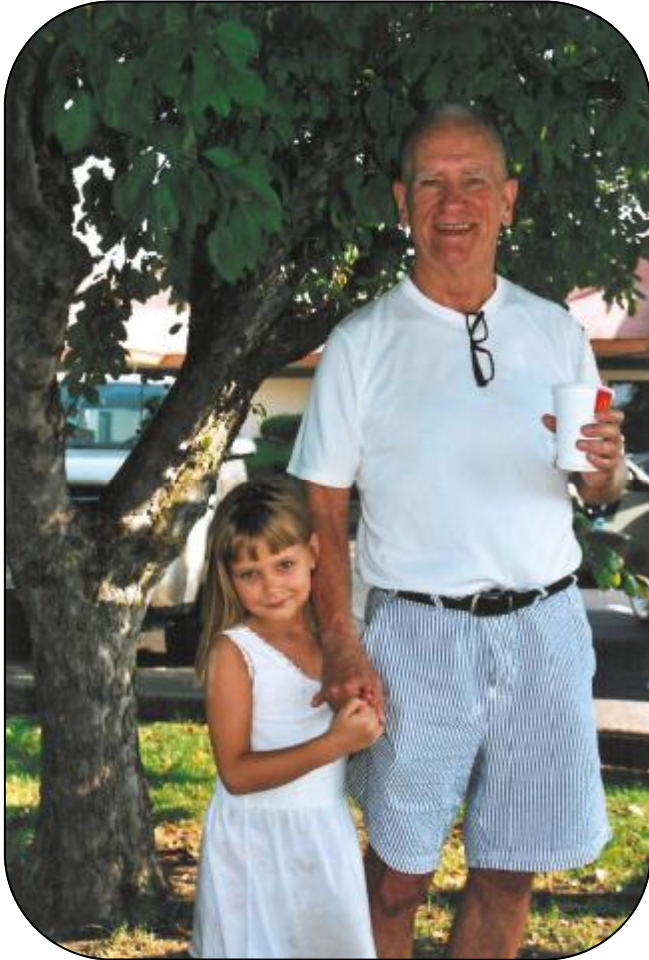


12 months of Compassion



worship and learning
with the other evangelical
evangelical united church of christ

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Letter from Pastor Katy

"Love God. Be Nice."

Dear friends,

Recently as a middle school teacher shared the story of her classes each identifying the "golden rule" as a baseline for classroom conduct, I was struck both by universality and acceptance of this concept and also the difficulty of living it.

We all know it, we all recite it. We give Jesus credit for it, but it dates back to Confucius and maybe even further.

It is as sacred to us as apple pie, and yet... we are as selfish now as any time in history. Clearly we need a different set of tools if we are to live this simple creed.

After winning a TED prize for her presentation on the "Golden Rule" in 2009, Karen Armstrong gathered a group of spiritual leaders and together crafted a "Charter of Compassion" which, in brief, challenges all of us to begin to live the simple truth that we learned as children. Believing that we needed some tools to turn a creed into a transformed life, Armstrong took inspiration from 12 step groups and devised a 12 step practice for developing a compassionate life.

As our Worship and Learning teams gathered to discuss goals for our communal life, the group began to dream about a faith community organized in worship and learning around these 12 simple practices. We began to envision a time when, through repeated years of practice, compassion would become more instinctive.

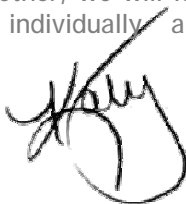
The Charter of Compassion embodies our Values, Mission and Vision (2007) and flows directly from Jesus' life and teachings. Even as we value the seasons of the church year, the Revised Common Lectionary, and the 3 year cycle of stories for our Church School, we see in the 12 steps of compassion an opportunity.

Handily organized into 12 themes, we can focus on one theme each month. Our biblical stories can be chosen to illumine these themes, so too our celebrations.

