



# celebration News

Bradenton/Sarasota Community of Christ

March, 2009

Volume 20 - Issue No. 2

## **Spring has Come to Southwest Florida!**

Most of you who are from somewhere else probably take issue with the concept of "season" here, but trust me spring is here! The oaks are getting new leaves, and signs of growth are everywhere. The Strawberry Festival will be here any day, and there are distinct signs of new life in our congregation.

Since this past Christmas Eve, we have rarely seen less than a hundred people in the sanctuary when services are offered. Youth and young adults are more active than ever in every facet of congregational life. People of ALL ages are exuding wisdom and excitement about being a people of God. We are being richly blessed, and if we hear the words of God correctly, this is just the beginning of what He can do with us! We have discovered that when we stretch ourselves to understand one another....we grow not only in faith but in love toward all.

When we turn listening into hearing and seeing into accepting.... ALL are blessed!

Let us do everything in our power to keep the momentum going by remembering that in everything we do what matters most is how we treat each other. God will reside in us, and our efforts will continue to be blessed if we treat each other with patience, understanding, and love.

**Carolyn Deering,**  
Pastoral Pastor



## **An Update on Conference Action**

The Praise Ministry Team (PMT) has been approved by the Pastorate and are planning **10:55 AM Praise Services for the last Sunday of each month.** The newly formed team has had two meetings to discuss the format such as type of music, how many hymns, speakers, etc. It was decided one or more PMT members would plan a service then the whole team would meet and discuss the planned service and make suggestions, if needed.

One of the key things the PMT will do is evaluate each service to continually be sure this ministry is meeting its purpose. We will be very sensitive to people's responses, and encourage you to make your feelings known. We are encouraging you to share your comments with any of the following PMT members: **Scott Cramer, Ginger Robertson, Amy Smeralda, Bob Slasor, Charyn Walker or Larry Bell.**

The PMT will meet on March 5 to discuss the upcoming March 29th service and to evaluate the February 22nd service.

The PMT is encouraging you to bring your friends, especially youth and young adults, to praise God and Christ in the Holy Spirit on the last Sunday of each month at 10:55 AM. Our desire is to be a blessing to the congregation.

**Praise Ministry Team**

## **Keep Talking!**

Many times in our impatience, we all have felt that we were cut off from God only to discover that there was a time span we were unaware of...and the Lord was on the line all along doing it his way. Keep talking to God. Don't let anything break down the line of communication. You are getting through, and God is coming through!



## Entering the Season of Lent

The Season of Lent is a time of prayer and fasting leading up to the Feast of Easter that recalls Jesus' forty days of fasting in the wilderness. The first day, known by the Western observance as Ash Wednesday, begins on February 25 this year and continues to Holy or Maundy Thursday. Although Sundays are not counted as fasting days, we continue our spiritual preparation through Holy Friday and Saturday. The word *Lent* is of Germanic (Teutonic) origin which means "springtime". The Christian world uses this season as a time of *spiritual spring cleaning*. We set aside this time to clean out all of those old hang-ups and habits that prevent us from having a deep and personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Lent is a time of spiritual renewal; a time of gratitude and penance. Come and share this journey with us as we walk the path to Jerusalem with Jesus.



Have you experienced *Life in the Desert*? Jesus spent 40 days in prayer and solitude to prepare himself spiritually for his ministry and commitment to fulfill his mission. **Charlie Walker** will bring us the message of this experience, and **Elaine Gregg** is presiding over this March 1st Communion Service.



To proclaim Jesus as the Christ, we are *Shaped By the Cross*. **Marcia Brougher** is sharing her ministry with us on March 8th with **Fay Beers** planning the service.



*Seek Christ's Sanctuary* is the theme for the third Sunday of Lent on March 15th. To find true peace and to experience God's infinite Grace, we must first enter into the Holy Sanctuary that is Jesus Christ. Evangelist **Bob Slasor** is preaching the sermon and **Carolyn Deering** is presiding over this service which will include the blessing of Cristian Palko Spiguel, grandson of **Karen and Charles Palko**.



Did you ever wonder *Why Are We Here*? **Bona Lee** will give us some answers to this question on March 22nd. Jesus was here on Earth for a reason; so are we! **Jerilyn Gregg-Chlebina** is presiding.



March 29th will be our Praise and Worship service that is being planned by **Charyn Walker**. **Scott Bell** will bring us the message of hope and salvation through Christ's love for us on this the fifth Sunday of Lent.

