

Mission Moment

The Church in Every Moment

The rhythm of our lives often changes during the summer, which is a good thing. It's wonderful if we're able to slow down and enjoy the beautiful outdoors, to stop and smell the flowers, and perhaps even to take a little vacation. But the rhythm of life in the church rarely skips a beat, even though some congregations may experience a few empty pews on Sunday mornings as folks travel and "take a Sunday off."

Our churches know that the regular work of the gospel goes on, day in and day out, in every season. The worship and pastoral needs of the local church, the justice work in the broader community, and the wider mission of the United Church all go on, even in August, and they are supported by the faithful giving of the people in the pews, whose generosity never takes a vacation.

Thank you for remembering to give generously in support of your church's ministry, even on Sundays when you are away from your own local congregation. Thank you for sharing the abundance with which you have been blessed so that the church, in every moment, can continue to be sign of God's healing and tender mercies in a beautiful but broken world.

June 2009

God is still speaking,

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



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“Immerse Yourself”

Often at the moments of greatest turbulence in our lives we discover the greatest sense of Christ’s steadying presence. This was true for the disciples as they felt the wind around them and watched the boat being swamped, asking Jesus: “Teacher, don’t you care that we are perishing?” Then came the reassuring words: “Peace, be still.” Was Jesus speaking just to the storm? Or was he speaking to the disciples as well, to their fears, worries, and anxieties?

In recent months we have all been affected by the severe financial crisis gripping our world. Countless individuals have lost jobs, income, and in some cases, hope. Churches struggle to meet the growing need for care of those who are hurting while at the same time dealing with reduced income.

This week, as the United Church of Christ celebrates its 52nd anniversary, delegates to the 27th General Synod will be gathering in Grand Rapids, Michigan under the theme, “Immerse Yourself.” To those braving the storms of economic distress, the Synod theme’s invitation hardly seems welcoming.

But we have also known the comfort of being in the boat together by virtue of our baptism, and we have experienced Christ in our midst, and heard again and again the comforting words, “Peace, be still!” Is the water rising for you, for us? Then immerse yourself!

Rev. John H. Thomas
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ

June 2009

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Is God Still Speaking?

Ask the Bible study group gathered in the church lounge.

Ask anyone who ever sang hymns around a campfire.

Ask the single mother who is warmly welcomed at the church pantry.

Ask the United States Senator who just finished meeting with a delegation of UCC laypersons.

Ask the volunteers who spent two weeks repairing a Protestant chapel in Honduras.

Ask the unchurched gay man who presented himself for baptism--and ask the pastor who baptized him in the name of the Trinity.

Ask the couple who prayerfully decided to double their annual pledge.

Ask the refugee family who were met at the airport--and ask the church delegation that met them there.

Ask the shyest member of the church youth group after their weekend retreat.

Ask anyone who ever attended an Easter sunrise service.

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God IS still speaking,

