

THE MUSTARD SEED



Vol. 36, Issue 5, January, 2009, Edition

Robbinsdale United Church of Christ • 4200 Lake Road • Robbinsdale, Minnesota 55422 • 763-537-6965 • Fax: 763-537-6477
Web site address: <http://www.robbinsdaleucc.org> • E-mail address: office@robbinsdaleucc.org

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**Merry
Christmas!**

From Your Pastor And Teacher

"Symbolizing eternal hope, the wreath goes 'round and 'round, and where it starts or ends cannot be found. Woven of things that grow - for life, and hung for holiday delight the wreath must be left in place from Advent through Twelfth Night."
— unknown origin

Advent is indeed my favorite time in the liturgical year. For some good reasons, we read from the prophets of hope and reconciliation during this season. I love it because of how the ancient texts have a way of intersecting with our everyday lives. Many of us will spend time with family in the weeks ahead. Some of that family comes from far away and others are close by, yet we don't see them unless we have to gather for a wedding or a funeral. Christmas has a special way of bringing people together. What Advent asks is that we spend time preparing for the moment when we are all in the same room. Advent asks that we read the stories of hope and reconciliation not because we need to hear these stories before we welcome Jesus. We are asked to read these stories precisely because they are relevant to the way we live with those around us. The prophets were living in a world of division and strife. The religion of the people had become increasingly irrelevant as people sought prestige and power. Family ties had become less and less an important part of the culture. It is true, these Jewish prophets did foretell the birth of the Messiah, but they also did the hard work of truth telling. You get this one chance, this one lifetime to do something truly amazing. You've got this one chance to be together, and yet many of us choose a life of isolation. The prophet's goal is connection, to family and to God. For Isaiah it is one and the same. My hope is that all of us see this Advent as our opportunity to practice the hope and reconciliation that is preached about.

The current cultural lens that we carry into this Advent season is the definition of family. For most it does mean those who share DNA and a family story, but for many, family means those with whom we choose to share our intimacy and vulnerability. In fact, we have a family right here at Robbinsdale United Church of Christ. We are a collection of different and diverse people who have chosen each other to share our ups and downs, our trials and our joy. We have chosen each other sometimes because that biological family has not understood how truly wonderful each of us are. One of my favorite things about RUCC is that we have several generations of families in the pews together, and that those families model the hope and reconciliation that has guided their lives and their faith.

May our Advent this year be guided by the opportunity for hope and reconciliation in our church, in our families, and in our world.

See you in church,
T. Michael





December

December 7. Second Sunday in Advent. Worship at 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion. Infant and Toddler Care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years old through 2nd grade, from 10:15-11:15 a.m. Lectionary texts: Isaiah 40: 1 – 11; Psalm 85: 1 – 2, 8–13; II Peter 3: 8 – 15a; Mark 1: 1 - 8.

December 14. Third Sunday in Advent. Worship at 10:00 a.m. Infant and Toddler Care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years old through 5th grade from 10:15-11:15 a.m. Lectionary texts: Isaiah 61: 1 – 4, 8 – 11; Psalm 126 or Luke 1: 47 – 55; I Thess. 5: 16 – 24; John 1: 6 – 8, 19 - 28.

December 21. Fourth Sunday in Advent. Service at 10:00 a.m. Infant and Toddler Care available. Children’s Christmas Pageant. Lectionary texts: II Samuel 7: 1 – 11, 16; Luke 1: 47 – 55 or Ps. 89: 1– 4, 19 – 26; Romans 16: 25 – 27; Luke 1: 26 – 38.

December 24. Christmas Eve. Services at 4:00 and 10:00 p.m. **December 25. Christmas Day.** Service at 10:00 a.m. Lectionary texts: Isaiah 9: 2 -7, Psalm 96, Titus 2: 11 -14, Luke 2: 1 – 14, (15 – 20).

December 28. First Sunday After Christmas. Service at 10:00 a.m. Infant and Toddler Care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years old through 5th grade, from 10:15 - 11:15 a.m. Lectionary texts: Isaiah 61: 10 – 62:3, Psalm 148, Galatians 4: 4 – 7, Luke 2: 22 - 40.

