



Celebration News

November, 2012 - Volume 22 - Issue 6

Blessed From Day One

"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."
Philippians 4:13

As I go through difficult times in my life, I am always reminded that I can handle anything with the Lord. I can think of many instances when I recognized this as the absolute truth. This past summer we celebrated the fact that I have been cancer free for eight years. My yearly mammogram went from being "diagnostic" to simply "screening." I had my annual appointment with my oncologist in September, and she did something very unexpected. She said, "I'm cutting you loose; you don't need a cancer doctor anymore." I sat there stunned and overwhelmed at the same time. Those were the most beautiful words I had heard in a long time. From the day we received my diagnosis, we looked at the situation as a new opportunity, a new pathway for a different type of ministry. It certainly has been that. We were blessed from day one with caring, compassion, love, strength, wisdom, prayers....the list is endless.

This has been a tough year for Jim and me with many difficulties, struggles and stresses, but through our toughest battles come our greatest victories and in turn, our greatest blessings! As we enter this month of Thanksgiving, it is impossible to not be reminded constantly of how very fortunate we are with our blessings too numerous to count! We thank God for blessing us with each one of you and the special gifts of love, hope, joy and peace that you bring to our lives!

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!

Carolyn Deering, Editorial Staff

Our Father's Cupboard Food Drive

During the months of November and December, we will be collecting food for Our Father's Cupboard. We are in need of all shelf staple items: canned fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, jelly, soups, canned meats, cereal, and packaged meals or side dishes. Diapers are always needed as well. Please remember to bring in your donations every week. Your support is greatly needed to help us feed the hungry in our community.

The Benefits of Gratitude

Christians realize that gratitude has spiritual benefits, but now scientists are confirming its physical and emotional benefits, as well.

Professor Robert Emmons found that people who counted their blessings instead of their burdens were healthier and more optimistic, exercised more and made more progress toward achieving goals. Evidence shows that gratitude can even ease chronic health conditions.

Emmons, author of *Thanks! How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier* (Mariner Books), acknowledges that gratitude seems harder to practice during rough times. But, he notes, "In the face of demoralization, gratitude has the power to energize. In the face of brokenness, gratitude has the power to heal. In the face of despair, gratitude has the power to bring hope."



Looking Back at Cozy Mountain Lodge

On the weekend of October 5-7, 53 women from the Florida Mission Center gathered at Deerhaven campgrounds for our annual Women's Retreat. The women of the Bradenton/Sarasota congregation hosted the *Cozy Mountain Lodge: Where Women Find Comfort in God* themed event while several husbands served by helping in the kitchen and with registration tasks. While much work was in-

involved in the planning, the retreat was a spirit filled weekend centered around the story of Ruth and her willingness to risk the unknown to follow her mother-in-law to a new homeland. Through her faith in God, Ruth found all that she needed in her new life.

We shared many activities in our various sessions, including working together to complete a project, building little log cabins with empowering messages of support written on them, Spiritual journaling, singing, sharing and worshipping.

One of our sessions included a service project of creating decorated bags and filling them with ingredients to make bean soup. The bags were then given to food pantries. Our Father's Cupboard was a beneficiary of 40 bags of soup mix! All of the recipients looked forward to making this delicious soup filled with good ingredients and lots of love. Just as God's hand was upon Ruth, so is God's hand upon all who place their faith in Him.

Ginger Robertson

Above: Twenty-one smiling Bradenton/Sarasota women who were hostesses at the Women's Retreat.

Below left: Some of the decorated bags.

Below right: Women pause to offer a prayer for those who will be receiving the bags.



The Nature of Discipleship

Each Sunday during the month of November you are encouraged to bring a gift of non-perishable food items to add to the worship center. Your gifts of food will be distributed at Our Father's Cupboard during December.

We are continuing our study of Mark for the first three Sundays in November. The Gospel of Mark is the earliest of the gospels. Mark focuses on the servanthood of Jesus, his suffering and death on the cross, and the nature of discipleship.

Mark 12:28-34

November 4

The table is set, and you are invited to participate in the Communion service. Priest **Patty Day** will preside at this service, and Evangelist **Glenn Day** will speak on the theme *Love the Lord*. To love God is to love our neighbor. To love our neighbor is to love God. In the celebration of the Lords' Supper, we remember God's supreme act of love toward us: the gift of Christ for our salvation. Come, take your place at the table.

Mark 12:38-44

November 11

The widow, who had very little, quietly put her coins in the collection unnoticed by all except Jesus. Jesus used the opportunity to again remind his disciples (and us as well) what it truly means to *Give Your All*. Priest **Heather Devine** and Elder **Stuart Skene** will share their ministry during this Sunday's worship service.

Mark 13:1-8

November 18

Jesus spends time with his disciples teaching them to focus on living as faithful disciples. They had concerns about the future and needed reassurance from Jesus. Elder **Ginger Robertson** will preside on this Sunday with Evangelist **Al Mount** and Priest **Linda Mount** speaking on the theme *Help Us Remain Faithful*.

On November 25, the scripture lesson comes from the Gospel of John, Chapter 18:33-37. These verses speak to Christians who are being encouraged to follow Jesus as God's truth in the world. Elders **Jim and Marcia Brougher** will bring ministry on this Sunday around the theme *Testify to the Truth*.

As we celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday and look to the month of December with special celebrations, be present at these worship services as well as the Wednesday night **Prayer and Praise** services and use them to grow your relationship with God. There will be **NO** service on Wednesday night, November 21.

Sunday, December 2, 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.

Remember to bring your gift of food to each Sunday morning worship experience. Those receiving food from Our Father's Cupboard will greatly appreciate your expression of God's love.

Jo Fenn-Martin for the Worship Team

Proclaim!

Families and members of all ages are invited to join in the **MissionFest: Proclaim!** Friday and Saturday, November 9 and 10, at Deerhaven Retreat Center. Celebrate our connectedness in the mission of Christ. Come learn, share with others and fill your spirit anew for journeying in mission together. Classes for children through adult will be offered during the afternoon. Nursery Care is available throughout the day. The annual Florida Mission Center Fall Conference will take place Saturday morning. Apostle Linda Booth will be involved in the weekend activities and bringing the message at the multigenerational worship service.

This conference will include election of delegates to World and USA National Conferences in 2013 as well as sustaining of officers and approval of priesthood calls. Register at www.cofchristfmc.org.

Thankful for:

Being able to bring a friend to a fun church event (outdoor church service).

Zoe Van Beek

The playground at Church in the Park! **Cole Van Beek**

The fellowship with other church members at the outdoor church service. **Karla Van Beek**

We survived the Women's Retreat and had a really good Spiritual Growth Retreat weekend. Also for really good books to pass on to a friend.

Ginger Robertson

Pastoral Care Activities

What a busy schedule we had in October! We experienced a wonderful Women's Retreat the first weekend in October. Our women did a great job of planning and coordinating the retreat. There were 21 women from our congregation, and **Dan Willetts, Charlie Walker, Dave Robertson and Bob Beers** did a great job helping in the kitchen.

The second Sunday in October we celebrated with *Church in the Park*. There were 85 people attending this event. **Jo Fenn-Martin, Nancy Skene, Nancy Peters and Charyn Walker** did a wonderful job of planning an intergenerational service for all to enjoy. **Dan Willetts and Richie Creel** were our smiling BBQ Chefs. The weather was beautiful, and everyone seemed to enjoy the day.

On October 21st we held our Congregational Conference to elect our officers for 2013. **Nanette Dizney, Ginger Robertson and Fay Beers** will continue as our Pastorate. Others elected were:

Secretary	Jo Willetts
Head Deacon	Melinda Creel
Librarian	Beth Slasor
Auditors	Jo Fenn-Martin and Al Mount
Facility Mgmt Team	Dick Chlebina and Jason Van Beek
Fund Raising Team	Stuart Skene and Karla Van Beek

On the weekend of October 26-28, the Spiritual Growth Retreat was held at Deerhaven Retreat Center, and many from our congregation attended.

As we move into November, we will continue to have a very busy schedule. We begin the month celebrating at our second annual Peace Festival.

We have been blessed as we worship and fellowship together through all of our activities. We look forward to the coming months as we celebrate the things that we are thankful for and prepare for the celebration of the birth of Christ. God has richly blessed our congregation. As we move into November, we have much to be thankful for.

Fay Beers, Pastoral Care Ministry

Church in the Park



Photos by Fay Beers

Church Women United

Did you know that Bradenton/Sarasota *Community of Christ* is a member of Manatee County Church Women United (CWU)? On the first Friday of each month we meet at various churches here in Manatee County to fellowship, worship and take care of business matters. CWU is a National benevolent organization whose focus is on peace and justice ministries and human rights issues.

Each year, in November, CWU sponsors a Migrant Tea. This is a time to honor and to celebrate the migrant families in our community and shower them with gifts of clothing, school supplies, personal hygiene items, baby items, blankets or anything a family might need during this time of year. Gifts for parents to give their children at Christmas are also welcome. This year's Migrant Tea is on November 16th. If you would like to contribute any items, please see **Nanette Disney** or **Ginger Robertson**. If you would like to make a monetary donation, we will use it to purchase needed items. We also welcome all of our women to join us at these monthly gatherings.

Ginger Robertson, Outreach Ministry



Wall of Thanks

During this season of gratefulness, create a special wall of thanks in your home.

What you need:

- Sticky notes
- Pens or markers
- Poster board, wall or refrigerator

What to do:

1. Every day in November, have each family member write or draw on a sticky note someone or something they are thankful for.
2. Display your notes on poster board, refrigerator or wall.
3. Read your list every day to remind you about God's many blessings.



World Religions as Seeing, Being, Doing

This year, as a student at State College of Florida, I felt led to change my major from Arts to Humanities. I have particularly enjoyed my World Religions class. After hearing that the Spiritual Growth Retreat in late October would feature J.W. Winland, founder and director of the Encounter World Religions Center in Toronto, Canada, as guest facilitator, I immediately knew I had to sign up. After sharing the information with my professor, he offered to give me extra credit for reporting on the weekend retreat.

After an introduction class on Friday evening, we began the weekend with anticipation of learning the history and origins of the India Religious Traditions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism. Next we would learn about the Balance Traditions that included Native American, Aboriginal, Confucianism, Daoism, Neo-Paganism and Shintoism. Mid-East Traditions included Baha'i, Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Zoroastrianism. Winland's stories and religion histories were in-depth, but colorful and entertaining as well as informative.

I found it interesting that the first interfaith dialogue, Parliament of World Religions, took place in Chicago in 1893 at the World's Fair. Even more surprising was that Joseph Smith III was among those religious leaders from around the world who participated in that historic event. During an interview that I conducted with J.W. Winland on Saturday evening, I asked him what legacy he hopes to leave behind when he retires in the coming year. He said, "I want to give people an optional thinking of world religions." This was a weekend I won't soon forget.

Jonathan Robertson

Happy Birthday!



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



- ◆ **Cole and Zoe Van Beek** were on the effort honor roll at Rowlett Elementary School?
- ◆ **Jacob Rodriguez** made honor roll at Bayshore Elementary School?
- ◆ **Jason and Karla Van Beek and Stuart Skene** loaded up a 16 foot U-haul truck with 60 pieces of furniture and drove up to our church campgrounds (Deerhaven in Paisley, Florida)? The facility where Karla works was getting rid of their furniture and gave armoires, night stands, and dressers to be used in the residence halls at camp. A special thank you to those who gave financial help to cover the transporting fees.
- ◆ **Jo Willetts, Daniel Willetts, Jonathan Robertson, Ginger Robertson, Nanette Dizney, Jo Fenn-Martin, Nancy Skene, and Karen Palko** attended the recent Spiritual Growth Retreat at Deerhaven?



50th ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to Basil and Rosalee Long who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in August. They were married August 31, 1966 with Basil's father, Ethan Long, presiding over the ceremony. They have two children, Lonnie Long and Lisa Rasmussen and four grandchildren: Ryan, Cameron, Alexis and Tyler. They celebrated at a dinner with their children before leaving for a second honeymoon on Lido Beach. Their first honeymoon was on St. Pete Beach. We wish them many more sunny and happy beach days in the future.

The Little Things

A bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Phoenix, was recovering in a hospital after heart surgery. He caught the attention of a nurse and asked her to please bring him some ice.

"I have a choice for you," the nurse said. "You can either have a new BMW or some ice chips."

Immediately, the bishop said, "Ice!"

The nurse replied, "Don't ever forget that."

The bishop says that was a good reminder of the importance of life's little things. Now he tries to always be thankful -- even for such common things as ice or a glass of water.



Our Love and Prayers

We extend our love and prayers to Suzanne Grimmer and Karen Palko and their families at the passing of their father, Bob Grimmer. Bob Grimmer worshipped with us the past few months after moving to Florida from New Jersey. He always had a smile to share and enjoyed being a part of our church family. He will be missed by his family and friends.

Trunk or Treat

Once again the vehicles were decked out with scary decorations and goodies while the children and youth came in costume to **Trunk or Treat** held after services on October 28th.

Everyone received a treat - young ones received many sweets while the vehicle 'artists' enjoyed the smiles and giggles of their visitors. All in all, everyone had a good time.



Photos by Karla Van Beek



Hanging of the Greens

On **Saturday, December 1**, you are invited to help decorate the church for the Christmas season. The first Sunday in Advent is December 2, and with your help, the church will sparkle in anticipation of the celebration of Jesus' birth.

More information will be announced in the Sunday bulletins. Decorating our church home for the Christmas holidays is a big job, but it can be a fun job when many hands help.

Please lend your hands and your creative spirit to help. Your work will be enjoyed and appreciated by all who enter our church home during the holidays.

Back By Popular Demand

On Saturday, December 8th at 6:30 pm, we will gather for a Christmas movie. After viewing the movie, we will enjoy having a discussion period with light refreshments. Mark your calendar for this event now. This is the second movie night we have had this year. We had a lively and interesting discussion following our first movie. Join us for an evening of fun and fellowship.

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

Address Correction Requested

We are thankful for:



The Peace Festival Shines

Music, chatter and laughter were heard at the **Peace Festival** held November 3rd. A beautiful day provided the background for a fun time - one with a message. It was good to feel the peaceful and joyful atmosphere. It is good that we are able to stop and be reminded of *Community of Christ's* mission: ...Proclaim Jesus Christ and Promote Communities of Joy, Hope, Love and Peace.

Note: the Dunking Tank was probably the most popular activity of the day! Although 'words' were exchanged while trying to dunk someone, there was a lot fun in hitting the bullseye and in being dunked!

