



Income Tax, Philippians 2:5-11, and Passion Sunday

We have to pay those pesky taxes to help support the programs and people who keep our nation going. Part of living in a community is paying taxes to help run that community.

Through his kenosis (Philippians 2:7), Jesus pays the highest tax of all. King Christ empties himself that we might be filled.

In response to this donkey-riding, cross-carrying, self-emptying king's sacrifice that pays for our salvation..... what do we pay to show our gratitude? To show that we are citizens of the kingdom of God?

Foot-washing is a good start. Yours in Christ,

Chuck Barnes

"Screen-Free Week"

As part of the interfaith So We Might See Coalition, the United Church of Christ's Office of Communication, Inc. is encouraging UCC churches to promote the coalition's annual media fast. Designating April 18th to 24th as a "Screen-Free Week," in which families are encouraged to commit to giving up all or some of their screens-television, video games, computers, smart phones, etc.-to better connect with each other at this holy time of year.

Over the last 16 years, thousands of people have participated through schools, houses of worship, libraries and community organizations as a way to reconnect with each other and reflect on the role media plays in their lives.

More information, as well as a commitment pledge, is available at ["Screen-Free Week"](#).

Proposed UCC Constitution and Bylaws Change

As you know, delegates to the twenty-eighth General Synod will be asked to approve amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws. The proposal for single governance is returned to this upcoming Synod. The proposed amendments are posted at <http://www.ucc.org/synod/constitution-and-bylaws.html>. We hope you will make your churches and delegates aware of this so they can thoroughly familiarize themselves with the proposed amendments before arriving in Tampa.

In addition to the proposed amendments that would enable the changes to the governance structure, there is a separate proposed amendment to the Bylaws that deals with the frequency of Synod. It is also available at the link above.

The proposed amendments dealing with governance are substantial and spread throughout the breadth of the Constitution and Bylaws and will have a hearing. All delegates and guests of Synod will have the opportunity to attend the hearing. The proposed amendment dealing with the frequency of Synod is a much less complex change and it will go through a committee of the Synod. Both proposals will then come to a plenary of the Synod for a vote by delegates.

Should your churches wish to review the Proposal for Single Governance itself, it may be found at <http://www.ucc.org/governance/finalproposal.pdf>.

Proposed Resolutions and Other Formal Motions for General Synod 28

At General Synod 2009 in Grand Rapids, water was the symbolic thread woven throughout worship; water - life-giving, sometimes threatening, freely-flowing or pooled. At General Synod 2011 in Tampa, sand becomes the central image - a vast, ever-changing landscape where "water" makes the difference between a seemingly barren desert and abundant life.

To the people of Israel, sand was an easy image to understand. So vast were the grains of sand, both in the desert and at the seashore, that a mention of it would be interpreted as something that is beyond measure - a symbol of abundance outside of human understanding. And the people of Israel knew well that in their part of the world, the difference between little-to-no harvest and abundance was drought or life-giving rain. To the Biblical audience of today, sand remains a powerful image of an unimaginable quantity. It also reflects the rich imagery of desert, of journey, of shifting sands dangerous yet captivating in beauty. And, of possibility: the desert blossoming into an oasis, life growing on the edges of the sandy seashore, and justice found in crossing a desert (both physically and metaphorically) to new life.

At the Twenty-eighth General Synod in 2011, the United Church of Christ finds itself in oasis and desert. Blessed with diversity of thought, vibrant life and shifting sands, we journey through challenging times seeking possibility, engaged in thoughtful and difficult conversations and wait on God. Scripturally, as we "Imagine What Possible is," worship will be informed by Isaiah 43:1-19, with attention to verses eighteen and nineteen where God challenges us: "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

The Executive Council has recommended on the disposition of 10 of the 11 proposed resolutions and those other formal motions submitted under provisions of Rule 12 C of the Standing Rules of the Twenty-eighth General Synod. The recommended disposition may be found at the top of each proposed resolution or other formal motion and beneath the title of each below. The Executive Council will recommend on the disposition of the 11th proposed resolution A Covenant for Church Youth Ministries at its meeting on June 30, 2011 and forward that recommendation to the First Plenary of the General Synod for concurrence.

These can be found at <http://www.ucc.org/synod/resolutions/>

In the Family

Please pray for Leslie Simonson's family; her stepmother "Pat" passed away after suffering from Alzheimer's.