



Celebration News

February, 2016 - Volume 26 - Issue 1

Celebrating the Last Twenty Years

Do you remember what you were doing 20 years ago on January 28, 1996? Some of us were at the Dedication of our church building. We were excited that we had finished paying the loan that was taken out when we first started building our church facility. Our new home was so much larger than our former church home. And it even had classrooms with doors instead of curtains! We had a larger sanctuary, kitchen, and fellowship hall. We were very happy as we celebrated that weekend.

On Saturday one of the programs took place outside near the southwest corner. At this time we planted many lovely new bushes, but the activity remembered most was burying a time capsule. A PVC pipe was filled with notes that many of those in attendance had written as well some other mementos.

Many times in the 20 years since then, people would say, "Is it time to open the time capsule yet?" As the date to do so nears, many of those same people are now saying, "I don't remember writing anything!" It won't be long before we will witness what was buried in the ground for these 20 years. It will happen at 4:30 pm on Saturday. It will be interesting!!!

The opening of the time capsule is one event that is being anticipated, but there will be other activities to celebrate also. We will gather at 3:00 pm on Saturday for socializing which will include some outdoor activities, indoor games, and snacks. After we open the time capsule, there will be a BBQ chicken dinner. You will also be able to share your memories and enjoy guessing whose picture is on display in the Information Center. You will also have an opportunity to put your thoughts into the new time capsule, because it will be buried again for another 20 years.

We're looking forward to a fun, meaningful weekend, a time to remember the past and reflect on the future. The following is a schedule of the festivities. It is hoped that you will join us for Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. We will be talking about this celebration weekend for the next 20 years.

January 30, Saturday

- | | |
|--------|--------------------------------------------|
| 3:00pm | Socializing, Games and Snacks for All |
| 4:30pm | Recovering and Opening
the Time Capsule |
| 6:00pm | BBQ Chicken Dinner |

January 31, Sunday

- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------|
| 9:30 am | Fellowship Breakfast |
| 10:00 am | Children's Classes |
| 10:55 am | Special Worship Celebration |



Actions Speak Loudly

Do not waste time bothering whether you "love" your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love them. ---D.S. Lewis

The New Year

Where are we going is my question to you? This is an exciting time in the life of the Bradenton-Sarasota Community of Christ. We will be celebrating our 20 years of debt free worship in this Holy Place on 33rd Avenue East. What will we find in the time capsule? Some are really nervous. Will it be filled with mud and water? Will we be able to read the hopes for the future that many of us wrote? Will we be disappointed that some of those hopes were lost? Will we be sad remembering those who had dreams who are no longer with us. Maybe you weren't even here 20 years ago.

There are lots of things to think about and ponder. What are your hopes and dreams? Where do you see yourself in 20 years? What will our church family look like in the future? Personally, I would like to be here to open the time capsule in 2036, but that would make me older than dirt, so maybe not! So back to the here and now!

My dream is to continue to guide our congregation toward Christ's mission. Everyone of us is invited to receive, embody, and share all the dimensions of Christ's peace. So where are we going?

We need to share what we have. Mission is a long journey in the same direction and with all our giftedness and callings, we can cultivate hope, discernment, discovery, and missional innovation.

Andrea Cooper, Pastor



We observed the Setting Apart of our new Pastor, Andrea Cooper, on the first Sunday of the new year. The Pastor's Leadership Team of Jo Willetts, Vera Kramer, Jim Deering, Charyn Walker, Ginger Robertson for Nanette Dizney, and Melinda Creel were set apart. Karen Palko, Al Mount, and Glenn Day offered the prayers for this special service.



Teamwork that Builds Friendships

In a meeting at church recently, I was reminded that when we work together as a team, we will build lasting friendships. I believe this to be true. As I look around at our congregation, I can see many friendships that were built out of teamwork. Teamwork has built friendships between many of you and myself.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 is a great emphasis on this.

4:9 - Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively.

As we work more effectively, we do build friendships. We also are able to share God's work at a better capacity.

4:10 - If one of them falls down, the one can help the other up.

But, if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help. When we are there to pick each other up, we will and do build friendships, and we will share God's love.

4:11 - If its cold, two can sleep together and stay warm, but how can you keep warm by yourself.

When we keep each other warm, we will build friendships, and again we will share God's love.

4:12 - Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone. A rope of three cords is hard to break.

A friendship built with God's love will last a lifetime.

We are better together than we are on our own. I look forward to building lasting friendships with all of you.

