

CELEBRATION NEWS



What is Your Role?

It is September, 2009! Soon we will once again be in two digit years because it will be 2010. Where DOES the time go? In early November we will once again be confronted with the election of new leadership for our congregation. It is not at all too early to begin asking ourselves questions about what we will do. I use the word "we" because I want to challenge each of us to look first in the mirror when contemplating the coming election.

Too often we skip this most important step. Yearly we are asked to come to the business meeting having asked others if they will consider this or that office on the leadership team. I am asking you to pause a little longer this year, and ask yourself what YOU are prepared to do... YES, YOU!! There is no magic to this. We are ALL uniquely gifted and have much more to offer God than we are many times willing to give. It is so easy to find excuses rather than reasons for holding back.

I want to challenge you each to take a NEW look at the person God wants you to become. Take a risk! Take a risk for God, and let yourself be led to new heights. In early November, come to the business meeting having challenged yourself and having asked those around you to do the same. In this newsletter (page 2) you will see the results of the survey about Leadership. Come to the **9:45 AM Business Meeting on November 8th** having given thought not only to YOUR role in the coming year, but also to the challenges we as a Community of Christ in Bradenton/Sarasota will tackle in 2010!

Look, pray, think and ask!

Jim Deering, Administrative Pastor

Sunday School

After a summer of children's combined classes, we will be returning to our regular class schedule beginning Sunday, September 13 at 10:00 AM. Teachers will be welcoming Kindergarten, Primary, and Middle/High School children/youth to their classes.

The adult class is finishing their study and are taking suggestions of possible study for the fall/winter season. If you have suggestions, contact **Scott Cramer**.

From a Child's Point of View

During a recent worship service the congregation was being led in a method of meditation. We were told to sit comfortably and quietly, palms up in the receiving position and to listen to the Spirit speak to us as individuals. After a few moments of quietness, **Cole Van Beek** was heard whispering to his parents, *I don't hear anything!*

What a lesson. A young child was aware of what was being said and listened. To him if you are told to listen for something, and you do so, you will hear something. When I was told this I laughed and laughed as it was so cute. But I do think it has a lesson for us also. Children are listening more than we think. I also imagine there were a few adults in attendance who may have also said *I don't hear anything* as we sometimes are listening for the wrong thing.

Elaine Gregg, Communications



Check out more pictures from our Vacation Bible School held in June on page 7.

A Lot of Activity

Our Father's Cupboard has fed 1,195 families thus far this year! This has meant that there has been a lot of activity in the Cupboard. There are new families signing up each week. Every Thursday shopping is done and food is put in the refrigerators, freezers and on shelves by many busy hands. Then on Friday the families come to receive their share of food. There is much activity on both days and sometimes it is overwhelming. The food comes in and goes out very quickly.

Thanks to Manatee Food Bank there has been free food to help in the struggle of keeping up with the needs in our community. The financial support of the congregation as well as those who donate their time is greatly appreciated. There have been some clothes and furniture donated and given to those in need.

The Cupboard is pleased with the new commercial fan which helps to beat the heat for the volunteers. Thanks to the Leadership Team for getting this much needed fan which helps in the ministry of the Cupboard.

Mark Bee and Patti Benjamin-Bovee,
Our Father's Cupboard Coordinators

In an effort to continue the growth and mission of the Bradenton/Sarasota Congregation, it was the consensus of the Leadership Team to form a Task Force to



look forward to the coming year and decide what form or structure of leadership would be best to continue our mission and ministry. The Task Force developed a questionnaire and sent it to all members of the congregation to find out the thoughts that each person may have. We received responses from 30 members.

It was clear to us that we should continue with a pastorate. This pastorate could consist of three or four people. Any problems that have existed or will continue to exist are from a lack of communication from the Pastorate and Leadership Team to the congregation. The comments that came in noted that in today's busy society and with the size of our congregation, it is difficult for a single pastor to handle all that is involved.

As our Pastorate has been organized, the Administrative Pastor still has the final say in decisions being made. When there are three or four people in a Pastorate, they have each other available to discuss plans and problems. The Leadership Team continues to have a major role in decisions being made for the congregation.

