



R E A C H I N G O U T
First Congregational Church of Berkshire, NY
State Route 38 & Glen Road
P.O. Box 196
Berkshire, NY 13736

Christmas Gift Project:

In early December, the Diakonate Board was made aware of several local families that could use help providing Christmas gifts for their children.

We made the church family aware of the need and once again the church family's generosity was shown! Through financial donations, Deacon funds, individuals donating shopping time and items, we were able to help six (6) families which included a total of nineteen (19) children in a short amount of time.

Thank you to all who donated to this endeavor which was very much appreciated by all of the recipients to make their Christmas a little brighter.

The Diakonate Board

Next Deadline: February 19th:

Our newsletter goes out to a lot of people. Both within our church and outside. All articles telling of the activities taking place are appreciated, showing the life taking place here. Please take the time to sit down and write something for me to put in here.

CONTACT US: You can reach our church by sending an email to BCC_Secretary@yahoo.com or calling us at 657-2677. Our website is redbrickchurch.org

For Pastor Chuck, call 657-8058 or email him at BCCPastorChuck@yahoo.com

Reaching Out

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BERKSHIRE, NY

Volume 32

February, 2012

Number 02

Another Word for Grace...

The Greek word for "grace" is *charis*, which means grace or a gift given in love. From *charis* we get our English word "charity." Looking it up in my *Dictionary of NT Theology*, I found the root word means "things which produce well-being." That is surely what God's grace is: a love-gift to make us well. I find it interesting that the King James Bible used the word "charity" to translate the Greek word for "love" (*agapê*). Yet that fits: *agapê* love is a self-less love that puts Christ first and others second. All too often we see modern "love" as selfish and self-centered. So charity is a love that freely gives to make others better.

Charity is something every congregation needs. We need to be loving to one another as Christ has been to us. As the song says, "they'll know we are Christians by our love." Charity reflects the health of our relationship with Jesus. People who are filled with His Spirit, who are living according to His will, are naturally charitable. They naturally fill the requirements of I Cor 13:4-7:

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." We should show this love, this charity, to everyone.

This passage is a great checklist for our spiritual health, both for individuals and a congregation. Read through each phrase again and ask yourself how it fits. Then look at your life both as a member of your church and of your community: how well do you show this charity to others?

Any questions? Share them next Sunday with your brothers and sisters here at church.

In Him, Pastor Chuck

A Note from our Regional Minister:

Rev Terry H. Shanahan is the Northeast Regional Minister for the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference. He shared this advice with our Transition Team as they began the active search for a settled pastor. They wanted to share his advice with the whole congregation. Here is what Terry said:

January 12, 2012

Hi Chuck,

Good talking to you today about the search for a new pastor. I am not overly surprised that the first round of candidates didn't hold a lot of possibility because the process of networking and getting the word out that Berkshire is looking has just begun. It may very well be the case, and I have seen it often, that someone who is not in placement is considering a move from their church. I believe, once Berkshire appears in the Forsee and word gets out elsewhere, that you will have more candidates....

I like the idea of seeking candidates from within the Conference, and I have made one phone call to a network of our Reformed friends to see if they know of anyone.

I understand the church would like to have someone in place by the spring and that would be wonderful, however we all know this needs to be in God's timing and we could find that candidate quickly or it may take some time.

God bless you in the search and let me know if I can be of any help to the church.

Terry

February Memory Verse:

Many people ask me how they can know they are saved. In our study of John, I came across this passage from I John that directly answers the question.

I John 2.3-5: Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.

I'm nowhere near a 'mature' Christian, but given the opportunities to gain knowledge, I'm well on my way. All the course offerings and Bible study groups that this Church has available has helped me grow tremendously in my faith. I find myself learning new things so often that I'm refreshed and renewed in my walk with the Lord. I yearn for more knowledge and growth and I know that I'll continue to find that here with my Church family. Thank you for the wonderful learning opportunities, they are powerful tools that relate to many real-life situations and issues.

God bless, Tami

Our New Church Officers

The Congregation voted in the following church officers at our January Congregational meeting:

Elders:

Mark Friebel, Paul Kunik, and John Stoughton

(all are appointed for one year as acting Elders; they will have the full rights and responsibilities of Elders as set forth in our Constitution and By-laws)

Deacons:

One year term: Judy Baldwin, Dot Klinge

Two year term: Bob Wait, Darlene Wait

Three year term: Ede Adams, Kit Michaud

Trustees:

One year term: Scott Albrecht

Two year term: Mike Kemmerer

Three year term: Dave Michaud

Clerk: Sarah Albrecht

Treasurer: James Willard, Jr.

