

The Herald

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



February 2008

Pastor: Katherine Bryant Graves

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“Helping Hands”

On Sunday, be sure to stop at the table in the narthex to get information about our first “Helping Hands” sponsored coffee hour on February 1st! Look for our FCC kids (who are the cutest in Carbondale you know), to explain the latest and greatest idea to hit Outreach in a while, all the while solving the coffee hour quandry and helping others at the same time!

Pancake Supper

First Christian Church annual “Shrove Tuesday” Pancake Supper will be held on February 24th, from 5:00 until 6:30 pm. Several of our church members will be cooking for the evening. The menu will include pancakes, sausage (and meatless sausage), apple butter, juice, milk, coffee and King Cake. There will be activities for the kids. Adults tickets are \$5.00, Children 6 and up are 2.50 (under 6 is free) Tickets may be purchased at the door. Bring your friends!

Shrove Tuesday, also called Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras, heralds the beginning of fasting in Lent. On



this day (so the historians say) there were feasts of pancakes to use up the supplies of fat, butter and eggs - foods that were forbidden during austere Lent. Since pancakes are a standard way of using up fat, the day is also called Pancake Tuesday.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is a time when we are invited to stay with the betrayals of our hopes for ourselves – the moments when we failed to hold to our commitment to the Christ who walks ahead of us on the way. We contrast the moments when we cheered on the godliness in the world as on Palm Sunday and the times when we failed to do that. We see and touch the ashes of those hopes as we acknowledge and grieve our profound humanness. We come together to acknowledge our creatureliness – our limitations – our common vulnerability – our sins but are we to gather as people with no hope?

The good news is that even in the midst of the stark reality of our mortality, in the Christ event, God has demonstrated God's Immanuel – God with us. Wearing the ashes on our foreheads in the form of a cross encourages us – For the God who has created us from the dust has promised not to abandon us there . . . God has claimed us as we are – fully human – full of folly and promise; sin and goodness, limited and gifted; mortal and immortal – all sons and daughters of God fashioned out of relationship for relationship. We wear the ashes to acknowledge to whom we belong – and whom we serve – even as we are.

Does what we do and how we do it communicate who we are and what we believe?

According to prevailing wisdom, if you want to understand someone's true character, pay less attention to what they say and more to where they spend their time and their resources.

If that is true of a person, can that not also be true of a congregation?

One of the unique contributions we "Cambellites" have made to Christendom in this country is to insist that the Lord's Table is not the property of an institution or the clergy but belongs solely to God's initiation in the Christ event. Where ever two or three are gathered in the name of Christ, it is appropriate and fitting to lift in remembrance the breaking the bread and sharing of the cup. It is at the Table where we come together as brothers and sisters of the family of God to receive God's provisions and blessing. . . not because we are entitled but because we are loved.

Born in the experiment of democracy in a new world, our movement empowered all believers to take on the mantel of ministry by insisting that all who were called to serve could equip the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world even when it came officiating at the Lord's Table. In some "Christian Churches" clergy were not allowed at the Table as it was considered "too priestly" to have the clergy officiate just as it was considered "too catholic" to elevate the Table as an altar. If a "priest" functions as an intermediary, inserting themselves between God and the individual as intercessor or confessor – well, that was unnecessary and even dangerous in the minds of our reforming ancestors. No! God was accessible directly to every seeking soul and our clergy were not to 'get in the way.'

In the Disciple congregation I served in Pryor, Oklahoma the Lord's Table was equipped by the laity in the Eldershp and Deacons of the congregation. The Pastor was to remain in the Pulpit. I finally argued my way in by pointing out I was also called by the congregation to serve as the Preaching Elder and was allowed to serve at the Table on occasion.

What does our practice of the Lord's Table say about what we believe about the role of clergy, elders, deacons or our relationship between God and neighbor?



Dear Church Family,

Once again the subject is morning Coffee Hour. I hope this will answer your questions concerning some changes the have taken place.

