

THE MUSTARD SEED



Vol. 35, Issue 6, February, 2008, Edition

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*Coming Up...
See inside for
details*

**Annual Meeting
Sunday,
February 3,
After Worship
Service**

Feb. 3—Women's Service
Feb. 4—Quilting Group
Feb. 6—Ash Wednesday
Feb. 12—Pilgrim Guild
Feb. 17, Mar. 2, 16, 30—
Opportunity Next Door
Feb. 20—3rd Wednesday
at PRISM
Feb. 24—GLBT Potluck
Mar. 7-9—Non-violence
Training
Mar. 13—Day on the
Hill
Apr. 5—"Love Letters"
May 4—New Members

Regular Features...

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Council p. 4
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Community News p. 6
Birthdays p. 7
Calendar—insert
Bible Adventures—insert

**Lent
Begins
Ash Wednesday
Feb. 6**

From Your Pastor And Teacher

Because Lent is upon us and in us and around us starting in this cold month, I thought it important to link our profound sense of being an inclusive church with the soul searching story of Lent. This poem is adapted from one by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, a prophet and pioneer in transgender/liberation theology. It may be the spiritual resource we are looking for as we journey through this season together.

*Oh, Great Spirit,
In whom we live and move and have our being,
We thank you for the haven of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ
Where it is safe for us to shine light
In the closets that have hidden traits
We did not want to claim.*

*Help us to remember that when we were created,
It was in your image and that you pronounced us good.
Help us to realize that walling up any aspect of our lives
Is a mistaken attempt to judge ourselves unworthy
And thus divide ourselves from you.*

*May we instead rejoice that like all other things,
All aspects of our lives are held together by your energy,
Christ energy,
Love-energy,
And therefore can teach and strengthen us, like friends.*

May this become real to us during our time together. AMEN.

Lent is a journey into the closets of our lives, the hidden places, the secret places, and the places of shame. This journey offers release from those places. This journey offers hope, freedom, and light. As long as we proclaim our identity of being open and affirming, we will be asked to take this journey. We will ask ourselves to be open and affirming of who we are as whole and beautiful beings. We will learn to thank God for creating us and seek new ways to show that gratitude. May this prayer end up on your refrigerator or hanging from your rearview mirror. May you say it often during this season and may you hold its message of hope close to your heart. For me, it is the only way for me to understand Easter in all its fullness.

So, come, join the journey and may our church continue to learn to reflect God's love and ways in the world.

See you in church,
T. Michael



February Schedule

WORSHIP DURING FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 3. TRANSFIGURATION, Service at 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion. Women's Sunday. Infant and toddler care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years old through 2nd grade 10:15-11:15 am. Lectionary texts: Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 or Psalm 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9.

Annual Meeting after worship

FEBRUARY 6. ASH WEDNESDAY. Dinner in Fellowship Hall; soup and bread, at 6:00 p.m. Worship at 7:00 p.m. in Sanctuary.

FEBRUARY 10. FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT. Service at 10:00 a.m. Racial Justice Sunday. Infant and toddler care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years old through 5th grade 10:15-11:15 a.m. Lectionary texts: Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Psalm 32; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11.
Senior High Sunday School
Second Sunday lunch
Youth Ministry 6 p.m.

FEBRUARY 17. SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT. Service at 10:00 a.m. Infant and toddler care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years old through 5th grade 10:15-11:15 a.m. Lectionary texts: Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17; Matthew 17:1-9.
Middle School Sunday School
Winter Scavenger Hunt – 12-3 p.m. (Senior High)
Bible Adventures Ministry 5-7 p.m.

FEBRUARY 24. THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT. Service at 10:00 a.m. Infant and toddler care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years old through 5th grade 10:15-11:15 am. Lectionary texts: Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42.
All Ministry Meeting after worship
GLBT Potluck – 6 p.m.