Assistant Treasurer: Sheryl Kunik

Team Chairs:

Outreach: Diana Burke

Worship: Sarah Albrecht

Fellowship: Judy Loeffler

Discipleship: Open (the Pastor & Elders will oversee this Team for now)

Ministry Placement: Jackie Morris

These are a new set of offices, not just officers. If you want to know more about what the Teams and offices do, we are spending a week on each during the Sunday school course "Where are we now?" Even though it is half over, you can join us at 9:30 any Sunday morning as each week is a new topic.

Women's Fellowship:

The Women's Fellowship is excited to announce plans for a women's brunch and pampering day on Saturday, March 17. All planning is not yet complete, but you will definitely want to put this date aside on your calendars, because we are planning a really special day with food, fun, and lots of opportunities for fellowship. More information about that will follow in next month's newsletter. We are also hoping to plan a trip to the Sight and Sound Theater in Lancaster County, PA for a performance of Jonah. That trip will likely be in May or June depending on availability of tickets and schedules, so keep watch for more information about that, too! Our program this month was about keeping the Joy of Christmas alive into the new year by making time for and remembering Him. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. Psalms 126:2*

New schedule for Nursery, Junior Church I, and Junior Church II begins February 5th:

Thank you to all that have been so faithful and helpful these past months with our Church Nursery, Junior Church I and Junior Church II classes. After much consideration and prayer, I am asking more members of our church family to help out in this capacity. I am now asking for one week at a time for the **Junior Church I and Junior Church II** classes as well as Nursery. In the past, they were asked to serve for a whole month and they were missing a lot of Church. A list to the "proposed" people has already been distributed with dates and areas assistance is needed. (I have already received a couple of "unable to do", but that is fine, God will help me find someone to step in.)

Nursery and Junior Church I classes!!!, If you need a helper, please feel free to ask a teenager, I know for a fact they will be more than happy to help you!

IF YOU CAN HARDLY WAIT TO VOLUNTEER, I do have some open dates that need to be filled; my phone number is 657-2536. Your servant through Christ – Jackie Morris

***"So I say to you, ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."* Luke 11:9**

Special Courses Coming in March:

We have two special courses coming up in March. First, we have a four week **New Member course**. If you feel called to make this congregation your specific home, come join us. You can learn what Jesus wants of His church and how He will bless you even as He uses you to bless others. We'll meet from 5:30 to 6:30 each Sunday in March. Baby-sitting is available if you need it.

Our second "March special" is **Becoming One: What God Meant Marriage to Be**

"Haven't you read," [Jesus] replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." (Mt 19.4-6)

Ever have a problem with these verses? Does "becoming one" seem an impossible ideal? Over this weekend, we'll come to understand what God means when He says marriage is "becoming one." We'll use both psychology and the Bible to understand marriage more realistically and to find ways to grow more towards God's ideal.

We start with a full Saturday to look at how our personalities differ. You'll complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and discuss how your personality matches up with your spouse. We'll look at how God made us different so that He could create a couple that is more than the sum of its parts. Oh, for this long day, we'll have snacks, lunch, and baby-sitting if you need somewhere to put your kids.

From there, we'll meet for four Saturday nights to see how God gives us answers to our major marriage problems. Here are the topics:

1. The Three Loves in a Marriage
2. Marriage roles: what about this submission thing?
3. How marriage forces us to grow... or quit.
4. Working through conflicts.

This will cost each couple \$25 for the supplies we use. A small price to pay for 25 years and more of being happy together! Baby-sitting, if you need it, is free.

This course is open to any couple in the community, so share this with friends. Pastor Chuck has run this seminar several times and it is so powerful that only couples can come. It is meant to be shared.

Please contact Pastor Chuck to make a reservation. We need to know in advance to plan for food and support. Here are the dates:

Saturday, March 3, from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. (with a mini-breakfast at 8:30)

Saturdays, (from March 10 thru March 31) from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Soup & Salad Supper:

Please bring the family and come for a lovely variety of homemade soups and salads, with drinks and yummy desserts! To be held the first Saturday of January, February, and March, from 3:30 to 6:30 PM at the Richford Congregational Church, Route 38 Richford. Any questions, please contact the church at 657-2592.

February Special Socials:

We have three specific fellowship events coming this month. First, Becky is arranging a "Single Senior Luncheon" on Sunday, Feb 5, right after the worship service. All seniors are invited to a time of free food and fun.

