

# On the Way

September 5, 2008

CENTRAL PACIFIC CONFERENCE \* UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*Extravagant Grace \* Generous Hearts \* Renewed World*

*All the way to Heaven is Heaven!*

- St. Catherine of Siena

This quote from St. Catherine came to me, tagged to an email from a sailing buddy and fellow storyteller Roger Lynn, a DOC minister most recently serving in Idaho. It struck me as an affirmation of spiritual pilgrimage – the journey is our destination. I googled the phrase to learn more.

I discovered an interview with William Cavanaugh titled *Liturgy as Politics*. Cavanaugh teaches at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. This article appeared in *The Christian Century*, (December 13, 2005, pp.28-32). Here is question & answer, and an extended St. Catherine quote.

**In a pluralistic culture like ours, Christians are often led to ponder John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." How do you interpret it?**

*There is a lot that could be said about this verse. The first thing I think of is a quote from St. Catherine of Siena: "All the way to heaven is heaven, because he said I am the way." Catherine talks about Christ as the bridge between heaven and earth, divinity and humanity. The bridge between heaven and earth is already heaven, because it is Christ. I love this quote because it breaks down the dichotomy between means and ends. The Christian life is not a means to heaven. War is not a means to peace, freedom is not a prerequisite for following Christ. The Christian life is about practicing heaven now, on earth, even if it gets you killed. It's not about making our way to Christ in some far-off eschaton; Christ is the way.*

Another "hit" is also worth considering. In November of 1995, folk-rock singer/songwriter/musician Melissa Etheridge released the CD *Your Little Secret*, which included the song *All the Way to Heaven*. It's a call for a love, unencumbered by the expectations of convention. I couldn't find any evidence that Etheridge had been reading St. Catherine lately, but the connection was hard to miss in the chorus:

*All the way to heaven is heaven \* Caught between the spirit and the dust  
All the way to heaven is heaven \* Deep inside of us*

I seldom aim for three points, but there's still room for one more finding. In an article from the *Houston Catholic Worker* discussing how Dorothy Day was inspired by St. Catherine is this description of the 14<sup>th</sup> century saint:

*Some have called her a social mystic. Suzanne Noffke, called her more properly a "mystic activist." She had a tremendous sense of the interdependence of the members of the Body of Christ. Her prayer was centered on Christ and His love, but also on the other members of the Body of Christ and all the potential members, those visible neighbors in whom she could serve the Lord, as well as those of the whole world.*

How does that fit us in the Central Pacific Conference? Mystic Activists? Interdependent members of the Body of Christ? Could be! Together, we serve the whole world, "On the Way."

## ***Creative Inquiry Potluck at Enterprise Community Congregational UCC***

On Sunday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, the congregation will gather for food, community, and conversation. Guided by the process of Appreciative Inquiry, they'll ask each other questions about how they worship together and what they do as a church outside of their sanctuary. They'll listen attentively to the answers to questions that are not complicated...

- in worship, when have you felt most alive? who was involved? what happened?
- what has contributed most to your spiritual life?
- what are the most important things you contribute to the church personally?

These questions, and more, will direct the congregation into the future. If you'd like to learn more about their experience, contact pastor Jon Riedel.

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## ***Catherine Rolling recommends this event to you:***

### **Doing Our Own Work: A Seminar for Anti-Racist White People**

Oct. 24-26, 2008, Dec. 5-7, 2008, and Jan. 16-18, 2009 at The Leaven Center in Lyons, Michigan

Doing Our Own Work is an intensive seminar for white people who seek to deepen their commitment to confronting and challenging white racism where they live and work. It is our experience and conviction that those of us who are white need to "do our own work" -- educating ourselves, confronting white supremacy, holding each other accountable, and demonstrating good faith as we seek to build genuine and lasting coalitions with people of color. Doing Our Own Work seminar is designed as a supplement to, not a substitute for, contexts where people of diverse races and ethnicities discuss and strategize together how racism can be challenged. Utilizing input from the leaders, reading assignments, videos, group discussion, and structured exercises, we will explore the following topics and issues:

Individual racism, institutional racism, and cultural racism \* White privilege and unearned advantage  
Claiming and shaping an anti-racist identity \* How to be an effective anti-racist ally  
Discerning our spiritual resources for change \* Practicing the skills of interrupting racism  
Strategies for institutional change

Providing more than 45 hours of "class time," the seminar utilizes an action/reflection method of learning: our study and reflection will be grounded in anti-racist action and our action will be strengthened and refined by reflection, study, and conversation. The action/reflection components of this seminar will include:

Identification by each participant of a "sphere of influence" or constituency that will serve as her/his focus during the seminar;

Assessment of where and how racism is present in this constituency;

Development of an action plan and time table that identifies ways that the participant can work, in collaboration with others, to challenge white racism and strengthen anti-racist commitment in her/his constituency;

Checking in with the group to receive feedback and encouragement and to amend the action plan where appropriate;

Keeping a journal of daily experiences, insights, concerns, and questions regarding racism and anti-racism.

For more information and registration details go to *The Leaven Center* web site: [www.leaven.org](http://www.leaven.org).

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## ***Pilgrim Press Writing Opportunity ~ Maren Tirabassi***

*All Those Whom God Has Joined – Resources for Clergy and Same Gender Loving Couples* by Leanne McCall Tigert and Maren C. Tirabassi, forthcoming from Pilgrim Press, will resource churches, clergy and couples for same gender loving marriage in a civil or religious context, services of covenanting and civil unions. We are seeking submissions of original services, blessings and prayers for this book. Please send liturgical material in an unformatted Word document. Please remove any individual names or borrowed liturgical language. Deadline is November 1, 2008.

To submit or with questions, please contact: [Allthosewhomgodhasjoined@gmail.com](mailto:Allthosewhomgodhasjoined@gmail.com)

Hard copy submissions (please include SASE) can be mailed to:

Maren C. Tirabassi  
271 Lafayette Road  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801 USA

Related Pilgrim Press ([www.thePilgrimPress.com](http://www.thePilgrimPress.com)) titles by the authors: *Transgendering Faith – Identity, Sexuality and Spirituality* \* *Caring for Ourselves While Caring for our Elders* \* *Coming Out While Staying In* \* *Coming Out through Fire* \* *Coming Out Young and Faithful* \* *Before the Amen – Resources for Worship* \* *God in Our Lives -- Faith Stories and How and Why We Share Them*

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## ***The Clergy Letter and Evolution Weekend***

*Archeology was my first love. Dinosaurs and pyramids fired my imagination. Those stories convinced me that all life is deeply interconnected in this great flow of creation. I was grounded in two worlds – science and Christianity – and I saw no conflict. I was ten years old when I debated the six days of creation with my Missouri Lutheran friend. He took the words literally – six days, sun up and sun down. I didn't know the finer points of myth, but I knew it took much longer than 144 hours for everything to happen. I've always been a stronger supporter of the theory of Evolution, and have fought attempts to teach Creationism or Intelligent Design as science. I gladly added my name to The Clergy Letter a couple of years ago. If you feel the same way, here's more information:*

*From Michael Zimmerman, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences – Butler University*

In the fall of 2004, I worked with clergy throughout Wisconsin to prepare a statement in support of teaching evolution. We were called to action by a series of anti-evolution policies passed by the school board in Grantsburg, WI. The response was overwhelming. In a few weeks, nearly 200 clergy signed the statement, which we sent to the Grantsburg school board on December 16, 2004. Additionally, groups of educators and scientists sent [letters](#) to the Grantsburg School Board and to the Superintendent of Schools protesting these policies. In response to all of this attention, as well as the efforts of others, the Grantsburg School Board retracted their policies.

The outpouring of support from clergy around the country encouraged me to make this a nationwide project. If you want to read more about The Clergy Letter Project or join us in sharing this important perspective, click [here](#).

