

# THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



The United Church of Christ

May 2008

## FROM THE PASTOR



Friends in Christ:

In early April I preached a sermon about the use of torture by the United States. Reflecting on the resurrection story in the Gospel of Luke I said, “The nail marked hands of the risen Christ haunt me because our country continues to hold to the option of torturing men, women, and children in the name of our safety and well-being. Any act of torture for whatever reason violates the image of God in each individual. Further, it eventually corrupts and demoralizes those who engage in it.” I asked, “Is this so hard to understand?”

Obviously it is for some.

On Sunday morning, April 20 I was eating breakfast before coming over to the church. The *New York Times* editorial that I read asked: “How high up did the decision go to ignore United States law, international treaties, the Geneva Conventions and basic morality? The answer, we have learned recently, is that — with President Bush’s clear knowledge and support — some of the very highest officials in the land not only approved the abuse of prisoners, but participated in the detailed planning of harsh interrogations and helped to create a legal structure to shield from justice those who followed the orders.”

ENOUGH!

This has been done in our name and with the excuse that such criminal acts are keeping us safe from further terrorist attacks. This, in spite of the reality that information gained through torture is notoriously unreliable. Those who later were found to be innocent and with no information were tortured in our name, for our “safety” as

well.

The National Religious Coalition Against Torture has declared June to be “Torture Awareness Month.” Yes, the need to designate such a month is disturbing, but that is the sad reality in which we live. So we have some work to do this month in preparation. I’d like each member to think about what we might do to raise the issue of torture to the people of Iowa City. I encourage you to go to [www.nrcaat.org](http://www.nrcaat.org) to find out more about the issue and steps that we can take. The hope is to have banners that read “Torture Is a Moral Issue” and simply “Torture Is Wrong” displayed by congregations in all 50 states. Shouldn’t such a banner be seen at Congregational UCC?

As those who follow in the way of the wounded and resurrected Christ, we seek to act as agents of healing and reconciliation in the world. We must continue to call for and work toward an end to torture. We must continue to speak to a government that has shown no signs of listening. We must continue to speak until our words from safety and privilege are heard even if the cries of the tortured are ignored.

### May Calendar

<b>May 4, Sun</b>	<b>Christian Century 7PM</b>
<b>May 10, Sat.</b>	<b>Church clean up day 9– Noon</b>
<b>May 11, Sun.</b>	<b>Mother's Day, Strengthen the Church</b>
	<b>Special Offering</b>
<b>May 13, Tue.</b>	<b>Christian Ed., Mission Board</b>
<b>May 14, Wed.</b>	<b>Diaconate</b>
<b>May 17, Sun.</b>	<b>Organ Recital - Matt Palisch 2PM</b>
	<b>Recital - Marie Von Behren 4PM</b>
<b>May 18, Sun.</b>	<b>Graduating Seniors Recognition</b>
<b>May 20, Tue.</b>	<b>Trustees</b>
<b>May 21, Wed.</b>	<b>Consultation of Religious Comm.</b>
	<b>10AM—12, Rockwood Hall</b>
<b>May 27, Tue.</b>	<b>Church Council</b>

### New Member Class

A New Member Class will be starting soon. If you are interested, please contact Bill Lovin.

CONGREGATIONAL U.C.C. - DUTIES ASSIGNED FOR May  
2008 May 4 Greeters: Elizabeth Boyd, Jacqueline Knapp

Ushers: Eugene Buck, Elizabeth Oakes,  
Bryon & Kathleen Day

Hosp: Bruce & Katherine Thede-Reynolds

May 11 Greeters: Marilynne Robinson, Megan Carnes

Ushers: Karen Smith, Beth Parker,  
Nicole Neems, Hermine McLeran

Hosp: Cynthia Parsons & Gary Klinefelter

May 18 Greeters: Glenna Cobb, Judith Doorenbos

Ushers: Stuart & Deborah Cobb,  
Robert & Gloria Hanson

Hosp: Doug & Connie Parsons

May 25 Greeters: Genevieve Dudley, Donna Hirst

Ushers: Bill & Ann Leefers,  
Ed & Heather Leighton-Dick

Hosp: Joyce & Mike Myer

DEACON OF THE MONTH: James Savage

**If you cannot serve on the date assigned, please swap  
with someone else and notify the Deacon of the month.**

Acolytes: Magill and Allie

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Dear Friends,

With this school year winding down, I have a couple of updates for you.

