



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

“Thinking Openly, Believing Passionately, Serving Boldly”



OCTOBER 2011

THE MESSENGER

WWW.RIVIERAUCC.ORG



**Third Annual
Blessing of the Animals
October 30, 2011
10 AM Gathering as One**

This month, we will be having a different kind of “Gathering as One.” This time we will gather outside for our Third Annual Blessing of the Animals.

If you intend to bring a pet (and we hope lots of you do!), here are the Ten Creature Care and Courtesy Commandments that will apply:

1. Thou shall bring only one animal (or picture of an animal) per person.
2. Thou shall keep thy animal in the shade and make sure thy pet has access to water and is allowed to quench it’s thirst, but thou shall not quench hunger with any other pet or person.
3. Thou shall remember thy pet’s leash and collar (or carrier/cage) and use them at all times.
4. Thou shall not let thy pet run amuck.
5. Thou shall guide thy pet to the designated toileting area and properly clean up droppings.
6. Thou shall be responsible for thy pet at all times and not allow altercations with other beasts, be they human, furry, feathery, hairy, scaly or bald.
7. Thou shall be cautious around children and be aware at all times that children can be terrified by even friendly and small animals.
8. Thou shall be responsible and careful with thy pet and courteous toward others.
9. No biting, nipping, clawing, kicking, bucking, stinging, constricting, gnawing, spiting, scratching or eating the pastor, moderator, gathered members or fellow critters.
10. Thou shall endeavor to have fun and enjoy the service and thy fellow animals, and be thankful to their Maker.

The service on October 30th will be followed by a Yappy Hour of fellowship with the pets and people.

By popular demand! From now on, RUCC’s MESSENGER Newsletter will be mailed out via USPS Bulk Mail. If you paid for postage, and would like a pro-rated return, please let the front office know.

OUR MISSION

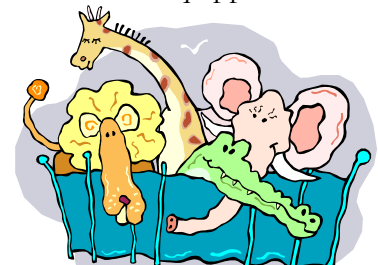
Welcoming and accepting all people.
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Encouraging freedom and responsibility to explore our lives of faith by studying and worshipping together.  
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Sharing the love of God found in the teachings of Jesus.
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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

Acting Moderator: Dick Rhinehart

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



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

If you go to our website and click on "Meet the Pastor" page you can watch a short video of me filmed by our national United Church of Christ's (UCC) "Changing Lives" series. I discuss, as I have with you all a number of times, how I first happened upon the UCC while walking our dog. The video is kinda fun (and I have convinced myself I don't look too bad).

In the video I briefly mention how I left the church because I believe God is love and had a hard time finding a church that seemed to believe that too. See a big part of my journey is that I left the church as a teen over my perception that Christianity as a whole ironically lacked a love center. For me church felt judgmental and close minded while I felt God was love and call me to open thinking and a broad embrace of all. So I stayed out of church and eventually labeled myself an agnostic because I simply could not believe in any God but love and I had rejected the God that I (mis) understood Christianity to be about.

My journey up to that point was and still is sadly not unique. Many leave or avoid Christianity disenchanted with the version of God perceived to be worshiped in churches. My journey took a remarkably sharp turn when I discovered that there are many churches (and many Christians) that are love-centered and accept and even encourage open thinking. I had made an unfair generalization and missed out on church for twenty years because of it.

Now that I have found and fully embrace Christianity I often counsel others who have wandered away thinking church cannot be love centered. I try not to be pushy, and a part of my pitch is explaining that a lot of what people think Christians have to believe, we don't. We have developed a pamphlet out in the lobby and up on our website that spells ten such things out (there are more than ten but the list includes the most common). Recently a pastor in Delaware somehow came across the pamphlet and actually preached a sermon naming the evils of the pamphlet, and along the way banned me from his pulpit. When I posted on facebook the news that I'd been banned from a pulpit with a link to the offending pamphlet we had a huge up-tick in visitors to the website, moreover there were dozens of comments from all over the country congratulating me on being banned (both my daughters were particularly impressed). And because of our website one person on the West Coast recently wrote and told me that after twenty years of being away from the church she looked up and found a UCC church in her new home town and was excited to attend church again.

Studies show that most unchurched people are looking for a church that has a casual atmosphere, a reverence for God and compassion for all. That's Riviera UCC. If you get a chance, let people know about us. It could change their lives. It will certainly enrich ours.

Your Brother In Christ,

Rev. Scott Elliott

Andrés' Corner

When our sister Janet Valley passed away last month, the church council heard about her partnership with Compassion International, an organization that matches individual sponsors with children in need in third world countries. Janet has been sponsoring André Sebastian Toboada Camacho from Peru since he was 5 years old. André will turn eight-years-old in June.

