

CELEBRATION NEWS

May, 2011 - Volume 21 - Issue 4

GET OUT THERE! HIT THE ROAD!

Living in Florida affords us the opportunity to engage in outdoor activities year round. For some of us a walk on the beach is a way to relax and unwind. For others, it may be a power walk through the neighborhood. We meet with other parents and grandparents at our children's sports events. Outside dining is always an option. Summer is upon us, and life slows down as the sun's heat drives us to seek respite in refreshing water fun. For most of us, this is why we are here. We are here by choice. For some, living in Florida means that they will not have to search for a warm place to sleep before sundown six months out of the year.

According to the Gospel of Luke, two men were walking on the road to Emmaus in grief and disbelief of what had happened to Jesus. As they were in deep conversation, a stranger approached and inquired of them what they were discussing so intently. Surprised, one of the men replied, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem, and do not know the things that have happened there?" What these two men did *not* know was that this "stranger" was the resurrected Christ. He was not revealed to them. To their surprise, the stranger questioned their faith and understanding of what had happened and why. As the three men walked along, Jesus was invited to stay with them and share a meal with the two men. As Jesus prayed and broke the bread, his glory was revealed to them, and he disappeared. The gospel goes on to relate that the men turned to each other and asked, "Were our hearts not burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" They then left to go tell the news to the disciples and other followers.

Jesus took that opportunity to restore in these two men the hope and the promise of what was foretold in the Scriptures: That a Savior, a messiah, would come and perform great miracles. He would take upon himself the sins of the world, suffering a painful death. And as these things came to pass, salvation would come to all people.

Every day we all have opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others we meet as we are out and about, at work, at school, at the ballfield, the beach, in our own neighborhoods; anywhere we encounter other people. We can invite them to walk with us or sit for a while as we share our own witness of how Jesus has transformed our own lives. If we do this, the Spirit will reveal the Jesus that lives within us. We have been counseled that it is the Mission that matters most to God. Get out there! Hit the road! Tell the Story! Jesus Lives!

Ginger Robertson, Outreach Ministry



Waiting to serve those coming to the Manundy Thursday Service are Charyn Walker, Richie Creel and Stuart Skene. Ten tables filled the Fellowship Hall with each having bread, juice, cheese, crackers and grapes that we shared as a community.

Opportunities to Serve

Have you been thinking you might like to get more involved in service to the church? Not sure where to start? The following areas are looking for willing people to serve. Our goal is to find enough individuals to serve in each area so that when it is time for a person's turn it is a blessing, not a chore or feeling of obligation. Please review the brief overview of what these opportunities entail. If you are interested in helping or would like to learn more, please contact **Melinda Creel** (941.780.2486). Classes are being planned for each opportunity so that all volunteers are well trained in their new venture.

Deacons (for non-Communion Sundays) provide a behind the scenes ministry for all services. They arrive early to open the church facilities. They make sure that the sanctuary is ready for the service and much, much more.

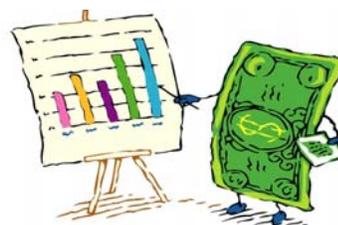
Sound Techs assist with the sound in all services. They control the sound board and place microphones.

Receiving the Offering is an opportunity to be a part of the service. Three individuals are needed each week to receive the offering during the Disciples' Generous Response.

Relief cleaners for the church facilities are needed to step in on the weeks that the regular person is unavailable to clean the church.

Again, the more people who volunteer the less times each volunteer has to take a turn. If we all chip in a little of our time in serving, it will definitely be a blessing every time we volunteer. This blessing is not only for ourselves, it is a blessing for the entire congregation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Melinda Creel, Head Deacon



Congregational Financial Update for March, 2011

Local Operating Tithes (Income)	\$14,046
Local Operating Expenses	(8,210)
Difference	\$ 5,836

Our Father's Cupboard Update as of March

Income	\$2,415*
Expenses	(271)
Difference	\$2,144

* Income includes FL Mission Center Grant of \$2,000.

