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Register Now:

WE LIVE IN RESURRECTION TIMES

BY JIM DEERING, BRADENTON/SARASOTA CONGREGATION

YOUNG ADULT RETREAT

MARCH 15-17

Guest Minister:
Blake Smith

“Seize the Day”

Cost: \$50/individual
\$90/couple
\$5/ages 5-12

Young adults—college-aged through 40-ish—are invited to a weekend of renewal and connection at Deerhaven. Register now to reserve your space at this fun-filled event. Seventy Blake Smith is back by request from last year's attendees. The weekend will again include classes such as woodworking, tie dye, a nature hike and a Deerhaven service project. Evening activities will include games, campfire, and moonlight volleyball. Come enjoy relevant worship and time with other young adults.

For more information
Karla Van Beek,
jvanbeek@tampabay.rr.com

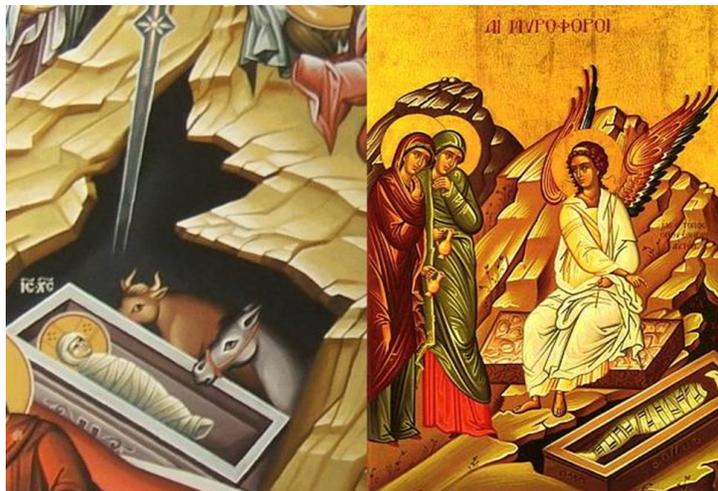
Ever hear the expressions we use when we sense change - "There's a spirit in the air!" or "feels like rain"? It's like that now as we approach the celebration of Easter.

I once saw an unusual Easter card which looked like a Christmas card. On the upper half of the card was a nativity scene which featured the shepherds who had come to worship the newborn babe. The lower half of the card depicted those same shepherds, who were young in the nativity scene, now

middle aged and those who were middle aged now old. Moreover, instead of standing before the new born babe in the manger they were standing before Jesus' empty tomb. Earlier, they had stood in awe before the revelation of God's love in the Christmas event.

Now it was time to go forth to proclaim the awesome good news of the Easter event. The deep root of our joy is that Easter is not only something that happened long ago, but something that happens to-

day - right now! And, if it isn't, we have missed the point. God acted then and God is acting now to confirm the life and ministry of Christ through his resurrection. He is here, in your life, and in mine at this very moment. Easter is a time to surface the conviction deep within us that God is in charge and God is good, and God will take care of us in life and death. The tomb, after all, is empty! We live in resurrection times. Christ is alive in us!

**The Womb and the Tomb**

The Reader's Guide to Orthodox Icons, tells us this about this ancient artwork: *It should be never forgotten that Jesus came to us in order to die – this was known by Him, at least, from the very beginning. Therefore, in Iconography, the manger in the Nativity Icon deliberately resembles a stone coffin, the swaddling clothes resemble a burial shroud, and the cave itself can even be said to prefigure Christ's tomb. With the side-by-side comparison shown above of the Icon of the Nativity with the Icon showing the Myrrh-bearing women discovering Jesus' empty tomb, no more words are necessary.*



STAIRCLIMBING

BY JANE WATKINS, FINANCIAL OFFICER

march

- 12 March for Rights
- 15-17 Young Adult Retreat
- 29 GOOD FRIDAY
Office closed
- 30 EASTER

april

- 13-18 World Conference
- 19-21 USA National Conference

may

- 12 MOTHER'S DAY
- 17-19 Spiritual Growth Retreat
- 24-27 Celebración
- 27 MEMORIAL DAY
Office Closed

