

Community of Christ

Fairbanks Branch Happenings

February 17, 2005

The theme for this Sunday is "Of Water and Spirit"

Open ourselves
For Your Spirit to fill us.

John the Baptist was a unique character. He looked weird (Matthew tells us that John wore clothing of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist), he had a very strange diet (locusts and wild honey - nutritionists today would not be impressed), and he had some words for the religious authorities that were not very complementary, calling them a brood of vipers. He appeared in the wilderness, the barrenness, the emptiness, around the river Jordan, proclaiming his message. Quite a character. And yet the people listened to him. Crowds surrounded him, coming out to the Jordan to be baptized by him. Many of them even thought he might be Messiah, the one sent from God.

...No, John said, I am not Messiah. But Messiah is coming. This baptism of mine is just water. But Messiah, he will baptize with Spirit and with fire. Baptism. Water. Spirit. Fire. Those are the images that surround this event of Jesus going to the Jordan, being baptized by John, and then seeing the dove come out of heaven and a voice from heaven saying "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

...When we hear about Jesus' baptism, we usually discuss things like "why was Jesus baptized?" If John's baptism was of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, does that mean Jesus had to have his sins cleansed? But how can that be, if we believe that Jesus didn't sin? Others would say that Jesus became the Son of God, became Messiah, at his baptism, that the baptism of Jesus was the turning point for Jesus, a kind of adoption, a form of ordination to ministry. Still others argue that it can't be that way - so then why was Jesus baptized?

...John said, "I baptize you with water, which is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Water. Cleansing. That is one of the aspects of baptism, the washing away of sin. In Psalm 51, where the Psalmist laments his overwhelming sense of sin and guilt, he prays, "purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." The idea of cleansing is really more a symbolic thing than an actual cleansing. But it is no less true that baptism involves cleansing.

...Too often, though, we stop there in our thinking of baptism. We don't often think of the power that is involved in baptism. I baptize you with water, John said, but Messiah will baptize you with Spirit and with fire.

Remember what took place at Pentecost? The **Holy Spirit came upon** the disciples and **caused them to do things that they otherwise would not have been able to do**. They spoke in languages that they had never studied. But more than that, they were given a boldness to preach and a boldness to live for Jesus. This is a group of people who for several weeks had stayed behind closed doors, not willing to go out in public because they didn't know what would happen to them; they feared for their lives. Even though they had seen Jesus post-resurrection, they thought that it was a pretty hostile world out there, and there could be some people who wanted to do away with any and all people who had been with Jesus. The disciples would have been first on the list. But then at Pentecost Peter - the one who had said "I do not know him," three times, the one who then said to Jesus three times, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you" - got up in front of a lot of people and preached Jesus. "You shall receive power," Jesus had said earlier, "when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." That power came on the disciples to preach, to teach, to go out

among all the people of different nations to proclaim that the Kingdom of God has come near. That power enabled the disciples to stand up in front of some of the religious and political authorities - those same authorities that had killed Jesus - and say that it didn't matter even if they were threatened with imprisonment, with beatings, with death, they would still preach. **That same Spirit is given to us at baptism**, though we don't always recognize that power or live in that power.

Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by that strange man/prophet named John. And the baptism began Jesus' public ministry, a ministry of justice and compassion, a ministry of truth and of mercy. Our baptism, which includes our being engrafted into the body of Christ, the community of faith, calls us forward to that same kind of ministry, to participation in the work and ministry of the one who calls us to that ministry.

The baptism of Jesus was not just something for Jesus, but something for us as well. It speaks of his ministry of compassion and grace, and then sends him forth in ministry to love all people, to be a servant of all people. We too are sent forth to love and serve God's people

Above excerpt from a sermon preached at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church – Tampa, Florida.

Last Saturday evening we shared a delicious Valentine's Day dinner. Special thanks go to our "gourmet" cooks, to our very "attentive" waiters and our "great" kitchen/sink helpers. After dinner we were treated to a wonderful and fun program. We even had several couples "volunteer" to be contestants in the 'Newly/Oldywed Game'. The audience was well entertained as were the contestants. Amazing how different "recollections" were shared!!! Many, Many "thank yous" for all of those that made this event possible and for everyone the came and participated.

