

# The Messenger

Orchard Covenant Church  
95 Berkshire Street  
Indian Orchard, MA 01151  
413-543-4204



Volume 41, Issue 8

March, 2011

## THE PASTOR'S PAGE

### Simply Jesus: Lent 2011

*Oh, to be “merely Christian,” or “simply Christian,” and not politicized or theologized or anathematized...just a simple Jesus follower.” Jay Phelan, Covenant theologian.*

In the midst of our complex world where Christian diversity often stands out more than Christian unity, we must never forget that we follow Jesus. We follow Jesus' Way, Jesus' Truth, and Jesus' Life. What is that Way, Truth, and Life? Jesus taught that we must be born again from above. He taught that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. And Jesus taught us to pray: *thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.* What else did Jesus do and say?

**This year during Lent, the 40 days before Easter set aside by Christians as a time of special devotion, we will read the four Gospels: 89 chapters about Jesus, two chapters a day, beginning on “Ash Thursday,” March 10, and ending on Easter Saturday, April 23.**

Before you read, settle your soul. Ask God to open your heart to Jesus' Way, Truth, and Life as God's gift of love to a broken world. Then, as you read, put yourself into the narrative as a first-century disciple and simply follow Jesus. Use your five senses and perhaps keep a journal: What do you Hear? See? Touch? Taste? Smell? Are you tired, hungry, amazed, afraid, joyful? Repentant? Forgiving? Imagine leaving everything, participating in the miracles. Imagine Jesus' teaching, spoken directly to us. My prayer is that as together we move from Matthew, to Mark, to Luke, to John, our understanding of Jesus' purpose on earth will both simplify and deepen. May God will speak to our souls deeply and fully about simply following Jesus.

Here is our reading schedule: Be blessed with the Gospels – the Good News – of Jesus Christ!

|                    |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| March 10 Mat 1-2   | Mar 25 Mark 3-4    | April 9 Luke 17-18 |
| March 11 Mat 3-4   | Mar 26 Mark 5-6    | Apr 10 Luke 19-20  |
| March 12 Mat 5-6   | Mar 27 Mark 7-8    | Apr 11 Luke 21-22  |
| March 13 Matt7-8   | Mar 28 Mark 9-10   | Apr 12 Luke 23-24  |
| March 14 Mat 9-10  | Mar 29 Mark 11-12  | Apr 13 John 1-2    |
| March 15 Mat 11-12 | Mar 30 Mark 13-14  | Apr 14 John 3-4    |
| Mar 16 Mat 13-14   | Mar 31 Mark 15-16  | Apr 15 John 5-6    |
| Mar 17 Mat 15-16   | April 1 Luke 1-2   | Apr 16 John 7-8    |
| Mar 18 Mat 17-18   | April 2 Luke 3-4   | Apr 17 John 9-10   |
| Mar 19 Mat 19-20   | April 3 Luke 5-6   | Apr 18 John 11-12  |
| Mar 20 Mat 21-22   | April 4 Luke 7-8   | Apr 19 John 13-14  |
| Mar 21 Mat 23-24   | April 5 Luke 9-10  | Apr 20 John 15-16  |
| Mar 22 Mat 25-26   | April 6 Luke 11-12 | Apr 21 John 17-18  |
| Mar 23 Mat 27-28   | April 7 Luke 13-14 | Apr 22 John 19-20  |
| Mar 24 Mark 1-2    | April 8 Luke 15-16 | April 23 John 21   |

## SIDE BY SIDE

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Billy Wages
- 9 Bill Bromage
- 19 Karen Ebner
- 22 Sean Mullins
- 23 Mary Campbell
- 31 Martha Bromage

## ANNIVERSARIES

- 9 Gene and Mary Campbell
- 11 Mark and Tammy Thomas

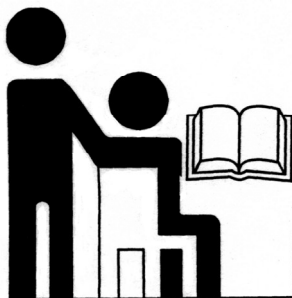
[If your date is wrong or your name has been omitted, please contact the editor.]

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- March 2- Lunch and Health Day
- March 5 – Vitality Team Retreat
- March 9 – Ash Wednesday Service  
6:00 p.m.
- March 10 – Side by Side Meeting
- March 13 – Daylight Savings Begins
- March 19 – Men’s Fellowship Breakfast

### *The Men’s Connection*

**Date: Saturday, March 20th**  
**Time: 8:30 to 9:30 am**  
**at the**  
**Orchard Covenant Church**  
**Breakfast will be served.**



### ACTS CELEBRATION – SAVE THE DATE

ACTS is marking its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year with a celebration at the Community Music School in Springfield on **Tuesday, April 5, from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

The featured speaker for the evening is Dr. Alan Ingram, Superintendent of Springfield Public Schools. Special music will be provided by Intercession, a gospel jazz vocal quintet from the local area. YOU are invited. To make a reservation at \$25/ person, please see Linda or John Howell.

