

CELEBRATION NEWS

April, 2011 - Volume 21 - Issue 3

Peace Festival

An outdoor **Peace Festival** will be hosted by our Bradenton/Sarasota congregation on **Saturday, April 9th**, at the church. Festivities will begin at **10:00 AM** with a prayer for peace and continue until **2:00 PM** with live Christian music, games, stories, crafts, a labyrinth, hot dogs, popcorn, drinks, and prize drawings. Come and share with your neighbors, friends and family the joy, hope, love and peace that comes from knowing Jesus.

Musicians from our local congregation and the Fort Myers' Praise Team will be sharing their music with us throughout the day. There will be an opportunity to walk a labyrinth that the Lakeland congregation has loaned us. **Karen Palko** will guide us on the labyrinth walk of prayer, meditation, and spiritual growth.

A committee has been planning for months, and now it's time for all of us to get involved. Volunteers are needed to help with the activities. Don't be shy. Ask **Charyn Walker, Larry Bell, Lynn Bryant, Wade Bryant, Dale Morgan or Ginger Robertson** how you can become involved.

The Mission Statement of Community of Christ is to proclaim joy, hope, love and peace. That's what our congregation will be doing on **Saturday, April 9th**, at the **Peace Festival**. This is a gift of love to our community without charge. Bring your friends and family. Plan now to be a part of this event by working and sharing together.



The Mission Matters Most

President Stephen M. Veazey will share his annual address with the worldwide church on **Sunday, April 10th at 7:00 PM**. This evening worship will be broadcast from the Temple in Independence, Missouri. The focus will be on the mission of Jesus Christ and how we can live that out now and into the future as *Community of Christ*. You can be part of this via the Webcast. Details regarding the webcast can be found at www.CofChrist.org/broadcast/upcoming/asp.

Our Father's Cupboard

This past Saturday, March 19th, was a busy day for our monthly food distribution. Having our food bagged and ready to go has been very helpful in the distribution. Each month has brought more new people as well as those who already signed up to be a part of this activity. We have been blessed to have **Jeanette Harris** helping us these past few months with the signing up and signing in of our clients. We regret she will be leaving us soon to return to Kansas City. Winter visitors **Joyce and Fred Keenan** have also volunteered their time. Three of our youth, **Patrick James, Jonathan Robertson, and Frankie Scholl** helped clients load their food in their cars.

Our next food truck delivery will be on April 13, Wednesday. Food distribution will be on Saturday, April 16. Your help is always needed and welcomed.

Spiritual Growth

Awakening to Grace is the theme for the Spiritual Growth Retreat to be held at Deerhaven Retreat Center on the weekend of May 13 - 15. Guest minister will be Gary Logan. Register early as there is some reading required prior to the retreat. If you have questions, contact **Karen Palko**. Register online.



Car Wash

There will be a Youth sponsored CAR WASH on **Sunday, April 10th**.

After church and while others are enjoying the Potluck Dinner, youth will wash your vehicle for a donation.

Come and Get a Shine!

Youth Offer Ministry and Outreach

Do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction and of the Lord. Eph. 6:4

From the time they are very small, children in the Bradenton/Sarasota congregation of *Community of Christ* are invited to participate in our worship services and events. We include them in focus moments, ask them to read or offer prayers, and encourage them to share their gifts and talents. We help them to discover those gifts and talents in the Sunday School classrooms while teaching them about God's word and Jesus Christ. As they grow, our children become aware that they, too, are called to be willing disciples of Christ.



As an ordained minister who has for many years been involved with children and youth ministries, I have seen over and over the fruitful results of

these efforts to be an "inclusive" congregation. While many of our youth are involved in outreach and ministry activities in their daily lives, they continue to share their ministry generously when called upon within our congregational life. **Brittney Morgan** has blessed us with her singing and her nurturing of our babies and wee ones. **Jonathan Robertson** is our "go-to guy" whose willingness to jump in and help when needed has been a blessing during work days, special events, and those times when extra hands and feet are needed. **Hunter Morgan**, who has been through difficult personal struggles and challenges, continues to hold on to his belief in the redemptive love of Jesus Christ and recently took on a leadership role when our youth offered a worship service at Arden Court's Assisted Living Facility. While I could write a book, hmm...maybe I will, about the incredible ministry of all our youth, I mention these three because they are all crossing the threshold between youth and young adult.