Responses to the questionnaire were as follows:

I would prefer a four-person pastorate	17
I would prefer a co-pastorate	2
I would prefer a single pastor with counselors	9
No preference	2

We appreciate the responses we received. We know that as our congregation moves into the future we will be a community of people who are dedicated to *proclaiming Jesus Christ and promoting our Community of Joy, Hope, Love and Peace.*

Fay Beers, Jerilyn Gregg-Chlebina, Glenn Day, Task Force

It's Cooler at Church

We, as a congregation, have worked for at least three years raising money to improve the church's air conditioning system - and it has finally happened! At the end of June this summer, we put in two new A/C units, reconfigured the old ones and changed out all the ceiling diffusers in the Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, and classrooms. This allows us to increase the air flow by 25% to each of these areas making it cooler when needed. We now have a separate A/C unit for the north classrooms with it's own thermostat and the same for the south classrooms, hall, and Information Center. The Narthex could never get cool enough due to it being connected to the Sanctuary system with the thermostats being in the Sanctuary. Now there is a separate A/C unit with it's own thermostat in the Narthex. All are appreciating how comfortable it now is in the Narthex. The new air handler in the Classroom 7 needs to be closed in, and that will be done in the near future. This will also add some storage area along that wall.

The Facility Management Team endeavors to make the church facility more comfortable and usable.

Bob Beers, FMT Member

Celebration News

Joyful Service

Children's Church has once again become a part of this congregation's ministry. Children's Church meets on the second Sunday of each month during the regular worship hour in the Fellowship Hall. We have had three wonderful meetings thus far. Children from kindergarten age up to and including those in fifth grade are welcome to participate.

It has been a joy to spend time with our church family's children. They are very bright and their willingness to share in song and especially in voluntary prayer has amazed me. Their prayers are like those of angels. They are truly heartfelt and sincere.



Each month we introduce a theme using a story from Scripture. We have played games and made a joyful noise with homemade instruments. We are learning new songs and are expanding our knowledge of familiar Bible stories. We also include an offertory time at each meeting. The children are learning how to divide equally between local and world ministries. Their favorite time of the morning seems to be snack time. We even try to incorporate the day's theme into our social time together.

It has been a wonderful experience for me to get to know our young people on a more personal level as well as teaching them about God's world and their place in it. A big "thank you" to **Jim and Carolyn Deering** whose help and friendship have proven invaluable over the past three months.

I would encourage you to stop in anytime and see what marvelous things are happening and the fun we are having!

Patty Day, Children's Church Coordinator



We Are Glowing Again

The church sign in front of the church has been cleaned and burned out light bulbs replaced. The sign is once again readable during the day and at night. There are still some repairs needing to be completed, but it is good to once again be able to read the messages.

Speaking of the messages, the efforts of **Kathy Park** and **Ginger Robertson** are appreciated. They not only see that each week the message is changed, but they also let us, and, hopefully, those traveling to and fro on 33rd Street East, know of special happenings. Thanks to all who have helped in this avenue of helping us communicate with those passing by our church facility.

Your Presence is Needed

It still will be summer like weather, but our church facility needs a fall sprucing up. Get your calendars out and circle **September 26th** right now. Many are needed to do interior and exterior work. Everyone can do something - no job is too big or too small. Many of the projects are the usual cleaning and upkeep jobs, i.e. cleaning doors and woodwork, giving the pews and chancel furniture a wood 'treatment', weed pulling, trimming bushes, and mulching. If you know of a job that needs to be done, contact **Brad Martin** so it can be added to the growing list. Remember the saying - *many hands make light work for all*. See you on the 26th of September between 8:00 AM and Noon.



Birthdays & Anniversaries

September

- 01 Hunter Morgan
- 04 Karen Palko
- 05 Laura Vaughan
- 10 Marcia Brougher
- 11 Jerilyn & Dick Chlebina (anniv)
- 13 George Botelho
- 13 Pat Benjamin-Bovee
- 16 Beth Slasor
- 19 Joan Martin
- 20 Kathy Park
- 22 Heather Manfull-Cosgrove
- 24 Don Fant
- 26 Karla Van Beek
- 29 Beulah & Jack Wilkins (anniv)

New Look

Do you like the new and colorful look of the front page of this month's *Celebration News*? Thanks to **Denise Chlebina's** knowledge and artistic gift in graphic design, we have a new look after seven years! Denise, thanks for all your time and effort.

