

# THE MUSTARD SEED



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*Coming Up...*  
*See inside for details*

Mondays—Job Search Support Group  
Tuesdays—Bible Study  
March 1, 8, 22, 29,  
Apr. 5—Christian Meditation class  
March 8, 15—Order Easter flowers  
March 8—YEP High School  
March 10—Pilgrim Guild  
March 27-29—Non-Violence Workshop  
March 29, Apr. 5, 7—New Member class

*Regular Features...*

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Bible Adventures Insert

**See the Holy Week Schedule on Page 5**

## From Your Pastor And Teacher

It didn't take long in our men's group for conversation to move into the increasing stress our struggling economy is having on the lives of our members. It affects all of us in one way or another, and around that table, and probably every table, we are acknowledging the loss of jobs, opportunity for retirement, and, most of all, profound sense of uncertainty.

One of our wisest members recalled living during the Great Depression of the 1930's. He recalled it being hard and that food was scarce, but he also reminded us that in the 1930's people knew how to deal with less. The idea of shared resources was not innovative or new. It was a way of life for many, and living through the depression only served to improve those skills of love and trust of those around you. The real worry was that, today, people don't have those skills.

So, I thought that it may be fitting to adapt a piece written by the President of Hope for Peace and Justice, an on-line community that provides inspiration and vision for people who are learning how to love. President Piazza offers these simple solutions:

1. Stop feeding our minds/souls a steady diet of bad news. Listen to comedians, read books with happy endings, get back to a church/temple/synagogue/mosque where a word of hope is offered and songs of joy are sung.
2. Eat dinner at home with family and friends and play cards or board games. Exercises like this will remind you that the true joys in life don't have to cost a lot.
3. Volunteer for a cause you believe in. This will remind you that your life has meaning and purpose beyond your job and paycheck.
4. Give generously. There are people who are unemployed and have little to give. As a result, almost every charity in the country is struggling to do more with less. If you still have your job, it is terribly ungrateful not to share a bit more of what you have.
5. Pray, meditate or focus on the possibilities. Decide to cooperate with the universe to celebrate every moment of your life from now until the finale. Decide that retirement is overrated anyway. Honestly, the future may look different for some of us than we thought it would. Different isn't always worse, though. How many stories do we know of people who worked to 65, retired and promptly got sick and died? Don't picture yourself as a greeter at Wal-Mart (heck, don't ever picture yourself inside a Wal-Mart!), but begin to notice elderly people who are happy and make up your mind to be one of them.

I know these are pretty basic suggestions and that the economic reality is complicated, but I firmly believe that our vision and opportunity to be a sanctuary of hope and healing has never been more relevant. I believe all of us should adopt the prayer of Reinhold Niebuhr that is a foundation for folks in recovery. Here it is in its more complete form:

*God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time;  
Enjoying one moment at a time;  
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;*

*Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world  
as it is, not as I would have it;  
Trusting that God will make all things right  
if I surrender to God's Will;  
That I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy with God  
Forever in the next.  
Amen.*



## March Schedule

### March 1, 2009

First Sunday in Lent

Service at 10:00 a.m. Infant and toddler care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade 10:15 – 11:15 a.m. Lectionary texts: Genesis 9: 8-17; Psalm 25: 1-10; 1 Peter 3: 18-22; Mark 1: 9-15.

### March 8, 2009

Second Sunday in Lent

Service at 10:00 a.m. Infant and toddler care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years through 5<sup>th</sup> grade 10:15 – 11:15 a.m. Lectionary texts: Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22: 23-31; Romans 4: 13-25; Mark 8: 31-38.

### March 15, 2009

Third Sunday in Lent

Service at 10:00 a.m. Infant and toddler care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years through 5<sup>th</sup> grade 10:15 – 11:15 a.m. Lectionary texts: Exodus 20: 1-17; Psalm 19; I Corinthians 1: 18-25; John 2: 13-22.

### March 22, 2009

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Service at 10:00 a.m. Infant and toddler care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years through 5<sup>th</sup> grade 10:15 – 11:15 a.m. Lectionary texts: Numbers 21: 4-9; Psalms 107: 1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2: 1-10; John 3: 14-21.

