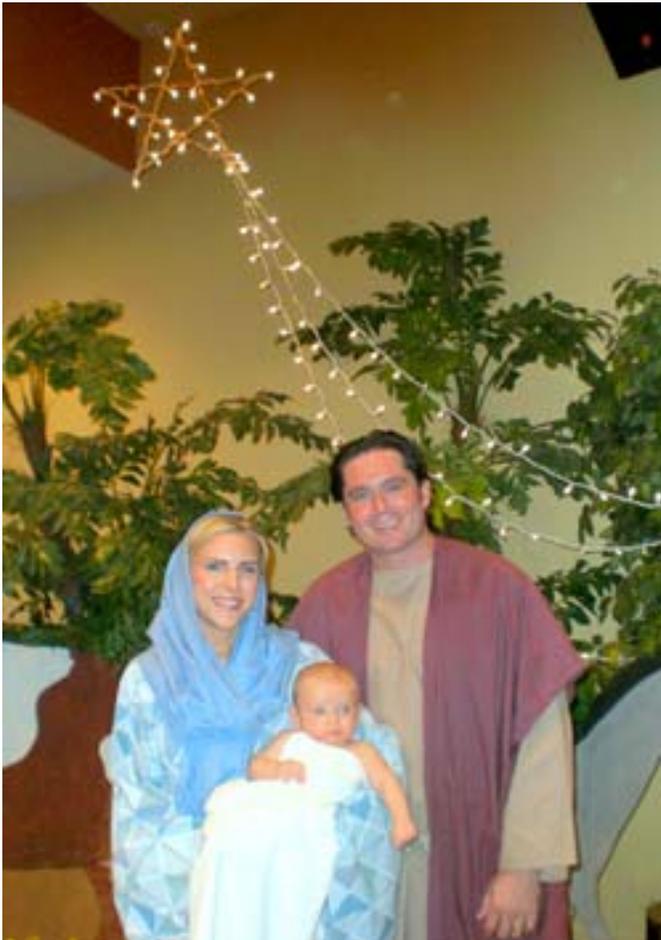


CELEBRATION NEWS

Looking for Volunteers

Do you enjoy interacting with children? Do you like volunteering? Then you should think about becoming a Nursery Volunteer. Additional volunteers are needed to stay with our little ones, ages walking through kindergarten, during the 10:55 AM service. Volunteers must be 18 years or older and complete a youth worker application form. If interested, please contact me, **Amy Smeralda**, at 941.447.0833. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon!



Words of Guidance

On **Sunday, January 17, at 2:00 PM**, **President Steve Veazey** will bring words of guidance and inspired counsel via live webcast from the Temple in Independence, MO. You are encouraged to participate in this opportunity as the church continues to engage in prayer, discussion, and discernment about important issues the church is considering at this time. The webcast will be broadcast at www.CofChrist.org. Note that in the past there have been some broadcast problems, but each time the process has improved.

Join the World Church Leadership Council in prayerful support of Brother Veazey and the church as we all continue our journey with God.

This year we were privileged to have a real baby represent baby Jesus during Christmas. **Liam Quinn** depicted baby Jesus while his parents, **Heather and Daryl**, portrayed Mary and Joseph. Liam looked around at the lights, smiled, and acted the part perfectly. Pictured here is the Quinn family at the end of the Christmas Eve Service.

One Sunday, December 27th, **Liam Austin** was brought by his parents to be blessed by the Elders. Again, Liam quietly took in his surroundings while the Sacrament of Blessing of Children was given in the presence of family and friends. We rejoice with the Quinn family and look forward to watching and participating in the life of Liam.

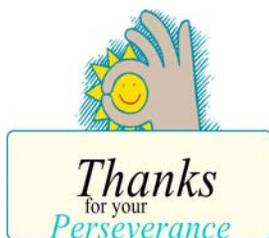
The Changing of the Guard

I know, I know...please pardon another reference to my recent trip to the United Kingdom! But, by the time you get this newsletter, we, as a congregation, will have undergone a change in leadership. A completely new group will have taken on the mantle of responsibility of leading us closer to God and each other.

