

THIS WEEK AT THE CREEK

THE WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER OF CROSS CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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The best preparation for a life of prayer is to become more intensely human.

-- Kenneth Leech

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IN WORSHIP THIS WEEKEND

This weekend we will continue our Pentecost series **AN ALTAR IN THE WORLD: A GEOGRAPHY OF FAITH**, based on the book by Barbara Brown Taylor. **Pastor Mike** will be offering a prompting entitled *"The Practice of Being Present to God: Prayer,"* which follows Chapter 11 of Barbara Brown Taylor's book. As one of the many ordained and/or seminary trained individuals at Cross Creek, **Dale Brown** will be offering a testimony about his experience of *"grace upon grace"* as an active part of our community of faith. The **Cross Creek Choir** be singing *"Still the Lord of All."*

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Dear Cross Creeker:

The following reflection is offered by Harry Knox, director of the Human Rights Campaign's religion and faith program, in response to the overturning of marriage equality by Maine voters. Harry is a friend of our congregation, having preached from our pulpit in October of 2006.

"By the rivers of Babylon, we sat down and wept...how could we sing the songs of Zion...?"

This morning I am wondering who and what I am. Once again, when American voters have had an opportunity to affirm my humanity and the loving commitment I have made to my husband, a majority of those voters have made a conscious decision to deny my humanity and treat me as if my citizenship and my marriage mean nothing; all the while patting themselves on the back for their piety. The slap they



intended is received. I am made to wonder – Am I human? Am I an American? Am I a Christian? Am I married?

It is clear that most voters in Maine, like majorities in other states before them, intend for me to feel less than human. People we respect as sisters and brothers in the human family, we treat as equals. Those majorities have reserved to themselves a legal right they feel specially entitled to – in spite of the fact that my husband and I face all the health, financial, familial and social challenges they do, and need the same supports they enjoy.

Here's what I know.

I know that I was never more beautifully and powerfully human in my life than the day I committed myself to lifelong partnership with my caring, strong, handsome, wise, funny husband. We made ourselves vulnerable to care for each other forever, come what may. There is no more hopeful, faithful, joyful, generative act in all the world. It was a decision only humans could enter into both intellectually and spiritually. It was a total giving of ourselves to each other, and as

such, it mirrored in part the gift Christ made for us on the Cross.

Voters in Maine have said with clarity that my husband and I are to be denied equal treatment under the law, despite the Constitutional promises made to us. The voters are unequivocal – we are something, but we are not, in their opinions, American citizens, despite the facts that we are native born or have diligently served our country over the last five decades.

What I know is that Mike and I seek everyday to contribute more to our country and God's world than we take from it. We have given our lives and careers in the service of others through Christ, and we have invested most of our time and much of our money into helping America live into its promises and potential.

Most Maine voters want us to understand once and for all that the Bible, which has been used to subjugate women, people of color, and the poor of every gender and race is now to be used as a weapon against us. They have gleaned all they intend to learn from their faith and as far as they are concerned, my family can go to hell.

I know that we are disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, God's incarnate word of truth, love, and justice who lived, died, and through his death and resurrection redeemed and continues to reconcile us, America and all the earth to God's original vision of peace and caring community.

It is clear to me now that a majority of Americans have chosen to deny my human rights, deny my citizenship, and deny my Christianity, by denying my freedom to marry. So where does that leave me? Who and what am I on November 4, 2009?

I know – I know – that I am married to my husband, Mike. He defends me against all who would do me harm and is faithful to me in spite of all temptations. We have cared for each other through more sickness than health; we've known more financial setbacks than gains; we have nursed each others' family members, wept over the graves of lost loved ones, helped and received help from family and friends, and assisted in raising the children of some heterosexual folks who weren't able to raise their own. I wake in the morning and nod at night with prayers of thanksgiving for the wonderful man with whom I am building a family by God's grace.



Today I am tempted to feel like an exile in my native land – to question who and what I am. But this I know: in the end it matters not one whit what others say or believe about me and mine. What matters, today and forever, is what we believe about ourselves. We are fully human. We are Americans. We are Christians. And we are most assuredly married.

When I remember that, the powers of hell cannot prevail against me or my marriage. I am empowered to continue to do the difficult work that will ultimately bring justice in the form of marriage equality to our land. I, and my husband with me, offer our heterosexual neighbors a vision of what the world will look like when we get the human rights we deserve – a world where everyone will live in peace and mutual respect with our neighbors.

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STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

*From Jesus' Fullness We Have All Received,
Grace Upon Grace"*

We are in the midst of our fall Stewardship Campaign. You should have received a packet of materials including our Mission Plan 2010, How Much Shall I Give?, a pledge card and Covenant Membership renewal forms. If you did not receive them or need replacements, check in the hall near the front door or contact the church office or find them online at www.crosscreekchurch.org. You are asked to make your pledge on-line, by mail or at weekend services by **November 22**. If you have any questions, please talk to one of the following stewardship team members: Bill Youngkin, Teresa Lowen or Steve Sackman.

