



celebration News

Bradenton/Sarasota Community of Christ

January, 2009

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A New Year...A New Start

Welcome 2009!! A new year...a new start. There is something about the beginning of the year that makes me feel like my slate is clean, and I have a fresh start. At this time of year I always think of the hymn *Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me*. "Jesus, Savior, pilot me, over life's tempestuous sea; unknown waves before me roll, hiding rock and treacherous shoal; chart and compass come from thee; Jesus, Savior, pilot me." What a blessed assurance we have in knowing that He does pilot us through whatever storms may come our way. I feel that we are facing a new year filled with more challenges than we have known for a very long time; and so I take great comfort in the realization that my Savior is in control.

As we move into 2009, we stand on the threshold of a new time frame; we say good-bye to one year and hello to the next. On New Year's Eve I have always felt very melancholy in the thought that it will never again be that year, and I did not do all that I would have liked. But in reality, the opportunity is not over just because the year is. There is always more work to be done and more needs to be met. This year I think I will feel differently. Instead of regrets for things undone, I will rejoice in what was accomplished and look forward to new opportunities for growth and service. We are a very blessed congregation and with Jesus, as our pilot, 2009 is bound to be a year filled with love, hope, joy and peace!!

Carolyn Deering, Pastoral Pastor



Welcome to 2009!



Dale Morgan and the youth pose with a "friend" during their trip to the Holy Land Experience in Orlando.

Youth Go on Field Trip

The Youth Group went on a field trip to the Holy Land Experience in Orlando on December 27. Attendees included **Chris Morgan**, his friend Tyler, **Brittney Morgan**, her friend Kenyata, **Hunter and Kayla Morgan**, **Jasmine** and **Lilly Rodriguez**, **Kayla Smeralda**, **Jonathan Robertson**, **Frankie Scholl**, and her friend **Darin**. **Heather Devine**, **Scott Cramer**, **Dale Morgan**, and **Charles Walker** were the adults that accompanied the group.

The youth were very interested in the Scriptorium and the City of Jerusalem model. The day was blessed with information and personal experiences. Seeds of faith were planted, and it is hoped that they will continue to grow throughout the lives of the youth.

You are encouraged to continue to support youth activities through the coming year in the midst of tough economic times. Thank you for your past and future support.

Charles Walker, Youth Leader

Gimme That Old Time Religion!

Volunteers are needed to present a short worship service at Arden Courts, an Assisted Living Facility in Sarasota. The service is held on the third Sunday of each month at 10:30 am.

A possible approach to the service would be to give a short talk and/or to perform a few well known hymns.

Many thanks to **Scott Cramer, Charyn and Charlie Walker, Larry and Patti Bell, Bob Slasor, Brittney Morgan** and Arthur and Carol Curtis for keeping this outreach ministry going during the last year.

If you are willing to serve in this way, please contact **Carey Chaney** at 941.924.2721.



The Spirit of Christmas be with You

As Christmas decorations are packed away, and the carols, celebrations, and programs come to an end, it is a challenge to hold onto the spirit of Christmas. If we listen to the world there is not enough goodwill, generosity or peace to go around. Will we have food to eat and clothes to wear? Matthew 6:25-34 counsels us to "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given" and "do not worry about tomorrow."

The carol *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* expresses it so well. The person, listening to the bells ringing of peace on earth and goodwill to men, hangs his head in despair, because he finds no peace on earth, and hate is strong. But the bells keep ringing with the message that God is not dead or sleeping, and He will win over evil. This song was written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow during the time of the Civil War.

Remember that God's gift of peace cannot be found in material possessions. Matthew 7:7 says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you." As we enter into the New Year, opportunities will be presented, because we are asking God to go before us. Will we follow His lead?

Charyn Walker, Outreach Pastor

We Are All Called

The theme of 2009 is *Be a Sanctuary of Christ's Peace*. This is not just a call for our faith movement, but it is a specific call to ALL of us! In order for the world to move closer to peace, we must start with all of our relationships. We cannot just focus on other people, but we must make peace with our earth, too. When we truly understand the "golden rule", we will find it rather simple to understand our place in creation. For me this means that I must slow down and focus more intently on what matters.

I look forward as always to the clean slate Carolyn mentions in her article. It allows me to "get out of fail free" again and start my life anew. I have recently begun to see more clearly ALL of the blessings I enjoy. I am more grateful, and I am more humble.

If we can focus all of our efforts on the "possible" this year, we will walk ever closer to the Lord and THAT will make us a sanctuary of Christ's peace. As we move into 2009, let us begin by remembering to love one another. I mean really looove one another. Let us learn by listening and really hearing each other. Let us focus our efforts on being a community that values peace inside and outside our walls, and let us do all in our power to make it a reality. We are ALL called!