Thank you for your support of Local Congregation and World Church.

Bob Beers, Congregation Financial Officer

Save the Date

Spiritual Growth Retreat, May 13 - 15

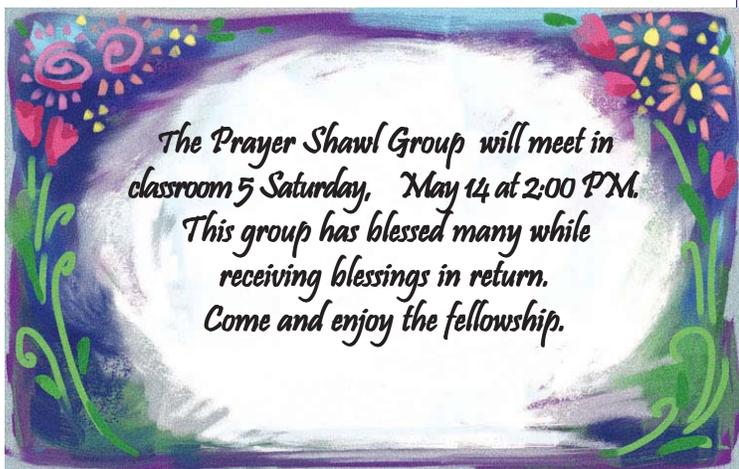
Deerhaven Workday, June 4

Junior Camp, June 12 - 16

Senior High Camp, June 19 - 25

Junior High Camp, July 10 - 16

For more information or to register, go to www.cofchristfmc.org



A Need:

There is a need for **kitchen helpers** for Florida Mission Center's summer youth camps. If you are interested in helping out at one or more camps and would like more information, please contact Judy Wegner at 321.229.1409 or judywegner@hotmail.com. Camp dates are June 12-16, June 19-25 and July 10-16.

Labyrinth's Update

The labyrinth project has received approval from the Facilities Management Team. The Leadership Team has reviewed and approved the concept and recommended it be presented to the congregation. Many of you have asked what a labyrinth is, why do we need one, and what will it cost to build.

During my spiritual growth, I, **Dan Willetts**, attended a Spiritual Growth Retreat at Deerhaven Retreat Center. There is a labyrinth there that I walked one morning. I was struggling with my recent return to the church and my desire to know God more closely. I asked Him to show me that I was on the right journey and was doing what He wanted me to do. As I walked towards the center of the labyrinth, I'd turn a corner and look to the clouds. They appeared to be different shapes. I thought this was so profound, and it helped me to keep myself focused on what I was doing. When I reached the center, I was looking out over this beautiful lake thinking to myself what a beautiful world God created. As I again cleared my mind and prepared to walk out, I thanked God for such a beautiful world and promised Him I would do whatever He asked.

When I reached the exit of the labyrinth, I stopped and looked to the sky hoping that God would give me the answers to my prayer. I felt nothing but the beauty around me, no real feelings that God was giving me an answer. I started walking around the lake wondering to myself if I was truly on the right path and doing the things He had called me to do, and, also, would I get an answer to my prayers. I looked up into the sky and there was the largest, most beautiful bald eagle I had ever seen. It could not have been more than 20 feet above my head. I thought, is this my answer from God? Is this really happening? And then a feather from the eagle fell to the ground, and I knew God had answered me.

With a sense of peace and fulfillment, I came home. I prayed to God asking him if there was a way I could share this sense of peace with others in our congregation and surrounding community. The Holy Spirit guided me, and I started doing research into what it would take to build a labyrinth. Since then I have visited many labyrinths and always come away feeling like God had walked with me. I truly believe that God has challenged me to help get His message out utilizing a labyrinth at our church.