Another year will have passed, and we will once again have taken a certain amount of time to consider our past response to God's call. After due consideration, we will also, hopefully, have recommitted ourselves to our future response. But, that's the hard part...isn't it? Where do we go from here? Well, we need only look at the life of Christ to get our answer. We must live by His rather simple example and respond to the needs all around us. Let us take on the mantle of kindness and understanding that He wore so well and place it on our own lives. Let us remember that each of us struggles, and we often fail, but it is all in the "getting back up" that we succeed.

May we all remember this year to give each other room to grow and to be PATIENT with one another as God is with us everyday. Let us love one another as we redirect ourselves toward God's call. *What would Jesus do?* is not just an expression...it is a call to proper action toward each other!

Jim Deering



We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to **Dave Robertson, Jason Van Beek, Brad Martin, Bob Beers and Lee Peters** for their hard work

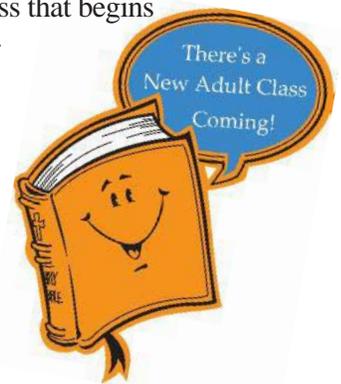
and perseverance in the replacement of our video projector. After many long hours of research, purchases, exchanges and installations, they had our system up and running in time for the Advent services. Thanks, guys!

Begin the New Year Exploring

ENDURING PRINCIPLES: THE IDENTITY, MISSION, MESSAGE, AND BELIEFS OF A WORLD WIDE FAITH COMMUNITY, CALLED INTO BEING BY GOD, AND LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Do you know what the *Community of Christ* believes about the *Enduring Principles* that are the very foundation of who we are as a "healing and redeeming agent" in the world? As we deepen our understanding of God's call to us and the power of the Holy Spirit that waits to break upon our way, we will become empowered to bring many to the knowledge of Christ. Each of us no doubt has a position of belief that has been formed from our experiences in the church in classes, worship, retreats, etc. But is our personal belief position helping us or hindering us from fulfilling the call of Christ to grow in his image?

The Adult Sunday School Class that begins on **January 3, at 10:00 AM**, will explore, inform, inspire, bless, reveal, and expand our understanding and begin a deepening process of growing in the image of Jesus Christ. You are invited to really know who we are and what we are as Christ's healing and redeeming agents in the world (see Counsel to the Church 156:5).



Nanette Dizney and Bob Slasor are co-facilitating this class. It will require study and preparation on your part of the provided materials. It is the desire of the class to have open and honest discussion and honor each other's position on any given topic. What can be promised as you do a serious study of these divine principles is the affirmation of the Holy Spirit to your heart and mind. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

What is the Holy Spirit's teaching about these enduring principles of: Grace and Generosity, Sacredness of Creation, Continuing Revelation, Worth of All Persons, All Are Called, Responsible Choices, Pursuit of Peace (Shalom), Unity in Diversity, and Blessing of Community? Do you want to know what is on God's heart about this? Do you want your heart touched, your mind expanded, and your knowledge increased? If so, please plan to become part of this learning experience. God will be happy. You will be happy. The church will be happy.

You are invited by Nanette and Bob to come and try it out. It is believed that you will be motivated by the Holy Spirit to really get into it. Begin the new year as you explore a deepened understanding of God's call. Remember the class begins January 3rd.



New Beginnings

are always filled with anticipation, hope, fresh ideas and even a little mystery. As we start the new year with a new worship committee, we will, in the weeks to come, look forward to the continued effort to bring vibrant ministry to all who come to worship and praise our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. We welcome and support **Fay Beers, Penny Cramer** and **Jo Fenn-Martin** who share a desire to bring this important ministry to our congregation.