Over the summer the church took on the responsibility of providing bagels, cream cheese, coffee & juice for our families who came early to attend Sunday School. The church was incurring expenses of about \$25 per week. It was hoped that members of the congregation would contribute monies to help defray those costs by sponsoring a coffee hour. To those who did we say a big "Thank You". However not enough people did so and the church shouldered the bulk of the expenses.

As everyone is very aware the economy of the country is not at its best right now and it is certainly "trickling down" to everyone. We need to do our part during this time to be more fiscally responsible. For example, I, myself, have given up 4 things a month that I enjoyed to cut my own personal expenses. It was the consensus of opinion of the Congregational Care Avenue of Service committee that the church can do the same cost cutting by only having coffee for the adults and juice for the children at morning coffee hour thus keeping the expenses to the church at a minimum.

The committee certainly encourages anyone who would like to do a coffee hour for a special occasion to please let Katherine, Mary, & me know so that it can be scheduled and put in the bulletin and on the Hot Line.

Respectively submitted,
Sandy Lowell, Congregational Care



Automated Giving Comes to First Christian

In response to several requests from members of First Christian Church, the Stewardship Committee has arranged electronic transfers from one bank to another with Old National Bank of Carbondale.

Beginning in January 2009, all church members and friends who give financial support to First Christian Church have the opportunity to have their giving directly debited from their checking or savings accounts and directly deposited to the First Christian Church checking account.

Why Automated Giving?

One of the principles of good financial stewardship involves planning the

gifts that are to be shared. Implementing an Automated Giving strategy in our church is one great way that church members and friends can enact their financial stewardship plan each year.

Benefits of Automated Giving:

- For those who embrace stewardship as a way of life, Automated Giving for the Sunday collections provide an opportunity to keep the Church a priority when it comes to sharing financial gifts (i.e. the Offertory).

- The more people that use Automated Giving, the more reliable a church's revenue stream will be from the weekly Offertory.

- As more church members opt for Automated Giving, data entry by churches for the regular collections will be less time consuming and the cost for envelope mailings will decrease.

- Not everyone attends services each week (for a variety of reasons), so Automated Giving ensures that the church regularly receives the intended gift as planned by the church member. If you are interested in the Automated Giving program, please contact Dia Parr, Financial Secretary (618-457-2029) or the church office (618-457-6817) to receive the necessary paperwork.

To Your Health

CELEBRATE EVERY DAY.... what a wonderful New Year's resolution to make.

As Christians, we have much to celebrate, but sometimes we do not show this to the world. "When you look for reasons to celebrate, no matter how small, you increase your happiness" says Greg Hicks, co-author of *Choosing Brilliant Health: 9 Choices that Redefine What it Takes to Create Lifelong Vitality and Well-Being*. Hicks further explains that "it (this looking for reasons to celebrate) makes you feel more connected to the world and to the people and things around you". Highlighting the positive things in your life and feeling the joy really can be a simple thing which brings many reasons to "celebrate life".

Getting to the point that we automatically celebrate little things takes practice. Part of that practice is slowing down enough to start noticing the things around us that

we can celebrate and that can bring us joy...a smile of a child who says "thank you", the beautiful sunset, an unexpected visit or call from an old friend we haven't talked to in some time, looking with care and love at picture albums with our kids or grandkids and retelling the old stories. Once you actually begin looking for "joy making" moments, you will find that they can come from the most unexpected places and at the most unexpected moments....what joy Bob and I get from seeing Al's beautiful pictures, from having time now with our grandchildren to visit them at school, to laugh with them and to see them in their day to day life....

If you see something beautiful, slow down, take it in and let these few moments "nourish your soul".

May God give you many blessings and joyful moments during this New Year.