A thousand years ago, Christians walked the labyrinth as an alternative to making a pilgrimage to

Jerusalem. Today it is walked as one of many tools to enhance prayer, contemplation, meditation, and/or personal growth.

One of the great lessons in life is to give up being in charge, to get out of our own way, and to turn things over to guidance from a higher source. As with prayer, God's answers are not always clear, and it takes much listening and an open heart to fully receive answers. The labyrinth helps us "get out of our own way" for a period of time, allowing us to listen to God, but we must be receptive and listen. When listening, we can learn; we can discover. Within listening there is an element of surrender that takes us out of time and space. Prayer is sometimes seen as asking and meditation as listening. Some call it "holy listening."

Robert Ferre', founder of Labyrinth Enterprises writes, "The labyrinth takes us beyond our limited, conditioned personality and learning to a deeper place of awareness and revelation. In that state, we can practice being in the presence of God. We can sing, pray, or dance. While walking the labyrinth, we can repeat a phrase as our mantra, such as Lead me, or Be still and know I am God. In the Old Testament David advised Solomon to walk in the ways of God."



Prayer Labyrinth

What we learn in the labyrinth we then take back into our lives. I believe that the labyrinth meets each person where they are and helps them to take the next step on their spiritual path. Because it is so personal, it is a spiritual practice that can be enjoyed by everyone.

The labyrinth is an ideal spiritual tool which can be used to reach all people including those who don't relate to the church. The labyrinth helps to build community and faith. By providing individuals with a place for meditation we are sharing God's blessings with the community. I believe the labyrinth should be the center of our spiritual garden and be open to the surrounding community.

The plan is to implement a labyrinth on our church property in multiple phases: (1) pavers on the ground so we can use it, (2) benches around the laby-

Continued on page 5



The winners are...

in the Casserole category:

Jo Willetts, Jo Fenn-Martin and standing in for winner Brittney Morgan is her brother Hunter

and in the Dessert category:

Fay Beers, Jo Fenn-Martin, and tied for third place, Kaitlyn James and Stu Skene.



Five year old Cole Van Beek and nine year old Matthew Devine got bored following the recent Casserole and Dessert Bake-Off. As they were plotting their escape from the Fellowship Hall to parts of the church unknown, Cole's mother, Karla, caught them. Karla said, "Cole, remember, you cannot play in the sanctuary." With a dead serious face, Cole replied, "Oh, Mommy, we won't be playing. We will be worshipping."

The Lenten candles and flowers used in our Lenten and Easter services have been put away, but Easter is so much more than a one day remembrance chosen to celebrate Christ's resurrection. We will continue to remember and celebrate the Easter message during the coming months.



On the second Sunday of Easter, May 1, we continue to consider what it means to meet the risen Christ. As the frightened disciples gathered in a locked room, Jesus appears to them with the message, *Peace Be With You*. Evangelist **Bob Slasor** will bring the message on this Communion Sunday with Elder **Charyn Walker** presiding.

When the women left the empty tomb that Easter morning, Luke tells us that they "got it." They knew that *He Is Alive*. But they were not believed. This struggle of recognizing the living Christ is for all ages, not only for those first disciples. High Priest **Nanette Dizney** and Elder **Larry Bell** will share their ministry on May 8 as they help us "get it" for living today.

On May 15 with Teacher **Fay Beers** presiding, we welcome back Elders Penny and Scott Cramer to share with us on the theme *Called by Your Name*. The message for this Sunday comes from the story of the Shepherd and his flock found in the 10th Chapter of the book of John. Have you heard the voice of the Shepherd calling your name and how have you answered?

Priest **Heather Devine** and Evangelist **Karen Palko** will share together on the Fifth Sunday of Easter, May 22. The scripture lesson is from the 14th Chapter of John and is known as the Farewell Discourse. What will become of the disciples once Jesus is gone? Jesus is welcoming the disciples and the church into the deep, communal relationship he enjoys with the "Father." What does it mean to *Dwell in Christ*?

