

THE MUSTARD SEED



Vol. 35, Issue 5, January, 2008, Edition

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Coming Up...
*See inside for
details*

Jan. 10—Worship
Planning meeting
Jan. 13—2nd Sunday
Jan. 18—Martin
Luther King Sunday
Jan. 27—Men's
Sunday
Jan. 29—Minnesota
Political Process
Meeting
Feb. 24—All
Ministries Meeting

Official Notice:
**The Annual
Meeting of RUCC
will be held on
Sunday, Feb. 3,
after the 10 am
worship service.**

Regular Features...

Worship Schedule p. 2
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Birthdays p. 7
Calendar insert

A HAPPY
NEW YEAR

2008

From Your Pastor And Teacher

“A final problem that [humanity] must solve in order to survive in the world house that we have inherited is finding an alternative to war and human destruction. Recent events have vividly reminded us that nations are not reducing but rather increasing their arsenals of weapons of mass destruction.”

“True nonviolence is more than the absence of violence. It is the persistent and determined application of peaceable power to offenses against the community—in this case the world community.”

- From “The World House” an essay by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

As long as I am able, I will read the hopeful words of the women and men who have served as prophets to our broken world. I will read the works of poets bell hooks and Maya Angelou, and I will read the sermons of Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor and Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is in these and other writings that God’s prophets have spoken to us again and again. It is often in the writing of prophets that I most clearly hear the voice of God.

In a year of presidential politicking, I urge each of us to move beyond the stump speeches of the various candidates and listen attentively to what the prophets are saying. It is the prophets who will proclaim justice and release for the poor and oppressed. It is the prophets who will follow that faithful teaching that we must move from a “thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society.” This prophetic statement by Dr. King is a part of this essay called, “The World House.” It is based on his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech that was denied print media in this country by a racist backlash, but is now widely available on the internet. Just imagine a world where the prophets are silenced or marginalized by those in power. Prophecy, in all traditions, holds one thing in common. It seeks to remedy injustice by questioning the status quo. It is my fervent hope that each of us may listen for the voices that question the status quo and feel that in those words God Is Still Speaking.

This month, we will remember the birthday of a prophet and celebrate again the music and language of not just a person, but a movement, just like last month when we celebrated the birthday of Jesus, whom we know precious little about, but that he started a movement that is alive today. Those movements were about people and freedom, and justice, and love. We are a part of this movement today. It is the movement that inspires service, compassion and kindness. It was begun long ago in the simple acts of forgiveness and hospitality to strangers and sinners. It is continued today in our acts of forgiveness and hospitality to others. Let us celebrate this season of Epiphany by remembering that we are a part of this movement and that our task may be the prophetic invitation for others to join in.

See you in church,
T. Michael



January Schedule

WORSHIP DURING JANUARY

JANUARY 6. EPIPHANY Service at 10:00 a.m.. Holy Communion. Infant and Toddler Care available. Bible Adventures 3 years old through 2nd grade 10:15-11:15 a.m. Lectionary texts: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12.

Faith Community Nurse meeting after church
Middle School Event: 12-3 pm bowling at Brunswick Zone

JANUARY 13. THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST Service at 10:00 a.m.. Infant and Toddler Care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years old through 5th grade 10:15-11:15 a.m. Senior High Sunday School. Lectionary texts: Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-1.

Second Sunday lunch: Kate Menendez
Bible Adventures Meeting 5-7 pm
Youth Ministry 6 pm

JANUARY 20. SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY. MLK Community Service at 10:00 a.m.. T. Michael Rock preaching. Infant and Toddler Care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years old through 5th grade 10:15-11:15 a.m. Middle School Sunday School. Lectionary texts: Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42. Mustard Seed deadline

JANUARY 27. THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY. Service at 10:00 a.m. Men's Group Service. Infant and Toddler Care Available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years old through 5th grade 10:15-11:15 a.m.. Lectionary texts: Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1,4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23.

