

February 2012

First Congregational Church of Chelsea

# The Commentary

## Friends in Christ

Greetings Dear Friends in Christ:

During February, we continue our journey through the season of Epiphany. This season began with the pilgrimage of the three Magi who followed the light of the star to a stable in Bethlehem and will end with the dazzling vision experienced by Peter, James and John high on a mountain-top where they witness Jesus' transfiguration into a divine being along with the presence of Elijah and Moses. Epiphany is the season when we celebrate Jesus' revelation as God's son, the Messiah; darkness is transformed to light as the people of the Bible recognize Jesus. During Advent we celebrate Jesus coming into the world again – the incarnation. During Epiphany we look for the light of Christ to pierce the darkness of our own lives and to shine through us as bearers and witnesses of Christ in the world. We seek this revelation both on a personal and community level.

I have been moved by the messages of our guest preachers this past month. I loved the story Joe Jeffreys told of the donkey climbing out of the well –stepping up and shaking off the “dirt” until he rose out of the hole he fell into. The donkey could walk in the light again, rather than giving up and allowing the dirt to bury him. I keep repeating Kris Abbey's words that “life is not a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be lived” and that our life's journey is “about the process, not the product.” These images of faith and hope have given me a brighter outlook on each day's new adventure. I find myself waking with expectancy, wondering how God will surprise me and how His divine light will burst forth each new day. I pray that I can see this light and be a worthy vessel, a lamp, and a witness for Him and that I may walk bravely, with my eyes open, finding the new paths that might be opened for me.

One of my favorite Bible verses is from Psalm 139: 16. “In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.” Our Search Committee continues its diligence in seeking our new pastor. God already has a plan and knows who this person will be. May God grant us the wisdom to recognize this person and the patience to wait for His timing. Although we deeply miss having a spiritual leader and pastor, we have remained strong as the body of Christ these past few months. Each of us has taken on more personal responsibility and accountability for our church. I am so happy to be a part of this amazing extended family. May we continue to share God's many blessings and be illuminated by the light of Christ.

Marsha Rinke, Music Minister

# Worship Committee

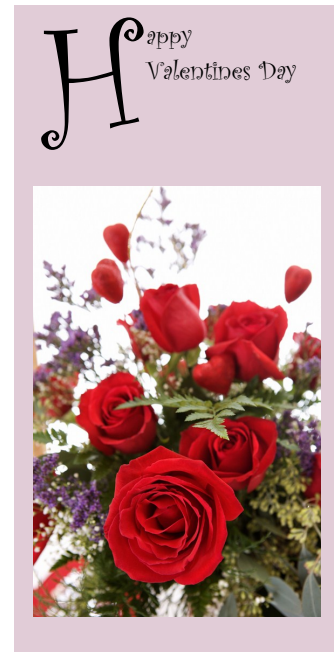
The Worship Committee is working diligently to line up pulpit supply pastors to lead our services until an interim pastor or a permanent pastor are found. This requires many emails and phone calls comparing schedules and confirming dates. Marsha Rinke and Janis Weston have taken the lead on this. Below are the worship leaders for February as of this writing:

- February 5 (communion) - Rev. Kris Abbey and Annual Meeting following service
- February 12 - Rev. Kris Abbey
- February 19 - Rev. Kris Abbey
- February 22, 7 p.m., Ash Wednesday Service - Rev. Kris Abbey
- February 26 - To be determined

The Worship Committee also welcomes our newest member, Laura Staebler. We are all looking forward to working with Laura and gaining her perspective as we begin planning for the Lenten season. At this point, our Lenten plans are a bit sketchy, but we know we will be putting up the large cross in the sanctuary and nailing the small crosses up during worship, as in previous years. Also, the Easter flower and Easter Vigil sign-up sheets will be posted by Sun, Feb 26th.

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## CROP Walk

The CROP walk was held in October but the totals aren't compiled until the end of the year. The list shows we had 4 walkers that raised \$885. We actually had 4 walkers and 1 runner and they were Michele and Brad Bowersox, Gary Grossman, Arly Spink and Jeanne Caselli. Thought folks would like to know how the money for CROP comes in every year and I want to thank our congregation again for all their support. Thanks Arly

## Member Caring

We have been trying to send out periodic emails to everyone to keep you updated on members who have been having health issues/concerns. If you have not been getting the emails due to not being on this email list, and would like to be included, please send your email address to the office at [fcchurch@provide.net](mailto:fcchurch@provide.net) AND Deb Borders at [debborders@me.com](mailto:debborders@me.com) (please note that this is a new personal email account) so we can make sure that everyone who wants to be updated can be.

