



STAY CONNECTED

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Dear Friends,

Once, I received an invitation to go to Australia to lecture to students preparing for ministry in a small Bible College and to preach in several Australian churches. What an experience that proved to be! That invitation impacted my life powerfully.

However, no invitation extended to me has ever had greater impact than the invitation extended by Jesus, "Follow me!"

Jesus first invited 12 common men to "follow" him. Most, if not all, left other occupations or trades to be with him and to learn from him. He invested his effort to teach them, and as they learned, they changed.

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They learned that when you pursue God's Kingdom wholeheartedly and commit to live in healthy relationship with others, your needs will be met.

They learned that forgiving those who hurt or disappoint you is important to God and a necessary step in your own experi-

ence of full forgiveness and spiritual health.

They learned that God loves all persons, and that God earnestly wants everyone to experience life to the full. They also learned that all of us who respond to the invitation to follow Jesus are commissioned to extend that invitation to others and to help them learn what that means.

Living as a Christian is much more than joining a social organization, submitting to a ritual, or taking on a new label. Living as a Christian involves a positive response to Jesus' invitation, "Follow me!" Living as a Christian leads to growth in the pattern of life lived by Jesus.

Early in this new year, it is good to reaffirm our commitment to follow Jesus.

See you soon,
RLY

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

**In the
SANCTUARY**

Wednesday, February 22, 7 p.m.

Ash Wednesday is a time to confront our mortality and to confess our continuing need of God's grace in a spirit of penitence. The use of ashes as a sign of mortality and penitence has a long history in Jewish and Christian worship.

HERE 'N THERE

Staff Parish Relations Committee chair Richard Hobbs announced to the CUMC congregation at each worship service January 29 that **Rev. Frederick (Fritz) Bartels** has been **appointed to serve as CUMC pastor** beginning July 1, 2012. Rev. Bartels currently serves 2 UMC congregations in and near Polo, IL. He was a long time resident of Will County prior to his move to Polo. Rev. Bartels and his wife Judy met with the SPRC and other CUMC leaders Friday, January 27.

Monday night, January 9, **Ministry Teams and Administrative Committees** met together in the **2012 organizational meeting**. In plenary session the Finance Committee presented a balanced budget for 2012. The budget was adopted unanimously. Then Committees and Ministry Teams met in break-out sessions to work on plans for the year.

We were saddened by news of the passing of **Karen Rath's granddaughter** and **Christine Murphy, daughter of Char Kowalsky** in early January. Please remember Char and her family in prayer.

Administrative assistant **Sharon Johnston and husband Larry** are currently on a cruise to Hawaii along with **Mike and Sharon Martin**. This has been a long time dreamed of and often delayed event for both couples.

Prayer is requested for both **Lorraine Williams and Tim Field** who are undergoing chemotherapy. **Betty Cosme** was hospitalized briefly at St. Margaret Mercy in Dyer and is now in the short term rehab unit at Beecher Manor. After school worker **Heidee Peebles** had major back surgery January 27 at Rush Hospital. She is making excellent progress in her recovery. **Kathy Luth** has been unable to teach for several weeks now due to a persistent physical problem. **Kathy Carter Young** spent a night in hospital and underwent a series of tests in January. The results were all good.

After canceling plans for their January trip to Colorado, **Pastor Richard, Kathy, and Ian** were able to reschedule at the last minute. They were away January 16-21.

On January 27 Pastor Richard officiated at a service celebrating the life of **Marge Hagen**, Crete Village collector for 27 years. On January 28 he officiated at a service for **Angela Busby**, age 28, who was found face down in the snow near a Cook County Forest Preserve.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

January 29, 2012

Shawna Birtciel

Crete

Debbi Czernik

Matteson

Sharon Lanphear (associate)

Beecher

Elsie Wujcik

Oak Forest

We are so glad God brought you our way!

CONFIRMATION 2012

Confirmation program provides a time to learn, to grow, to have fun, to explore new ideas, to get to know others, and to commit to growing and maturing as a follower of Jesus Christ.

Again this year more emphasis will be placed on participation in regular youth/church activities, and less time will be required in special class sessions.

Any person 8th grade or above may participate. Requests for particular exceptions to the age requirement will be considered on individual case merit.

To enroll in Confirmation 2012, or to request more information, please call the church office or contact Pastor.

DON'T FORGET...

Crafting for Charity

Meets Saturday Feb. 4 and Feb.18

At 10:30a in the Church Library

For more info, call Valerie (708) 624-9272

Potluck dinner including a "Not So Talented Talent " Talent Show on Saturday, February 25,th from 6pm until 9pm in Fellowship Hall. Bring a dish to share and a talent to share if you are so inspired....

We will be providing the main dish.

Sign up sheets will be in the narthex.
