our present site in October of 2001, we happened to move across the street from where he and his current wife, Liz, were living at the time. Kenny and Liz came to Cross Creek right after our move and on their very first visit happened to sit beside none other than our dear saint [Kathryn McMahon](#) (another former Baptist!). She heard Kenny singing that morning and said to him, “Oh, you should sing here sometime!” And that was that. And it just so happened that the first issue of our newsletter that Kenny and Liz received included the posting about our search for a new Worship Director. Kenny applied and as they say “the rest is history.”

Please join in celebrating Sue and Kenny’s anniversaries. Please join me in giving thanks for their ministries and their presence among us!

I’ll be looking for you this weekend as we gather to worship!

Peace, Pastor Mike

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IN WORSHIP *THIS WEEKEND*

This weekend we will continue our Lenten series *YEARNINGS: EMBRACING THE SACRED MESSINESS OF LIFE*. Ruth Hopkins, our seminary intern (a covenant member!) will be offering “THE PROMPTING” entitled *YEARNING FOR THE WAY*. We’ll be reading from the Psalms 22:23-31 and the Gospel According to Mark 8:31-38. If you are following along with Rabbi Irwin Kula’s book *YEARNINGS: EMBRACING THE SACRED MESSINESS OF LIFE* we’ll be considering the section “*Yearning for the Way*”. Our soloist will be **Kenny Roaden**.

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FRIDAY NIGHT LENTEN MEAL & MOVIE SERIES

This is a great opportunity for fellowship and deepening relationships among Cross Creek people. It is also another means to enter in the spiritual discipline of Lent through film. Each movie has been selected to correspond with the theme of worship for that weekend.

Here’s how to go:

1. RSVP’s for meals and childcare must be in by noon on Wednesday each in order to make proper preparations. You can sign-up at church or e-mail Pastor Mike at MDCastle@aol.com.
2. Meals are \$5.00 per adult (children and youth under age 18 are free!) Meals will be served between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m. Vegetarian option available upon request.
3. Childcare is \$5.00 per child and will be available during the film/discussion, *not* the meal.
4. Please pay at the door and bring exact change if possible. Checks to Cross Creek.
5. Movie will start promptly at 7:00 p.m. with a time of discussion to follow (optional)
6. You are welcome to come to the movie and skip the meal if you’d like!
7. Finally, you might want to bring a comfortable folding chair with you!

Friday, March 6: *PRIEST* (Meal: Lasagna, Salad, Bread, Dessert)

(It’s too late to RSVP for the meal but come and join us for the movie!)

Friday, March 13: *PATCH ADAMS* (Meal: Meat or Vegetarian Chili with all the fixins, dessert)

Friday, March 20: *TRANS AMERICA* (Meal: Manicotti meal with vegetables, salad, bread and dessert)

Friday, March 27: *LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL* (Meal: Spaghetti and meatballs, salad, bread, and dessert)

Friday, April 3: *PAY IT FORWARD* (Meal: Sloppy Joes, Potato Salad, Veggie Tray and Dessert)