

VISIONS

No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Because Jesus has taught us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, strength, and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves, we invite people of every race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, economic circumstance, and physical and mental ability into the worship, rites and sacraments, fellowship, and leadership of our church.

Michelle's Musings: Were You There?

"Are we there yet?!" Usually when we hear this question we think of long car rides and restless youngsters (and adults) who are anxious to bypass the journey and get to the desired destination already. I know the feeling. As I begin this meditation during a mid-afternoon in the last week in March, I look outside at overcast skies and bristle because it's only a balmy 35 degrees out there. And all around me this weather is met almost unanimously with the same type of refrain: "Argh! It should be springtime – Aren't we there yet?"

Unfortunately, that is often how we experience the climate of Lent, especially in our culture where attention spans are short and the pressure to move on to the next measure of achievement leaves little time to linger in the moment. Too often, rather than taking advantage of the invitation to slow down and pause within the story of Christ's journey to the cross, we prefer to look past it to the Resurrection on Easter morning. We find ourselves asking, "Are we there yet?"

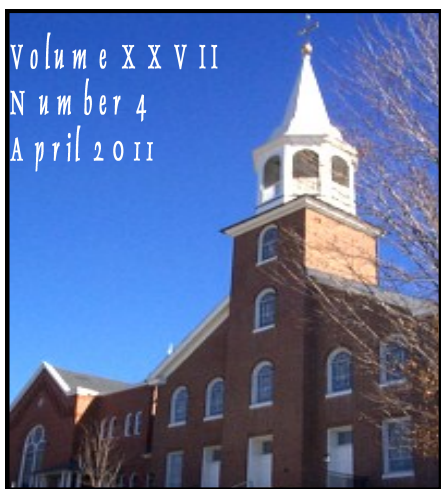
But that is the wrong question for Lent. Instead, Lent challenges us to ask, "Were we there?" Like the classic spiritual of that same name, Lent, and in particular Holy Week, is a call to slow down and to live in the moment – to really put ourselves in the story of Christ's progress to the cross where the full breadth and depth of God's love for us was so extravagantly poured out.

But that can be hard to do. With so many demands on our time, it feels counter-productive to slow down; in a culture that worships 'happiness' sometimes at the expense of authentic experience, it feels morbid to linger on the march to the cross; and finally, when confronted with the span of a couple thousand years, it can feel almost impossible to bridge time and put ourselves in the story. Fortunately, we are not the first in the history of the Church to face these challenges. Our spiritual ancestors have gifted us with any number of traditions to help us succeed at meeting the Lenten challenge, and it's never too late to start.

The tradition of daily Lenten devotions help us focus on prayer, scripture and reflection every day along the journey. Weekly Lenten studies (such as this year's *Journey Through the Psalms*) give us a forum to explore our spiritual life and to enjoy the fellowship of others on the same journey. Our musical heritage offers many selections – like the spiritual *Were You There?* – that force us to move slowly and methodically, to linger in the moments of Christ's walk of love. And certainly as we gather to worship throughout Lent – weekly and in the observations of Holy Week – we are able to participate in Christ's story in a unique way.

Easter will soon be upon us, that time when we celebrate God's victory revealed. But when we do finally get *there*, can we claim to participate in that victory if we didn't participate in the struggle? Were we there? Did we honor our Lord enough to pause from our regular routine, to sit with him as he prayed in the garden, watch as he was betrayed with a kiss by a trusted friend, lament as his closest allies scattered, and weep as he faced the cross in the name of love? Were we *there* this Lent? If so, we can all the more truly be *there* on Easter.

