Christ United Methodist Church

The VOICE

"Reaching Out to All God's Children" February 2010

Mardi Gras and Lent

While many of you at Christ UMC have been celebrating Mardi Gras on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday for over 35 years, the day will be a first in my ministry. None of the previous churches I have attended or served as pastor have had a Mardi Gras worship service. On February 14 we will have a worship celebration with New Orleans-style jazz music followed by a pancake breakfast. I am looking forward to it. Below is a bit of the history of Mardi Gras and its connection with Lent.

The history of Mardi Gras can be traced back to the Roman Empire. In mid-February the Romans celebrated a circus-like festival called Lupercalia. When Rome converted to Christianity the Church leaders wisely discerned it was better to incorporate pagan holidays rather than abolish them. The festival of fun and merriment was celebrated before the penitential Christian season of Lent. From Europe the festival came to America in 1699. The French explorer Sieur d'Iberville sailed into the Gulf of Mexico. On March 3, 1699 d'Iberville set up camp on the bank of the Mississippi River south of what is now New Orleans. He named the point Mardi Gras. As you know to this day New Orleans is the epicenter of the Mardi Gras celebration in the United States. In French Mardi Gras means "fat Tuesday" describing the date of the celebration as the day before Ash Wednesday.

Lent is one of the oldest observations on the Christian calendar. Lent is a time designated for self-examination, penitence, and self-denial in preparation for Easter. The early church father Irenaus of Lyons (c.130-c.200) wrote of such a season in the earliest days of the church, but back then it lasted only two or three days, not the 40 observed today. In 325, the Council of Nicea discussed a 40-day Lenten season of fasting. It's unclear whether its original intent was just for new Christians preparing for Baptism, but it soon encompassed the whole Church. Over time the beginning of Lent was set on Wednesday in order to have 40 days between the start of Lent and Easter. In this period Sundays are not counted. Sundays have always been viewed as "feast days" by the church as it is the day Jesus rose from the tomb. The other days in Lent were fast days. To this day many people give something up for Lent as a way of observing the fast.

Self denial is not a popular or common practice in our culture. While it is right to refrain from the excessive expressions of self denial and abasement that were common in the Middle Ages, in today's world we would do well to curb our excessive self-indulgence. A balance between celebration and ascetic practice is healthy. I encourage all of you to join us in our celebrations of Mardi Gras and Easter. I also hope you will attend our more reflective services on Ash Wednesday (February 17), Maundy Thursday (April 1), and Good Friday (April 2). Indeed the celebrations of our faith are empty and powerless without times of reflections and self-denial. We are transformed in this life by the power of the resurrection only when some part of us has died. Easter is really a great day when you have genuinely faced the power sin and death have in your life.

Peace,

Pastor Brian

Mardi Gras Jazz Service and Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, February 14

Invite your friends and neighbors to attend our Mardi Gras Worship Celebration with Bob Leopold and the Dixie Stompers! A festive **pancake breakfast** will follow in the Fellowship Hall, complete with "King Cake." This popular, annual event, held on the last Sunday before Lent, is a great opportunity to welcome others into our faith community. Invite a friend!

Ash Wednesday, February 17

An Ash Wednesday service marking the beginning of Lent will be held at 7:30 p.m. Come for this quiet time of reflection, meditation and prayer.

Throughout Lent a variety of small group experiences will be offered to help you focus on your spiritual journey through the Lenten season. Watch the bulletin and e-Voice for more information.

Public Action to Deliver Shelter

Our February PADS lunch day is **Sunday, February 7** Come down to the kitchen after church that morning and help assemble lunches for Public Action to Deliver Shelter. All helping hands, young and old, are welcome! Call Sue Howard, 847-573-8963, with questions or for more information about PADS.

CUMC's commitment to PADS provides lunches one Sunday a month to this not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing shelter, housing, and services to families with children and individuals experiencing homelessness in Lake County. PADS operates the largest rotating, non-restrictive emergency shelter site system in Lake County that is open on a seasonal basis (October 1st through April 30th). PADS sleeps approximately 160 people per

Thanks for sharing the warmth!

A big thank you to all who donated hats, mittens, gloves, and even scarves to Marcy Newberry during the holidays. We were able to give them about 30 hats, 60 gloves/mittens, and a couple of scarves. Many heads, hands, and even hearts were warmed by your generosity. The Social Ministries Committee is never disappointed when this congregation is asked to help others. God bless you all.

