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Redeemer Connection



Church of the Redeemer United Methodist Church

Pastor's Message

*“Now the green blade riseth, from the buried grain,
wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.”*

I've always liked the words and the tune to this Easter hymn (no. 311, Now the Green Blade Riseth). The words remind us that love doesn't die. Even though it may seem long gone, it comes again. And that's a good message to hear as we head into the Easter season. God's love is never gone. There may be times when it seems far away; there may be times when it seems buried and out of sight – but just as the wheat springs up green after a season of winter death, so does Love come again.

Easter is all about God's love – and it's the season of the year when we celebrate God's love with all the triumph we can muster – the melancholy songs of Lent are stilled. The cross is unveiled. The words of the dying Jesus on the cross become the shouts of alleluia at the empty tomb. From death to resurrection. From sorrow to joy. From emptiness to fullness. That's the promise of Easter. And, I hope it's a promise you hear for your own life, for the lives of those you love, and for the life of our congregation.

*“When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
Jesus' touch can call us back to life again;
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.”*

That's the last verse to the hymn. I think a number of us have had wintry hearts this year – when our own spirits reflected the grayness of the winter skies around us. Sadness, grief, pain, loneliness, health and financial problems, family discord, employment difficulties, world conflict, earthquakes, political unrest – there has been much to weigh us down, and for our hearts to feel smothered. What to do? Well, one response is to remember that God's love isn't seasonal or conditional. Easter can happen anytime. Easter is about the power of God's transforming love. A love that touches wintry hearts back to life. A love that makes the bare fields of our existence spring forth with life.

That's the good news of Easter. I hope you hear it again, and let it soak deep into your spirit – so that you can see the signs of life springing up around you, so that you can sense the stirrings of new life in your midst – even in your own heart, even in your own spirit. Love is come again -- Alleluia!

~ Pastor Karen Graham

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Trustees/Finance Report

by Karen Graham

Because of so many building improvement expenditures in 2010 and early 2011, the Property and Building Fund has been more than depleted. A decision was made at our February Church Council meeting to divest our withholdings with Morgan Stanley, and use that money to set up a separate Building Fund account at the East Ohio Conference Credit Union. A check has been deposited into that account for \$4235.30. From now on, all contributions to the Building and Property Fund will be forwarded (once a month) to this Credit Union Account. This decision has a very important ramification:

Building Fund money will no longer be co-mingled with General Fund money in our checking account – this is a good thing. The money at the Credit Union will be accessible as needed. This means, however, that we will need to be even extra diligent in maintaining an adequate cash flow for operating expenses. We will no longer have any savings “mixed” in with our available funds. Keeping current on pledged giving is going to be even more crucial.

Financial Report

By Jim Simler

The first quarter of 2011 continues to be full of surprises. We have spent over \$15,000 in unanticipated building expenses. Yet at the same time, God blessed us with additional funding that cushioned Redeemer from what could have been a serious cash crunch. Generous donations were made to help meet some of extra expenses.

In summary, the facade, windows, freezer and parking lot are weak but the spirit of Redeemer is willing.

Our first two month's budget shows that we

\$4,235.30 isn't much of a “rainy day” fund. With the age of our building, and with some repair needs already identified, it's going to be necessary for us to strengthen this new Building Fund on a steady basis. The General Fund is not strong enough on its own right now to withstand any major building repairs.

What do we know we need to fix but don't have enough funds to pay for? The water leaks in the downstairs classroom and stairwell and boiler room, the parsonage sidewalks and retaining wall, piano restoration, more window replacement and repair.

Church Trustees and Finance will work together to plan ways to promote donations to the Building Fund. For now, please be aware of the situation, and know that any donations you are currently making are received with much appreciation. Much good work has been done to improve the appearance, safety and function of our building. Much money has been spent. We aren't done, however – and in order to ensure that we can meet both present and future building needs, we will all need to increase this fund's capacity to meet those needs.

collected \$42,869 for the General fund versus \$40,655 general fund expenses. While that appears positive, there is about \$2,000 in outstanding bills with another \$7,500 for apportionments due. We will need to step up our level of giving to be completely current on our finances.

