



The Vigil

August 2008



A Communication Of The International Christian Community Churches

A Message From The Presiding Minister

- Rev. Carlene Wood

As I write this rather late note to you all, I imagine that many of you have joined with me in prayer for those who were killed, injured or affected by the recent church shooting in Tennessee. Such incidents, we believe, can occur at shopping malls, fast food restaurants, post offices, and (sadly) at public schools -- but at churches?! Surely not something this horrendous!

This incident is a sad reminder that we live in a violent world that extends even into our sacred spaces. We live in a society in neighbors, and where most if like us" in political, religious, tion beliefs and practices. We if at all. This lack of knowing, often leads to suspicion. Suspicion leads to mistrust. Mistrust leads to matel, hatred leads to vio-spaces become targets for this grief that God feels over this



which we do not know our not all of our friends are "just economic and gender identifica- do not really know others well, rather than leading to curiosity, tion grows and becomes mis- fear. Fear leads to hatred. Ulti- lence. Occasionally, our sacred violence. I cannot imagine the human condition.

Many of us have been direct ance. As I wrote last month, annual conference in our area last week. Religious intolerance and disrespect come in many other forms as well. There is too little grace, tolerance and respect preached from this country's pulpits. When the Church gives permission to discriminate and to avoid dissimilar people, the suspicion-mistrust-fear-hatred-violence cycle is fueled. In essence, the Church insti-

victims of religious intoler- Exodus International held its

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Keynote Speaker CONVOCATION 2008

ICCC is proud to announce that our keynote speaker for the Saturday night worship service for CONVOCATION 2008 is **Mr. Jimmy Creech**. Mr. Creech is a native of Goldsboro, NC, and an ordained Elder in the United Methodist Church. He holds a BA in Biblical Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Master of Divinity from the Divinity School of Duke University. He served as a pastor in churches of The North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church from 1970 to 1990.



While at Fairmont United Methodist Church in Raleigh, NC he helped to create the Raleigh Religious Network for Gay and Lesbian Equality, an ecumenical group whose purpose was to publicly counter antigay religious rhetoric with a faithful message of God's love for and inclu-

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A Thank You Note from our Webmaster

I can't express my gratitude to you for your faithfulness over the years.

For a good while now, the websites have been my only source of income and I do appreciate it.

God Bless You Richly

Rod Watkins

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A Message From The Presiding Minister

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gates and condones this discrimination.

We are blessed that there are denominations and churches that, like International Christian Community Churches, believe that Christ's message is one of love, justice and inclusion. The Unitarian Church that experienced this tragic crime has paid a very high price for being open and affirming of ALL people. Innocent people have died because of their courage to do justice and to be inclusive. We honor their sacrifice, and continue to spread Christ's love when we seek justice and inclusion for everyone, and when we work to tear down every barrier that keeps people away from the Beloved Community that Christ calls us to be.

Each of us must examine the ways in which we personally deny others a place at Christ's table. We must continue to extend God's invitation in radically inclusive ways so that we can know and be known by others. We must also continue to pray for this man and for all perpetrators of violence and ask that God touch their very hearts and souls in profound ways. The Table is set for them, as well.

I am grateful to be in Christ's service with you all.

Convocation 2008

“WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?”

Before we know it, summer will be gone and fall will be upon us. It is not too soon to make your plans for Convocation 2008. The dates are November 7-9 and will once again be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel – Airport in Atlanta. There will be workshops dealing with new and different topics, music that will thrill your soul and speakers that will touch your hearts.

This year, workshops will begin on Saturday morning, prior to the business meeting. After the meeting, lunch will be provided and there will be another set of workshops. There will be lots of time to make new friends and see old friends. Friday night, prior to our worship service, we will have The Gathering with wonderful food and time to relax before the service.

We will feature a new and exciting Christian musical group the fabulous CANAAN BAND. We know you will love their music. You can hear a preview on their web site at www.canaanband.com.