Available Now: Electronic Donations

Christ United Methodist Church is pleased to announce the introduction of a new electronic option for making regular offerings. This option is EFT, or Electronic Funds Transfer, and can be initiated through our church website, "christumcdeerfield.org." Contributions can now be debited automatically from your checking or savings account. Our new electronic giving program offers convenience for you and also provides donation consistency for our congregation.

If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. And, when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your weekly offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis.

If you are interested in starting this or learning more about it, contact Barry Davidson, Financial Secretary, or Kristen Scott in the church office. An authorization form and a "Frequently Asked Questions" flyer are available from the church office.

Men's Fellowship Group

CUMC's Men's Group meets the **first and third Saturday morning** each month at 7:30 a.m. in the Lounge. Please join us for timely and relevant discussion of what it means to be a Christian man in today's world.

Please contact Chuck Whisler (847-940-8324) or Charlie Kuehmann (847-940-0761) for more information about the Men's Fellowship.

Apportionments Paid in Full for 2009

Thanks to you, we now have a 25-year history of paying our apportionments in full.

Apportionments are our contribution to the denomination, which support the administration, ministry and mission of the United Methodist Church.

Only 50% of the churches in the Northern Illinois Conference paid apportionments in full for 2009.

Thank you for your faithfulness!

2010 Bishop's "Day on the District"

Your chance for discussion with our Bishop

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung welcomes your participation in a gathering for laity in our Northwestern District on **Thursday, February 11**. The theme of discussion will be "The Spiritual Discipline of Stewardship," an important issue facing our church and our planet. CUMC's own Rev. Harry Nicol will also participate.

Central United Methodist Church, 8237 Kenton Ave. in Skokie will be our host for this service for congregation members from 7-9 p.m. Please call the church office if you wish to make a reservation, or contact Pastor Brian for further information on this event.

Family Ministries News — Justin Spurlock

Sleuths—The Many Mysteries of Our Children's Faith

In the 1970s, John Westerhoff wrote a book called *Will Our Children Have Faith?* His conclusion was simple, "Our children will have faith if we have faith and are faithful." Faith is a journey of constant discovery—new insights and experiences of God, self, and others. Our children are constantly making new discoveries, which makes me think that many of you are making attempts to converse about faith at home. Currently, some of our children's classes are exploring the 10 Commandments and will be studying some of many symbols of Holy Week during the season of Lent; some are studying the stories of Jesus; and our teens are preparing for 30 Hour Famine. Please continue to take moments to talk with your kids about faith.

Praying in Color

At CUMC, we are continually experimenting with "best practices" of incorporating faith into everyday family life. Our latest lab is called *Praying in Color,* taken from a book by Sybil Macbeth. It is an innovative and creative way to pray if you are 3, 13, 43, or 93. You can do it in as little as one minute a day, at work, around the dinner table, before bed, whenever. Most importantly, it will forever transform the way you pray. This faith lab will start at the beginning of Lent (**February 18**). Please consider signing up. No words are necessary; no artistic skill is necessary—only a desire and a longing for the presence of God.

1. Draw a shape.
2. Put the name of a person for whom you are praying inside the shape.
3. Add lines, squiggles, and dots.
4. Add color.
5. Think of each stroke of the pen and each daub of color as a moment of prayer.

Family Faith Labs are designed to help your family talk about faith as a normal part of your daily and weekly routine - perhaps over a meal or before bed. We would love to have 5-7 families try this for 5 weeks and then debrief about the experience, learning what worked best, and forming ideas about how to get other families into a family faith lab. If you are interested, contact Justin Spurlock

Acolytes Needed

Is your child in 3rd, 4th, 5th, or 6th grade? If so, your child may serve as an acolyte. What is an acolyte? An acolyte is a person who brings the flame and light of Christ into the worship service and lights the candles on the altar. At the end of the worship service, they come to extinguish these flames and carry the light back out into the world with the congregation following. It is a wonderful way for children to participate in worship and learn about faith.

continued on next page...

Family Ministries New, continued...

Mardi Gras Sunday

Jazz, pancake breakfast, and other festivities await your family on Mardi Gras Sunday. Our kids parade around the sanctuary with balloons, beads, and masks. During Sunday School, they will learn all about the *Mystery* of Mardi Gras.