Women's Retreat

Ladies, mark your calendars for Florida Mission Center's Women's Retreat to be held at Deerhaven Retreat Center October 2-4. The women of South Miami congregation have been preparing an exciting event. Apostle Linda Booth will provide guest ministry and the theme is *All are Called*. The men of the South Miami congregation will be cooking a variety of dishes and treats from Hispanic culture, especially for the Saturday night Fiesta! This will be a multi-cultural event you will not want to miss. You can register now at www.cofchristfms.org.

A Youth Shares

Jonathan Robertson attended two international youth activities this summer. Both of these are sponsored by the International Church Headquarters in Independence, Missouri. The following is taken from his testimony of his participation in IYF (International Youth Forum) held in Independence and SPEC (Spectacular) which is held at Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa. The following is taken from what he shared at a recent worship service.

The theme for IYF was "ONE", which meant that although we were many youth from many countries, we were One in Community. We were hosted by loving families who made us feel at home, fed us and took care of our needs. Each day we met with familiar *Community of Christ* leaders. In small group gatherings we learned about the many different versions of the Bible, and how to use them. This time we built friendships also. Our worship was incredible, as were the Daily Prayers for Peace. The food, concerts and fun activities made us aware just how much the youth are valued.

This year's theme for SPEC was "We Are". We were to find out what defines us as Christian disciples. I couldn't believe the diverse cultures that were represented. Youth from French Polynesian delegations stood out in their bright colors, amazing dance and music and sheer numbers. Although arts and sports kept us busy, each day we gathered to discuss the daily theme. I learned that we are both insiders and outsiders, much like the Jews and Samaritans who were so set in their own ways and culture that they refused to try to understand and love each other. We have to look beyond our differences to see just how we are the same. One of the best things about SPEC is learning about other cultures and communities. I learned that we are givers and takers. God gives to us generously, and we take what He offers us freely. As disciples of Christ we in turn must give generously as well for the benefit of others.

I thank my family and my church family for making it possible for me to be a part of two great experiences. In closing, I learned that we are dreamers and we are doers. We dream what is possible, but it is our action that makes that dream a reality. We are ONE, we are MANY, we are *Community of Christ*.



Thank you so much again for the use of the church. We have really enjoyed having such a nice big space indoors and outdoors for both of our Girl Scout Troops. Contact us if you need a cleanup or work day done at the church. We would love to give something back to the church! Thanks again.

The leaders of Girl Scout Troops 6 and 90 sent a thank you for the use of our church facility. They have been meeting at the church twice a month on Thursday evenings for four or five years.

Members of the Leadership Team were asked to reflect on worship experiences held this summer and share one that especially touched them with the readers of *Celebration News*.

I have to say that the Young Adult service, Sunday, August 16, was so meaningful to me. So many were willing to participate, and the bell choir was terrific. Each person who shared a testimony with us was so sincere and shared what meant so much to each one. I was ministered to during the entire service. - **Fay Beers**, Secretary

For me, a wonderful spiritual experience this summer was the baptism of Jim Brouger. I felt a spiritual connection with Jim the first time I met him. So, going down into the waters of baptism with him and feeling the presence of Heavenly Hosts and their joy as they witnessed this sacrament, was a deep spiritual experience for me. - **Glenn Day**, Spiritual Growth

When asked to write about a service that touched me in a very spiritual way, I knew that it would be hard to comment on just one because so many services have touched me and moved me. On May 31st we were blessed to have the praise and worship band from Orlando come and lead us in worship. My spirit soared with the music, and we danced together that day, God and I. Music moves me in a very deep and profound way, humbling me and exalting me at the same time while allowing God to speak to my very soul. I raised my hands and sang; I praised my God and felt that deep connection with the spirit and with all who were gathered there that day. God poured His love upon us, and we were all truly blessed. I thank God that I belong to a church that gives us freedom in planning our worship services - and I give thanks for attending a congregation that is blessed in having so many gifted people who are willing to share their talents and gifts in God's service to His people. - **Scott A. Cramer**, Adult Sunday School Coordinator



