

# CELEBRATION NEWS

February, 2012 - Volume 22 - Issue 1

## Proclaiming the Good News

Have you found all the Christmas decorations that went unnoticed until all the storage boxes had been put away? It feels like the Christmas spirit is still in the air. But in February, we turn our thoughts to Lent.

Many of the stories of Jesus healing the sick and restoring them to community are found in the first chapter of Mark. The people heard about Jesus and came to *Gather Around Jesus* to experience his message for themselves and for the sick they brought with them. On February 5th, we will hear these stories and more about how the people responded to Jesus as he shared his ministry with them. As we gather around the table to celebrate the Lords' Supper this day, we approach with an attitude of prayer, confession, and renewal so we can prepare ourselves to proclaim the good news and to restore people to community. Elders **Jerilyn Gregg-Chlebina** and **Jim Brougher** will lead us in worship.

We find the story of Jesus healing the leper in the book of Mark. The leper shows his faith that Jesus can heal him when he approaches Jesus and says, "If you choose, you can make me clean." The question is will Jesus heal him? Find out the answer on February 12 when Priest **Heather Devine** speaks on the theme *Make Me Clean*. Priest **Patty Day** will preside over the service during which time we will also celebrate Youth Ministries Day.

February 19th is Transfiguration Sunday. Who is Jesus really? What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? These questions will be answered as Evangelist **Karen Palko** explores the scripture lesson from Mark, Chapter 9. Here we read the story of Jesus, Peter, James, and John going to a high mountain away from the others where Jesus is transfigured before them. The words, *This is My Son*, are heard. Deacon **Melinda Creel** and Priest **Megan Chlebina** are presiding over this service.

The first Sunday of Lent will be celebrated on February 26. The season of Lent prepares the church for Easter. It begins with Ash Wednesday which is celebrated on February 22 this year. Elder **Charyn Walker** will preside on the first Sunday in Lent with Elder **Ginger Robertson** encouraging us to *Remember the Everlasting Covenant*. There will be five more Sundays before Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week.

As we approach this important season in the Christian calendar, may our attendance at the available worship experiences bring us into a closer relationship with God. Begin with the Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 pm on February 22 and continue on through the services on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, leading to our joyous celebration on Easter morning.

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



## Here Comes...

What is the greatest resource of our church? Children!

*Young children believe what they hear, sometimes without question, even when it's about themselves* (Paula Spencer, journalist specializing in parenting and family issues).

A few weeks ago, a group of school aged boys walked together through the hallway of our church. In love numerous people made comments along the lines of, *Here comes trouble*. If children believe what they hear, what may these boys be thinking?

In a HBO special, *A Child's Garden of Poetry*, nine year old Stephanie described how important words are. "Words have power -- because you're probably just thinking words are things that just come out of your mouth and they don't mean much. But sometimes words can really hurt somebody, or inspire them ..."

We could continue to say things like "Here comes trouble," but if we want to take care of our greatest resource, we will try our best to use our words to inspire. What would these boys, and our other children, think about themselves if we would say things like, "Here comes energy" or "Here comes fun!" We could even stretch ourselves and recognize their gifts. We could say "Here comes Peace," "Here comes Kindness," or "Here comes a Cheerer-Upper!"

**Jerilyn Gregg-Chlebina**

## Yard Sale Plus

The Fund-Raising Committee is excited to announce the date of the **Yard Sale Plus**. This is our congregation's largest fund-raising endeavor! The date for the sale is **Saturday, March 17, 8 am - 2 pm**. Included with the yard sale will be a bake sale and food booth. Many volunteers are needed for that day as well as helping in the preparation during the week prior.

Monday through Friday people will be needed to sort and price items for the yard sale. **Mervin and Barbara Smith** will be at the church Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10 am-1 pm prior to the sale to facilitate the work. On Tuesday and Thursday from 1-4 pm, **Jo Fenn-Martin** will be at the church to continue the sorting and pricing. On those days you may bring your items to the Fellowship Hall. Each day volunteers will be needed. On sale day it will take many volunteers to set up - work - and take down. Look for the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board to become a member of the team.

