



# *The Communicator*

## *The Congregation as Blessing*

—Evangelist, Rick Bunch

As I write this, I am well aware that we are right in the middle of the season of Lent. It is a time when many people have put emphasis on what might be sacrificed or given up in the days leading up to Easter. It seems the better focus might be on how this commitment prepares one, in a very real way, to experience the joy of Easter as the most graphic affirmation of love made real in the life and ministry of Jesus. The attitude of preparation echoes what Dick Foster wrote in his January *Communicator* article regarding the Evangelist Congregational Blessing.

The fact is, Jesus' life was a blessing to all of humankind, especially to those who caught the vision of what love could bring about. Our lesson for today suggests that we have the same charge, as a matter of life stewardship, to explore that profound insight and, in the process, become a blessing to everyone we meet.

Jesus' life was all about love. His emphasis centered on acting out that love in very real terms on a personal level—to feed, clothe, visit, and care. There are, however, so many instances where we are simply unable to adequately minister to human need on a personal level. Therefore, we organize into a church (congregation) so we might pool our resources, both human and physical, to

accomplish what we, as individuals, are incapable of. In that sense the congregation then fulfills the presence and fact of blessing. The congregation must be a blessing to everyone in its wake. Evangelists, as special ministers, are said to be “blessed to be a blessing.” Congregations that live up to their responsibility in sharing the love of the Christ, like evangelists, are blessed to be a blessing. Just as individuals make preparation during Lent, the congregation likewise makes preparation to respond to the life and ministry of Jesus to bring blessing to people.

In our recent congregational retreat we began to explore the potential for that preparation by “following the Spirit” in the sense of adventure. Major themes in that experience were the discovery of who we are and where the Spirit is leading us as a result. On Sunday, President David Schaal challenged the congregation to consider the following as a matter of qualifying our people to be the blessing to which we aspire:

- ❖ Personal involvement of members that goes beyond our walls and into community
- ❖ Regard for the overall health of the congregation
- ❖ Ministry to young people and inviting them to likewise minister to adults
- ❖ Recognition of diversity among the generations
- ❖ Sustaining and growing into a welcoming congregation
- ❖ Exploring creative use of our facilities
- ❖ Willingness to listen to and reflect on individual and corporate experience

- ❖ Intentionally creating worship and celebration experiences that respond to the needs of the congregation
- ❖ Willingness and desire for personal and spiritual nurture which prepares and enables us to move beyond ourselves
- ❖ Pursuing the potential to which the Spirit is calling us

May we continue to explore the nature and purpose of our being as a congregation. May we make intentional preparation to seek the blessing of the Spirit. May we become the blessing to this community for which, and to which, the Spirit now calls us.



The congregation picnic will held on July 10 at City Park Shelter, same as last year. Mark your calendar now!



## Financial Report



### March Income

#### World Church

World Ministries	\$1,542.00
Oblation	436.00
World Hunger	55.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,033.00</b>

#### Local

Local Offering	\$2,757.50
Building Fund	35.00
Youth Bowling Project	698.45
2 Cents a Meal	45.25
Family Assistance	65.00
March Retreat Income	15.00
RMMC Reunion	5.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,621.20</b>

## What DOES Matter Most?

—Sharon Troyer, pastor

Many of us in Community of Christ gathered around computers, television, or projector screens to listen to President Steve Veazey as he spoke in Independence on April 10. Thanks to the electronic age, we joined many small gatherings of our global church family around the world. In the context of a beautiful worship service, we not only heard an inspiring message by President Veazey, but we also heard music, special testimonies, and even announcements of new methods of selecting how we want our world church contributions to be spent! The entire message will be printed in a future *Herald*, but you may listen or read it now by visiting

[www.cofchrist.org/presidency/sermons/default](http://www.cofchrist.org/presidency/sermons/default).

Our Ft. Collins Congregation is in the process of asking a similar question to Veazey's topic, "What Matters Most?" He pointed out that when Jesus returned from spiritual soul searching in the wilderness after his baptism,

**“Jesus strategically selected a scripture passage to proclaim his mission.** By doing so he set the direction for the disciple community that would form around him.” According to Luke 4:18–19, Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah and described his call as being “annointed to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Christians through the ages have marveled at how Jesus was able to read that statement with such inner authority! Veazey said

Jesus was able to make this claim because he knew the ways of the Spirit. He was grounded in scripture, particularly the prophetic texts. He had spent ample time being shaped by the Spirit through prayer, as well as worshiping and learning with others. Being spiritually formed is foundational to obtaining a clear and compelling vision of mission. A compelling sense of mission springs from the overflow of deep communion with the Spirit. And such communion occurs when we engage in personal spiritual practices as well as spiritual growth through healthy congregational life.

As your out-going pastor, I am mindful we have been invited to listen to the Holy Spirit as we seek to **align ourselves with how God continues to work in our greater community.** Some of you may want to consider joining the **small Upper Room group** that meets each Wednesday at 9:30 a.m., to do just that. Do you wonder if we can develop the kind of trust that Jesus showed when he relied on the words of an ancient prophet...to help us see in new ways?

I invite you to pray for Dick Foster, Debbie Jones, and Marta Remmenga who have been appointed to share with your leadership team and congregation at large....some of the options that surfaced during a recent inquiry

process. I remain convinced that this congregation can and will make wise decisions about whether to hire another part-time pastor to work alongside the many gifted people now serving in lay ministry, or whether there are other models of leadership that will better serve our current needs.