Worship at Robbinsdale United Church of Christ

As we get ready for Lent, it may be a wonderful time to invite a friend to join you for worship. This month we enter into Lent led by the powerful spiritual women in our congregation. As Lent arrives early in our calendar, we will be able to experience this season in a darker time. I think that it is an appropriate thing because we will be asked this Lent to examine both our hope and our brokenness. We will be asked to look at both where we have come from and where God is leading us. We will be asked to look at where we have suffered and where we have been healed. This will be a rich spiritual experience that prepares us to live closer to God.

February 3rd – Communion: Women's Sunday – What is a holy encounter? This Sunday, women of our congregation will explore this question in an interesting conversational format, and David Nordli will lead a women's chorus .

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 6th

Soup and Bread Dinner – 6:00 – 6:45 p.m. (FREE)
Worship – 7:00 p.m.

It is important to start Lent by acknowledging that we are not alone. We are bound in life and death to each other. There are no solitary practitioners of Christianity. This special Wednesday service reminds us that we are connected. Come and enjoy a meal with your church family and stay for a service that is deep in practice and meaning. If you have any questions about this service or the dinner, see a member of the Worship Ministry.

February 10th – First Sunday in Lent –
Sacrament of Baptism for Amanda Sonquist
Scripture Readings – Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7 and Romans 5:12-19
Sermon: “Understanding Sin and Grace” – Rev. T. Michael Rock

Let's talk about sin! In the Hebrew scriptures, sin separates Adam from God and the garden, but, more importantly, introduces the idea that death also separates us from God and one another. The message of grace redraws the lines of separation. No longer do sin and death remove us

Continued on next page

Continued from page 2

From God and each other. Together we need to understand that nothing can separate us from God's love.

February 17th – Second Sunday in Lent

Scripture Readings – Psalm 121 and John 3:1-17

Sermon: “On the One Hand ...” – Dwight Wagenius

For some, the passages from John 3, “you must be born anew” and that “God so loved the world that he gave his only son,” are the most inspirational passages in the Bible. Others don't understand why. Can we all be so inspired?

February 24th – Third Sunday in Lent – One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

Scripture Readings – Exodus 17:1-7 and Romans 5:1-11

Sermon: “Suffering, Endurance, Character, and Hope” – Rev. T. Michael Rock

Here in the midst of our journey, we find ourselves reminded of our complete humanity. Humanity IS Suffering! It is part of who we are. Our response to that suffering makes a difference in our lives. The path laid before us this Sunday moves us from suffering to hope. If this seems difficult or confusing, I'll expect to see you sitting in the pew.

Lent at Robbinsdale United Church of Christ

The season of Lent is time of reflection and renewal for many people. Some people give things up for Lent as a spiritual practice. I like to take things on to grow my faith. The practice of faith is always much easier when we are not alone, so you are invited to take on a spiritual practice this Lent. There will be sign up sheets after worship, or you can call or e-mail your choice. Each week you will receive an e-mail with encouragement for your new practice.

Choice 1 – Fasting – On Mondays during Lent, from sunrise to sunset, you are invited to refrain from eating, while being mindful and aware of both your physical and spiritual hunger. You may choose to fast the whole time or for one meal. Know you have the permission to make this spiritual practice your own.

Choice 2 – Lectio Divina – This is a form of Bible study that asks you to read a short passage from scripture and allow it to become a prayer for your

life. Each week you will be given scripture choices, or you can find one of your own.

Choice 3 – Prayer / Meditation – Join us for prayer and meditation on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. in the Prayer Room. There will be a short reading or outline of the many ways to pray and then silence for you to breathe and focus on the breath of God in your life.

Choice 4 – Alms Giving – This is a fun spiritual practice. This involves a discipline of giving and generosity. One way to practice is to put \$2 in a jar each day during Lent. Just be mindful of setting aside \$2, or any amount of your choice, and watch the jar fill up. At the end of Lent, find a person or place to give the money away. In doing so, you will not just donate money, but you will give a piece of your spirit away. Pray about the recipient and infuse your gift with love. Some folks add a \$1 for every time they swear or utter unkind words. This is a simple way of staying “on course” during Lent.