### March 29, 2009

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Service at 10:00 a.m. Infant and toddler care available. Bible Adventures for children 3 years through 5<sup>th</sup> grade 10:15 – 11: 15 a.m. Lectionary texts: Jeremiah 31: 31-34; Psalm 51: 1-12; Hebrews 5: 5-10; John 12: 20-33.

### Worship at Robbinsdale United Church of Christ

The past season of worship has been all about healing. In the midst of our gratitude many folks who came heard once again about the purpose of church being a place to offer healing and to ask for healing.

The goal is wholeness, forgiveness and grace. Here at Robbinsdale United Church of Christ we are working those things out together. Lent offers us that time to learn once again about how God promises to be with us and that we bear some responsibility in return.

### March 1<sup>st</sup> – Communion – First Sunday in Lent

Scripture: Genesis 9:8-17 and Mark 1:9-15

Sermon: “Covenant Begins” – Rev. T. Michael Rock

This will be a great time to bring a friend to church or come back again to be a part of this wonderful community. This Sunday will really focus on the simple meanings of what it means to be a church, the promise that God makes, and the responsibility we have been given. Come and renew your sense of Spirit by making a commitment to being here during Lent.

### March 8<sup>th</sup> – Second Sunday in Lent

Scripture: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Sermon: “Another, Bigger Promise” – Rev. T. Michael Rock

Come and explore again the foundation of our biblical story in the character of Abraham. Is there any better way than to journey through Lent knowing that what God really wants is for us to be in healthy and whole relationships? What a gift to receive this promise. What gift we will share in return?

### March 15<sup>th</sup> – Third Sunday in Lent

Scripture: John 3:14-21

Sermon: “Ollie, Ollie Oxen Free” – Frank Bennett

God entered into a new covenant with people through the witness and life of Jesus. The scripture passage of John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” has been interpreted to mean many things. What is the nature of this covenant between us and God? I will describe part of my faith journey as a young adult through pictures and art to address the question, “Does God use belief in Christ as a way to decide who gets into heaven?”

### March 22<sup>nd</sup> – Fourth Sunday in Lent

Scripture: Numbers 21:4-9

Sermon: “Watch Out for the Snakes.” – Rev. T. Michael Rock

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We are halfway through this season of Lent and it's time to do some self-reflection on our response to God's steadfast love. It's time to accept the challenge of change in all aspects of our lives. In this exploration of covenant we learn that nothing stays the same.

**March 29<sup>th</sup>** – Fifth Sunday in Lent

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31-34 and John 12:20-33

Sermon: "Our Side of Covenant"—Rev. T. Michael Rock

Be prepared to share your understanding of covenant and what you promise to be and do for others. We are not in this alone, but each of us is asked to respond in some way to God's love for us.

**Lent at Robbinsdale United Church of Christ**

The season of Lent is time of reflection and renewal for many people. Some people give things up for Lent as a spiritual practice. I like to take things on to grow my faith. The practice of faith is always much easier when we are not alone, so you are invited to be take on a spiritual practice this Lent. There will be sign-up sheets after worship, or you can call or e-mail your choice. Each week you will receive an e-mail with encouragement for your new practice.

*Choice 1 – Fasting* – On Mondays during Lent, from sunrise to sunset, you are invited to refrain from eating, while being mindful and aware of both your physical and spiritual hunger. You may choose to fast the whole time or for one meal. Know you have the permission to make this spiritual practice your own.

*Choice 2 – Lectio Divina* – This is a form of Bible study that asks you to read a short passage from scripture and allow it to become a prayer for your life. Each week you will be given scripture choices, or you can find one of your own.

*Choice 3 – Prayer / Meditation* – Join the prayer chain this month and practice your prayers in a more intentional way.

*Choice 4 – Alms Giving* – This is a fun spiritual practice. This involves a discipline of giving and generosity. One way to practice is to put \$2 in a jar each day during Lent. Just be mindful of setting

aside \$2, or any amount of your choice, and watch the jar fill up. At the end of Lent, find a person or place to give the money away. In doing so, you will not just donate money, but you will give a piece of your spirit away. Pray about the recipient and infuse your gift with love. Some folks add a \$1 for every time they swear or utter unkind words. This is a simple way of staying "on course" during Lent.