While none of us can predict their future, I know this: they are, all three of them, rooted and grounded in Christ. It is my fervent prayer that as they continue to grow, they will not depart from the discipleship to which they have been called. As a church family, we uphold them and celebrate the new possibilities that await them in the years ahead.

Ginger Robertson, Outreach Ministry

Answer to question on page 6: "C"



Congregational Financial Update for February, 2011

Local Operating Tithes (Income)	\$ 9,208
Local Operating Expenses	(5,482)
Difference	\$ 3,726

Our Father's Cupboard Update as of February

Income	\$2,245*
Expenses	(195)
Difference	\$2,050

* Income includes FL Mission Center Grant of \$2,000.

Thank you for your support of Local and World Church Mission Tithes. May your giving benefit God's great causes.

Bob Beers, Congregation Financial Officer

Taking Time to be Holy

Take time to be holy, that's the key. Taking time for Jesus, both to be with and to listen for - to share with and to listen to. Does God not deserve the focus of our attention? Does God not have the right of our obedience since as it is God who created us and sustains us minute to minute? Praise be to the Lord God who risks all to create us with the freedom to choose, knowing that we may choose evil and not good.

I am, you are, we all are the handiwork of God, finely made and abundantly blessed. To whom do we owe our life and our obedience? We owe them to the God of eternal love who created the possibilities for the kingdom, both to live within it and assist God to bring it to pass. Praise be to God who calls you and me to assist in the salvation of his world!

As you contemplate both your freedom in God and your obligation to "hear his voice", what are you hearing? What are you thinking? What does "take time to be holy" mean to you? Do you take time? Do you **make** time?

How you answer these questions in your daily living will open or close the door to the full measure of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's blessing.

Evangelist Bob Slasor

The Giving of a Shawl

We, the Prayer Shawl Group, invite and welcome all those who knit or crochet to meet with us once a month and enjoy the ministry we are RECEIVING! We have learned that "the motions of needlework are singularly well suited to the practice of contemplation" and that knitting is a spiritual practice of prayer and craft! We have been so blessed through the actual giving and even more by the responses of the recipients.

Let **Bona Lee** know if you know of someone who is in need of comfort, solace, a hug, and uplifting which are symbolic of the mothering qualities of God. Our next meeting will be on Saturday, **April 9th at 2:00 PM**. Come by and visit with us in Classrooms 5 & 7 after the Peace Festival on the 9th.

Conversations with God

"As the deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God! My soul thirsts for God, for the Living God" Psalm 42:1&2 NRSV

Deep within our hearts is a yearning for a deeper relationship with God through prayer. Why? It is because God put this desire in us and created us for such communion. After potluck dinner on **April 10th** from **1:30 to 2:30 PM**, we will have our first prayer session called **Conversations with God** and invite you to be a part of this experience.



We all have heard the saying "Pray always and in all ways". During this prayer experience, we will share together and experience different spiritual prayer disciplines or practices which will assist us in growing in our intimacy with God and our Lord.

Mark your calendar now, and we hope to see you on Sunday, April 10th! If you have any questions, call or e-mail **Bob Slasor**, **Glenn Day**, or **Karen Palko**.

HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE



Palm Sunday

Our Lenten journey began on Ash Wednesday, March 9. Our journey now brings us to Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, with the procession of palms and singing praises of *Hosanna!* This **April 17th Worship** will be jubilant and not like the somber experiences in the days ahead. Come to this worship service at **10:55 AM**, and add your joy of welcoming the Son of David's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.



Good Friday Prayer Vigil

Continuing on the journey, a Prayer Vigil will be held on **Good Friday, April 22**, in the Sanctuary. **Starting at 7:00 AM** and going **until 7:00 PM**, prayers will be continually raised to our Creator. You will have the opportunity to select a time that is convenient for you. You can select a half-hour time slot or longer if you wish. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Information Center. Plan to spend some time on Good Friday in prayer.



Easter Breakfast

Join us for a joyful Easter Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall on **Easter Sunday, April 24**. Breakfast will be ready at **9:00 AM**. Come join the **Creel and Willetts families** (our breakfast chefs) for good food, fellowship and praise!



