

THIS WEEK AT THE CREEK

THE WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER
CROSS CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
March 4, 2010

If you get rid of unfair practices, quit blaming victims, quit gossiping about other people's sins, if you are generous with the hungry and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out, your lives will begin to glow in the darkness, your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight. I will always show you where to go. I'll give you a full life in the emptiest of places - firm muscles, strong bones. You'll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry. You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again.

-- Isaiah 58: 9b -12



IN WORSHIP THIS WEEKEND

The sculpture *Filled with Spirit*, created by local artist/sculptor **Tess Little**, is serving as a focal point throughout the season of Lent. We are reflecting on God as the Gardener of our Lives and on the garden as a symbol of the original unity of creation from which we came (Genesis 2:4b-9) and of the lush and verdant garden-like place in the New Jerusalem described in the Revelation to John (22:1-2). In both these gardens the Tree of Life grows.



The Lenten theme is **LIKE A WATERED GARDEN: LIVING INTO THE PROMISE OF LENT**. For this third weekend of Lent the prompting, entitled "Put Manure on It," will be offered by **Pastor Mike Castle**. **Kenny Roaden** will sing "Broken Hallelujah." Communion will be served at all services.

FOR YOUR REFLECTION THIS WEEK....

SPRING THAW

by Rev. Janis Loomis

Rev. Janis Loomis is a covenant member at Cross Creek Community Church. She came to Cross Creek during the first year of its operation and through Cross Creek became an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. She is currently serving as pastor of the Jackson Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Jackson, Ohio. Her article will appear in a column called "Grace Notes" in The Jackson County Times Journal on March 7. Jan can be reached at pastor@jacksonchristianchurch.org.

It's been a long winter – so much cold weather and record snowfalls throughout the country. I, like many others, feel like I can't bear another snowy weather forecast and say I'm ready for spring. In fact, I can hardly wait! We are not unlike our ancestors one hundred years ago. The 1910 Old Farmer's Almanac says of February "Since many think February the least enjoyable month of the year, we should be thankful that it is the shortest." And so we look forward with hope to spring, flowering bulbs beginning to bloom, and soil that can again be worked.

We are relieved that February has finally passed, and we look for signs of spring, for signs of new life emerging from the frozen ground. Even though plants seem to emerge overnight, the reality is that much has been going on under the ground out of our sight, the result of ground conditions and weather events. If we look to ourselves, we may find that we too have become like the frozen ground – we've gone into dormancy, less alive and more complacent, but hopeful that some unseen activity is thawing us.

My favorite book for these doldrum times of winter is *The Spirituality of Gardening* by Donna Sinclair. It is my favorite inspirational gardening book not only because of the beautiful color pictures of plants at all stages of development, gardeners toiling in their beloved gardens and admiring the bounty of their harvest, but because the text keeps me connected to the One who created all living things, set the world in motion and keeps it going. It reminds me that my gardening passion which spans dreams, hard work and frustrations results from my sense of awe in participating in a process that is ultimately beyond my control in spite of my best efforts. The book gives me perspective and wisdom.

It teaches me that as hard as I may work, there are forces greater than myself active in the final result. I smile as I read the book's quote of an unknown author who said "Only God can make a tree, but I'm in charge of seeds and weeds." Gardening teaches me the blessings of nurturing, waiting, humility and hoping. Donna Sinclair, in the chapter entitled "Gardening is Hope" quotes Jennifer Bennett and Turgid Forsyth: "Gardening is one of the slowest of arts, asking patience and foresight and some simple manual labour in exchange for its ephemeral beauties. What the gardener plants in spring is not so much seeds and seedlings as hope."

In this time of snow and ice when we, like the frozen ground, slip into dormancy, feeling less alive and more lethargic, these processes can work in us too – patience, foresight and a sense of hope of beautiful things yet to come.

For Christians we're almost half way through Lent, the time in which we renew and prepare ourselves to better celebrate the most joyous day of the Christian year – Easter, the Day of Resurrection, the promise come true.

We can all remind ourselves that Easter and spring is just around the corner. As warm breezes thaw the ground, may the anticipation of the Day of Resurrection warm your soul. As the sun heats the frozen ground and brings forth flowers, may you know peace, joy and hope blooming in your winter heart.

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

Prayers for Bev Grzymala who has been dealing with colon cancer and last week found out she has a spot on her liver. She is waiting for test results to find out what this is all about. Please hold her in prayer as she waits and worries.

UPCOMING EVENTS

REMEMBER: Everyone is encouraged to check out Cross Creek's complete events calendar online at www.crosscreekchurch.org.

GODSPELL - A MUSICAL

Godspell, based on the Gospel according to Matthew, will be performed at Greenmont-Oak Park Community Church UCC (1921 Woodman Dr. Kettering, OH 45420) on **Mar 5 at 7:30 PM, Sat, Mar 6 at 7:30 PM, and Sun, Mar 7 at 3:00 PM**. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, students, and groups of eight or more. You may contact their church office for reservations or information: 252-3251.

EASTER EGGS-STRAVAGANZA 2010 -- Saturday, April 3

Cross Creek's annual Eggs-stravaganza, for infants through second grade children and their families will take place Saturday, April 3, from **10:30 AM to Noon**. Tickets are \$3.00 and friends are welcome. There will be an Easter egg hunt with prizes and entertainment by Jonathan Heart "The Origami Wizard". Tickets on sale now at the events table. Get yours today!

THERE'S NO WHERE TO GO BUT "UP!" on MAY 1, 2010!! What's "UP!"? you ask.