Melinda Creel, Assistant to the Pastor

Time to Simplify and Prepare

The scripture lessons for the month of February all come for the book of Luke. The following worship opportunities are available as we begin the journey of Lent. Lent guides us as we prepare for the events of Holy Week and Easter.

Transfiguration Sunday

The story of the Transfiguration is found in the 9th chapter of Luke starting with verse 28. Transfiguration Sunday, February 7th, is an invitation to reflect on our humanity while we celebrate that Jesus Christ offers peace and hope for everyone. Evangelists **Len Young** and **Karen Palko** will bring ministry on this Communion Sunday around the theme *Glimpse Jesus' Glory*.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is February 10th. Elders **Charyn Walker** and **Jim Brougher** will be leading us in worship at the 7:00 pm service on that Wednesday. This marks the beginning of Lent which is the season in the Christian calendar that occurs during the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter. It is a time to simplify our living; a time to prepare ourselves to experience the fullness of hope and joy that is realized at Easter.

First Sunday in Lent

Sojourn in the Wilderness is the theme on February 14th. Jesus enters a time of trial and temptation when he fasts and prays with his intent focused on mission. Priest **Patty Day** and Teacher **Jo Willetts** will bring the lesson found in the 4th chapter of Luke. Youth Ministries Day will be celebrated on this Sunday as well.

Second Sunday in Lent

Luke's Gospel lesson challenges us to model Jesus by living with similar courage and resolve. Being part of the body of Christ strengthens our faith as we live as disciples. *Approaching Jerusalem*, Jesus continues to be grounded in the mission before him. Elder **Jim Brougher** will be speaking on this subject on February 21st with Priest **Carolyn Deering** presiding.

Third Sunday in Lent

Repent and Become Fruitful. Jesus calls all to a change of mind, a change of heart, a change of direction. He invites his followers to look within and to make a change for the better so that their ministry will be fruitful. Evangelist **Peggy Young** and Elder **Jo Fenn-Martin** will present the worship experience on February 28th.

During this Lenten season, we are invited to journey with Christ. We will spend time practicing spiritual disciplines during our Sunday morning worship services for the next five Sundays. This practice is designed to draw us closer to God. The above listed worship services as well as the Wednesday night Prayer and Praise services will enrich our preparation for Easter. Use them for that purpose and enjoy the leading of the Spirit of God as we share in worship with others who are travelling the Lenten journey.

Jo Fenn-Martin for the Worship Team

Year End Congregation Financial Update

We, the Bradenton/Sarasota congregation, ended 2015 year with only a small excess of expenditures over contribution income. However, our fund raisers more than covered the shortfall. Expenditures were \$208.61 more than contributions. The unexpended portion of the youth activity budget was transferred to the Youth Fund Reserve, thereby increasing the excess of expenses over contributions to \$1,208.61. This amount was transferred from Fund Raising to operations to offset the short fall. The year end income and expense statement is posted in the Information Center.

Overall, our congregation is in excellent financial condition. I believe that the coming year will see us reaching out by sharing the good news and the peace of Jesus Christ. Any obstacles that we encounter will simply prove to be opportunities to grow and become a stronger force in moving the Kingdom of God forward.

Dick Kramer, Congregational
Financial Officer





Yard Sale

Ready or not, time for our annual **Yard Sale** is quickly approaching. It's time to go through our garages, closets and cabinets to look for items that we can donate for the yard sale. A friendly reminder: we are looking for gently used and clean (no dusty or cobwebs, please) items to sell. We will need all hands on deck for the week of **March 7 - 12** to help in the setup.

The Yard Sale will be on **Saturday, March 12**. We will have our usual great food, drinks and fun. A Bake Sale will also be a big part of this fund-raising event. Look for upcoming announcements and sign-up sheets to be posted.

Fund-Raising Team

An Invitation

Join us for worship on **Ash Wednesday**, February 10th, 7:00 pm in our church Fellowship Hall. This special service marks the beginning of our journey with Jesus toward Easter.

Developing Disciples in 2016

Although each account is slightly different, the four gospels that tell us the story of Jesus' life and ministry describe the calling of "the twelve" as somewhat simplistic; Jesus asks and each one willingly agrees to follow him. While we might get the mental picture of every disciple leaving all behind and immediately walking away with Jesus, I tend to believe that, like all of the people he spoke to, Jesus first spent time with these chosen men. Most of them were fishermen, so I imagine they shared a meal or two. Levi the tax collector, (later named Matthew), even planned and hosted a big banquet in Jesus' honor, much to the chagrin of the Pharisees.

