

Mission Moment

Epiphany Today

An epiphany is defined in the dictionary as “a usually sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something.” As we celebrate Epiphany, we remember the Magi’s “sudden discovery” more than 2,000 years ago of the first manifestation of Christ, which changed our world forever.

Epiphany UCC, in St. Louis, MO, is changing its own corner of the world today through an essential ministry they call the Urban Mission. The church hosts youth from the Joint Neighborhood Ministry who serve for a week at a time with various missions in the St. Louis area.

The Urban Mission also involves youth groups from all over the United Church of Christ, providing opportunities to serve and educate, and perhaps even offering the occasional “epiphany” to those who come to work.

This mission and the partnership it has inspired with the encouragement of UCC Volunteer Ministries, a national effort of the United Church of Christ, has been part of the revitalization of Epiphany UCC.

January 2009

God is still speaking,

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Mission Moment

It's Cold Outside

This winter, food pantries and homeless shelters in many parts of the country are serving increased numbers of people. Homelessness and hunger are crises any time of year, but in winter the situation is acute—especially for families.

UCC churches across the country are mobilizing and focusing on what they *can* do in these uncertain financial times. Certainly many churches are cutting back expenses, but they are also looking deeper at what they are able and equipped to do for others—and it's a lot. Congregations are offering all kinds of assistance, to community members and church members alike.

At St. Mathews UCC in Wheaton, IL, the youth group volunteers at the People's Resource Center, a local food pantry. The youth work hard to get their jobs done, but it isn't until they see the people coming in that they realize just how important food pantries are. That's when they realize that not everyone gets to wake up from a warm bed and eat a hot breakfast before leaving the house to spend a short time in the cold. Some people may be in the cold all the time, and without the sustenance of three meals a day. It's humbling to see the many people in need, but also good to know that the food pantry has a good stockpile of food at the moment.

Projects like this provide defining moments in fellowship and service for church members. This winter, UCC congregations are stepping up to the plate and seeking opportunities to serve the vulnerable among us.

January 2009

God is still speaking,



Mission Moment

A Bible FAQ

What is the Bible?

There is more than one way to answer this question! A good place to start may be to say that the Bible is a library. A literal meaning of the word “bible” is “book of books.” It is 66 books for Protestants, 73 for Catholics. It divides into the 39 books of the Old Testament, which tell the story of God’s dealings with Israel, and the 27 books of the New Testament, which tell the story of Jesus and the church that followed him.

To call the Bible “a library” means that there different types of literature between its two covers. There is drama, history, law code, song, poetry, gospels, parables, letters and more. Key to using the Bible is knowing what part of the library you are in or what type of literature you are hearing or reading.

Even more importantly, a library is defined by its owner and their purpose. This library is the library of Israel and the Church. It reminds Jews and Christians who they are and whose they are.

Bible FAQ’s are written by Anthony B. Robinson and appear in *The Bible and the United Church of Christ*, a collection of short essays by UCC writers, to introduce or re-acquaint readers with the Bible. To read more, go to i.ucc.org.

January 2009

God is still speaking,

