



## Keep in Touch

"The *Community of Christ* way of pursuing Christ's mission includes opportunities for the World Church to come together to experience and celebrate global community in Christ. What a powerful witness to a conflict-prone world it is when the international church gathers in peace to hear and respond to God's vision for the church and creation." (statement of Stephen M. Veazey, president of the church.)

In a couple of weeks the **2013 World Conference will be held from April 13 - 18**. It will begin with the opening ceremony which includes the "roll call of nations". Then the conference will begin considering business matters. There are resolutions to be considered and voted on as well as reports to be presented. The World Conference will close Thursday, April 18th. The **USA National Conference will be held April 19 - 21**.

Resolutions approved for Conference consideration can be found at [www.CofChrist.org/wc2013/official/legislation.asp](http://www.CofChrist.org/wc2013/official/legislation.asp). Some of the activities will be available via webcast on the church website. More information can be found at [www.CofChrist.org](http://www.CofChrist.org).

In the days ahead, please remember the church leaders and delegates as they consider and discern matters to come before the Conferences.

## Sunday School Update

The adult class' study, *Christ's Mission is Our Mission*, will conclude on Sunday, April 7th. Thank you, **Ginger Robertson** for facilitating this study. For some, this was a requirement to prepare for conference, but it was a class that everyone could gain valuable insight into Christ's Mission.

**Larry Bell** will begin a new discussion class on **Sunday, April 14th**, in classrooms 5 & 7. Using articles and suggested discussion questions from the Herald (church magazine), we will continue our exploration of *Christ's Mission is Our Mission*. Come and be a part of the discussion and share your ideas with one another.

**Charyn Walker**,  
Sunday School Coordinator



Showing off its spring look, the *Children's Peace Garden* provides a warm welcome to all who come to join us.

## The Best Is Yet to Come

How often do you catch yourself saying, "God is so good!"? I know I have been saying it a lot lately. We as a congregation have been blessed in so many ways. This past winter we enjoyed the return of seasonal members and the ministry they have shared. We have welcomed another new baby, **Kinsley Chlebina Roehl**, into our church family and welcomed many guests and visitors. The adult Church School class explored the study of *Christ's Mission is our Mission*. Even though we had an average attendance of about 25 people, everyone had an opportunity to share thoughts, ask questions and seek greater understanding of Luke 4:16-30. Our Sunday worship and Wednesday prayer services continue to challenge us to become a Congregation in Mission.

At the beginning of this year, ten members of our congregation attended the first Leading Congregations in Mission workshop at Deerhaven Campgrounds. Apostles Linda Booth and Ron Harmon facilitated this introduction to help us learn how we are being called to lead our congregations to be engaged in the Mission of Jesus Christ. Some of this information was shared with the congregation in an adult activity on Easter Sunday. We will continue to share this information throughout the year.

The 33rd Street Coffee House opened its doors the first Saturday night in January and has been open every first Saturday night of the month since! Led by **Carey Chaney**, a seasoned musician and Community of Christ minister, we have enjoyed incredible talent from local musicians, and yummy donated desserts with our coffee. The donations received from these fun and entertaining evenings benefit our food pantry. I always look forward to "coffee house night". For those of you who haven't attended, you really must come and join us!

Last month, **Charyn Walker** and I had a fun morning at Living Word Christian bookstore, where we enjoyed a very interactive presentation of this year's Vacation Bible School offerings. We left with not just one, but two very fun and meaningful VBS kits. We have scheduled the first full weeknight VBS the last week of June, from the 24th through the 28th. This year we will present "Kingdom Rock" (Where kids stand strong for God!). Chadder Theater is back (previous VBS attendees will be familiar with Chadder), as well as a whole new cast of Bible Buddies. We will need lots of volunteers to help make this the best VBS every! More fun activities and music will remind the children that they can grow in friendship with Jesus. Our children have been enjoying their own church service on the third Sunday of each month. There are always opportunities to help in teaching our children how to grow in

Cole Van Beek's Sunday School Class assignment was to choose three objects from an assortment of items that he thought would describe his family. He chose a hopper (a ball that pops up unexpectedly), a telescope, and a noisy ball. The reason for his choices is shown on his poster. His Sunday School teacher, Jerilyn Gregg-Chlebina, declared it a PRICELESS assignment!!

