



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
451 Riviera Drive NE • Palm Bay, FL • 32905

"Thinking Openly, Believing Passionately, Serving Boldly"



MAY 2011

THE MESSENGER

WWW.RIVIERAUCC.ORG

Community Family Players

announces

AUDITIONS

for

Much Ado

About

Nothing

Drop-In:

May 14, 2011

between the hours of:

11:00 AM to 3:00 PM

at

Riviera United Church of Christ

451 Riviera Dr. NE

Palm Bay, FL 32905

(321) 723-3963

www.rivieraucc.org/drama

Callbacks:

May 21st

11 AM - 3 PM



Open to all youth 12 to 20 years old.

Previous experience not required.

No preparation needed.

Auditions will consist of reading, speaking and taking direction.

COMMUNITY FAMILY PLAYERS
IS DEDICATED TO
"Connecting youth and community
with the performing arts"

OUR MISSION

Welcoming and accepting all people.
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Encouraging freedom and responsibility to explore our lives of faith by studying and worshipping together.  
~~~

Sharing the love of God found in the teachings of Jesus.
~~~

Working for justice for all people, striving to demonstrate God's love for all creation.  
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Building a family of believers where people are nurtured and equipped for ministry.



Church Council Members

Moderator: George 'Butch' Litteral

Vice-Moderator: Dick Rhinehart

Vice-Moderator: Billy Lane

Clerk: Kathy Nilan

Treasurer: Paul Lucas

Financial Secretary: Nancy Cook

Financial Minister: Michael Ross

Finance Minister: Lisa Leslie

Finance Minister: Nancy Marsh

Teaching Minister: Carol Robinson

Teaching Minister: Kathy Hufford

Spiritual Minister: Wesley Main

Spiritual Minister: Phyllis Yanis

Spiritual Minister: Margaret Ann Eisenmenger

From Our Pastor

The Reverend Scott Elliott



Dearest Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As a pastor I spend a lot of time thinking and talking about God. Sometimes it's to explain, sometimes it's to defend, sometimes it's just to raise questions. I like all this God thought and in keeping with our church's vision statement I am all for "thinking openly" about God. To that end I have recently starting reading a book by an atheist (Richard Dawkins) called "The God Delusion." Getting through the book is taking a long time because I am constantly stopping to take notes in the margins. Mostly my notes are defending religion and God

from the author's attacks against one or the other.

Do not get me wrong either, I am not opposed to atheism. I believe that God only desires us to believe in love and to love, and religion is just one way to do that. I do not think God cares why we honor love and provide love, only that we do.

Unfortunately the atheist who wrote this book as far as I can tell (70 pages into the book) is not so much interested in an honest discussion on the topic of God or religion as he is in dismissing the propriety of both. I have so far found most of his arguments intellectually dishonest, he not only sets up fanatics as representatives of religious people as a whole, but freely blames religion for the atrocious acts of religious nations while refusing to similarly blame atheists for the atrocious acts of the atheist nations (like the Soviet Union). While there is no doubt that awful things have been done in the name of religion (and atheism) it is also true that many good things have come from religious people. Indeed, I'd love to ask the author why he thinks it is that churches and church leaders have repeatedly led the way in the movements to end injustices like slavery and racism, child labor and genocide, torture and political imprisonment, and who's going to do it if religion is not around? I'd even dare to argue with him that since Christianity's rise, humanity has changed for the better precisely because one of the main tenets of our faith is love for others.

There is one other thing I'd argue, i.e., that he (the author) needs to get a better grip on a definition of God (he claims that God means a supernatural being beyond creation). The definition I'd recommend he consider is: God as THE unfathomable creating, present and hopeful power that soaks the universe and endlessly persuades creation to the best it can be in each given moment. For humans the persuasive power is experienced as love, how God otherwise works in mostly mystery.

This book's author, being a scientist, will no doubt want proof of God (this power that persuades creation to its best) and here's the proof: humanity individually and collectively experiences a longing for the best in any given moment. Call it by any other name, that longing is God persuading. I note too that there is no force calling us to be our worse, it's always to our best. We often fail to heed the call to be our best for sure, but, dang it if it isn't always there beckoning us. Our church family is about listening to the call of God to be our best and responding to it as best we can in every moment, together and alone, through Love.

I am very fortunate to be in a family that hears God's call and regularly responds to it.

Thank you for that!

Your Brother in Christ,









Rev. Scott Elliott

HELP US TELL EVERYONE WITH YOUTH ABOUT AUDITIONS!