Worship at Robbinsdale United Church of Christ

Flexibility is the key to worship in January. Your pastor will likely be taking two weeks off at the birth of his new baby at some point this month. In that

case worship will be led by a capable and gifted Worship Ministry, and we will gather to hear the word preached by Rev. Jennifer Stoos and our in-care student, Beckie Bernu. So, let us remember to be flexible in this season of Epiphany.

January 6th – Epiphany Sunday w/ Communion
Scripture Readings – Isaiah 60:1-6 and Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon: “Uh-oh, We Lost the Child” – Rev. T. Michael Rock

On this Epiphany Sunday we will remember the arrival of the wise ones from the East. We will also explore the strategy of those who proclaim the truth and those who have discovered Jesus in a new way.

January 13th –
Scripture Readings - Acts 10:34-43 and Matthew 3:13-17

Sermon: “The Water Breaks” – Rev. T. Michael Rock

The folks in Bible Adventures have been living with the parable of the Good Samaritan for the past three weeks. In worship, it will be the adults' turn to experience this story and discover in our own lives our barriers and opportunities to be “good.”

January 20th – Birthday Celebration for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Complete with spirituals and stories from the African-American tradition, let's journey through the life of Dr. King and hear where he came from, and the challenge to see where we are going. This will be a wonderful service to lift our spirits and warm our hearts.

4:00 p.m. – Community Worship – Our gift to the wider community when we present this worship service out in the community.

January 27th – Men's Sunday
Scripture Reading – Matthew 4:12-23

Sermon: “Fishing for People – Minnesota Style”

Talents and gifts abound at RUCC. This Sunday will feature a faithful group of men who have been writing and praying about their call to serve others. The message on this Sunday will reflect on how to reach out and invite others into this faithful family.

Notes from Our Student Minister Dwight Wagenius

We have now completed a church year and begun a new one together. We are beginning a new calendar year together. I am blessed and continually nourished by your welcome, support and opportunities to grow.

I look forward eagerly to the opportunities my ministry with you will pose in the new year. I will do some education projects, lead Bible study sessions, preach and lead worship, celebrate Lent with you all, and do a bit of that great variety of things that ordained ministers do in a congregation.

Since my last note to you all, I have gotten to know more about how this church works and how much you all do. I worked with the YEP2 teens, Mary Ann Mead, Steve Quesnel, and T to prepare the Christmas Eve four o'clock service and celebration—you are truly blessed to have these young people and mentors in your community. I met regularly with T. Michael and the staff, and with several ministries and other groups.

In the seminar that goes along with this internship, we are in the midst of a long series of academic studies of congregations as systems, cultures, and organizations. I conduct occasional analyses of one or another aspect of this congregation to go with the academic studies.

I am here to learn and to teach. You can give me feedback either directly or through any of the good folks on my Leadership Advisory Group—Jim Benshoof, Dawn Conn, Tracey Fluegel, Jean Hosterman, Dale Swenson, and T. Michael.

Thank you.
Peace,
Dwight

Tuesdays with T. – A Bible Study for Beginners 6:00 p.m. – Every Tuesday

We are reading, singing, and praying the Psalms. Haven't you wanted to learn more about the Bible? Haven't you always wanted the Bible to be relevant in your life? Come and read with us on Tuesday nights and discover the Bible for the first time, or all over again. This will be a wonderful time to explore and learn from each other about the scripture. This Bible Study is designed in a way that folk are welcome to drop in from time to time, or attend every week. No homework is required, and all

questions are welcome. The Bible Study will last for an hour and child care is provided.

Please bring a Bible if you have one, or we'll have one for you. All versions are welcome. Please talk with T. Michael if you have any questions.



WORSHIP PLANNING AND PIZZA

Thursday, January 10 – 6 p.m.

Who decides whether we pass the communion trays or dip the bread? Who requests the choir to process or sit in the congregation? Who gets to dream up which banners are hung or what wonderful creation will hang in our worship space? Who makes us focus on the lectionary or delve deeper into a sermon series?