WORK-SHIP COUNTDOWN: 4 Down & 6 To Go

We are two weeks from our work-ship weekend, and there is one more week to bring in supplies. Thanks to your generosity, we already have all we need of four items – toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap and razors. Still needed: **39** shampoos, **37** deodorants, **39** hand sanitizers, **25** small packages of cotton swabs, **20** lip balms, and **34** lotions. We never come out exactly even, so if you haven't had a chance to shop, we could use a few monetary donations so we can fill in the gaps. Please either put it in the envelope on the display in the hall or use our regular offering envelope and mark it "Work-Ship".

READY FOR THE 2009 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT?!

This year we are presenting "Matt and Lucy's Version Births," a play written by the writers of the "Living the Questions Series." It explores the differing stories of Jesus' birth told in the books of Matthew and Luke. Which one is right? Join us and find out!



We're looking for children and youth of all ages! The rehearsal schedule is 5-6 PM on Sunday, November 22 & 29 and December 13th, and a dress rehearsal on Saturday, December 19th from 11:30-1pm. The pageant will be held at 5:30 on Saturday, December 19th. A sign-up sheet is in the hallway and if you have any questions please contact Kim Lockwood@ 829-3272 or kimberly.lockwood@notes.udayton.edu.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY!

We are going to do things a little differently this year. Instead of a catered banquet we will gather for a pot-luck dinner on **Sunday, December 6 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM**. Dinner will be served promptly at 5:00 so be sure to have your dish ready to go! Following dinner there will be a delightful program of music and drama and fun. Plan on singing some of your favorite Christmas Carols as well! Please sign-up in the church hallway by indicating what type of dish you plan to bring and how many people will be coming with you.

IN THE COMMUNITY

DAYTON LGBT COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER -- Saturday, Nov 21

Come for a Thanksgiving dinner featuring turkey, ham and all the fixin's! Bring a salad, dessert or side dish to share to St. Paul United Methodist Church, 101 Huffman Ave in East Dayton. The evening begins at 5:30 PM with a social hour followed by dinner at 6:30. Then the Dayton Gay Men's Chorus will preview their 2010 Winter Concert to be held on Dec 5th.

WORLD AIDS DAY PRAYER SERVICE

St. John United Church of Christ (520 Fairfield Avenue, Bellevue, KY) invites you to the annual **World AIDS Day Prayer Service on Tuesday, December 1st at 7:30 PM**. This year's service follows the recent pattern of presenting liturgies from around the world that call us to prayer and action. The Church will be filled with candlelight and prayers will be offered to remember that every 15 seconds someone in the world dies of AIDS-related illnesses. Clergy from the area and others will lead in prayer and scripture readings, and a combined choir from St. John United Church of Christ (Bellevue, KY), Calvary Episcopal Church (Clifton) and First United Church of Christ (College Hill) will sing and lead in chants and hymns. The order of service was published by the Diakonia Council of Churches in South Africa and adapted for this service. **The Reverend Dr. Michael Castle, pastor of Cross Creek Community Church in Dayton, OH will preach.** A reception will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

Anonymous HIV Testing will be offered by the Northern Kentucky Health Department at the Church in room 201 from **4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** Please use the Ward Avenue entrance.

The Church is located 1/2 mile east of Newport on the Levee and 1/4 mile east of the 471 Interstate at the Bellevue/Newport/Route 8 exit. For more information go to www.StJohnChurch.net or call 859.261.2066.

FRUITCAKE: DAYTON GAY MEN'S CHORUS HOLIDAY CONCERT

The Dayton Gay Men's Chorus will present their 2009 holiday concert **FRUITCAKE: A Delicious Slice of Holiday Song** on **Saturday, Dec 5 at 6:00 PM** at St John's United Church of Christ. Tickets are \$10

EQUALITY OHIO CELEBRATES 5 YEARS OF SUCCESS

On **December 5th** from 5:00 to 7:00 PM, friends of Equality Ohio will gather at the Columbus Athletic Club in Columbus, Ohio to celebrate the progress made for LGBT equality across Ohio since 2004. The event will honor the service of Lynne Bowman, Equality Ohio's outgoing founding Executive Director and commemorate the 5th "Banniversary" of the 2004 anti-gay marriage amendment to our state's constitution. Admission for this fundraiser is \$50. There will be appetizers and cash bar with brief program at 6:00 PM. Please register for the event or donate at www.equalityohio.org

GOOD GRIEF WORK GROUP

The Good Grief Work Group at Miami Valley Hospital seeks to create an environment where surviving family, friends and significant others can receive support, give compassion and learn coping skills while going through the grief of bereavement. The group meets on Wednesdays, 3:30 - 5 PM on **Dec 2, 9, & 16, 2009 and January 6, 13, & 20, 2010**. There is no charge to participate but you must register and commit to attend all six sessions. Call (937) 208-2499 to register.

Note of Thanks

The Human Resources Team celebrates the third anniversary of Mary Sharp as our church's administrative assistant. Let us give thanks for Mary's wonderful skills, loving care and presence in our church's life!



CROSS CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH – UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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