The past week was particularly frustrating. It seemed like every part of my life was in failure mode. Our personal lives were upside down with Jordan's injury and professionally things weren't feeling much better! My grandfather used to give me a big hug and say, "This too shall pass," on those occasions when he was there and I felt blue. As simplistic as that sounds, it has been tested mightily over the years and found to be guaranteed to work: everything moves on. I suppose that is the one thing in this world that doesn't change; that is, that everything changes. If we are open to the experience, these challenges can serve to make us stronger and more capable for the next storm that hits our lives. At the time we are going through these ordeals, it just feels like an exercise in frustration. Yet in those moments we are sure to grow.

The picture with this article was taken almost exactly one year ago while I was in Independence, Missouri, for some meetings. I was staying with my best friend, Stacie Williams, whom I accompanied one day to pick up her children from school. These stairs were at the side of the school parking lot. They rose up, majestically, but went absolutely nowhere. There is a small strip of lawn and then the fence that borders the side yard of the property next door. Obviously once-upon-a-time there was a nice house at the top of those stairs. Having grown up in this area, I can predict that the house was probably made of stone just like the stairs. But at the time I spied these stairs, I was just struck with the metaphor: a nice set of stairs going absolutely nowhere!

I suppose these stairs resonated with me because I've had those moments when I felt like I had climbed a mountain only to find out that there was nothing rewarding at the top . . . or worse yet, there was nothing there at all. However, being a "cup half full" person, I immediately thought of the excitement of what lay beyond those stairs. What adventure could be found at the top? Who might be waiting? Where could we travel with no constraining sidewalk to keep us coloring in the lines?

You know Jesus was not big on coloring inside the lines. He worked hard, in fact, to color a bigger better world . . . one in which love trumped law. Boundaries blurred. Those outside the margins of "decency" were brought inside the circle and embraced. Each person was valued in Jesus' sight. In those teachable moments, Jesus gave a vision of how life could be if we could just be open to change. Those old rules about widows, orphans, the old and infirm were tossed out the window. If Jesus were to arrive here tomorrow, I'm sure he would be baffled at the fuss we make over skin color, body size, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, education . . . and on and on. Don't you think Jesus would just remind us that we are all God's children? In the struggles and strife of our everyday lives, we are held up and blessed by a God who calls us son or daughter, without regard for any of those labels that we tend to apply to each other.

So today and tomorrow, while I try to make sense out of the events occurring around me, I will choose to remember those stairs leading up to . . . nowhere? In my reverie, I shall choose to put Jesus at the top of those stairs, arms outstretched, inviting me to bring my problems—the big and the not so big—to lay down at his feet. Jesus has promised us peace and comfort. We just have to climb those stairs and claim his promise. Won't you come and climb those stairs with me? Jesus beckons to us, saying, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid" (John 14:27).

DEERHAVEN POOL UPDATE

On February 14th, eight core samples were obtained from the swimming pool to determine the quality of concrete still existing in the pool. On February 28th, the test results were submitted to an independent engineer. Currently, the Deerhaven Board is waiting for the engineer's report and advisement on how to proceed. Once the report is filed,

the information will be shared with the pool contractor so that we can proceed to the next step. You can continue to watch for updates and pictures on the Facebook page Deerhaven FL Connections. Thank you for your continued support of the swimming pool project. We will see a swimming pool in operation at Deerhaven when this is all done!



WHAT DOES THE MISSION CENTER DO?

The Florida Mission Center is available to help those in need. Our oblation program is one of the great blessings we are able to give to others. Through the generosity of tithes given to "Abolish Poverty, End Suffering" as well as the collection of loose funds in each congregation on Communion Sunday, we are able to turn these gifts around and help people struggling with rent, mortgage, utilities, food, transportation, and medical bills. There is a process in place to evaluate need and the amount of funds available for indi-

viduals and families. The process is completely confidential and may be dispensed on the congregational level or through the mission center. Last year, the Florida Mission Center distributed over \$10,000 in aid to assist five families and 4 individuals. This does not count the aid given by individual congregations. We are blessed to be able to be charitable!