Perhaps being around Easter, I remember where Redeemer was financially two years ago. Today, we have a new lease on our day to day expenses in the life of the church. The ability to keep within our means is a testament to the people of Redeemer and how we are closely watched and tended to by God.

Sing a New Song: CONVOCATION 2011

by Mary Ann Carlson

In 1995 four Redeemerites went to Minneapolis for **CONVOCATION** (a regular gathering of the Reconciling Ministries Network). On return one of our group likened it to “going to the gay holy land.” It was an eye-opening, enlightening and celebratory experience. Since then I have missed two **CONVOS** – Sadly!

This summer **CONVO** is coming to our area. It is being held at Sawmill Creek in Huron, August 24 - 28. In addition to a spiritual experience, this weekend offers lots of opportunities for fellowship. Some scholarship money is available through Redeemer to encourage individuals to attend. For registration and fee information, please contact Redeemer.

Mission Update

by Mary Ann Carlson

This summer there will be no week long Mission Trip. This is with great sadness by the long time team. We have looked forward to the time away with its fellowship, projects and retreat time. There will however, be several shorter project activities. During which there will be efforts to include the best parts of the time away. The team is hopeful that these shorter activities will attract other members of Redeemer.

The Welcome Table

by Mary Ann Carlson

The gatherings for the **Welcome Table** have begun. Some of those who have met have given us this feed back:

- “We had a ball. It was wonderful.”
Brenda and Frank Grover
- We had our gathering on Feb. 19th. We had a very nice time sharing one personal experience. It seems as if we have a group that enjoys sports. Our unintentional theme was basketball!!! Our next meeting has not been set yet, but we have plans.
Connie Gillen
- Our group met Feb. 20th for lunch. There was no agenda except getting to know one another better and having a fun time together. Based on the conversation and laughter, our time together was a success and we are looking forward to getting together sometime in June.
Randy and Michelle Blackford
- Our group met last Sunday to share brunch. It was fun to get to know new friends and connect with old friends-learning something new about everyone! We decided to gather again in May. We're not sure of the activity, but talked about some ideas for the future such as a game night or a picnic. We're looking forward to growing in our connections and faith!
Jane Finley
- We had a lovely outing. Seven of us gathered at Dewey's Pizza on Feb. 26th for dinner. We split a couple of pizzas and shared a little about our lives. We were of various ages and had a lot of fun together. We planned our next couple of get-togethers and strategized how to locate some of our group members for whom we have no contact information. Before we left the restaurant, we asked a waiter to take our picture. I went home feeling good about our church and the nice people who make up our congregation.
Joyce Roper
- We had our first meeting for brunch this afternoon.
Michelle

If you have not yet been contacted, be patient. There are some of the hosts who have been unable to schedule their gathering. It's coming.

“We're looking forward to growing in our connections and faith!”

Dates to Remember

April

Sunday, 10	3 -5:00 p.m.	North Coast District Spring Conference.
Saturday, 16	5-7:30 p.m.	ARM Sponsored Family Dinner
Sunday, 17		Palm Sunday
Thursday, 21	7:00 p.m.	Maundy Thursday
Friday, 22	7:00 p.m.	Good Friday
Easter Sunday, 24	6:15 a.m.	Sunrise Service
	9:00 a.m.	Breakfast
	10:45 a.m.	Worship
Tuesday, 26	5:30 p.m.	Community Meal

Reoccurring Programs in April

Wednesdays	10:30 a.m.	Bible Discussion
	6:30 – 7:30 p.m.	Stretch & Pray (except for April 27 th)
Thursdays	7:30 p.m.	Choir Practice (except for April 21 st)

May

Sunday, 1		Nehemiah Project Mission Presentation
Monday, 2		Christian Family Week Begins
	7:00 p.m.	Church Council
Thursday, 5		National Day of Prayer
Sunday, 8		Mother's Day/ Festival of the Christian Home
Monday, 9	7:30 p.m.	Trustees
Sunday, 15		Men's Sunday
Sunday, 22		Membership Celebration
Tuesday, 24	5:30 p.m.	Community Meal