Easter Worship

The **Easter Worship Service** will begin at **10:45 AM**. Celebrate the resurrection message with joy. Evangelist **Bob Slasor** will bring the Easter message.



Maunday Thursday

As our Lenten journey proceeds through Holy Week on **Thursday, April 21, at 7:00 PM**, we will be able to participate in a service celebrating the events of the last meal Jesus had with his disciples. We will be reminded of the events of Holy Week starting with Palm Sunday and ending with the night Jesus gave the greatest commandment. Join with us as we remember together during this service of sharing the communion emblems and washing of feet. There will be **NO Praise Service** on Wednesday, April 20.

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It is time for our
It is time for our annual
It is time for our annual*



Easter Egg Hunt!

QUIZ - How many Easter eggs can you put in an empty basket? Only one - after that it's not empty any more!

All children from toddlers through fifth graders are invited to participate in our annual Easter Egg Hunt. We can guarantee there won't be any empty baskets, but there will be a lot of activities, i.e. stories and crafts projects. All "hunters" should be in classroom 5 at **9:45 AM** so they will not miss the fun.

More volunteers are needed. The Middle/High School youth have offered to help stuff and hide eggs, but more volunteers will be needed. Please let **Jerilyn Gregg-Chlebina** know if you are curious about how you can participate in this fun activity.

Lenten Opportunities

The season of Lent continues in the month of April. Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, April 17. There will be additional opportunities to worship during the month other than the regular Wednesday Praise services and Sunday morning services. A celebration of Maundy Thursday and a Prayer Vigil will be held during Holy Week. Join us for these services as well as the following Sunday morning worship experiences.

The first of Sunday of April is the fourth Sunday of Lent. The theme *Receive Your Sight* comes from the scripture in John, Chapter 9, where Jesus heals the blind man. Jesus said, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." There are many lessons to be learned from this scripture. Elder **Carol Law** will share some of those lessons, and Elder **Jo Fenn-Martin** will preside on this Communion Sunday, April 3.

The miracle of the raising of Lazarus, as recorded in the Gospel of John, occurs just before Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. It signals what is to come not only for Jesus but for those who choose to follow him. The theme on April 10 is *Believe and Live*. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live,..." Elder **Stuart Skene** will present the message with Priest **Patty Day** presiding on the fifth Sunday in Lent.

Prepare the Way for the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is what the crowds did by spreading their cloaks and palm branches on the road. The crowds shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" as Jesus made His way into the city. High Priest **Nanette Dizney** and Teacher **Nancy Skene** will share their ministry of Palm Sunday, April 17.

On April 24, Easter will be celebrated with joyous thanksgiving and praise. Hallelujah! He is risen! Jesus is the Christ whose ministry, death, and resurrection serve as the foundation for new life. We, as disciples of Jesus, are to overcome our fears, and share with others who seek a message of hope and new life. Easter calls us to action. Evangelist **Bob Slasor** will challenge us to be a people of action and to *Go and Tell*. Elder **Ginger Robertson** will preside over this service which will begin at **10:45 AM**.

Continue to remember the season of Lent and the coming worship services in your prayers. May you use these opportunities to bring you closer to God as we celebrate the possibility of new life offered to us through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer.

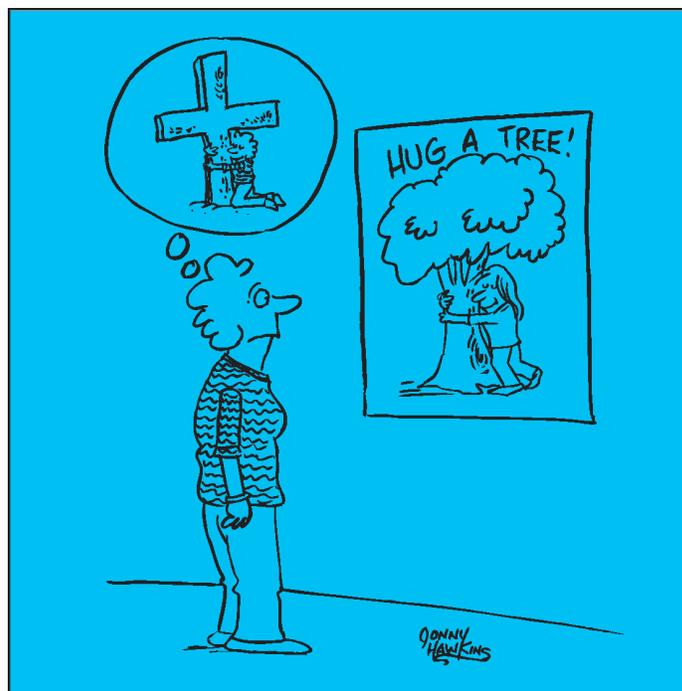
Jo Fenn-Martin, for the Worship Team

Without Jesus...

