



# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*Toms River*

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# THE TIDINGS

NEWSLETTER

<http://www.tomsriverucc.org>

September/October Edition 2009

## POSSIBLE NOVEMBER FELLOWSHIP LEAGUE MEETING

The history of Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station: The Manchester Branch of the Ocean County Library does a slide presentation of the Lakehurst NAS, and will do it in the church if there is enough interest by members and guests. This could be the November Fellowship League Meeting on a Saturday in November at the church. Please

Let Joyce Jones know if this would be of interest. Other possible subjects are "Life and Times of Lakehurst", a picturesque and interesting documentary slide show of the background of the Borough of Lakehurst, which was once part of Manchester Township.

Charlie Mueller has offered to do a slide show presentation of many of the places he and his, wife Denise, visited, as photographers. Those of you who have seen some of his photographs, know what outstanding work he has done.

Let Joyce know if you are interested in seeing any of these programs; it's a chance for us to be together for an enjoyable afternoon. (732)244-1322.


## SEMINARY INTERN TO SHARE IN MINISTRY

Doug Brown, a seminary student at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, will begin a nine month internship here at Toms River UCC, beginning September 13. He met with the Board on Sunday, May 17, and was introduced to those who were at worship that Sunday.

Here is information on his journey in his own words.

"I began full time seminary work in the Fall semester of 2008 and hope to finish seminary in May of 2011. It has been an interesting, often wonderful, yet sometimes difficult journey. I originally entered Abilene Christian University in Texas as freshman major in Youth Ministry, upon high school graduation in 1987.

I was raised in the Church of Christ tradition, a very conservative sect of the Christian Church and Abilene Christian was the expected progression for my life - a life planned for me by deeply entrenched family and church traditions. Unfortunately, it was not the plan God had for my life and I found myself very depressed and unhappy in my two years at ACU. The depression and sadness came primarily from the difficult secret reality that I was a gay man who wanted to follow Christ; a seemingly contradictory existence for

 God is still speaking,

someone in the Church of Christ. That secret reality turned into horrible reality when I told my family at 21 years of age, and I was nearly excommunicated from worship. I left conservative Biblical education and ran to the warmth and nourishment of a Fine Arts School in Boston and I flourished in many ways - it was the first step in embracing my authentic identity as a man of God. During the years that followed, God did not let go, nor did I let go of Him, yet it was a quiet and inward journey I traveled during the next 15 years without a church home.

I share this story because it is a direct influence on my call to ministry and is part of my journey to the United Church of Christ in 2005 as a wounded and victimized believer who found tremendous healing in the extravagant love of God in the assemblies of the UCC. Seminary was a difficult decision as I am a licensed Funeral Director who found this work sacred and a call to serve families in the midst of grief was paramount to my work. Yet, it is not where God needs me. I am grateful for the opportunity to attend seminary, as I am supported spiritually and emotionally by my two sisters in profound ways and recognize that their unconditional love is always there for me. Harold, my partner of 8 years is generous in his understanding of my call and is patient in his understanding in those days when we rarely see each other; the result of seminary, ministry work and my semi-full time job. They all hold me up to this call in their loving-kindness and I am blessed.

In my spare time, using that term loosely, I enjoy gardening around my little bungalow house in Neptune. It brings me great joy to see things grow and like many gardeners, I find it very cathartic and relaxing.

I have two sisters and one brother who live in this area with a large extended family in the Midwest and South. Sadly, my parents died in 2002: however, their legacy of faith stays with me and I am grateful for the spiritual foundation they provided me.”

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### CHURCHES FUNNIEST ANNOUNCEMENTS

Through the years church secretaries and pastors have written some of the funniest announcements (without trying to be funny). Here are some:

Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10 AM. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B. S. is done.

The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Congregational Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon will be “What Is Hell?” Come early and listen to our choir practice.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

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**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TOMS RIVER** is an open and affirming congregation, we embrace all persons, regardless of marital status, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical ability, race, ethnicity or socioeconomic background. We welcome all to participate in the many aspects of life in our church, including, but not limited to, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities and the blessings that are so richly abundant in our church. We celebrate the differences that make us each a unique gift from God.

**NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY,  
YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!**

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.

The Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

The Rector will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing: "Break Forth into Joy."

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

- Hope Center items for September - canned fruit
- Hope Center items for October -- tuna fish
- Church Leadership Retreat, Saturday, Oct. 3 .
- Sacrament of Holy Communion, Sunday, Oct. 4.
- Church Board, Monday, Oct. 12, 6:30 p.m.
- New Jersey Association UCC Fall Workshop, Oct. 17th, Topic: "Vital Congregations -- Sixteen Tips for Turning Your Church Around"
- CROP WALK, Sunday, Oct. 18.
- "Let's Talk Faith" Discussion Group, Saturday, Oct. 24, 10 am to Noon.
- Lunch Bunch Bible Study, Tuesday, Oct. 27, Noon at church.
- Set Clocks back, Saturday, Oct. 31 (Daylight Saving Time ends).

### AUGUST FELLOWSHIP LEAGUE SUPPORTS THE CENTER IN ASBURY PARK

In August the Dopkos hosted the Fellowship League in support of The Center in Asbury Park. The weather predictions called for an 80% chance of rain, and mercifully there was only a very brief sprinkle or two that preceded the arrival of the guests to mar an otherwise lovely day.

The Center is a volunteer service organization made up of people from all faiths who come together in response to the growing AIDS crisis in our society. Their mission is to be of personal service to those in the community affected by HIV disease both those actually living with the virus, as well as their family, friends, and caregivers. At The Center, the bottom line is making a difference in the lives of these individuals.

The Center's programs and services include:

- Food pantry to supplement people in need.
- Transportation to help get people to clinics, doctors appointments, and food stores.
- Monthly Meals serves as an elegant meal for a social experience.
- Luncheon support group.
- Thanksgiving Turkeys and Christmas Gifts help bring joy and love to others.
- Rental, pharmaceutical, and utility subsidies keep people warm, sheltered & well.
- Center al a carte, AIDS walk, and various other benefits make it all possible

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### United Church of Christ of Toms River Pastoral and Congregational Leadership

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