Marge Schulhof,
R.N. B.S., Parish Nurse

Inauguration

People from a variety of faith perspectives have reacted enthusiastically to General Minister and President Sharon E. Watkins' sermon at the National Prayer Service in Washington D.C. The sermon took place on Jan. 21, the day after the inauguration of the nation's 44th president. Disciples and faith leaders from around the globe have congratulated Watkins through e-mails, web postings and phone calls. "How inspired I was by your sermon," said Judy Furber, one e-mail respondent. "It touched my heart and my mind profoundly." Watkins spoke at the National Cathedral before a crowd of 3,000 that included newly elected President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and his wife, Dr. Jill Biden, former President Bill Clinton and his wife, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Watkins was the first woman selected to give the historic address, a tradition that dates back to President George Washington.

To read a transcript of her sermon, visit: www.disciples.org/Default.aspx?tabid=483

Washington, D.C. - DNS - Jan. 22, 2009) -

Outreach

My neighbor has a favorite saying that never fails to crack me up with laughter. She tells of feeling like she's "circus monkey nuts" when it comes to life getting out of control. Visions of a monkey dressed in bright colored clothing, jumping frenetically and wildly come to my mind, and sadly, I relate! Some days I feel like that monkey. Do you? I'm sure that many of you do.

Christmas is now behind us, and hopefully the monkey has taken his place back in the quiet corners of Christmas' past. This is a good thing, and for most of us, a needed respite from all that the Christmas season brings to the calendar. Yet, it can leave us feeling strangely empty. The holidays go by in a blur, and in our search for meaning, we stretch ourselves beyond what we do

most months of the year. Then, as suddenly as it begins, it is over.

Many people experience a sort of depression this time of year. It's cold out, spring still months away, and the sky a steel gray that saps the energy and the spirit. For many, the season of winter turns into a wintertime of the heart, and we struggle through the days dreaming of warm summer sun, the fun of vacations and long, light-filled days. How quickly we lose sight of the joy of Christ's birth, the promise of what He brings to this weary world.

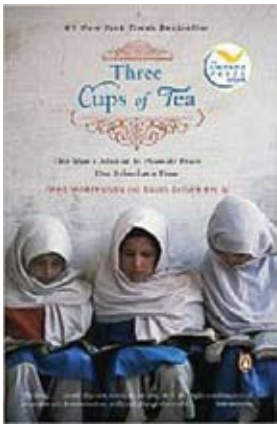
So, what's to be done? Do we curl up under our blankets, sleepwalking through our days, waiting for the first signs of springtime? The thought is tempting, I'll admit. Yet, I prefer a different strategy for dealing with these

long days of winter. Dream. Reflect. Contemplate. God provides the world a rest through the gift of winter, a dormancy that allows nature to rest and recharge for the next growing season. How can we ignore God's gift, that is for us as well? For a few months we are given time to be still, before we begin the next growing season. What fruit will you bear come springtime? Nurture yourself during this time, connect with others, connect with your church family, and watch the wonder that unfolds when spring finally shows herself to us.

For Outreach, January is a quiet month. Stay tuned for when our next craft night at the church will be held and consider bringing a friend.

Blessings to you all - Debra Whitledge

Library



Mortenson, Greg, and Relin, David Oliver. *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace. . . One School at a Time*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. 349p.

In 1993, Greg Mortenson traveled to Pakistan to climb K2, the world's second tallest mountain. Mortenson failed to reach the summit, and on his descent

became lost and might have died of hypothermia had he not been rescued by a Pakistani guide, who took him to his home village of Korphe to nurse him back to health. During his seven-week stay in Korphe, Mortenson became well acquainted with the Pakistani people and the remote village clinging precariously to a mountainside in the Karakoram mountains between Pakistan and China. In gratitude, Mortenson promised to build a school in Korphe where girls could be educated as well as boys. Thus began a continuing project that would result in the founding of the Central Asia Institute and the building of more than fifty schools in the rural areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Mortenson's story is a compelling one, both in Asia and the United States. Being an American in Pakistan, he was distrusted as an outsider and an infidel, suspected of being a covert operative, and identified as a

likely mark by con artists and unscrupulous vendors. He was captured and held prisoner for several days while traveling alone scouting locations for new schools, and he was detained in Afghanistan as a political refugee after the World Trade Center was destroyed in 2001. In the United States, Mortenson's work was largely ignored until he finally attracted a sponsor willing to take a chance on him. Even then, he was often reviled for helping the Afghans. Mortenson and Relin have developed a compelling twist on international relations between the United States and the neighboring countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and a unique grass-roots theory for fighting Islamic extremism in the area. *Three Cups of Tea* is the story of one man's mission and the adventures, hardships, hostilities, unlikely friendships, and hard work encountered in making his dream a reality.—Thomas Kilpatrick.

