



The *United Endeavor*

UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH

EAST AVENUE & DILLON STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21224

JANUARY, 1975

REV. BRUCE D. WICKKISER

Your new Interim Senior Pastor is the Rev. Bruce D. Wickkiser who will be with us while our pastoral search committee seeks out and interviews candidates for the position of Senior Pastor. Rev. Wickkiser is a native of Northampton, Pennsylvania and a graduate of Lancaster Seminary. He was ordained a minister of the United Church of Christ in 1958.

Rev. Wickkiser served a parish in Pennsylvania for nine years and has held several interim positions. Most recently he has been interim for First and St. Stephens in Towson and Zion U.C.C. on Golden Ring Road.

Rev. Wickkiser and his wife Mary Jane have two children a boy, Bard and a girl, Brown. He lives at 5507 Leith Rd. in Baltimore. He can be contacted during the day through the church office and he will be available to you in an emergency at home by calling his number there, 532-9773.

Rev. Wickkiser is presently serving on the Mission Commission and the Consistorial Banquet 1975 Committee of the Chesapeake Association. His major interests are in the Liturgy and Church History.

PASTOR RASCHE'S PLANS

Following their retirement from United Evangelical Church, Pastor and Mrs. Rasche will be moving to Timber Ridge U. C. C. in the Shenendoah Association of our Central Atlantic Conference. There they will assume the Pastorate of this very small congrega-

tion in the mountainous region west of Winchester, Va. Pastor Rasche will be in semi-retirement, with much less pressure and a much lighter load of responsibility than during these last thirteen years of work here in Baltimore.

Pastor and Mrs. Rasche will be on vacation at the parsonage here at United until January 8 awaiting the completion of renovations at the Timber Ridge parsonage. On that date the movers will take their household goods to their new home. Since the Pastor's term of service in Baltimore concludes with December 29, he will not be available for any pastoral duties after that date.

Timber Ridge Parsonage is located off US Rt. 50 beyond Winchester, Va. Take #50 west to Gore, Va., which is thirteen miles from Winchester. Just beyond Gore, state Rt. 259 goes off to the left and up into the hills. Take this road for five miles, and you will come to the parsonage. It sits in open country just beyond the tiny village of Highview. The parsonage is located on top of the ridge and is on the right side of the road. On the lawn is a sign saying, "Timber Ridge U.C.C. Parsonage". The church is about one mile from the parsonage.

The new address will be:
Rev. & Mrs. Paul A. Rasche
Timber Ridge U.C.C. Parsonage
Rt. 1
Gore, Va. 22637

They heartily invite you to come and visit with them. They will be in the apple country situated at an elevation of 1100 ft. above sea level. This invitation is meant to be a hearty and sincere one. You will be warmly welcomed.

GONE FISHING

THOMAS MERTON

Since I write a large part of the Endeavor this month I thought it would be an excellent opportunity to introduce the congregation to one of my favorite authors. For the past five years I have been a devotee of the writings of Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk. His books and poems are the product of his life as a contemplative. But Merton was not a humorless pietist. He had a very healthy sense of the irreverent.

Merton writes about what it is like to be a religious person, deeply loving God and yet still very human. He writes about being so bored listening to prayers being read in the meeting rooms that he falls asleep. His writings portray his humanness, his saintliness and his openness to all things.

The thirty-first of this month marks what would have been the sixtieth birthday of Thomas Merton, monk, author and theologian. He was an American who was born in France and educated in England and the United States. He had no church background but while pursuing graduate studies at Columbia in New York he became interested in and finally converted to Catholicism. He entered the Abbey of Gethsemani in 1942 as a Trappist monk. He is probably best known for his spiritual autobiography Seven Storey Mountain which became a best seller in the late 1940's. He continued to write while at Gethsemani and is the author of several books on the monastic life and eastern religious thought. In 1968 he was accidentally electrocuted while attending a convention of monks in Bangkok, Thailand.

