

# CELEBRATION NEWS

November, 2011 - Volume 21 - Issue 7

## Giving Thanks for All Things

It's easy to list the blessings in life: good health, family, a satisfying career, a comfortable home. We might even be thankful for things others take for granted, such as freedom, clean drinking water, reliable transportation and food enough to eat. Then there are the little things, such as gardens, sunrises, pets and coffee.

What about life's storms or unanswered prayers? Should we be thankful for these? Loss and hardship remind us of our dependence on God. From our trials we are drawn closer to him. He is our rock and refuge. In misfortune and grief, we discover God's comfort and strength. Should we not, then, be thankful for the storms, too?



There will NO Thanksgiving Dinner at the church this year. If you will be serving a Thanksgiving dinner in your home, invite someone or a family to share the meal with you.

## Meet Siyuan Ya

*Wade and Lynn Bryant were asked to tell us about the Exchange Student that is living and attending church with them. They wrote the following information about her to enable us to know more about her and be able to welcome her as part of our church family.*

Siyuan is a 17 year old girl from Hefei, China, a city of about 8 million not far from Shanghai and the famous Yellow Mountain. She attends Manatee High School and is listed as an 11th grader although she had already graduated high school in China. Siyuan uses the American name **Lara** as some people have a hard time saying her name. This is a custom of most Chinese who come to the United States.

Siyuan is living this year with **Lynn and Wade Bryant** in Bradenton. Her real mother is Wang Banglan, a gynecologist, and her Father is Yu Yixiang, a national public servant. The Chinese say their last name first. Siyan is an only child which is typical of Chinese families in the modern world. China lists as having their population of over one billion people. Siyuan will return home at the end of the school year. She will then prepare to attend university in the U.S.A.



In China Siyuan (Lara) is average size, but at 5' 3" she is small to us. She is extremely polite and very bright; and we also think she is pretty. Chinese students work very hard to learn and have long hours at school. When Lara is in China, she would get to school at 7:00 am and get home at 7:00 pm. They do not have school sports and bands, so she enjoys the football games and especially the bands.

Lara invites everyone to come to China to visit. We love her.



## Experience Thanksgiving, Praise and Joy

Autumn has arrived and with it a hint of coolness in the air. At this time of year we also begin to anticipate the coming holidays with all their festivities and religious significance.

We will be encouraged to *Keep Awake!* on November 6. The parable of the 10 bridesmaids found in the book of Matthew will be the scripture lesson for this Sunday. Elder **Jerilyn Gregg-Chlebina** and Evangelist **Karen Palko** will share a message of faith in action. The table of the Lord's Supper is a time and place where we can recommit our lives to Christ. This Communion Sunday we will be reminded that we need to remain faithful to our calling. All are invited to share in this fellowship.

### Photos Being Taken

Pictures are being taken for the Church Family Board in the Information Center by **Elaine Gregg** on the first three Sundays in November. The pictures will be taken in the Fellowship Hall after church. Pictures can be taken before the worship service if you let Elaine know.

If you are new to our church family, have added members to your family, or would just like to update your picture, please make plans to do so on November 6th, 13th, or 20th.

*SMILE!*

The Christians in Thessalonica, like today, had many voices competing for their attention. Paul reminds them to *Encourage One Another*. Elder **Jim Deering** will preside over the service on November 13 with guest speaker, Teacher Paul Davis, bringing the message.

As a church, we are being challenged to answer the question, "What matters most?" How do we respond to God's love? The scripture lesson for November 20 helps us answer that. Priest **Linda Mount** and Evangelist **Al Mount** will bring ministry on the theme *When Did We See You!* with Teacher **Fay Beers** presiding.

Sunday, November 27, marks the beginning of a new year in the Christian calendar. It is the first Sunday of Advent when we turn our thoughts to the coming of the Christ child, Emmanuel, God with us. The theme for this first Sunday of the Christmas season is *God Is the Potter, We Are the Clay*. Elders **Ginger Robertson** and **Charyn Walker** will share with us how we can remain open to God's (the potter) shaping our lives (the clay).

Thanksgiving, Praise, and Joy are in the air as we approach the coming holidays. Use the offered worship experiences to grow your relationships with God, your family, and your community. Worship with us on Wednesday nights as well as Sunday mornings. **NO** Prayer and Praise service will be held on Wednesday, November 23.

**Jo Fenn-Martin**, for the Worship Team

### Your Presence is Requested

Thank you to those who participated in the third Tastefully Simple fund-raiser. Your contributions have made it possible for spices, bread mixes, platters, and dips to be added to the **Silent Auction and Spaghetti Dinner** which will be held on **November 20th** right after church. Please plan to attend. It will be a donation offering, and you will enjoy spaghetti, salad, vegetable, dessert, and beverage. We hope that you find having this event right after church services more convenient and easier to fit into your schedule than coming another day or evening.