Summer Worship Remembrances

The worship planners worked overtime in the planning of our services this summer. There was no end to the variety of kinds of worship opportunities to be had. I personally got something out of all of them, but a couple of them really touched me. The "Campfire Service" really stands out. It was a risk worth taking! It brought back so many memories of experiences of closeness with other believers and with God in camp settings. And, I did not miss the bugs! I was really ministered to by the service that involved so many of our young adults. Who knew they were so gifted with bells in their hands?!!! Their testimonies touched my heart and let me know how they really feel. There was something for everyone this summer, baptism, confirmation, administrations, quiet contemplation and shouting adorations to our God. It shows that experimentation is a GOOD thing. It helps us express our love for God, and lets each of us grow in our understanding of one another. - **Jim Deering**, Administrative Pastor

The service on August 16 was a high for me. It was so wonderful to see our young people taking a big part in the service and sharing their life experiences so sincerely, and how God is working in their lives. The Bell Choir was the crowning touch for the service, and seeing the faces of those involved in the choir ring those bells brought the presence of God closer to me. We have much to be thankful for in our congregation and community. Praise the Lord!! - **Bob Beers**, Congregation Financial Officer

Sunday worship services hold the possibility of a closer encounter with God. How can we deny His presence when people of all ages are willing to share their testimonies of God's love in their lives? Sharing can be prayers, speaking, drama, music, hugs, smiles, or just being a friend. Whatever way you choose, just do it! I especially enjoyed the service this summer with Don Fant. He lead the service with an open and friendly manner. His music was uplifting and inspiring. I hope that Don will continue to spread his wings and to share the good news of Jesus through his God given talents. - **Charyn Walker**, Outreach Pastor

Asking me to share a memorable worship experience this summer is like asking a mother to name her favorite child. It would be difficult to choose one. Heather Quinn's expressive dance? The Jubilation band? Jo Fenn-Martin's sermon on the G-Force? Campfire? I always come to worship with the attitude that in some way I will be blessed. My spiritual cup was filled to overflowing. - **Ginger Robertson**, Worship Coordinator

Short-Term Rental Needed

A short-term rental home or mobile in the church area is needed. Ideally it would be a two bedroom with no steps although a ramp would be okay. A one bedroom would be considered. If you have any knowledge of such a home, please contact **Bona Lee** at 941.378.5607 or bona.lee2@verizon.net.

Thinking Back

Thinking back over the summer, I have to say that one of the best experiences for me was the August 9th service. We were blessed to be part of a campfire that was wonderfully set. It was such fun to sing some of the silly campfire songs that I remembered, but also some I had never heard..."Black Socks?" I also appreciated the testimonies of our youth. They inspire me because it doesn't matter how much or how little they say, just the fact that they were willing to get up and share is so great!

While I am sorry that I also missed some services, I am thankful for the reason...Children's Church. **Patty Day** accepted the responsibility to start this for our younger kids up to 6th grade, and it has been my pleasure to assist her. We had three attend the first service in June and grew to nine in July and August! That's pretty good with everything else that goes on in the summer. Our future lies in these special young people, and we are having wonderful experiences sharing during Children's Church. Please think about offering your time and talents if you feel led to help out on the second Sunday of the month. You will be glad you did!

Carolyn Deering, Pastoral Pastor



FINANCIAL UPDATE

Operating Budget for 2009 is \$60,031:

Income through July 2009	\$31,851
Expenses through July 2009	29,652
Balance ending July 2009	2,199

Through July we have 53% of our 2009 Operating Budget in, however, we should have 58% which is a difference of -\$2,976 or 5% below budget. We hope to make up this shortage with every one getting back to their regular giving routine. We hope every one had a wonderful summer!

Our Father's Cupboard:

The Cupboard operates in an Agency Account which means it operates based on contributions donated to the Cupboard.

Income through July 2009	\$ 6,341
Expenses through July 2009	4,644
Balance ending July 2009	1,697

Your generous contributions and the dedicated people that give of their time help make this outreach opportunity a blessing to many families. May God continue to bless each and everyone of you.

Bob Beers, Congregation Financial Officer



Welcome to **Jerry Sipos** and his mother **Joanita** who moved here in June from Dayton, Ohio. They live at 5218 8th Street Ct W, Bradenton 34207. Their phone is 941.756.0797.