The past few years have seen a growing interest in things spiritual. Leading this interest have been many of the books posthumously published by Merton's monastery and collections of his work by other authors. The following are taken from a collection of Merton's works by Henri Nouwen very appropriately entitled Pray to Live. These excerpts are from Part II of the Book called For Meditation:

"...The religious life exists and thrives not in buildings or dead things or flowers or beasts but in the soul. And there it exists not

as a "good feeling" but as a constant purpose, an enduring love that expresses itself now as patience, now as humility, now as courage, now as self-denial, now as justice, but always in a strong knot of faith and hope, and all of these are nothing but aspects of one constant deep desire, charity, love."

"In meditative prayer, one thinks and speaks not only with his mind and lips, but in a certain sense with his whole being. Prayer is then not just a formula of words, or a series of desires springing up in the heart - it is the orientation of our whole body, mind and spirit to God in silence, attention and adoration. All good meditative prayer is a conversion of our entire self to God."

M.E.K.

CHURCH COUNCIL 1975



At the October Congregational Meeting new members were elected to the Church Council. The Council members and officers for the coming year are:

Ray Schmitt, President
George Sauer, Vice President
William Single, III, Treasurer
Randy Schmitt, Recording Sec'ty
Ernest Jones, Financial Sec'ty
Sam Jones
William Bark, Jr.
Arthur A. Block
Fred Long
Louis Parker, Jr.
William A. Voelker
J. Albert Fader, Sr.

The entire congregation would like to express its appreciation to George Tuerk for the dedicated manner in which he has served as Council President during 1975. He will remain as head of the search committee which is interviewing candidates for Senior Pastor.

WHAT IS THE U.C.C. ?

The United Church of Christ came into existence in 1957 with the merger of two denominations that were already the result of a previous union. These two church bodies were the Congregational Christian Church and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. The Church to which Pastor Rasche is retiring is an old Christian Church. As your Associate Pastor I come out of the New England Congregational background. Rev. Bruce Wickkiser is very much a part of the Reform tradition and United's heritage is Evangelical. These various churches came together to form a church which was united and uniting church. Unit- ing signifies the processual nature of the U.C.C.: the fact that it is a denomination which is open to all local churches who wish to associate themselves with a body declaring itself to be the United Church of Christ.

The union of the Congregational Christian and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches was not an easy one. The traditions out of which the U.C.C. emerged are disparate. This is evidenced in the voting procedure which was used to unite the churches. Congregational Christian churches because of their heavy emphasis on congregational autonomy voted independently as to whether they would join the merger. Some churches did not receive the required two thirds membership vote and never became a part of the U.C.C. In contrast, the Evangelical and Reformed Church voted through its Synod to accept the merger and therefore all E & R churches became a part of the merger.

Douglas Horton in his history of the merger The United Church of Christ says "In the union of the Congregational Christian with the Evangelical and Reformed Churches, the New England boiled dinner and Pennsylvania sauerkraut had to come to terms with each other: the culinary differences had their place with the theological ... and even incidental manners of living were felt by the thoughtless to reveal deep spiritual tendencies. Some of the Evangelical and Reformed leaders, for instance, were cigar smokers - and smokers of cigars plainly did not have the spiritual sensitivity (thought some) of the smokers of cigarettes.

Some of the Congregational leaders were from Boston and the State of Maine - and a down-east accent is clear proof of provincialism."

Despite the small size of the U.C.C. when compared to similar denominations we have had more than our share of influential Christian leaders and theologians. The Congregational Christian tradition brought to the merger America's greatest native-born theologian, Johnathan Edwards while the Evangelical and Reformed contributed Nevin and Schaff, famous for the heavily liturgical Mercersburg theological movement. In the twentieth century the U.C.C. has been called home by important religious leaders such as Roland Bainton and Wilhelm Pauck, church historians of the Reformation: Paul Tillich, Nells Ferre and Reinhold Niebuhr, theologians: H. Richard Niebuhr and John Bennett in social ethics.

