

Celebration News

May, 2013 - Volume 23 - Issue 4

Soles for Little Souls

Last month the Manatee County chapter of Church Women United (CWU) launched their "Soles for Little Souls" project by distributing 165 pairs of new shoes to needy children in Manatee County. Working with local agencies that provide services for families in our community, CWU plans to make this an ongoing effort.

Members were asked to bring in new shoes in appropriate sizes for children from elementary through high school ages. Many of our women asked for help from their individual churches. The response was amazing! Nearly 200 pairs of shoes were collected, and \$1,283.41 donated to purchase new shoes or shoe vouchers. CWU will distribute shoes at the beginning of each school year, again in November prior to the winter months, and in the spring. Immediate needs will also be filled.



As a member of Church Women United, our *Community of Christ* congregation will host the October 4th meeting of CWU. We are asking all of you to begin bringing in new shoes or money donations to help us give "Soles to Little Souls" in the fall and winter distributions. A collection bin will be set up in the Information Center. Money donations may be given by contacting **Nanette Dizney** or **Ginger Robertson**. One of our most important community help agencies, Turning Points (formerly called One Stop) serves over 2,000 homeless children in our community. After receiving 100 pairs of shoes for their clients, they were extremely grateful for the generosity of those who donated. We urge you to help us provide "Soles for Little Souls".

A New Old Way to Pray

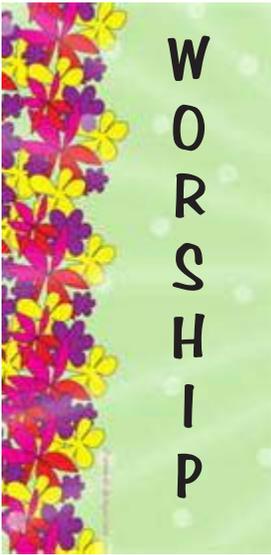
An ancient Jewish form of prayer, still in use today, involves sprinkling one's day with short prayers of gratitude to God. The prayer typically begins: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who ..." and concludes with a phrase that fits the specific situation. Such a prayer works well in good circumstances and bad. For example:

- "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who has provided clean water for my shower this morning."
- Blessed are you, O Lord ... who brings friends to support me in my grief."
- Blessed are you, O Lord ... who has blessed me with a keen mind; please help me focus while I take this test."
- Blessed are you, O Lord ... who holds my children in unconditional love."

Try using this form of prayer liberally as a way to "pray without ceasing" and to weave your faith throughout each day.

The Price of Freedom

Memorial Day challenges us to live so as to honor the sacrifices made by members of the military. We value our freedom because of the heavy price people have paid for it. Likewise, every day we're challenged to live so as to honor Jesus' supreme sacrifice. He calls us to spend our "priceless liberty" using our blessings to bless others.



After the celebration of Easter in March, the scripture lessons that we have studied from Acts have encouraged us to be witnesses of the living Christ, to be God's instruments in this world, to be alive in the Lord in our service to others, and to make no distinction in our relationships with others. The lessons have been creatively presented. Did we get them?

As we go forward into the month of May, the scripture lessons continue the story from Acts. The following themes for the 10:55 am Sunday morning worship lead us to the celebration of Pentecost.

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER - May 5

The disciples are trying to determine where they should go next to *Proclaim the Good News*. Discipleship involves taking action and often requires us to step out of our comfort zone. Evangelist **Al Mount** and Elder **Ginger Robertson** will be sharing and proclaiming with those who come to worship on this Communion Sunday.

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER - May 12

The jailer asked Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul answered, *Believe in God*. God calls converts from all places to believe and be saved. Elder **Charyn Walker** and the Church School department will present the worship experience on this Sunday.

PENTECOST - May 19

Come, Holy Spirit is the expectation on Pentecost. Christ's disciples waited with high expectations, because Jesus had previously told them the spirit would come to them with power. As disciples of Jesus, we, too, wait with high expectations. The Pentecostal experience with the Spirit is not solely inward-focused; rather it enables us to move outward in Christ's mission. High Priest **Nanette Dizney** will preside over this service with Elder **Larry Bell** speaking.

TRINITY SUNDAY - May 26

God is our Sovereign. God oversees all the earth with an every-present love. Another way to say that is, *God Cares*. We, as humans, are called to be partners with God, extending God's love to all creation. Teacher **Fay Beers** and Elder **Jim Deering** will bring ministry on this Sunday.

Consider coming to the Wednesday evening Prayer and Praise service held at 7:00 pm on Wednesdays for a midweek worship experience. Here you will share in a relaxed and meaningful time of worship. Try it.

Jo Fenn-Martin for the Worship Team

The Ascension Challenge

Every wonder what it might have been like to be a disciple when Jesus ascended into heaven? He gave them the monumental task of making disciples of all the world. Plus, they'd have to do it without relying on Jesus' physical presence, as they had until then. Were the disciples overwhelmed, uncertain, afraid?