Then we're having a Game Night for everybody on Saturday, Feb 11th. That goes from 6 - 10 and covers all sorts of fun: video games, ping-pong, chess, cards, you-name-it. We'll provide the drinks, you bring the snacks. You can come as early as you wish and stay for as long as you are having fun. We're pretty easy going at these things.

On Sunday, Feb 19th, the Men in Ministry meet at 5:30 to go out for Chinese food and then bowling. All men are invited to see if Pastor Chuck can break a hundred and if he can keep his cool when he doesn't.

Not done yet: there will be a Ladies Tea at 2 PM on Thursday, Feb 23rd. They meet in the Fellowship Hall.

Request for Drivers:

The Department of Aging needs drivers to deliver lunches to shut-ins. If you want to know more, call Elayne Dudek at (607) 687-4120 ext. 321 or Rosemarie Oliver at ext. 324.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES:

Anniversaries:

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Paul & Carol Olcott | 2/09 |
| John & Ede Adams | 2/20 |
| John & Lil Hoffmier | 2/27 |

Birthdays:

| | |
|------------------|------|
| Joan Ann Howland | 2/22 |
| Carol Olcott | 2/22 |
| Travis Payne | 2/23 |
| John Stoughton | 2/27 |

We are trying to get all of our birthday and anniversary information in one place. If you see an error or omission, please let our church secretary know. Thank you

OCTOBER WORSHIP SUPPORT:

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Greeters:</u> | | <u>Junior Church I:</u> | |
| February 5 th | - Sandy Kasmarcik Jenn Willard | February 5 th | - Jenn Willard |
| February 12 th | - Dot Klinge Kit Michaud | February 12 th | - Sandy Kasmarcik |
| February 19 th | - Charlotte Alexander Betty Kasmarcik | February 19 th | - Judy Loeffler |
| February 26 th | - Sheryl Kunik Ede Adams | February 26 th | - Need Volunteer |
| <u>Ushers:</u> | | <u>Junior Church II:</u> | |
| February 5 th | - Jim Willard Paul Kunik | February 5 th | - Darcy Friebel |
| February 12 th | - Mike Kunik Bob Wait | February 12 th | - Paul Kunik |
| February 19 th | - Jeff Wait Mark Friebel | February 19 th | - John Stoughton |
| February 26 th | - Dave Michaud John Adams | February 26 th | - Sarah Albrecht |
| | | <u>Nursery:</u> | |
| | | February 5 th | - Ruth Stoughton |
| | | February 12 th | - Sandy Kasmarcik |
| | | February 19 th | - Judy Loeffler |
| | | February 26 th | - Darlene Wait |

Congregational Church Events - February 2012

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <p>Join us for food & fun on Saturday the 11th when we have our next game night! Bring your favorite game...</p> <p>Keep watching for publicity on our Youth Group fund drive for the 30 hour famine (Feb 24 & 25).</p> | | | 1 | 2 7 PM- Youth Group Band I | 3 2 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Youth Group Band II 7 PM- How to Study the Bible | 4 |
| 5 9:30 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship noon- Single Senior Luncheon 6 PM Youth Group | 6 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Trustees Meeting | 7 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study | 8 7:30 PM- choir | 9 7 PM- Transition Team Meeting 7 PM- Youth Group Band I | 10 2 PM- Ladies Bible Study 6:30 PM- Diabetic Meeting 7 PM- Youth Group Band II 7 PM- How to Study the Bible | 11 6 - 10 PM: Game Night |
| 12 9:30 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship COMMUNION 6 PM Youth Group | 13 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Men in Ministry | 14 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study | 15 | 16 7 PM- Youth Group Band I 7 PM-Women's Fellowship | 17 2 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Youth Group Band II 7 PM- How to Study the Bible | 18 |
| 19 9:30 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship 5:30 PM- Men in Ministry night out 6 PM Youth Group | 20 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Men in Ministry | 21 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study | 22 7:30 PM- choir | 23 2 PM- Ladies Tea 7 PM- Transition Team Meeting 7 PM- Youth Group Band I | 24 2 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- How to Study the Bible 30 Hour Famine | 25 10 AM- Senior Pantry 30 Hour Famine |
| 26 9:30 AM- Sunday School 11 AM- Worship noon- Coffee Hour | 27 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Men in Ministry | 28 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study | 29 | <p>COMING IN MARCH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Members Class on Sunday nights - Becoming One course starting Sat, Mar 3 | | |