The early disciples' path must have been challenging. Jesus brought them along as he traveled throughout Galilee, Judea and far away Phoenician territories. They listened to him preach and witnessed countless miracles. Yet when the crowds departed, Jesus spent time teaching his disciples. He sent them out alone without him, warning them to take nothing but a staff; no bread, no bag, no money - only the tunic on their backs and sandals on their feet. This was their trial run. Finding that God had well equipped them, *"They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them."* Mark 6:12-13

God still equips us to learn by Jesus' example today. It is the vision of the **Developing Disciples to Serve** team to offer our congregation opportunities to grow in our discipleship through Temple School Classes that will increase our awareness of how we can effectively use and develop our gifts and talents, increase our generosity and to enhance our ministry through education. We would like to invite everyone to join us on this new path of discovery. It is through this hands-on learning process that we can be confident in our mission and ministry. Are you ready to open your mind to new possibilities and understanding? Like the first twelve, Jesus will lead us. All we have to do is come.

Ginger Robertson, Developing Disciples to Serve



Grow in Love

As our new year begins, we find our congregation involved in exciting preparations for the **20th Anniversary Celebration** of the dedication of our beautiful building. For those who were here then, thinking back over the past 20 years of all those precious memories, the loved ones who have gone on and how they have impacted our congregation will be bitter sweet; however, we are

thankful to our Heavenly Father for allowing us to laugh, love, learn, worship, and cry together.

The highlight on **Saturday, January 30th**, will be the opening of the **Time Capsule**, that will rekindle many memories of activities and loved ones. There will also be a display of pictures and memorabilia in the Information Center. At 6:00 pm a yummy BBQ chicken dinner will be served. **Sunday, January 31st**, begins with a special fellowship breakfast followed by a celebration worship service at 10:55 am.



Our February activities begin with **Family Fun Night** on **Wednesday, the 3rd** - dinner, games and a valentine craft activity in preparation for the February potluck. On **February 6th, Saturday** at 6:00 pm, we will show the movie "War Room" here at church. This movie is a faith drama about a family crisis and their journey back to God. **February 14th** is our **Potluck Dinner** with a valentine theme - come share the food and love on this special day. This also is the First Sunday of the Lenten Season, a time of sacrifice, study, and prayer as we prepare for Easter.

My hope for the year is that as we grow in love and engage in congregational life activities, we will be brought closer to God always keeping in mind **Christ's Mission is Our Mission - Invite People to Christ**.

Activities for all to enjoy are in the planning. Keep reading the *Celebration News* and the Sunday bulletin to find out about our next activity - **surprises are coming!**

