

United Religious Community  
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PERIODICAL

If you wish to be removed from the TORCH mailing list, please call 574-282-2397 or email [urc@urcsjc.org](mailto:urc@urcsjc.org)



### **THE GIFT OF WARMTH**

Congregations and individuals wishing to donate to this program may only make general, undesignated gifts. NIPSCO will match dollar for dollar every gift up to \$80,000! The South Bend Advocacy Center (289-5830) - now located at 501 N. Main in South Bend—is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to noon. The Mishawaka Advocacy Center (254-4068) at St. Andrew's UCC at Union Street (off of 4th Street) is open Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to noon.



### **QUICKSHEET DIRECTORY**

The 2009 edition of the **Quick Sheets Guide** will also be available in June. The popular and handy, "Who Helps With What?" pamphlet is currently being compiled. Again, a copy is free to sponsoring/supporting organizations and individuals. Additional copies and those for non-sponsoring groups or individuals is \$10.00 each.

United Religious Community of St. Joseph County

# URC TORCH

Volume 37, Issue 1

March 2009



Dear Friends,

We are excited to give you the details of our **Annual Prayer Breakfast** to be held on **Thursday, May 7th, at 7:30 a.m.** We will hold the event at the Hilton Garden Inn by St. Mary's College that morning. The theme will be, "*Keeping the Faith in Anxious Times.*" We will also honor persons with the **Hearts Afire** awards. Please nominate persons in your organizations who have worked in the interests of peace and justice both inside and outside your communities of faith. The cost will be \$25.00 per person or purchase a table for eight for a reduced cost of \$180.00. Registrations and nominations need to be sent in to the URC ASAP. As the times are changing, the one constant we believe in and serve is our God, who never changes and in whom we can truly place our trust!

**Rev. Dr. William J. Wassner**  
Executive Director,  
United Religious Community of St. Joseph County, Inc.

## ADVOCACY CENTERS NEWS

The Advocacy Centers of the United Religious Community continue to provide vital assistance to the less fortunate members of our community. **During 2008, nearly 6,000 individuals were served in South Bend and Mishawaka! The Centers have provided cash assistance and case management to 596 individuals in 294 households in the first two months of 2009!** The support provided to these families helped with rent and mortgage payments, utilities, vital medical and prescription expenses, and identification documents.

On behalf of those we serve, the URC and the Advocacy Centers would like to thank all the individuals, organizations and congregations who support our mission and services! In these uncertain times, your donations are vital to those less fortunate. **Don't forget your Gift of Warmth donations (see bottom of back cover page for details and requirements of this vital program).**

*Marchell Wesaw*



We are hoping to have our new **2009 Directory of Congregations** in St. Joseph County available by June. The cost for the bound pamphlet will be \$10.00 each but are FREE to all supporting faith communities and organizations. Please call (282-2397) or email us at [urc@urcsjc.org](mailto:urc@urcsjc.org) to make sure your faith community is included and to order copies!

### STAFF

**Rev. Dr. William J. Wassner,**  
Executive Director

**Joyce Williams**  
Executive Assistant

**Marchell Wesaw,**  
Director of Victim Services  
Director of Advocacy Centers

**Carol McDonnell,**  
Director of Refugee Services

### 2009 OFFICERS

**Rabbi Michael Friedland, President**  
Sinai Synagogue, South Bend

**Naji Zaydan, Vice President**  
Islamic Society of Michiana

**Kevin McDonnell, Treasurer**  
Saint Mary's College

**Marlene Nowak, Secretary**  
Sacred Heart Parish, South Bend

### 2009 BOARD MEMBERS

**Debra Barton-Grant,**  
Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley

**Rev. Barrett Berry**  
Pentecostal Cathedral COGIC, South Bend

**Rev. Sue Breiner,**  
St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, Inc.

**Phil Damico,**  
Grace Church, Granger

**Tris Dashti-Gibson,**  
Baha'i Faith, South Bend

**Indi Dieckgrafe,**  
First Presbyterian Church, South Bend

**Karen Dwyer,**  
St. Bavo's Catholic Church, Mishawaka

**GlendaRae Hernandez,**  
Iglesia Manos de Cristo, South Bend

**Charlotte Huddleston,**  
St. Augustine Catholic Church, South Bend

**Eva Patterson,**  
First Church of Christ Scientist, South Bend

**John Pinter,**  
St. Joseph Catholic Parish, South Bend

**Don Sporleder,**  
First Presbyterian Church, South Bend

**Alan Steele,**  
Granger Community Church, Granger

**Robert Stockman,**  
Bahai Fellowship, South Bend

## APRIL COMMUNITY FORUM

The fourth annual *Community Forum on Economic Development—Improving Our Quality of Life* will take place on Saturday, **April 18, from 9 AM to 4 PM** at IUSB. The program will include a keynote address by Carl Redwood, Chairman of the One Hill Coalition and a presentation by Marty Wolfson, economist from the University of Notre Dame. Afternoon breakout sessions will focus on specific ways we can work together to build a better community. There is no fee but reservations are required. Contact [sjc.cfed@gmail.com](mailto:sjc.cfed@gmail.com) or call 574-287-3834.

## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

There has been one recent arrival from Rwanda and should be two more soon from Rwanda and Liberia. Our focus in January and February was English language training and education. About ten newcomers were enrolled in classes or tutoring programs. Since the students were all at different levels and had different work schedules, this was a challenge. Help with college applications was also provided to a number of young people.

We are grateful for the assistance we have received in recent months in our networking with the URC Advocacy Centers, the Family Justice Center, The Red Cross, Catholic Charities and the offices of Senator Bayh and Congressman Donnelly.

*Carol McDonnell*

## RECENT GIFTS RECEIVED

Bahai's of South Bend  
Broadway Christian Parish  
Christ the King Lutheran  
Crest Manor Church of the Brethren  
Evangel Heights United Methodist Church  
Faith United Methodist Church  
First Baptist Church of South Bend  
First Christian Church of South Bend  
Hilltop Lutheran Church  
Immanuel United Methodist Church  
Mr. and Mrs. Juarez  
Kern Road Mennonite Church  
Northern Indiana United Methodist Conference  
North Liberty Church of the Brethren  
Pine Creek Church of the Brethren  
Pleasant Valley United Church of Christ  
South Bend Christian Reformed Church  
South Bend Friends  
St. Andrew's UCC of Mishawaka  
St. Joseph Catholic Church  
St. Peter's UCC of South Bend  
Sumption Prairie UMC  
Gladys Van De Putte  
Karen Wendling  
Tom Yarger  
Zion UCC of South Bend

*NOTE: Although there have never been any member fees or dues to belong to the URC, we are now suggesting an annual contribution of at least \$300 per faith community due to the increasing costs of operation and the growing needs of the less fortunate in our neighborhoods.*

**THANKS FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING  
AND SUPPORT!**

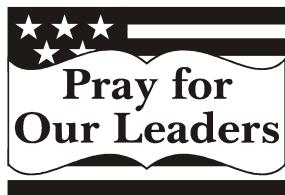


## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### **CROP 2008 RESULTS**

A big thanks to the estimated 441 walkers who gave of their time to walk for a good cause on September 28th. The monies received thus far total \$47,086.89.



We have coordinated persons of faith to pray at the start of the South Bend City Council since 1988. We are looking for volunteers to help fill the remaining schedule for 2009. The Council generally meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday night of every month at 7:00 p.m.. Won't you give 5 minutes of your time to pray for our local leaders at the beginning of their important meetings? Contact Bill Wassner if you have any questions. We need you to be a part of the role of the faithful in our local public life!

### **Widowed Women & Men**

The Widow/Widower support program meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at Sunnyside Presbyterian Church at 6:30 p.m. If you know of someone who needs support through recent loss or just friendship, let them know. We invite you and your support to keep this group strong and vital!

### **Human Hurt—Christ's Healing**

Pastors, counselors, Stephen's Ministers, laity and students will benefit from the practical ministry insights into inter-personal and cultural healing from noted author Dr. Andrew Sung Park. The two day event will be held **March 28th and 29th** at Evangel Heights United Methodist Church. For more information or registration call 574-234-8379 or email [pat@eheights.org](mailto:pat@eheights.org).

### **Bridge of Hope to sponsor presentation about Mother Teresa**

The St. Joseph Chapter of Bridge of Hope is proud to announce "A Night with Paul A. Wright, M.D." at the St. Pius X Parish in Granger on **March 27th** at 6:30 pm. Paul A. Wright M.D., noted author and cardiologist, will speak on his time with Mother Teresa and her prescription for finding happiness and peace in service. The event begins with a light supper and will be followed by a question and answer session and book signing. For more information call 574-679-4238 or 574-247-0650 or email [mary@bridgeofhopesjc.com](mailto:mary@bridgeofhopesjc.com)



Homelessness is an issue for all of us in Indiana and across our nation. As our economy continues to falter, more individuals will be faced with unemployment and impoverishment and more individuals will struggle to maintain the ability to remain in their homes. Even those who work can find it difficult to use their limited resources for basic necessities such as housing, food and healthcare. Many in our community are an illness or an accident away from homelessness. An estimated 300,000 Hoosiers have been at risk of homelessness at some time in their lives. What can we do to help? On **Saturday May 9th** come join the annual Homeward Bound Walk. Sign up to walk at [www.HomewardBoundIndiana.org](http://www.HomewardBoundIndiana.org). If you can't make the walk, make sure to sponsor someone who is walking. Funds collected from the walk support local agencies including the United Religious Community that assist the impoverished and homeless in our community. In these difficult economic times let us continue to look outward to those who are in greater need than ourselves. It is a blessing to be able to give.