Without the risen Savior in our hearts, life is like:

- A chocolate Easter Bunny -- empty on the inside;
- An Easter bonnet - easily blown off kilter;
- An Easter lily - it soon withers and dries up;
- A bag of jellybeans - sugary and sweet but lacking substance;
- An unfound Easter basket - full of gifts that spoil and go to waste;
- A colored Easter egg - looks great but cracks under pressure;
- The Easter bunny - always hopping here and there;
- Marshmallow Peeps - becomes hard when opened up;
- Easter parade - a long journey with no destination;
- An unopened Easter card - a message of love unclaimed.

-David Patterson

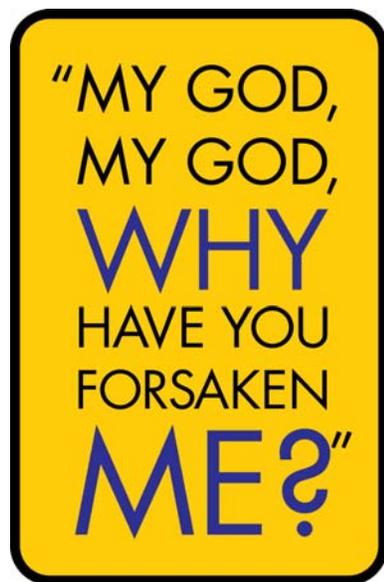


Reserve this date: Sunday, May 22d.

The youth will put on their chefs' hats and serve **LUNCH** in the Fellowship Hall following the morning services on May 22nd.

Donations will go toward covering the cost of their recent trip to the Orlando Holy Land Experience.

Plan to support the youth. Mark your calendar now.



Two places in the Bible, one in the Old Testament and one in the New, feature the following words: "My, God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The New Testament account is found in Matthew 27:46, when Jesus is hanging on the cross. Where are the words found in the Old Testament?

- A. 1 King 19:4
- B. Jeremiah 38:9
- C. Psalm 22:1
- D. Lamentations 1:20

(Answer on page 2.)

Men's Retreat

From April 1 - 3 a Men's Retreat will be held at Deerhaven Retreat Center. Guest ministry will be provided by Don Compier and Derrick Williams. Males 14 years of age and up are invited to be a part of this retreat. Bring your scriptures to explore together; sports equipment to enjoy camaraderie; music and instruments to give praise; and yard tools for a community outreach project. Register online.

Developing a Peaceful Community

Last month I wrote about a friend who called together her neighbors to address the need for a neighborhood watch program in their Volunteers of America (VOA) housing community. After contacting each family, a St. Patrick's Day block party brought everyone together with food, fellowship and purpose. All those attending were given Neighborhood Watch sign-up forms that included vital contact information. This gathering was a time for residents of this village to get to know one another and share their thoughts on how they can all be proactive in the welfare of the community. Their next meeting will be with the Manatee County Sheriff's Department representative who will help them organize their Neighborhood Watch program.

On behalf of Community of Christ, I extend our love and support to this united group of our brothers and sisters who strive to build a strong and peaceful community.

Ginger Robertson, Outreach Ministry

The Weight and the Wings

Romans 8:31 reads, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can prevail against?" This is not to say that there won't be those who will be against us, but the key is that they cannot PREVAIL against us! Jesus knew that, even though he must die, death would NOT PREVAIL against him. Jesus really understood what the crucifixion was all about; do we?

I have given a lot of thought lately to anticipation. Anticipation can be positive or negative. I wonder how Jesus was anticipating what he knew was coming in his future. It would have been hard to anticipate anything but dread. No one knows what their future holds, but we do know WHO holds our future, and because of that we need to anticipate life in a positive way.