Needless to say, items are needed to sell. Now is the time to look around your home and inquire of neighbors if they have extra items to add to our inventory. Items should be clean and useable. Large items can be brought the week of the sale and put in the storage building. Small items collected between now and the week of the sale can be brought to the storage building, but you should contact **Stuart Skene** before hand so that arrangements can be made to have it open.

The Bake Sale will need many delicious offerings to tempt customers. There are many great bakers in our congregation so let the baking begin! The sweet items are always in great demand. Put your name on the sign-up sheet.

Donations will be needed for the Food Booth of small bags of snack items, bottled water, and sodas. Sheets will be posted on the bulletin board for signing up to furnish these items. The usual great sandwiches will be available for your lunch or for take out.

Saturday, March 17th will be a big day but to make it a successful day a lot of volunteers will be needed. Can you be counted as one of the many willing workers? Any questions, contact **Karla Van Beek**.



## Our Father's Cupboard

How many people does it take to keep our food pantry running smoothly and efficiently? In this and the next issue of *Celebration News*, you will meet our volunteers and get an overview of how we serve the people who come on the third Saturday of each month to receive food and encouragement.

We have four different volunteer groups: **Delivery**, who bring in, unload and shelve the food; **Baggers**, who pack the food for distribution; **Secretaries**, who take care of all sign in and paper work, and **Distribution**, who hand out the food and often carry the bags to the clients' vehicles. We try to personally greet each person as they arrive to receive food. Hugs are always needed and welcomed. As the clients proceed to sign in or fill out forms, they are greeted by a group of three staff members who take care of all necessary paperwork. This includes signing in, receiving their "voucher" card that verifies how many bags they are to receive, or for the new client, filling out minimal verification information forms. They then are greeted by the Distribution Team.

There are usually four or five people on this team who receive the voucher cards and make sure our clients, in return, receive the number of bags for which they qualify. These volunteers usually deliver the bags to the clients' vehicles, as they are heavily packed with sufficient food to last for a number of days. Volunteers are always needed and welcomed whether it is for long term or just a day. We also always need your donations of food, diapers, personal hygiene products, and, of course, money. We have been blessed with grant money and donations, but they are both crucial to maintain the amount of food needed to sustain the number of clients we serve. Remember donations can be made through your church envelope by writing "Food Pantry" on the Local side.

Next month you will meet our Delivery and Bagging teams who are the foundation and backbone of our operation. We unload and shelve food on the third Wednesday of every month. Our volunteers arrive at about 2:30 pm and are usually finished by 4:00 pm. Bagging takes place the following morning at 10:00 am and takes about one hour to complete. On Saturday morning of that week volunteers arrive at 9:30 am to prepare for our 10:00 am opening and close the pantry at 12:00 pm. Working in teams, we enjoy fellowship with one another as we live out the call to practice the Mission Initiatives that have been divinely given to the Community of Christ.

**Ginger Roberston**, Outreach Ministries



## Notice to Young Adults

A Young Adult Retreat will be held the weekend of April 13-15 at Deerhaven Retreat Center. Those age 18 (high school graduate) to 40ish are encouraged to attend. Child care will be provided. Financial assistance with retreat fees is available. More information can be found at the Mission Center's website, [www.cofchristfmc.org](http://www.cofchristfmc.org).

## Men's Retreat

Men of all ages are invited to come to Deerhaven Retreat Center for a weekend of relaxation, fun, good food, great ministry and more. Men, bring your teenage sons or a young man to sponsor. Time will be provided for participating in music and sports. So, if you have an instrument or sporting equipment you would like to bring, than please do! Guest minister Mike Hoffman will be traveling from Arizona to share in this event. He is a dynamic person, and we are excited to have him at this event.

See brochure on the bulletin board in the Information Center for more information about registering for this event.

## Pastoral Care

We have been blessed with many volunteers to help our congregation with planning of activities for 2012. **Jeanette Harris** arranged for a women's lunch at Dutch Heritage Restaurant recently. **Bob Beers** is organizing an activity for the men in March of golf or bowling. In April the **Willetts family** will be serving us another wonderful Easter Breakfast. Saturday, May 5, the congregation is invited to meet at Cafe on the Beach for breakfast.