Once upon a time, long, long ago, in a land not so far away there lived an article in the Herald entitled "Splinters from the Board." The article briefly outlined the activities of the Board as interpreted by a former Pastor for the edification of the congregation. Though the article was helpful it was not always thorough so it was that the minutes of the Board began to take up residence in the Herald for a time. But the minutes of the Board were lengthy, detailed and contained errors and if corrected and approved, were no longer timely received. So it came to pass, that the minutes of the Board traveled to the little table in the Narthex where they were sometimes picked up by passers by but more often neglected and forgotten. "Perhaps the time has come, offered the Splinters from the Board, for me to again occupy a space in the Herald? "I believe it could be helpful," replied the resident Pastor. "But, I think your appropriate creator would be our Board Chair rather than myself. Let's ask if she will serve." The Board Chair, being a wise and willing leader, agreed to submit a brief outline of the Board's activities in the Monthly Herald entitled "Splinters from the Board." Her only request is that the Pastor submit the first article while she tended to the needs of her son's recovery from surgery. So here in lies the resurrected Splinters from the Board through the interpretative lens of the Pastor:

The Board gathered after worship in the "pink" room after worship on February 18th, 2009. All Board members were in attendance with additional congregational members, Derek Hamblin, Al Parr, Kenneth Taylor and Mike & Sharon Williams. Secretary Esther Hays took minutes. The following items were presented as information:

An explanation of the bill from Voss Heating and Air of \$1,590.60 for repair of the sanctuary heating units installed in 1994. The final bill from Wilson for

installation of exit lights and emergency lighting required from the inspection by the Carbondale Fire Department official. The bill totaled \$2,950.

The completion of a dedicated phone line to equip the operation of the fire alarm installed in 1984.

The expectation of a written bid for rewiring from Burke electric to further equip the operation of the fire alarm. The repairs completed on the kitchen drawers with a recommendation for repairing and refurbishing the existing cabinets as replacement costs would run approximately \$9,000 to \$10,000 and would be prohibitive at this time. It was agreed the weight load on the drawers and cabinets needs to be lightened.

A reminder of a bid we have received to maintain our heating and air units and encouragement from Mike Williams that we contract with Voss Heating and Air to maintain our equipment.

The Financial Secretary reported we now have 52 pledges for 2009

A review of our financial status from the Treasurer who reports we are within our monthly parameters but end of year reports will not be forthcoming until March 2009 after we receive the final quarter report from the managed funds.

A review and agreement to the changes submitted in 2008 to the Employee Handbook outlining expectations and benefits for hourly employees.

A report of upcoming expectations for coffee hour, Christian Education plans and next Congregational Care gathering February 15th.

A review of upcoming Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper plans and Ash Wednesday service and supper February 24th and 25th. Pancake supper on Tuesday and Ash Wednesday worship begin at 5:30 p.m. Martha Beck is preparing soup and bread supper following Ash Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.

A plan to proceed with the Boat Regatta the last Saturday in April with help from the Dion's "banana boat."

Derek Hamblin reported Dance4Grandma Theater production is putting on a musical dinner theater entitled "The Taffeta's" in the friendship hall February 12th, 13th, & 14th for \$25 a person. Dia and Katherine reported with aid from Kenneth Taylor the difficulty of homelessness in our neighborhood and their Dia and Katherine's meeting with the social workers of P.A.T.H. from Southern Illinois Rehabilitation and Social Services.