Maybe, yet they went on to spread the gospel throughout the world nonetheless. They rose to the challenge because they fixed their gaze above as they watched Jesus disappear into the clouds.

When we follow that example, offering ourselves as willing servants and keeping our eyes trained on Jesus instead of our circumstances, there's no limit to what God can accomplish through us.

Mother's Day Tributes

If you have a mom, there is nowhere you are likely to go where a prayer has not already been.

The heart of a mother is a deep abyss at the bottom of which you will always find forgiveness.



Father's Day Tribute*

"My father didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it."
C. Kelland

Definition of an exceptional father:
One who lets the children play with their Christmas toys more than he does.

* As there is not newsletter in June, our tribute is a little early.

Gimme That "Old Time Religion!"

I am writing to thank everyone who has been willing to come to Arden Courts of Sarasota, a Memory Care Facility, to present a worship service for those living there. The one-half hour service is held on the third Sunday of every month at 10:30 am. Those that have participated are Larry and Patty Bell, Jim and Marcia Brougher, Lynn and Wade Bryant, Bettie Chlebina, Scott Cramer, Arthur and Carol Curtis, Patrick and Kaitlyn James, Heather and Tim Devine and children, Nanette Disney, Jeanette Harris, Jane Kelley, Brittney Morgan, Ginger Robertson, Stuart and Nancy Skene, Bob Slasor, Charyn and Charlie Walker. If I have left anyone off the list, my apologies, but please know your efforts have been very much appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in this ministry, please contact **Charyn Walker** (941.751.4697) or **Carey Chaney** (941.924.2721). The services are very simple with a short and positive talk, reading a short scripture passage (King James version is more likely to be remembered by those attending), playing and/or singing a few very well-known hymns, reading a brief inspirational story, or other approaches that might occur to you. One must be prepared to be yourself and speak in a voice that can be heard. There will be more than a few of the attendees that will appreciate and "take in" what you have to share with them.

Carey Chaney, Activities Director at Arden Courts

Scam Alert

The following alert has been sent out regarding a scam targeting *Community of Christ* members:

Someone posing as Herald Publishing House or Community of Christ Seminary Press has made phone calls to members. The individuals ask if the members would like to purchase books and then collect credit card information over the phone.

This is a scam. Please do not give out any personal information over the phone. If you or someone you know has received a call, please contact your credit card company to determine if the account has been compromised.



How many volunteers does it take to make a successful Vacation Bible School? If the past is any quantifying measure, we will need 20 to 30 *Community of Christ* registered child care workers to make this the best VBS ever! **From June 24th through the 28th** our children will learn through Bible stories, science experiments, yummy snacks, fun music, and more about how they can grow and stand firm in their faith. The materials are thorough, easy to follow and the lesson stations fun for both volunteers and children. We even have materials for our preschool age little ones. We will also need at least two registrars.

Our first volunteer "crew" meeting will be **Monday evening, May 13th at 7:00 pm**. The meeting will last about an hour, and we will distribute all necessary information and materials. I might add, the science experiments, which take the place of crafts, are especially fun! Smart phone users will be able to interact with the daily Bible buddies and watch them come to life with a free smart phone app. We will be sending out reminders so you won't forget this **VIP VBS Meeting!** This is our opportunity to reach out to children in our community; you are invited to join the fun on our **Kingdom Rock** adventure.

Ginger Robertson, VBS Coordinator



Business and Blessings

by Ginger Robertson

I am not one who takes going away on a trip lightly. My experience with traveling is much like "The Out of Towners" movie - anything that can go wrong usually does! Ten days away from home for both the International and National *Community of Christ* conferences was, in my opinion, a long time. On the other hand, I love attending the conferences in Independence, Missouri, our International Headquarters.

As the International Conference opens, flags from representative countries around the world are unfurled, and all nations where we have established churches and presence are accounted for. It is a very beautiful and reverent ceremony. As I look around the conference chambers, I am in awe of the thousands of people who have traveled from around the world, some with great difficulty, to attend the conference. But nothing can compare to the sound of all those voices singing our loved and familiar hymns in different languages. Our world church leaders spend many months and countless hours of prayer and preparation to plan these conferences. This year, great effort was made to create a spirit of worship and blessing within the legislative process. When issues must be discussed that are met with varying degrees of support or opposition, it is important that everyone is given an opportunity to be heard and validated. The "Blessing" breaks gave us pause to clear our minds and allow the Holy Spirit to cleanse and refresh our thoughts and emotions. This was especially true as we began our first National U.S.A. Conference.