Thank you for your generosity to this world church ministry to provide the hands of Christ in times of need.



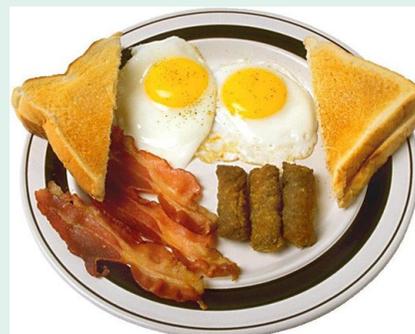
DGR HIGHLIGHT

The following letter was received in the mission center office from the South Miami Congregation. This is a response from them to our generosity-based budget for 2013:

The congregation in Miami has been working hard on ways that can help us meet our financial obligations. We started making breakfast on Sunday mornings in October after seeing that most of us were coming in with fast food bags. We take turns

cooking (three at a time) and pay \$3.00. From October to the end of January 2013 we made \$1,059. The [enclosed check for] \$1,000 is for our yearly quota. We are just happy to be able to pay it! Love, Angela and the rest

Thank you, Miami, for your ingenuity and your example of sacrificial giving. We continue to learn from and be blessed by you.





FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

BOB WATKINS, PRESIDENT

Each generation shares from one generation to another. I think of the life of Jesus and that important message we are called to share. To be honest, I cannot believe it but another Easter celebration is upon us. Yes, we will go through the celebration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem; a week of Passover, of betrayal, of new covenants, of trial, of torture, of death, of burial, and the resurrection of Jesus. His story continues to live from generation to generation.

As Jesus' disciples of the twenty-first century we have a more complete story of Jesus as we read sacred text and embrace the understanding of the role of scripture in our faith journey with Community of Christ. As I think of the lives of the Old Testament prophets and New Testament disciples and the struggles they had as a people of faith, I am sure we could look at the stories and remember people who were good as well as not so good examples of how to live our lives. I also know I like to think of the good examples, how those people built a foundation for their children and their children's children. From generation to generation.

As we think of the life and ministry of Jesus, and those who went before us, I have to ask myself some questions. What will I leave for the generations which will come behind me? What impact will our congregations in the Florida Mission Center have on the communities where they live out their discipleship? Finally, I ask what impact will our mission center have on the Community of Christ and the world? The answers to the questions are found for me in our Enduring Principles and Mission Initiatives. When you look at the life of Jesus he lived with his own enduring principles and mission statement as found in the fourth chapter of Luke. ***The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind*** (4:16). Our Enduring Principles are in alignment with His mission today. Grace and Generosity; Sacredness of Creation; Continuing Revelation; Worth of All Persons; All Are Called; Responsible Choices; Pursuit of Peace (Shalom); Unity in Diversity; and, Blessings of Community.

The Community of Christ calls us today to be in mission with Jesus. His mission is our mission. For my grandmother and great-grandmother this was their lives, to be in mission with Jesus. What a great way to live and to model discipleship—to be about the mission of Jesus in a world that is broken. I pledge to work with you in making your congregations and your mission center a place where we leave a legacy of discipleship to our children and their children's children from generation to generation.

Coming Soon...

The FMC and Deerhaven websites have a new look! The new sites will go live any day now.

Watch your email and Facebook for an announcement when the new sites are up and running!



FALL HISTORIC SITES TOUR

OCTOBER 8-17, 2013 WITH TOUR GUIDE BARBARA WALDEN

Join fifty of your new friends on a journey to each of the Community of Christ historic sites and experience firsthand our faith community's historic connections to the mission initiatives. Discover Christ's mission living and breathing through the passions and actions of those who have gone before.

