

Community of Christ North Houston Happenings

March 8, 2005

The theme for this Sunday is “Jesus Calls”

Clear
As a bell,
Loud as a drum, Your
Loving call
Summons and comforts us.
by Martha Romig

Reflecting God's Call

Intro: The drama this morning calls to mind the cell phone commercial with the man walking to various places asking, “Can you hear me now?” I have a feeling God would like to ask us that question sometimes. Here is a summary of some of various calls:

Abraham – God calls us out of our comfort zone.

Moses – God accepts no excuses when He calls.

Joshua – God calls us to be strong and courageous

Gideon – God calls the unlikely, unwilling, and unexpected.

Samuel – God is calling if we will listen.

David – God looks at our heart when He calls.

The Call to Discipleship

Jesus calls us to follow Him, to be like Him, to live for Him. That's the call of discipleship. Jesus said, "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." (Mark 1:17). In order to follow Jesus, we have to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him (Mt. 16:24). Once we do that, we will find that He has a calling for us to serve Him. That's the call of service.

The Call of Service

We may think the call of service is just for people in full time ministry, but it is for all believers. He has given us gifts and abilities to help others and help out with His work. 1 Peter 4:10 says, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others..." Jesus said we should follow His example of being a servant because He himself did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mk. 10:45).

The truth is you cannot separate these three calls. You cannot respond to the call to salvation if you are not willing to respond to the call to discipleship. And if you respond to the call to discipleship, it will lead you to the call of service. You can't have one without the other.

Conclusion:

The bottom line is that we have all been called. The only question remaining is- are we listening and have we responded? We have already seen some who have responded to the call the to discipleship. They gave their visible testimony in baptism. Last Sunday we remembered how Jesus gave His life for us on the cross by celebrating the Lord's Supper. That is really a celebration of how Jesus lived out God's call in His life and how we are also called to give ourselves to Him for others. How does your life reflect God's call? Have you responded to the call to salvation by turning from sin and turning to Him for forgiveness and eternal life? Have you responded to His call to follow Him by turning your life completely over to Him no matter what the cost? Have you responded to His call to serve Him with the gifts and talents and abilities He has given you? If not, then let me repeat what I said earlier, you cannot even be a Christian without responding to God's call. Can you hear me now?

Above excerpted and adapted from a sermon given at First Southern Baptist Church – Phoenix, AZ

Wednesday, March 9 - 7pm - CPI (Co-Missioned Pastor Initiative) Introduction.
North Houston is considering entering the CPI Program. This is the introduction to the program. It is very important that you attend this meeting so we can determine if this program is one we want to be a part of. It involves a commitment from the congregation as well as from the CPI candidate - Dorothy Hibbard. It is a 5 year program. Facilitator is Mark Euritt, CB Mission Center President.

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 Dorothy know if you're interested in serving as a delegate from our congregation to the Mission Center Conference in April.)

Thursday, March 24 - 7pm, Maundy Thursday Service at North Houston facility

Sunday, March 27th- 10:00 Easter Fellowship/Refreshments; 10:30 Worship; 12:15 Easter Egg Hunt. Be sure to invite your friends and relatives.

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 your name on the ballot.)

Sunday, April 3rd - 9:30 CPI (Co-Missioned Pastor Initiative Workshop) at North Houston. 11:00 - 11:20 Worship; noon - potluck; 1 - about 3 - workshop continues. This is an important day for North Houston to determine if we want to participate in the CPI program. The decision will be made at the workshop.

April 7 - 7 pm - President Designate Steve Veazy to visit N. Houston Cong.

April 8-10 - Men's Retreat, Livingston, TX

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

House Church

Begins Anew!!!!

Covenant Discipleship Group - This group is already full but if you would like to start another one, just talk to Dorothy. Members of this Covenant Group are David and Rachel Siddall, Jimmie Radliff, Carol Nelson, Teri and Steve Portz, Dorothy Hibbard. We meet once a month and will be focusing on spiritual disciplines and spiritual growth.

Book Club Group - This group is now organizing and it isn't too late to join. Talk to Jonathan if you are interested. The group will read a book and then discuss it at the meeting. This month the book is "Becoming a Thinking Christian" by John B. Cobb, Jr.

Please review the prayer list in the Sunday bulletin. If you have added someone to the list please update Dorothy with any new information and current status of the prayer concern. Please contact Dorothy 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

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

The following is a schedule of those that are currently scheduled for the 1st quarter.