Would you like to be involved in this exciting youth ministry? You can!

Community Family Players (CFP) is seeking volunteers to assist in many aspects of this summer's production, including:

-  Costume Design
-  Stage Construction
-  Lighting
-  Make Up and Hair
-  Backstage Helpers
-  PR and Fundraising
-  Front of House
-  Ticket Sales

If you are interested in assisting in any capacity, please tell Scott Elliott, Amy Lewis or Paul Lucas.

Production Dates of MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING will be:

Thursday-Saturday at 7PM
July 21, 22, 23, 28, 29 30

Sunday Matinees at 2PM
July 24 & 31, 2011

Note from Pastoral Relations:

It may not seem like it, but Scott Elliott has been at Riviera United Church of Christ (RUCC) for nearly five years! Part of our contract with him is that after six years he shall take a three-month, paid sabbatical leave. Although RUCC does not prescribe the form and content of a sabbatical leave, the time is generally considered a period for study, reflection and/or renewal, not a vacation. The time for his leave will be here in just under a year and a half.

Scott and the Pastoral Relations Committee, with support from the council, have identified a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. that could help both Scott and RUCC during Scott's leave. Here are the two advantages we have identified to applying for and receiving a grant through the Clergy Renewal Program from the Lilly Endowment, Inc.:

- Scott would receive enough funding to travel, increase his knowledge of peace studies and peace spiritual practices and study theater for worship and ministry, as well as spend time writing.
- RUCC would receive funding to plan its own activities which could include hiring a substitute pastor for the three-month leave, along with other activities for the congregation's own renewal program.

As part of the grant application, **you will be asked to fill out a survey indicating your support for Scott's and RUCC's proposal to the Lilly Foundation's Clergy Renewal Program.** That survey will be available in the narthex on May 1 and May 8. It will be very short, and contain a few details about the proposal. Please watch for and fill out the survey with Phyllis Rhinehart or Nancy Cook.

Here is brief information about some of the requirements of the Clergy Renewal Program from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. The entire application and all requirements can be found on the Internet at <http://www.clergyrenewal.org/>.

- The program seeks to strengthen Christian congregations by providing an opportunity for pastors to step away briefly from the persistent obligations of daily parish life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection.
- The congregation is applying for the grant although the pastor may design his study program. Proposals are required to provide evidence of broad congregational support.
- The congregation must commit to continue the pastor's salary and benefits during the renewal program.
- The pastor and an authorized congregational leader must "certify the pastor's intent to remain in the congregation at least one year after completing the program."
- The grant proposal can request a maximum of \$50,000. Up to \$15,000 of the grant request may be used for congregational expenses, which can include an interim pastor.

The proposal that Scott and the committee have designed includes study with a mentor in Oregon on peace issues and related spiritual practices (prayer, meditation, readings, etc.). Scott intends to use what he learns in future sermons and worship at RUCC. He intends to write at least three peace-oriented sermon dramas or sermon stories to use when he returns. In addition, he is proposing to attend the Oregon Shakespeare Festival with the grant funding. The festival features a dozen plays, theatre tours, and classes that will be helpful in the continuing RUCC Community Family Players program now in its third summer.

Submitted by Nancy Cook



Ladies Evening Group

April's gathering was full of laughter and we did get to know more about each other. As always, we managed to stuff ourselves in between all the sharing of stories and jokes! The

booth we sat at fits four regular sized persons, but we managed to place all six of us around it! Thank goodness we are a very close group! Time flew so fast that the next thing we knew it was time decide what to do next month. Here is what we decided on:

Pat is planning to make a SURPRISE DINNER. Be sure and sign-up in the narthex to let her know how many to expect. Directions on how to get to Pat's house from Riviera UCC will be available if needed.

Justice Ministry Group

Next Meeting Wednesday May 11, 2011
10:00 – 11:30 AM



On Mother's Day, May 8, you will have an opportunity to participate in an Offering of Letters in support of the efforts of Bread for the World. In their words: "Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging your decision makers to end hunger. We work with both political parties to craft and adopt legislation that has helped millions of people in the United States and abroad lift themselves out of poverty and hunger."

The Offering of Letters to our Representatives and Senators this year is an appeal for the United States to bring greater efficiency to the way we deliver aid particularly to Liberia and Haiti. Mothers and children suffer greatly from malnutrition in these poor countries. Pick up our info flyer, and write a brief message. We'll mail it for you.

A Hearty Thanks for Campus Ministry Supper.