The Clergy Letter Project has also sponsored annual Evolution Sunday events. These events provide an opportunity for congregations around the world to come together, in the way each feels most comfortable, to discuss the compatibility of religion and science. By doing so, we are educating thousands and elevating the world-wide discussion of this important topic. If your congregation would like to participate in Evolution Sunday, please contact me: <http://www.theclergyletterproject.org>

***Here's a "Church Vitality" Event you don't want to miss.***

***REGISTER NOW!! Transform Your Church with "Unwrapping Our Gifts"***

Bethel Congregational UCC in Beaverton, OR will host a leadership training event on Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 am – 3:30 pm. "Unwrapping Our Gifts" is sponsored by the Central Pacific Conference UCC and the National UCC. This will be a time of individual spiritual renewal as well as an introduction to the Laity Empowerment Project. To get maximum benefit for your church, send a team of 3 people (including your pastor). If you can't find three people, you're still welcome to attend. If you want a personal recommendation, call David Randall-Bodman at Bethel. He'll tell you that it's the best program of leadership training he's experienced in his years of ministry!

Congregational Vitality was the theme of the Spring Assembly and will continue to be a focus for the western churches at the Fall Gathering in Corvallis. "Unwrapping Our Gifts" is a concrete step toward member empowerment and increased vitality for your church. For more information go to: <http://www.laityempowerment.com/>.

Register your team by September 29<sup>th</sup>. **Registration form is attached.**

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### ***CPC Ministry Teams on the Schedule***

Wider Church Ministry Team – Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup>, 12 noon – 3 pm, Interchurch Center  
Covenants Ministry Team – Friday & Saturday, Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>, 5-9pm, Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>, 8:30am-3 pm, ICC.  
Local Church Ministry Team – Saturday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 9am – 1 pm, ICC.

If you have business for these teams, contact the chairs:

Covenants Ministry: Becky Martin [jmartin@jeffnet.org](mailto:jmartin@jeffnet.org)

Local Church Ministry: Rick Skidmore [rick@kairosucc.org](mailto:rick@kairosucc.org)

Wider Church Ministry: Jean Doane [jeanedoane@yahoo.com](mailto:jeanedoane@yahoo.com)

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### ***Healing and Prayer Service at Cedar Hills UCC \*\* CORRECTION\*\* Sorry!***

A service of Healing and Prayer will take place on Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. The gathering will be held in the Sanctuary of the Cedar Hills United Church of Christ, 11695 SW Park Way, Portland. (Chapel is adjacent to the parking lot on Park Way.) Prayer requests will be gathered and included in our individual and group prayers and meditations at the service. All are welcome and encouraged to attend, especially those with prayers concerns for themselves and/or loved ones.

For more information contact Bev Stearns, 503-626-4026; email is [widadsufi@yahoo.com](mailto:widadsufi@yahoo.com)

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### ***Women's Retreat \* October 17-19, 2008 \* "God is Still Giving"***

This year's Women's Retreat explores the theme, "God is Still Giving." During the event, participants will acknowledge the present of God in their lives by slowing down and relaxing! Bring a playful spirit, and join the group at Camp Adams to worship, discuss, meditate, sing, and play together. The Rev. Jean Done will be the resource leader as women take advantage of the opportunity to greet old and new friends, walk in the woods, and share their joys and sorrows as they build a strong community of women in the Central Pacific Conference. **Registration materials are attached.**

### *Still on the Calendar...*

You are invited to participate in an *Ecclesiastical Council* for Anne Dunlap hosted by Bridgeport UCC on the afternoon of Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 3 pm. Anne will have her ordination interview with the Covenants Ministry Team earlier in the weekend.

Saturday, September 27, 2008. 9:30 am – 12:30 pm. First Congregational UCC, Portland. *Workshop with Master storyteller Christopher Leebrick*. The storytelling workshop is \$30 per person for early registration by September 15. Later registration is \$35. Call 503-228-7219 to sign up.

Thursday, October 30, 2008. 11 am – 4:30 pm. Cedar Hills UCC. *Green Building and Renovations* sponsored by Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. To register, call (503) 221-1054 or e-mail [ksharinghousen@emoregon.org](mailto:ksharinghousen@emoregon.org). Pre-registration is requested by Oct. 27, but registration will be accepted at the door. To download a brochure, go to [www.emoregon.org](http://www.emoregon.org).