Surely Christ did not look forward to what he knew was going to happen, but he stayed in faith and depended on the knowledge that he was in God's hands, no matter what. If Christ could do that in his situation, can we not demonstrate the same faith in the context of the challenges that we face in our lives?

Romans 8:28 reads "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." The Apostle Paul did not say "some things", or "most things", but "ALL things." That means from the smallest to the most momentous. He also says "work", not "have worked" or "shall work"; but it is a present function.

In God's plan for each of us all things are working together for our good if we love Him. Don't look at the problems you face as bad or destructive. Instead, remember that all things work together. We must have oppositions in our life to have true equilibrium or balance. Think of our planet. The centrifugal and centripetal forces acting in opposition to each other are what keep the Earth in her orbit. One is propelling and the other repelling so instead of sweeping off into space in a path of desolation, our planet pursues her even orbit around the sun.

In the same way, God guides us if we keep Him at the center of our existence. We need to have a repelling force in addition to the impelling force. To do this God holds us during the testing ordeals of life. The things that seem against us can be futhering our way on the path of life. We need to thank Him for both, the weight and the wings, and keep anticipation positive knowing that "If God be for us, who can prevail against us?"

Carolyn Deering, Editorial Staff

DID YOU KNOW ???

- ◆ **Jonathan Robertson** took the driving test and received his Learner's Driving Permit?
- ◆ **Seventeen youth, adults and children** spent Saturday at the Orlando Holy Land Experience?
- ◆ **The recent Yard, Bake and Lunch Sales** netted \$1,726.71 thanks to many donations and many volunteer hours?
- ◆ **Carolyn and Jim Deering** will become grandparents again the last of July?
- ◆ **Carolyn Deering's** mother, Evelyn Masek, wrote the Lenten Readings that are being read each Sunday during the Lenten season?
- ◆ **Megan Chlebina, Richie and Melinda Creel, Tim and Heather Devine, Jason, Karla, Zoe, and Cole Van Beek** attended the Young Adult Retreat at Deerhaven Retreat Center?

April

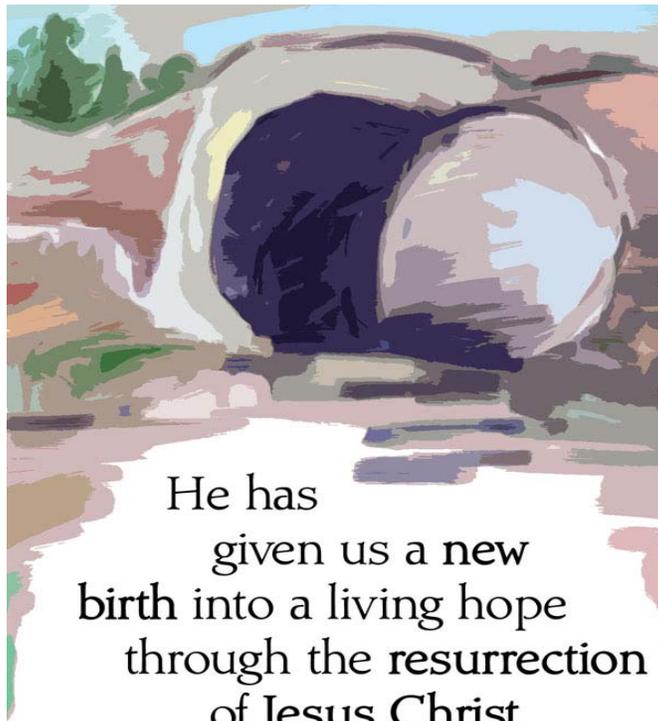


Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 3 **Jim Deering**
- 5 **Dale Morgan, Jr**
- 5 **Hailie Rodriguez**
- 6 **Meah Rodriguez**
- 7 **Jo Fenn-Martin**
- 8 **Lillian Wade**
- 9 **Scott Morgan**
- 12 **Patty Day**
- 14 **Scott Cramer**
- 17 **Jeanette Dean**
- 19 **Betty & Ken Simpson (anniv)**
- 20 **Frankie Scholl**
- 21 **Levi Morgan**
- 21 **Debbie Stevens**
- 25 **Denise Chlebina**
- 30 **David Robertson**

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Address Correction Requested

A blessed Easter to:



He has
given us a new
birth into a living hope
through the resurrection
of Jesus Christ
from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3, NRSV