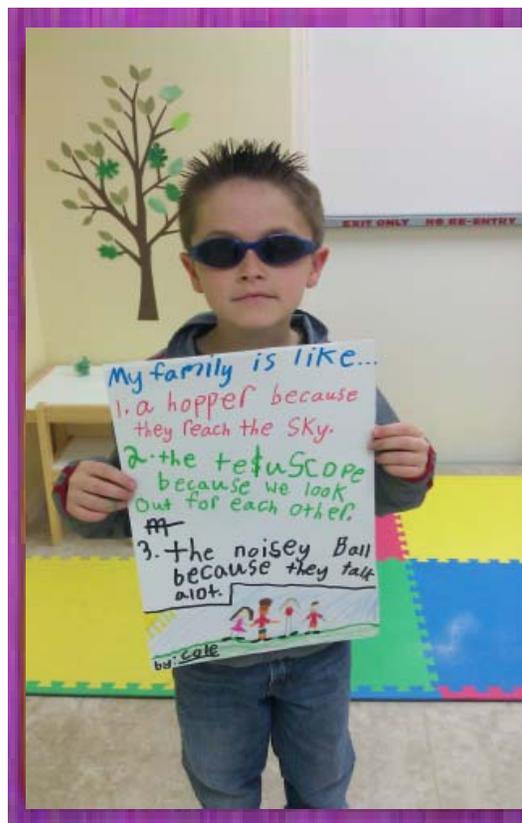


Photo by Jerilyn

their relationship with God and Jesus. It is important that they, too, can experience the joy that comes from knowing our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As a member of our Pastorate, I encourage all of you, regardless of age or ability, to take advantage of the many opportunities that are offered to all. God has blessed us with many diverse and useful gifts and talents. As I sat in the congregation during the Easter worship and celebration service, I was again in awe of the incredible ministry that **Christina CooperFoster** and the many people who participated under her direction rained down upon our congregation. Yes, God is very good! I cannot help but believe that He has even more in store for us if we will open ourselves to receive what He is waiting to give to us. The best is surely yet to come.

**Ginger Robertson**, Outreach Ministries

## Good Food, Good Visit

On Monday, March 18th, **Bob Beers, Glenn Day, Jim Deering, Fred Keenan, Calvin Long, Al Mount, Merv Smith, Bill Williams,** and Frank, Glenn's friend, gathered at Der Dutchman in Sarasota for a breakfast get-together. The men had a good time sharing and visiting with one another. The food was pretty good, too! Close by were **Barb Smith** and me who had a nice time sharing with each other and keeping a close eye on the men!

Thank you, men, for letting me organize your breakfast activity. How blessed I am to know all of you.

**Jeanette Harris**, Coordinator



Photo by Jim Deering

## Looking to "the Beyond"

**Christ is Risen!** The joy of the Easter season remains with us as we continue moving into "THE BEYOND." The scripture lessons this month all come from the book of Acts. The Easter celebration continues as we journey in worship toward the celebration of Pentecost.



After the resurrection, the apostles could be found proclaiming the good news about Jesus. Luke tells us in Acts that the apostles were imprisoned, flogged, released, and arrested again. But they were willing to suffer for what they believed, proclaiming *We Are Witnesses*. On April 7, Evangelist **Bob Slasor** will bring the message that God is present with those who are faithful. Priest **Heather Devine** will lead us in worship during the communion service.

The scripture from Acts 9 recounts the story of the conversion of Saul who was a well-known enemy of Christians. But God was at work then, as well as now, calling people to be witnesses of the risen Christ. Like Paul, you can *Be God's Instrument* as you accept the call to carry the message of Christ to all the world. Priest **Nancy Skene** and Elder **Jim Deering** will bring ministry on April 14.

On April 21, the story of Tabitha will be explored. Tabitha, also called Dorcas, was a widow who was kind and generous to the people in her community. When she dies, the people in her community..... The rest of the story will be shared by Elder **Jo Fenn-Martin** and Priest **Megan Chlebina** as they bring the worship service on the theme *Alive in the Lord*.

The Jews had difficulty understanding that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well. When we fully recognize the extent of God's love for us, we see how that same love extends to all people. *Make No Distinction* tells us that everyone is equal in the sight of God. Deacons **Dan Willetts and Melinda James** will guide us to this understanding on April 28.

The Wednesday evening Prayer and Praise group invites you to join them for a relaxed but meaningful time of worship starting at 7:00 pm on Wednesdays. Consider adding this experience to your weekly activities to keep yourself focused for the coming weeks on becoming Easter people.