It is my hope that folks will also take on one or more of these practices for the six weeks of Lent. Remember, when you sign up to take on one of these practices, you will receive a special e-mail of encouragement on Mondays from your pastor and teacher. If you have any other questions, please talk with T. Michael at anytime.

**LET US PREPARE THE WAY:**

**An introduction to Christian meditation techniques:**

**A Faith Formation series**

**presented by Frank Bennett**

**Sundays, March 1, 8, 22, 29 and April 5**

**from 11:30 to 12:30 in the Heritage Room at RUCC**

As we prepare ourselves for Easter, we find ways to deepen our faith and our understanding of God working in us and through us. Last year, Robbinsdale UCC used fasting and other spiritual practices to develop awareness and insight as part of the Lenten preparation. This year during Lent, I will be leading a series of 5 one-hour workshops for anyone who wants to learn more about different methods of Christian meditation.

Over the last 30 years, I have explored meditation techniques from other traditions in an effort to deepen my own spiritual practice. In 2007, while I was a student at UTS, I undertook an independent study to discover the roots of Christian meditation because I wanted to learn more about what our religion's history and traditions could teach us about this method of gaining self-awareness and a small measure of peace.

As a result of my studies, I created an education program to share my knowledge with adult learners. With the blessing of the Faith Formation ministry, I'd like to share it with this community of faith. Each week we will explore a different Christian meditation technique, none of which involve sitting in convoluted positions or require any skills or experience. The only thing that is needed is an open mind and heart.

This series is open to all youth and adults on a drop-in basis. You're welcome to attend one, some or all of the sessions. I look forward to seeing you in March!

## **RUCC STAFF PERFORMANCE REVIEWS**

Thank you to all who participated in staff performance reviews during 2008.

Personnel Committee members included Jan Walker, Corinne Myers, Dale Swenson and Dan Haugen. Ken Beck and Julie Manworren also assisted. As a result, David Nordli, Steve Quesnel, Gretchen Roesler and Sue Cook were each given the opportunity to receive feedback concerning their current job activities, as well as input as they move forward in their roles. All RUCC staff participate in interactive performance reviews on an annual basis.

The process that was used to review T. Michael's activities over the past year was particularly noteworthy. It provided every member of RUCC with an opportunity to complete a survey. Survey results were compiled and, subsequently, all scores and comments were shared with T. Michael.

T. Michael was very appreciative of the feedback he received and the opportunity he has had to discuss this feedback. By plan, this sort of comprehensive review, including all RUCC members, will be conducted every two years. In intervening years, the model used for other RUCC staff members will be employed.

Thanks again to all who participated in this process. It adds great value to the life of our church.

### **Coordinating Council February 16, 2009**

\*Treasurer: Generally we are in good shape year to date with income and expenses. There will be an expense (not in budget) for elevator maintenance; work has been ordered.

\*Endowment income to be distributed (see article below).

\*New member classes delayed until March. Beekie Bernu is working with T. Michael on these.

\*Nominating Committee did a good job filling openings on ministries for this year, but there are still openings on Youth, Hospitality, and National and Global. See Dan Haugen or T. Michael if interested.

\*Challenge for 2009: raising the \$10,000 for line item in budget for fund raising. Council is seeking ideas from congregation.

\*Long Range Planning "Listening Team" interviewers have been commissioned to talk with each member. Information will be used to set goals.

\*Worship: Children's Time Box will return in summer; will not do Passing of the Peace during Lent. Gospel of Mark will be read April 3.

\*Community Outreach: Support group for unemployed or under-employed will meet on Mondays (see article elsewhere in this issue).

\*National & Global: Continuing to work toward a mission trip to Guatemala in 2010.

### **Special Grant Opportunities from the Endowment Fund**

At its February 16 meeting, the Coordinating Council decided to invite the ministries and the congregation to submit applications for endowment grants to be taken from our previous year's earnings from the Endowment Fund. The 2008 earnings are \$6300. This money is available to the church ministries and groups of church members interested in pursuing a special project to enhance the mission and ministry of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ.

Under RUCC bylaws, this money can be spent as follows: up to 25% (up to \$1575) may be spent on capital projects; up to 25% (up to \$1575) may be spent on scholarships; 25% or more (at least \$1575) may be spent on outreach into the local community; and 25% or more (at least \$1575) may be spent on the wider mission of the denomination.