Worship in December

“Christmas – It’s Not YOUR Birthday”

December marks the season of Advent in our church year. It is a season of waiting and watching. It is a season that asks us to slow down and contemplate what is “next” for us in our lives. This is a counter-cultural idea, but one that we lift up as people of faith. Let us come to worship, bring our friends, and ask ourselves what is “happening” in us?

December 7th – 2nd Sunday in Advent; Communion
Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11
Sermon: “Comfortable Christians” – Rev. T. Michael Rock
The second Sunday in Advent invites us on a journey

back to a time when people wondered about the future of their world. They had witnessed war and poverty on grand scales and their faith had waned. The prophet comes into their midst and proclaims that another future is possible. This is a great time to invite a friend to be with you in church on this Advent journey.

December 14th – 3rd Sunday in Advent

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Sermon: “The Mission of the Servant”– Rev. T. Michael Rock

This Sunday we’ll explore the concept of change and its relationship to Advent. We’ll celebrate traditions and crack open the door to a new way of being in the world. We’ll see what meaning this season has for the way we live our lives. Have you invited a friend to church this month? Now is the time.

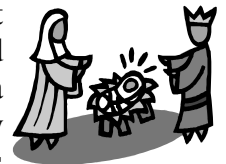
Sunday, December 14th– BLUE CHRISTMAS WORSHIP, 7:00 p.m.

Feeling down this holiday season? For some people, Advent and Christmas are not times of joyful expectation and good cheer, but times of “forced” good cheer. Thus, our Blue Christmas service is a quiet, meaningful service of meditation, music, and prayer for those who are feeling lost and alone this holiday season, for those who find the season difficult to bear, for those who need an extra hug, and for those who just to wish to support others or have a quiet time in a busy season. Come to feel the support of your church family. Child care will be provided as well as dessert and fellowship following the service.

December 21st – 4th Sunday in Advent – CHILDREN’S PAGEANT

Scriptures: Luke 2 and Matthew 2

In a unique turn from a traditional pageant, the children of our Bible Adventures will sing and read us into the season. This day is not about cute costumes and organized chaos, it is about a baby being born. An everyday occurrence, but this story is something very special.



Worship continued on next page

Continued from page 2

Wednesday, December 24th – CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00 p.m. – Family Celebration with Candlelight
Come and bring to the family to the story and meaning of Christmas as told and led by our Student Minister, Frank Bennett. You may even get a chance to live out the story in a whole new way.

10:00 p.m. – Lessons and Carols with Candlelight

Scripture: John 1:1-14

Sermon Title: “Word and Light” – Rev. T. Michael Rock

This traditional service will bring forward our gifted choir to continue their telling of the sacred story through music. Prelude music will start the service and our short meditation will bring us all into that state of reverence and remembrance. It may even feel like a shift is happening as we experience this same story once again.

Thursday, December 25th – CHRISTMAS DAY with Communion, 10:00 a.m.

Scripture – Mark 1:1-8

Sermon – “A Visit from John the Baptizer”

Christmas morning is a time of chaos for most families and a profoundly lonely time for others. Our church is here to support each family in its search for meaning and connection. Therefore, we have to offer this special service on this holy day. We will sing traditional songs, hear stories and even get visited by one of the characters who prepared the way for this event to happen. We will remember that the meaning for this season doesn't lie wrapped in tape and plastic, but exists in the warmth of our hearts and smiles. Come as you are, bring friends and family, and celebrate this holy day with your wider church family.

December 28th – SERVICE OF LIGHT

Scriptures: Galatians 4:4-7 and Luke 2:22-40

Sermon: “Hope and Light in a Broken World”

A Sunday to remember our losses and also our hopes for the future. A new year is on the horizon and we'll spend some time as a congregation remembering our past year and looking ahead to what lies in front of us. We'll work together to make this service one full of meaning for each of our lives.

THE MEANING OF THE SACRAMENT

December 7, Communion Breakfast

This summer I was caught in a wonderful

conversation about the meaning of communion. This is a sacred meal that can be packed with meaning and transformational possibilities. Too often we pass it by as “normal” or “regular” and miss the significance of how it can connect us to community. My conversation partner reminded me that the biblical communion meal takes place at the end of the meal. The precursor to the meal is conversation, building the community and sharing stories. So, here is the invitation to Communion Breakfast.