Well, it is the folks who show up for Worship Planning. Three times a year people are invited to dream and decide about the direction of our worship for the next few months. We will look at possible sermon ideas, music, art, drama, and other ritual that enhance our worship life together. Come and take part in this special opportunity. All you need to do is call the church office so we have enough pizza. If you have any questions, please talk with T. Michael.



When was the last time you checked out our website at

www.robbinsdaleuucc.org

Our webmaster, Paul Amundson, will be making some neat changes in the coming months as we learn to tell our story. We are also asking folks to take pictures of church events and people. If you have ideas about the website or would like to be one of our official photographers, e-mail Paul at p.amundson@usfamily.net or T. Michael at tmichael@robbinsdaleuucc.org



**LGBT Potluck
ALL Are Welcome!!
Saturday, February 24, at 6:00 p.m.**

Coordinating Council

December 18, 2007

*Opportunity Next Door: Studying possibility of affordable housing ministry. Information meetings will be held (see article elsewhere in this issue).

***Annual Meeting Feb. 3.** Will vote on proposed bylaw changes. See below.

***All Ministries Meeting Feb. 24.**

*Treasurer: Pledge income is behind for year, but some pledges are expected to be paid at year end.

*T. Michael's paternity leave: pulpit will be filled by Jennifer Stoos and Becky Bernu for 2 Sundays.

*Dwight is very pleased with his internship so far; interviews for next year's intern will be held Feb. 25.

*Worship planning meeting open to all on Jan. 1, 6 p.m. (see article elsewhere in this issue).

*Middle School and Senior High Sunday School going well.

*PRISM: Undie Sundays in January. Hat & Mitten Tree has never been so full.

*Trustees are getting quotes for dishwasher replacement; current one cannot be repaired.

*National & Global: Sponsoring "Jesus at Guantanamo" (see article elsewhere in this issue).

*January 2nd Sunday: Kate Menedez speaking about her experiences at Guantanamo and working with detainees there.

*Stewardship Drive: 99 pledges in at \$229,268.

Bylaw Changes Proposed to Be Voted on at Annual Meeting



There will be several proposed by-law changes for the congregation to vote on at this year's Annual Meeting on February 3, 2008. The objectives and a summary are included here; a full list of the proposed changes, along with the proposed budget, will be posted on the bulletin board outside the office two weeks before the Annual Meeting. Copies of both documents will be available in the office.

Objectives:

- Make it easier for individuals to share their talents and interests
- Support realization of long term goals through consistent leadership
- Increase opportunities for active ministry

Summary of proposed changes:

- Provide leadership consistency—Retain Past

Moderator as active officer for an additional year.

- Provide leadership consistency—Add Head Usher as designated role

- Allow more members to participate actively in RUCC Ministries—Change Ministry membership from a fixed number of people to a minimum number

- Allow people to continue to participate in their ministry of choice—Change number of consecutive Ministry terms from 3 to no limit

- Increase opportunities for active ministry—Set 3-consecutive-year limitation on leadership terms in a Ministry

Community News

Members With Special Concerns

Please keep these church friends in your prayers:

Gert Anderson
Jeanne Angel
Amanda Busch
Shirley Dayton
Eleanor Evans
Ken Evans
Vince Flesness
Tom Jensen
Madge Johnson
Lois Larsen

Mary Lauder
Kathy Plumb
Ellinor Porter
Barbara Sexton
June Swanson
Barbara Webber
Arlene Whelan

Phone Number Change

Amanda Busch
651-488-5079

Many Thanks!!

The Pilgrim Guild wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the Tree of Warmth for PRISM. (People Responding in Social Ministry) The gifts included 9 sets of hats with gloves or mitts, plus 12 pairs of mittens, 15 pairs of gloves, 44 hats, 3 scarves, 3 pairs of slippers and two blankets. We contributed to 36 pairs of warm hands and 53 warm heads this winter. Some items were hand knit and others purchased...all with lots of love. PRISM thanks you for your continuous support of the various needs in the west metro and wishes you all a wonderful New Year.