On Monday night, April 18, 2011 we provided a supper for students and some faculty at the All Faith Center at Florida Tech. We had a great team. Thanks to Nancy Cook, Mary Beth Moseley, Bonnie and Daryl Hankins, Rev. Scott Elliott, Margaret Ann Eisenmenger, Pat Lawson, Anita Kidney, Joni Isaman, Bettilou Mowery, and Carol Robinson. Judith Busch would have joined us but recently had rotator cuff surgery. Heal well Judy, there'll be a next time!

- Justice Ministry Group



PEACE HEROES

Vacation Summer Camp at Riviera UCC – June 27 through June 30

Parents, Grandparents, Neighbors, and Friends mark your calendars now! Register your children between ages 6 and 13. During the last week of June from Monday through Thursday, 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM, we will explore the world of peace heroes, through stories, games and fun activities.

You can be one too. There will be program activities also for adults who wish to participate.

RUCC Scholarship

Application forms and criteria information for the RUCC scholarship are now available. The scholarship of up to \$1,000 may be awarded annually to one or more church members who are pursuing post secondary education. For more information or to obtain forms please contact the church office or a member of the Scholarship Committee, including Kay Martin, David Cook, Steven Clark, and Kathy Hufford. Application deadline is May 8, 2011.

Fly with the Spirit!

Sunday Church School Grades One through Six will be flying with the Spirit during the month of May. That is, the Holy Spirit.

The lessons will be based on the following Bible stories:

- May 1 – Acts 2:1-12 The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost;
- May 8 – Acts 5:17-39 Peter and the Apostles Get Out of Jail;
- May 15 – Acts 8:26-40 Philip Ministers to the Ethiopian Eunuch;
- May 22 – Galatians 5:22-23 Paul Teaches About the Fruit of the Spirit;
- May 29 – Acts 6:1-7 Seven Men Are Chosen to Serve.



Church School Collecting Lego Blocks

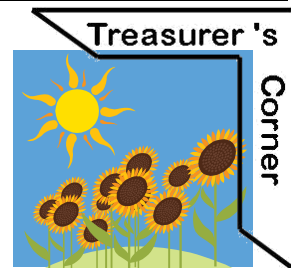
Have your children or grandchildren outgrown their Lego blocks (any size)? Perhaps you've seen some at a yard sale for small change. We have a small bin but would like to accumulate enough to fill a LARGE bin. We can use them as a fun and creative way of telling stories and expressing feelings. This will be an ongoing project. Imagine the possibilities!

Submitted by Carol Robinson

RUCC Financial Health Report:

The financial report for RUCC through the end of March 2011 is as follows:

Income for March was: \$13,287.00	Expenses for March were: \$28,999.93
Year To Date projected income: \$72,690.95	YTD projected expenses: \$56,494.11
Year To Date actual income: \$69,045.28	YTD actual expenses: \$54,716.85
Per Capita Owed to UCC: \$2,276.50	Per Capita Collected: \$1,480.00

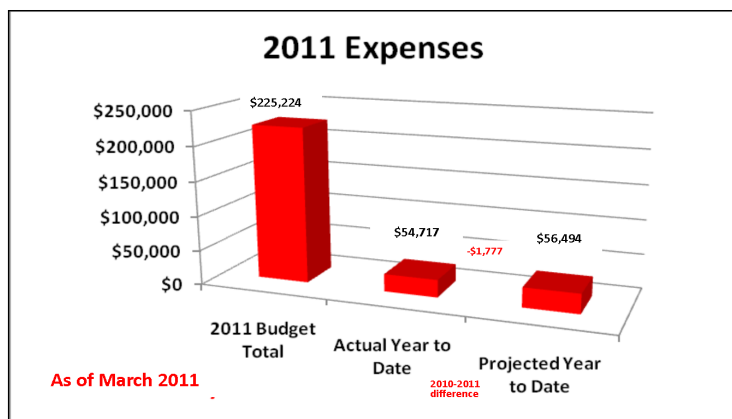
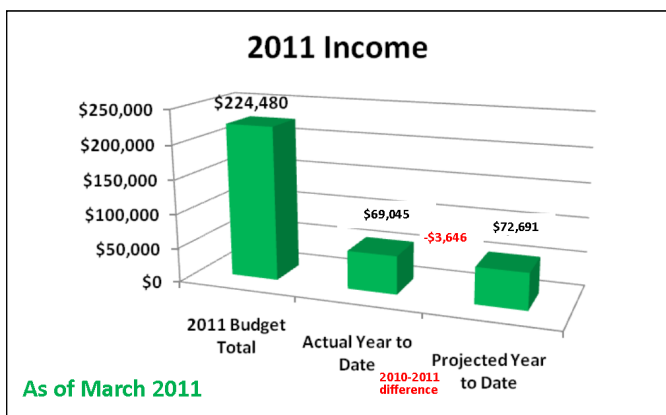


Save Our Savings as of March 2011: \$470.00 this equals 3% of projected \$15,000

As of the end of March the actual income is \$3,645.67 lower than the projected as compared to 2010, and the expenses are \$1,777.26 lower. The staff is doing a great job of keeping expenses below projected levels!