On **Wednesday Evenings** we invite everyone to come and join us in fellowship and renewal as we share our praises, our prayers, our songs, and even our concerns and needs as a community of brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Ginger Robertson**, Worship Team Coordinator



The Senior High Class get acquainted with Apostle Skoor at the 9:30 AM Fellowship before going to their Sunday School Class where she shared again with them.

## Financial

At the end of 2008 we didn't achieve our 2008 Operating Budget, however, the good news is we did control our expenses so we didn't go over our Contribution Income!

2008 Operating Budget	\$66,600.00
2008 Operating Contribution Income	\$59,130.01
2008 Operating Expenses	\$57,894.64
2008 Amount after Expenses	\$1,235.37

Thank you for your Local Mission Tithes that support so many worthwhile programs and help to keep our building in good shape. May God continue to bless you in your endeavor to support our Congregation.

**Robert Beers**, Chief Financial Officer

You are invited to participate in a **Church Work Day on Saturday, March 21st**. We need many hands to get the jobs done. There will be inside and outside jobs. You will be able to find a job that is suitable for you no matter what your age or physical limitations. The day will begin at **8:00 AM** and will end around noon. Come to work, and who knows you may even have a good time!



If you have any questions, please call **Brad Martin** at 371.7051. See you the last Saturday in March.

**Brad Martin**, Facility Management Team Chairman

## "SUPER"annuation!

For all those who serve in the priesthood there will come a time when we feel that we have reached our physical and/or mental limits. After all, when we accepted our call we knew that we were required to respond to service whenever and wherever it was needed. That is a tall order under the BEST of circumstances! Over time it may become more and more difficult to be able to do that. That's all right too.

At some point we will all have to eventually admit that "the spirit is willing, but the body is weak." When that day becomes the norm, it might be time to consider that superannuation is what is needed. Remember Superannuation does not take any authority or office away. It simply means that your response to God's call for ministry becomes an act of discretion. It makes it OK to decline if indeed you cannot serve for any reason. It also allows you to continue to serve whenever your circumstances make it possible.

There is one more thing. Even though you have not served your God and his people for any kind of credit, superannuation allows those who have witnessed your service to marvel at God's use of your talents. It allows us as a congregation to thank you for your response to God's calling and the expression you have uniquely given it.

If you think that this time has come for you, let **Jim Deering** know. We will be planning a service of Superannuation for the fall of this year, and we would like to include you in our plans.

**Jim Deering**, Administrative Pastor

## Leaping Leprechauns!

Calling all lads and lassies to meet at the church for a **St. Patrick's Day Leaping Leprechauns Dinner on March 14th**. Gathering will begin at 6:00 PM with dinner to be served at 6:30 PM. On the menu is the Irish specialty of Corned Beef and Cabbage. This dinner is sponsored by the Fund Raising Committee. Mark your calendars now so you won't miss this fun-filled evening. It will surely bring out the Irish in you!



## Chili Cook-Off

The Chili Cook-Off and Youth Bake Sale was a great success. We had 71 people attend, and a good time was had by all. The Chili Cook-Off made \$445.00 after expenses, and the Youth Bake Sale made \$153.00. Thanks to everyone for their support, and a big THANKS to **Joel and Lisa Rodriguez** and the rest of the Fund Raising Team!

**Jonathan Robertson** defended his first place finish again this year! Second place went to **Jason Van Beek** and third place to **Scott Cramer**. The "Onion Award" was given to each chef for their participation in the cook-off. Congratulations to all!



Nanette Dizney, Elaine Gregg, and Bettie Chlebina cheerfully pose while awaiting the opportunity to sample the chili entries.



Lillian Wade, Pat Bovee-Benjamin, Mark Bee, and others make their chili sample choices.

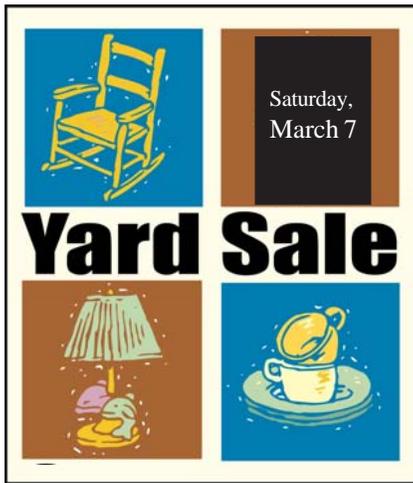
Bingo was offered for entertainment following the dinner. While for some it took full concentration to mark their cards, **Frankie School** and friend were able to multi-task and also listen to music on a shared i-Pod!