**INTERFAITH LEISURE AGE
9 AM. SOCIAL HOUR
12 NOON LUNCH AND PROGRAM:
Lunch Reservations Required
Elim Lutheran Church.
3748 West Broadway in Robbinsdale**

Jan. 3: No Leisure Age.
Jan. 10: Joe Jenson and the Top Hats.
Jan. 17: Blood pressures taken from 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Program: Kevin Doely, musical ventriloquist.
Jan. 24: Mary Hall presents "My Favorite Tunes."
Jan. 31: January Birthday Party. Program: accordion
player Florian Chemielewski.

Leisure Age meets on Thursday from 9:00-2:00.
Lunch costs \$8.00. It is now necessary to make
reservations if you plan to attend. If you're present
one week, you can sign the reservation book that is
passed at the table to attend the following week. If
you are not present, you can make reservations
Monday 9 a.m. to noon by calling Jean Lindstrom at
763-537-1171. You may also use this number to
cancel a reservation.

*If you have any questions, please contact:
Leonard Sidle, 763-504-0465
or Keith Smith, 612-588-1401*

Once again RUCC is privileged to serve at
Elim Leisure Age on **Feb. 7th and 14th**. A sign-up
sheet will be posted by the office. As usual we need
2 volunteers at 10:30 a.m. and 6 volunteers at 11:30
a.m. to serve and clean up. T. Michael will lead
chapel on Feb. 14th and everyone is invited to join
him for lunch that day. Thank you.

—Keith Smith and Leonard Sidle

YOU INDEED MADE IT HAPPEN!

Members of the Garden Group
express their appreciation for your
support to beautify our sanctuary with
poinsettia plants for the holiday season.
Without YOU it would not have
happened. Oh, by the way, we are
already thinking spring and the Easter seasons.
Orders will be taken in early March for our Easter
Garden display Easter Sunday, March 23. Again, our
thanks to you for many years of support.



Next New Member Sunday – May 4

If you would like to become a member of
Robbinsdale United Church of Christ, or know
someone who does, please call T. Michael at the
church office, so a special invitation can come
forward.

**Tuesday, January 29th – 7:00 p.m.
Minnesota Political Process 101**

It is said that the best
words a politician can hear in
states like Minnesota and Iowa
are, "I'm going to caucus for
you." When I moved to
Minnesota I had no idea what that even meant. I've
asked several people if they attend a political
caucus in Minnesota and over 75% of them have
said they attended once but didn't understand how
it worked. Well, it's time we understood. Our
student minister, Dwight Wagenius, is an
experienced caucus participant and leader. On this
Tuesday night, Dwight will teach us about this
process and help us understand how we can each
have a voice in our democracy. The Minnesota
Caucuses will be Tuesday evening, February 5, so
this will be perfect timing for us to be involved.



**Creating a Culture of Peace:
Practical Nonviolence for Personal and Social
Transformation**

Heritage Hall - Robbinsdale United Church
of Christ

March 7th – 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

March 8th – 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

March 9th – Noon to 5 p.m.

The cost is \$30 for members of
Robbinsdale United Church of Christ and \$130 for
friends and guests. All meals are covered.

What is this training about? This program
has been designed to bring out the extraordinary in
all people. It offers a journey through experience of
violence, a practicum on active nonviolence, a
study of social movements and change, and a
practical exercise on how to build community. The
workshop ends with planning on how to take this
experience into our families, our work and into the
world.

Please fill out a registration form and turn it
in to the church office by Sunday, February 17th.

RUCC to Host "Jesus at Guantanamo"

Local and nationally-known theater artist, Matthew Vaky, will perform his one man play, "Jesus at Guantanamo" on Friday, January 18, 2008, at 7:00 pm, at Robbinsdale United Church of Christ. The premise of this hilariously intense one-man show is that Jesus Christ has returned to Earth and, being from the Middle East, has been sent to Guantanamo as a terrorist. He has been denied a lawyer and a trial, and hasn't been charged, but has been sleep deprived and tortured...and he also has some pretty funny ideas about the Bible and man's inhumanity to man.