We will be partnering with First Christian Church for a **Vacation Bible School** to be held June 10–13, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM, at First Christian. The program will be written for children who have just completed grades K–4. More information is to follow.

As I mentioned last month, thanks to the generosity and appetite of our members, the young people of the church raised \$189.31 to send to **Heifer International**. Our young people voted to send a sheep, chicks, bees, and ducks. Thanks go out to our congregation who are always willing to support these efforts and thanks also go out to our young people who continually try to make our world a better place for everyone and who make us all very proud.

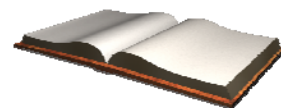
Please don't forget to check out the information posted on the Christian Education bulletin board about summer camping available at **Pilgrim Heights Camp and Retreat Center**. There are camps for all ages from Adults 55+ to Counselors-In-Training. And, don't forget the Grandparents Camp—a great way to spend time with your grandchild. There is something for everyone!

The last day of Christian Education classes for the 07–08 year will be May 18, although **Children's Church** is planned until August.

As we enjoy the spring—green shoots peeking through, warmer weather, and, yes, even the rain—let's remember to take some quiet time to listen.

Eddie Roberts

Christian Education Director



## Library News

### *Four Feet, Two Sandals*

By Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammad

Illustrated by Doug Chayka

“Based on Mohammed’s work with refugees in the city of Peshawar (on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border), this poignant story centers on two Afghani girls, each of whom ends up with half of a pair of sandals after relief workers bring used clothing to their refugee camp. Lina and Feroza agree to share the shoes, taking turns wearing them and sometimes each wearing one. They also share their stories: Lina tells of her family’s midnight flight after her father and sister were killed, and Feroza responds, I have only my grandmother now. After Lina learns that her family will be able to relocate to America, the girls go back and forth about who should keep the sandals, and ultimately decide to each keep one to better remember the other. Paired with Williams’s straightforward narrative, Chayka’s acrylic paintings, rendered in broad swaths of color, offer a glimpse of the seldom viewed, chore-filled lives of children in a refugee camp, where only boys can attend school and crowds fight for supplies and clothing. The bright yellow sandals, each decorated with a blue flower, shine against the muted desert landscape, a well-chosen and meaningful symbol of both privation and hope.”— *Publisher’s Weekly*

This book is recommended for readers ages 7 to 10.

This was just one of fifteen books that Judy Doorenbos and I purchased for the children’s library last year. In addition to the above book, they include: *The Coat of Many Colors*, *Anna’s Corn*, *Loon Summer*, *Sometimes Smart Is Good*, *If Nathan Were Here*, *The Moses Basket*, *To Everything There Is a Season*, *Come Sunday*, *Grandpa’s Soup*, *The Best Cat in the World*, *Angela and the Baby Jesus*, *N Is for Navidad*, *The Legend of the Poinsettia*, and *The Candy-maker’s Gift: The Legend of the Candy Cane*.

I hope some Sunday you do some exploring in our library with your children and enjoy the “treasures” that can be found there.

Eddie Roberts

**The Visitation committee is a group of volunteers  
Making a difference!**

The Visitation Committee is a group of church members who visit our elderly and less mobile members, often at the request of these members or their families. We let them know that our community is still thinking of them, tell of church activities and sometimes send cards or offer a flower or piece of candy, though just the contact is enough. If you can spare 15 minutes a month and would like to join us in this rewarding ministry please contact the church office or Marie Von Behren at 354-4020 with questions or to add your name to our group.

**News from the Mission Board**

Reports are in for the three Special Offerings so far this year. All exceed the giving from 2007. Thank you to for this extra giving as we progress through our church year.

<b>One Great Hour of Sharing</b>	<b>\$1567.70</b>
<b>AIDS/United Nations</b>	<b>\$527.25</b>
<b>Ecumenical Minority Scholarship Fund</b>	<b>\$1363.27</b>

We keep the books open for our Special Offerings if you are still planning to give! Just write a note in the memo line designating your gift.