Community of Christ has long recognized that it is through the use of our spiritual gifts that we flourish and grow. We will begin the new year by *Praising the Giver of Gifts* during the January 3rd Communion service. Elder **Carol Law** reminds us that John the “beloved disciple” believed that we need to stretch our thinking about God, creation, our lives in this world and discipleship. Priest **Don Fant** is presiding.

Listening to God’s Voice is the message Evangelist **Glenn Day** shares as we begin the Epiphany Season on January 10th. The Epiphany is a Christian remembrance of the Magi visit to see the Christ Child, thought to be about two years *after* the actual birth of Jesus. God’s presence is in all creation. The prophet Isaiah’s words to the people of Israel are as relevant today as they were in his time. **Jim Brougher** is planning this timely worship experience.

One of the Enduring Principles of the Community of Christ is that *All Are Called*. On January 17th the new 2010 Pastorate of **Elaine Gregg, Marcia Brougher** and **Ginger Robertson** will share with the congregation their thoughts on this principal, and that *God Has Called and Gifted Each One*. From a little baby who lay in a manger portraying the baby, Jesus, to our more senior members who share their talents and wisdom, comes the blessing of spiritual gifts. During this service, the Pastorate will be set apart with a blessing for the year ahead.

Elder **Bona Lee** will speak to us about how we are a people of *Many Gifts, One Body, Serving Together* on January 24th. This was the Apostle Paul’s message to the church in Corinth as they often disagreed with one another on important issues. Evangelist **Bob Slasor** is planning and will preside over this worship service.

Our focus for the last service of the month, January 31st, will be that *God Provides Strength and Understanding*. Elder **Penny Cramer** explores the prophet Jeremiah’s calling and relationship with God and the authority that came with his calling. Elder **Bob Beers** will preside.

We invite everyone to join us on **Wednesday Evenings** for our spiritual blessing gatherings. We meet in the Fellowship Hall at 7:00 PM with love, refreshments, praise and prayer. This is an opportunity for everyone to share and grow in our relationship with God and with one another.

Ginger Robertson

A New Year’s resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.

-- Author Unknown

Many people look forward to the new year for a new start on old habits.

--Author Unknown

We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year’s Day.

--Edith Lovejoy Pierce



2010 Church Directory information

Bradenton/Sarasota Congregational Directory is being put together. If you have had an address or telephone change, please let **Elaine Gregg** know as soon as possible. Any changes in your e-mail addresses need to be noted also. Please update your information before the publication date. Your support is appreciated.

Winter Reunion

Florida Mission Center's **Winter Reunion** will be held at Deerhaven Retreat Center **January 23 - 29**. Apostle Stassi Cramm will bring guest ministry during the week. Stassi is currently assigned to the Michigan area and holds responsibilities for African-American Ministries, Campus Ministries and Young Adult Ministries.

There is a variety of optional class choices, i.e. computer power point class, beading, birdhouse making, cake decorating, pine needle weaving, water color painting, evening ecosystem walk and more. The cost is \$100 per person for the week or \$20 per day. Register on line at cofchristfmc.org or call 800.900.5070.

Following Christ's Path is the theme of the **Junior/Senior High Retreat, January 29-31** at Deerhaven Retreat Center. Fee for the weekend retreat is \$30.



Enjoy the outdoors, learn about God and spend time away from it all with old

and new friends. Experience the joy of camp including campfire, interactive classes, creative worship and fun! Bring a friend. Register on-line at cofchristfmc.org or call the Florida Mission Center office at 800.900.5070.

Special FMC Conference

A special **Florida Mission Center Conference** is scheduled for **Saturday, February 6**, at the Tampa church. The conference will begin at 9:30 AM and last about two hours. Apostle Linda Booth will be present to participate in two ordinations and a vote will be taken on the amended Articles of Incorporation for Deerhaven before they are submitted to the State of Florida.



The philosophy of Outreach International has always intrigued me. We have all heard the biblical expression *Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime*. According to Matt Naylor, head of Outreach International, it is not enough to give people food, or to even dig them a well. To do so is a temporary fix at best. Their mission is to educate the people in oppressed communities to work together to approach local and national government officials and voice their needs and concerns. They learn how to gain the financing and tools to farm, tap into water supplies, build schools and medical clinics and become viable working communities.