Highlights of the autumn tour include evening worship in the Kirtland Temple and Plano Stone Church, a walk through the sacred grove at the peak of fall foliage season, hymn festival at the Red Brick Store, and a visit to Joseph Smith III's Liberty Hall. Throughout the journey, Barbara Walden, Foundation executive director and co-author of the book, *Community of Christ: An Illustrated History*, will lead a variety of history classes, giving tour guests an inside view of Commu-

nity of Christ history as it relates to each significant site on the trip. In addition to Community of Christ historic sites, tour guests will visit a number of museums and landmarks along the way like the National Baseball Hall of Fame, Hancock Shaker Village, and Niagara Falls.

Seating is limited. Reserve your place today! Tour price is \$1,350 per/person for double-occupancy room, \$1,850 for single-occupancy. Tour price includes luxury bus transportation (from Independence, MO area), hotel room each night, tour fees, and most meals. Reservation forms and a full tour itinerary are available on the Foundation's website www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org, or by contacting Linda Etchison at (217) 453-2246.



Kirtland Temple

A tour flyer and itinerary is also available from the FMC office:
fmcbartlett@aol.com.

Summer
Camp

Mark Your Calendar for Summer Youth Camps!

June 16-20—Junior Camp, \$135
June 23-29—Senior High Camp, \$195
July 7-13—Junior High Camp, \$195
July 19-27—Spec at Graceland University, \$430
Pre-register online: www.cofchristfmc.org
Start your fundraising now!

SPIRITUAL GROWTH RETREAT

MAY 17-19 AT DEERHAVEN



You are invited to draw apart from your daily routine and spend a weekend "Resting in the Healing Presence of God." Come rest and share in sacred community. Come prepared to listen to God through prayer, journaling, nature, times of sharing, companionship and relaxation. Mark your calendar and watch for more information in the coming weeks.

RSVP

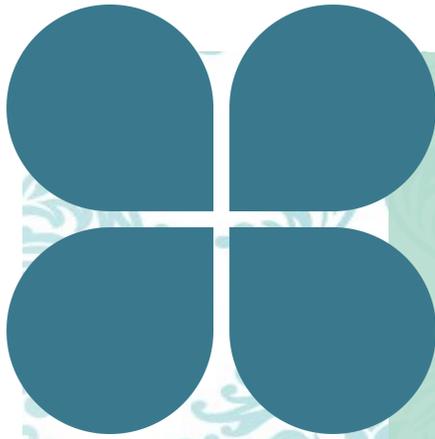
www.cofchristfmc.org

For more information contact:

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Deerhaven Events

PRE-REGISTER AT WWW.COFCHRISTFMC.ORG

- March 15-17—**Young Adult Retreat**, “Seize the Day,” Guest Minister: Blake Smith

REGISTERING EARLY AS WELL AS CANCELLING EARLY, IF NEEDED, HELPS US KEEP THE COST OF EVENTS DOWN AND HELPS DIRECTORS AND STAFF PREPARE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Other FMC Events

- March 12—**March for Rights, Respect and Fair Food**; contact Cindy Campbell to join this event: cicamp7@gmail.com or (352) 373-3932

Conference Registration and Information

- April 13-18—**World Conference** in Independence, MO: <http://www.cofchrist.org/wc2013/>
- April 19-21—**USA National Conference** in Independence, MO: <http://www.cofchrist.org/usaconf/default.asp>

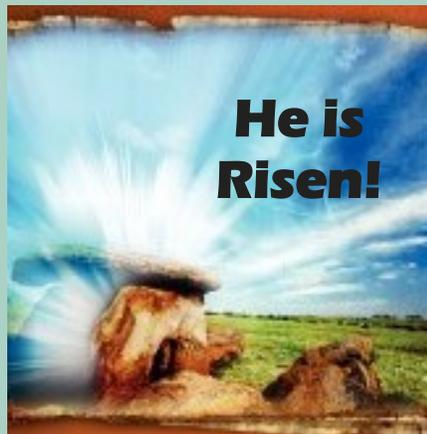
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We proclaim Jesus Christ
and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace