

CELEBRATION NEWS



March, 2012 - Volume 22 - Issue 2

Return the Favor

On March 31st we have the opportunity to return the favor. What favor? The favor of having the church facility always here to welcome us and your families and friends. It is a place to celebrate the sacraments, to hear and learn of a loving God and Jesus Christ, to share with others on our journey of discipleship. It is pretty much taken for granted that it will be here to welcome us when we come. But in order for the building and grounds to greet us, it takes some work on our part. That is where we can return the favor. Come to the **Work Day on Saturday, March 31st between 8:00 am and noon** to give our church facility a sprucing up!

There will be things to do inside and outside. When you come, sign up on the designated sheet as to the task you would like to do. Some tasks take one person while others take two or more. We can guarantee that you will work, but there is a lot of enjoyment in sharing together for a good purpose. If you have any questions, please contact **Brad Martin** at 941.371.7051 or braddmartin@verizon.net.

A favor is described as a good turn, an act of kindness in support of something and helping. Attending the Work Day is a way of giving thanks for our lovely church facility. Hope to see many thankful people on Saturday, March 31st.



Save the Date

There will be a meeting on **Monday, March 19th**. Our congregation has been asked to participate in a pilot study for the World Church. Jim and Jan Slaughter will meet with us to describe what the study is all about and how all of us can be involved. Please plan to attend. This pilot study can open up new avenues for us to serve God.

Seize the Day

The Florida Mission Center is sponsoring a **Young Adult Retreat, April 13-15 at Deerhaven Retreat Center**. The guest minister for this weekend is Stacie Williams who is from Missouri. The weekend is promoted as *Make New Friends - Stay Connected - Renew Yourself*. Sounds like a very promising and enjoyable weekend.

Numerous activities are planned such as moonlight volleyball, woodworking, tie dye, wildlife hike, a service project, games, snacks, and fellowship.

The cost is \$45/adult, \$80/couple, \$5/children 3-12, and free for children 2 and under with a paid adult if registering by March 30th. The price increases after the 30th. Contact **Bob Beers** if financial assistance is needed. If you have questions, contact **Karla Van Beek** at 941.739.9823

Plan for Early Easter Worship

This year we will offer an **Early Morning Outdoor Service** prior to the Easter Breakfast. Community Outreach Word of Deliverance Ministries, led by Pastor Dexter McDonald, will join us for this 8:00 am worship. Begin the day with song and praise to our risen Lord as we celebrate Easter Sunday.

Wholeness Healing Ministry

We are thrilled to announce that a new healing ministry focus has begun in the congregation. Every third Wednesday of the month has been set aside for intentional Holy Spirit ministry to meet the needs of members and friends. The service is held in the Sanctuary. Very often we carry pain, concerns, fear, etc. without being able to bring them into the presence of God in a service designed to bless, set free, inspire, and heal body, mind, or spirit.

All are invited to bring their needs to the altar of blessing. If you have friends who need inner healing, encourage them to come and be blessed. Bring them with you.

Our first **Wholeness Healing Ministry** service was held Wednesday, February 17th, under the ministry of Elder **Larry Bell**. Several, if not all in attendance, were blessed. The next service will be **March 21st at 7:00 pm** under the direction of Evangelist **Karen Palko**.

Bob Slasor

Fill the Red Wagon

Last month you had an opportunity to read about **Our Father's Cupboard's** food distribution. We will introduce you to the rest of our volunteers in the April's *Celebration News*. It seems like every month the time we are open passes quicker than the month before. Those who volunteer on distribution day have been blessed to get to know our clients and offer their ministry of greeting and hospitality. Also all youth who volunteer will receive documentation for high school credit and the satisfaction of knowing that they have been a blessing to others.

This year our Yard Sale will be open for business when the pantry is open on March 17th. Please be mindful that our clients will need access to the pantry. We look forward to sharing this fun event with our pantry clients.

If you would like to contribute to **Our Father's Cupboard**, we would appreciate your financial support. You may always bring food donations and place them in the red pantry wagons in the Information Center. We always need peanut butter and jelly and all sizes of diapers. Cereal is also welcomed. Thank you for your continued support.

Ginger Robertson, Outreach Ministries

Christ distributes courage through community; he dissipates doubts through fellowship. - Max Lucado

Looking for a Strike?