Consensus was quickly realized and a plan began to unfold. As we journey through this year together, we will learn a series of tools that we pray will empower us, individually and collectively, to lead more compassionate lives.

Katherine HawkerSelf

August 2011





Learning Programs

Each Sunday morning from 9:45am-10:45am (Labor Day to Memorial Day) we offer opportunities for all ages to explore the questions of faith and practice compassion.

Our children's programs are in the lower level of the education building, teens in the Still Speaking Center, and adults in the upper level classrooms.

With a team of amazing volunteers, we develop and lead program with and for one another.



Beginners

Our youngest children, ages 3 and 4, meet for story and play with Laura Evans and Sandy Bowe in the Red Room. Parents drop off and pick up in the classroom.

PreK and Kindergarten

Our PreK and Kindergarten children meet in the Worship Room with Barb Touchette, Ray Mulligan and Harriet Frazier. Parents drop off and pick up in the classroom.

Elementary Ages

Children in grades 1-6 meet for opening story in the Green Room. A variety of multi-age choice activities will be offered each week led by Darcy Swanson, Kathy Adair and Debbie Gregg. Parents drop off and pick up in the Green Room.

New this year will be opening story at 9:45am followed by the center times which will be multi-age and based on each child's choice.

Also new are special requests for helpers. We need a (monthly) Welcome Table Host to help with sign in and also a (weekly) Storyteller.



Registration form for Beginner-6th Grade:

<http://evangelicalucc.org/files/churchschoolregistration.pdf>



Parent Group

A weekly gathering that features a series of monthly opportunities for our parents (open to all!). With an eye towards developing group camaraderie, we'll explore topics identified by group members.



New Member Classes

Three week sessions of exploration and community building offering information about both our local community and our denomination. These classes are led by Al Schon.



Adults

We recognize that the most important teachers our children have are their parents and that our children learn much more by our actions than our words. We are persuaded, too, by the witness of the flight attendants who teach us that we are not to help our children until we first put on our own oxygen mask. Learning at the Other Evangelical is not just for children.

For our adults we offer multiple options each week at 9:45am in the main building:

Topical Series

September:

General Synod Sharing (Gary Stallings) and the UCC Disabilities Ministry (Ryan Matthews)

October:

Companion Ministry, An Introduction. Each week we'll explore an area of potential ministry:

- Mental Health of Children
- Issues of Aging
- Homelessness
- Mental Illness
- Substance Abuse
- and Trauma

Jr High (Confirmation Prep)

Confirmation is the rite whereby youth join the community of faith, celebrated each spring at Pentecost. We dedicate both 7th and 8th grade learning experiences in preparation for this commitment. Although we explore a variety of content areas, our primary focus is on building relationships which foster the faith journey. Jeanne Smith is the guide for our Sunday morning learning time.



Senior High

Our oldest youth meet in the Still Speaking Center with Lucy Allen.



Youth Fellowship

Our youth love to hang out with each other and at the church.

In addition to our Fall Retreat and popular monthly meals, we will be looking for parents to again help us organize our program for teens.

Parents can sign up to lead a game night, an outing (Bowling, Laser Tag, etc), movie/discussion, or service project.

Music Program

Why music? It enlivens our souls. It lifts our spirits. It challenges us to hear more deeply and in new ways. It inspires us to find our own voices. It broadens our vision. It relaxes our judgments! It nudges us to higher aspirations. It soothes our anxiety. It is the Muses at play! And the Muses invite you to share these gifts for life. Some ways you can be involved:



Chancel Choir

Whether you're a beginner or have had years of vocal experience, if you love music, we want you to join the choir. We sing a wide variety of music and we promise it will please YOU!! In rehearsals, we work on the basics of singing including how to read music, and we prepare music for our worship services. We meet most Thursdays from 7:00pm-8:30pm and sing most Sundays from September through May. We're in need of tenor and bass voices especially, but everyone is welcome to join in the fun. If you have an interest and/or questions, please call Directors, Donita Bauer or Jill Thompson.