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. – Full breakfast will be served in Fellowship Hall

Free will offering will be accepted.

Our December Breakfast Host: Willa Truehart

A volunteer is needed to host on the first Sunday of the month in January and February. If you have any questions, please talk with T. Michael.

YEP - 2

YOUTH at RUCC

Middle School YEP 2

December 14th – Christmas Caroling to church members

1:00-4:00 p.m.

High School YEP 2

December 5 and 6 – Our Whole Lives Lock-In

7:00 p.m. Friday to 12 noon Saturday

December 7th – High School Youth respond to Homelessness

Plan for Mission Trip 2009

7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Financial Corner at RUCC

Thru October 31, 2008

	<i>Year to Date</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Difference (-)</i>
Income:	\$179,871.00	201,400.00	-21,529.00
Expenses:	\$214,307.84	216,185.09	-1,877.25

What this means: Pledge income is down, but normal because many families pay at the end of the year. (Consider this to be a gentle reminder.) Expenses are very close to budget even with a large additional gas bill. If you have any questions, please talk with our Treasurer, Brad Welton.



Help Those Less Fortunate in This Season of Giving

Donate to PRISM's Holiday Shoppe

The Community Outreach Ministry would like to invite everyone to participate in PRISM's Holiday Shoppe by purchasing new toys for needy children. The Christmas tree in the narthex is covered with tags that list the age and gender of a child: grab a tag and go shopping! (Or just bring in a gift of your choosing without guidance from a tag.)



All varieties of gifts are welcome, big, medium and small in size. Books, games, toys, puzzles, art supplies and coloring books are some easy ideas. (No violent toys, please.) By the way, PRISM is always short on gifts for kids ages 12-18; suggestions for this age group include CDs, movies on DVD, cameras, games, watches and gift cards. Bring your unwrapped gifts to church, with the price or a receipt attached, and if you have a tag, tape it or clip it to the gift. Please have the presents at church no later than Thursday, December 11th, so they can be delivered in time for parents to "go shopping" on December 13th. Also, PRISM welcomes volunteers to help with setting up the Holiday Shoppe at an area church on December 12th, and running it on the 13th. Check PRISM's website for more information or email kate.menendez@gmail.com.

Bring Food or Donate Cash

PRISM is still in *grave need of food* for its food shelf. Use of the food shelf by needy families is on the rise every single week, and contributions are down in our slumping economy. To top it all off, PRISM's costs for food, fuel and other necessities are rising every day. Please help by bringing non-perishable food donations to church whenever possible. Any food item, any amount, is very appreciated. Monetary contributions are also very welcome as they allow PRISM to purchase needed food at wholesale prices.

RUCC has done a wonderful job of supporting PRISM and its many client families during this time of crisis. In the last two months we have donated over 350 pounds of food and more than \$2,000 as a congregation. Let's keep up the good work, and continue to support our neighbors in need.

Faith Formation Needs Your Help! Please Sign Up!



Big problems are often solved by small solutions. Faith Formation Ministry's big problem is food. It seems we either have way too much or too little of it. In our present economy this means money thrown away. We are attempting to be a "green" church, so we want to limit waste. In an effort to conserve money, product and avoid waste--to say nothing of the headaches of planning and setting up for an event--we are instigating the "sign-up sheet." Because our events are so diverse we have had as few as 8 people show up or as many as 70.

We will have a poster in the narthex and request a number of people you are bringing and how many will need child care for each event we sponsor. Our ministry members would often like to see our programs too, and while we do have access to outside child care, we hate to waste the time and money if it is not needed.

If you forget to sign up please come anyway. We never want to discourage anyone from coming to the programs. We just want to keep our cooks happy and have the proper adult to child ratio so our caregivers will volunteer again! If your plans change at the last minute, feel free to call the church office and let Gretchen know and she will pass along the information to us. The sign-up sheet is a guide not a reservation--we always plan for a few more, and we understand life's complexities! We promise to let you know about events ahead of time if you will, in turn, let us know if you can attend. Thanks for your help!