Coming from Missouri are **Lynn and Wade Bryant**. They have settled at 104 17th Street NE, Bradenton 34208. They can be reached at 941.201.6571 and wbryant@Tampabay.rr.com. Lynn is a Graceland Alumnus.

We are pleased to welcome you all into the fellowship of our church family and look forward to getting to know you all better.

Please make the following address change:

Karen and Charles Palko
4582 Las Brisas, Sarasota 34238



Smiles are evident while posing for their class picture.



Gathering together for a group picture.



Lily Rodriguez putting finishing touches on her Snack Time project.

Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School was held at the church June 8-12. The number of children attending this year was down from previous years, but the enthusiasm was way up! This is probably the first year that our own church family children were outnumbered by friends and neighbors. It was wonderful to be able to welcome so many new children and their parents each evening. No matter how many children attend VBS, it still takes many volunteers. The volunteers were almost as enthusiastic as the kids but definitely more tired at the end of each evening's activities! Yes, it is a lot of work, but it is such a wonderful experience.



Ginger R. & Jim D. look for questions during class time.



The 'older' class endeavors to look dignified for their class picture.

Jumping for joy while singing a favorite song.



Many giggles from the young ones while posing for their picture.

Let the Spirit Breathe

Again you are reminded that this community was divinely called into being. The spirit of the Restoration is not locked in one moment of time, but is instead the call to every generation to witness to essential truths in its own language and form. Let the Spirit breathe.

Section 162:2e of Counsel to the Church

We recently shared a beautiful worship experience that was given the theme *Are You Offended by This?*, based on scriptural text. Perhaps in our spiritual journeys, we should ask *ourselves* that question to challenge our understanding of spiritual discernment. What really matters to God? In an effort to bring spiritual freedom to our worship services this summer, we encouraged our worship planners to open themselves up to receive greater spiritual guidance in the use of diversity and giftedness during our worship gatherings. What followed was an outstanding example of what can happen when we let the Spirit breathe.

Our worship has included rousing praise and song with the Jubilation Praise Band from Orlando, baptism and confirmation followed by communion, and gentle spirit filled worship with acoustic guitar. Visually, we were engaged with video presentations that allowed us to see God's creations in new and enlightening ways. We even had a campfire worship! Bradenton/Sarasota Community of Christ is blessed to have so many young adults, each one gifted with unique and meaningful ministry. Whether expressed through breathtaking dance, beautiful bells, or heartfelt testimony, it was evident that Jesus Christ lives vibrantly in the lives of our up-and-coming church leaders. Our "summer services" will end with a service planned and participated in by our youth and Youth Leader, but it is our intent to allow the Holy Spirit to continue to lead us into the "worship seasons" that are to follow. It is our fervent prayer that we remember the counsel that preceded this writing, and that we honor and cherish each generation to share their witness as God has called and gifted them. Surely that does not offend you. It is evident that we have been blessed as people who are not afraid to try something new and see what God has in store for us. Never forget that *all* are called. Let the Spirit breathe.

Fall Brings Anticipation

Can it really be almost September? It seems as though the summer has passed so quickly. Soon we will look forward to the return of our "seasonal" church family and begin planning the Advent worship services. (Have you noticed Halloween creeping into our retail aisles?) After a summer of fresh, inspired worship, fall brings the anticipation of new spiritual awakenings.

All Are Made of God, our Communion Sunday theme, is based on the principle of identity in Proverbs 22. Elder **Elaine Gregg** is planning this September 6th service with Elder **Jim Deering** sharing the ministry of our need to recognize the poor among us and to make it our mission to help them fulfill their needs.

Are you happy with your life? On September 13, Elder **Penny Cramer** will challenge you to *Lose Your Life for Jesus* in her sermon of selfless discipleship as explained in the eighth chapter of Mark. Elder **Jo Fenn-Martin** will preside over this worship of invitation to leave behind the things of this world and become a follower of Christ.

Fall in Florida means the start of a new growing season. High Priest **Nanette Dizney** will teach us how to *Plant Peace* in our homes, communities and throughout the world. We have been called to be peacemakers, builders of Zion here on earth. What better theme to help us fulfill that calling as we observe our Heritage Day. Priest **Heather Devine** will preside during this service.