The hotel has been renovated since last year and will provide a relaxing atmosphere for everyone. Registration for the Convocation is \$45.00. There are 60 lucky people who filled out surveys and returned them to us. If you are one of these people, you will receive a \$5.00 discount on your registration. The room rate this year is \$85.00 per room, for up to four people.

Registration for the Convocation needs to be sent to our Treasurer no later than October 30, 2008 in order to receive the meals. Registration forms are enclosed in the VIGIL and will also be mailed to everyone who has attended in the past. Hotel registration MUST be handled by the hotel. Reservations need to be made by calling the hotel directly at 404-768-6660. Please be sure and mention the ICC Convocation in order to obtain the correct room rate. These reservations must be made no later than October 15, 2008 in order to obtain the group rate. Please DO NOT call the Crowne Plaza Reservations Line (the 1-800 number) to make your reservations as you may not be able to obtain our room rate.

Should you have any problems or questions, please contact any Governing Board member.

In the meantime, make your plans for an exciting weekend in November.



Back to School

It only seems like yesterday that I was saluting summer. Now it is August and the air is filled with "Back to School" commercials. I think it may be time for us to think about going back to school. Recently I have been confronted with the knowledge that a pastor does not know everything. I know it is hard to believe, but I can testify that it is very true. Transitions in leadership are full of surprises. I have suddenly found myself burning the midnight oil looking through documents I thought I had read: The Article of Covenant, Robert's Rules of Order, The Pastor's Manual. Not the most exciting material I am here to testify, but certainly of great importance to me now. From material that sat unused for many months or years suddenly they became of vital importance. Once transition has begun it waits for no person. You need answers and you need them now. From time to time I have read them but now I need them. I suggest that all of us in the next year read them, maybe twice. These documents are created at the beginning of an institution: church or organization. Many are copied from another similar organization and serve as a foundation for government. All of us know from experience that all organizations and churches are not alike, so problems or questions arise about these foundational documents. As in my case it was something that had never been addressed before and so information and guidance was limited. The good thing is that the information and experiences gathered will be available for future use and study. It will become a part of our learning curve. This is true for all of our churches. We have experiences that touch the lives of our churches that need to be shared with the whole body. We have an opportunity to share our case studies with others. In my own case the Governing Board has walked with me. They did not have all the answers but they remained in the process so that we as a denomination could benefit from this experience.

In the next few years, as we grow and develop, other questions and situations will arise. I can almost guarantee that The Pastor's Manual and Articles of Covenant may not have all of the solutions. I would suggest to all of us that these tools of government are not complete and need revision. Even our own United States Constitution is open ended and can be revised to meet the needs and changes we face as a people. From my personal experience I know this is true. There are questions we have as laity and pastors that still need to be asked and answers to be found. As pastors, The Pastor's Manual should contain more than the requirements for being a pastor or removing a pastor, but also a guide to dealing with the job of pasturing. Perhaps it should be called "A Practical Guide to Frequently Asked Questions." We have 14 experts who can contribute to the text. We all need to stay in school. The future of our denomination is depending on us.

The Emmaus Institute can be a great help in our development. Not only does it provide an education for the development of clergy and laity, but it can provide a place for the development or re-development of the denominational doctrine.

I have learned, much to my surprise, school is never over. We are in the process of education every day. We learn new things. Some things we have learned are no longer true or their concept has been expanded beyond what we have been taught. God's Word is like that for us too. There is always the possibility of new insights. Just look how long it took for the early church to say the world was round! In your fall scheduling, plan to continue your education. Every community has access to education. We

Who Do You Say YOU Are?

The theme for the 2008 Convocation is "Who Do You Say I Am?" It is an opportunity to discover the many faces of Jesus in our lives. In addition to looking at the many faces of Jesus, we also want to look at the many faces of ICCC. We want to see you and your community of faith! In a concerted effort to make this year's gathering real and personal for everyone, we have come up with a way to allow each of us to get an "insider's view" of our church families.

We are asking each church to bring a collage on a tri-fold foam core board to be displayed in the common area so that we can get to know each faith community a little better. On this display can be pictures of worship, social activities, quotes, mission statements, church vision or drawings – anything that helps us to understand and know your faith community fuller.