Riviera UCC feels blessed to announce that this church family will be taking over Andrés sponsorship at \$38 dollars a month (to be paid from the Shepherd's Fund). This donation will enable André to continue his studies in elementary school, provide him clothing and school supplies as well as help his family keep nutritious food on the table.



There is a folder in the narthex that contains information about Andre and his family, as well as information about Compassion International. Stay tuned to next month's MESSENGER Newsletter for updates on this youth.



Church Council Updates

New Bylaws: At the congregational meeting we voted to adopt new bylaws. You can read a copy of the bylaws on our website at www.rivieraucc.org or pick-up a copy in the church office. Thanks to all who worked on the new bylaws over the past two-and-half years, including the original committee, the 2010 council and the 2011 council.

New Budget Process: We also voted to merge our building/mortgage fund-raising with our Operational Budget, eliminating a separate Capital Campaign. This means we just pledge one Annual Pledge (though you can still designate separate uses if you'd rather).

Community Funds: A community fund of \$25,000 collected as a tithe almost ten years ago in the initial drive to build this church, by vote of the congregation, will be distributed as follows: \$5K to Back Bay Mission, \$5K to Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ, \$4K to Daily Bread, \$4K to Riviera Elementary School, \$4K to Sharing Centers of Brevard, and \$3K toward Riviera UCC's M25M Garden.

Playground: After many years without a children's playground we have voted on a plan to spend up to and not more than \$10,000.00 from the Bobbie Deering Fund on the construction of a new playground.

Justice Ministry Group

Next Meeting Wednesday October 12, 2011
10:00 to 11:30 AM

Scriptural foundations for the **Economic Justice Covenant Program**; economic injustices as appropriate concerns for the local church. This covenant program is the product of a 2009 Synod Resolution developed by the Justice and Witness Ministries of the UCC denomination.



Moving Planet events in 188 countries around the world on September 24, sponsored by the "350.org" crowd, probably kicked up a lot of dust literally and hopefully figuratively. These wide-ranging displays of public support cannot help but send the message to governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses and individuals that there is significant support for the stance that the world must reduce the output of greenhouse gases. Check the photos and videos at www.350.org or www.moving-planet.org/video.



Campus Ministry Dinner – October 24

The sign-up sheet to participate is in the lobby. This is our turn to provide a meal for students and some staff at the All Faith Center at Florida Tech. Monday, October 24th. Needed: menu ideas, cooks, serving supplies and servers. Set-up begins by 6:00 PM and serving around 7:00 PM

Florida Institute
of Technology

Submitted by Carol Robinson

The 'Green Team' sez: Where do you stand?

Here's a check list to help you evaluate your position on energy use.

- I can't survive without my car.
- I would not sign a petition for improvement of the public transportation system.
- I don't think about dwindling fossil fuels or their negative impact.
- I think about changes I could make but don't make them.
- I've rarely if ever suggested a car pool short term or long term.
- I never walk or bike to a store, school or work.
- I see no connection between buying local foods and energy use.
- Since cost is no issue, the thermostat is kept below 76°.

Is your slate pretty clean?

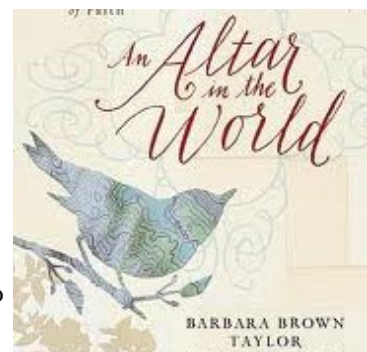
Submitted by Carol Robinson



Adult Sunday School

An Altar in the World by **Barbara Brown Taylor** From October 9 through December 18, 2011 (9 or 10 sessions, depending on the number of "Gathering as One" Sundays), the adult Sunday seminar group will discuss *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor. Taylor writes about how to see the holy in everything. Her chapters "mine the potentially sacred meaning of simple daily activities and conditions, like walking, paying attention, saying no to work one Sabbath day each week." The adult seminar **meets from 10:10 AM until 10:50 AM**. Please sign up in the narthex by October 2nd so we know how many books to obtain. Books should cost about \$10. Scholarships are available by talking to Nancy Cook.

Submitted by Nancy Cook



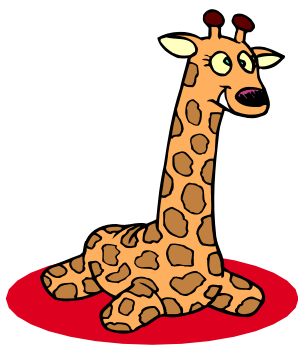
Kid's Sunday School

Playing and Living Joyfully is the title of the Faith Practice unit of activities that will continue as the theme of the children's classes for the month October. Thanks to Margaret Ann Eisenmenger, Forrest Wilson, B.J. Eby and Carol Robinson for guiding the classes in September.

During the month of October, between the Sunday services, look for the Faith Practices recruitment table. We are seeking to enlist teachers and teacher assistants for each month between now and June. Each Sunday during the second service time two classes meet; one K through 3rd grade, the other, 4th through 6/7th grade. Men, women and older youth consider your calendar and see where you might fit in our staffing chart. Orientation will be provided. The theme for

November and December will be *Giving and Receiving Hospitality*.

The foundation of the program is the UCC Statement of Faith and other affirmations or beliefs of the UCC denomination. Riviera UCC has taken a one year subscription to this gold mine of ideas for growth in understanding of and living our faith.



In My Daily Life

Random Attitudes of Kindness. When you sit and wait in the doctor's office, while resting at the mall, waiting for transportation, in the line at a checkout counter watch the people and listen. Envision the way Jesus might see them. Let your imagination spin out possible scenarios that may have led to the emotions being revealed. How would you respond to similar challenges? What is God saying to you through the people you see? What is God calling you to do or be? Sometimes more is revealed if you try to write it down. As in an artist's sketch pad, new perspectives may come to light.

Submitted by Carol Robinson

RUCC's Shepherd's Fund

You can help our neighbors in need by donating loose change, cash or check to RUCC's Shepherd's Fund. The Shepherd's Fund is primarily used to care for those in need in our community, bringing hope to many who need it. Please consider helping out with this ministry. Contributions may be mailed, place it in the offering plate (marked) or there is a donation box near the doors of the Sanctuary. Thank you!



RUCC Financial Health Report:

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

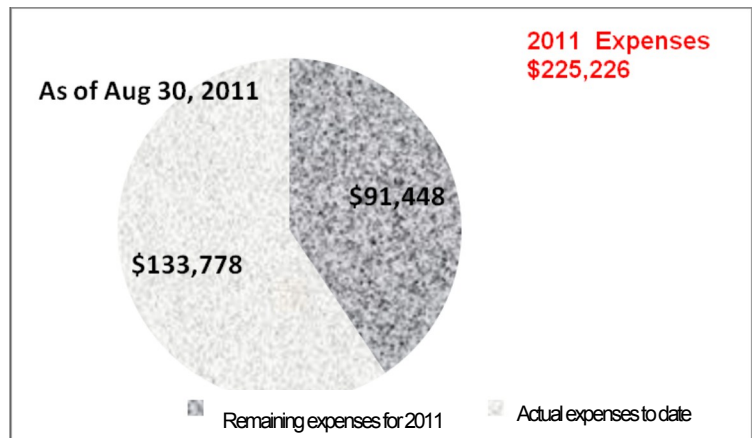
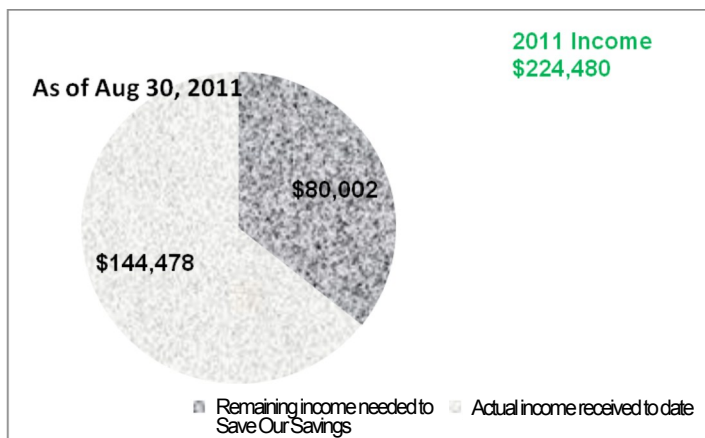
Income for August was: \$13,928.15	Expenses for August were: \$14,366.07
Year To Date projected income: \$152,365.54	YTD projected expenses: \$137,777.78
Year To Date actual income: \$144,478.43	YTD actual expenses: \$133,778.33
Per Capita Owed to UCC: \$2,276.50	Per Capita Collected: \$1,311.50

Treasurer's
Paul Lucas
RUCC Treasurer
Corner

After 8 full months or 66% of the year completed, the income is 64%, and the expenses are 59% of the budget. At this point last year the income was 69%, and expenses were 61% of the budget. So the income is behind last year's but in 2010 some early deficit-reduction gifts were received. The budget is also slightly lower, which are the results of continued efforts by the staff, building managers, and council management.