For more details about these categories, check the bylaws or contact a member of the Coordinating Council or Endowment Committee. Note that our bylaws advise that these funds shall not be used for the annual operating budget.

To apply for an endowment fund grant, complete an RUCC Endowment Funds Request form and submit it with a description of your project to the church office (Attn: Coordinating Council), either by mail or by e-mail ([office@robbinsdaleucc.org](mailto:office@robbinsdaleucc.org)). The form will be available in the office in printed form or via e-mail, and it will be posted on the RUCC website. Turn in your completed form by Thursday, April 16, 2009. The Council will review projects at its April meeting, and may decide to fund some or all of the proposals or to request more information. The final decision will be made at or by the May meeting.

This is an exciting time. Be creative. Partner with others. Help enhance the ministry of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ!

### **Opportunity Next Door – UPDATE**

Many folks have asked recently about the status of this project. It's a great question, and we are glad to say that the opportunity is still there. Along the way, in partnership with the Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation, we have discovered about 1.6 million dollars could be available through public funding, mostly through Hennepin County. We have also connected with other local congregations and feel that together we could raise about \$100,000 for the project. Unfortunately, that leaves us about \$300,000 short in our ability to purchase, develop, and renovate the property.

**Good News** – We have time. The owner is not moving quickly and the market is still down. We also have creative people looking at other avenues of generating the income to bridge that gap.

**Bad News** – There is none. Each moment spent concerned and connected to families in need brings us closer to God and clearer on our vision as a loving congregation. Nothing is wasted as we try to understand how best to serve those who need our love the most.

**Next Steps** – Continue to pray about this opportunity and realize that it may just take one or two significant donors to move this project forward. Continue to remember that there is still not enough housing or resources for the families in our community. Continue giving our homeless kits to folks on the highway and continue advocating for more and more housing in our community.

**On Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, Rev. Jenny Mason will be here to give us the opportunity to sign postcards to send to County Commissioner Mike Opat, in the hopes that more funding can be used for housing and bringing an end to homelessness. This is something all of us can do.**

*Decision and Discernment time for those wondering about membership at Robbinsdale United Church of Christ.*

Lent is wonderful time to journey and seek connection. It is also a wonderful time to grow in faith. We will be offering times of story telling and contemplation for anyone wishing to formally join our church after worship on Sundays, March 29<sup>th</sup> and April 5<sup>th</sup>. We will also connect to our Lenten Journeys by being together on Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

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.

### **Women's Group—Save the Date!**

On Sunday, March 15, after the service, the Women's Group will meet. There will be a potluck lunch and a simple program. Our purpose is social and to become better acquainted with one another. We meet the third Sunday of the month.

Our speaker in March will be Lois Wilder, a graduate of St. Olaf College and former teacher of history and English. She now teaches Memoir Writing classes that emphasize the fun and the importance of recording what you recall from your childhood days to wherever you are in your life's journey now. Join us downstairs at 11:30 and come even if you forget your potluck dish. We always have ample donations.

## **HOLY WEEK**

at Robbinsdale United Church of Christ  
Mark your calendars  
Take the journey. All the way.

Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 7 p.m. – “The Gospel of Mark, The Story of Jesus”

Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, at 10 a.m. – Palm Sunday Worship and Communion

Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, at 6 p.m. – Dinner/Worship/Maundy Thursday Ritual

Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, at 7 p.m. – Good Friday Worship

Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, ALL DAY – Prepare yourself in prayer for Easter

Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, at 10 a.m. – CELEBRATION EASTER WORSHIP



### Happy Birthday!

Greetings and best wishes to all members and friends of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ who celebrate their birthdays in March.