Board Actions

A recommendation under Congregational Care submitted by Katherine Bryant Graves and supported by unanimous vote to change Marleen Shepherd's position description to Ministerial Intern to further support her call to candidacy for seminary and the ordained ministry and change her mode of reimbursement from 20 hours a week to 12 equal monthly installments. A recommendation under Congregational Care submitted by Dia Parr and supported by unanimous vote to bring before the congregation on February 8th a suggested change in wording in the Constitution to allow membership in this congregation for those who need to also simultaneously maintain membership in their "home" congregation. A recommendation under Facility and Finance submitted by Al Parr supported by a unanimous vote to purchase a portable sound system from Sound Core from funds out of Abiding Memorial for \$917.99. A recommendation from Dia Parr and supported by unanimous vote to move \$575 received from specific donors to the "Helping Hands Fund" to address needs for assistance as governed by the Helping Hands Policy.

Copies of the "corrected and approved" "official" board minutes will not be available until after our next Board meeting on February 22nd, 2009.

Advent Dinner and Christmas Play

As always, the Young Disciples did a great job with the Advent Play, "The Customs of Christmastide!"

This is a much beloved tradition at First Christian Church, and we are so grateful for all the children and adults who helped make it happen. What is very special about this performance is that children of all ages work together. And all get a chance to sit on Santa's lap after the show, no matter how big! For the first time, Holly the dog had a role too.

Sunday School Time Change!

Starting Sunday, January 6, we will hold Sunday School from 10:15-11:15 a.m. and then join worship. I know it's confusing to change times again, and I apologize. We have been trying to ensure that Young Disciples have both Sunday School and worship time on a regular basis. Parents have let me know that the early start time we began this fall is not working for them, and we've seen a decline in attendance to Sunday School. Hopefully this new

time will work better and still meet our goals of quality Christian education and quality time in worship as a church family.

January Sunday School

In December, we began collecting in Sunday School for Heifer International. We are continuing to collect this month, as we still have quite a way to go to reach our goal of \$50. This will purchase a Basket of Hope filled with enough chickens and rabbits to sustain a family, hopefully for generations. In class, children are being encouraged to think of fun ways to raise money for this important cause. In our house, we're doing a dollar for every book read. Each week in January, the children will bring the amount they've raised forward during the worship offering.

In Sunday School, children will begin Jan. 4 with the wisemen's journey. On Jan 11, they will learn about Jesus' baptism and this is also the time to consider your child's baptism, traditionally occurring on Easter. Let me know if this is some-

thing you'd like to explore as there is a pastor's class that baptism candidates are required to take before making this important commitment.

On Jan. 18, children will hear from the psalm that they are wonderfully made. On Jan. 25, the children will learn of Jesus' call of his disciples. God's healing love is our theme for February classes. Check the FCC Weekly, available in the sanctuary each Sunday, to learn more about what we're up to in class.

Youth Group

Youth Group continues to meet here from 5 to 7 p.m. We have about seven regular attendees now who are having a great time, and there's always room for more! Any twelves & teens and their friends are always welcome to meet at First Christian each week for faith and fun.

In Christian Love,
Marleen Shepherd
Christian Education Coordinator



Celebration Dates

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First Christian Church Birthdays and Anniversaries

January Birthdays

1/7 Betty Revell	1/23 Joyce Myers
1/7 Tyler Dion	1/25 Bill Kayne
1/10 Kerry Knight-Cooper	1/27 Michael Eddings
1/11 Esther Hays	1/29 Tina Knight
1/13 John Lenzini	
1/15 Sally Zimmer	
1/16 John Parrish	
1/19 Adam Raymond	

February Birthdays

2/11 Debra Whitledge	2/23 Karen Knodt
2/11 Jack Legan	2/24 Juli Claussen
2/11 Joey Legan	2/25 Dorothy Davis
2/12 Pam Raymond	2/25 Emily Gindlesparger
2/16 Pat Rayfield	2/28 George Hussey
2/17 Sue Hunter	
2/18 Tamara Workman	
2/19 Linda Dickerson	2/3 James & Pat Rayfield
2/20 Dale Jones	

Anniversaries

2/3 James & Pat Rayfield



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