First place winner of the Chili Cook-Off was defending champion Jonathan Robertson! The decorative sign above him speaks for itself. Dale Morgan seems to be happy for Jonathan.



**Daylight Saving Time begins  
March 8**



Our **Annual Yard Sale** is being dedicated this year to the memory of **Louis Willetts**. For many years, **Louis and Betty** dedicated numerous hours of their time to make our yard sale a success. Even when their health was not as strong as in the years past, they managed the sale for our congregation. Without them the success we have been blessed with, as far as fund raising profits goes, would not have been as great. Please join us as we endeavor to carry on their tradition of service by supporting the **2009 Yard Sale**.

If you have items to donate stop by the storage building and drop them off Sundays after church. Items are needed. In these difficult times we may not only be making money for needed expenditures for the church, but we may be lead to help someone else in need through our efforts.

More bakers are needed for the **Bake Sale**. If you can throw together a great pie, cake, or any other "yummy" item, *we need it!* Please look at the sign-up board in the Information Center to see what days you may be able to lend a hand! Volunteers will be at the church Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 5 through 7! Busy hands doing God's work are always blessed for their efforts.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact **Sue Grimmer** at 941.493.7861. May God bless your efforts to be of service - in whatever way you can - at this our **Annual Yard and Bake Sale**.

**Your Fund Raising Committee**



## A Personal Prayer

Dear Saints of Bradenton/Sarasota, I know that this journal prayer is personal between me and God, but it felt right that I should share it with you because I am sure there are others who are praying in the same way for the same thing. It is important for you to know that no matter how "spiritual" we may become we are never beyond always remembering who we are and *whose* we are. I know the struggle of trying to stay focused. That is why others have been invited to join in a *Covenant for 2009*. To date over 20 of you have committed yourselves to a *Covenant with Jesus Christ in 2009*. Boy, is God happy about that! This then is my prayer as we continue on our journey.

Precious Lord, with praise and thanks I journal my feelings and thoughts with you. You are my God, my Savior. You love me with an everlasting love - the depth of which I have no way even to understand. I am a sinner in so many ways, often neglectful of other's needs, often too busy with things that don't matter, often withholding my presence because of fear. For these sins and more, I repent. I know you will forgive me when I repent, but you don't want excuses, you want change. You want me to be and to become, and to see and to do.

Precious Lord and Savior, how much growing I need to do - how much spiritual growing. I have made a covenant with you for 2009, that I will go beyond where I am now spiritually and seek your face, your presence, and your direction. O God, I renew that covenant today, right now. It must remain my focus no matter what. It must become my focus where that is not now the case. I do need to see with new eyes, eyes opened by your Spirit. But seeing is not doing. Doing is doing!

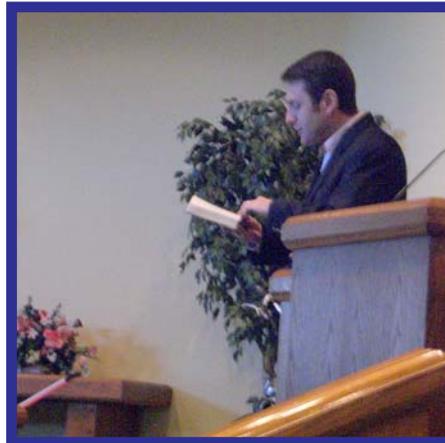
Lord, don't let me just think it. Help me do it. I know you are anxious to reveal yourself to all who seek you when we seek you with all our heart. Let it be so with me. O God, let it be so with me. You hear my words, now you wait my response. It will be, it will be! This is my promise to you renewed this day in Jesus name, Amen.

In Christ, **Bob Slasor** Evangelist



We were very blessed to have Apostle Susan Skoor with us for an Open House at the church on Friday, January 30th. There was a nice turn out, and those in attendance were able to hear her remarkable story and enjoy an assortment of deserts. She also was the speaker at the February 1st Communion Service.

Apostle Susan Skoor is shown at the priesthood's One Day Retreat which was held Saturday, January 31st.



Matthew Naylor, President of Outreach International, was the guest speaker at the January 25th Praise Service. Matt shared stories of those who have been helped in many areas throughout the world with Outreach's assistance during the uplifting praise service presided over by **Jim Deering**.