It is my hope that folks will also take on one or more of these practices for the six weeks of Lent. Remember, when you sign up to take on one of these practices, you will receive a special e-mail of encouragement on Mondays from your pastor and teacher. If you have any other questions, please talk with T. Michael at any time.

Legislative Day on the Hill: Save the date! March 13, 2008

Day on the Hill is Minnesota's Interfaith Lobby Day for Social Justice. Participants are briefed on social justice issues and then have an opportunity to meet with members of the legislature. It is sponsored by the Minnesota Council of Churches, Minnesota Catholic Conference, Jewish Community Relations of Minnesota and the Dakotas, and Islamic Center of Minnesota. Look for registration forms on the bulletin board outside the sanctuary or go to www.jrlc.org for more information on this important event. Jim Puffer, Gretchen Goede, Cheryl Nordquist and T. Michael attended last year. You could talk with them about **Day on the Hill**.



***Notes from Our Student Minister
Dwight Wagenius***

While reflecting in preparation for writing this note, I realized that some time during January I passed the midpoint in my sojourn with you. The time is flying. I appreciate the help you have given me in climbing the steep learning curve I am on.

John and Jenny welcomed me into joining them and T. Michael in planning their January 19 wedding ceremony, a valuable experience for an intern minister. Then Bridget Joy Rock arrived at a time that gave me the opportunity to conduct my first wedding rehearsal. Thanks, Bridget, your timing was exquisite. Thanks, best wishes, and congratulations to Jenny and John. Daughter Emily did a great job reading scripture during the ceremony.

In January I led a discussion of precinct caucuses in Minnesota. I hope it induced some of you to attend your precinct caucus. I also worked with the Bible Adventures Ministry in preparing for February's presentations. I will conduct the first Sunday in February exercise with all but the oldest Bible adventures children. That makes the learning curve a bit steeper; I'm excited. I will also be preaching in February on the 17th on what are, to some, the most inspiring passages in the Bible. And, I'll be back in classes in February after a break from classes in January.

I will do a variety of Lenten things with you and then, in April, I will lead a three-part series of discussions on global warming, our carbon footprint, and related challenges. I'm in the process of deciding on the content and scope of this effort. I know some of what I want to generate discussion on, but I want your feedback and guidance on what you want to discuss. I'll appreciate your ideas.

You continue to teach me, challenge me, inspire me. Thanks.

Peace,
Dwight

**GLBT Potluck
ALL Are Welcome!!
Sunday, February 24, at 6:00 p.m.**



**Coordinating Council
January 17, 2008**

*Treasurer: Much of the 2007 income gap was made up; expenses were in line. Gas bill smaller; good energy conservation efforts.

*Clerk: Proposed bylaw changes and 2008 budget will be posted 2 weeks before Annual Meeting, Feb. 3.

*T. Michael and a task force have been looking into the feasibility of hiring a part-time business manager; however, not in 2008 budget at this time.

*Good turn-out for the recent Opportunity Next Door luncheon. Future information meetings after church on Jan. 27, Feb. 17, and March 2.

*Coming up: Interviews for next year's student minister.

*Pro Choice Lobby Day, March 4. Joint Religious Legislative Coalition Day on the Hill, March 13, with Sally Dick speaking (see article elsewhere in this issue).

*Pledges for 2008: 105 pledges totaling \$241,488 as of Jan. 13.

*Council reviewed and approved 2008 budget for presentation at Annual Meeting with specific discussion on raising OCWM commitment and on increasing pastor's compensation after his successful first full year. Budget is posted on the bulletin board in the narthex.

*Nominating Committee: still need to fill a couple of spots on Communication & Evangelism. Volunteers?