We also wish to thank everyone who filled out a questionnaire for us. They were invaluable. We shall continue with the 2nd Sunday events but the 3rd Wednesday will be no more. Instead we will have other programming, but events will happen more randomly--see our announcement elsewhere in this issue for a *movie event on Saturday, January 3rd*.

Baptism

Rosaria Marilyn Mimi Busch born in May of 2007, was baptized Sunday, November 2. Her parents are Amanda Busch and Wiley E. Merritt.

Death

Our sympathy goes out to the family and friends of Gerald Abild who died November 5. The memorial service was held November 10 at RUCC.

Help RUCC to Go GREEN!

The Community Outreach Ministry has been racking its collective brain. The question: to decide on the most creative, effective, efficient and “doable” ways to help our church become the best ecological stewards we can be. Our best idea is to ask you for your best ideas. During the next few weeks we’ll be asking you to think about all the ways, big and small, RUCC might work together to take care of our planet. They might be ways to save energy, reduce consumption, or enhance our environment. We want to gather all ideas, sort them out, and then decide together where to begin.

Look for a poster in the narthex that asks you to jot down your thoughts about environmental action. We’ll continue to gather ideas from the congregation throughout December. In early January, we’ll make some decisions based on our collective reflection. Thanks in advance for your help!

“The Box”



Thank you from the Worship Ministry for the creativity of the children who bring items for "The Box" and for the creativity of the adults who weave stories for us all to enhance our worship service and our spiritual life. We are very grateful

Are you considering a year end gift to RUCC?

One of the ways to give is to do so in honor of someone you know and love by giving to something they believe in. If you believe in the ministry and mission here at RUCC, then it would make a perfect gift under the tree to make a donation in someone else’s name. You could even celebrate the gift of music the choir brings each week or our commitment to the families at PRISM and FMF. Gifts in excess of your pledge are always appreciated and graciously received. We even have an easy way for you to transfer stock and it’s a great way to receive an extra tax deduction for 2008. If you would like to transfer stock, please call the church office or T. Michael to ask for details. Our ministry will be multiplied when we all use our gifts to their fullest.

IRA gift options extended by Congress

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 includes a two-year extension of the IRA charitable rollover. Originally enacted as part of the

Pension Protection Act of 2006, this provision permits IRA owners starting at age 70½ to make charitable gifts totaling up to \$100,000 per year from their IRAs tax-free if made directly to qualified entities such as Robbinsdale United Church of Christ.

To make a qualified charitable rollover to RUCC, you should contact your IRA custodian. Ask for the IRA Charitable Rollover transfer forms. And to qualify for a charitable distribution, your IRA custodian must directly transfer the funds to RUCC rather than a withdrawal by you for later gifting. Otherwise, the IRA withdrawal will be taxed if you receive it.

Remember: For the transfer to qualify for exclusion in 2008, the distribution must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2008.

ALMS BOX

Giving alms (money) to the poor has been a faithful practice for hundreds of years. The Community Outreach Ministry has heard a request from the congregation that we should have such a box set out on Sunday mornings and anytime we gather to eat together as a reminder that we need to be mindful of those that have a hard time putting food on their table. Please look for the Alms Box and remember to put a dollar or two in the box anytime you have the chance. It is a wonderful reminder for us all.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

We had a great consecration Sunday. Over 110 people celebrated with our meatloaf dinner and good fellowship. Pledges from the first Sunday were 78 pledges for \$194,826. If you are wondering, we have about 120 families or individuals who give to RUCC regularly. So ... we have reached 67% of our pledge goal of \$291,479.

If you have not yet pledged, we encourage you to send a pledge to the office as soon as possible. Pledges allow our Coordinating Council and the Ministries to be good stewards of our money as they finalize the budget for all of us to approve at the 2009 Annual Congregation Meeting.

—Your Stewardship Committee

December Schedule...