I Peter 3:15b says, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." Do you *Share the Hope* with everyone who asks? What about those who don't ask? Priest **Charlie Walker** will preside on May 29, the Sixth Sunday of Easter, and Elder **Bona Lee** will be the speaker as we explore the scripture lesson.

You are encouraged to come to all the worship services during the month of May as well as the 7:00 PM Wednesday Prayer and Praise Services.

Jo Fenn-Martin for the Worship Team

rinth for resting and meditation, (3) landscaping around the labyrinth to provide a feeling of privacy while keeping it open to God's creation, and (4) improving the present spiritual garden.

The first phase will need approximately \$25,000. We do not want to take anything financially away from our budgetary commitments that are currently in place. We have a beautiful church facility which takes a lot to maintain and operate. Therefore, we would like to do special fund-raising and will accept donations to fund the cost of the labyrinth.

We are the *Community of Christ* and God has asked us to spread His word. What better way than giving everyone a quiet spiritual place to meditate and be with God and their innermost thoughts. If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact me, **Dan Willetts** (941.376.3720).

NOTE: Dan suggests that you read Section 164:9 in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Thanks to all those who show us the love of a mother.

Mother's Day is May 8th.



Top Cops!

Nearly every Mobile Home Park has a security system, and we would like to introduce you to the "Top Cops" at Ruskin's ChulaVista Landings' recently appointed security persons: **Marilyn Wonsitler and Karen MacDonald**. They are full time residents of the park and are the head of the park's patrol. Their responsibilities entail assignment of residents willing to patrol the park for four hour shifts each month, heading up fund raisers to pay volunteers, writing payroll checks, posting reports each month, keeping equipment in working order, and being on call for any emergency. The purpose of the fund raising is so the volunteers can be paid for the gas and wear and tear on their vehicles.

Since their responsibilities began in February, they have hosted two breakfasts, a lunch, and a Senior Prom. Thus far, the residents have enjoyed the Senior Prom most. Really dressing up for a dance seemed to be an occasion to shop at mostly thrift stores and consignment shops for gowns to remind them of their own past proms. The most original men's attire was a T-shirt designed as a tuxedo worn with black Bermuda shorts.

Park Patrol is an important responsibility, and we salute our own Marilyn and Karen for accepting this position and being Top Cops!



Children enjoyed the Annual Easter Egg Hunt following the Easter Breakfast. Besides finding eggs, the children decorated colorful bags and listened to the Easter Story.



"What Would Jesus Do?"

The disciples witnessed the ministry of Jesus, his death on the cross, his triumphant resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, and the gift of the Holy Spirit just as He promised.



Today, so many years later, He still continues his ministry among us. He is still in the business of teaching, comforting encouraging, blessing, healing, and performing miracles to glorify our Father in heaven. Jesus still shares the same message of God's love for all creation and his plan for salvation. His ministry still brings peace, hope, love and joy to a world in need. The key to salvation and eternal life is still Jesus. Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV) says "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."



So, *what would Jesus do?* I would like to share my testimony with you. God planted an idea in my head and a desire on my heart for our congregation to host a Peace celebration for the community. When I presented the idea, some people could envision it and others could not. I tried to stifle the idea, but the urging inside of me kept growing. I could not ignore it any longer. **Larry Bell, Lynn and Wade Bryant, Dale Morgan, and Ginger Robertson** joined the challenge of planning our first *Peace Festival* held on April 9th. Forty-three T-shirts were ordered from **Terrell Italiano's** Teamwork Imprinted Sportswear business for volunteers to wear and the remainder were to be used for prize drawings. Much to our surprise and pleasure, we had more than 43 volunteers!



Maybe we didn't have hundreds of people attend our Festival, but God saw the congregation's willingness to work together and share his message of love with the community. The music provided by musicians from our congregation and the Fort Myers Praise Band was a sacrifice of time and talent. God truly blessed those who attended and those who volunteered that day. I have continued to pray about our Peace Festival and where God wants us to go from here. In my journaling, God has urged us to be vigilant in our efforts to do good, to reach out to those around us in different ways; to be the safe haven that people can come to in time of need for that is when they are most open to His Spirit. Be not afraid, but act courageously in telling others of His love for them. They need to hear the message from us, and we are reminded that God is with us always.

