



## **Our Worship in March Come and Worship**

### **March 4: Second Sunday in Lent**

Text: Luke 10: 25-37

Message Who Is Your Samaritan?

This second Sunday of Lent provides an opportunity to revisit Luke's parable of the "Good Samaritan." Have we lost some of the meaning in this parable through the centuries?

Let's consider who the Samaritans in our life might be.

### **March 11: Third Sunday in Lent**

This Sunday is still under construction. Pastor Kres will be in retreat in San Francisco with several Brethren pastors from the district.

### **March 18 One Great Hour of Sharing Sunday**

Texts: 2 Corinthians 5: 16-21

Luke 15: 1-3; 11b-32

Message: "From Now On"

The fourth Sunday of Lent will include an opportunity to share a special gift for One Great Hour of Sharing. Kres' morning message will be taken from Paul's second Letter to the Corinthians. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God is reconciling the world and we are a new creation. Praise God!

### **March 25 Fifth Sunday in Lent**

Text: John 12: 1-8 (read John 11 for background)

Message "Letting Go"

One translation of verse seven, in the above text, is that Jesus says to Judas, "Let her go." This morning we will look at that verse in light of the Lazarus story and other words of Jesus which suggest that we, too, are called to let go of some things in our lives.

### **April 1 Palm/Passion Sunday**

Texts: Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29 and Luke 19: 28-40

Message Turning Our Piece of the World Upside Down

Today we focus on the tradition known as Palm Sunday. What was Luke saying to us by having Jesus riding a colt (Luke's language) into Jerusalem? Maybe, Luke was giving us a glimpse of the shape our ministry should take.

## **Making a World of Difference**

This year's annual One Great Hour of Sharing theme is, "Who is My Neighbor?" Since 1949, the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) has given American Christians the opportunity to be part of a caring network that expresses God's love to neighbors everywhere -- not just to victims of the major disasters that saturate the media, but to victims of disasters that repeat themselves every day -- disasters of extreme poverty and chronic hunger, of perpetually unclean water and nonexistent sanitation, of terrorizing war and devastating loss. By sharing a special gift to OGHS, we are neighbors to others by supporting those who are "Christ's hands." The ministries of the Church of the Brethren General Board remind us that our neighbors are everywhere, from Louisiana to Sudan.

The Church of the Brethren is working with women in West Africa to grow vegetables for vital nutrients. We are providing health care

for refugees in Sudan, building systems to deliver safe drinking water in villages in Laos, bringing farming tools and seeds to communities in Haiti, and providing disaster relief to the U.S. Gulf Coast. Some of this work happens through partner agencies, like Church World Service, and some is the result of direct Brethren involvement. Either way, our neighbors in need benefit.

Last year our congregation gave nearly \$700 through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. What can we do this year? Please bring your OGHS gift to worship on March 18, 2007. Special envelopes are available. Make checks out to First Church of the Brethren and designate it to OGHS. Together we can make a world difference.



## The Vine and the Branches (John 15)

“How can we share the Gospel in ways that will move ourselves (and our congregations) more intentionally toward joyous worship, active peacemaking, passionate faith, and spiritual maturity?” For the next 18 months this question will be a study-focus for myself and four other pastors from the Illinois and Wisconsin District. Pastors Christy Waltersdorff, Orlando Redekopp, Dennis Webb, Joel Kline, and I came to this question through our intentional sharing with one another about the joys and challenges of pastoral ministry. Some of our discussion has centered on what it means to be Brethren in an urban/suburban context and in a new century. There has been discussion on key themes in Brethren belief and practice and on the our peace witness. We have begun exploring how we can better share our faith in ways that connect with the communities around us and in ways that “fit” with who we are as Brethren. These kinds of conversations have led us to our question.

The five of us will be traveling to San Francisco on March 5th to begin a 10-day retreat. We will worship, study, and pray together. We will attend a number of different churches and meet with leadership from some of those congregations. We will spend time with a member of the faculty from Pacific School of Religion. This will be a time to “immerse” ourselves in the question we have asked. After our return, scheduled for March 15, we will meet on a monthly basis as we continue our study together.

The cost for our trip and our time together is being paid for through a grant and program called Sustaining Pastoral Excellence. The five of us have pastoral experience ranging from 10 to 30 years in congregational ministry. We believe, also, that spiritual maturity and spiritual vitality are community matters, not merely individual concerns.

So, as always, I ask for your prayers. Pray for the five of us in this endeavor. Pray for our communities of faith: Highland Avenue COB, Naperville COB, York Center COB, Chicago First COB, and Springfield First. Pray, among other things, that we might embody the qualities necessary for joyous worship, active peacemaking, passionate faith, and spiritual maturity.

One branch among many,  
Pastor Kres

## Pancake and Sausage Breakfast

The Stewards Commission is organizing a Pancake and Sausage Breakfast for Saturday, March 3rd. Breakfast hours are from 7 - 11 am. The cost is \$5 per person and tickets are available at the door. Tickets are also available for members and friends of the community to sell in advance. Invite your neighbors, family, friends and co-workers.

## Bonhoeffer Book Discussion

The last evening of discussion of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book, Life Together, is March 6. Discussion begins in the church basement at 7 pm. Thanks to all who have been able to participate.

## SOS's Season Ending

The Springfield Overflow Shelter exists from November 1 until April 1. During SOS's three years of existence, our faith community has assisted with providing volunteer staff and an evening meal on the 1st Thursday of each month. Thursday, March 1 will likely be our last evening during the 2006-07 winter season. Thanks for all your help this year. Contact Pastor Kres if you would like to help out on March 1.

*Which now of these three, think you, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?*

*And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do you likewise.*

Luke 10:36-37, KJV 2000

## Fabric Wanted

The Association for the Arts (AACB) is inviting each congregation in the denomination to provide one yard of print cotton fabric for inclusion in the design and construction of a special 300th Anniversary quilt. Please contact Pastor Kres or Terry Link (our Annual Conference delegate) if you would like to donate the fabric on behalf of our congregation.