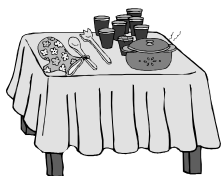
**INTERFAITH LEISURE AGE
9 AM. SOCIAL HOUR
12 NOON LUNCH AND PROGRAM:
Lunch Reservations Required
Elim Lutheran Church.
3748 West Broadway in Robbinsdale**

Dec. 4: Red Johnson, singer and song writer.
Dec. 11: December Birthday Party. Musical program by Peggy George.
Dec. 18: Blood pressures taken 9:30-11:30 a.m. Christmas Party, with a special Christmas show presented by Mary and Marie Ripka.
Dec. 25: *No Leisure Age. Merry Christmas!*

Leisure Age meets on Thursday from 9:00-2:00. Lunch costs \$9.00. It is 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*

Pilgrim Guild Christmas Potluck



Pilgrim Guild members, other church members, and guests are invited to the annual Pilgrim Guild Christmas Potluck Luncheon on Tuesday, December 9. We will gather at noon and eat as soon as the dishes are set out. The ever popular **Happy Notes** will entertain us at 1:00. The **Happy Notes** are directed by Bill Sowden and accompanied by Steve Quesnel. Hosts for the day are Wayne and Donna Pitmon, Sandy Nelson, and Jean Hosterman. Please come join us for this wonderful holiday event!

Pilgrim Guild Annual Bake Sale

The annual Bake Sale, sponsored by the Pilgrim Guild, is scheduled for Sunday, December 14th, after church. As in past years, we encourage church members and friends to participate by donating goods and by purchasing goodies for the



upcoming holidays. Money raised will be used for special projects at RUCC and various charities.

Help Decorate the Tree of Warmth!

Once again our fall has been fairly mild, but we know that won't last. The days of snow and sub-zero temperatures will be coming soon. With this in mind, the Pilgrim Guild is again sponsoring a **Tree of Warmth**. Please help us decorate the tree with mittens, hats, scarves, gloves, and slippers for children, teenagers, and adults. Items collected will be donated to PRISM for those who need these very basic winter apparel items that we take for granted. Together we can make a difference.



For the Bible Tells Me So: A Movie Event

Faith Formation Ministry is sponsoring an inter-church event and will be inviting Robin Raudabaugh (our former co-pastor) and her church in Maple Grove to join us in viewing the award-winning documentary "For the Bible Tells Me So." As this goes to press we don't have a time confirmation, but we do have a date—Saturday evening, January 3rd. The movie is about 5 ordinary families and their journey with homosexuality, intermingled with commentary from religious leaders and scholars' views on how the Bible has been used and misused in response. It includes Rep. Richard Gephardt, whose daughter is gay, and Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson who is gay (he had to wear a bullet-proof vest when he first "came out"). One of the families who is featured in the film will also be joining us for discussion. The movie is 99 minutes long and we will allow 45 minutes for discussion afterward. Refreshments will be offered. Please mark Jan. 3rd on your calendar and watch for further updates.



There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex so we can plan food and child care. Please feel free to bring a guest--there are few families who are unaffected by the gay issue. Older children may find the viewing helpful in dealing with their own or family members' issues. If you would like more details, you may go to firstrunfeatures.com/forthebible_synopsis.html. This website can be very helpful.

P.S. Bring plenty of tissues—this film can be heart-breaking.



Happy Birthday!
Greetings and best wishes to all members and friends of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ who celebrate their birthdays in December.

Darren	Schultz	December	2
Kathy	Herrmann	December	3
Michael	Rice	December	3
Eric	Bertossi	December	5
Cathy	Salinger	December	6
Alice	MacPherson	December	7
Donna	Pitmon	December	7
Mary Ann	Mead	December	8
Ann	Chisnell	December	10
Jennifer	Master	December	11
Nick	Lauer	December	12
Melanie	Muyres	December	13
Terry	Boelter	December	14
Dan	Haugen	December	15
Emily	Norberg	December	16
Chris	Welton	December	18
Erik	Nordli	December	21
Gordon	Lee	December	22
Cesar	Berra, Jr.	December	23
Sharon	Mallak	December	27
Chantelle	Pelzer	December	27
Jane	Boggs	December	31
Donna	MacDonald	December	31
David	Wogsland	December	31

The Women's Group Is Planning Ahead

The Women's Group gathered on Nov. 2nd. The 13 of us present made some decisions that will take us through June. We have found that the 1st Sunday of the month gets too busy (and late), so we are changing to the 3rd Sunday of the month. Unless otherwise noted, we will do a potluck for each gathering--this way there is plenty of food for those who forgot (there is always too much food) and this allows for more sharing and camaraderie. We will forgo a December gathering since that is the Sunday before Christmas, so this will be our 6 month calendar (barring scheduling conflicts of our speakers):

Jan. 18--Movie "Iron Jawed Angels" will be shown (selected scenes) and discussed. About the

Suffragette Movement and the sacrifices and indignities these courageous women went through to get us the vote. Linda Smith will facilitate the meeting and Louiva Puffer is in charge of set up for potluck.

