

# Global Mission Moment

## New Beginnings

*"I am the resurrection and the life; one who believes in me, though s/he dies, yet shall live..." John 11:25*

Easter is a time for alleluias and shouts of joy for new life, and new beginnings! This year it falls in the month of April. In my work in Japan, April is also the beginning of a new school year, a new group of freshmen to get to know, each with their own hopes and dreams for new adventures at Doshisha University.

April is a joyous time, yet it also has a special sadness for some at our University. April 25th is the five-year anniversary of a train accident that took the lives of 107 people. Four of those killed and over 20 severely injured were students of our University. It was one of the worst railroad accidents in Japan's history. In Japan, where trains are expected to be on schedule, this train was exceeding the speed limit, and derailed on a curve.

Following the accident, the entire campus was engulfed in grief. The University held several worship services the week after the accident and then continued to hold daily prayer meetings during the lunch hour. Over 3500 people attended the services. There was such a real sense that the Christian faith brought the University community together, uniting us in a common bond, in the midst of our grief and pain. Three months after the accident, a memorial service was held with over 500 people attending, including the families of the victims. Though most people are not Christian, the worship brought us together. In Doshisha's 130 years of history as a Christian school, this was yet another moment when the Christian witness made a difference.

Now five years later, resurrection joy often replaces our sorrow. Life has moved forward more lightly, more happily. My hope is that we continue to witness to the Good News in times of joy and in times of grief - and the in-between times too.

*Martha Mensendiek is a missionary teaching social welfare at Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan through the Council on Cooperative Mission.*



## Mission Moment—Resurrection Joy

**April 4, 2010**

**Easter**

**W**hat is our calling as the church? The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. put it eloquently: "We who are members of the church are the lighthouse of the world. We are responsible for one task above all others - to keep the light of the gospel burning. All else must be secondary..." In that 1957 sermon, Dr. King described the church as saying to us, "I don't care who you are, what your background is, what you have. You are a child of God, and as such I welcome you without reservation. I offer you all the privileges and blessings; and I shall belong to you and you to me now and forever."

Every April, on the anniversary of his death, we remember the price that Dr. King paid for courageously proclaiming the gospel of justice, healing and peace. We also remember the bold witness of many people of faith who marched, spoke, and even died for the cause of racial justice. The same church that offers us a home, a haven, and a sanctuary also provides a prophetic voice in our public life, turning our attention - our hearts and minds - toward the needs of the most vulnerable, the marginalized, and those without a voice in our society.

"To keep the light of the gospel burning..." Our faithful and generous giving to the church keeps the light of the gospel burning brightly, offering a home and a witness to the world in which we live, that world that God loves so well.

**Acts 10: 34-43**

**Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24**

**I Corinthians 15: 19-26**

**John 20: 1-28**

## April 5, 2010

Imagine the joy Mary Magdalene must have felt when she saw the risen Christ. She went to the tomb to minister to Jesus' broken body and came away feeling restored. In a similar way, volunteers experience and express this when they describe their time in mission. Volunteers from Orange Congregational Church in the Connecticut Conference saw and immediately identified with graffiti on a wall in Biloxi, Mississippi which read, "We came to help heal, and we were healed." The Rev. Lee Ireland, Associate Pastor of Orange Congregational, and 23 members of the church went to Biloxi to help rebuild areas devastated by hurricanes. They all echoed the sentiment expressed by one of their members, John Caldwell, who said, "an unrealized secret of life is that people do not understand how much you get out of giving!" Some of the church members were given assignments based on their skills or interests. Others saw needs and filled them. (cont.)

**Joshua 10: 16-27**  
**I Corinthians 5: 6b-8**

**Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24**

## April 6, 2010

Sue Yamaguchi (from Orange Church) went to help at a soup kitchen and learned while there that blankets were needed for those who were still homeless. She went to a fabric store, bought fleece and made 150 blankets to be distributed. While some things can be mended or replaced, other things are not as easy to fix. Sandy Kline saw the depression beneath the surface of many she met in Biloxi and remarked, "You can rebuild a house, but not the mind or soul so easily." Susan and Don Hutchinson and their daughter Kate saw the rebuilding of one resident's esteem as this family, and others, rebuilt her house. Susan could see that with the rising of the visible house, the homeowner stood taller "and she could see the light at the end of the tunnel." The gratitude showed to the Connecticut volunteers by those living in Biloxi was amazing. Just as amazing, says the Rev. Ireland, is the commitment of those who sojourn from the comfort of their homes, who don't think twice about giving their time, talents and treasures.