Jim Deering, Administrative Pastor

A Prayer for the New Year

Lord, in this new year which we have begun,
we have

Enough happiness to keep us agreeable,
Enough trials to keep us strong,
Enough sorrow to keep us human,
Enough freedom to keep us happy,
Enough failure to keep us humble,
Enough success to keep us eager,
Enough wealth to meet our needs,
Enough faith to banish our depression,
Enough hope to look forward,
Enough love to give us comfort, and
Enough determination to keep us going.



Looking back on 2008, we were blessed to witness and partake in many sacrament services. Beyond our Communion services there were Ordinations, Baptisms, Baby Blessings, and Administrations. This month will be no exception.

January begins with Communion Service on January 4th. Elder **Jerilyn Gregg-Chlebina** will preside over this service with the them *Shine!* Evangelist **Bob Slasor** brings us God's message on this the first Sunday of 2009. Jesus is the light of the world. The light of Christ will shine through each of us if we open our hearts and illuminate the lives of others.

Believe! As we enter into the Epiphany Season, we relive the Baptism of Water and of Spirit as we witness the baptism of Alexandra (Zee) Fant, by her father Priest **Don Fant** on January 11. Elder **Bona Lee** is planning this service, and Priest **Stuart Skene** will challenge the congregation to uphold and support Alexandra's new journey on the Disciples Path and to remember our personal covenant to follow Christ and to listen to the Holy spirit that resides within us.

Community of Christ will observe Racial Justice Day on Sunday, January 18. Elder **Marcia Brougher** is planning this service with Priest **Carolyn Deering** speaking. Jesus' ministry took him out into a broken world where justice and equality among all people was not practiced. He reminds us even today that in his eyes, every person of every race and culture are children of God. We are called to *See!*; see Jesus, the Messiah, who has come to save the world. A baby will be blessed on this Sunday also.

Could you, **would you**, give up your life and livelihood to follow Christ? Andrew did, and Peter, Luke, Mark, John and many more. They willingly chose to follow Jesus, inviting others to join them. So we too, are called to *Follow!* Our special guest minister for this fourth Sunday in January is Matt Naylor, head of Outreach International. Matt and Elder **Jim Deering** will be working with our new **Praise and Worship Team** to plan this uplifting, contemporary worship service.

Everyone is invited to come to our Wednesday night **Pray and Praise Worship** at 7:00 pm. Held in the fellowship hall in an informal setting with coffee and light snacks, these midweek services are becoming a popular meeting place on Wednesday evenings.

As some of you may know, **Jo Fenn-Martin**, who coordinated the worship schedule for the last three years worked very hard to continue bringing together gifted people to plan and bring the message for our worship service. We are all grateful for her diligent effort, and offer our prayer and support as she meets the challenges ahead. I am blessed to have **Fay Beers** and **Marcia Brougher** working with me as a team to plan worship services in the months to come. I also look forward to working with Praise and Worship Coordinators **Larry Bell** and **Bob Slasor** as we begin the process to enliven our worship by offering contemporary services that will appear to many people of all ages. Come, Shine, Believe, See and Follow as we worship the living Christ!

Ginger Robertson, Worship Team Coordinator



A Pre-Baptismal Class was held for four children December 29 and 30. Zoe Van Beek, Matthew Devine, Dani Cosgrove, and Zee Fant are shown in Jo Fenn-Martin's Scripture Class.



Needs Continue

In the month of November **Our Father's Cupboard** gave out 40 turkeys at thanksgiving and fed 130 families! All were very happy for all we did for them.

The Cupboard hours and day have changed to Friday 11:00 am - 2:00 pm every week. The change was made, because on Thursdays fresh vegetables are available at the Food Bank. This allows us to give the families fresh vegetables.

The list of clients continues to grow each month through the contacts with United Way, Salvation Army, medical offices and word of mouth. The Cupboard has helped in many ways other than food by helping with gas, prayer, hugs, praise, furniture of all sorts, and clothes. The clients themselves offer to help when we are swamped. This helps them feel good about themselves. They feel they have something of value to give.

There is one client that very faithfully comes every week to help with the unloading of the food. We are very happy to see him, and he is the kind of person that lifts up others.

The Cupboard is still in need of a working refrigerator and freezer. As needs grow, there is a need for more storage. We seem to be growing every month!

Please keep up the good giving that you show each month with your contributions on the second Sunday of each month. Lists of needed items are on the bulletin board, and a list is inserted in the fourth Sunday's bulletin.

A big thank you to **Larry Bell, Bob Slasor and Kathy Parks** for their help each week. You can help any Friday from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm to see what the Cupboard is all about and how outreaching this ministry is working.

Patti Benjamin-Bovee and Mark Bee

Adult Class

2009 is upon us and what does the new year hold in store for the Adult Class? Well, we will continue with the book *When God Whispers Your Name* by author Max Lucado and his book, *In the Grip of Grace*. Also Evangelist **Bob Slasor** will lead a study of Section 163 with the help of a book written by Danny Belrose.

Come join us in the upcoming year as we delve into God's plan for our lives.

Scott Cramer, Adult Education Coordinator

God's Invitation

Dear Saints, the following is part of a longer writing I did earlier in the month. If you would like to read the whole article let me, Evangelist Bob, know.

God's invitation to new life is constant to his creation. At some point in this life or the next, all will know it is true. Yet, all have the choice to respond or not. If God's love and invitation are constant, what does this say about the disciple as to the purpose of our discipleship? Is it not to be the constant voice of hope to others? The voice and action of God's love are reflected in us and through us. Is it not to be constantly ready to respond to human need when opportunity presents itself? And when we are committed to be ready, God will always send to us those who need his touch.

Doesn't loving God with all your heart, mind and strength mean putting God first in your life? And if God is first in your life, then God becomes so much a part of your very existence that you begin to reflect God's love and God's concern for all of this creation. You begin to love your neighbor as you have learned to love yourself as God loves you - unconditionally, constantly, faithfully, slow to judge and quick to forgive. You begin to understand with great clarity that your welfare is closely bound to your neighbor's welfare. The memory of God's grace to you when you least deserved it is quickened in you, and you begin to see others, all others, equally deserving of that same grace, especially in their lost and painful condition.

A disciple in love with God and Christ is also in love with all of God's creation, be it human, plant, wildlife, all of the natural world. A disciple growing in grace and truth under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit is developing the "Fruits of the Spirit" which is the life-style of Jesus Christ and living those qualities of character daily in all parts of her/his life.

Lord, may this be so in us individually and in our congregation in 2009. Amen.

Bob Slasor, Evangelist

Reminder: you can get the color version of Celebration News on our web-site: cofchristbradenton.com

If you prefer to receive your newsletter via the website, please let Elaine Gregg know. It's always good to save paper and postage!

A NEW YEAR & NEW OPPORTUNITIES

With smiles on their faces and ready to serve at the Youth sponsored Potato Dinner held after church recently are Kayla Morgan, Jonathan Robertson, Hunter Morgan, and Lilly Rodriguez



The following people responded to a questionnaire with the following questions:

- (a) What was the most exciting event for you in 2008, and
- (b) What one thing would you want to accomplish in 2009.

Carey Chaney - (a) playing some of my songs on a live radio broadcast (KSLR, 96.5 FM) that also went live on the internet.

(b) complete a new CD.

Heather Devine - (a) chaperoning the youth to the Holy Land Experience and watching their reactions to what they saw and what they were feeling during certain exhibits.

(b) continuing to build my spiritual relationship with God and being able to do home visits on the weekends.

Glenn & Patti Day - (a) moving to Florida (Venice) and finding a new church family.

(b) find a job.

Amy Smeralda - (a) had many exciting events in 2008, but the one that was the best for me was seeing Kayla and Jacob playing in the snow for the first time at their grandpa's house in North Carolina.

(b) finish my college classes and get my Bachelors Degree from DeVry University.

Marilyn Wonsitler - (a) having colon surgery in June and in October being clean - no cancer.

(b) get our house finished and quit smoking.

Cheryl Tack - (a) the birth of my granddaughter, Hayden Elizabeth Tack, on July 16. Also the month long visit with Tyler and Tristen Trotter who share my love of snorkeling at Discovery Cove and fun at the beach. I am truly blessed and that our Lord for these blessings.

(b) to help abused women and make a difference in my little sister's life (Morgan) with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and encourage others to do the same.

More church family member's responses on page 6

After making some ornaments for the tree and enjoying snacks at the Hanging of the Greens, Jason Van Beek helps his son Cole put his ornament up high while Nancy Peters looks on.



Manger, tree, and wreath are shown after the decorating was completed.



New Year and New Opportunities continued...

Bill Manfull - (a) my niece adopting a little girl.
What a great gift from God!

(b) help my family grow in the Spirit.

Jerilyn Gregg-Chlebina - (a) a wonderful family vacation out west followed by my nephew's wedding.

(b) to be brave. I'll have a new job that frightens me, but I know I can do it, and who knows, next year I'll be wondering why I did not make the change sooner.

Bill Williams - (a) having cataract surgery. I did not know I was living and seeing in the dark ages!

(b) to have better health so I can become a better servant to my Lord.

Nanette Dizney - (a) the Thanksgiving holiday was an exciting experience with many of my children. Anytime we can spend time with David Martin is truly a blessing.

