

Church Chatter

February 2012

"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful and let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." (*Hebrews 10:23-24*)

VIEWS AND REVIEWS "LOVING LIKE JESUS"

I ran across two items recently, one innocent and sweet, the other not so much. The first is a brief exchange between two characters in A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*.

Piglet: "How do you spell love?"

Pooh: "You don't spell it, you feel it."

I came across these lines on the same the day I watched on DVD the last episode of the BBC TV series "Jekyll," an update of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic book *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. As you may recall the doctor is a reputable man, but he transforms into Hyde, an unrestrained, immoral and violent figure. In this contemporary version Jekyll is a man named Tom Jackman. His mother says to his wife, "People think Hyde is rage or hate or greed or lust. But Hyde is far worse." "What is he?" asks his wife. His mother replies with a question: "What was the first day you knew you could kill anyone, anyone at all, if you had to?" After a moment of hesitation, she answers, "The day I first held my children." His mother then replies, "It's our oldest, deadliest impulse: the need to protect our own at the expense of any other living thing. And we give that impulse such a nice name, don't we? *Hyde is love.*"

And there you have it: the sentimental and the brutal. Yes, we use that word "love" to describe both the tender affections we feel and those attachments we have that can lead us to kill and destroy whoever and whatever we believe threatens those nearest and dearest to us. In the name of "love" two individuals walk down a church aisle and vow to one another to be faithful in poverty or wealth and sickness or health. But it is also "love" that motivates those on the battlefield to do Hyde-like behaviors to protect people, land and principles that are cherished. From love comes both delight and destruction.

How do you define love? If we believe Jesus is Lord, for us he is the very definition of love. His life displays to us what love looks like. The love Jesus embodied was neither sentimental nor

compatible with deadly force. In him we see a love that is self-giving, compassionate, forgiving, truthful, and so wide-flung that it is an affront to those with narrow notions about who counts as worthy of regard. Jesus loved in a way that leaves no room for ideas like "us" versus "them" or "friends" versus "enemies." Jesus taught, "Love your neighbor as yourself," but then made it clear that enemies are also neighbors we must love (Matthew 5:43; 22:39).

For us who follow Jesus, love is not a vague value that we define in any way we prefer. Rather love is what we have had poured out on our behalf by Jesus and that we are to pass on to others. Or as Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34, 15:12). To find love undistorted by passion, fear or self-interest, we look to see how Jesus lived and how he treated others. The supreme expression of love is found at the cross of Christ, that place where his faithful life in a wayward world brought him into the hands of the powers-that-be and where he absorbed the violence of others without attempting to inflict violence in return. It is here at the cross that we learn what it means to "follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:20-21).

As we live in this world, we are to be, as Jesus said, "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). The world is a hazardous place. We can get hurt as we follow Jesus. We need to be wise as we go about giving and forgiving, healing and helping, welcoming and embracing those who few others are willing to embrace. Christ-centered love is risky. But that is our calling. Our broken and suffering world is desperately in need of the kind of love we have been given to share. God alone knows what wonderful things can happen as we follow Jesus. Let your light shine with the radiance of divine love.

Grace and Peace,
Craig



If you would like offering envelopes, they are now available in the church office. Thanks for your patience!

PRESCHOOL NEWS
FROM MS. SUZANNE

Over one hundred people enjoyed our annual Bingo for Books. There was great food, good friends, and all the children went home with at least one new book to enjoy. A winning combination all the way around! Thank you, Preschool Staff, for working so hard so we could have fun!

February always brings lots of love and sharing. We decorate with valentine colors...red, pink and white. Hearts and kisses and cards for our teachers and friends are all part of the fun. Teddy bear picnics, parades, lessons on kindness and farm life are all part of this month's preschool activities.

Registration for Fall Preschool and VPK will open on Monday, March 5th. More information will be available later this month.



FEBRUARY PRESCHOOL HAPPENINGS

- 2/2 PJammin' Day
for Childhood Cancer Awareness
- 2/7 & 8 Preschool Sharing with Pastor Craig
- 2/10 Ms. Rita, Dramatic Storyteller
- 2/14 Valentine's Day Celebrations
- 2/20 Holiday – Preschool Closed
Full Time Care Open
- 2/23 & 24 Trike-a-Thon to Benefit
St. Jude Children's Hospital
- 2/27 Fall Registration Info Available
- 3/1 Animal Kingdom Farm Animals Visit
- 3/5 Fall Registration Opens



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

"Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat." These words were spoken by a Presbyterian minister in 1990 and became the basis for what is now Souper Bowl Sunday. This special offering is taken up in churches all over the country to help local food banks fight hunger.

On February 5th, Super Bowl Sunday, our church will have a meal of home made soups and breads right after the 10:45 service. An offering basket will be set out for anyone who'd like to make a contribution to our food pantry. The funds we raise will be reported to the national organization. Want to contribute soup or bread for the meal? Please contact Ingrid Chung.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1st Sarah Derby
Andres Ortiz
Daniel Ortiz
- 2nd Tina Wiedman
- 3rd Emily Derby
- 6th Ryan Wolff
- 8th Jane Fenelon
Michael Wolff
- 9th Judy Veliyathil
- 12th Michael Rucinski
- 13th Jim Martin
Paul Zahn
- 15th Craig Watts
- 19th Hannah Canterbury
Dorothy Nembhard
- 22nd Judie Romain
Diane Wead
- 23rd Juliana Angle
- 24th Joshua LeFever
Billie Schaeffer
- 25th Diana Genno
Kathy Rucinski
- 27th Nicole Greggs
Sydney Lagogiannis
- 28th Lisa Gerlach
- 29th Sophia Lagogiannis



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 7th Jeff & Libby Snyder
- 14th Michael & Yvonne Steele
- 27th Mason & Donna Pruner

[We apologize if your name is not on the list. Please call the office to update your information!]