Feb. 15--Jan Walker will bring in a woman and her German born mother who lived through the atrocities of World War II as a non-Jew in a concentration camp (Mom only speaks German so the daughter acts as interpreter.)

March 15--Erma Andrews will bring in an educator who will discuss "how to write your memoirs." She promises to lead a lively discussion on what your "legacy" will be.

April 19--We will expound on "our memoirs" and tell a bit of our own story.

May 17--Mary Jane Lee will lead us in a spiritual book discussion--book yet to be decided.

June 21--We will recap what we did so far and plan for fall.

At each gathering we will ask for a volunteer to lead the next gathering--the *Grand Poobah*--and someone to set up for our potluck--plates, napkins, utensils--The *Kitchen Kahuna*! Kathy Plumb will do email announcements and Kathy Jo Gausman will do Mustard Seed articles. We have also decided we would like to do 3-4 field trips per year that would probably be on Saturday and include things like going to the Arboretum, a museum, or seeing special movies or plays. If you know of anything upcoming that you think the group would be interested in, please get all the information and be ready to present it at the next get-together. Due to poor summer attendance we will not meet regularly but may plan a special "field trip." We also discussed child care. Since we do not always need it, it would be left up to the individual to call the church office at least 1 week before the meeting so it can be arranged.

PICTURE DIRECTORIES ARE HERE. . .The picture directories have arrived. One free copy is available for each person or family group whose picture was taken by Olan Mills in March 2007 or who joined RUCC in May 2007, November 2007, and May 2008. If you are not in these groups or if you want an extra copy, you may purchase a copy for \$5. For members who have not yet obtained their copy, the directories are in the church office. If your picture was taken by Olan Mills in March 2007, please take the directory which has a label with your name on the back cover. The extra copies are not labeled.

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

At Robbinsdale United Church of Christ
February 6th – 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
February 7th – 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.
February 8th – Noon to 5 p.m.

The cost is \$50 for members of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ and \$150 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, our work and into the world.

Twelve members of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ went through this course last March, and the deep desire was that we offer it again and again for anyone who desires growth and change in their lives.

HELP WANTED!

It is evident that there are gifted and wonderful souls everywhere you turn here at RUCC. After two years of shared ministry with you, I am still in awe of your dedication and faith. I also realize that many of your gifts may feel confined in the “committee structure” of the local church. Our committees and ministries are essential, but we are also looking for a few other folks who feel called to serve but don’t find a monthly meeting to be where they would like to fit in. So, we are experimenting with some free-lance positions that would fill a big need in our congregational life and also be a way for you to serve.

Minister of Membership – Help me to communicate with potential new members, design and implement the new member classes, and assist in the ritual of new member dedication. This person must love to tell the story of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ.

Minister of Community Mission – Act as a contact person with our local mission partners and be the point person for our training and education as a host church for Families Moving Forward. This

person must have a passion for mission and the needs of our community.

Minister of Communications – Help keep our church in the public eye by telling our story via the print and on-line media available to us. Will work with our Office Administrator, Gretchen, and make sure people know who we are.

Minister of Caring – This is for a person trained in Called to Care or BeFriender’s Ministry. Keep the list of pastoral care current and accurate for use in the bulletin and by our Community Nurses. Will also assist in identifying new members to be trained in this valuable ministry.

If you have a desire to try one of these ministries out, please talk with me, Rev. T. Michael Rock.

December 18, 2008:

Homeless Memorial March and Service

To honor and remember those who have died while homeless in Minnesota. The Homeless Memorial March is a silent march. We ask all in attendance to respect the spirit of the event and the memory of those who have died.