So share yourselves with us! We WANT to know you better. We WANT to share with you! We WANT to experience the joys and marvels of YOUR faith family. So start gathering those pictures, drawings or whatever best tells the rest of us just who you are!



2008 Keynote Speaker

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sion of all persons, regardless of sexual orientation. Mr. Creech served as the Program Associate with the North Carolina Council of Churches from 1991 to 1996. While he was serving on the North Carolina Council of Churches, the Council voted for the approval of the membership application of the Gulf Lower Atlantic District of MCC. This was the first state Council of Churches to do so. He was instrumental in providing workshops for churches in the association to teach ways to be open and affirming.

In March of 1998, he was acquitted of a charge violating the Order and Discipline of the United Methodist Church for celebrating a covenant ceremony of two women in September of 1997. In April of 1999 Mr. Creech celebrated the Holy Union of two men in Chapel Hill, and charges were brought against him for this pastoral act. Once again he faced a trial in November of 1999. He has served in numerous organizations and received many rewards and a great deal of recognition for his service. We are honored to have Mr. Creech speak to us at this year's annual Convocation. This denomination supports him in all his efforts for fairness, equality and justice in our world.

Celebrating In Hickory

August is a big month for Christ's Church of the Foothills. It marks the seventh anniversary of Rev. Christine Oscar as pastor of the church. It is also the anniversary of the church. There will be a big cookout on August 1st and a special service on August 2nd. Rev. Carlene Wood, Presiding Minister will be preaching and joining in the festivities.

The folks in Hickory will also have the opportunity to celebrate Rev. Oscar's 25th consecutive year as a pastor. She was pastor at St. Mary's in Greensboro for 18 years and was then called to Hickory, NC. It is with joy, pleasure and humbleness that ICCC joins in congratulating both the church and Rev. Oscar at these milestones.

Christ's Church of the Foothills was the first church to join ICCC and Rev. Oscar is a founding member of the denomination. We thank the church and their pastor for their faithfulness and commitment.

Christ First News SPIRITUAL RETREAT

On June 5-8th, 2008 a group of 18 people from the congregation of Christ First in Gainesville, GA ventured to Pigeon Forge, Tennessee for a 3 day spiritual retreat. The weekend was organized by our pastor, Rev. Monica Ledford and her partner, Christy who are familiar with the mountains of West Tennessee. They obtained a beautiful cabin with four levels that was large enough to accommodate all 18 of us under one roof. The cabin sat high on a ridge overlooking the mountains and valleys. The view was spectacular!



The weekend included group discussions, a picnic and nature ride, and games (the Family Feud was most memorable). We also did some sharing of "what was your most.....", a study on the 5 Love Languages, and a guided meditation on "God, the Source of Living Water." During the weekend, each person shared in the preparation of meals which culminated in a "Fine Dining" event on our last night with 18 people seated along one long table.

We shared, laughed, cried, and became closer to God, nature, one another, and our group mission as a church. We can't wait until we can do it all over again!



News From New Day Greer, SC

New Day will be hosting the Georgia and South Carolina Emmaus students for their Church History classroom session of the summer semester on Saturday, August 16th. New Day will be providing lunch for the students and we are excited to be able to share the building and the blessings the Lord has graciously given to us.

After our sobering experience on the rapids of the Green River, you may recall we decided putt-putt and a cookout was more appropriate to "our age group." Indeed, the more we thought about it, the better it sounded – sooo – we will in fact be having a day at Frankie's Fun Park followed by a cookout at Pastor Steve and Tim's where the wading pool will be open and the croquet court will be smoking. All of this fun and more will be on Saturday September the 6th. All are welcome to join us!

Plans are underway for our yearly Homecoming Weekend scheduled for September 21, 2008. Our special guest speaker will be our Presiding Minister Rev. Carlene Wood. Following worship we will enjoy food and fellowship with dinner on the grounds. We would love to see some "new faces" with us that day, so this is an open invitation to join your brothers and sisters for a day of worship, celebration and great food. Activities are being planned for Saturday too. Why not make it a weekend?