Please don't be confused by the charts. We have \$69,045 of income and have only spent \$54,717. Experience has shown that the income-per-month decreases during the summer months. However, the expenses keep going at the same or higher rate. This is due to higher utility bills during the summer and the quarterly insurance and benefits payments. March was also expected to be a high-expense month because of quarterly insurance and benefit payments.

Paul Lucas
RUCC Treasurer



The 2011 Pledge Campaign through February increased to 60 pledges for \$128,000.00. The budget predicted a total of \$136,000.00 based on our 2010 actual income. To date, we have an \$8,000 budget gap. If we don't make this up, we will have to use our savings to operate the church, which is why we are keeping up with the SOS drive (see below). If you would like to pledge or change your pledge, please submit a pledge card anytime at the office or on any Sunday by placing a pledge card in the offering plate. You may also give a pledge card to Nancy Cook, Bonnie Hankins, or Pat Lawson. Pledge cards are available at the office or near the sound booth in the Sanctuary.

Save Our Savings Campaign - As of the end of March, \$470.00 has been received toward the SOS campaign prediction of \$15,000. Any shortage of the projected budget income will be supplemented from our savings to meet the budgeted requirements. If you are able to donate extra towards RUCC's operating budget, please identify it, if possible, as for the SOS campaign. However, any extra offering you can and will be well-received no matter how it is identified.

2011 Per Capita Campaign – Per Capita is \$14.50 per member and is paid annually by RUCC to the national UCC Conference. As of February 2011, we have received 77% of our collection goal from RUCC members. Envelopes are available at the office or near the sound booth. Members, please place your Per Capita amount (\$14.50 each) in the provided envelope, add it to your offering and place it in the collection plate on any Sunday or give it to one of the Financial Secretaries.

One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering – As of April 25th, the total collected for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering is \$1,341.00. This offering is used to support countries where disasters have occurred such as Japan.

Stewardship Committee - The Stewardship Committee of Paul and Pat Lucas, Nancy and David Cook, and Amy Lewis normally meet on the last Tuesday of each month at 5:30 PM to discuss ways raise funds for RUCC. The committee is always looking for fundraising ideas. If you would like to make a suggestion or become part of this committee, contact any one of us. This is a voluntary committee not appointed by the congregation.