Are we being called to develop Peacemaker Clubs whereby we can invite children into our building to learn peacemaking skills? Talk to Shirley Remmenga and others with a long-time interest in such ministry! Shall we consider offering the use of our Activity Center to meet the needs of homeless persons with no easy access to taking showers? Visit with Kay or Rick Bunch about this. What kind of leadership would empower us most fully to respond to diverse needs? Could our answers be “both/and” rather than “either/or”?

**Let’s not make this a time of uncertainty and indecision, but one of steadfast trust in the creative God who brought us into community to share the life-giving love of Jesus Christ.** May our unique gifts, as individuals and as a congregation, equip us to share the “good news” with everyone, inside and outside our walls!



## ***Herald-in-Every-Home Program***

Our congregation participates in this program. It is paid for out of the congregation Operating Fund. If you would like to support this program and the budget, consider giving \$26.50 beyond your regular offering. Identify it as *Herald in Every Home*. **To-date, five contributors have responded.** Thank you.

## What's Happening?

Bonnie Thomas now has two jobs, working full-time at State Farm Insurance and part-time at Kmart. Bonnie's graduation ceremony will be May 11 with more details to come. She has been nominated for outstanding student and may get the chance to speak at graduation.

## Speakers, Keyboard, Greeters, and Nursery



### Speakers

- ❖ May 1: Nancy Miller
- ❖ May 8: Rich Kohlman
- ❖ May 15: Morris Danielson
- ❖ May 22: Scott Murphy
- ❖ May 29: Shirley Remmenga

### Keyboard

- ❖ May 1: Sharon Fulton
- ❖ May 8: Kay Bunch
- ❖ May 15: Jean Newman
- ❖ May 22: Tom Beck
- ❖ May 29: Sharon Troyer

### Greeters

- ❖ May: Rich and Mary Kohlman

### Nursery

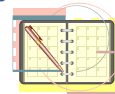
- ❖ May 1: Marta Remmenga
- ❖ May 8: Tim Sundell
- ❖ May 15: Donna Clark
- ❖ May 22: Bill and Pat Miner
- ❖ May 29: Julie Foster

## May Birthdays



❖	Frankie Dampier	05/02
❖	Porter Garner	05/03
❖	Voni Simons	05/04
❖	Awtumn Alcoser	05/10
❖	Rose Julch	05/15
❖	Jim Miller	05/15
❖	Lisa Garner	05/25

## May Calendar



Check the website

<http://cofchristrm.org/FortCollins>

- May 1: Communion  
First-Sunday Giving
- May 4: *Upper Room*, 9:30 a.m.  
Senior Meal Site, 11:45 a.m.  
Worship Team, 10:45 a.m.
- May 8: Mother's Day  
Two-Cents-a-Meal Offering
- May 9: WEAVERS, 4:00–6:30 p.m.  
PFLAG, 6:45 p.m.
- May 11: *Upper Room*, 9:30 a.m.  
Senior Meal Site, 11:45 a.m.
- May 12: Afternoon Women's Group,  
1:00 p.m.
- May 13: Junior and Senior High Youth—  
Hayride and BBQ
- May 18: *Upper Room*, 9:30 a.m.  
Senior Meal Site, 11:45 a.m.
- May 19: Leadership Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- May 22: *Communicator* items due.
- May 25: *Upper Room*, 9:30 a.m.  
Senior Meal Site, 11:45 a.m.
- May 29: Fifth-Sunday Forum, 9:00 a.m.



## Junior/Senior High Youth Group Update

Our January meeting consisted of planning for the next few months, sharing a make-your-own taco dinner, and a rousing game of Mexican Train Dominos!

The February activity was part of our congregational retreat. Many of you generously supported our youth with your donation to the bowl-a-thon. The grand total raised was just over \$718.00. The youth have several ideas they are considering regarding how best to use the funds to help others. Thank you so very much for your contributions. The youth will strive to be good stewards over these funds and would like to say a very sincere THANK YOU to Kay and Rick Bunch for organizing this activity as part of our congregational retreat.

Our March meeting was very special as one of our own, Kate Ytell, shared with the group some of her 700 plus slides of her 10-day trip to Honduras. She shared many wonderful experiences as well as the slides. The youth were so impressed that they decided they wanted to prepare an 11:00 a.m. Sunday service in June to share this same information with the congregation. We enjoyed a light supper of sloppy joes, chips, fruit, and brownies.

The April activity was a field trip to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Some highlights of the museum were the Real Pirates Exhibit, Space Odyssey, Prehistoric Journey, Wildlife Exhibit, and the Expedition Health area. I think we all learned a lot!

Back in the fall the youth worked hard to compose a letter to Bed, Bath, and Beyond, to request being a charitable distributor for them. They could not commit for the year but they are offering about 50 new pillows, pillowcases, and a number of comforters for distribution. The youth would like them to be used for the victims of the Crystal fire. They will be picking them up in the next couple of weeks and will take them to the United Way for distribution. If the victims of the Crystal fire cannot use them, they will be given to the victims of the fires in Texas or the tornados on the East Coast.



## Names in the News

**Rich Bunch** has been elected vice-president of the Interfaith Counsel. (*Interfaith Newsletter*)

**Rose Julch** purchased a home. (*Coloradoan*)

**Luella Foster** celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on March 31. (*April Herald*)

**Kurt Remmenga**, Director of Facility Services at Graceland University, was in an article about the replacement of the housing units. (*The Tower*, March 2011)

**Marcia Wood's** obituary (*Coloradoan*)

**Pam Shipley** was selected for the "9Who Care" award for April. (*Coloradoan*)

"Sabbath implies a willingness to be surprised by unexpected grace, to partake of those potent moments when creation renews itself, when what is finished inevitably recedes, and the sacred forces of healing astonish us with the unending promise of love and life."

—SABBATH: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest.  
Wayne Muller, pg. 37





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