We will continue to have our Potluck Dinners on the second Sunday of the month, except for the summer months. This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy fellowship and get to know one another. The Prayer Shawl Group and the Pancake Breakfasts will also continue. Other activities are being planned which include a fishing trip for the men and Church in the Park. We will keep you informed about the upcoming activities in the *Celebration News*.

Our ministry plans include a Priesthood Visiting Program. We are hoping to visit every family in the congregation, at their convenience, during the year.

God has blessed this congregation, and we are looking forward to moving out this year in new ways with His guidance.

**Fay Beers**, Pastoral Care Ministry



## Love Conquers All

The love for equals is a human thing -- of friend for friend, brother for brother. It is to love what is loving and lovely. The world smiles.

The love for the less fortunate is a beautiful thing -- the love for those who suffer, for those who are poor, the sick, the failures, the unlovely. This is compassion, and it touches the heart of the world.

The love for the more fortunate is a rare thing -- to love those who succeed where we fail, to rejoice without envy with those who rejoice, the love of the poor for the rich ... The world is always bewildered by its saints.

And then there is the love for the enemy -- love for the one who does not love you but mocks, threatens and inflicts pain. The tortured's love for the torturer. This is God's love. It conquers the world.

--Redferick Buechner

## Ultimate Treasure Hunt Ministry Continues

The third Saturday of each month those willing to be sent out by the Holy Spirit to bring ministry to persons that God identifies as in need, gather at the church at 1:00 pm. They pray together and listen to the Voice of the Spirit as to where to go (a super store, corner strip mall, etc.), what needs are obvious and anything else the Holy Spirit might reveal to members of the group going out. Then, out they go as teams to find God's human treasure that He wants to bring a blessing to. It has often been said that each of us is a miracle waiting to happen in someone's life. Those of us who have participated in the past Treasure Hunts can testify to that truth.

It takes no special skill or special training to look for God's treasures. It just takes a heart that cares in order for you to be used by God in this way. The 18th of February will be our next Treasure Hunt. Please join us and be a miracle. For information see **Ginger Robertson, Carolyn or Jim Deering, Merv Smith** or myself. Come be a blessing; find one of God's hidden Treasures.

### Bob Slasor



*Choosing Faith in spite of doubt.* This simple line from one of our hymns is so powerful. We all strive to find faith, to have faith, to develop faith, to show faith. Who knew that we could simply CHOOSE faith?

Doubt seems all too present in our lives. It has supporters everywhere we turn. It is so easy to doubt. It so often seems more tangible than faith. Faith requires affirmation of the unfamiliar. Doubt requires so much less of us. It is the easy way that leads us nowhere. Faith seems so uncertain until we CHOOSE it. Choosing faith allows us to believe in our deepest selves. It opens us to acting on our deepest desires. It requires us to go to the edge of our abilities. By stepping up to that edge, we must then CHOOSE to believe in the magnificent power of God.

Choosing faith in spite of doubt will enable us to achieve far greater things in our life than we could ever have accomplished on our own. Choosing faith requires us to act. It is not sedentary. Doubt most often pervades our lives, because it requires nothing of us. The choice of faith leaves doubt behind where it belongs.

I hope this doesn't seem to be idle rambling. I suppose I always thought faith would just "come along" eventually, if I waited long enough. I now see that is not so. Faith is something we must CHOOSE. It is something we must put into action even though doubt persists. Faith can take its place if we choose to let it. I want to be like the woman reaching out, choosing faith in spite of doubt. I choose to believe in the limitless power of God. I choose faith!

### Jim Deering



## Baby Blessed

Johnathan Cody Allen Guterrez Morgan is a very sweet little baby boy with a big name. He is the son of Cody and Luci and was blessed during the January 8th Worship Service. The grandparents are Dale and Linda Morgan. Brittney is a devoted aunt.

## Welcome

Congratulations to the Quinn family! Lennon Patrick was welcomed by parents Heather and Daryl and brother Liam. The proud grandparents are Nancy and Stuart Skene and great-grandmother Bettie Chlebina.

## Volunteers Needed

The statement on page 2 of this issue in the article entitled *Here Comes...* says that children are the church's greatest resource. How many times have we given praise and thanksgiving for our little ones and their families. Now they need us.