Of course, if you would prefer to have your name removed from receiving these emails, please also let us know.

We would like to put together a list of service providers that members can draw from when a need arises. If you use a trusted service provider, say for snow removal, or handyman services, or light housecleaning, or plumbing, or electrical, or help with meals, or running light errands, please contact the church office at [fcchurch@provide.net](mailto:fcchurch@provide.net) AND [debborders@me.com](mailto:debborders@me.com).

ALSO – if you are a service provider, or if you are affiliated with a company that provides a service and you would like to have you and/or your company included in this list, please be sure to contact the office and Deb Borders with your information at the email addresses above.

ALSO – if you can think of any other services that you think would be good for the office or the Member Caring Committee to have on hand in case of Member needs, please, again, send your thoughts and information to the office and Deb.

In the absence of a minister, the need for volunteers to help out with member visits has greatly increased. At one time, there was a list of people who were willing to volunteer some of their time to accompany the minister to visit our member shut-ins and members who are in the hospital. We would like to re-create and update the list and keep a copy in the possession of the office and the Member Caring Committee. If you are retired, or otherwise find that you have a little extra time on your hands and would like to help out by volunteering some of your time, please let us know via the above emails. There will be a sign-up sheet on the Bulletin Board for you to indicate your availability. Thanks!

## Men's group

Is it possible that we have a few men in the church who might like to spend a little time hanging out? – if you are one of these guys, would you be interested in organizing in small groups to visit members in the hospital or some of our homebound members – maybe visit for a couple hands of cards, or maybe pick up someone who is unable to drive and go as a group to a movie, or how about organizing a “movie night” at the church that could be enjoyed by all of our members?

Women tend to reach out to each other, but men seem to have a harder time doing that. Let's make it easier on each other. Let's try to get a few things in place and start getting to know each other.

If you have some ideas that you would like to share, or if you would like to help out with the organization of more men's fellowship, please contact Jim Menlove at [jim.menlove@gmail.com](mailto:jim.menlove@gmail.com).



## Fellowship Committee

On January 8th, we gathered to celebrate a very special day in the life of our church, Epiphany, celebrating the visit from the Magi to baby Jesus, recognizing the beginning of a new year, and to bless the home and household of God. The Committee provided rolls, beverages and dessert. Hams were provided by Arly Spink, Howard Baker, Barb Wolfgang and Julie Nelson, and the congregation provided the salads, potatoes and vegetables. Dessert cupcakes were filled with trinkets, each with a different prediction for the year: If you found a baby in your cupcake, a baby will touch your life this year; if you found a ring, a wedding will touch your life this year; if you found a penny, you will have good luck this year; if you found a jingle bell, you will have a little extra jingle in your pockets this year; if you found a seashell, you will have less stress in your life this year, and a button meant you will be surrounded by warmth in 2012! The Committee set up, and decorated the dining room with a festive theme! This year's talents included jokes by Jean Satterthwaite, and Eltia Borders, as well as humorous stories told by Arly Spink and Linda Smith. Approximately 54 people joined in the festivities. How fun was that!

Our next event is scheduled for Sunday, March 11th – the theme being GREEN!!! With St. Patrick's Day landing on the following Saturday, we think it will be fun to see how much of the color green we can actually find and use! In the meantime, start pulling out your "green" recipes and your green clothes and get ready to have some fun! More details will follow.



Matthew 7:7-8, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened.

## Musical "Notes"

We are grateful that the council has proposed continued funding for Kelly's position as Choir Director throughout 2012. We continue to learn so much from her amazing vocal talent and strong faith. I would encourage other potential singers of all ages to consider joining our choir. We rehearse each Thursday at 7 p.m. and welcome anyone who just wants to check it out and see how much fun and fellowship we share!

Thanks to Jane Shrosbree for her continuing work with our youth in leading the chimes. One Sunday each month we will enjoy this beautiful musical addition to our worship.