Remember the goal is to minimize use of savings reserves to meet the 2011 operational expenses. This income is not that far behind that it could be easily caught up in the last 4 months of the year.

Save Our Savings effort as of August 2011: **\$3,834.03** has been received, which is 25% toward the desired \$15,000 of the SOS campaign. Any shortage below the \$15,000 projected budget income will be supplemented from our savings to meet the budgeted requirements.



Stewardship News Flashes October 2011:

2012 Budget Recommendation – The Stewardship Committee sponsored a motion to combine the 2012 Operational and Mortgage amounts into one budget. This would simplify the 2012 Pledge Campaign and simplify giving overall. The current Capital Campaign ends in March 2012 and is the 4th consecutive campaign over a 14-year period. UCC National has advised against continuous Capital Campaigns which are normally used for specific short term projects. The motion was presented at the September 25th Congregational Meeting and passed by vote.

2011 Pledge Campaign – The 2011 Pledge Campaign through July remained at 62 pledges for \$129,000.00. To date we have a \$7,000 gap between the projected Pledge Income and Actual Income.

2012 Pledge Campaign – Stewardship Sunday is November 13, 2011, which is fast approaching. It is time to start thinking about next year's pledge. Remember our pledges are a greater response to God's blessings and support God's work through RUCC. Your gift is between you and God. No one other than the Financial Secretaries knows your pledge or the gifts you provide to God's work. Due to the results of the Congregational Meeting on September 25th, we are now asked to make one combined gift that includes missions, ministries, outreach, support groups, mortgage, and facilities and staff. Separate designated donations will still honored be by Council for anyone wishing to make them.

Neighbors in Need Special Offering - The Stewardship Committee has been promoting this year's Neighbors in Need special offering. The offering is scheduled to be collected on October 2nd. If you miss the collection date, gifts will be accepted through the end of October. Make sure to designate the NIN special offering on your gift. The results of the special offering will be included in the November MESSENGER Newsletter.

-RUCC Stewardship Team



OCTOBER



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		SUNDAY WORSHIP 9:00 AM - Traditional Worship 10:10 AM - Adult Sunday School 11:00 AM - Contemporary Worship 11:10 AM - Kids' Sunday School					1 Home Base 6-9 PM
2 <u>Worship Services:</u> Traditional - 9 AM Contemporary - 11 AM Kids' Sun School 11:10 RIC 3 & 5 PM	3 Home Base 6-9 PM Finance 7 PM	4 Riviera Key Home-Owners 7 PM	5 Bible Study 12 Noon 'Green' Team 6 PM Choir Practice 7 PM	6	7 RIC 7 PM	8 Home Base 6-9 PM	
9 <u>Worship Services:</u> Traditional - 9 AM Adult Sun School 10:10 Contemporary - 11 AM Kids' Sun School 11:10 Council 1 PM RIC 3 & 5 PM	10 Home Base 6-9 PM	11 Teen Meeting 4-6 PM	12 Justice Min 10 AM Bible Study 12 Noon Choir Practice 7 PM TNET 7PM	13	14 RIC 7 PM	15 Fellowship Bfast Chekmars 9AM Home Base 6-9 PM	
16 <u>Worship Services:</u> Traditional - 9 AM Adult Sun School 10:10 Contemporary - 11 AM Kids' Sun School 11:10 RIC 3 & 5 PM	17 MESSENGER Article Deadline Home Base 6-9 PM	18	19 Bible Study 12 Noon Choir Practice 7 PM	20	21 RIC 7 PM	22 RIC 3PM	
23 <u>Worship Services:</u> Traditional - 9 AM Adult Sun School 10:10 Contemporary - 11 AM Kids' Sun School 11:10 RIC 3 & 5 PM	24 Daily Bread 10-2 PFLAG 6 PM Home Base 6-9 PM FIT Dinner 7P M	25	26	27	28 RIC 7 PM	29 Home Base 6-9 PM	
30 <u>Worship Services:</u> GATHER AS ONE 10:00 AM <i>Blessing of the Animals</i> Planning Mtg 12 PM RIC 3 & 5 PM	31 Home Base 6-9 PM						

Welcome Back Snow-Birds!

This time of year, our brothers and sisters who travel north for the summer return to our lovely community. They have been missed a ton, and we are so glad to have them back. Welcome home snow-birds. We love you!

Invite Someone to Riviera United Church of Christ!

Our publicity team has been working hard the past year and we've received a lot of press. People are coming to see what Riviera UCC is all about. Visitors have been treated with kindness and a welcoming spirit that's infectious. This is great news! Good job Riviera UCC! The best way to get folks to church is not through publicity, however, it is through personal invitations and conversations by members with their family, friends, neighbors and acquaintances. This has always been the number one way to bring in visitors.



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 321-723-3963
www.rivieraucc.org



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

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

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