Here, in our own community, we have seen the ravages of the broken economy in the faces of the hundreds of people who have come to **Our Father's Cupboard's** food pantry each Friday for food, clothing and spiritual blessing. While this ministry is a vital necessity, it is time for us to address the questions, *What more can we do?* Again, education is a key that unlocks the door to independence. Given the basic skills of reading, math and English, a person who may have been overlooked in the entry level job market would have the confidence to meet prospective employers with a renewed sense of self worth and dignity.

Community of Christ affirms the worth and dignity of all people. Are we willing to give up a few hours of our time each week to teach, tutor, and mentor these brothers and sisters that we love and care for? Are we willing to use our gifts and talents to bring enrichment into the lives of those whose circumstances have left them on the fringes of our society? Can we share the gospel of Jesus Christ in action as well as words? I believe that we can.

In the year ahead, we have the opportunity to reach out in new and powerful ways to our community. We cannot afford to sit back and do nothing; we must be bold and move forward to fulfill the call to "discern and embrace (the) full meaning" of our identity. I urge everyone to read and read again the words of counsel given to us in Doctrine and Covenants 163. *You are called to create pathways in the world for peace in Christ to be rationally and culturally incarnate. The hope of Zion is realized when the vision of Christ is embodied in communities of generosity, justice, and peacefulness.* (163:3a)

Ginger Robertson, Outreach Ministries

Welcome 2010!!

When we usher in a New Year, we tend to look at it as a clean slate. For myself, I plan to make better use of my time this year. I find myself many times saying I wish I had more time or there just isn't enough time in the day. The truth is that we all have exactly the same amount of time; the only difference is how we use it.

The following is a wonderful poem, and I share it with you as part of my plan for 2010. I hope it brings you some inspiration. It is simply titled *Time*.

Take time to pray *it helps to bring God near and washes the dust of the earth from your eyes.*

Take time for friends *it is the source of happiness.*

Take time for work *it is the price of success.*

Take time to think *it is the source of power.*

Take time to read *it is the foundation of knowledge.*

Take time to laugh *it is the singing that helps with life's loads.*

Take time to love *it is the one sacrament of life.*

Take time to dream *it hitches the soul to the stars.*

Take time to play *it is the secret of youth.*

Take time to worship *it is the highway to reverence.*

May God continue to bless each one as we stand at the threshold of a New Year filled with opportunities to use our time in His service.

Carolyn Deering



FINANCIAL UPDATE

Our Local Tithes Operating Budget for 2009 is \$60,031. Through November 2009 we should have received \$55,028 or 91.7% of the budget to meet expenses for planned programs. We are short \$4,594 from where we should be at this time; however, I feel confident we will make this up in December.

Income through 11/2009	\$50,434
Expenses through 11/2009	<u>48,964</u>
Balance through 11/2009	\$ 1,470

Our Father's Cupboard as of 11/2009

Contributions	\$ 8,674
Expenses	<u>7,418</u>
Balance	\$ 1,256

Thank you for your continuing support.

Bob Beers, Congregation Financial Officer



The Christmas Eve Service held at the church was one of Christmas readings and music. The youth and children took part in the service. Shown above are Patrick James and Frankie Scholl presenting their reading. Below the children sing their closing song.



More Florida Mission Center Coming Events:

Men's Retreat - March 5-7. All men are invited and encouraged to bring your father, teen son, brother or a friend. Guest minister will be Gary Logan, a retired field minister of the *Community of Christ*. The cost is \$50 and registration forms are available and can be found on the bulletin board in the Information Center. Registration is also being accepted via the FMC website.

Young Adult Retreat - March 19-21. This is an annual gathering of adults age 8 to thirty-something. Guest ministry includes young adult Shandra Newcom who has been a campus minister and currently serves in the Rocky Mountain Mission Center. Childcare will be provided for young families. Cost for the weekend is \$45/adult, \$80/couple and \$5/children age 3-12. Prices increase for registrations received after March 5th. So take advantage of a bargain - register early. Keep up with this event on Facebook through Deerhaven FL Connections. Information is also available from the retreat directory, Cindy Campbell at 352.373.3932 or campbecs@bellsouth.net.