**Judges 4:17-23; 5:24-31a**  
**Revelation 12:1-12**

**Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24**

## April 7, 2010

San Marino Congregational United Church of Christ is celebrating renewal and transition. Founded in 1948, the church is located in a Los Angeles suburb near the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. The West San Gabriel Valley and the City of San Marino have experienced significant demographic shifts as new residents have arrived from China, Southeast Asia, Mexico and Latin America. At the same time, the global economic downturn has created severe challenges even among affluent families. As a result, San Marino Congregational UCC has sponsored a series of events to address "strategies to survive the economic melt-down." At the same time, the church has opened the new StillSpeaking Theatre that employs equity actors for staged performances. Spiritual nourishment mixed with social innovation and an entertainment venue has helped to increase church attendance on Sunday mornings and provide a relevant, faith-based presence.

**II Samuel 6: 1-15**  
**Luke 24: 1-12**

**Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24**

**A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ**

## April 8, 2010

A phrase on the wall of Mu Law Eh's apartment states, "Unbery (unbury) tomorrow and dead yesterday if today be sweet." When asked, Mu Law Eh explains that it is a way of saying: "Dream of the future, leave behind the past, and enjoy today." These slogans take on special meaning when one knows the journey of this tiny young woman and her family. Mu Law Eh was born in a refugee camp in Thailand, where her parents met and married. The Aung family belongs to the Karen ethnic group, which fled from Myanmar (formerly Burma) because of persecution from the government. After hoping for many years to be able to leave the camp, their hopes finally came true when the family arrived in Louisville, KY to be welcomed by members of Grace Immanuel UCC.

**I Samuel 17: 1-23**  
**Acts 5: 12-16**

**Psalm 150**

## April 9, 2010

Suzanne C. Swanson of the Haiti Task Force of the RI Conference relates that through shared worship, sustained friendship and joint advocacy for positive change, the MEBB/RIC-UCC Haiti Task Force is dedicated to providing quality healthcare, education, pastoral training, recreation, and community-based services for the people of Haiti. A number of UCC churches continue to provide information about the mission, raise funds and collect donations to enhance the partnership projects. Others travel to Haiti to participate in the provision of education and healthcare. Funding is for the salaries of the doctor, nurses, teachers, and scholarships for students in lower grades, high school and college. The installation of three water wells as made possible through donations. The newest project is the creation of two adult education schools directed by one of the Haitian interpreters. Rhode Island Conference can claim, "We're changing lives!"

**I Samuel 17: 19-32**  
**Acts 5: 17-26**

**Psalm 150**

## April 10, 2010

"I am Cha Kee, now in my late 40s, the oldest child of my family from Laos. In November 1978, after hiding in the jungle for three years, my mother and siblings and I decided to go to Thailand. With the soldiers after us, my mother, brothers ages 13, 11, a sister, 9, and a baby brother, jumped into the Mekong River along with others and swam to reach the free Laos side, on the Thailand border. My mother tied my tiny brother Chai onto her back to swim the wide Mekong River to our freedom. The Shabbona UCC in Illinois helped us settle in America. My brothers and I are all now working in agriculture and our sister is a school teacher. Mother travels to visit each of us."

**I Samuel 17: 32-51**  
**Luke 24: 36-40**

**Psalm 150**

**A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ**

**April 16, 2010**

**D**avid Zerby states that Christian progressives have not always made their voices heard or defined their issues. Richard Plant said New Vision welcomes conservatives, too. "Across our theology, we're finding more in common," he said. "We try not to polarize ourselves from conservatives. We have found common work in missions." New Vision missions include the CHAPS HIV/AIDS, program and Community Harvest. The Rev. David Cleaver-Bartholomew, associate minister of the East Ohio Association of the UCC, said he's optimistic about New Vision. "It's trying to be radically inclusive. We embrace the notion that everyone is a loved child of God, period." Cleaver-Bartholomew, who also joined New Vision, said the church emphasizes welcome because discrimination within the church still exists. "We live in a broken society. ... People in churches don't always behave well. A lot of people in our society have had very negative experiences in the Christian Church. It's sad to say, but it's true. We've had people who thought they could go to a particular church and have found out otherwise. So, it is important to say, 'This is a safe place.'" (continued)

**Isaiah 6:1-4**  
**Revelation 4:1-11**  
**Psalms 30**

**April 17, 2010**

**D**avid Cleaver-Bartholomew defines New Vision as a church of ". . . inquiring faith. I like that; I like that it has a relationship with other faith traditions. I like that openness and respect of others' faith traditions."

