

First Congregational Christian UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

August 2023



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Every two years the national body of the United Church of Christ gathers at General Synod to worship and celebrate together and do the work of the wider church. The first in-person national gathering since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic was held in Indianapolis from June 30 – July 4. During General Synod, delegates considered 17 resolutions and several bylaw changes. Here are some of the highlights:

- The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson was elected as the new General Minister and President of the UCC. She is the first woman and the first Black minister to hold this position.
- Outgoing General Minister and President John Dorhauer apologized for the historical failure of the United Church of Christ to recognize the Afro-Christian Convention as the “fifth stream” making up the United Church of Christ, joining the already acknowledged Congregational, Christian, Evangelical and Reformed traditions.
- A statement supporting affirmative action was endorsed by General Synod in response to the recent SCOTUS ruling.
- Approved Resolutions included:
 - Condemnation of solitary confinement as a form of torture
 - Affirmation of the dignity of trans and nonbinary persons
 - Support for public school educators, academic freedom, and equity efforts in schools.
 - Affirmation of the right of all people to access reproductive healthcare, including contraception and abortion.
 - A commitment to investigate and make amends for the UCC’s historical complicity in boarding schools for Native Hawaiians and Native American nations.
 - A call to congregations to confront white supremacy and make their congregations “white supremacy free zones.”

You can see a complete list of the highlights, with more details about all of the resolutions, at <https://www.ucc.org/general-synod-34-highlights/>

AUGUST WORSHIP CALENDAR

Sundays at 11:00 AM

and on Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/1stUCC>

Aug 6 10th Sunday after Pentecost; Holy Communion

Genesis 32:22-31; Psalm 17:1-7, 15; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21
Guest pastor: Rev. R. Charles Grant

Aug 13 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 37:1-4,12-28; Psalm 105:1-6,16-22,45b; Romans 10:5-15; Matthew 14:22-33
Guest pastor: Phyllis Tessieri

Aug 20 12th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 45:1-15; Psalm 133; Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32; Matthew 15:10-20, 21-28
Guest pastor: Amanda Pohl

Aug 27 13th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 1:8-2:10; Psalm 124; Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20
Guest pastor: Rev. Daniel Willson



Along with all of “Metro Richmond at Prayer,” during August let’s pray for the Workplaces and Businesses of Metropolitan Richmond.



Our monthly Black Lives Matter vigil will be held on **Sunday, August 13 following worship**. Bring a sign - or borrow one of ours - and join us in front of the church along Courthouse Road for an hour to show our solidarity with our Black brothers and sisters!

Pastor **SEARCH UPDATES**

At our Congregational Meeting on July 23 we approved the additional at-large members from the congregation for the Pastoral Search committee (some members are required under the Bylaws). The committee consists of Jeff Beatman, Doug Macauley, Jim Decknick, Gail Christie, Kieran Eggleston, and Patty Beatman (Patty and Jeff will share just one vote). We will be searching for a part-time “designated term” pastor – the same position that was held by Rev. Joe Medlin – with the option to be considered for a permanent call. The committee is now in the process of updating our church profile and position description to send to the Conference, and we will be meeting with Rev. Marvin Silver, our Associate Conference Minister, on August 3 to review the search process. Stay tuned....

August Birthdays

8/07 Niki Auletta
8/09 Amanda Moody
8/09 Jonathan Conception
8/11 Helen Parry
8/14 Ed Hooker
8/23 Merry Donati



August Anniversaries

8/01 Jerry & June Conner
8/21 Will Edwards & Herman Morris
8/21 George & Elizabeth Marshall
8/22 Mark & Nancy Griffith
8/30 Art & Amanda Moody



The financial secretary would like to thank everyone for keeping their pledges up to date during the summer months. Remember – you can mail checks to the church,

use your bank's online bill pay, or make payments via Venmo, to:

1stchurchuccgiving@gmail.com.



Flying Squirrels Faith Night Thursday, August 10 Game time 6:35 PM

Come cheer on the Flying Squirrels as they play the Bowie Baysox. The game begins at 6:35; we plan on meeting outside the front gate at 5:30. Tickets are \$10 each for reserved seating. Contact Jeff Beatman by August 1st if you would like to go.

Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship will meet for breakfast this month on **Saturday, August 12 at 9 AM** at First Watch, 1403 Huguenot Rd. Midlothian.

Women's Fellowship

Thanks to everyone who donated for supplies and helped assemble 33 menstrual hygiene kits last month for distribution by Church World Service! Women's Fellowship will meet for brunch on **Saturday, August 19 at 11:30 AM** this month at the Hard Shell, 11400 W Huguenot Rd., Midlothian. Please RSVP to Sharon Macauley.



This is the list of high priority items provided recently by the volunteers

at the Food Pantry. Thanks, as always, for your faithful support of this ministry!