Men, mark your calendar for a fun evening of **Bowling and Snacks**. Men are invited to meet on **March 11 at 6:00 pm** at the AMF Bradenton Bowling Lanes at 4208 Cortez Road (Cortez and 43rd St. W). Their phone number is 941.758.8838. The cost is \$15.00 per person which includes two (2) hours of unlimited bowling, bowling shoe rental, a jumbo soft pretzel, freshly popped corn and unlimited soft drinks.

Bring a friend, a male friend of course, to bowl and/or cheer us on. Don't forget to bring a camera to record the fun. There will be great fellowship, a great time, and lots of laughs.

A sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board in the Information Center. Please do sign-up by Wednesday, March 7th. If you have any questions or need information, please contact **Bob Beers** at 751.2993 or bobbeers75@msn.com.





The season of Lent has begun. It started with Ash

Wednesday on February 22. These forty days before Easter, excluding Sundays, represent the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness before beginning his mission and the forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness before they settled on their land. Christians use this time for repentance and preparation for the Easter season.

Receive a New Name is a message of hope offered on March 4, the first Sunday of the month. Communion will be celebrated with an emphasis on world hunger. Elder **Elaine Gregg** and Evangelist **Glenn Day** will present ministry from the scripture in Genesis when Abram receives a new name. God gave Abraham a new name to symbolize a new relationship with him, and God seeks to establish covenant relationships with us that are transforming and everlasting.

The author of Psalm 19 writes that God is a God of love who wonderfully and lovingly created the world and humankind. All of creation speaks to the wonders and love of God. On March 11, Bishop Fred Keenan will speak on the theme *Tell the Glory of God* with Elder **Ginger Robertson** presiding.

How big is God's Love? *God's Love Endures Forever* and is available to everyone. Priest **Carolyn Deering** and Elder **Jim Deering** will be sharing their testimony of God's love during the worship service on March 18. One of our new little ones will be blessed during this service.

God never gives up on us. We may give up on God, but God never gives up on us. Jeremiah wants his people to know there is always hope with God. God is making a new covenant, and it will be *Written On Our Hearts*. Elder **Marcia Brougher** and High Priest Rick Jones will be bringing ministry during the service on March 25.

As you continue your Lenten preparation in the coming weeks, join us for worship on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. We will observe Palm Sunday on April 1 and Easter on April 8. Special services as well as activities are planned for those days.

Jo Fenn-Martin for Worship Team

Unnatural

It's countercultural, unnatural even -- this Lenten call to deny oneself and resist temptation, put aside comfort for a time in reflection of Jesus' sacrifice for us. It's downright uncomfortable. Lent is a most unwelcome experience because human nature seeks pleasure and avoids pain at all costs. But Jesus promises that those who dare to follow him into the desert will find a rich reward.

Treasure Hunt Ministry Continues

On Saturday, February 17th, **Carolyn and Jim Deering**, a Christian friend Anita, **Mervin Smith, Larry Bell** and **Bob Slasor** listened to the voice of the Spirit as to whom God wanted them to seek out so they could offer to pray for them. Several in Wal-Mart with the Deerings and friend Anita were blessed by this compassionate ministry. Sam's Club was the focus for Larry, Bob and Mervin. This outstanding congregational ministry into the community will continue on the **third Saturday of each month. We meet at 1:00 pm** in the Sanctuary and go out from there. If you want to see and be a part of miracles happening in the lives of others, come and learn about the **Ultimate Treasure Hunt** and allow the Holy Spirit to direct you to find treasures for God.

Please make the following changes in your 2012 Congregational Directory:

Correct spelling of Luci Guitierrez (Cody Morgan) and in their e-mail address

Jim Deering's cell phone: 941.400.2878

Add: David Ross
1320 Karen Dr., Venice 34292
cell: 941.226.6045
dr448@verizon.net



March Celebrations

- 01 Charyn & Charlie Walker
(anniv)
- 04 Fay Beers
- 08 Brittney Morgan
- 08 Joan Wooderson
- 12 Fay & Bob Beers (anniv)
- 15 Karen MacDonald
- 16 Jason Van Beek
- 17 Beulah Wilkins
- 20 Marilyn Wonsitler
- 26 Sydney Evans

It Pays to Advertise

The Fund Raising Team recently announced that they will be selling T-shirts. This endeavor will not only raise some needed monies but will advertise our faith movement. The shirts will be light blue with Community of Christ in navy blue lettering on the front. The back is still a work in progress. The shirts are \$10.00 and come in child to adult XL sizes. Sizes XXL and XXXL will be available for \$1 and \$3 extra. We are



hoping that we will have the shirts in time for members to wear at the Yare Sale Plus. A little advertising goes a long way. It is hoped that in wearing the shirts when we are out and about in the community, we will be seen as smiling and peace loving people.