David Plant said the former Market Heights UCC was a faithful but aging congregation. "I think congregations have a life cycle. They voted to let go. They allowed a fresh and new congregation to come in, in order to regenerate." "We're very excited about New Vision," Cleaver-Bartholomew said. "It's very engaged in missions and social outreach. It's a vision-oriented church."

New churches within the United Church of Christ are blessings among us and resurrection witnesses in a whole new way.

**Genesis 18:1-8**  
**Luke 14:12-14**  
**Psalms 30**

*Through your continued support of Our Church's Wider Mission the Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ is made possible; thank you!*



## **Mission Moment—Resurrection Witness**

**April 11, 2010**  
**Second Sunday of Easter**

**I**n Jesus' last words, as recorded in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, he proclaimed to the apostles their mission to "be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8b)

In responding to their commission from Jesus, have Christian missionaries always remained faithful to the spirit of Jesus' intention? History offers us no such assurance.

Did Jesus have in mind the alliance of cross and sword represented by the crusades of the Middle Ages? It is difficult to imagine the gentle Jesus, who won hearts with his loving ministry, approving of those bloody invasions of the Muslim Middle East.

Is that sufficient reason for us to repudiate Christian mission entirely? God's love shown through Jesus Christ does not discourage us from being Jesus' witnesses to the world.

Thousands of schools, hospitals and social service agencies as well as churches were established by early missionaries all over the world. Learning from successes and failures, correct action and mistakes, mission today is focused on partnership, accompaniment and respect for the uniqueness of each person.

That is the philosophy which inspires and drives the workers and the works of Church World Service, our ecumenical partner in overseas aid and development. Donna Derr, an associate director of this joint ministry of 36 Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox churches, emphasizes that "our name is on the materials we provide.... Beyond that, do we do any sort of proselytizing as we offer assistance? No. We simply consider being there a witness to God's love." We support the work of Church World Service through our gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission.

**Acts 5:27-32**  
**Psalms 150**  
**Revelation 1: 4-8**  
**John 20: 19-31**

## April 12, 2010

Sixteen years ago this month, the world was witness to the election of Nelson Mandela, signaling the end of apartheid. But the rebirth of South Africa has not eradicated unemployment, overwhelming poverty or the lack of economic empowerment. These problems, coupled with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, continue to plunge South Africa into deeper crisis. Noodsberg Congregational Church of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) responded to the HIV/AIDS crisis through the creation of Siyabathanda – a community-based organization in Kwazulu-Natal Province. Eleven years ago, Siyabathanda started an orphanage which currently serves 40 children, many who lost parents to AIDS. The children are supplied with food, clothing and shelter and receive life skills training to facilitate their growth as individuals. The need continues to grow and through the contributions of Global Ministries donors, improvements have been made to the orphanage making it a safer place for the children.

Esther 7: 1-10  
Revelation 1: 9-20

Psalm 122

## April 13, 2010

Board meetings are hard, especially when they go on for three days! The four covenanted ministries of the national settings of the United Church of Christ—Office of General Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, Wider Church Ministries and Local Church Ministries—are governed by about 300 members of our church—clergy and lay—who give of themselves to attend Board meetings, serve on committees, be delegates to General Synod, and wrestle with the vexing issues that confront the UCC in these times. Often, Covenanted Ministry Board members give up weeks of vacation time for several years in order to fulfill their obligations and serve their church in this capacity. Board members represent the thirty-nine Conferences of the United Church of Christ; their diversity models our intention to be a multi-racial, multi-cultural church. We pray for these witnesses of the resurrection and all leaders within the church. Beginning tomorrow, these boards meet jointly for three days in Cleveland, Ohio.