There is a need for nursery volunteers during the 10:55 am Worship Service. The nursery is for toddlers up to school age children who are cared for in classroom 1. At present there are one to four little ones to read, color, or play with for an hour. **Amy Smeralda** schedules volunteers for each Sunday with the hope that a volunteer will only have this responsibility once every three months, but she has been coming up short of people. If you would like to be a part of this wonderful ministry, contact Amy.

Let us remember Christ's words, *As you do unto the least of these (children) you do unto me.*

## Occupy Deerhaven!

In recent months, people who needed the world to hear their voices began occupying city capitals around the world. On the last weekend of January, five of our Bradenton-Sarasota youth - **Patrick and Kaitlyn James, Lara Yu, Frankie Scholl, Ari Ahern** - joined 50 to 60 other youth from throughout the Florida Mission Center to "occupy" Deerhaven Retreat Center.

The theme, *Occupy Deerhaven!*, was chosen to help our youth find their voice to make positive changes as they occupy their individual lives. The guest minister was Terry Williams, the President of Mid-South USA Mission Center. On Friday night the youth watched the movie *Simon Birch* and on Saturday night the *Blind Side*. Both movies centered around young persons who, while suffering through personal challenges, were blessed by God with people who helped them find their voice.

This retreat for junior and senior high students was filled with fun, good food, and the Holy Spirit. Oh, yes, and newly empowered voices for change.

**Ginger Robertson**, Outreach Ministries

### Be a Disciple

A girl returning home from Sunday school expressed disappointment with the class's reaction after the day's lesson. "We were taught to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations," she said, "but we just sat!"

### Financial 2011 Year End Report

2011 Operating Budget	\$56,923
2011 Operating Expenses	54,841
Short to Operating Budget	(2,082)
Actual Operating Expenses	48,816



Thanks to all Department Leaders for controlling their expenses. We thank our congregation for their continued support to World Mission Tithes as well as Local Mission Tithes.

### 2011 Report for Our Father's Cupboard

Income	\$3,449
Expenses	<u>2,651</u>
Balance	\$ 798

**Bob Beers**, Congregational Financial Officer

## 2012 Directory - Do You Have Your's?

The 2012 Congregational Directory has been distributed. If you have not received your copy, please see **Fay Beers**.

Did you know that the directory contains more than the names and addresses, etc. of those who are a part of our congregation? The Congregational Officers are listed as well as the names, office and telephone number of priesthood members. Do you ever wonder who you should call to place a name on the prayer list or request administration? Look on page eight for these and other helps. You can find the names of World Church, FL Mission Center and Deerhaven persons to contact. Have you wondered what speakers were talking about when they mention the Mission Initiatives? Look on page nine for that information. Remember our directory gives you a variety of helpful information.

**Please** make the following corrections to your 2012 Congregational Directory:

Jeanette Harris' phone number is 913.522.6736

Randy Potvin's apartment number is #203

Nancy Skene's cell phone number is 941.545.0227

Stuart Skene's cell phone number is 941.448.1411

## Look Who Came to Lunch

There was a lot of talking and a lot of food when twenty-three women gathered for the luncheon on Thursday, February 2, at the Dutch Heritage Restaurant. There was a nice mix of women with guests, winter friends and 'ole Bradenton-Sarasota members. Some of the women asked as they were leaving, "Do we meet here again next month?" Thanks to **Jeanette Harris** for being a lovely hostess and organizing the event.



## Website

The monthly prayer list has been added to our website, [cofchristbradenton.com](http://cofchristbradenton.com). If you don't receive the printed prayer list in your bulletin the first Sunday of each month or if you have misplaced it, you are able to add your prayers to those requested by going to the website. There you will also find Sunday morning recorded messages, weekly order of worship and opportunities, as well as monthly newsletters. The mission statement is there for you to share as well as directions to the church. There are also links to other sites for your convenience. It is hoped the website will enable church members and friends to keep up to date with what is going on at the Bradenton-Sarasota Community of Christ.

Community of Christ  
% Elaine Gregg  
8075 36th Street Cir E  
Sarasota FL 34243-6309

**Address Correction Requested**