Zoe	Chisnell	March 1
Jeanne	Angel	March 2
Peggy	Spielman	March 3
Rod	Giddings	March 4
Curtis	Johnson	March 5
Jennifer	Welter	March 5
Cathy	Lloyd	March 7
James	Dayton	March 8
Noah	Spielman	March 8
Matthew	Anderson	March 9
David	Chisnell	March 10
James	Geiger	March 10
David	Straight	March 10
Doug	Thompson	March 10
Zella	Fluegel-Murray	March 11
Kathy	Plumb	March 12
Paul	Amundson	March 13
LaVonne	Falk	March 13
Tim	Hoppe	March 13
Ellinor	Porter	March 15
Greg	Thompson	March 17
Jolene	Lauer	March 18
Nancy	Bossert	March 19
Kristen	Geiger	March 19
Kathy Jo	Gausman	March 21
Oliver	Fluegel-Murray	March 23
Sophia	Bertossi	March 24
Jenny	Borchardt	March 24
Patty	Finnemore	March 24
Mark	Wills	March 24
Lilja	Amundson	March 26
Rosalie	Berra	March 27
Davis	Johnson	March 27
Kyle	Pelzer	March 28
Ruthe	Hawn	March 29

**T. Michael is available Tuesday and Thursday 9-12 by appointment for office hours. Call 763-537-6965 or 612-275-0387 to schedule an Appointment.**

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

Heritage Hall  
Robbinsdale United Church of Christ

March 27<sup>th</sup> – 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
March 28<sup>th</sup> – 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
March 29<sup>th</sup> – Noon to 6 p.m.

The cost is \$50 for members of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ and \$100 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. This training event is a practical tool for every person, regardless of age, culture, or ability. All of us can use these skills to connect to our own best self.

Please fill out a registration form and turn it in to the church as soon as possible.

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:** Methodist Hospital Hospice will be providing training for new volunteers this spring. Volunteers give respite care to caregivers who are caring for terminally ill loved ones in their homes. Commitment is a maximum of 4 hours per week, and the training is 4 sessions. If interested, please call Libby Swanson at 952-993-5381.

*To my RUCC family,*

*Thanks to you for the many cards, emails, and phone calls following my recent heart attack. Your caring concern is indeed evidence that I am blessed to be a member of RUCC.*

*—Skip Wills*

*Heartfelt thanks to all who made an old lady feel loved and appreciated by your gifts, your presence, and your creativity. I shall ever be mindful of that most marvelous of birthdays.*

*—Corinne Myers*

*One of the purposes of RUCC's Faith Community Nursing group is to provide health education.*

## **March Is Kidney Month**

The National Kidney Foundation ([www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org)) provides a lot of information about all aspects of kidney problems, treatment and CEUs for those of us who need them. This article presents a snapshot of information. Information is taken from the NKF website.

How do your kidneys help maintain health? In addition to removing wastes and fluid from your body, your kidneys regulate your body water and other chemicals in your blood such as sodium, potassium, phosphorus and calcium; remove drugs and toxins introduced into your body; release hormones into your blood to help your body regulate blood pressure, make red blood cells, promote strong bones. Glomerular filtration rate (GFR) is the best estimate of kidney function.

What is chronic kidney disease (CKD)? Twenty-six million American adults have Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) and millions of others are at increased risk. Early detection can help prevent the progression of kidney disease to kidney failure. Chronic kidney disease includes conditions that damage your kidneys and decrease their ability to keep you healthy. If kidney disease gets worse, wastes can build to high levels in your blood and make you feel sick. You may develop complications like high blood pressure, anemia (low blood count), weak bones, poor nutritional health and nerve damage. Also, kidney disease increases your risk of having heart and blood vessel disease. These problems may happen slowly over a long period of time. Chronic kidney disease may be caused by diabetes, high blood pressure and other disorders. The risk increases if you have diabetes, have high blood pressure, have a family history of chronic kidney disease, are older, or belong to a population group that has a high rate of diabetes or high blood pressure, such as African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and American Indians. When kidney disease progresses, it may eventually lead to kidney failure, which requires dialysis or a kidney transplant to maintain life. Persistent proteinuria (protein in the urine) means CKD is present. Three simple tests can detect CKD: blood pressure, urine albumin and serum creatinine. Anyone can get chronic kidney disease at any age.

What causes CKD? The two main causes of

chronic kidney disease are diabetes and high blood pressure, which are responsible for up to two-thirds of the cases. Diabetes happens when your blood sugar is too high, causing damage to many organs in your body, including the kidneys and heart, as well as blood vessels, nerves and eyes. High blood pressure, or hypertension, occurs when the pressure of your blood against the walls of your blood vessels increases. If uncontrolled, or poorly controlled, high blood pressure can be a leading cause of heart attacks, strokes and chronic kidney disease. Also, chronic kidney disease can cause high blood pressure.