Thursday, December 18, 2008

5 p.m. March & Silent Vigil

Hennepin County Government Center, 3rd Ave. S. & 5th St. S., Minneapolis. The march will follow 5th St. S. westward to Nicollet Ave. and proceed south to 28th St.

6:30 p.m. Service of Remembrance

Simpson United Methodist Church, 2740 1st Ave. S., Minneapolis

Speaker: John Song, Assistant Professor, Center for Bioethics; Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, University of Minnesota Medical School

7:30 p.m. Community Meal

Simpson Shelter, lower level of Simpson UMC. All are welcome.

Rides available from T. Michael leaving RUCC at 4:00 p.m.

Shuttles to the march will depart from Kmart, Lake St. & 1st Ave., Minneapolis, at 4:20 p.m. sharp.

Note from Our Student Minister

I was eating dinner at the seminary last Thursday night, and the people around the table were talking about their preparation for the holidays. Lori said she wanted to make ginger cookies. Bill said he and his family always watch the movie “A Christmas Story.” Lou said he and his wife organize their annual bowling tournament for all three generations of their family, trophies included. I said I liked to sing Christmas carols.

How do you prepare? We all have ways of getting into the spirit and making ourselves ready. Advent is all about preparation. There is the physical preparation, which at times seems to dominate our entire lives. There is the spiritual preparation in which we make room in our minds and souls for Christ to enter. Then there is the emotional preparation of joy and happiness, which is difficult for those of us who are reminded of our losses at this time. If preparing for Christmas leaves you sad because you or someone close to you is in grief or pain or brokenness, consider joining us at RUCC for a “Blue Christmas” service of comfort on Sunday, December 14, at 7:00 p.m., with apple pie and ice cream afterwards.

—Frank Bennett

Can you volunteer for. . .

Dinner at Your Door

Dinner at Your Door needs regular or substitute drivers. We deliver meals once a month on the 3rd Tuesday from North Memorial Hospital and the Crystal Community Center. It takes about 1½ hours from the time a driver leaves homes until he or she returns. If you would like to help, either on a regular basis or to substitute in an emergency, please contact Vince Flesness at 763-537-6310.

The clients are so appreciative of this service. Sometimes this is the only contact a recipient has all day. Please consider volunteering!

THANKS to members of the Worship Ministry and to other volunteers who helped to decorate the church for Advent and Christmas.



One of the purposes of RUCC's Faith Community Nursing group is to provide health education

Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis, often referred to as DJD or Degenerative Joint Disease, is the most common form of arthritis affecting over 21 million people today in the United States alone. This disease appears to affect all races equally. However, the most common group to suffer from its debilitating effects is the aging or the elderly population.

Osteoarthritis is caused by a breakdown of cartilage in the joints between our bones. Cartilage acts as a cushion when we move our joints and bones. When there is cartilage loss, there can be direct bone-on-bone contact, which can cause extreme pain. The primary "cause" of Osteoarthritis is merely a consequence of getting older and our joints suffering normal wear and tear. But other factors may heighten our chances of developing the condition, such as being overweight, which causes extra stress on the joints, injuries and repetitive use of joints as well as a family history of Osteoarthritis.

Blood tests are not needed to diagnose Osteoarthritis, but they can be used to rule out other conditions if there are varying symptoms involved. A procedure called Arthrocentesis, in which joint fluid is removed for analysis, is one way to determine if a patient has Osteoarthritis. An Arthroscopy is a surgical technique in which the doctor can "see" the joint space and any abnormalities to determine if any repair is possible. The most common method of diagnosing Osteoarthritis is through the use of X-rays that can show the damage that has been done to the joints already. Typically, X-rays will show bone spurs, narrowing of the space between the joints and cartilage loss as evidence of the condition.