## Remember the Christmas Stocking

This is just a friendly reminder for you to 'stuff' your Christmas stocking! Remember the little red Christmas stocking you got at the beginning of the year with your name on it? This is a fund raising project which will be turned in during December of 2009. If you are like many people, you did not read the instructions and are still wondering what to do with the stocking. It is very simple. You are being asked to put a coin(s) or paper currency in your stocking each month. The way it works is in the first month, January, you should have put in one coin which could be anything from a penny to a silver dollar! Of course, if you don't want to hear a lot of jingle, you may put in any denomination of paper money. Being that February is the second month you do the same as you did in January but times two. This continues to multiply according to the month, such as six for June and 11 for November. At the end of the year you will have 78 coins or bills in your Christmas stocking! Now go find your Christmas stocking and some coins and beginning stuffing.



At this printing of *Celebration News* we mark the passing of one of the

most beloved among us, **David Z. Martin**. Everywhere we look around the church facility we see the hands of David. He repaired, painted, patched, laid tile, and on and on. In addition to using his gifts of maintenance, David shared his gift of caring also. He was often called on to go to hospitals to visit and administer to those in need, and, many of you may not know, that he served as pastor of our congregation. David was always willing to give of his time and talents. We are thankful for having David be a part of our lives.

Our love goes out to his wife, **Jo Fenn-Martin**, and family, **Brad and Joan Martin, Danielle and Kenny Johnson, Karla, Jason, Zoe, and Cole Van Beek**. There will be a celebration of David's life at the church on March 28th at 3:00 PM.

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 Elaine Gregg, 8075 36th St Cir E, Sarasota 34243



# March

- 01 Charyn & Charlie Walker (anniv)
- 04 Fay Beers
- 07 Amber & Lonnie Cooper (anniv)
- 08 Brittney Morgan
- 08 Joan Wooderson
- 12 Shirley & Howard Jousma (anniv)
- 12 Fay & Bob Beers ( anniv)
- 13 Arthur Curtis
- 15 Karen MacDonald
- 16 Jason Van Beek
- 17 Beulah Wilkins
- 17 Esther and Henry Bender (anniv)
- 18 Bill Manfull & Heather Manfull-Cosgrove  
(anniv)
- 20 Lil Caudle
- 20 Marilyn Wonsitler
- 28 Tobin Cooper

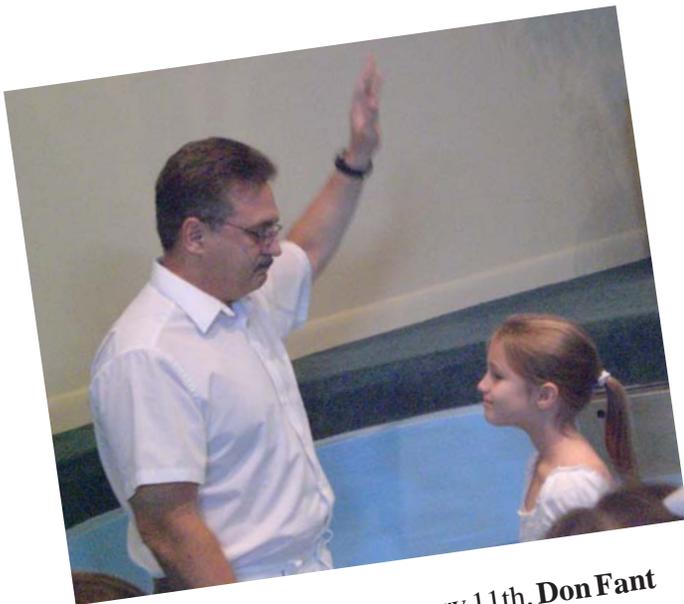
# DID YOU KNOW ???

- ◆ **Facility Management Team** has completed overseeing the repair of the wood siding and the painting of the gutters, facia, and soffits? Take a look!
- ◆ **Jack Ruggles** had to leave sunny Florida to attend to his northern home's frozen pipes last month?
- ◆ **Elaine Gregg** camped out at Myakka State Park with six women out of 11 who all are former Girl Scout leaders and have been meeting once a month for over 20 years?
- ◆ **World Day of Prayer** will be observed on March 6th?



We extend our condolences to **David and Ginger Robertson** and their family. Dave's sister Kay, who was the oldest of the seven brothers and sisters, passed away February 12th, after a long and challenging battle with Leukemia.

**Oscar Dean** passed away Friday, February 20th, in Columbia, Missouri at the Veteran's Hospice Hospital. Our prayers go out to his wife, **Jeanette**, and his family which includes sister-in-law **Genevieve Wenzel**. Services will be held February 23rd at the Community of Christ in Brush Creek, Illinois.



At the worship service on January 11th, **Don Fant** pronounces the prayer of baptism as **Alexander (Zee)**, his daughter, anxiously awaits the sacrament.

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Address Correction Requested



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