-RUCC Stewardship Team



MAY 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <u>Worship Services:</u> Traditional - 9 AM Adult Seminar - 10:10 Contemporary - 11 AM Kids' Sun School 11:10 ByLaws 12:30PM CFP Plan Mtg 3:30P RIC 3 PM	2 Finance Mtg 7 PM HomeBase 6-9 PM	3 Shepherd Center Council 10 AM Riviera Key Home- Owners 7:00 PM	4 Bible Study 12:00 Noon "Green" Team 6 PM Choir 7 - 8:30 PM	5 Shepherd Center Classes 8AM-2PM RIC 6 PM	6 May Family Night: Dinner & a Movie 6:00 PM	7 HomeBase 6-9 PM Rev. Elliott
8 <u>Worship Services:</u> Traditional - 9 AM Adult Seminar - 10:10 Contemporary - 11 AM Kids' Sun School 11:10 RIC 3 PM	9 HomeBase 6-9 PM	10 HomeBase 6-9 PM	11 Justice Min 10 AM Bible Study 12:00 Noon Choir 7 - 8:30 PM TNET 7-9 PM	12 Shepherd Center Classes 8AM-2PM RIC 6 PM	13 Mateh Chaim 7PM	14 CFP AUDITIONS <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> Drop-In 11AM-3PM Rev. Elliott Returns HomeBase 6-9 PM
..... is on Vacation						
15 <u>Worship Services:</u> Traditional - 9 AM Adult Seminar - 10:10 Contemporary - 11 AM Kids' Sun School 11:10 RIC 3 PM	16 MESSENGER Article Deadline Ladies Evening Group 6:30 PM Council 7:00 PM HomeBase 6-9 PM	17 Journey's Academy Rehearsal 10 AM	18 Bible Study 12:00 Noon Choir 7 - 8:30 PM	19 Shepherd Center Classes 8AM-2PM Journey's Academy Graduation 5PM	20 HomeBase 6-9 PM	21 Fellowship BFast @ Chekmars 9 AM CFP CALL-BACKS <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> 11AM-3PM HomeBase 6-9 PM
22 <u>Worship Services:</u> Traditional - 9 AM Adult Seminar - 10:10 Contemporary - 11 AM Kids' Sun School 11:10 Planning Mtg 3 PM RIC 3 PM	23 Daily Bread 10A-2P PFLAG 6:00 PM HomeBase 6-9 PM	24 Easter Flower Order Deadline Riviera Key Home- owners 7 PM	25 Bible Study 12:00 Noon TNET 7-9 PM	26 Shepherd Center Classes 8AM-2PM RIC 6 PM	27 Mateh Chaim 7PM	28 CFP READ-THRU <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> 3:00 PM HomeBase 6-9 PM
29 <u>Worship Services:</u> Traditional - 9 AM Adult Seminar - 10:10 Contemporary - 11 AM Kids' Sun School 11:10 RIC 3 PM PRIDE FEST	30 OFFICE CLOSED HomeBase 6-9 PM <i>Memorial Day</i>	31 Stewardship Meeting 5:30 PM	SUNDAY WORSHIP 9:00 AM - Traditional Worship 10:10 AM - Adult Sunday School 11:00 AM - Contemporary Worship 11:10 AM - Kids' Sunday School			

Florida UCC Women's Reading for Renewal

Mary Beth Moseley reported the most books read from the 2010-2011 Reading List. She is finding the list for 2011-2012 a rewarding selection. Here are her comments on four from this new list:

Absolutely delightful! **The Art of Racing in the Rain** by Garth Stein gives a view of the human condition through eyes of a dog

Leaving Glorytown by Eduardo F. Calcines, is one of six books from the Mission Study List concerning the Caribbean. This is very interesting, a different view from other books I have studied. It is an autobiography recounting what it was like to grow up under Fidel Castro's rule.

Nevada Barr's book **Flashback** is one of a series of mysteries set in our National Parks. This one, in Ft. Jefferson in The Dry Tortugas

south of Key West. Great descriptions. She evokes wonderful memories of parks I have visited and have me anticipating the ones I have yet to see. Plots are intelligent with good character development.

I am just finishing Katherine Howe's **The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane**. The story moves between Salem, MA in the mid 1600's and Marblehead and Cambridge, MA in the early 1990's. The author is a descendent of

one woman who survived a witch's trial and one who did not. Makes me glad we endorse thinking openly.

- Mary Beth Moseley

All of the books are available in the Brevard County Library system. Copies of the new list are available in the Narthex.

Do you have questions or wish to share comments about books you have read from this list? See Mary Beth or Carol Robinson.



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www.rivieraucc.org



The **MESSENGER Newsletter** is a monthly publication of Riviera United Church of Christ in Palm Bay, Florida and is also available online:

www.rivieraucc.org/Newsletter

Deadline for material to be published is the **third Monday** of each month. All items are subject to approval and editorial changes. Articles or information may be submitted to the church office in hard copy form or by email: arlewis@rivieraucc.org

To receive **The MESSENGER Newsletter** by mail, please send your written request to the church front office. Please include \$15 (or whatever you can afford) to cover costs for the year.

OUR VISION

Thinking Openly

Believing Passionately

Serving Boldly



Church Office: 451 Riviera Drive NE
 Palm Bay, FL 32905

Website: www.rivieraucc.org

Phone: (321) 723-3963

Fax: (321) 723-1281

Email: rivieraucc@rivieraucc.org

Hours: 9 AM to 1 PM, Monday-Thursday
 9 AM to 12 PM, Friday

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Traditional Service
 9:00 AM

Adult Sunday School
 10:10 AM

Contemporary Service
 11:00 AM

Kid's Sunday School
 11:10 AM

Our pastor, Rev. Scott Elliott generally schedules himself to be at the church from 9 AM to 5 PM Saturday through Wednesday. He works many more hours, however, coming in early and staying late (and working at home too). If you need to contact Scott, please contact him at the church or make an appointment to see him. When possible, please avoid calling Scott at home for church matters unless an emergency arises. Scott's email is:

selliott@rivieraucc.org