See **Karla Van Beek** to order your shirt.

Sharing God's Love

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matthew 18:20

I had the pleasure of bringing one of my coworkers on our last Ultimate Treasure Hunt. Anita has a deep desire to do God's work. We share our experiences and have prayer together often. When I learned about our first Treasure Hunt, I explained it to her and gave her the book to read. She was so excited about it and felt that the Lord was telling her to get this book for the people in her church. She did just that and has been eager to participate and learn how to do treasure hunts. But she wanted to go with others to see how it is done and have some experience, so she came with Jim and me.

Our clues took us to Wal-Mart where we started in the electronics section. We found a man wearing jean shorts and black sandals with a moustache which were all clues Anita had. When I approached him and introduced myself, I realized he did not understand me. I asked if he spoke any English. A woman on a scooter came close and introduced herself as Mary and told us he did not. We asked her to relay our message to him that he matched our clues and what we were doing. He was God's treasure, and we wondered if he had any concerns that we could pray for. She responded that he did not, but the man had tears in his eyes. We assured them again that God loved them, and he was indeed God's treasure and wished them a blessed day.

Later we came across one couple where the wife actually said she knew that we on a 'treasure hunt'; she had read about them. Another woman on a scooter was excited to come together with us for prayer. She was so happy that we were there. As Anita prayed over her, a man stood at a distance with his head bowed and was praying also. You never know who is watching and also receiving a blessing from your actions.

We made four attempts that day and had two opportunities for prayer; but we all felt that our most important connection may have been the first gentleman that we approached. It was obvious that he was touched by the experience and that gave us confirmation that the Lord was working and blessing us to be a blessing. We never know what the outcome or affect of our actions will be, but we do know that God has promised that *where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* God certainly was with us that day, in that moment, on our Treasure Hunt.

I am so pleased to say that Anita was so excited and is eager to go again and to share this experience with others. I hope that more of you will feel the leading of the Spirit to come and be a part of this special opportunity to witness and share God's love and blessing. We truly do find "treasures".

Carolyn Deering, Editorial Staff

Come As You Are

I have always liked the concept of "come as you are" parties. No pretence, no anxieties about what to wear, just come. When Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he beckoned to Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew to *Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.* They left their nets and followed Jesus. He then came upon James and John, sons of Zebedee, and called for them to come and follow. Again, without hesitation, they left their father's boat and joined them. Jesus called Levi (Matthew), the tax collector, while eating at Levi's house with other tax collectors. Leaving behind his old life, Levi followed Jesus. And so it was with all of Jesus' disciples. They had no idea what to expect, but God had, in different ways, prepared these men to respond to the call to "come".

As we enter the season of Lent, it is time for us to be aware that Jesus beckons us to "come". Whether or not we are prepared to be in his presence, Jesus extends his hand to us and calls us to leave behind our sins, our doubts, our worries and come with him. Through Jesus' death on the cross, God prepared a way for us to begin a new life in Christ. We are his modern day disciples. He calls us to be his hands and feet. He sends us out into the world to prepare the way for others to come to him, to receive the love and salvation he offers.

After sending out seventy-two of his disciples, it is written in Luke 10: The seventy-two returned with joy and said, *Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.* To which Jesus replied, *Blessed are the eyes that see what you see.* Sadly, there were those who failed to heed the call to come. They had things to do, people to see, and places to go. Jesus warned them that they were not fit for the kingdom of God. We are called to come just as we are and follow Christ. May we all be blessed to see what awaits us as we go out in the name of Jesus.

Ginger Robertson, Outreach Ministries

Financial Update Through January, 2012

Budgeted Local Tithes Income	\$4,861
Actual Income	4,519
Short to Budget	(342)
Actual Expenses in January	2,426
January Ending Balance	2,093



Our Father's Cupboard

January Income	\$ 122
Expenses	<u>181</u>
Balance	\$ (59)

May God continue to bless you for your contributions to his causes.

Bob Beers, Congregational Financial Officer

It's Time to Get Started!

As a congregation we approved the building of a labyrinth on the church grounds. The labyrinth will be a spiritual place where the people of our congregation and the community can come to center themselves with God, a place where all can come to relax and remove the stresses of daily life. In keeping with our Mission Initiatives, the labyrinth works toward "Inviting People to Christ" and "Pursuing Peace on Earth." It's time to get started!