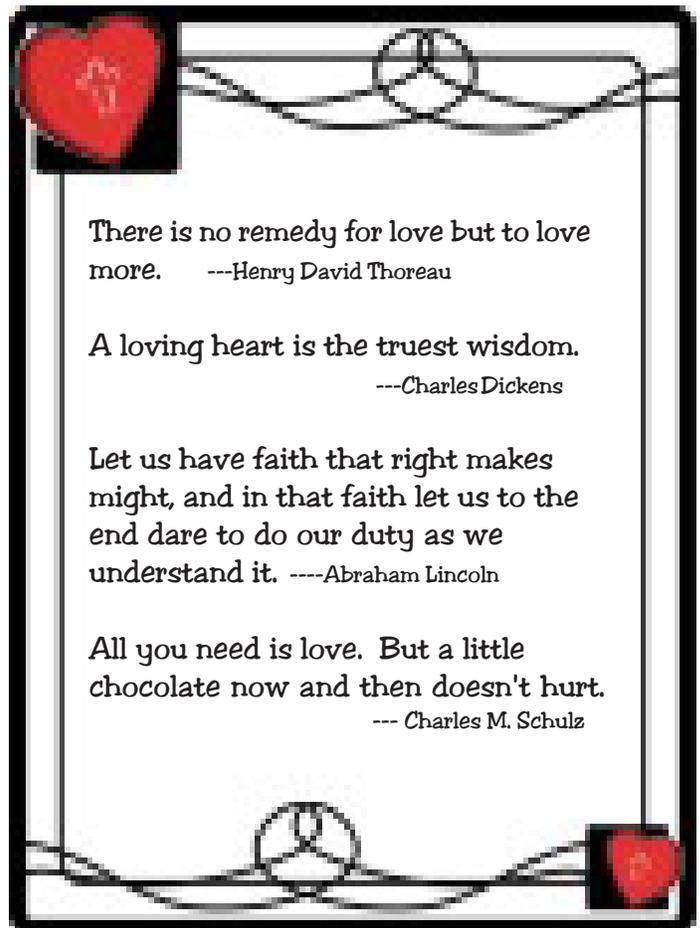
Vera Kramer, Congregational Ministries

Church School News

How's your prayer life? How about your relationship with God? Is it cold, hot or lukewarm? If you have seen the latest Christian movie, "War Room", you already know how important it is to engage in a serious self examination of your relationship with God. The Adult Church School class has begun "The War Room Bible Study." Through group and individual study, along with timely clips from the movie, we are learning how to strengthen and deepen our relationship with God through prayer and faith. Newcomers to the class are always welcome, and there are still books available. If you haven't seen the movie, mark your calendar! We are showing "War Room" at our **Movie Night** on Saturday Evening, February 6, at 6:00 pm. A movie for our elementary age and younger children will be provided as well as supervised child care.

We are currently looking at some new church school curriculum for our K - 5th grade children offered by our International Headquarters.

Ginger Robertson, Church School Coordinator





Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 1 Carolyn Deering
- 2 Jasmine Rodriguez
- 7 Penny Cramer
- 11 Dan Willetts
- 12 Nancy Brougher
- 14 Barbara & Mervin Smith (anniv)
- 14 Sally Melchert
- 15 Sandi Hunt
- 19 Karla & Jason Van Beek (anniv)
- 22 Linda Mount
- 26 Dick Kramer
- 27 Margie Geiger Boettger

March

- 1 Charyn and Charlie Walker (anniv)
- 3 Sandra Rater
- 4 Fay Beers
- 8 Joan Wooderson



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Thank You for Your Compassion

You all have shared so generously with a piece of yourself throughout the past year, and I wanted to reach out and let you know what your generosity accomplished.

The Reach In/Reach Out bucket was the brain child of **Dick and Vera Kramer** as members of the Compassionate Ministries Team. We wanted a way to help the communities we are part of - the world community, the U.S. community, the local community we are in and the community within. The Cramer's told us about a box their previous congregation uses. This box is placed in a spot of prominence each Sunday to collect loose change from the congregation. From this idea, our Reach In (go deep into your pockets and heart and provide that loose change) and Reach Out (drop your change in the bucket each week so we can use it to reach out to those in need) bucket was born.

We have collected over \$5,045 since we started the bucket early in 2015. We donated \$1,500 to Outreach International, over \$2,200 to the mission work of JaAna and Rick Schwartz' congregation in Greenfield, South Carolina; \$660 to



Souls for Little Soles; \$150 emergency backup for the Manna Bag project; and over \$850 for members of our own congregation in need.

Along our mission trip, we have had some fund raising meals to help "purchase" gifts for those helped by Outreach International and the South Carolina mission. We have each been approached with requests and suggestions for future projects.

Our mission is beginning to shape up into one of giving to those within our various communities who have need. Bless each of you; thank you for your heartfelt contributions and may you have a blessed new year! Come and join the Compassionate Ministries meetings held at 7:00 pm on the last Thursday of the month in the Fellowship Hall.

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

2 Corinthians 9:10-13

Jo Willetts, Compassionate Ministries

Hanging and Unhanging of the Greens

On Saturday, December 5, nine eager decorators gathered to make our church home festive for the Christmas holidays. The lighted wreaths were already in place in the sanctuary, and the large banners had previously been hung in the Fellowship Hall.

The angel, dove, and poinsettia ornaments that had been made at the **Family Fun Night** on December 2 were placed on the tree after it was assembled. These were the only ornaments that were used on the tree this year, and they provided a beautiful and simple display. The angel took her place on the top of the tree as always.

The candles in the advent wreath reminded us of the themes of joy, hope, love, and peace that we celebrate throughout the advent season. The Christmas banners were hung in the narthex and the sanctuary, and the nativity scene was displayed in the narthex.

Our church home reflected the joy we experienced as we came to worship each week. But....what goes up, must come down. So on January 9, six un-decorators arrived to return the decorations to the attic and put the church back to its pre-Christmas condition. If you want to keep the decorations you made to use on your tree at home next year, please pick them up.

Thank you to all the decorators and un-decorators.



(Left to right) Hailie Rodriguez, Zoe Van Beek, Karla Van Beek, Jacob Rodriguez provided beautiful Christmas music at our 2015 Christmas Eve Service.

A Few Highlights from December



Dick Kramer and Charlie Walker celebrate with first place winner Zoe Van Beek at the Chili Contest.



Jasmine and Robert brought their son, Kane Byron Pusey, to be blessed by Elders Charyn Walker and Ginger Robertson on December 20th.



Jerilyn Gregg-Chlebina and children prepare to light the Advent candles.