If you would like to send a Thank You note to the babysitters for last Saturday, please see Margie or e-mail Martha for their addresses.

GOBBLE- GOBBLE- Does any have access to a fryer to deep fry turkeys? If you do, please contact Margie White.

Sunday, February 20th – Several of our church family members are planning on going to lunch at Luby's Cafeteria – 13451 NW Fwy. @ Tidwell following the worship service.

Sunday, February 20th – Hearne 125th anniversary celebration. Ken Robinson from First Presidency is the guest speaker.

Sunday, February 27th – 6:00 p.m. Congregational Planning Meeting. Come and help develop ideas for enhancing our ministry and fellowship.

Saturday, March 5 – "The Passion of Christ" video and discussion at North Houston. This is a family event. Larry Kibby will offer clown ministry. Childcare will be provided and live music will hopefully be a part.

Sunday, March 13th – 10:30 a.m.- Congregational Conference Election of Congregational Delegates to Special Mission Center Conference for election of World Conference Delegates. (Please let John know if you're interested in serving as a delegate from our congregation to the Mission Center Conference in April.)

Saturday, April 2nd - Special Mission Center Conference to elect World Conference Delegates - Pasadena - 1:00- 3:00 p.m. (Persons interested in serving as a World Conference Delegate or as a World Conference Alternate should contact Mark Euritt so that he can place their name on

the ballot.)

June 2-5th - Community of Christ Special World Conference - Independence, MO

The worship and nursery schedules have been posted in the family center for January through March, 2005. Please check these .

Nursery Schedule:

February 20th – Sue & Alex Turner

February 27th – Ruth & Gary Chatburn

March 6th – Beth & Steve Herold

March 13th – Ruth & Gary Chatburn

March 20th – Sue & Alex Turner

March 27th – Andrea & David Watson

Please review the prayer list in the Sunday bulletin. If you have added someone to the list please update Leo Caesar with any new information and current status of the prayer concern. Please contact Leo Caesar if you wish to add/remove someone from the list.

Calendar & Mission Center News:

The Coastal Bend Mission Center is proud to announce that the Coastal Bend web site is up and running! You can visit the site at www.coastalbendmc.org

February 20th – Hearne 125th anniversary celebration. Ken Robinson from First Presidency is the guest speaker. Check out the pictures [HERE](#)

February 27th – 6:00 p.m. Congregational Planning Meeting

March 5 – “The Passion of Christ” video at North Houston

March 13th – 10:30 a.m.- Congregational Conference

April 2nd – Special Mission Center Conference – Pasadena – 1:00- 3:00 p.m.

The following is a schedule of those that are currently scheduled to deliver the message for the 1st quarter. This is not the “official list” and is for informational purposes only. Please refer to the worship schedule in the fellowship hall for changes.

February 20th – Doug White

February 27th – Carole & Leo Caesar

March 6th – Gary Chatburn

March 13th – Testimony Service (Sue Turner presides)

March 20th – Carole & Leo Caesar

March 27th – John Reimer

The First Presidency of Community of Christ have called a [special World Conference](#) June 2-5, 2005.

This will be for the specific purpose of considering and acting on the Council of Twelve’s recommendation of the name of the one they feel is called to be the church’s next prophet-president. This name will be determined through a [discernment process](#).

The church worldwide is invited to join these World Church leaders in the discernment process by upholding them in frequent prayer. We also ask for prayers on behalf of the church and those who will be working to finalize arrangements for this special World Conference. For this purpose we are designating **Sunday, February 27, 2005**, as a special day of prayer and preparation throughout the church.

I will be sending out periodic e-mails letting everyone know what is “HAPPENING” at Fairbanks. Please let me know if your e-mail or other contact information changes.

Mark your calendars and **participate, enjoy, reach out!!!!!!**I pray that everyone have a safe and happy week.

Martha Romig

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Hearne 125 years

Gallery: [Coastal Bend Mission Center](#) ↑ Album: [Hearne 125 years](#) ↑

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