Jesus is still in the business of reaching out to all people although how it is presented may seem peculiar to us at times. When God calls us into action, may we be listening and ready for the leading of His Spirit.

Charyn Walker, Peace Festival Coordinator





Food and snacks were shared...



Ft. Myers Praise Group came to share their music...



Church family members shared their instrumental music...



as well as singing their praises.

Praise Festival photos taken by Charyn Walker and Bob Beers.

DID YOU KNOW ???

- ◆ **Twenty-three people** prayed for 12 hours at our recent *Prayer Vigil* held on Good Friday?
- ◆ **Zoe Van Beek** sold over 450 boxes of Girl Scout cookies this year, thanks in great part to her church family?
- ◆ **Van Beek Family** is sponsoring a yellow lab named Trey for Southeast Guide Dogs for the next year in hopes that he will be a guide dog for a blind person one day?

Birthdays & Anniversaries

May

- 01 Rachel Fant
- 04 Dale Morgan
- 08 Liliana Rodriguez
- 08 Charlie Walker
- 09 Bettie Chlebina
- 17 Jacob Rodriguez
- 18 Cole Van Beek
- 19 Kay Budd
- 22 Laura & Bob Vaughan (anniv)
- 23 Joan Wooderson & Ray Daniels (anniv)
- 25 Wanda Fenn
- 30 Pat Moore-Hall

Address Change

Wanda Fenn
 2800 60th Ave W, Apt 213
 Bradenton 34207

Address Correction Requested

We Welcome You



Easter and New Life

Growing up, I lived in an area of Indiana that was surrounded by thousands of acres of forest. Much of the forest had never been cleared, and many varieties of trees flourished in our forest. One day in the fall of the year, I noticed caterpillars in a tulip tree. These little guys had stripped most of the tree's leaves from its limbs and ate all the leaves with a voracious appetite. Later as fall drew to a close, the caterpillars were gone and so were the tulip tree's leaves. In looking at the limbs, I noticed dozens of cocoons attached to the tree's limbs.

That day I asked an old man, Mr. Cruise, what was going on with that tree. He said the caterpillars are hibernating in the cocoons until next spring. Being curious, I asked him what that meant. He replied that a rebirth of the caterpillars would happen in the spring when the forest came back to life. I removed one of the cocoons and carried it to school the next day. The biology teacher confirmed that it was a cocoon or, as the science book called it, a chrysalis.

The following spring I returned to the forest and the magnificent tulip tree. It was close to budding on that warm spring day, and then I noticed something. The

cocoons or chrysalis had begun to open, and lots of butterflies were emerging from the opened cocoons. The butterflies were preening their new wings and bodies in preparation for flight. Then one by one with beating wings the butterflies lifted up to soar in the spring breeze. These beautiful creatures of God were soon feeding their new bodies with nectar from the blooming wild flowers. Leaving behind a pile of opened cocoons, the butterflies had arose from their deathlike sleep to become a thing of beauty.

During this past Easter season, we were reminded that Jesus Christ died on the cross, was buried and on the third day arose in a new body. The empty tomb of Jesus only contained burial clothes that were shed as the Savior arose from the dead. The bondage of death was broken. Like the butterflies, Christ is risen, Hallelujah!!! We can face tomorrow with the assurance that Jesus is in fact alive to help us, to guide us and to give us hope for the future. And because he is living, our problems are not unsolvable. The pile of empty grave clothes proclaims that Jesus Christ is the victor over death. Because he lives, nothing is impossible. I pray that the Easter season has been a witness to rebirth of Christian excitement in our church, *Community of Christ*. The Savior lives and will rule forever!

Jim Brougner