Reoccurring Programs in May

Wednesdays	10:30 a.m.	Bible Discussion
Thursdays	7:30 p.m.	Choir Practice

June

Sunday, 5		Graduate Recognition Sunday
Sunday, 12		Pentecost Sunday
Sunday, 19		Father's Day
		Peace with Justice Sunday
Monday, 20	7:30 p.m.	Trustees
Tuesday, 28	5:30 p.m.	Community Meal
Wednesday, 29	5:00 p.m.	InterAct Meal

3 Month Review at Redeemer

What's been going on at Redeemer? Here's a brief synopsis of the last three months:

We hosted Bishop Sally Dyck's book signing event on January 14. About 100 people came to buy books, to hear her speak, and to enjoy delicious refreshments. Through an arrangement with Cokesbury, we received 10% of the sales. So we made \$280! Bishop Dyck preached for us on Sunday, January 16. It was a wonderful Redeemer weekend!

A NOW (Nurture, Outreach, Witness) training event was held January 29.

We celebrated Reconciling Sunday on January 30. The special offering will be used to sponsor scholarships for the Sing A New Song convocation in August.

8 Redeemer adults and 2 Redeemer youth attended the North Coast Leadership Academy on February 5 at Church of the Saviour.

Thanks to the generosity of Thea Wilson and Carrie Hicks, Redeemer was able to host a marvelous evening of storytelling and song, "A Train Called Freedom" on February 12. The music shook the rafters, as the L.O.V.E. ensemble celebrated the lives and accomplishments of African-Americans in the efforts to abolish slavery and to promote civil rights.

We mourned the deaths of two special women: Harriet Queen and Wilma Gundersen. Harriet (Kari Sharpe's mother) died unexpectedly on January 3 and we held a memorial service for her on Saturday, January 22. Wilma died March 12, after a long illness, and her memorial service was held at the church on Sunday, March 20. We remember both women with affection and gratitude.

We paid for a lot of repair work on our building! A number of emergency repairs were made (a new refrigerator compressor, boiler repairs, bathroom plumbing leaks). Some planned work was also accomplished: heating cables installed on the roof, electrical work done to hook up the heating cables, new carpet installed in 2 downstairs classrooms (thanks to ARM!), and the new education wing windows were installed. If you haven't driven by the church on Scarborough Road, do so and notice how nice the new windows look. All these projects totaled close to \$15,000. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Building and Property Fund.

We collected \$700 to support the work of United Methodist Protestant Campus Ministries, and we began collecting our Easter mission offering to support the work of United

Methodist Committee on Relief.

We put together a wonderful Lenten Devotional called "God's Promise", which was ready for distribution on the first Sunday of Lent, March 13. Thanks to coordinator Heather Mullen and her fantastic team of Mary Hopewell, Jane Finley, Melanie Tyler, Bridgett Emerson, and Cathy Lipton. Thanks also to Kate Klaber for duplication and collating.

Church Council met on February 21, beginning with dinner and time of orientation. Highlights include: review of 2011 goals; approved Outreach recommendation to designate Easter mission offering for UMCOR; approved Trustees recommendation to close investment account with Morgan Stanley, and use money (\$4000) as seed money for replenishing the Building and Property Improvement Fund; heard update from Worship Attendance task force; reviewed 2010 financial report and previewed the 2011 budget.

A grief support group met on March 12 and will meet again March 26. Anyone who has experienced a recent (1-3 years) loss and would like to learn from others about grief recovery and support is invited to attend. The group meets at the home of Cathy Lipton.

A Lenten "Stretch and Pray" group began meeting on March 16 under the leadership of North Coast District Parish Nurse Rev. Linda McCowen. Open to any one who would like to combine some mild exercise with spiritual discipline is invited to attend. It meets on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. at the church.

The Welcome Table groups began meeting in February and March. Each person has been assigned to a small group to meet four times a year. The purpose is fellowship and friendship, and each group is free to design its own format and activities. Thanks to these first round hosts: Randy and Michelle Blackford, Bev and Phil Holland, Jane and Jim Finley, Connie and Roy Gillen, Cynthia Larsen and Joe Mendes; Forest and Vicki Ratliff, Carolyn and Ken Bowman, Joyce Roper and Chris Ball, Frank and Brenda Grover, Howard and Michelle Gillespie, Patrick and Heather Mullen, James Graham and David Dusek, David Rodney and Cindy Oser, Gus and Jan Kious.