Orchard Covenant Church has a long tradition of being a caring, warm church. Thanks to the special leadership of Linda Howell, former Team Chair, the Care and Nurture Ministry Team has been very busy! Back in March, 2010, several of us attended a “Stephen Ministry” seminar in order to investigate their program and see if it would fit for us and help us to continue our tradition. For those who are not familiar with Stephen Ministry, it is a structured program that formalizes the “caring” relationships of the church family. While we found it to be an excellent program, we decided as a group to not pursue it at this time, but to develop a caring group that would more suit our needs.

Those of us who attended the seminar, plus a few others, have taken a 10 week course focusing on “Distinctively Christian Caregiving,” and have found that to be very helpful as we plan for the future. While we are just beginning to formulate a specific caring program, we wanted you to know that a new group has come out of this, called “Side by Side.” The purpose of this group is to (1.) identify needs, (2.) come alongside on a one-to-one basis to help work through the difficult time, and (3.) follow up and provide support and further training for the group as needed.

Where do you come in? As we strive to identify the needs of our congregation, you can help by communicating any need or situation to us. If you or someone you know in our church family is going through a troubling time, please let Pastor Nancy know, or call Toni Wapner, present Care and Nurture Team Chair, at 599-1411. This is especially true if you know someone who is in the hospital! Our goal is to care for everyone in a distinctively Christian way, and with your help, we can do this. And we thank you for the excellent Christian care you give each other every day.



### Community Lunch and Health Day

March 2

Because of yet another snow day, Health Day was postponed from February to March 2. Sue Warner, former dental hygienist, will talk to us about dental health, particularly as it relates to maintaining a healthy heart. Blood pressure checks will be offered before lunch. You know you can count on a good, nutritious meal so bring your friends.

## Muhudu Mission/Feeding Program

Alice Jumba

My visit to Kenya was full of adventure and joy. I was glad to be with my family and eventually traveled to Muhudu Village in Western Kenya. Mama Esther was there, in charge of the Muhudu village orphans feeding program. She feeds them three times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. At present we have registered two self help women's groups, namely Muhudu Self Help Women's Group and Muhudu Orphans feeding program

Their goal is to make the women self sufficient, with a vision of ensuring they make a profit out of the school uniforms they are sewing. One of the objectives is to use some of the money they make to help feed the Orphans and also ensure that all the households have enough for themselves.

Mama Esther has provided five sewing machines and materials for the uniforms. There are three qualified tailors, two of whom are women volunteers. She has also collected remnants of cloth materials which she hopes the women will turn into bedspreads to be donated to Kaimosi hospital which has a shortage of beddings for the patients.

The second group is Muhudu Orphans Feeding Program. This group entirely depends on Mama Esther's family and well wishers. Orchard Covenant Church has changed the lives of many unfortunate children in the village. The community is being encouraged to step in fully.

### NEW LIFE RADIO – MOSCOW

Rev. Daniel Johnson, Christian Radio for Russia

We ask you to pray and lift up the Covenant initiated radio network, as our ministry is facing the very real threat of shutting down unless we get new ministry partners and sufficient funding. We need \$4400 per month in new contributions that will allow us to reach the ends of the earth with the gospel via radio.

### EVIDENCE THAT FAITH HEALS

Helen Ham

Of more than 300 studies conducted to explore the health rewards of prayer and faith, 75% show a benefit. That's more evidence than scientists have to support the benefits of Vitamin C as a treatment for the common cold.

## Navigate Waypoint 102

Dick Warner

In last month's Messenger, the article Navigate Waypoint 101 spoke about the Bible passage Colossians 3:12-17 which addresses the issue of how we communicate with one another. Some questions were asked in the article, such as "In every way, by thought, word and deed, do we seek to build God-honoring relationships with one another and do we attempt to build each other up and not down?" Another: "Is our approach to difficult issues gentle and loving?"

It has been said that our Navigate Pathway is both adventurous as well as treacherous. What happens when there might be serious disagreement regarding which path to take along our spiritual journey? This is where instruction given in passages such as the one in Colossians comes into play.

To help in this, our Vitality Team is developing what has been called a number of things including Behavioral Covenant, or Relational Covenant or Manners for Holy Living. Whatever we decide to call it, this agreement amongst ourselves will set guidelines as to how we relate and communicate with one another during times of conflict so that God will be honored in all that we say and do.

From a process point of view, once developed and ready, the covenant will be shared first with the Church Council and then with the congregation. It is hoped that everyone will "sign on" with the precepts of the covenant so as to help promote loving relationships and bring praise to our Lord.

We have quite an exciting journey ahead. We are in it together, following the Holy Spirit where ever the Spirit leads and buoyed up by the fact that three things last forever: "faith, hope and love." (Colossians 13:13).

### YOUR 2011 COUNCIL

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Chairperson           | Mike Foster         |
| Vice Chairperson      | Jon Abrahamson      |
| Secretary             | Roberta Glassman    |
| Treasurer             | Charlene Abrahamson |
| Financial Secretary   | Dale Jennings       |
| At Large              | Rich Forbes         |
| Care & Nurture        | Toni Wapner         |
| Evangelism & Outreach | Alice Jumba         |
| Christian Formation   | Dina Hokanson       |
| Properties            | Dick Warner         |
| Music & Worship       | Diane Lawler        |

Please hold them in your prayers.