*Endowment income in 2007 was \$5911. Council voted to make it available for special projects as was done the previous year.

“Opportunity Next Door”

We are in a period of discernment regarding the mission and outreach of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ. Will we identify low-income housing as a part of our mission? Will our passion lead us to respond to the families next door? Will we give to support this mission? Will we partner with a real estate developer to bring this vision to fruition? It is time to ask the questions and receive some answers. You are invited.

February 17th and March 2nd — Mission Inquiry, following worship

March 16th – Potluck with potential partner – Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation

March 30th – Congregational Meeting to vote on moving this project forward

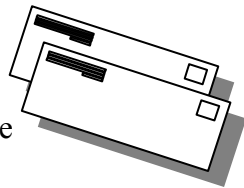
Please feel free to talk with a member of this Mission Task Force – Julie Manworren, Jim Puffer, Ken Barker, Kay Barker, Dan Haugen, Ken Mallek, Ken Beck, Lyn Koss, Lisa Lindesmith, Chioma Onwukwe, Brad Welton, and T. Michael Rock

Mark your calendar for..

“LOVE LETTERS”

A Play

Performed by Bill and Diane Sowden



****DATE CHANGE****

NEW DATE – Saturday, April 5, at 7:00 p.m.

Please invite your friends.

Donation: \$10—proceeds to organ repair fund



Get to Know PRISM

A winter evening out for dinner and tour is awaiting you. We are going out into the neighborhood and to PRISM. On Feb. 20, the 3rd Wednesday experience begins at 6:30 p.m. at PRISM, located at 730 Florida Ave and Laurel. The Community Outreach Ministry and PRISM volunteer Peggy Spielman will provide the supper. After

supper a staff member will share the wonderful spaces at PRISM that serve so many families in the west metro. You will see food shelves, the clothing market, and the auto body shop. You will learn more about how PRISM screens clients and the many services available for families in need. PRISM has been around many years, and RUCC has been a longtime supporter for it. Come and see for yourselves what PRISM (People Responding in Social Ministry) offers.

Date: February 20

730 Florida Ave. & Laurel in Golden Valley

6:30 p.m. supper

7:15 p.m. Tour of PRISM

Look for a sign-up at church if you would like a ride or are willing to be a driver from the church or for others living in or near your neighborhood.

Undies Sundays for PRISM

Seeing underwear on the cart at church may be embarrassing, but can you imagine how it feels not to have it or to wear the same underwear several days if you have only a few pairs? Thank you for answering the call to make Undies Sunday a success, and thank you in advance from the recipients at PRISM. This year RUCC donated 85 pairs of underwear in men's, women's and children's sizes and 2 packs of 30 diapers. Our church is unique in many ways, but we are the **only** church to sponsor “Undies Sundays” for PRISM.

THANK YOU!

--The Community Outreach Ministry

The Children's Time "Box"

has added a new dimension to our worship. Introduced by T. Michael at the beginning of September, a box is given to a different child each week to be returned the next week with something inside that is not a toy or anything that bites. Thank you to **Harry Jensen** for bringing a **dictionary**; to **Ben Stoos-Tysver** for bringing a **Bible** and to **Finn Rogan** for bringing a **red knitted scarf**. (And thanks to Nancy Bossert, T. Michael and Dawn Conn for opening the box!!) **How many wonderful ways we have learned to see God's presence and action in the world through our children!!!**



**INTERFAITH LEISURE AGE
9 AM. SOCIAL HOUR
12 NOON LUNCH AND PROGRAM:
Lunch Reservations Required
Elim Lutheran Church.**

3748 West Broadway in Robbinsdale

Feb. 7: Karl Commers presents a tribute show about Neil Diamond.

Feb. 14: Valentine's Party with prizes and surprises. Program: Dan and Karin Wickman, singer and keyboard.

Feb. 21: Blood pressures taken 9:30-11:30 a.m. Program: Tara B sings and plays piano.