Our faith movement was called into being during a time of humble prayer and discernment of a very young man in a quiet grove. From there we have been called to become a prophetic people who honor and value the worth and calling of all people of all ages, cultures, ethnicity, and genders. Changes in the way God calls us to think and act are sometimes difficult and against all that we know and have been previously taught. God is now asking us to embrace our brothers and sisters in the gay/lesbian/trans-gender community with love and acceptance of their giftedness and ministry. The release of this spiritual power will bring many more people to Christ who have been hesitant to commit their lives to him in the past. How can that be anything but good news? If I have taken away anything at all from these conferences, it would be that in all things, in all circumstances, we need to remember the balm of "Blessing": to be worshipful in all matters of planning and decision making. Take a break every now and then to pray, sing, praise and uphold one another with the love and in the name of Jesus.

Some Reflections by Bob

by Bob Slasor

In 2010 President Steve Veazey brought the word of the Lord that said: *By the grace of God, you are poised to fulfill God's ultimate vision for the church.* (Doctrine and Covenants 164:9a) If I understood what he, President Veazey, said during World Conference this year, it was that we have passed over the threshold and are moving past being just being poised to fulfill the ultimate vision, but the power of Zion has been released and the accomplishment of Zion will be hastened.

In my opinion, the actions of the just completed U.S.A. Conference are part of the releasing of the spiritual power of endowment that will allow the formation of congregations of equality, unity, spiritual power, healing, and vision. The promise of God is that all who believe will be set free and empowered to do miraculous things. The Apostle Paul said that the gospel came not in word only but in power and in the Holy Spirit. More and more the church, and the Bradenton/Sarasota Congregation, will experience that same power as we practice being a Zion people in thought, word, and action.

I am excited about what is going to happen in the church, to the church, and by the church. We will make a difference in this world because that is what we have been called to do and promised that we can do. No wall too high, no heart too hard, no life too broken to stop the saving and redeeming power of Christ from coming to them by faithful, spirit-filled disciples. God says, *Let's do it. Let's do it now. Let's do it right here.* Amen

A Meaningful Experience

by Fay Beers

One of the most meaningful experiences I had during this conference was the Prayer for Peace Service on Friday, at the beginning of the U.S.A. Conference. My niece, Leah Irby, from Bainbridge Island, Washington, participated in the planning of this service as well as participating in the service. Leah plays the viola and is a professional musician.

After sharing a reading, Leah led the congregation in an interpretive dance to one of the hymns from the country of Napal that will be included in our new hymnal, *Herana Hera (We Call Out to You)*. She encouraged the congregation to participate in the moves of the dance along with her. This may be viewed on YouTube as "We Call Out to You" (Herana Hera) by Msvioladance.

The closing music was performed by a group of musicians and sung by a quartet. The music was written by Leah. It was titled *Come Out on the Water*. The words reminded me so much of the talk that I gave here in our congregation challenging us to step out of the boat - out of our comfort zone. The words and the music were truly touching.

It is so great to see the young generation offer their talents and giftedness in service to our Lord.



Spirit of Unity

by Bob Beers

There was a great spirit of unity among the Saints at Conference. Seeing all the different flags from the countries represented at World Conference is always a wonderful experience. It gives one a sense of joy to see how many countries make up our World Church. I always enjoy the Sunday Communion Service and how smoothly everything flows. The Spirit of God was truly with us throughout the week.

Of the two conferences, the U.S.A. Conference was much more intense from the beginning. This was due to the subjects at hand which were to be addressed. The new hand held Electronic Polling Devices worked well, and the voting results could be seen instantly. After the process of listening, there was a blessing on the congregation which invoked the Holy Spirit to be present with us. It was a very emotional experience on all sides of the issues. There was a lot of sharing and tears, but we had God's spirit to lift us up and start to mend our brokenness and share our love for one another. I am very thankful I could be there and share with others.

Common Consent

by Jim Brougher

Marcia and I attended the 2013 National Conference. The conference addressed a docket with many issues for U.S.A. resolve. The major goal was to reach "Common Consent" on the issues at hand. Webster defines Common Consent as "an agreement reached by a group as to a course of action." Common Consent would then enable us to recommend a course of action on these issues to President Veazey.

The method used to reach "Common Consent" in this conference was not a typical Roberts Rules of Order platform. It was a structured meeting where prayer, listening sessions, scripture, music and personal discernment was effectively used. The voting on issues, understanding the "Why" questions, and level of commitment was enabled by a new electronic sampling and voting device. This voting method helped the delegates to understand more deeply the issues on the floor. Voting provided "Common Consent" on the issues at hand. However, in voting there are winners and losers. The delegates took the time to pray for those who opposed the issues and assured them that no one would be left behind. We may agree or disagree on issues, but what matters most is the mission of Jesus Christ!

