Space still available—Back Bay Mission Trip #5

The fifth annual Union Church mission and service trip to Back Bay Mission (BBM) in Biloxi, MS is scheduled for Sep 30 – Oct. 6, 2012. Our first trip in March 2008 was in response to Hurricane Katrina, and the rebuilding process continued for a number of years. Earlier sources of funding for rebuilding have pretty much dried up, but the work of Back Bay Mission in the Biloxi and surrounding area continues.

The Mission and Service Board is seeking volunteers for the 2012 trip. While some construction skills for the Housing Recovery Program are definitely helpful, there are other volunteer opportunities in the Micah Center, a daytime drop-in program for the homeless, and in the Food Bank or Office.

Volunteers are housed in a very comfortable building on the BBM campus, with separate women’s and men’s bunk rooms, prepare our own meals, enjoy the front porch rocking chairs after work, and have been known to stay up way too late finishing a puzzle or playing board games.

In you are interested or want more information, contact John Payne, Mission and Service Board, or Betty Hibler, Administrator.

Cost is $75/person to BBM for housing; food costs last year were $50/person (we ate very well); and gas costs are shared by each vehicle’s occupants. To learn more about Back Bay Mission, visit www.backbaymission.org.

Neighborhood Meetings in August!

The day is soon approaching when our new Associate Pastor, Rev. Rachel Small Stokes, will be with us. Many of us have never been part of a multi-staff church, thus Rachel’s arrival will be a new experience for us. Having more than one clergy person on staff offers many blessings, yet it can present unique challenges as well.

To prepare for Rachel’s arrival, the Community Life and Growth Board, along with the Pastoral Relations Committee, is sponsoring a series of Neighborhood Meetings to talk about ways to nurture and grow our relationship in healthy ways.

You should have received a letter with full information on July 24 or 25 (if you live in Berea, Richmond, or environs). Please call the office if you didn’t get a letter & neighborhood group info and we’ll get you connected to a group!

Construction status update from the Church Administrator

Here is a report on the status of our construction project. At the end of June we received bills for nearly 10% of the construction project. When I received these I talked with Hawkins and PPA about completion of the project. We were two months into what we had been told was a four month project and were only being billed for 10 percent.

I was told to estimate the completion date they would need more information from the vendors providing doors and heating and cooling equipment two items that can take a while to receive and they should have this information by mid-July. When I pushed for a date to assist with building use contracts we have with Berea College and projections of spaces will need for our Sunday and Wednesday programs, I was told not to expect to be in the building until November 15th, but they will revise this number as more information comes to them.

Work continues on the under slab drainage, heating and cooling, putting in under slab sanitary (sewage) pipes for the new bathrooms and kitchen, and electrical work. Last week we also had the carpenter start putting up walls in the office area and the sprinkler system installation has started.

I have begun working with contractors on the work we are responsible to have done, wiring for internet and phones. This was taking out of the contract with Hawkins as a part of the value (Continued on page 6)
Some text is not clearly visible due to the image resolution.
number of roots in the line from the tree located in the parking area, the tree that has had limbs fall on the Education building roof and cars parked near the church. A change order is being prepared to replace these sanitary lines. The electricians have also raised some concerns with some of the older wiring and they have been asked to determine if there are any updates that are necessary for safety or fire hazards. If they find any problems this will also result in a change order for our team to review and make a decision about.

Lastly, we have had some reports from the plumbers and electricians. When the plumber was digging to find the outdoor sanitary lines they found the lines have a

“Green” Building Practices

As the construction continues on our beloved building the Design Team wants to keep the congregation informed on the steps that are being taken to minimize the effects of the renovation on the environment. Last month you read about the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning. This month is lighting.

T8 Lamps are being utilized for the fluorescent fixtures. These are one of the most energy efficient fluorescent lamps on the market today.

Low-voltage lighting control & occupancy sensors are being installed. The low voltage lighting controls turn off the lights at night or at a set time to save energy and the occupancy sensors only run the lights during occupied times. This system allows the lighting to be very efficient and save energy, along with preserving the life of the fixtures and lamps, which also saves money and resources.