Feb. 28: February Birthday Party. Program: Lyndon Peterson, a one-man band!

Leisure Age meets on Thursday from 9:00-2:00. Lunch costs \$8.00. It is now necessary to make reservations if you plan to attend. If you're present one week, you can sign the reservation book that is passed at the table to attend the following week. If you are not present, you can make reservations Monday 9 a.m. to noon by calling Jean Lindstrom at 763-537-1171. You may also use this number to cancel a reservation.

*If you have any questions, please contact:
Leonard Sidle, 763-504-0465
or Keith Smith, 612-588-1401*

CORRECTION: Leisure Age Schedule

RUCC will be serving **March 6th and 13th** instead of February 7th and 14th as listed in the January issue.

However, T. Michael will still be doing chapel on Feb. 14th as previously announced. Please join him at that time for lunch at Elim. There will be a Valentine's Day party and entertainment by Dan and Karin Wickman to help celebrate. Everyone is welcome to join T. Michael that day.

Community News

WEDDING

Jenny Borchardt and John Norberg were married here at Robbinsdale UCC on January 19th! Congratulations!

BIRTHS

Congratulations to Morgan, T. Michael, and Nathan Rock on the birth of daughter Bridget Joy on January 18. And *congratulations* also to Tim Hoppe and Katie Knutson on the birth of their son on January 18. Both babies were born at HCMC on the same day!



MEMBERS WITH SPECIAL CONCERNS

Please keep these church friends in your prayers:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Gert Anderson | Janet Johnson |
| Sylvia Anderson | Madge Johnson |
| Jeanne Angel | Lois Larsen |
| Amanda Busch | Kathy Plumb |
| Shirley Dayton | Ellinor Porter |
| Eleanor Evans | Barbara Sexton |
| Ken Evans | June Swanson |
| Vince Flesness | Barbara Webber |
| Rodney Giddings | Arlene Whelan |
| Ruthe Hawn | |

**Tuesdays w/T. – A Bible Study for Beginners
6:00 p.m.**

This will be a wonderful time to explore and learn from each other about the scripture. This Bible Study is designed in a way that folk are welcome to drop in from time to time or attend every week. No homework is required, and all questions are welcome. Bible Study will last one hour. This month we will continue to read and reflect on the Psalms as a mirror of faith. It is important to read the Bible and also to read it in community. This is the invitation to you to come. All levels are welcome, and there is child care provided. If you have any questions, please talk with T. Michael.

**When was the last time
you checked out our website?**

www.robbinsdaleucc.org

Our webmaster, Paul Amundson, has made some great changes to our website, but we are still in need of folks to take pictures of church events and people. If you have ideas about the website or would like to be one of our official photographers, e-mail Paul at p.amundson@usfamily.net or T. Michael at tmichael@robbinsdaleucc.org





Happy Birthday!

Greetings and best wishes to all members and friends of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ who celebrate their birthdays in February.

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------|----|
| Tracey | Fluegel | February | 1 |
| Toni | Pangborn | February | 1 |
| Ken | Barker | February | 3 |
| Jim | Greenwood | February | 3 |
| Diana | Courtney | February | 4 |
| Gretchen | Goede | February | 6 |
| Jennifer | Stoos | February | 7 |
| Sharon | Blaine | February | 9 |
| Cameron | Gardner | February | 12 |
| Corinne | Myers | February | 13 |
| John | Pyne Mendolia | February | 15 |
| Rose | Finnemore | February | 16 |
| Wendy | Lukaszewski | February | 17 |
| Gert | Wehking | February | 17 |
| Alexander | Roelofs | February | 21 |
| Christopher | Roelofs | February | 21 |
| Steve | Quesnel | February | 26 |
| Kira | Braun | February | 27 |



Wanted: People willing to try and learn something new, No sewing experience necessary! NO rights or wrongs!