Souvlaki

"Souvlaki is a Greek specialty made with tender cuts of meat. In this pork recipe, the meat is marinated in a lemony olive oil mixture. Serve with rice pilaf and a Greek salad."

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 4 pounds pork tenderloin, cut into 1 inch cubes
- 2 medium yellow onions, cut into 1 inch pieces
- 2 green bell peppers, cut into 1 inch pieces
- tomatoes (optional)
- Skewers

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large glass bowl, mix together lemon juice, olive oil, soy sauce, oregano, and garlic; add pork, onions, and green peppers, and stir to coat. Cover, and refrigerate for 2 to 3 hours.
2. Preheat grill for medium-high heat. Thread pork, peppers, and onions onto skewers.

Lightly oil grate. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes, or to desired doneness, turning skewers frequently for even cooking.

Submitted By: Rod Watkins

Farewell and Hello

On August 3, 2008, Rev. Jay Neely founding Pastor of Good Shepherd ICCC will retire. This last service will honor him for his dedication and leadership to our community. We cordially invite all who know him to attend this service of thanksgiving. Sunday at 11 AM. There will be refreshments after the service.

This will be the last joint service held by Good Shepherd. Good Shepherd will divide into two communities: Good Shepherd North pastored by Rev. Mena Johnson and Good Shepherd South pastored by Rev. Philip Maniscalco. It will not be an easy separation for we have been one family since our founding. Like most families the separation will be filled with anxiety. We have been challenged to develop two communities which will bring the good news to more people in a very large city. It will present us with new opportunities and new experiences in evangelization. We ask that you pray for all of us as we begin this new journey for Christ.



CONVOCAATION REGISTRATION FORM

November 7 – 9, 2008

Crowne Plaza Atlanta Airport
1325 Virginia, Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30344
Vc: 404-768-6660 Fax: 404-766-6121
Email: cpatlantaairport@ichotelsgroup.com

Please Print Clearly

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone() _____

Church Affiliation: _____

Names of Children and their ages (under 12 free of charge, but must be registered for lunch)

Child _____ Age _____ Child _____ Age _____

Child _____ Age _____ Child _____ Age _____

Registration Fee: \$45.00 per person (children under 12 free)
Registration must be received by October 30th to include free lunch.

Amount enclosed: _____
(You may use one check for multiple registrations. Please mail all registrations together with check.)

Names of Registrants included in payment: _____

Hotel reservations must be made directly to the hotel. **Do Not Use the 1-866 number.** The discount will not apply. The room fee for the Crowne Plaza is \$85 a night. You must mention ICCC convocation to receive the group rate. The hotel number is: 404-768-6660. **Reservations need to be made by October 15th in order to receive the group rate.**

MAKE CHECK/MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO ICCC AND MAIL WITH COMPLETED FORM TO:

**ICCC – CONVOCAATION
PO BOX 178**



International Christian Community Churches



Interest Form

1. Helping Ministry at Convocation

I Would Be Willing To Help With: (please check)

Welcome/Registration _____

ASL Signer _____

Memento Sales _____

2. Special Music/Artistry at Worship Services

I am interested in sharing through:

Special Music: Singing _____

Other: (please indicate what) _____

Please indicate choice of selection and who we can contact to check talent.

Any special music should fit with the theme

Who Do You Say I Am?

Name _____

Contact information: Phone: () _____ Email: _____

PLEASE MAIL THIS FORM WITH COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORM TO:

ICCC Convocation
PO Box 178
Greer, SC 29652

Phone: 828-505-4306 Email: intlccc@charter.net



The Vigil

August 2008

Governing Board

Presiding Minister: Rev. Carlene Wood
Asst. Presiding Minister: Ms. Sharon Lindenbaum
Clerk of the Board: Ms. Kim McGinnis
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At-Large: Rev. Linda Simonds; Web Liaison

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Mr. Alan Hathcock
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Deadline: 25th of the month

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