Folk Ensemble

This is an informal choir for folks who enjoy folk music. Rehearsals are on the first Sunday of each month at 9:45am in the sanctuary and we sing monthly in worship.



Youth Choir-Band

A musical group for Junior and Senior High youth, we practice once a week (probably Sunday, noon-1pm) and sing/play monthly in worship. If you like to sing and/or have an instrument to play, we'll teach the rest! Directed by Jill Thompson.

Children's Choir

A choir for children (PreK—6th grade). We rehearse from 6:30pm - 7:30pm each Wednesday and sing for worship once a month. Basic note reading, rhythm, and singing skills are taught as we prepare our anthems for worship. Questions? Please call Director, Darcy Swanson.



And More...

Instrumental Ensemble

This group is for instrumentalists who've had a few years playing experience, generally junior high through adult. We play for festivals and about one service per month. This group meets one Sunday per month between services. If you want to find out more, contact Donita Bauer.

Solos, etc.

In addition to these groups, we also like to provide special musical offerings by soloists and/or small groups. Children, youth and adults are all encouraged to participate. If you have a musical talent you would like to share in worship, please talk with Donita Bauer, Darcy Swanson or Jill Thompson, or sign up on the Round Table outside the sanctuary.

The Band

An informal, quirky little group of guitarists, percussionists, instrumentalists who oftentimes show up to play along with the Sunday music. If you're interested, talk to Donita Bauer.

Drumming Circle

This is an informal group practicing the spiritual and therapeutic art of drumming.

Contacts

Donita Bauer 314/367-8224 dbauer3671@sbcglobal.net

Jill Thompson 314/367-8224 jskbythom1@sbcglobal.net

Darcy Swanson 314/729-0251 ddaswanson@hotmail.com



Worship and Children

We love children, babies, and teens and we welcome all ages to share worship with us.

Activity pages (available in the Narthex) allow children of all ages to respond creatively to worship.

A story time (Chancel Steps) is offered at both worship services.

A playtime for young children is offered after the Chancel Steps at the 11:00 a.m. service.

We respect that each child is unique and no single program fits all children. We strive to welcome all ages within our worship experience but also understand that some children are most comfortable in other settings. Professional childcare is available throughout the morning for those who prefer.



Communion

Communion is shared each week at the 8:30am service and on the first Sunday of each month at 11:00am. The words we share vary but most often our pastor begins by sharing, words of invitation, a remembrance of Jesus' sharing around tables and a blessing prayer.

We share communion by "intinction", meaning that we walk forward, take a piece of bread from the loaf ("we are one in the body"), dip it in the juice ("the cup of Blessing"), and then eat. Before returning to our seats we are invited to light a candle at the altar in prayer and leave an offering in the offering plates.

Many children share at the table from the time they can reach the bread and do so with remarkable sensitivity. At the same time, we respect each family's need to discern what timing is best for your children.



Baptism

background...

While most Christians share baptism in remembrance of Jesus' baptism, our practices and our beliefs vary widely.

An important point of difference is a belief in either "original sin" or "original blessing". Original blessing is newer language to express an even older idea that humans enter the world at one with the Creator.

As we adopt this theology we are more likely to understand the ritual of baptism as the celebration of the relationship between the recipient, the gathered community, and the presence of God.

our practice...

We celebrate baptism with infants, young children, teens and adults. Baptism can be celebrated during any season of the year. Baptism is shared with children at the parents request, with youth at Confirmation, and with new members who chose.

The questions we share for infant baptisms were written for the children in our community and embrace our community values of diversity and inquiry.

Likewise the questions shared with new members, Confirmands, and adult baptisms reflect the vision, mission and values of our community.

Safe Church

“Evangelical United Church of Christ is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God’s love. In order to promote this, we have established the following guidelines in addition to the general requirements for ministers who regularly work with children and youth ministry as well as those working with vulnerable persons of the church. This includes, but is not limited to, teachers, chaperones for overnight stays, employees, youth leaders, nursery assistants, shepherds assistants, and members of the care partners circle.”