SUMMER IS

JUST AROUND THE CORNER

The Christian Church Conference Center is looking for YOU! Registration is now open for both campers and adult counselors to attend church camp this summer. Registration materials, scholarship applications and information about each week of camp is available in the church office. See which of the ten camps, with experiences for those in kindergarten – grade 12, is the right one for you!

The deadline for scholarship applications is March 20, so if financial help is needed, please contact the church office to get an application form as soon as possible.

If more information is needed, please contact Pastor Ros Springer (Camp Coordinator and Chaplain) at rsprin1@tampabay.rr.com or Pastor Richie Sanchez (Associate Regional Minister) at rsanchez@floridadisciples.org. Happy Camping!

"NEVER NOT CALLED TO DISCIPLESHIP"

Senior Adult Retreat

April 17-19, 2012

Christian Church Conference Center

FINANCIAL UPDATE

2012 has arrived and we are all faced with the new challenges and opportunities that come with it. We continue to praise God and serve people with their varied needs with the talents and resources we have available. No doubt new ways to touch lives will come our way and we want to be ready to respond. That requires the support of everyone in our church family.

Without question, we all understand that we live in difficult economic times. Our prayers go out to everyone. When we speak of giving, the scriptures say that "the gift is acceptable according to what one has - not according to what one does not have" (2 Corinthians 8:12). God doesn't expect much from us when we don't have much. Rather God gladly receives what we give according to our ability. Clearly, some have a greater ability than others.

Wonderful things happen when people generously give what they have to give. And, yes, that doesn't always mean money. It can be time, talents and effort. But it is important to remember that the ministry we do here does require contributions to sustain it. Along with everyone else, we have faced tough financial challenges for the last several years. Our expenses for the God-inspired work we do have exceeded the contributions we've received. God grant that we overcome all of our challenges and embrace all our opportunities as God guides us.

We would love to end this year on firmer footing in both our ministries and our financial support. For that your generous help is needed. Even by dropping pocket change in our "Coins for Christ" model church in the narthex, each of us can take a step toward that end. Royal Palm Christian Church continues to touch the lives of many people, and together, with the help of God, we can go on doing so. God be with you.

FOREST HILLS ADULT CO-ED SOFTBALL

A CHRISTIAN SOFTBALL LEAGUE

Fridays at Forest Hills Park

Game times are 6:45pm and 8:00 pm.

All levels are welcome.

Fun, Fellowship, Fitness

on Friday nights - under the lights.

Come and check it out, if you are interested.

\$35 for a 10 game season; \$12 for a team shirt

The new season begins February 10th.

Contact Diane 954 647-0546 for more info.

SOUTH FLORIDA RUN FOR COMPASSION 5K

"SPEND A MORNING SAVING A LIFE"

Imagine being a parent who has to make the decision to either buy food for your hungry family or buy firewood so that you can boil and sterilize the dirty water you are about to drink. Nearly a billion people worldwide face this dilemma every day and sadly, two million children lose their lives every year because they had no option but to drink unsafe, contaminated water. The diarrhea caused by the consumption of unsafe drinking water is the 2nd leading cause of death in children in the developing world.

Compassion International, like many of the large child advocacy ministries, has been fighting this deadly killer for many years. One weapon recently developed to combat this problem in a cost-efficient and effective manner is the Water of Life filter. Amazingly, these filters can take the most dirty, contaminated water from almost any source and, without using any electricity or moving parts, turn that water into clean drinking water totally free of bacteria or parasites. In fact, one of these filters, which cost ~\$55, can provide enough clean drinking water for over 70 people for their entire lifetime (> 1 million gallons). Many of these filters have already been distributed all over parts of Africa, Asia, and Central America, and whole communities are being transformed in the name of Jesus Christ because of them.

I, and other local Compassion volunteers, have organized a 5K walk/run that is focused on raising money for the purchase of these Water of Life filters. This event will take place on March 3, 2012 at the beautiful John U Lloyd Beach State Park in Dania Beach, FL. The course, which takes participants along the beach and through several beachside trails, is designed to appeal to everyone including experienced runners, recreational joggers, walkers, and kids. The beautiful scenery of the ocean and mangrove trees provides an ideal way to spend a Saturday morning with your family in support of children in need. In addition to the 5K event, we will have a free kid's fun run on the beach as well as other free kid's activities (face painting, sack races).

If you are interested in registering for or donating to the event, please visit the website www.runforcompassionsfl.com and click the appropriate link. The website contains additional information if you interested in learning more about the event as a whole or the Compassion International Water of Life program. I will start a list at the church for anyone who wishes to register so maybe groups of us can carpool and participate as a team. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions.

Thanks and God bless!! Josh Loomis
(jlloomis@nova.edu, 954-449-3150)