Other conditions that affect the kidneys are Glomerulonephritis, the third most common cause, a group of diseases that cause inflammation and damage to the kidney's filtering units; inherited diseases, such as polycystic kidney disease, which causes large cysts to form in the kidneys and damage the surrounding tissue; malformations that occur as a baby develops in its mother's womb, for example, a narrowing may occur that prevents normal outflow of urine and causes urine to flow back up to the kidney which causes infections and may damage the kidneys; Lupus and other diseases that affect the body's immune system; obstructions such as kidney stones, tumors or an enlarged prostate gland in men.

What are the symptoms of CKD? Most people may not have any severe symptoms until their kidney disease is advanced. You may notice that you feel more tired and have less energy, have trouble concentrating, have a poor appetite, have trouble sleeping, have muscle cramping at night, have swollen feet and ankles, have puffiness around your eyes, especially in the morning, have dry, itchy skin, or need to urinate more often, especially at night.

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**YEP – High School Event**  
Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, Noon to 3 p.m.



### **“Pizza and Pride”**

Come and enjoy food and share stories about life. All are welcome. Friends are always invited. Come and connect to old friends and new ones, and remember to ask and sometimes demand that the church is yours, too.

## Pilgrim Guild News

The Pilgrim Guild will have their March meeting on Tuesday, March 10th. Social time begins at noon, followed by dessert served by our hostesses, Kathy Giddings and Corinne Myers. We have a musical program by a group called **Showtime**. One of our members, Bob Alvord, sings in this group. We would really like a great turnout, so plan to come and enjoy good fellowship, delicious dessert and fun entertainment. If you are not on the calling list just tell Jan Paulsen, Stan Atkinson or Keith Smith you are coming. You'll be glad you did.

The count is in. You helped us collect the following for the Tree of Warmth: 65 hats, 30 scarves, 25 pairs of gloves, 18 pairs of mittens, 1 pair of slippers, 1 pair of booties, and one container of children's jewelry. PRISM thanks you for your generosity.

The Pilgrim Guild has dispersed almost \$2,000. We voted last month to purchase 10 tables for the church to begin to replace the old heavy ones. \$250 worth of school supplies was purchased for Ken Beck's Olson Middle School Team. The following charities each were sent \$150: The Aliveness Project, Leisure Age, Families Moving Forward, Common Hope, Home Free, Mpls. Crisis Nursery, and Dinner at Your Door. We sincerely thank the members at RUCC for supporting our Bake Sales and Plant Sales that make these donations possible.

One of our long time members, Alice MacPherson, would appreciate a ride to church on Sundays. She lives at North Ridge in New Hope. If you live near or go by that area and could pick Alice up once in a while, just let T. Michael or the office know. Thanks.

## Easter Sunday Spring Garden

Many of you will recall the beauty of our sanctuary on Easter Sunday last year. Members of the Garden Group will once again coordinate the ordering and display of Easter flowers. This is a wonderful opportunity to purchase an Easter plant to honor a family member or friend. There will be an insert in the Easter Sunday bulletin listing those whom you wish to honor. Plants may be picked up after worship on Easter, April 12. Orders will be taken on Sundays, March 8 and 15. See a member of the Garden Group at the table in the



narthex.

Prices are as follows:

Easter lilies (5 or more blooms)	\$8.00
Tulips (asst. colors)	\$8.00
Mums (asst. colors)	\$8.50
Hydrangeas (pink)	\$12.00

## JOB SEARCH SUPPORT GROUP WILL MEET MONDAYS

The first meeting of the "**Robbinsdale Area Job Search and Support Group**" was held at 8 a.m. on Monday, February 23, 2009, in the living room of the Robbinsdale United Church of Christ. The group will be meeting every Monday at 8 a.m. for the foreseeable future.

This group has been created in response to the growing number of people who are looking for work due to the worldwide economic downturn.

Consider joining us whether you have been laid off from work, anticipate soon losing your job or business, or are a retiree realizing it may be necessary to re-enter the work force to maintain your standard of living.

The following are major goals of this support group:

- Provide positive support for all attendees.
- Share information to assist others in finding jobs.
- Build a database of local and regional employers actively seeking job applicants.
- Reinforce the knowledge that together we can all improve our lives.