There is a definite loss of mobility associated with Osteoarthritis due to the swelling and pain one experiences. And, unlike other types of arthritis, Osteoarthritis only affects the joints and not the internal organs as Rheumatoid Arthritis does. Although Osteoarthritis can affect both genders, it seems to strike men more before the age of 45 and women after they reach 55 years old. There are several treatment options available to sufferers today, such as those that are medicinally based like topical creams, oral medications or even injectable medications to ease inflammation and pain. Weight loss is also highly recommended as is regular exercise, wearing supports, using heat, and allowing the joints to rest properly. Knee braces, canes and

walkers can all be helpful for those suffering with Osteoarthritis, and swimming is an excellent form of gentle exercise that is easy on stiff, swollen or painful joints. Proper guidance from a health professional is essential in improving and managing the ill effects of this condition.

Unfortunately, as of yet, there are no methods of detecting Osteoarthritis in its earliest and most treatable stages. However, with the help of lifestyle changes, along with drugs and medical treatments, people may be able to experience some relief from this disease.

Ummmmm! Delicious Meatloaf

Here is the recipe many asked about after the Stewardship luncheon. Jim Puffer had this meatloaf one evening when he hosted overnight at the Men's Shelter in Minneapolis.



Chris makes it and serves it there on the first Monday every month. Special thanks to all those who helped prepare for the Stewardship luncheon, provided the table decorations, baked the bundt cakes, and also to the many volunteers working afterwards on cleanup. The Stewardship Committee greatly appreciated your support! *(Note: This large quantity recipe will have to be cut down for a family size portion.)*

Meatloaf (United Methodist Church, North Minneapolis, Chris)

- 24 lbs. hamburger
- 2 dozen eggs
- 8 bunches parsley, chopped
- 8 lbs. onions, chopped
- 2 lbs. unsalted sunflower seeds
- 2 loaves bread, soaked in milk & squished
- ¼ cup coarse sea salt
- ¼ cup fresh ground pepper
- 1. Combine all thoroughly
- 2. Form into 12 loaves
- 3. Place on baking sheets with all sides exposed
- 4. Bake at 350° F. until done
- 5. Feeds 60 to 80 people

Congratulations to Beckie Bernu

Beckie passed her Ordination Exam on Saturday, November 15th. We will be scheduling her Ecclesiastical Council here at RUCC sometime in December. After this step, Beckie will be empowered to seek a call to ministry in the wider United Church of Christ and become an ordained minister. Please keep her in your prayers as her search continues.

Tuesdays w/T

A Bible Study for Beginners

6 p.m. Every Tuesday (except Dec. 23 and 30)

The Theology of Paul

This month we explore the texts from II Corinthians and learn about how Paul dealt with the early divisions of the church and how that formed his thinking of "living in Christ." This Bible Study is open to all levels of experience. There will be lively discussion and a wonderful opportunity to discover our faith in a new way. This Bible Study is open to everyone. There is no homework, and all that is required is that you come open to our Still Speaking God.

Special Satellite Bible Study

**December 23rd at Waterford – Noontime
(bring your own lunch)**



January Issue. . .

Mustard Seed



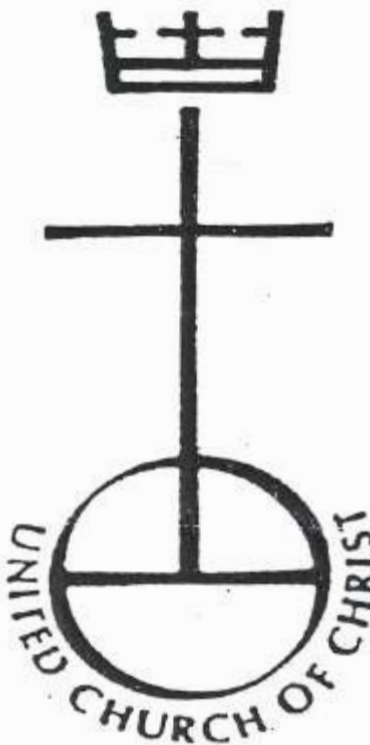
Please place all articles for the next issue of the Mustard Seed in the box marked "Mustard Seed" on the shelf inside the door to the workroom in the church office, *e-mail* to thewillses@aol.com (preferred) or mail them to Barbara Wills, 6214 Upland Lane No., Maple Grove 55311, so that they are received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

JAN. ISSUE DEADLINE

Sunday, December 28 , 11 a.m.

No exceptions please.

(Jan. issue will be mailed Friday, Jan. 2.)



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

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