When it comes to sharing your witness of Jesus Christ, *Speak Boldly!* It takes courage to speak out on behalf of those who are marginalized and oppressed in our society. But with God's great strength and power, lives can be changed with perseverance. This service is being presented by our Praise and Worship team on September 27.

Wednesday evenings we gather together in table fellowship with coffee and light refreshments to share our witness and concerns, pray, praise and sing. Although the worship begins at 7:00 PM, you are encouraged to come a little early to meet, greet and fellowship. There is always room at the table for everyone who comes.

Ginger Robertson, Worship Coordinator



Ginger Robertson, Worship Coordinator

During the summer months a combined Sunday School class was formed with an average of eight students ranging from preschool through elementary grades. Together we had fun with Bible stories and crafts. Pockets, the kangaroo puppet, shared with us, too. Using the Bible curriculum, "Teach as Jesus Taught", we learned from the scriptures.



Children Learn Bible Stories

John 11:1-45: *Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Give honor by obeying our parents.*

Matthew 21:1-11: *Jesus rides into Jerusalem. We can celebrate and praise Jesus, too!*

Matthew 26:17-30: *Jesus' last supper. Share a meal with friends and remember Jesus.*

Matthew 26:57-75, 27:11-56: *Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. Jesus died and rose again.*

Luke 24:1-12: *Jesus is alive! Remember to share the good news and pray.*

Acts 9:1-9: *God calls us to follow Him. Our hands can help others.*

Acts 9:10-22: *God calls us to obey Him. Saul hears Jesus and is blinded by a bright light.*

Acts 9:23-25: *God calls us to help others. Ananias prayed and Saul's blindness was gone.*

Acts 13:1-5: *Paul and Barnabas share the good news. They traveled by boat.*

Acts 16:11-15: *Lydia meets Paul. Tell people about Jesus so they can follow Him, too.*

Acts 18:1-4, 8-28: *Priscilla and Aquila help Paul. Show Jesus' love and encourage others.*

Acts 27:1-44: *Paul shares the good news in a stormy sea. God protects and helps us.*

Thank you to our class volunteers **Amy Smeralda, Lisa Rodriguez** and **Nancy Skene**. May God bless our children and their families.

Charyn Walker, Teacher

Mark Your Calendars!

With fall coming, it is time for us to get together again as a community and have some fun! Two events are planned for October and November. Mark your calendars now, and look for more information later.

Saturday, October 10, we will gather at 8:30 AM at the Cafe on the Beach at Holmes Beach for **Breakfast on the Beach**. There has always been a good turnout for this, and we hope to see lots of people this time as well. Come and enjoy good food, conversation and fellowship.

Saturday, November 7, we will be headed to the **Roaring 20's Pizza and Pipes** for an evening of food and great music! If you have not been to this delightful restaurant, you really should try to set aside the date because you will thoroughly enjoy yourself.

cofchristbradenton.com

For those of you who have not committed our website to memory, cofchristbradenton.com is our 'address'. There is information there that is available to you at your convenience. Go to the site and you will be able to listen to the message from a worship service you may have missed or one that you want to hear again. The weekly church bulletin is available also. It has not only the Order of Worship but has Opportunities (announcements) that will be happening that week as well as some upcoming events. You also can view the monthly *Celebration News* in color by clicking the newsletter tab. Check out Bradenton/Sarasota's website, and let **Jason Van Beek** or **Elaine Gregg** know what you think about it. If you have suggestions of something else you would like to see added, let them know that, too.

If you do not receive the *Celebration News* via your computer and would like to do so, please let Elaine Gregg know. Remember it is in color and you eliminate the need of postage! Here are a couple comments received regarding the on-line newsletter: *WOW! This looks soooo great online...we do really appreciate and enjoy it* was the response from the **Robertson's**. From **Megan Chlebina**, *I like the newsletter, and all the pics turn out great!*

Let us know what you think.

Community of Christ
% Elaine Gregg
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Sarasota FL 34243-6309
Address Correction Requested



ALL are WELCOME!

*"...the **joy**
of the Lord
is your **strength.**"*
Neh. 8:10b