Chicago Wolves Hockey—Sunday, March 7, 3 p.m.

An event for the whole family—kids, teens, and parents. Tickets are $15 per person. We need a group of 15 people in order to get these discounted prices. Please **RSVP by February 21.**

Ski Camp @ Wesley Woods and Alpine Valley (February 12-14)

If you are in 6th - 12th grade, you are invited to come along with us to Wisconsin on a ski retreat. Whether you ski or not, there is plenty of fun, games, and activities during the whole weekend. Deposit of $75 is due Sunday, January 24. The cost for skiers is $159 and for non-skiers is $99. Please contact Justin Spurlock if you have any questions.

Many Thanks to Our December & January Volunteers

Much appreciation and thanks to the following people for their service and gifts in teaching and shepherding this past month: ***Barry Bradford, Katherine Floren, Mindy Bradford, Rebecca Sauser, Greg Spencer, Cathy Spencer, Patty Kuehmann, Susan Canale, Lisa Shick, Jesse Shick, Christine Peschier, John Peschier, Ruth Kauffmann, Cheryl Mitchell, Grace Mitchell, Aileen Hsu, Nicole Batinovic, Kary Henry, Kate Henry, Kristen Kaplan, Tina Salliotte, Dana Litwin, Mary Kay Ellis, Peg Plambeck, Kristin Lerner, Kristen Miller, Doreen Clough, Hayley Clough, Charlie Kuehmann, Cathy Taylor.*

As well, much appreciation and thanks to ***Peg Plambeck and Deb O'Neil*** *for all of their work on the Christmas Pageant.*

February Celebrations

Birthdays

2 Tim Plambeck
3 Len Kisellus
Katherine Naumann
4 Elizabeth Briner
6 Arnold Scheinpflug
7 Graham Spencer
10 Alex Capstick
Paul Zhang
11 Ginnie Fiocchi
12 Ruth Kauffmann
13 Sarah Goddard
15 Rebecca Grill
16 Maureen Cox
18 Gregg Johnson
Megan Romano
20 Claude Lerner
25 Krista Sorensen
26 John Bartok
28 James Urice

Wedding Anniversaries

Gary and Darlene Blum
Doug and Mary Bruss
Tom and Susan Canale
Art and Betty Taylor

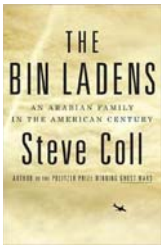
VOICE Deadline

Please keep in mind that the deadline for submissions to the monthly newsletter is always the 15th of the month. If you would like to submit an article or information for the March issue of The Voice, please get it to administrative assistant Kristen Scott by **February 15**.

Submit by e-mail:
kscott@christumcdeerfield.org
or fax: 847-945-3138
or drop it in Kristen's mailbox across from the church office.

The Reading Circle

Norma Wiley will host this month's Reading Circle on **Thursday, February 4** at 9:30 a.m. for discussion of



"The Bin Ladens: An Arabian Family in the American Century," by Steve Coll. Pulitzer Prize winner Coll presents the story of the Bin Laden family's rise to power and privilege, revealing new information to show how American influences changed the family and how one member's rebellion changed America.

Join us for fellowship and lively discussion: 65 Ferndale Road in Deerfield; please call Norma to let her know you are coming: 857-945-2795.

Mary Ruth Circle

Join us **Monday, February 8** as we assemble adapted books use by Jan Johnson in her work with autistic children.

We'll gather at 7:30 p.m. at Jan's home, 707 Westgate Road in Deerfield. Materials will be provided — all we need is you!

Please call Jan (847-267-1992) to let her know you are coming. See you then!

Christ United Methodist Church
600 Deerfield Road
Deerfield IL 60015
phone 847/945-3040, fax 847/945-3138
e-mail: info@christumcdeerfield.org
Website: www.christumcdeerfield.org
Rev. Brian Roots, Pastor

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage Paid
Deerfield, IL 60015
Permit No. 9

Current occupant or

Christ United Methodist Church values…

Worship: *Taking time to praise and give thanks for all that God does for us*

Hospitality: *Offering a radical and inclusive welcome both inside and outside our church walls*

Service: *Helping others or contributing to society in Christ's name*

Family: *Creating a sense of caring fellowship in our own families and in our church family*

Journey: *Honoring the process for each individual to become the person that God created him or her to be.*