Zoe Van Beek making some sparkling trim for the sanctuary Christmas tree.

Who Am I?

Last year *Celebration News* presented a question to a variety of our church family members whose answers were published in each issue. It was interesting to learn more about those that participated. This year we are hoping to present a **Who Am I?** column in an attempt to learn more about each other. You will be asked to list up to 10 facts about yourself which will be printed in the newsletter. If you would like to participate, contact **Elaine Gregg**. The first *Who Am I?* is printed below and the answer to the question is printed somewhere in the newsletter. Good luck!

Who Am I?

- 1 - Grew up in Michigan
- 2 - Was born and raised in the same house
- 3 - Was blessed by my grandfather and baptized by my father
- 4 - Played the bassoon for three months in high school
- 5 - Burned out the car brakes in the family car while cruising' Main Street with emergency brake on
- 6 - Married a senior engineering student
- 7 - Lived in 16 homes in the first 16 years of marriage
- 8 - Have four grandchildren
- 9 - A favorite trip was the one to Grand Cayman with husband and children
- 10 - Spend way too much time playing Free Cell on the computer

Frankie Scholl shows off her Christmas 'earrings' before she puts them on the peace theme Christmas tree in the Fellowship Hall.



A small but dedicated group gathered at the church the last Sunday of November for Hanging of the Greens. It is at this intergenerational activity that the church is decorated for the Christmas season.

DID YOU KNOW ???

- ◆ **Jacob Rodriguez** finished his first season of T-ball and received a trophy?
- ◆ **Joan Martin** graduated from the University of South Florida in December with a Masters Degree as a Nurse Practitioner?
- ◆ **Pancake Breakfasts** are served in the Fellowship Hall every fourth Sunday at 9:30 AM?
- ◆ **Priesthood Members** meet together on the third Sunday of the month at 6:00 PM where they discuss, learn and worship together?
- ◆ **Ryan Hollenbeck** and **Scott Morgan**, two of our church family members serving in the military, were home on leave during the holidays?
- ◆ **Nine youth** took a trip to Bush Gardens during their Christmas break along with Youth Leader **Charlie Walker** and three chaperons?



Beginning this January, the **Leadership Team** will be meeting at **7:00 PM** on the **Third Tuesday** of each month (except June and July). The Leadership Meetings are open to anyone in the congregation. If you have a matter that you would like to bring to the attention of the leadership team or are just interested in what takes place at these meetings, please feel free to attend.

Red Stocking Update

The little red Stockings fund raiser which started in January, 2009, is unofficially coming to an end. The stockings were collected on Sunday, December 20th, and the coins, bills, and checks have been counted. It is interesting how much these gifts came to when we planned and gave regularly. Your contributions for this fund raising project raised \$1,718.00. These monies have gone toward paying for our air conditioning improvements made this past year.

By the way, it took **FOUR** hours to count and package all the coins which totaled \$200.00 alone. Bank of America, where we deposit our weekly receipts, just loved seeing **Bob Beers** coming in with five bags of coins! Ha!

JANUARY

- 02 Roberta Hamilton
- 02 Lonnie Cooper
- 06 Nancy Skene
- 09 Lee Peters
- 13 Nanette Dizney
- 13 Kaitlyn James
- 17 Heather Quinn
- 19 Patrick James
- 20 Elaine Gregg
- 21 Heather Devine
- 22 Kay & Dale Budd (anniv)
- 24 Danielle Johnson
- 26 Bill Caudle
- 26 Patti & Larry Bell (anniv)
- 27 Betty Simpson
- 30 Dawn Kolquist



Celebration News is a publication of the
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Elaine Gregg, 8075 36th St Cir E, Sarasota 34243

Address Correction Requested



“...I am the



of the world.
Whoever follows me
will NEVER
walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.”

John 8:12