Light-Emitting Diode (LED) Exit Signage will be used. All of the new exit signage will be lit by low voltage LED lighting to use minimal energy and be as efficient as possible while still meeting the required code.

From the Worship Board

The Worship Board invites all to an afternoon of music to benefit “Mission Behind Bars and Beyond” at Luthercreek Correctional Complex in LaGrange, KY. Union Church members and friends, including Rev. Kent, have participated in leading worship services at Luther Luckett.

The event, Sacred Moments, is an afternoon of song featuring the Rev. Marsha Charles, Pastor of Bluegrass United UCC on Sunday afternoon, September 16 at 4:00 pm at St. Andrew UCC at 2608 Browns Ln, Louisville.

Refreshments will be served, a donation of $20 will help the Mission continue their work, including offering a quarterly 5-week Life Skills class to incarcerated persons which teaches money management, staying in business, personal development skills such as cognitive learning, emotional intelligence, parenting skills and getting along with others.

Worship Leaders in August

August 5 - John Culp
August 12 - Rusti Mullins
August 19 - Sally Hindman
August 26 - TBA

From the Pastor

Dear Church Family and Friends,

Greetings from members and friends of Union Church from across the pond in Scotland and parts of England and Ireland. I had wonderful trip over to baptize the son of Aidan and Annette (Cable) Broadbridge, who were married in Union Church 8 years ago, while Annette was a member and working here in Berea.

It was a warm gathering of “chosen family” for me, and I honored to be named American Godfather to little Levi, as well as to participate in his christening.

While there I had the chance to tour some of the oldest holy sites in the United Kingdom, namely the cairns and standing stones that dot the countryside and that date back as far as 5000 BCE. There is a profound sense of “gravitas” when one walks in such places. You can’t help but cast your mind backward and think of all the foot traffic that over 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000 and 2000(!) years walked these same small paths to stand and wonder at these same small stones. What sacrifices were made in their construction? What offerings of oath or promise were made right where I stood? Who wept at these gravestones, and what good came of such tears over all these centuries.

It strikes one, too, that for all the history and thought they evoke, are situated near quite ordinary lives and parking lots. They are dotted next to restaurants and gas stations, as well as sheep barns, houses, shops and all the ordinary social furniture of our era. It’s probably easier to see in a place like Scotland where the human history and its remaining monuments are more preserved than in our own country, but even here the holiest things are intermingled with our ordinary lives.

A child takes her first step—a miracle and a blessing—in the playground at a roadside fast food place. An old man stops to pray at a small chapel, now surrounded by corporate towers of wealth and power. And you can’t help but think of the last man to make bread loaves in the presence of a holy God. 

From the Pastor

To stand and wonder at these same small paths to stand and wonder at these same small stones. What sacrifices were made in their construction? What offerings of oath or promise were made right where I stood? Who wept at these gravestones, and what good came of such tears over all these centuries.

Paul writes in Ephesians 2:19-22 “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom also you are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.”

Rather than stones and cairns, if you would make a holy pilgrimage, knock on a new neighbor’s door. Oh, and take a loaf of bread. God loves a picnic on holy ground.

Farewell, Wyndee!

On Sunday June 26, the congregation honored the Rev. Wyndee Holbrook for her three years of service as our Faith Development Director. Working far more than the 10 hours per week in the job description, Wyndee helped organize education classes and volunteers, oversaw the youth ministry, and brought her creativity and organizational skills to Vacation Bible School, Adult Bible study, as well as preaching wonderful worship services.

Kim Kobersmith, chair of the Faith Development Board presented a stained glass tree from the church symbolizing all the ways Wyndee has helped us grow and deepen in our faith. Kim expressed the thanks of the board and all the congregation for her loving service and her leadership.