(b) first thing is to help create a worshipful experience for all attending Winter Reunion the end of January. After that, I want to be available to the FMC wherever I am needed.

Heather Manfull-Cosgrove - (a) the presidential election and being baptized.

(b) some type of music lessons.

Kayla Smeralda - (a) was the sleep over at the church with the youth group.

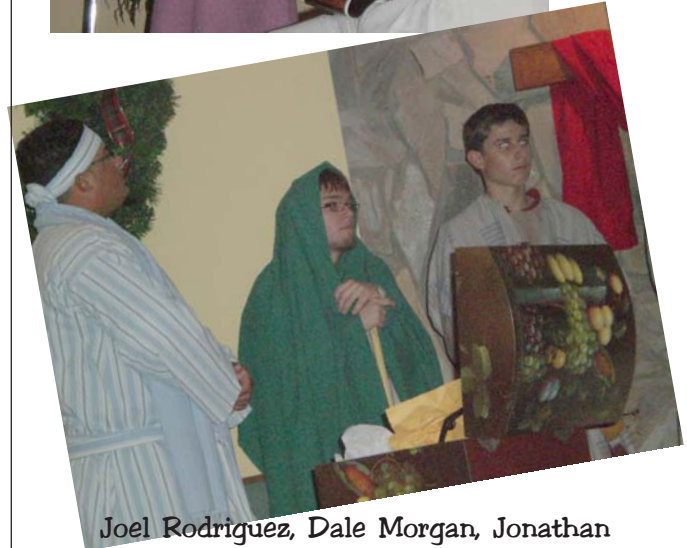
(b) I would like to be able to go to camp.

Bob Beers - (a) having our three daughters come from different parts of the country to visit for Fay's birthday - "A Time of Sharing". A wonderful time was had by all, but just too short.

(b) to be closer to my God and to take more time to pray and commune with Him.



Zee and Don Fant sang a duet.



Joel Rodriguez, Dale Morgan, Jonathan Robertson portrayed Old Testament people.

A look back at the Christmas Eve Service. The theme was *Watch and Wait* with music and the portrayal of Old Testament people on their journey towards Bethlehem.



Patty Day, Mark Bee, Charlie Walker, Betty Chlebina, and Megan Chlebina were also part of the portrayal.

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January

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- 2 Bob Vaughan
- 2 Lonnie Cooper
- 5 Jean Botelho
- 6 Nancy Skene
- 9 Lee Peters
- 13 Kaitlyn James
- 13 Nanette Dizney
- 19 Patrick James
- 20 Elaine Gregg
- 21 Heather Devine
- 22 Kay & Dale Budd (anniv)
- 24 Danielle Johnson
- 26 Bill Caudle
- 26 Dustin Stevens
- 26 Patti and Larry Bell (anniv)
- 27 Betty Simpson
- 30 Dawn Kolquist



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If you have changed your name, address, phone number or e-mail address, **PLEASE** contact **Elaine Gregg** via telephone: 941.351.1072, e-mail: efgregg@msn.com or in person. We are in the process of assembling the 2009 directory. We are counting on your help for corrections and/or new information. Thank you!

DID YOU KNOW ???

- ◆ **Jim Deering** shared the news that daughter Amanda Jones and her husband Jay, were in Macy's Thanksgiving Parade in New York and enjoyed every minute of it?
- ◆ **Elaine Gregg** went to Missouri to attend the graduation of her grandson, Gregg Martin, from Missouri State University and experienced snow and VERY cold weather?
- ◆ A group of approximately 12 people from the **Morgan, Walker, Smeralda, Dizney and Rodriguez families** went Christmas Caroling Sunday, December 21, in the church neighborhood and then enjoyed pizza afterwards?
- ◆ **Fred Wenzel** flew to Richmond, Virginia, to his son and daughter-in-law's home to have Christmas with his family?
- ◆ **Bradenton/Sarasota Community of Christ** is listed in *The Shepherd's Guide* which is known as "the Christians' choice of Yellow Pages".
- ◆ **Our church facility** is getting a face lift with new exterior wood siding and painting of the new boards?
- ◆ **Jason Van Beek, Tim Devine, Don Fant, and Jonathan Robertson** volunteered their time to take down the Christmas decorations, pack them up, and put them in the attic. A great job, guys!



Patrick and Kaitlyn James for the death of grandfather, Larry, the last part of November.

Karen and Charles Palko for the death Charles' sister who passed away in New Jersey.

Howard and Shirley Jousma for the death of Howard's brother Bill in Michigan. Bill and his wife Barbara spent many winters worshipping with us during the winter months. We will miss him.

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Address Correction Requested