Vaky is a former member of the Guthrie Acting Company and has written, directed and acted with many local companies, including Mixed Blood, Children's Theater, Stepping Stone Theater, the Fringe Festival and the Bryant Lake Bowl. He teaches at the Guthrie and is on staff at El Colegio Charter School in Minneapolis. The play is wonderfully written, beautifully performed and surprisingly humorous. It is not for the faint of heart, however, nor is it for children because of mature themes and strong language.

The performance is free and open to the public and is being co-sponsored by the National and Global Ministry and the Northwest Neighbors for Peace. The performance will be followed by a discussion between the playwright and the audience. A free will offering will be accepted. This is an important work and one you will not want to miss. For more information, contact nwn4p.pbwiki.com or Carole at 763-546-5368.

--Dale Fisher, National and Global Coordinating Ministry

Children's Time — "The Box"



The Children's Time "Box" has added a new dimension to our worship. Introduced by T. Michael at the beginning of September, a box is given to a different child each week to be returned the next week with something inside that is not a toy or anything that bites. Thank you to **Sophia Bertossi** for bringing a **dollar bill**; to **Brittany Welter** for bringing **music**; to **Oliver Fluegel-Murray** for bringing a **salami sandwich**; to **Klare Geiger** for bringing a **flashlight**; to **Kira Johnson** for bringing **her blanket** and to **Nathan Rock** for bringing a **globe**. (And thanks to T. Michael, Cheryl

Nordquist, Dawn Conn and Kris Geiger for opening the box!!) **How many wonderful ways we have learned to see God's presence and action in the world through our children!!!**



PRISM Undies Sunday in January

The Community Outreach Coordinating Ministry will collect underwear donations for PRISM in January. "Undies Sunday" is a legacy of Fran Zabel, who was active in Mission and Outreach at RUCC and started the first "Undies Sunday" collection at RUCC. You can help families in need by donating new "undies" of any kind for all ages: undershirts, underpants, diapers/ "pull-ups." Please bring your donations on January 6th, 13th, or 20th. Thank you for your support of Undies Sunday and the families who will benefit from this collection.



And, as always, don't forget the PRISM Food Shelf. The need is great!

2008 Prism Recommended Items for RUCC to Contribute:

January - Dish Soap
February - Canned Vegetables
March - Diapers size 3 and up
April - Flour and Sugar
May - Baked beans
June - Tuna
July - Toilet paper
August - Macaroni and cheese
Sept - Canned fruit
Oct. - Ramen
Nov. Jam and Jelly
December - Chili



Thank you for your food contributions and Christmas Gifts to PRISM. In a future newsletter we will share RUCC's total gifts in pounds of food and \$ value donated in 2007.

—Community Outreach Ministry



Happy Birthday!
Greetings and best wishes to all members and friends of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ who celebrate their birthdays in January.

Diane	Amundson	January	3
Kayla	Miller	January	3
Lissi	Weiss	January	3
Megan	Davis	January	6
Lois	Bossert	January	9
Phillip	Carlson	January	10
Marion	Hansen	January	13
Dorie	Miner	January	15
Molly	Straight	January	16
Patty	Miller	January	17
Nancy	Greenwood	January	18
Dick	Reierson	January	20
Richard	Smith	January	23
Howard	Berg	January	24
Jordan	Lanz	January	25
Kyle	Lanz	January	25
Jeanette	Rost	January	26
Louiva	Puffer	January	29
Taylor	Abild	January	30
Sue	Nechanicky	January	30

STEWARDS OF THE EARTH SURVEY

Here are the results from our survey in October. The numbers indicate the percentage of respondents who answered yes to each question (some questions weren't applicable to every household). We actually dropped for many of the questions, however, keep in mind that we did not apply any statistical analysis so much of the difference may be sample error. Let's continue to try to improve our stewardship of the earth over time. Remember that you can go to www.mnenergychallenge.org to take the energy challenge and to get other ideas for saving energy and decreasing carbon dioxide production – we are registered as a congregation on the website. There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the idea of using ceramic mugs for coffee hour. Our ministry will continue to work on making that happen. Thanks, the Community Outreach Ministry

We/I have or do:

Replaced at least 5 light bulbs with compact fluorescents.