Esther 8: 1-17  
Revelation 2: 8-11

Psalm 122

A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ

## April 14, 2010

What began as one woman's quest to find a spiritual home has resulted in the birth of a new church; New Vision Church, Canton, Ohio. It's the culmination of a faith journey for Karen, who, after becoming dissatisfied with her former church, organized New Vision on her back porch with 12 friends. "We outgrew that space," she said. "We moved into the house. We outgrew that." The burgeoning group was renting space in a karate studio in Massillon when they were approached by the UCC, which was in the process of closing the Market Heights UCC. New Vision moved into the edifice on Jan. 1, 2006. New Vision members pride themselves on their diversity, something that was intentional from its inception. "We want folks to know there's a community of faith that is truly progressive in spirit," said the Rev. David L. Zerby, a retired Army chaplain who became pastor in August of 2009. David pointed out that discussion of an interfaith Habitat project is already in progress. (continued)

Esther 9: 1-5, 18-23  
Luke 12:4-12

Psalm 122

## April 15, 2010

The Rev. Zerby said worship at New Vision is not a cut-and-dried process, and that as pastor, he doesn't have an "end state." "Each new person changes the church," said the Rev. Richard Plant, who is a member of New Vision. "People have said we don't have moral or ethical standards because we don't interpret things in the Bible in a certain way," Richard said. "My understanding of ethics in the Bible is that Jesus invited people who were broken and needed community. He wanted them to turn from ways that were destructive, to a life that is affirming and good. God meets us and accepts us where we are and wants us to continue to grow." "Our national tagline is, 'Jesus never tuned anyone way, and neither do we,'" David said. "We understand our community of faith is not for everyone. ... We've been called a 'gay' church. No, we're not. The majority of people who call this church home are not gay. But we do have an acceptance of folks who are. (continued)

Isaiah 5: 11-17  
Revelation 3: 14-22

Psalm 30

A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ

**April 23, 2010**

**M**oments in mission have blended far-ranging calamity with unbridled joy for Doreen and Michael McFarlane. Called by Global Ministries to serve as visiting professors at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, the McFarlanes were 1,000 miles from the areas hit hardest when the devastating earthquakes rocked Sichuan province in May 2008. "Within a day or two," wrote Doreen McFarlane, "the pain of this terrible thing began to settle into us."

The McFarlanes and other professors felt the school curriculum be carried on as planned. "It gave the students an opportunity to sing, pray, cry out, and preach out their deep feelings." A year later, the school held its first-ever spring concert. Palpable energy permeated the packed sanctuary. Professional singers and instrumentalists accompanied the choir. One student was moved to say, "Tonight I truly experienced the hugeness of the glory of God, when I heard the choir and everyone onstage singing."

**Ezekiel 20:39-44**

**Revelation 6:1-7:4**

**Psalms 23**

**April 24, 2010**

"**D**o you need your roof re-shingled? Do you want to support the youth mission trip?" These are headlines for First Congregational United Church of Christ in Bradford, CT. Just how does this work? They let their experienced youth work under the direction and supervision of a licensed contractor to shingle the roof of a member or friend of the church. For many years the youth have been doing roofs on mission trips to the south. Members and friends pay for the supplies and make a donation for the labor which goes to the next mission trip. They get a repaired roof and support the mission trip at the same time. All building codes and insurance regulations are adhered to.

**Ezekiel 28:25-26**

**Luke 12:29-32**

**Psalms 23**

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**Mission Moment—The Way Forward**

**April 18, 2010**

**Third Sunday of Easter**

**A**h, Spring! Fresh breezes, a new palette of colors, the earth changing daily before our eyes—a time so full of promise it's easy to "Praise with Joy the World's Creator," as the hymn goes. And a time to remember we are entrusted with God's marvelous handiwork. We hold it in common so that all may enjoy and praise in this generation and in years to come. As communities across the U.S. celebrate Earth Day on April 22, we can look back in history and discover yet another UCC first. Twenty years ago, on the eve of Earth Day 1987, the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice published a landmark report, "Toxic Waste and Race." For the first time in history, the disproportionate burden borne by African American, Latino, Native American, and Asian American communities as the "dumping grounds" for our nation's waste and pollution was documented.

The study looked at every zip code in the United States and identified where toxic waste sites were located. It found that race was the most significant factor, even more significant than poverty. "Toxic Waste and Race" led to the coining of the term "environmental racism" and helped to jump start the environmental justice movement.

Thanks to Our Church's Wider Mission, the UCC has continued to speak truth to power and nurture grassroots movements in communities at risk so that all may realize the promise and blessings of God's good creation.