Helpful, like to play with color and patterns, tie knots, can hold your breath for short periods of time! Interested to find out why? Come to the **quilting group** the first Monday evening of the month through May! Drop in anytime between 5:00 and 9:00 p.m.

New Member Sunday – May 4th

If you would like to become a member of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ, or know someone who does, please call T. Michael at the church office, so a special invitation can come forward. Thank you.

Join Pilgrim Guild!

Next Meeting is February 12

The Pilgrim Guild wants new members! We know you are out there. We want adults of all ages to join us on the second Tuesday at noon. Come for the social time. Come for delicious meals or dessert. Come for fun and informative programs. Come to help with good works in the church. We have something for just about everybody. Already a member? Consider bringing a friend or two.



Our next meeting is **Tuesday, February 12**. Social time begins at noon with dessert served at 12:30. Stan Atkinson and Keith Smith are our hosts. A short business meeting will be followed by playing Bunko. This is an easy dice game - no special skills required. **Please bring (if you have one) a wrapped White Elephant Gift to be used as a prize.**

If you are not on the calling list and would like to be, talk to Stan Atkinson. If you want to come try us out, just let Keith or Jan Paulsen know you'll be there. Hope to see you in February.

Creating a Culture of Peace: Practical Nonviolence for Personal and Social Transformation

Robbinsdale United Church of Christ
Heritage Hall
Fri., March 7th – 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Sat., March 8th – 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Sun., March 9th – Noon to 5 p.m.

The cost is \$30 for members of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ and \$130 for friends and guests. All meals are covered.

What is this training about? This program has been designed to bring out the extraordinary in all people. It offers a journey through experience of violence, a practicum on active nonviolence, a study of social movements and change, and a practical exercise on how to build community. The workshop ends with planning on how to take this experience into our families, into our work and into the world.

Please fill out a registration form and turn it in to the church office by Sunday, February 17th.

Worship Note. . .

RUCC Covenant

The Worship Ministry, with help from some gifted writers in our midst, have moved to offer this covenant in the hopes that it become a part of our liturgy and a mirror to remind ourselves who we are called to be.

**We covenant together as a community of
God's people seeking God's will:
Offering love and witness to one another,
Following Christ,
Accepting all people,
Working for peace and justice,
Sharing God's love in the world.**

Please share comments with members of the Worship Ministry.



March Issue. . .

Mustard Seed



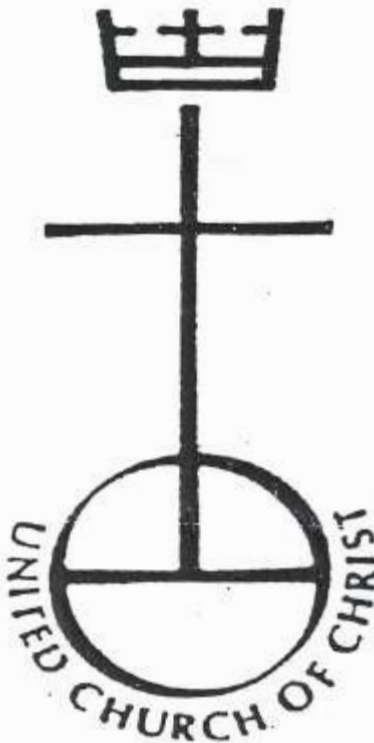
Please place all articles for the next issue of the Mustard Seed in the box marked "Mustard Seed" on the shelf inside the door to the workroom in the church office, mail them to Barbara Wills, 6214 Upland Lane No., Maple Grove 55311, or e-mail to thewillses@aol.com so that they are received by the deadline.

MARCH ISSUE DEADLINE

Sunday, Feb. 24 , 11 a.m.

No exceptions please.

(March issue will be mailed Friday, Feb. 29.)



**Robbinsdale United Church of Christ
4200 Lake Road
Robbinsdale, MN 55422**

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