Yes 49% May

Yes 51% October



Consistently turn off lights and electronics when leaving a room.

Yes 91% May Yes 74% October

Use a programmable thermostat to lower the heat at least 5 degrees for at least 8 hours while away at work or asleep.

Yes 70% May Yes 53% October

Increase the Air Conditioning thermostat/decrease the heat thermostat at least 2 degrees; turn off the AC at night when it is cool outside.

Yes 86% May Yes 70% October

Limit showers to 5 minutes.

Yes 64% May Yes 48% October

Wash clothes in cold water.

Yes 57% May Yes 59% October

Installed a low flow showerhead.

Yes 52% May Yes 43% October

Turned the water heater thermostat down 1/8 turn.

Yes 36% May Yes 21% October

Carpool to work, take public transportation, or bike to work.

Yes 15% May Yes 16% October

Maintain car tire pressure; obey the speed limit; avoid quick starts and stops.

Yes 81% May Yes 76% October

Keep fireplace damper closed when not in use.

Yes 100% May Yes 86% October

Augmented attic/wall insulation.

Yes 63% May Yes 32% October

Replaced old appliances with new energy efficient models.

Yes 68% May Yes 53% October

Have a hybrid engine vehicle or use a vehicle that gets over 40 mpg.

Yes 7% May Yes 6% October

Installed double paned or glazed windows.

Yes 68% May Yes 48% October

Are willing to use ceramic cups for coffee hour instead of Styrofoam. (A dishwasher will be installed in the upstairs kitchen to clean them).

Yes 87%



Would prefer to bring my own cup to keep at church or have the church supply a mug.

Own mug 40% Church provided 53%

“Opportunity Next Door”

A possible mission project of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ.

Partnering with The Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation to provide low income housing in the units next door to the church.

More Information:

Low-Income Housing 101 – January 6th Potluck
Discussion/Discernment Round Tables
After Worship on January 27th, February 17th,
March 2nd
March 26th Potluck

Congregational Vote on this proposal – Sunday, March 30th.

Any questions, please contact the “Opportunity Next Door” Task Force: Julie Manworren, Jim Puffer, Kay and Ken Barker, Ken Mallak, Ken Beck, Lisa Lindesmith, Chioma Onwukwe, Lyn Koss, Dan Haugen, Brad Welton, and T. Michael Rock.

February Issue. . .

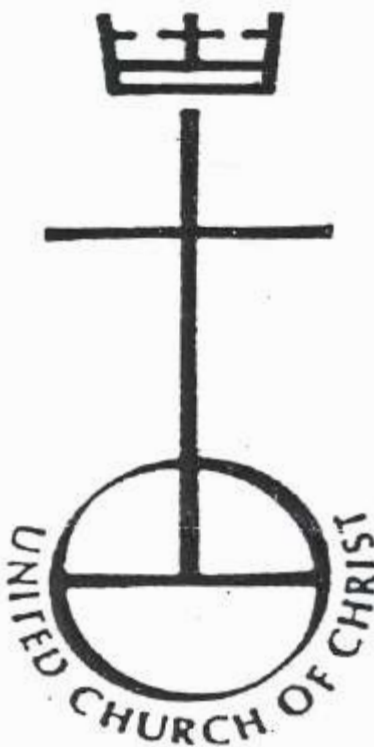
Mustard Seed



Please place all articles for the next issue of the Mustard Seed in the box marked "Mustard Seed" on the shelf inside the door to the workroom in the church office, mail them to Barbara Wills, 6214 Upland Lane No., Maple Grove 55311, or e-mail to thewillses@aol.com (attachments Microsoft Word only) so that they are received by the deadline.

FEB. ISSUE DEADLINE
Sunday, January 20 , 11 a.m.
No exceptions please.

(February issue will be mailed Friday, January 25.)



Robbinsdale United Church of Christ
4200 Lake Road
Robbinsdale, MN 55422

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