**Acts 9:1-6 [7-20]**

**Psalms 30**

**Revelation 5:11-14**

**John 21:1-19**

## **April 19, 2010**

**T**he Global Ministries partnership formed in 2007 by the Illinois South Conference and their brothers and sisters in the United Evangelical Church in Ecuador thrives. The partnership includes six agencies from Ecuador; and half of the Illinois South's local churches participate. "You can sponsor a girl to go to high school for a year, or buy a sheep, among other things," says Roseanne Franke, a member of Eden UCC in Edwardsville, Ill., who has devoted her retirement to serving as chairperson of the Ecuador Partnership committee.

Depending on need, school scholarships vary from \$200 to \$500, covering books, supplies, transportation and matriculation fee. (The cost of one year's education is \$170.) The graduation rate of Illinois South-sponsored students is outstanding.

**Ezekiel 1:1-25**  
**Acts 9:19b-31**

**Psalms 121**

## **April 20, 2010**

**A**lthough the civil war officially ended in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) over a decade ago, almost 6 million have died as a result of the war. Women and girls were used as weapons of war and the atrocities are still being visited upon women and young girls who continue to be raped on a daily basis. The Church of Christ in the DRC and the Community of the Disciples of Christ in Congo – partners of Global Ministries – are responding to these brutal attacks through an accompaniment of women and girls rape victims program. The Eastern Province of the DRC, where the largest numbers of rapes have occurred, is the starting point for the project, which works to address the physical and psychological trauma of the women, to use micro-credit loans to develop income generating skills for their future and to provide education resources for the younger girls. The hope is to bring this program to all four DRC provinces in an effort to restore the morale and dignity of these women who have suffered and survived the ravages of war.

**Esther 8: 1-17**  
**Revelation 2: 8-11**

**Psalms 122**

**A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ**

## **April 21, 2010**

**O**n Miro Street, at Beecher Memorial United Church of Christ, the inside walls are a forest of bare, water-stained wood. Hundreds of names, scribbled with black "Sharpie" markers, are recorded on the stained studs. Hundreds of names, and among them are the names of the Chicago Metropolitan Association, and Ron, and Marjorie, and Tyron, and Roger. There are hundreds more names from other Conferences and Associations, as well as individual churches. They are the hundreds of names of those who have contributed countless bits, pieces and parts of hope to our sisters and brothers at Beecher Memorial.

**Isaiah 6:1-8**  
**Luke 5:1-11**

**Psalms 121**

## **April 22, 2010**

**T**he Ecuador Partnership (ISC), a partner of Global Ministries, is helping to shape the lives of children in Ecuador from Romerillos, a small village high in the Andes, to Yachana High School along the Napo River, and beyond. Three of the programs that ISC is assisting include the Fedice Lisa Haida Memorial Child Care Center, the Yachana High School agricultural program and Integrated Family Service Center's (CIF's) LaDolorosa Project. The childcare center serves 30-50 children between the ages of six weeks and five years providing both childcare and pre-school education. Yachana High School is a boarding school with an agricultural program that produces 48% of the students' food and provides food to sell. ISC is providing support for a solar powered electric fence to protect vegetable crops. Finally, the LaDolorosa Project is an intensive, one-year career training program for learning disabled students. CIF provides teacher training, family therapy and a student medical clinic.

**Ezekiel 11:1-25**  
**Revelation 5:1-10**

**Psalms 23**

**A Calendar of Prayer for the Mission of the United Church of Christ**

**April 30, 2010**

**C**handler's attention was drawn to a bi-annual conference of 230 United Church of Christ pastors and deacons from the Islands who made a commitment to be "good stewards of God's creation" and vowed action and greater presence by the Church on the issue of climate change. The more the Earth is understood, Chandler says, the more our interconnections become apparent. Carbon dioxide pollution caused by excessive fossil fuels in developed countries has an effect around the world. The effects of deforestation in Asia are felt in the United States and China's rising demand for oil affects gasoline prices at the pumps. The more we learn, Chandler says, the more we realize that we are indeed one people, on one finite planet. If there is to be a way forward for our Earth, we must use the knowledge God has given us to understand what we are doing to our environment. We have the means to save our planet, Chandler says; let us pray we have the will to sustain it.

**Daniel 7:13-14**  
**Revelation 11:15**  
**Psalms 148**

**May 1, 2010**

**S**alem United Church of Christ, Rochester, NY is proud to be involved with Operation Gratitude. This program is offered through Henrietta United Church of Christ and provides holiday packages for troops serving overseas. They collect items that fill the holiday packages thus offering a token of gratitude for their service to our country. They, like we, believe that this service ensures our freedom to worship God, to assemble and spread the gospel. Gifts are received through a simple collection basket in the church and packaged and sent by loyal volunteers.