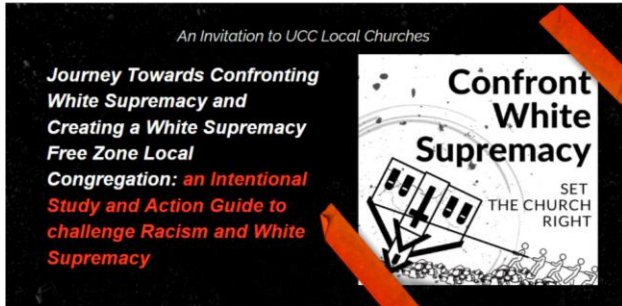
1. "Heat & Eats" (This is an umbrella term for anything that can constitute a one-pot meal: Chili, canned pasta, corned beef hash, beef stew, chicken and dumplings, etc.)
2. Spam / Treet
3. Canned Fruit
4. Juice
5. Pasta & Pasta Sauce
6. Laundry Detergent
7. Dishwashing Soap
8. Feminine hygiene products

Bowling **Sunday Aug 6**



Join us at Bowl America on Hull

Street at 1 PM for fun and fellowship. For details, see Rhoda Blocker.



UCC delegates meeting last month in Indianapolis overwhelmingly passed a resolution calling on local churches of the United Church of Christ to declare themselves as 'A White Supremacy Free Zone' and to publicly express that "We are confronting white supremacy through declaration, intentional study, and action." Through this resolution, Synod — which speaks to and not for local UCC congregations — called on all the denomination's settings, including "local churches of predominantly European descent" to "confront the idolatry of white supremacy, in witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ."

This resolution originated from efforts in our Potomac Association, where representatives from several churches with membership of predominantly European descent came together to develop a process to live into this resolution. Their work was reviewed periodically by a group of representatives from churches with membership of predominantly African descent. Revisions were made based on the feedback received. The draft guide that was developed, the "*Journey Towards Confronting White Supremacy and Creating a White Supremacy Free Zone Local Congregation: An Intentional Study and Action Guide*" was used in a pilot program this spring as a field test in support of the resolution. Seven members of our congregation participated in this pilot, which consisted of 8 sessions meeting over a period of 4 months. This group - Jeff and Patty Beatman, Gail Christie, Dave and Brenda Clancy, Kieran Eggleston, and Joy Hoyle - is now making plans for next steps for personal growth and for engagement of the larger congregation in this work. Feel free to ask them about their experience!



UPDATES FROM RISC

Good news on gun violence prevention: RISC has formed an alliance with the The Richmond Chapter of Virginia Caucus of Rank-and-File Educators (VCORE) on the issue of gun violence prevention. They recently wrote a joint letter to Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney and, after three years of stonewalling, he has finally agreed to a meeting – on August 29th. More details will be forthcoming. In the meantime, put August 29 at 5 pm on your calendar!

Bad news on affordable housing:

Richmond wants to do with away with the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) Supervisory Board as well as the Trust Fund itself. Instead, they propose to have a "Housing Commission." The plan is to roll the existing AHTF Board into a new Housing Commission – which will have an advisory role on housing policy but no decision-making authority on how affordable housing funds are allocated – and transfer the remaining balance in the AHTF to the new Housing Commission.

Basically, now that the AHTF has a significant amount of money – thanks to the hard work of RISC – the city wants to turn it into a political slush fund that is controlled by City Council and the Mayor. Affordable housing in Richmond would become a "pay to play" scheme. And while affordable housing would get built, it very likely would not be for those MOST in need of it.

City leaders will have to repeal an ordinance in order to make this happen. They indicated their timeline for this will be some time this fall. RISC plans to fight this, as hard as we can. Luckily, some on City Council have expressed opposition to this plan. Stay tuned for much more information how we plan to fight this power grab!



Faith and Democracy 2023

One goal of our campaign is voter education. Following the 2020 US Census, there was redistricting – which has affected nearly all of us. Do you know what district(s) you are in now?

We each have four different districts: US Congress, Virginia Senate, Virginia House of Delegates, and Chesterfield County Magisterial District (which determines School Board and Board of Supervisors). Redistricting has affected all of these. In the fall of 2023, we are voting for every Virginia House of Delegates and Senate seat, as well as all of the county offices – School Board, Board of Supervisors, Commonwealth’s Attorney, Commissioner of the Revenue, Treasurer, Sheriff, Clerk of Court, Soil and Water Board. You can check your registration status, apply for an absentee ballot for early voting, and see what districts you are in - as well as your polling place - at:

<https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation/Lookup/status>

Early in-person voting in Virginia for the Nov 7 election starts Sept. 22. More information about all of the voting options will be outlined in the September Messenger. If you need help figuring out who your candidates are, see Gail Christie.

Fall GOTV Postcard campaign has begun!

We are partnering again this fall with the Center for Common Ground in a non-partisan campaign to promote voter registration and get-out-the-vote reminders to voters, primarily in communities of color. Postcards, addresses, script, and detailed instructions are provided - you only need to provide stamps. For those who can't afford stamps, we have some that have been donated for this project. Many thanks to those who have already volunteered for this effort! If you would like to help, or want more information, contact Gail Christie. Addresses are now available; the window for mailing completed cards is Sept 8 – Oct 30.