**Jo Fenn-Martin**, for the Worship Team

**The Smells of Easter morning** lingered in the air....sausage, egg casserole, cinnamon rolls, as the people gathered. Our traditional Easter breakfast started at 9:00 with hungry people of all shapes and sizes ready to feast on the delicious food waiting for them. Thanks to many hands who cracked dozens of eggs, browned sausage, rolled cinnamon buns, cleaned strawberries, rolled silverware in napkins, set up tables, and put out placemats all before the breakfast started. Thanks to those who cleaned up the kitchen and Fellowship Hall and put the room back in order for the next function. *The smells were tantalizing!*



**The Sights of Easter morning** gave us pleasure as the children, with their decorated bags, searched for colorful, plastic eggs that held their favorite kind of candy. There were new outfits, banners with the words "Christ has Risen", a parking lot overflowing with vehicles, and a new hat or two. The flower and greenery garden that was built at the foot of the cross by the children at the end of the worship service brought beauty and variety to the chancel. *The sights were breathtaking!*



## *An Overlook of Easter Morning*

**The Sounds of Easter morning** could be heard all through the church. The place was buzzing with clanging dishes, laughter, happy voices, babies crying, squeals of delight, songs of joy, meditation silence, and robust singing. *The sounds were joyful!*

**The People of Easter morning** came early and stayed late. They came eager to be fed both physically and spiritually. They came ready to visit with friends, get reacquainted with those they hadn't seen for some time, greet visitors and bring hospitality to all who entered. They came to meet the risen Christ and to find joy and meaning in the resurrection story. They came to reconnect with our community of disciples, people who love and care because they believe in the worth of all people and are willing to demonstrate it in their lives. *The people were encouraged and uplifted, and they departed with a renewed conviction to make Christ's mission their mission!*



Does Easter come just once a year or could Easter be every Sunday?

## Shifting Means Change

When our congregation decided to have a newsletter 22 years ago, it was called *Shifting Sands*. It seemed a very fitting name for a congregation that had quite a fluctuation in attendance. The logic of the name was "as the sands are shifted along the shore by the waves which encompass and alter that which they touch, so God and the people who come and go in our church family encompass and alter the life of the Bradenton/Sarasota congregation."

A few years later I attended a workshop for church newsletter editors. One of the subjects on the agenda was the name of the newsletter and its importance. The name should signify a positive vision of the congregation. I began to wonder if *Shifting Sands* was giving a wrong vibe as "shifting" isn't always used in a positive way. After discussing the matter with the leadership team at the time, it was decided we would have a contest to rename the Bradenton/Sarasota's newsletter. Thus, we became the *Celebration News*.

The name *Shifting Sands* has always stayed with me. I celebrate the fact that our congregation changes when we have new people come into our family. We have truly been blessed this winter with the addition of six new winter residents. We have already felt their influence because of their sharing. We, as a congregation, have always rejoiced and given thanks for our winter family members.

Another reason that the *Shifting Sands* title has come to mind lately is the upcoming World Conference and the National Conference to be held this month. In preparing for these, church members have been asked to study and pray for the Conferences. The study book, "Christ's Mission Is Our Mission", is being studied in the adult class. The author explores the meaning of Luke 4:18-19 as it relates to us as a 21st century church. Jesus' teachings give us a clear sense of our purpose today. In this study I have found that the church of my youth has grown - not old as I have - but in its thinking of mission. A "shifting" has been taking place in understanding our mission for quite a few years now. It started when we accepted God's children from other cultures into our faith movement. We had to look at things differently. We weren't a white, middle class church anymore. We began to look at people and their cultures through God's eyes. There have been many bumps in our journey to today, but the blessings have been great. We have shifted to a more open and welcoming church.

In the days, weeks, and years ahead, I am sure we will be asked to grow in understanding of Christ's mission in this world of turmoil. One thing I do know, Jesus accepted and loved ALL people. As a church we are learning how important that is in today's world. Yes, we probably will have more changing and moving - "shifting" - to do before we reach the Zion ideal, but as long as we keep our goals on Christ's mission in the forefront, I think we can do it.