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### *Clergy Cluster Gatherings*

Eastside \* Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, Noon \* Zion UCC, Gresham.

Gorge \* Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 am \* Good River Restaurant, Mosier.

Westside \* Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 – 3:00 pm \* Cedar Hills UCC, Portland.

Idaho \* Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 10:00 am \* First Congregational UCC, Boise.

I am planning to attend all the gatherings listed above. I'll look forward to seeing you! wj

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### *A Personal Note . . .*

One month together! A month full of meeting people, emails, and phone calls. I've been to Camp Adams five times, met with folks in The Dalles, Eugene, Lincoln City, Tillamook, Forest Grove, and more. I've preached at Kairos-Milwaukie and Portland First and will be with Hillsboro this Sunday. I joined with the Board of Directors a few weeks ago, and will meet with three Teams – Covenants, Wider Church, and Local Church – this weekend. The times have been full and rich. I began with a respect for the leaders of this Conference, and that early impression has strengthened! It feels right to be with you in the Central Pacific Conference.

After this slow start... things take off in September! I'll be part of our Conference team to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS from Sept. 13-20. At the end of the month, I'll head out to Idaho for a 12-day road trip. I'll take part in the fall gathering, preach at McCall the first Sunday, and at Wright Memorial, Boise the second Sunday. With the rest of the time, I plan to visit all nine of our churches, visiting with any members who are available. I'm excited about the month ahead!

Yours in Christ, walter john

**The Rev. Dr. Walter John Boris – Conference Minister  
Central Pacific Conference \* United Church of Christ  
Interchurch Center  
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Portland, OR 97239-4258**

**[wjboris@gmail.com](mailto:wjboris@gmail.com) (O) 503-228-3178 (M) 206-235-3801 (H) 360-314-2497**

## Women's Retreat

This year's Women's Camp will focus on "God is Still Giving" (as well as speaking). During our time together, we will try to increase our awareness of God's presence in our lives by slowing down and relaxing. We will learn about our special gifts and how we can use them to deepen our relationship with God. So, bring along openness and a playful spirit!

Join us at Camp Adams to worship, discuss, meditate, sing, and play together. It's our chance to greet old and new friends, walk in the woods, and share our joys or sorrows as we build community among the Central Pacific Conference women.

### **WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

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**"GOD IS STILL GIVING"**  
**Camp Adams Registration**  
**Due October 13, 2008**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(please print)*

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Church** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone** (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ **E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Total Retreat Fee:</b>	<b>\$95.00</b>	
<b>Pre-Registration:</b>	<b>\$55.00</b>	<i>(transferable but non-refundable)</i>
<b>Amount Due on arrival:</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>	

**Make checks payable to:** **United Church of Christ Women**  
*(Total may be paid in advance)*

**Mail to:** **Nancy Klingeman, Registrar**  
**3225 N.W. Elmwood Drive**  
**Corvallis, OR 97330**  
**(541)-753-3350**

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# REGISTRATION FORM: "Unwrapping Our Gifts"

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October 4, 2008, Bethel Congregational UCC, Beaverton, OR

Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Office Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**REGISTRANTS:** *(A Team of Three from a local church is ideal: 1 Pastor, 2 Church Members)*

Name #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Male/Female \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name #2 \_\_\_\_\_ Male/Female \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name #3 \_\_\_\_\_ Male/Female \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name #4 \_\_\_\_\_ Male/Female \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**LUNCH INFORMATION:**

Any Special Needs Concerning Saturday Lunch? \_\_\_\_\_

**FEE:** \$10 per LEADER (including Sat. lunch)

**RETURN FORM:** *Pre-registration is REQUIRED by Sept. 29. Please return completed form by email or US mail to Shawn Burchfield, Registrar, Central Pacific Conference, Interchurch Center, 0245 SW Bancroft St., Suite E, Portland, OR 97239, centralpacific@cpcucc.org. Registrants receive essential advance registration materials explaining what to bring and how to prepare. Make check payable to "Central Pacific Conference".*