March 13th - Biz. Mtg. 10:30 (shorter Sunday School time); Dorothy Hibbard presiding, Janine Turner speaking

March 20th - Baptismal Service (Sarah Brosemer being baptized); John Brosemer presiding, Jonathan Coit speaking

March 24th - Maundy Thursday Service, 7:00 pm, Mike Turner presiding

March 27th - Easter - 9:30 Fellowship, 10:30 Worship, 12:15 Easter Egg Hunt

Official Announcement

A joint council of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve Apostles, Council of Presidents of Seventy, Presiding Bishopric, presiding evangelist, and president of the Quorum of High Priests met on March 4, 2005, to receive a recommendation from the Council of Twelve regarding who is called to serve as the next president of the church. The joint council entered into a period of worship before considering the recommendation. Following discussion and the sharing of testimonies regarding the call, this council unanimously expressed support for the individual named as well as appreciation to the Council of Twelve for their leadership of the discernment process. The following communication from the Council of Twelve regarding this matter is offered for the prayerful consideration of the church. *—The First Presidency*

March 4, 2005

To the Church,

As members of the Council of Twelve Apostles, we testify that we have felt your prayers as you have lifted us up to God during the discernment process to determine who is called by God to serve as the church's prophet-president. This has been a joyful, and Spirit-filled time, marked by an unusual unity of purpose, a fervent spirit of prayer, and strong sense of mutual support. We believe your prayers have made a difference. God's abiding grace and eternal presence have inspired and guided us as we've sought to know the mind and will of God. With praise and thanksgiving we acknowledge the Holy Spirit's presence and direction, guiding the church during this leadership transition.

We also acknowledge that the prayers, support, and counsel of the joint council have blessed us during our journey of faithful discernment. Our expectations have been surpassed, our faith strengthened, and our hearts filled beyond measure with the assurance that God is with us and continues to lead the church into the future.

On March 2, 2005, the Council of Twelve Apostles met in fasting, fervent prayer, and reflection. God graced our efforts and gave to each of us a testimony that Stephen M. Veazey is called to lead the church as prophet-president. We offer his name to the church for consideration, not of our own accord, but through what we know to be the Holy Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation. We know that our brother is divinely called by God to serve as the president of the high priesthood, prophet, and president of the church.

Brother Veazey senses that call as well. He shared with the council expressions of how the Holy Spirit has been working in his life, preparing him for this moment and supporting him as he prepares for the challenges of this role. He affirmed his faith and trust in God, saying that when he has answered Christ's call, God has always been there to sustain and direct him. If delegates at the special World Conference, June 2-5, 2005, support this call, Brother Veazey will serve faithfully, working closely with the World Church Leadership Council to ensure that God's purposes are lived out in the church's mission.

As Brother Veazey's friends and colleagues, we affirm his gifts of visionary leadership, prophetic insight, humility, integrity, compassion, missionary passion, and commitment to Jesus Christ. These spiritual gifts are accompanied by the wisdom he has gained through many years of experience, serving and witnessing in many nations. Brother Veazey loves God and the people he is called to serve. He has the unique ability to hold all ministries of the church in his awareness while giving specific attention to the church's broader vision. We recognize that no one person has all the qualities of leadership needed in this role. We believe, however, that God has blessed him with the gifts that are needed at this time.

As a Council, we will continue to support Brother Veazey as he prepares to serve the church. Because of the spiritual power we experienced as people throughout the world joined in prayer on our behalf, we encourage the church to pray for the World Conference delegates, Brother Veazey, World Church leaders, and one another. It is our fervent prayer that the encounter we have had with the Holy Spirit will be experienced by and confirmed to all our brothers and sisters in the Community of Christ.

Your sisters and brothers in Christ,

James E. Slauter, secretary
Linda L. Booth
David R. Brock
Bunda C. Chibwe
Mary Jacks Dynes
John P. Kirkpatrick
Dale E. Luffman
Kenneth L. McLaughlin
Gail E. Mengel
David D. Schaal
Leonard M. Young

Links to the video clip of the service in which Stephen Veazey was announced as President-designate are at <http://www.cofchrist.org/broadcast/2005archive.asp#Announcement>

I will be sending out periodic e-mails letting everyone know what is “HAPPENING” at North Houston. 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.

Dorothy Hibbard