The Fund Raising Committee is still looking for donations for the Silent Auction. Any service type project or items can be donated. Some of the things going up for bid are an oil change and tire rotation, Lia Sophia Jewelry, a weekend at a cabin in Georgia, homemade cheese cake, Southern Living platters and bowls, award-winning banana pudding, and favorite food items from Tastefully Simple. Do you have hobby items or speciality baked goods that you could donate? Please contact **Stu Skene** or **Karla Van Beek** with any donations or ideas.





## Thankful for the Treasure

Matthew 13:46 says *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field.* Let's go find that treasure and bring the kingdom of heaven here on earth!

Fall is my favorite time of the year, and it is especially important because we celebrate Thanksgiving. I am always thankful for my blessings, and this year I have had the wonderful opportunity to be reminded weeks before Thanksgiving of just how blessed I am by being able to participate in the *Ultimate Treasure Hunt* weekend held recently in our congregation. One of my best memories as a child was going on a treasure hunt in our basement when the weather was bad outside. The weekend experience was a different kind of treasure hunt.

I did not get to finish reading the book, *The Treasure Hunt*, which was one of the suggested books to read for the weekend until the afternoon that our experience began. I believe this was a good thing for me, because, much to my surprise, my excitement over what this adventure might produce outweighed my terror at the prospect of participating! When the time came for those who were interested to go out in the community on our *treasure hunt*, I was ready to go.

In our group there was Keith, one of the visiting ministers, **Jim Deering**, **Al Mount** and myself. We went to Sweetbay to check out our clues. A man with his wife and daughter seemed to meet the requirements on our list. We asked Keith to initiate an encounter. It was wonderful to experience how easy it was to engage this family in conversation and to experience their receptiveness to our desire to pray for them. Our clues were from Jim and Al's lists, and

I felt like I didn't contribute until we heard the concern they wanted us to pray for was their son and his new job. I stepped forward with excitement to show them that I had only one clue under prayer concerns on my list and it was "child." My arms immediately filled with goose bumps. Later we realized that their daughter's name was Alexis and Keith had the name "Alex" on his list!

This was such a beautiful experience that I happily agreed to take the lead to find our next *treasure*. We set out towards the pharmacy as that was a word on one list. I felt that a young woman there was perhaps the one we were looking for and approached her. Needless to say, when you are doing God's work and following HIS lead amazing things take place. Our intentions were received by this woman with unbelievable enthusiasm and joy! Never in my life would I have thought I could be bold enough to approach a stranger in public so easily to share the love and blessings of God. I have always been glad to share but, in the past, it has always been a result of someone coming to me rather than my approaching them! What an incredible feeling! Those people blessed ME so much. I am so grateful for the insight given to us about the possibilities to serve in a whole new way. The Lord has so many *treasures* out there for us to find, and I look forward to going on many *treasure hunts* for new opportunities to be the hands and feet of Christ in this part of His vineyard and give thanks for the continued blessings that God bestows to me.

**Carolyn Deering**, Editorial Staff

## New Facility Rental Guide Available

If you are planning a wedding, bridal or baby shower, private party or family reunion and would like to use our *Community of Christ* facility, we now have new member and non-member Facility Rental Guides available.

Pricing is based on the amount of time and space that will be needed for your event. Included are guidelines of what is and is not acceptable in reference to weddings and usage of our facilities in general. While we encourage everyone to consider our facility for your venue, it is important that we maintain certain standards to ensure that our church building is safe and clean. For more information or to receive a guide, please contact **Bob Beers**, **Ginger Robertson** or **Elaine Gregg**.



## Financial Update through September 2011

|                          |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Local Operating Fund     | \$38,633      |
| Local Operating Expenses | <u>36,841</u> |
| Amount Remaining         | \$ 1,792      |

Good job done by all in controlling expenses and for supporting our Local Congregation and World Church.

## Our Father's Cupboard Update

|          |              |
|----------|--------------|
| Income   | \$3,094*     |
| Expenses | <u>1,249</u> |
| Balance  | \$1,845      |

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

**Bob Beers**,  
Congregational Financial Officer

## Sharing God's Love

I had the pleasure of attending FL Mission Center's **Women's Retreat** this year and rooming with my mother and aunt. It had been several years since I last attended this annual event. I enjoyed myself very much, and *Seaside Escape* was a great relaxing theme.

As a service project, I helped organize the making of bracelets to give away to women who need to feel God's spirit and love. What a sight it was to see 75 women happily making bracelets to give away to other women knowing that they are sharing God's love by being an active part of his kingdom. I look forward to attending next year!

**Karla Van Beek**

Please mark your 2012 calendar for the **Young Adult Retreat** scheduled for **April 13 - 15**. Dave Schall of the First Presidency will be the guest speaker. Assistance with retreat fees is available. Everyone between ages 18 (high school graduate) to 40ish are encouraged to attend. Childcare will be provided.

## A Time to Share

"Whenever you get a blessing from God, give it back to him as a love gift. ...Offer the blessing back to him in a deliberate act of worship. If you hoard a thing for yourself, it will turn into spiritual dry rot, as the manna did when it was hoarded. God will never let you hold a spiritual thing for yourself; it has to be given back to him that he may make it a blessing to others." --Oswald Chambers

## Information about USA Conference

The first USA Conference will be held in Independence 2013. There was a workshop held recently in Orlando for anyone who would like to know about the conference and/or would like to serve as a delegate from the Florida Mission Center. That workshop was held the same weekend that we, the Bradenton/Sarasota congregation, had the *Ultimate Treasure Hunt* here. Because it is important for us to understand what will be happening at the conference, Bob Watkins will be here for a one day workshop on December 17th to go over this information. If you have questions, please contact Nanette Dizney.

Save the Date



Happy Birthday!

## November

- 01 Jolene Gregg
- 03 Richie Creel
- 03 Charyn Walker
- 09 Jane Kelley
- 23 Gloria Chaney
- 23 Shirley Jousma

## Night of Joy

Recently our Youth experienced Night of Joy which is held at Disney World after hours. For many it was the first time to be a part of such an awesome night of great music and fun. The atmosphere was filled with love, joy and the presence of God. Plans are in the works to experience another Night of Joy next year. We can't wait!

Photos in this issue are by Charyn Walker, Karla Van Beek, Jo Willetts, and Elaine Gregg

## Hanging of the Greens

Christmas is coming, and we are making plans to celebrate the birth of our Savior in many ways. The first Sunday in Advent is November 27, and we want the church to sparkle. Decorating our church home for the Christmas holidays is a big job, but it can be a fun job when many hands help.

On **Saturday, November 26, at 9:00 am** a crew will arrive to get the boxes down from the attic. At **10:00 am** the rest of the decorating crew will arrive to put up the decorations. Please join us at 9:00 or 10:00 and help decorate the Church. Your work will bring joy to all who enter our church home during the holidays.





Hailie Rodriguez is shown following her Confirmation with the youth membership manual presented to her during the service.

A child of God should be a visible beatitude, for joy and happiness, and a living doxology, for gratitude and adoration. - Charles H. Spurgeon

Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. - Albert Schweitzer

## Another Year; Another Chapter

The end of October has come and gone along with Halloween and for me, another birthday. I would like to say I spent time in pensive reflection on the past year, and hopeful vision of the year to come, but the reality is my attention was on the Sunday worship service, which I had planned. After the service we celebrated "Trunk or Treat" with great fun and revelry. The rest of the day was spent in the company of my daughter, Heather and dinner with my husband, Dave. I was, as Jim Deering talked about in his morning sermon, "live in the moment."

While there were, I am sure, many notable memories of this past year, what stands out are those times when I witnessed the bounty of God's love and grace. Having been called to outreach ministry at this time in my life, I have developed a profound compassion for the people whose lives have been bruised and broken. And yet, just when I think we have come to our last resource, God reminds me that His love for these people is greater than mine; that He will provide for their needs.

During his devastating trials and tribulations, Job sat with his three friends, Bildad, Eliphaz and Zophar. As they commiserated with Job and attempted to analyze the root of his problems, Job sarcastically replied, *Is not wisdom found among the aged?* Do I, now that I am becoming one of those "aged" disciples, allow my own will and desires to stand in the way of the Spirit, or perhaps do I just assume that I know the will of God? We learned through our treasure hunt weekend that in just a *moment in time* all it takes is one word or one phrase and the spirit will reveal who God has waiting for us to reach out to and what He would have us do for them. So this year, my prayer is that I will not just live in the moment, but that I will live in the *Spirit moment*.

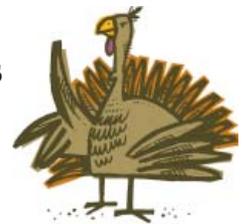
Ginger Robertson, Outreach Ministries

## MissionFest

What is **MissionFest**? This is a question that some have asked when they see the dates listed in the weekly church **Opportunities**. MissionFest is an opportunity to celebrate your place in the Florida Mission Center; to come learn, share with others and fill your spirit anew for journeying in mission together. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet others from Tallahassee to Miami who are on the same faith journey as you are. In classes, worship, campfire and skits, and fellowship, ideas can be shared. You will be able to interact with the guest ministers President Steven Veazey and Apostle Linda Booth. You are invited to be a part of MissionFest. Youth and young adults are encouraged to come also. Childcare will be available during classes and worship for those with young children.

On **Friday, November 11**, the weekend will begin, and it will conclude on Sunday. On Saturday afternoon there will be FMC and Deerhaven Conferences. You can register via website: [www.cofchristfmc.org](http://www.cofchristfmc.org) or mail a registration form found on the bulletin board.

## A Turkey's Point of View



"I have never understood why anyone would roast the turkey and crisp the croutons and shell the peas and candy the sweet potatoes and comote the cranberries and bake the pies and clear the table and wash the dishes and fall into bed exhausted when they could just as easily sit back and enjoy a hamburger or a pork sandwich."

-- The Turkey



Great Fun!

Good Fellowship



Clever People - old and young



Great to see the young and old interact

# Trunk or Treat 2011

What Creativity!



## Be Thankful

Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire. If you did what would there be to look forward to?

Be thankful when you don't know something, for it gives you the opportunity to learn.

Be thankful for the difficult time. During those times you grow.

Be thankful for your limitations, because they give you opportunities for improvement.

Be thankful for each new challenge, because it will build your strength and character.

Be thankful for your mistakes. They will teach you valuable lessons.

Be thankful when you're tired and weary, because it means you've made a difference.

Gratitude can turn a negative into a positive.

Find a way to be thankful for your troubles and they can become your blessings. -- Unknown

## DID YOU KNOW ???

- ◆ **Jason Van Beek** will be playing in a golf marathon tournament on November 14th to raise money for the All Star Children's Foundation to prevent child abuse? If you would like to make a financial contribution, please contact Jason as soon as possible.
- ◆ **The Young Adult's BBQ and Pool Party Get-Together** in September was enjoyed by 20 adults, 11 children and one dog?
- ◆ **Kathy Park, Nancy Brougher, Bettie Chlebina, Nancy Skene, Marcia Brougher, Karla Van Beek, Jo Fenn-Martin and Nanette Dizney** attended the Women's Retreat held at Deerhaven Campground?
- ◆ **Jo and Dan Willetts** experienced a great vacation recently when they traveled to Ireland, England, Paris, and Yosemite, USA?
- ◆ **Nancy and Stu Skene** traveled to Spain for a wonderful get away?
- ◆ **Trey, Karla Van Beek's guide dog in training**, is turning nine months old, and beginning in December, we will NO longer be able to pet him when he is wearing his service coat?
- ◆ **Zoe Van Beek** will have her own booth at a December outdoor art festival to sell her artwork?
- ◆ **October's Church in the Park** had 75 church family members and friends from the age of 4 months to 80 plus years attend the worship and fellowship?
- ◆ **Frankie Scholl** performed in the Michael Jackson Thriller Tribute with the Sarasota High School Drama Troupe on Halloween night at St. Armand's Circle?

## A Great Afternoon

On Sunday, October 23, our younger youth enjoyed time together at the Fruitville Groves Pumpkin Festival. After church, pizza was served in the Fellowship Hall. Then it was off to an afternoon of fun of pony and mini train rides as well as a hayride, and, of course, pumpkins. Our youngest attendee was **Meah Rodriguez** who enjoyed her ride on



## Stocking Stuffer Idea

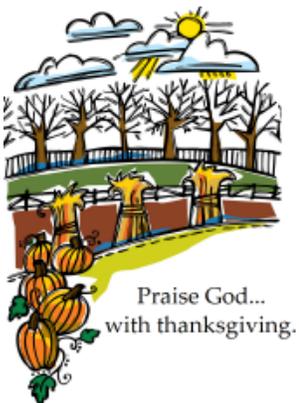
If you are looking for an idea for a stocking stuffer, **Nanette Dizney**, may have your answer. She purchased some of the *Enduring Principle* hand painted stones from the Herald House. They have been advertised in the *Herald* for the past few months. There are nine of the stones each one in a pastel color with the *principle* engraved on it. They sell for \$12.95 for all of the, and they come in their own mesh bag. They are being presented to new members when they are confirmed, but she purchased extras to sell. For \$12.95 and any free will offering for the shipping that was incurred, you can have a Christmas gift without much effort. See Nanette if interested.



a pony. Each of our little ones got to pick out a small pumpkin to take home as their very own. Picking out just the right pumpkin isn't easy when there are so many pumpkins from which to make your choice! It was a great afternoon for all who went, including the adults!

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

*We give thanks for*



### Looking Back at the October 16th Church in the Park



Gathering and singing under the pavilion...

Children share in their part of the worship...



Youth prepare with their usual enthusiasm...



The grill masters...



A group gathers to rehearse...