All this happened, of course, in addition to our ongoing ministries and activities: worship, Sunday School, choir, caregiving, community meals, ARM, SIS, youth fellowship, Bible Studies, Soup Sundays, committee meetings, and so forth. Thanks to everyone in leadership. Thanks to everyone for their financial and spiritual support. Thanks to every one for their participation!

Birthdays and Anniversaries

APRIL BIRTHDAYS			MAY BIRTHDAYS			JUNE BIRTHDAYS		
	DAY			DAY			DAY	
Noah Prater-Cleary	1		Patrick Mullen	1		Milan Doering	2	
Jacob Doak						Pat Steinfurth		
Armando Tatum	2		Carolyn Hicks	2		Sydney Ball	3	
Vicki Ratliff	3		Jennifer Prater	4		Brittany Nevels	4	
Lauren Dugard	4		Marge Kaercher			Kayla Bryant	5	
Quinn Perkins	5		John Dugard	6		Ginny Bair	6	
Tyson Mixon	6		Mark Rodney			Grace Graham	7	
Natalia Lenington	7		Victoria Johnson	7		Anne Crowley		
Estelle Covault			Justin Mauter	9		Lee Wilson		
Gus Kious			Joannae Steinfurth	10		Heidi Schmidt	9	
Melanie Tyler			Nadine Young			Audrey Harris	10	
Nolan Harris	11		Jennifer Perry	13		Glenn Steinfurth	12	
Leondre Reed	13		Joan Organ			William Smalls, Jr.		
Glenn Harris	14		Marcia Burke	14		Briana Evans	14	
Cate Terez			Tony Lewis	16		Madisyn Mixon	15	
Gloria Lovelace	15		Philip Hicks	18		Ken Slater	16	
Jameel Jackson	18		Mim Conway			Terran Mack	17	
Crystal Stokes			Arnette Rowell	19		Selby Majewski	18	
Katie Sheridan	20		Mariah Mendes	20		Katie Spohn		
Lynda Hicks			Denise Jackson	24		Alan Harris	23	
Corey Holowach			Grace Finley	25		Phil Opp	24	
Paul Gundersen	21		Dianne Covault	27		Camille Stokes-	26	
Jason Rodney	23		Kate Klaber	31		Thomas		
Josiah Quarles	24					Amelia Radecki	29	
Bob Bair	25		MAY ANNIVERSARIES	YEARS		Mary Madison	30	
Jeff Carter	26		Robert & Gail Nevels	4	25			
Redwin Lewis	28		Jim & Jane Finley	12	21	JUNE	DAY	YEARS
Regina Yaskey	29		Bob & Ellen Bair	13	5	ANNIVERSARIES		
Eddie Bornds			Eugene & Clara Williams	22	50	Fred & Susan Radecki	1	39
APRIL ANNIVERSARIES	DAY	YEARS	Wayne & Ruth Spohn	23	36	Chuck Collins & Heather Howiler	7	8
John & Sheryl Dugard	14	27	Bubba & Rose Williams	24	42	Doug & Mary Ann Kerr	12	46
			Frank Williams & Pam Holowach	24	36	John & Marcia Burke	12	40
			George & Carrie Hicks	25	29	Taran Henderson & Damian Forshe	28	8
			Corbin & Dianne Covault	27	22			
						Forest & Vicki Ratliff	30	9

Prayer Concerns & Celebrations

- Sympathy to Kari Sharpe and family on the death of her mother, Harriet Queen and sympathy to the family of Wilma Gundersen
- Prayers for Gretchen Reynolds (knee surgery recovery), Juanita Nims, Cindy Gayle, and Jane Carter.
- Congratulations to Doug and Mary Ann Kerr on the birth of their granddaughter, Elsa, and to Wayne and Ruth Spohn on the birth of their grandson, Landon, and to Fred and Susan Radecki on the birth of their grandson, Adrian!

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A Place of Welcome

Worship: 11am

Rev. Karen B. Graham

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