On **April 21** from **11:00 am to 3:00 pm**, we will hold the first **Labyrinth Fund-Raiser** at the church. We plan to have entertainment and a friendly BBQ cook-off to get things rolling.

We are looking for individuals or groups who would be interested in competing in this cook-off, providing entertainment and working the fundraiser.



If you are interested in helping out or know of anyone who would be interested in the cook-off or performing, please contact **Dan or Jo Willetts** or **Melinda and Richie Creel**. If you would like to make a donation to the labyrinth, enter "labyrinth" on your Sunday envelopes or contact either **Bob Beers** or **Dan Willetts**.

Watch for more information to come in next month's newsletter and on the bulletin board. Now, let's get started!



Judith Hamilton became a member of *Community of Christ* when she was confirmed during the February 19th worship service. We have known her for her vitality, loving spirit, and gift of music as she has shared with us. We look forward to being a part of her continued spiritual growth.

DID YOU KNOW ???

- ◆ **A display** is being prepared in the Information Center to honor the youngest church family members?
- ◆ **Copies of the Worship and Fellowship Schedule** for the next month are available each month for those who would like to have one?
- ◆ **Aluminum cans** are still being collected by the Youth, and the proceeds go toward their fund? Bag the cans and place them in the containers on the porch outside of the kitchen.
- ◆ **Jonathan Robertson** made the Dean's List for his first semester at State College of Florida?
- ◆ **Denise Chlebina, Megan Chlebina and friend, Jolene Gregg and Laura Vaughan** ran and finished a half marathon in St. Pete on the cold Sunday when the starting time temperatures were in the mid 40's? It should be noted that a cheering squad of parents, grandparent and boyfriend endured the cold also!
- ◆ **The black spiral binders** from your "old" church directories, if in good condition, can be recycled? Bring them to the church and place them in the Suggestion Box which can be found left of the church Family Picture Board in the Information Center.

Yard Sale Plus

The time is approaching quickly for our annual **Yard Sale Plus** to be held **Saturday, March 17, 8am - 2pm**. Not only are items needed to sell, but people are needed to prepare for the sale as well as work that day.

Beginning Monday of the week of the sale, the fellowship hall will be open every day for you to bring your items. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday items can be brought from 10am - 1pm. On Tuesday and Thursday bring items from 1-4pm. On these days help will be needed to sort and price all items. If many will volunteer, the easier the task will be. On the day of the sale, Saturday, help is needed to bring the tables out to the parking lot as well as the larger items from the storage building. And, of course, clean up everything after the sale.

The Plus of the sale includes a bake sale and a food booth. The sweet items are in great demand. Could you bake something sweet for the Bake Sale? The Food Booth needs small bags of snack items, bottled water and sodas. The food items are being donated by some great cooks. Check the list on the bulletin board to find out what items are still needed.

The Yard Sale Plus is a big boost to our budget. The sale will only be as successful as the effort that we put forth to make it so. It is hoped that many people will volunteer so a few won't have to do all the work. PLEASE consider contributing a few hours of your time and supporting the bake sale and food booth. And, don't forget items, are needed to sell!



Sunday School classes are held each Sunday at 10:00 am. The classes are for two year olds up to adults. Pictured below are four of the classes.



Come Away

Jesus told his disciples to *Come off by yourselves; let's take a break and get a little rest.* This is what is being offered to men in the Florida Mission Center at the **Men's Retreat** to be held **March 23-25** at Deerhaven Retreat Center. Mike Hoffman will bring a message of renewal as he shares in the weekend activities. The activities include classes, service projects, roundtable discussion, music, good food and your choice of activities such as nature hikes, horse-shoes, and games. The retreat is for males from age 14 years and up. Bring your scriptures, your desired sports equipment, your musical instruments, and your desire to take a break from your usual schedule and get a little rest with the Lord.

You may register by calling Don Passeretti at 352.620.5533 or passerettid@yahoo.com or you can register at cofchristfmc.org.

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

Address Correction Requested

An Irish blessing to:

BLESSINGS
FROM
GOD



An Irish Blessing

May God grant you always
A sunbeam to warm you,
A moonbeam to charm you,
A sheltering angel
So nothing can harm you,
Laughter to cheer you,
Faithful friends near you --
And whenever you pray,
Heaven to hear you.