Rabbi Michael Friedland

**The United Religious Community:  
Serving, developing, creating, and  
Effecting positive change for 35 years**

### **SOME DATES TO REMEMBER**

**March 23rd at 8:30 a.m.**

Women in Ministry Breakfast at LePeep

**March 23rd at 5:30 p.m.**

URC Board Of Directors meeting at St. Peter's United Church of Christ

**March 28th & 29th**

Evangel Heights United Methodist Church Lecture/Worship with Dr. Andrew Sung Park

**Thursday, April 2nd**

Dismas House Benefit Dinner & Auction

**April 14th at 6:30 p.m.**

Widowed Women & Men at Sunnyside

**April 18th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

*Community Forum on Economic Development Improving the Quality of Life* at IUSB

**April 19th from 1:00 to 5:00 p. m.**

Resource Fair at Century Center

**April 25th at 12:00 Noon**

Hug 15,000 at St. Joseph County Fairgrounds

**April 25th check in 8:30/9:30 a.m.**

March of Dimes March for Babies College Football Hall of Fame

**April 27th at 8:30 a.m.**

Women in Ministry Breakfast at LePeep

### **RESOURCE FAIR at Century Center Economic Hard Times—A Family Affair Sunday, April 19th—2:00 to 5:00 pm**

An afternoon of workshops and programs to help those in need of assistance connect with local resources.

Sponsored by Family & Children's Center and St. Joseph Regional Medical Center.

Call Mary Kowalski, 574-232-2255 for more information.



## Gift of Warmth Contributions

Ross & Eileen Byrne  
St. Peter's UCC  
Sacred Heart Parish  
Sandy Hall  
Carol Holt  
Nora Fromm  
Patricia Frye  
Mary Ann Katz  
Jan Jenkins  
Marilyn Brown  
Enoch & Corinne Karlin  
Richard & Linda Mintz  
Jeffrey & Ilene New  
Melvin Brook  
Bill & Lisa Wassner  
Tom & Marlene Nowak  
Memorial Presbyterian Church  
Zion UCC of South Bend  
First Christian Church, South Bend  
First Presbyterian Church  
Roberta Grimstad  
Harvey & Carin Weingarten  
Michael & Barbara Levin  
Steven & Margaret Goldberg  
Rabbi Michael Friedland  
Cheri Berman Schuster  
Sinai Synagogue  
Martin's Supermarkets  
Manos De Cristo  
Brian & Lilac Kordansky  
Newcomers Club of Michiana  
Charles & Nancy Stanton  
Greg & Linda Mullenix  
Olive Chapel Church



In these stressful and anxious times of change and uncertainty, people and organizations experience conflict more frequently. Communities of faith are not immune from this malady so the URC, in partnership with the Samaritan Counseling Center of South Bend, recommends people of faith to the Center in order to work through these difficult times and situations.

Vouchers for counseling sessions are available for clergy to purchase for members and friends of the congregation. They are available in bundles of ten for \$800. The client who uses the vouchers only pays \$20 per session.

The Center is offering a special workshop for pastors who commit to purchase ten or more vouchers before April 1, 2009. This workshop, *Managing Conflict in the Congregation* will be held on Thursday, April 23.

For more information call 574-277-0274.



## Benefit Dinner and Silent Auction

On the evening of Thursday, **April 2nd**, Dismas House of South Bend invites the community to attend its 23rd Annual Benefit Dinner at St. Hedwig Memorial Hall in South Bend.

Dismas House provides a unique form of crime prevention by working with men and women recently released from prison or jail to integrate them with community volunteers, college students and staff. The Dismas program has successfully restored over 75% of its residents to the community and their families.

To purchase tickets, call Maria Kaczmarek at the Dismas office, 574-233-8522. The cost is \$25 per person.



Can you hug  
15,000 people at  
one time? You  
can on Saturday,  
**April 25th** at the  
St. Joseph County  
Fairgrounds at  
noon.

Studio C3—The Church in South Bend is sponsoring this event in order to break the world record AND raise food for the hungry. Bring one non-perishable food item with you and get ready to hug! For more info, contact Steven Reynolds at 520-7786.

## Walking with God—A Journey through the Prayer Labyrinth

Christ the King Lutheran Church invites all congregations to walk a prayer labyrinth. They have arranged to have a portable labyrinth, made of canvas, which is a copy of the labyrinth on the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France.

Labyrinths are spiritual tools that have one path, a pattern of U-turns that lead to the center and back out again. The twisting path becomes a metaphor for the faith journey, a mirror for what is happening in one's life. For Christians, the path also is a reminder of Christ's journey to the cross.



Walking the labyrinth reminds us of God's presence in our life and gives us an opportunity to be with God and also seek His wisdom in these particularly tough economic times.

The Prayer labyrinth will be available from **March 30th to April 13th**, Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Christ the King Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall is located at 17195 Cleveland Road, South Bend, just west of Grape Road. To learn more or schedule a group time, please contact the church office at 574-272-4306.