You have probably noted that most of these men are either German immigrants or of German descent. They have found the U.C.C. to be a congenial Christian fellowship for them. It is obvious that what the U.C.C. lacks in size it makes up for in influence.

M.E.K.

JANUARY CALENDAR

Monthly

Church Council - Jan. 7 at 8 p.m.
Ladies Aid - no meeting in Jan.
Men's Fellowship - Jan. 8 at 8 p.m.
Church School - Jan. 14 at 8 p.m.
Women's Guild - Jan. 15 at 8 p.m.
Junior High (6th - 8th) - Jan. 26
at 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Youth Group - Jan. 5 from 2 to 5pm
Jan. 19 at 2 p.m. The second
will be an away meeting.
Congregational Meeting - Jan. 31
at 8 p.m.

Weekly

Children's Choir - Sun. at 11:30 am
Senior Citizens - Mon. at 10 a.m.
Sewing - Tues. at 10 a.m.
Scouts - Boy and Girl Scouts have
their meeting on Mon. and Tues.
afternoons and evenings
Confirmation I and II - Thurs. at
7:30 p.m.
Choir - Thurs. at 7:30 p.m.
Youth Service - Wed. at 7:30 p.m.

YOUTH RETREAT

The Youth Group is planning a retreat to the Summit Lake Retreat Center in Thurmont, Maryland. The group will be leaving on Friday, January 10 at 6 pm and will be returning Sunday, January 12 at 4pm. The retreat is \$6 for active members of the Youth Group and \$12 for inactive members. This price includes meals. We ask that full payment for the trip and permission slips be turned into the church office by January 7.



CHURCH SCHOOL NOTES

Teachers - There will be an executive business meeting of the Church School at 8 pm. on Tuesday, January 14, in Friendship Hall.

Youth - The high school age young people have been meeting on Sunday mornings with Mr. Witzke and Mr. Myers in Friendship Hall. They have been using 'Serendipity' materials. If you would like to attend a class that is different from the usual Church School class you are invited to join with them at 9 a.m.

Adult - On January 19 the Adult Class will begin a new ten week study of the synoptic gospels. This is the name which is given to the gospels of Matthew, Mark. Luke. Anyone interested in this is invited to join the class which will have its first meeting at 9am in the Library on the second floor of the Church School building.

U.C.C. DECLINE

The United Church of Christ reports a membership drop of 8.3% from 2,067,223 to 1,895,016 in the 1964 to '73 period. During that time per capita giving rose from \$75.94 to \$105.39, an increase which did not keep pace with the inflation spiral.

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CHURCH RECORDS

Baptisms

Henry Jay, son of Henry J. and Barbara (Spencer) Jones on Nov. 10
Shannon Lee, daughter of Charles G. and Mary (Smith) Alt on Nov. 17
Ruth Caroline, daughter of Jerry C. and Ida (Ruth) Allred on Nov. 17
Richard Todd, son of Richard T. and Beverly (Blunt) Smith on Nov. 17

Walter George, son of Walter G. and Karen (Piercy) Scheuerman on Dec. 8

Weddings

Fred Barantas and Alice Taylor on Nov. 28.

Leroy Kucharczyk and Karen McLewee on Nov. 16

Funerals

George C. Hammerbacher, age 85 on Nov. 16

Frederick Scheufel, member, age 90 on Nov. 15

Mrs. Mamie Crispens, member, age 80 on Dec. 2

Mrs. Margaret Muehlberger, member, age 86 on Dec. 3.

ANNUAL MEETING

Friday, January 31 at 8 in Friendship Hall the Financial reports, pastoral & Organizational reports will be given.

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Home Phone 532-9773

Mary-Ellen Kitchen, Assoc. Pastor
Home Phone 467-7227

Worship

Each Sunday — 8:00 & 10:15 a.m.

(7:45 a.m. each Communion Sunday)

Church School — 9:00 a.m.