- as quoted in our Safe Church Policy

We ask that volunteers (parent and others):

- Have a history in our community.
- Register with the Family Care Safety Registry.
- Complete a disclosure form (Exhibit D).
- Provide evidence of good driving record and insurances when transporting youth.



In our program we expect:

- Every program for children and youth have established ratios for adults and children, including activities that occur off church premises.
- Procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.
- Written consent for all activities off the church property, transportation, and any overnight activities.
- Transportation provided only from church to off-site activities and back, and all cars must have no fewer than three individuals.
- Youth, parents, and leaders must sign covenants every year.

Forms for youth:

Youth Covenant (annually) - <http://evangelicalucc.org/files/YouthCovenant.pdf>

Event Participation (per event) - <http://evangelicalucc.org/files/EventParticipation.pdf>

Medical Information (annually) - <http://evangelicalucc.org/files/MedicalInformation.pdf>

Forms for adult volunteers:

Volunteer Disclosure - <http://evangelicalucc.org/files/Exhibit D.doc>

Covenants Forms - <http://evangelicalucc.org/files/Exhibit E - Covenants.doc>

Registration with Family Care Safety Registry - <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/fcsr/>



Charter of Compassion

The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honor the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

We therefore call upon all men and women

- ~ to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion
- ~ to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate
- ~ to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures
- ~ to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity
- ~ to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.

We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.

<http://charterforcompassion.org>

12 Months of Compassion

1. January – Learn About Compassion

“This program is designed to bring forth the compassion that, as we have seen, exists potentially within every human being so that it can become a healing force in our own lives and in the world.”

Back to basics...

2. February – Look at Your Own World

“It is now time to apply what we have learned to our own circumstances and to the society in which we live.”

Seeing the world for what it is...

3. March – Compassion for Yourself

“Once you have started to feel a genuine compassion for yourself, you will be able to extend it to others.”

You are the light of the world...



4. April – Empathy

“The suffering we have experienced in our own life can help us to appreciate the depths of other people’s unhappiness.”

Facing me, I see you...

5. May – Mindfulness

“Once we know that the cause of so much pain is within ourselves, we have the motivation to change.”

Paying attention creates a readiness for change...

6. June – Action

“We are not doomed to an existence of selfishness, because we have the ability, with disciplined, repetitive action, to construct new habits of thought, feeling, and behavior.”

Trying on new behaviors...

12 Months of Compassion

7. July – How Little We Know

“We can never understand the transcendence we call God; precisely because it is transcendent, it lies beyond the reach of the senses and is therefore incapable of definitive proof.”

How little we know...

8. August – How Shall We Speak to One Another?

“During this step, we try to make ourselves mindful of the way we speak to others.”

Respect...



9. September – Concern for Everybody

“Letting go of our ‘tribal’ egotism can become a spiritual process.”

See our connectedness...

10. October – Knowledge

“Overcoming the limitations of the unexamined life and the dangers of habitual tribal thinking.”

Open to learning...

11. November – Recognition

“If we want to achieve reconciliation, not only do we have to struggle with the enemy, but we also have to wrestle with ourselves.”

Recognizing our oneness...

12. December – Love Your Enemies

“We have to try to look carefully and deeply into our own hearts and thus learn to see the sorrow of our enemy.”

A new holiday tradition...

Mission

*Following the God made known
in the life and teachings of Jesus,
we at Evangelical United Church of Christ gather
as an Open and Affirming community
to worship, learn and serve.*

Values

As a community, Evangelical United Church of Christ celebrates the values embodied in the ministry of Jesus:

- Inclusiveness in our diversity,
- Intentionality in our commitment to social justice,
- Intimacy in our fellowship together,
- Inspiration in our communal worship and
- Inquisitiveness in our personal spiritual growth.

Vision

We desire to be a leader in helping the wider community affirm that God is still speaking.

Adopted by the congregation, July 2007



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