Wyndee became our Faith Development Director in September of 2009. This June she was offered the opportunity to become Lead Gospel Catalyst for the newly founded Academy of Preachers helping encourage and train the next generation of great preachers (of which Union Church is a supportive partner). She resigned from the FDD position to begin her work with AoP immediately, but is not leaving Berea and will still be an active member of our community.

Wyndee’s expertise and enthusiasm have been such a blessing to us and we celebrate her work at Union Church! The Faith Development Director position is being incorporated into the new Associate Pastor portfolio. We look forward to her new ministry with AoP and the ways we can continue to do God’s work together.
A note about Passport from Della Walters:

When I was asked to write about my experience at Passport, at first I was nervous. Not because I didn’t enjoy it (I really loved it!) but because some things I experienced at Passport couldn’t really be put into words and it would be too hard to sum up my whole experience. After thinking about it, I realized so much of it can be put into words and that the parts that are indescribable are simply going to have to remain unsaid.

One absolutely incredible experience I had a Passport was through my choice. Choices were two hour periods each day when campers were divided based on an activity of their choosing. I choose Misions Two (M2) because this missions choice consisted of going to a YWCA to work with young children. I saw God though the campers as we played with the children and worked together to make sure they were happy. I also saw God through the children. Whether we were playing out in the heat, doing arts and crafts or just using our imagination and playing around, it seemed they always had smiles on their faces. I spent one day with a little boy named Gabriel and knowing that I made him happy just by playing with him reaffirmed my desire to work with children. I felt truly happy when working with the children of the YWCA and was definitely one of the highlights of Passport for me.

While at Passport I made new friends; these friends helped show me sometimes you have to go beyond all social groups and stereotypes and just get to know someone. I still keep in touch with them and am grateful for what they taught me. Although it was awesome making new friends, growing closer to my youth group was extremely rewarding. I can trust each one of them and was reminded of how important they all are to me.

Throughout the week at Passport, I really learned a lot about myself and it is this part of the experience that I find difficult to put into words. I now try to see people for who they truly are, not look at them and judge by appearance or stereotypes. I see how blessed I am and I am so grateful to God for all of the opportunities I have been given. I see that there is so much I can do to help others. I also see that I may not have everything quite figured out or be able to make everything go exactly to my plan, but its okay. I see that God is beside me every step of the way and will help keep me on my path. So, I could call Passport an eye-opening experience, but that only shows you part of what it was for me. But since I can’t take you there with me, I guess I’ll go with that.

We hope Della’s note gives you a picture of our time together for camp. It was wonderful to have Hanrick, Della, Summer, Cole, Mallory, and Abi with us. We were quite grateful to spend the evenings talking with them, to enjoy the 4th of July with them and to camp with them at Montreat on our way home. Thanks for all of your support and prayers.

Our first Hunger Games discussion went wonderfully and we are looking forward to more great discussions. The curriculum explores issues that are bought up in the Hunger Games series and looks at how they can be addressed in our own country.

The Music Box

This summer I have been afforded two opportunities to “get my feet wet” in continuing music education. In June I attended the annual congress of the Guild of Carillonneurs in North American at Clemson University. I joined the Guild a few months ago and this was my first congress. (My thanks to Marlene Payne for the encouragement to join.) The four days were filled with many superb carillon concerts, workshops and perhaps most importantly, many opportunities for informal conversation with experienced carillonneurs from all over N. A. and Europe. I quickly learned of the passion that these new friends had for their instrument and for sharing music in this most public way.

Though I have just begun “learning the ropes,” (bad pun—no ropes only “batons” on a keyboard), I heard many creative ideas in which the music of the carillon can reach more people. I purchased my first personal scores (all new compositions) to begin learning. Of course they exist in reality. If you have any questions or know a youth who would like to be involved, please contact us.

Peace and Grace,
Christopher McKenzie

The starting date of handbell rehearsals is strictly determined by the availability of our choir room. If the room is ready, we will begin on Wed., Sept 7 at 7:00 p.m. Again, new ringers are welcome. In order to “jump right in” you need some basic music reading skills—the other ringing skills can be learned along with everyone else!

In joyful service,
Larry