We hope to see you at our meeting.

Bill Delano

Questions? Call Bill @ 763-531-0016

Email: [billclimb2@comcast.net](mailto:billclimb2@comcast.net)

## Notes from the Worship Ministry. . .

We are experimenting with several small changes in the Sunday service. You may have noticed that "The Box" has been absent from Children's Time since Christmas. It will take a vacation and will return in the summer. During Lent, we will take a break from our Passing of the Peace time. That will resume Easter Sunday. Please let a member of the Worship Ministry or T. Michael know how you feel about these changes as time goes on.

We will be coordinating a reading of the Gospel of Mark on Friday, April 3rd, at 7:00 which will be open to the public. The entire book will take approximately an hour to read. Listen for further announcements.

**March Schedule...**

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

March 5: The Plymouth Rockers, directed by Mary Lou Thibult.

March 12: Bingo. Please bring something for a prize!

March 19: Blood pressures taken 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
Program: The Somewhat Dixieland Band, directed by Al Sweet.

March 26: March Birthday Party. Program: David Allen sings.

Leisure Age meets on Thursday from 9:00-2:00. Lunch costs \$9.00. 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:*

*Jan Paulsen, 763-529-1986*

*or Keith Smith, 612-588-1401 or 763-588-4356*

**Can you help at Leisure Age?  
RUCC will be serving on March 5 and 12. We need 8 people to help serve and clean up. Sign up on the bulletin board across from the office or see Jan Paulsen or Keith Smith.  
Thank you!**

**Robbinsdale United Church of Christ  
LISTENING PROJECT**

Five Assumptions:

1. This church belongs to the people for the purpose of worshiping God and serving ALL people.
2. Every opinion and/or idea matters when living in community.
3. It's time to listen to the needs, concerns, and visions of our congregation.
4. If we all learn to listen, we further our

understanding of living a "we" existence in a "me" world.

5. It's the best way to remind folks that everyone of you are loved.

During this year of 2009, the Coordinating Council has supported the formation of a listening project to guide us into a long range planning process. Our goal is to sit down, one on one, with every member and close friend of our congregation. The interviews will be both meaningful and short. During the first few months, the team will conduct interviews after worship and other gatherings of the church. The second phase will be home visits and phone calls to those who don't attend on a regular basis. Please be open to what may happen when all of us feel heard, honored, and loved. This coming fall we will hold a congregational meeting to report on these findings and hopefully determine a clear vision for our future together. Please be thinking and praying on the three questions you will each be asked.

1. Who/What is God to you? Are there any barriers to that relationship?
2. What is Robbinsdale United Church of Christ to you? Are there any barriers to that relationship?
3. If you could change anything you wanted about RUCC what would it be?

Along the way, if you have any questions, please talk with T. Michael at any time.

*When was the last time you checked out our website at*

[www.robbinsdaleucc.org](http://www.robbinsdaleucc.org)



Our webmaster Paul Amundson has made some great changes to our website, but we are still in need of 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](mailto:p.amundson@usfamily.net) or T. Michael at [tmichael@robbinsdaleucc.org](mailto:tmichael@robbinsdaleucc.org)

## MISSION TRIP INSIGHTS

Frank Bennett, Student Minister



In January 2009, I was fortunate enough to go on a mission trip to Kenya, Africa, with Wayzata Community Church. Our group of 13 adults spent 12 days working at the Light of Hope orphanage and school in Naivasha. It is home to 42 girls ages 3-14, most of whom are AIDS orphans. We also spent time in Nairobi with Opportunity International, a faith-based microfinance bank that serves over 10,000 clients in the slums and rural areas of Kenya, providing loans and support to people who have no resources other than their integrity. The trip was transformational for me for many reasons. Since I returned, people have asked what I learned. I decided to write down my insights from this trip:

1. The mission had an impact on me because it focused on a specific group of people and a program, rather than a series of brief informational meetings. I was able to get to know the Kenyans as we worked, ate, worshipped and learned with each other.
2. The mission centered on organizations and people who were making a difference in their communities. No one ignored the reality of corruption, oppression and social injustice in Kenya. However, the focus was on those who are constructive, who are making change. I was inspired by the strength and optimism of the people who are trying to do more than just survive.
3. We were exposed to several different program models for the AIDS orphans in Kenya. I learned there is more than one way to construct a plan for change and that each model has something to teach the others.
4. I learned from the Kenyans that hope is possible even in the face of strife, hunger and oppression. I was able to be a part of making a difference instead of just learning about all the problems. The Kenyans taught me to have hope. With no resources and no prospects, these people rise every day with a grateful heart and work to make the world a better place. I learned that hope is a necessity, because it is the fuel of faith.
5. We were asked to share our life story, to be vulnerable within our group of 13 people. We were given prayer journals with daily scripture readings, prayers and blank pages for us to reflect on our personal insights and experiences. I was

encouraged to look within for the work of the Holy Spirit in my transformation.

6. At the end of the trip we were asked by the leader to write a hope, an affirmation and a challenge for each other person in the group, and then share it with them one-to-one. This encouraged us to extend our transformation to those around us, not just ourselves. I saw how I was connected to and could be a force for change in my community.
7. At the closing worship, we were given an opportunity to participate in a "say so." This is an age-old tradition of personal testimony, dating back to the Old Testament. We all said what changes or commitments God and the Holy Spirit had brought about in us as a result of this trip. I had an opportunity to proclaim my commitment to further the education of these students as they graduate from the Light of Hope.
8. Instead of force-feeding us a pre-determined diet of political, economic or moral information or dogma, on this trip we were allowed to sample from a buffet of learning and hands-on experiences that gave us a hunger to both go back for seconds of what we were intrigued by, and to try new things that were outside our comfort zone. This mission was built on the notion that attraction engenders more commitment and learning than compulsion.
9. I was transformed because the experiences, the group learning and the personal reflection all worked to forge a change from within me, not an imposition of change from an external source. Mission is about the change and the nearness of God in the person performing the mission, which is me, not the person receiving the mission
10. I learned that the difference between mission and community service is the attitude and objective of the person who goes on mission. Community service can be done by anyone, anywhere, anytime. For me, mission is an intentional use of service to transform the experience into a step in my faith journey. This mission let the Holy Spirit transform me from within, irrespective of what happened without.

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**DON'T FORGET TO SET  
YOUR CLOCK AHEAD!**

**Daylight Savings Time begins  
March 8.**



**Tuesdays w/T. – A Bible Study for Beginners**  
**6:00 p.m.**

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. Bible Study will last one hour. This month we will be getting into the depth of Paul's letter to the Romans. This is the most important book in Biblical theology. Come and explore what it says about God and what it says to us. I believe it is both important to read the Bible and also to read it in community. This is the invitation to you to come. All levels are welcome and there is child care provided. If you have any questions, please talk with T. Michael.

**Special Satellite Bible Study**  
March 24<sup>th</sup> at Waterford – Noontime  
(bring your own lunch)

April Issue. . .

# Mustard Seed



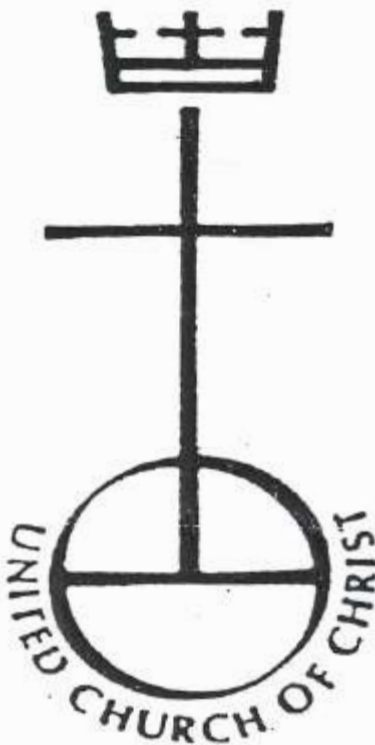
Please place all articles for the next issue of the Mustard Seed in the box marked "Mustard Seed" on the shelf inside the door to the workroom in the church office, *e-mail* to [thewillses@aol.com](mailto:thewillses@aol.com) (preferred) or mail them to Barbara Wills, 6214 Upland Lane No., Maple Grove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

## APRIL ISSUE DEADLINE

**Sunday, March 22 , 11 a.m.**

No exceptions please.

(April issue will be mailed Friday, March 27.)



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

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