## Dream Big/Reach High

Unfortunately, this ad-hoc Committee has decided to call for an indefinite hiatus! At the time this Committee was formed there was an urgency in coming up with new ideas to increase funds coming in to the church's general fund. This Committee was an EXCELLENT idea, and there was so much positive energy! In hindsight, maybe the intent was a little too broad. We seem to do better when we concentrate on one idea at a time. And if that one idea works, stick with it, own it, and let someone else come up with the next idea. Some examples:

Mary Schrottenboer works well with the Meijer One and TeraCycle programs, and she really loves organizing the Mission Trip and the Fellowship activities – the fact that she is a natural born organizer and party planner helps with these events immensely! – more importantly, she has stuck with these activities, and she has owned them, so they are successful.

Pastor Barb's creation, and now Mary Schrottenboer and Doug Beaumont continue to use their creative talents through the play that has been put on the past few years. Not only has this event become a bonding experience for the cast and crew members, it is becoming something that the Chelsea Community looks forward to each year. Again, they own this event, and therefore, it has become a successful tool to raise money for our programs.

Laura Gordon and Wendy Beaumont have made the annual Chicken BBQ a great success for our Church, both as a fund-raiser and as a Community spotlight, because they've owned it.

Another idea that extended members of this Committee thought of was to organize a bowling fundraiser (at a different time than February, which is when the Homemakers hold their bowling fundraiser). We believe that this event will be a successful fund raiser for our church. We will continue to encourage the individuals who thought of this event, to see about getting it organized and owned!

We do have enough people to put together small groups to organize and follow-through with individual events. Once it's organized, our members are so willing to help. If you have an idea, let's talk about it and let's see if we can get it put in place.

The Chelsea Community seems to be very open to new things. The businesses in town are very willing to help when asked. We just need to come up with ideas and ask for help.

Unfortunately, I personally tend to bite off more than I can handle every now and again. It's such a fine line between the spearhead of an idea and the follow-through. Again, I personally keep trying to remind myself, **I cannot do everything by myself, but together, we can do anything.** I find that all I have to do is ask and I have more than enough people to help. And when I feel like doing it myself, I do that too. I just try to be aware of and recognize that little feeling of martyrdom – no one asks me to do it myself, and people are just waiting to be asked, so when I start to feel like I'm not getting any help, I say again to myself – ask for it! Matthew 7:7-8 Deb Borders Committee Member

## Women's Prayer Group

The Women's Prayer Group will meet at Laura Gordon's home on Tuesday, February 21st at 6:30-8:00 pm. All women with knitting, crocheting or quilting experience (or a desire to learn some new handiwork skills) are welcome to join the fun. We are working on prayer shawls for Chelsea Community College and lap blankets for Allegiance Hospice Home. Please contact Laura with any questions.

## Christian Education

Sunday school classes for Youth and Adults are held every Sunday morning at 9:00 am. Everyone is welcome to attend.

The youth (6th-12th grade) class is held in the pastor's office and taught by Laura Gordon, Wendy Beaumont and Jane Shrosbree. We have guided discussions relating weekly Scripture lessons to everyday life. We also share chime music in the worship service about once a month, with chime practice during Sunday school on the morning of the performance.

The adult class will informally gather at Pierce's bakery at 9:00 am during the month of February. All adults are welcome and will discuss the book and format for the Sunday school class.

Scholarship donations are being sought to help fund the college scholarships for our high school seniors. Any donations of any amount given through April are greatly appreciated. Our college scholarship committee meets to make decisions on scholarships early in May

## 2012 Youth Mission Trip



Stay tuned for more information on what, where and when!

## Coming soon: And Evermore Shall Be SO

Work on our annual church play is underway and the cast is already practicing twice a week. The play by Norman Robbins is now scheduled to be performed on Thursday, Friday and Sunday, April 19th, 20th, and 22nd .

## Missions and Outreach

### **You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Mark 12:31**

Church World Service has been responding to Jesus' call to be neighbor to those in need, helping impoverished communities with the basic tools they need to sustain themselves and their families.

When disaster strikes, people often need blankets--and much more. They need food, shelter, safe water. And, as the recovery process unfolds, they need tools, training, and other resources to help them rebuild their lives.

Contributions to Blankets+ mean that Church World Service is there for the long haul as families recover from a disaster. At its heart, Blankets+ means you. Each year, through your contributions our congregation makes this ministry of hope a reality for people in need the world over.

Blankets+ Offering is February 12th and February 19th.

With blankets+ we can blanket the world with love!