Listen together to one another, without judgment or predisposition. Do not assume that the answers to matters of conflict have yet been perceived. There is much labor to be done. Reason together in love, and the spirit of truth will prevail. (Doctrine and Covenants 162:5c) Through prayer, truthfulness, witness, and listening to the Holy Spirit "Common Consent" was realized by the delegates at the conference. Our course of action on the issues was given to President Veazey. He will in turn present to the U.S.A. congregations a plan of action for each of the issues that required "Common Consent".



Anniversaries & Birthdays

May

- 01 David Ross
- 04 Dale Morgan
- 08 Liliana Rodriguez
- 08 Charlie Walker
- 09 Bettie Chlebina
- 17 Jacob Rodriguez
- 18 Cole Van Beek
- 23 Joan Wooderson &
Ray Daniels (anniv)
- 28 Tobin Cooper

June

- 05 Bill Williams
- 06 Addison Creel
- 07 Jonathan Robertson
- 09 Patty & Glenn Day
(anniv)
- 16 Bob Beers
- 16 Carolyn & Jim Deering
(anniv)
- 25 Megan Chlebina
- 28 Lisa & Joel Rodriguez
(anniv)
- 29 Karen & Charles Palko
(anniv)

July

- 02 Nancy Peters
- 03 Heather & Tim Devine
(anniv)
- 06 Zoe Van Beek
- 07 Coral Blackmore
- 13 Mark Bee
- 15 Brad Martin
- 15 Jean & George Botelho
(anniv)
- 16 Lisa Rodriguez
- 17 Esther Bender
- 19 Amy Smeralda
- 22 Al Perrin

Many Serving to Serve Others

As I was preparing to leave for the Conferences in Missouri, I made sure our food pantry order and reports were sent in, but I knew our pantry would continue to run smoothly due to our hard working and dedicated volunteers. On "pantry week", volunteers come in on Wednesday afternoon to unload the truck and stock the shelves. Thursday morning, more volunteers arrive to pack the 60 to 70 paper grocery bags, which are donated by Publix Supermarkets. Saturday is pantry day, and yet more volunteers come to handle the necessary sign in and record keeping tasks, and distribute the food. That is approximately 6 to 8 people each day!

Now that summer is here, we encourage our youth to bring a friend and help out. We do keep track of volunteer hours, which will be converted to credit hours for our high school students. Yes, the volunteer hours accumulate and carry over from year to year.

Each month we typically feed 50 or more families on the one day we are open. Each bag has enough food for about 3 or 4 days. Watch the Sunday bulletin **Opportunities** page for times and dates to volunteer. Can't volunteer? Your food and money donations are always welcome and needed! Place donated food in our little red wagons in the Information Center, and place donated funds in a tithing envelope and write "Food Pantry" and amount on the additional blank "local" line.

We also want to thank Carey Chaney and his musician contemporaries who are sharing their musical talents at our monthly **33rd Street Coffee House**. The money donated for coffee and refreshments has been generously given to **Our Father's Cupboard**. Their generosity has been greatly appreciated. Come out on the first Saturday evening of the month and support the musicians and the cupboard!

Ginger Robertson, Outreach Ministries

Summer Dates to Remember

May 11	Prayer Shawl Group
May 13	VBS Organization Meeting
May 15, 16, 18	Food Pantry Week
May 17 - 19	Spiritual Growth Retreat, Deerhaven

June 1	Deerhaven Work Day
June 1	33rd Street Coffee House
June 8	Prayer Shawl Group
June 12, 13, 15	Food Pantry Week
June 24-28	Vacation Bible School

Genevieve and Fred Wenzel have moved to Kansas City, MO to be near family members. They have been a part of our church family for many years. We send our love and best wishes with them.



Our Sympathy and Prayers to out to:

Bona Lee and her family. Bona's daughter-in-law, Nancy Huffman, peacefully passed away April 29 in Nashville, TN and

Bill Williams and his family at the passing of his sister on May 2.

Each Sunday nursery ministry is available for our little ones. Shown below is Karla Van Beek at an activity table with Addison Creel and Lennon and Liam Quinn.



There weren't many that turned out for the Saturday Beach Breakfast, but they enjoyed a good time and breakfast. In fact, they were having such a good time that suddenly a tree frog jumped in to join them! After some hops, by the frog, and laughs, by the people, it was rescued and returned to a safer location.



Pictured to the left is the frog!
Pictured to the right: Ginger Robertson, Calvin Long, Lynn Bryant, and Jonathan Robertson.

Pictured below: Calvin, Lynn, Jonathan, Elaine Gregg, Wade Bryant, Nancy Brougher, and David Robertson.



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Truman is waiting to welcome children each night.



Duke is very excited to be part of the activities and wants to make sure you will be coming.



Vacation Bible School

at 5817 33rd Street E, Bradenton
Community of Christ

June 24 through 28