"UP!" is the theme for our **2010 Service Auction**. "UP!" will raise funds for our budget AND our Balloon Payment. "UP!" will be LOTS OF FUN! Mark the date!! Donate a service!! Details available at the Activity Table and at our website <http://www.crosscreekchurch.org>. Plan to be there!!

DREAMING OF SUN AND FUN-FILLED SUMMER DAYS....

You'll notice that the **2010 summer camp** inserts are in the bulletin this weekend. The Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ offers an amazing selection of summer camps for both adults and kids at our two beautiful outdoor ministry facilities in Ohio! Consider all of the different experiences and opportunities for this summer!! For more information, see the detailed pamphlets in the church hallway. You can register online at www.ocucc.org or call them direct at 1-800-282-0740. Members of our church family (talk to Sue Voisard or Haley and Brice Donegia!) have experienced these camps firsthand and found them to be wonderful, safe, well-organized and inspirational! Check them out for yourself!

EQUALITY OHIO GATHERING FOR GREATER DAYTON -- Friday, March 19 at 7:00 PM

You are invited to join the Boards of Directors for Equality Ohio and Equality Ohio Education Fund for a fun night of learning more about Equality Ohio and supporting its important work in our state. It is at EL MESON Restaurant in West Carrollton with owners Bill Castro and Mark Abbott being our hosts!

We'll be introducing our new executive director, Sue Doerfer. Come meet her and let her meet you! We'll also be recognizing Miami Valley Ohio House of Representatives who helped pass the Equal Housing and Employment Act (HB 176) this past September. Peggy Lehner (R), Ross McGregor (R), and Roland Winburn (D) have all committed to be present. So please, join us in thanking them for their important support!

Please register by March 16 at http://eqfed.org/equalityohio/events/El_Meson_Registration/details.tcl. \$75.00 (includes food, non-alcoholic beverages plus \$35 membership to Equality Ohio. Cash Bar Available.) If you have any questions, please call Mike Castle at 937-434-4580 x14 or email him at MDCastle@aol.com.

QUESTIONS ABOUT CROSS CREEK CHURCH?

Those interested in investigating covenant membership at Cross Creek Community Church, as well as those interested in learning more about the church's statement of faith; its vision, mission and distinctive values; its decision making processes and its varied ministries, as well as its affiliation with the United Church of Christ and the Alliance of Baptists are invited to attend the **Exploring Covenant Membership Class on Saturday, March 13 from 9 AM to 2 PM**. You can sign up in the church hallway or contact Pastor Mike Castle. Childcare is available upon request with advance notice.

COFFEE SERVICE UPDATE

Thanks to those who donated our coffee, tea, hot cocoa, and especially our cups and lids! You can't know how much this helps our profits. We would like to add to our list of needs the chocolate Biscotti, which can be purchased from Sam's Club for about \$10. Thanks again!

CENTERVILLE WASHINGTON DIVERSITY COUNCIL PRESENTS.....

CHALLENGES TO PEACE AND PROSPERITY: IRAN -- Forum on March 25, 7-8:30 PM

Our guest speaker, Melody Moezzi, grew up mostly in Dayton, Ohio (graduated from Centerville High School) amid a strong and vibrant Iranian-American Diaspora. She is a writer, speaker, activist, author and attorney. Her first book, *War on Error: Real Stories of American Muslims*, earned her a Georgia Author of the Year Award and a Gustavus Myers Center for Bigotry and Human Rights Honorable Mention. Moezzi is a commentator for National Public Radio's All Things Considered and for Georgia Public Broadcasting's Georgia Gazette. At this Forum, Moezzi will relate general background information about Iran and about their culture. She will also relate her experiences growing up here as an Arab-American. The forum will be held at Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 8690 Yankee Street, Centerville

CHALLENGES TO PEACE AND PROSPERITY: AFGHANISTAN -- Forum on April 22, 7-8:30 PM

Our guest speaker, Jaro Bilocerkowycz, is an author and professor of political science specializing in national security and global politics at The University of Dayton. He has written numerous articles for the World Book Encyclopedia and is author of the book *Soviet Ukrainian Dissent*. He covers Afghanistan in courses on international relations, global politics, nationalism and ethno politics, and US national security. The forum will be held at Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 8690 Yankee Street, Centerville.

Lent: 2010

LIKE A WATERED GARDEN: LIVING INTO THE PROMISE OF LENT

March 13-14 Fourth Sunday in Lent: *Feasting from the Garden* Joshua 5:9-12; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Artist Testimony: Tess Little, *FILLED BY SPIRIT*

***One Great Hour of Sharing Mission Offering.*

March 20-21 Fifth Sunday in Lent: *Carrying the Seed* Psalm 126; Isaiah 43:16-21; John 12:1-8

Guest Pianist: Zach Ruppel

March 27-28 Palm Sunday: *Out of the Garden and Into the Streets*

Ps. 118:1-2, 19-29; Lk 19:28-40

April 1 Maundy Thursday – 7:00 PM *Agony in the Garden*

**Childcare provided for Children who are pre-Kindergarten.*

April 2 Good Friday – 7:00 PM *A Garden of Horrors*

**Childcare provided for Children who are pre-Kindergarten.*

April 3-4 EASTER: *Now the Green Blade Rises*

**Cross Creek Choir Sings. ** Communion Served at all weekend worship services.*

Liturgy Planning Team for Lent: Barbara Battin, Kathy Swenson, Tom Harry

THANK OFFERING FOR TESS LITTLE

We are collecting a free-will love offering for Tess Little as a way of thanking her for sharing her art with us this season. She has not asked us for anything and she is thrilled to be able to share her art with us. However, we want to respond in gratitude and deep appreciation. You can give by marking your envelope "Tess Little Offering" or place your offerings in the container near the Usher Table. All gifts are tax deductible.