**Daniel 7:27**  
**Revelation 11:16-19**  
**Psalms 14**

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**Mission Moment—Life-giving Acts**

**April 25, 2010**

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

**B**uga, or "Boo" as her friends call her, is a 10-year-old girl living in a remote mountaintop village in northern Laos. Boo's family members, like others in her village, are subsistence farmers and have very little cash income. Tradition has in the past kept women and girls from interacting with others or going outside the domestic sphere. With support from Church World Service and One Great Hour of Sharing, Boo's village now has its first school, which the villagers helped build themselves. When Boo says she wants to be a doctor, there are smiles and sounds of encouragement from a crowd of adults surrounding the school. Boo's village has no doctor or medical clinic and the mortality rate is very high – a homegrown doctor would make a world of difference to her community.

For Boo and for her village, the new school brings the possibility of her dream coming true – of being a doctor who can make her village a more healthful place, a place of promise.

Make more dreams possible. Give to One Great Hour of Sharing.

**Acts 9:36-43**  
**Revelation 7:9-17**  
**Psalms 23**  
**John 10:22-30**

## April 26, 2010

Six years ago, Global ministries missionary, Xuyen Dangers, who serves with Global Ministries' partner Church World Service and Witness (National Council of Churches), met Nang Ven. Ven's mother was a volunteer weaving teacher at the Donkoi Children Development's Center in Laos. As the social work supervisor at the school, Dangers asked the mother if Ven was ready for school. "No, she cannot hear and talk," replied the mother. Dangers arranged for mother and daughter to visit a nearby school for deaf children.

Ven is now 13. She has made many friends, likes her teachers and enjoys school. She can read and write, and is fluent in sign language. In addition, she learned weaving from the Donkoi Center and is an excellent weaver. She even teaches weaving at the after-school activity program at her own school. An opportunity for education, thanks to the partnership with Global Ministries, has created a new future for Ven.

Ezekiel 37: 15-28  
Revelation 15:1-4

Psalm 100

## April 27, 2010

Bath Church in Akron, Ohio puts movie fun and education together in a time called, "Micah 6:8". Asked to come together to, agree and disagree...As citizens and Christians, they use this time together to think about hot button issues of the day. Recently they viewed, "Rethink Afghanistan" a ground-breaking, full length documentary focusing on the key issues surrounding the war. The film raises critical questions about Afghanistan that Congress must address in oversight hearings, that inform the public and challenges policymakers.

Ezekiel 45: 1-9  
Acts 9: 32-35

Psalm 100

## April 28, 2010

In March 2009, Global Ministries executives joined regional and local church staff in Tuscon, Ariz., to tour U.S./Mexico border ministries. The group visited an emergency watering station in the U.S. desert and Altar, Mexico. The Rev. John Dorhauer, UCC Southwest Conference Minister, called the poverty of the region "real and deep." The group "came face-to-face with ... dire need, and desperate people who make the often life-threatening decision to cross our border against the law ... We met many who are shaping ministry [and] aiding those in disaster, bringing hope and dignity to those whom many have forgotten or written off." The travelers also saw a Global Ministries partner church in Nogales, Sonora, that is being built with the pastor's hands and money. The pastor "knows in his heart that these are his people, and his call is to be here to give them hope and vision," said Dorhauer. "May it please God to bless him."

Jeremiah 50:17-20  
John: 10:31-42

Psalm 100

## April 29, 2010

Until the effects of global warming become up close and personal, there will continue to be those who doubt its existence. Like the apostle Thomas, they will need to put their fingers in the wounds of the Earth in order to believe. Jack Chandler, Justice and Witness Team Member for the Minnesota Conference, does not doubt and neither do people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. People on the Islands are experiencing increased erosion on the sea shores, rising tides and increased storm surges. The Islands are protected from the Pacific by fragile coral reefs which are being destroyed by the warming waters of the ocean which, in turn, raise the sea level. The Islands' average height above sea level is just seven feet, making the residents fear that they may become some of the first environmental refugees. Chandler was surprised at the UCC connection with the Marshall Islands and was unaware of the large percentage of UCC members (55% of the population).

Ezekiel 2:8 – 3:11  
Revelation 10:1 – 11

Psalm 148