Elaine Gregg, Editor



## 2013 Youth Camps

<b>Junior Camp</b>	June 16 - 20 Registration due by May 31	Entering Grades 3-6
<b>Senior High Camp</b>	June 23 - 29 Registration due by June 7	Entering 10th through graduating seniors
<b>Junior High Camp</b>	July 7 - 13 Registration due by June 21	Entering Grades 7 - 9
<b>Spectacular</b>	July 24 - August 1 Graceland University, Lamoni, IA Registration due by June 10 (Price increases to \$175 after June 10)	Entering 11th through graduating seniors

To register go to [www.cofchristfmc.org](http://www.cofchristfmc.org)  
Registration fees need to be made to Florida Mission Center

## Financial Update through March 2013

	Budget	Actual	Difference
Operating Income	\$15,175	\$13,964	\$1,211
Operating Expenses	\$15,175	\$ 8,215	\$6,960

Actual Operating Income \$13,964 to Actual Expenses \$8,215 through March leaves us with a balance of positive \$5,749. In light of this, please remember we need to meet our Budgeted Income if we are going to meet our planned expenses. As everyone knows, planned expenses don't always happen as planned!

### Our Father's Cupboard Update through March

Income	\$ 921
Expenses	<u>609</u>
Balance	\$ 312

### Labyrinth Fund Update through March

Income	\$ 387
2012 Carry Over	<u>2,105</u>
Balance	\$2,492

Thank you for your continued support to our Congregation and the World Church.

**Bob Beers**, Congregational Financial Officer



**Greeters  
are  
Needed**

Your smile and joyful "welcome" is needed on Sunday mornings. Greeters are an important part of the church's Mission Initiatives one of which is to "Invite (Welcome) People to Christ". **Jeanette Harris** is looking for persons who are willing to serve as greeters on Sunday mornings. She is especially short on greeters during the summer months. If you can serve one or more Sundays during the summer or for a while, please contact her (941.923.3600).



Shown below is a guest guitarist at the March 33rd Street Cafe. If you haven't come to enjoy music with others, why don't you give it a try? The doors are opened on the first Saturday of the month at 6:30 pm. Sweets can be enjoyed for a donation. Good music, good company, and good food make for a good evening.



Photo by Bob Beers

# DID YOU KNOW ???

- ◆ **Bettie Chlebina**, matriarch of the Chlebina family, had all five children with her on Easter Sunday as well as 10 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren, and 11 others connected to the family?
- ◆ **Zoe Van Beek** got straight A's on her progress report and has earned a half brown half black belt in Karate?
- ◆ **Hailie Rodriguez**, a member of Manatee Girls' Softball, scored a run for her team at a recent game?
- ◆ **Young Adult Retreat** was attended by 19 from our congregation: Jonathan Robertson; Karla, Jason, Cole and Zoe Van Beek; Heather and Tim Devine; Richie and Melinda Creel; Megan Chlebina; Santi Sanchez; Jo and Dan Willetts; Heather, Daryl, Lennon and Liam Quinn; Nancy and Stu Skene who had a fantastic time?
- ◆ **Jean Botelho** volunteers at Blake Hospital's Health to You program by answering the phone and doing other helpful jobs?
- ◆ **Cole Van Beek** recently earned his brown belt in Karate and was student of the month at his school, Rowlett Magnet Elementary School?
- ◆ **Our two Doctors of Optometry, Dick Chlebina and Jolene Gregg**, were rated in the top five of Best Optometrists in the Bradenton and Sarasota area?

The resurrection gives life meaning and direction and the opportunity to start over no matter what the circumstances.

Like the disciples, we experience a mixture of joy, fear, and disbelief at news of the risen Jesus. Receive us, O God, just as we are.

Mission Prayer  
God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.



## A Modern-Day Parable

My friend had a large hydrangea bush in her yard. Each year for a decade, she found only one or two blooms. "Cut it down?" she told her husband in frustration. But he, a very patient man, urged, "Let's give it one more year. I'll water it and fertilize it with coffee grounds. If it still doesn't bloom, I'll chop it down."

The next year, as the couple anticipated carrying out the death sentence, the bush not only bloomed but bloomed in abundance -- and in multiple colors that amazed my friend, an avid gardener. "It's the barren fig tree all over again!" she exclaimed.

Indeed, sometime God replicates his miracle, perhaps because we need a refresher course in patiently waiting for his glorious blessings.

--Heidi Mann



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**Address Correction Requested**



**L**OVE THE LORD YOUR GOD  
WITH ALL YOUR HEART  
AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL  
AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND  
AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.

MARK 12:30, NIV