Spread the Love, Strengthen the Church The UCC Strengthen the Church special offering is scheduled for Sunday, May 11th. This offering supports activities and programs of the local conference as well as national ministries. For more information go to the website: <http://www.ucc.org/stc/>

### **Mission Board Sponsors Educational Forums for Special Programs in Iowa City Public Schools**

The Mission Board is sponsoring a series of adult education sessions to inform the congregation about several unique and much-needed school programs that target under-served students in Iowa City. The first session, May 18th, Henri Harper and students from City High will describe the Fast Trac Program. Henri started this program in 1997, recognizing that the needs of at-risk, high-ability students are often overlooked. The program supports high school performance, community involvement and preparation for college.

They welcome opportunities to place students in internships, jobs, and learning experiences that can assist them in becoming college-bound. Come learn how one person's dream can make a difference and how we can help.

Look for a continuing series on other programs such as Puertas Abiertas, an after-school program at Horace Mann that targets children from non-English speaking families; The Healthy Kids Clinic that serves school children from families without health insurance; and the after-school program at Mark Twain School.

Greetings in the Name of Jesus the Christ!

There are various and sundry ways any community builds itself up. Physical bodies use bones, sinews and tendons as the frame upon which to organize life. Though no human finds another attractive by virtue of his “tendons”, without those tendons she would hardly be able to function.

In the wider church, we are connected by relationships and by programmatic structures. We all understand that congregations are found compelling by virtue of exciting and compelling ministry, but without the mundane support offered in times of pastoral vacancy, and the at-home support offered to missionaries who serve in seemingly exotic places and countless other examples of infrastructure support that the conference and national church provides, those other, seemingly more compelling ministries would not be possible.

Thank you so much for your support of the wider church.

Whether in the form of OCWM or in the form of support of the special offerings of the church, your gifts make it possible for Christ to be present and active in myriads of places where he would otherwise not be found and in ways he would otherwise not be acting.

God bless you!

Rev. Dr. Rich Pleva

Iowa Conference, UCC

### Free Lunch Program News

Our church served lunch to 105 people at the Wesley House on Monday, March 31. A BIG Thank You is sent to the following people who prepared food and/or served and cleaned up on this day:

*Hermine McLeran, Gretchen Snider, Dave Carew, Beth Parker, John Fuller, Edie Roberts, Robin Lovin, Kathy Fait, Christine Darr, Judy Doorenbos, Ethel Bloesch, Ginny Clemons, Glenna Cobb, Betsy Henson, Joan Buxton and Claire Ashman.*

Our next serving date is Monday, June 30, 2008. Please consider donating your time; no experience required! A sign up sheet will be posted in Rockwood Hall by the 1st of June.

Gratefully, Vicki Thomae

### **The Free Lunch Program Celebrates 25 Years**

On Sunday, May 4th, 2-4, the Free Lunch Program will celebrate its 25th anniversary at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.



## *Happy Anniversary*

*Catherine & Chris Kovach*

*Ann & Michael Romanowski*

*Carol & Bruce Fischer*

### **Women's Luncheon - May 16**

The showers of April did not prevent twenty women from gathering for lunch at Mondo's last month. And we decided to do it again! All women are invited to meet at a new restaurant, **Blackstone**, 503 Westbury Drive, located on the east side near the intersection of Rochester Avenue and Scott Blvd. Plan to join us on Friday, May 16 at noon. Once again, we will each pay our own way, and the gratuity will be included in the bill. Bring a guest!

Please phone the Church Office at 337-4301 by May 15 to sign up for the luncheon. We will make the final reservation on that day.

And do tell us if you need a ride. Sharyn Reitz



**THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
**30 North Clinton Street**  
**Iowa City, Iowa 52245-1700**

**May 2008**

**HOW TO CONTACT US**

Monday—Friday.....9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Phone:** 319-337-4301

**E-mail:**

Office Manager.....uccicsec@uccic.org

Christian Ed. Dir....uccicce@uccic.org

**Visit our Web Site:**

[www.uccic.org](http://www.uccic.org)

**Sunday Schedule**

**9:15 a.m. Education**

**10:15 a.m. Worship**

**11:15 a.m. Fellowship**

**Our Church Staff**

**Pastor: Rev. Lovin**

Music Director: Richard Bloesch

Organist: Bill Crouch

Christian Ed: Edie Roberts

Nursery Care: Julianna Stewart

Custodians: Nicole & Eddy Ghumm

Office Manager: Phil Jamieson

**Parking Information**

Parking is available evenings and all day Sunday at the IMU or North Hall Parking Ramps. Ask your usher for a voucher (or get one from the church office).