~ Michelle



Michelle's Musings	1
Raise the Star Update Share Your Palm Plant Children's Center News Easter Egg Items Needed MHS Plant Sale Lifting Up Our Church Nursery Ministry Walking the Labyrinth	2
Children's Church Thank You Notes	3
Christian Education	4
April Calendar Nursery Survey	Insert
Plan Your Calendar	5
Around the Congregation	6
Community Outreach	7
Holy Week Schedule	8





"Raise the Star!" Update

The work by Bruchey Builders to restore our sanctuary has essentially been completed. All the carpeting and hardwood flooring in the sanctuary, choir rooms, and on the stairs has been installed and the pews put back into place. The electrical and lighting work is complete, and the sound system is being restored to its previous state in preparation for our eagerly anticipated return to the sanctuary on April 3. The dorsal cloth and cross have been hung and the sanctuary has been cleaned. Additionally, cove lighting has been installed in the chapel to brighten up that worship space. We are working to obtain additional funding from the insurance and the Consistory is considering some financing options for church funded work, but some things will be delayed until sufficient "Raise the Star" pledge money has been received. While work will be ongoing for some time, with comforts such as pew cushions yet to be in place and the organ not due to return until late fall, we can all be thankful our return to the sanctuary is imminent!

Share Your Palm Plant

Palm plants are needed to decorate the sanctuary for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. If you are able to share your palm plant(s), please bring them to the church sanctuary before Palm Sunday. Please call the church office for more information at 301-371-6610.

Children's Center News Great Mission Great Work

This program has been created by the congregation of Christ Reformed United Church of Christ to fulfill a community need for working parents by providing a safe and educational environment for their children. Our church hopes this unique program will provide your child with positive and nurturing care. Our partnership with the home and community helps to develop the whole child to include personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical and scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical and spiritual growth. The Children's Center's goal is to help children achieve school readiness in our church based environment. Our staff takes part in professional development opportunities to maintain MSDE accredited status and provide children with the best quality care.

The Center recently held preschool conferences with parents or guardians of preschool participants. Teachers met during school hours or in the evenings to accommodate parents' work schedules. Feedback was very positive and we feel confident that the Center's reputation is certainly growing in the community as many parents commented. We have been receiving a number of new registrations for the 2011/2012 school year because of "word of mouth." Thanks to all in the church who have encouraged families to check out our center.

Spring will bring visits to the Murray Farm off Harley Rd. in Middletown. Our end of the year picnic and preschool graduation is planned for Wednesday, May 11, 2011, with dinner at 6:00 p.m. and graduation at 7:00 p.m. We look forward to being back in the beautiful newly renovated main sanctuary. The last day of preschool is Friday, May 27 and

will begin again on Tuesday, Sept. 6, 2011. Summer sign ups/registrations will begin in the end of April for the upcoming summer.

The Children's Center will only be closed on Friday, April 22, for Good Friday during the Easter holiday.

Easter Egg Items Needed

Another year has sped by and it is already time to think about the Easter Egg Hunt which will be held on **April 23rd**. If you would like to donate regular sized plastic eggs as well as small items (such as stickers, coins, small wrapped candies, etc.), please put them in the box on the table in the narthex by **Sunday, April 10th**. Thank you.

MHS Plant Sale

The Middletown High School Horticulture Dept. spring bedding plant sale order forms are available in the narthex. Orders may be placed in advance and forms can be turned in to Nicole Hood. If you have any questions, please call Nicole at 301-473-5052, or the contact information for the Hort. Dept. on the order form.

Lifting Up Our Church Nursery Ministry

The Discipleship Board invites members of the Christ Reformed community to share their experiences with, and hopes for, our Nursery Ministry. All are welcome to use the enclosed survey, but other forms of input are also encouraged.

The Church Nursery is available during both worship services (8:15 and 10:30) and during the Sunday School hour (9:15-10:15) every Sunday morning for children up to age 4 (or 5 if rising into kindergarten the following fall). While children of all ages are always welcome in worship, the Church Nursery provides parents and caretakers with an alternative.

Our Nursery Ministry serves a number of important functions. It is a critical gateway whereby our youngest members, friends, and visitors develop some of their first associations with church. The Nursery also ministers to families and caretakers. By providing a safe, nurturing, and engaging experience for these young children, the Nursery Ministry offers parents and other caretakers peace of mind while they explore their own faith journeys.

Whether or not you have children or grandchildren of 'nursery' age, this ministry is important for the health of our church, and your opinion matters. We welcome your input and encourage you to forward survey responses and other comments to Michelle Beadle at the church office at 301-371-6610 or michelle.beadle@comcast.net.

Walking the Labyrinth

The labyrinth is an ancient aid to spiritual development. Walking its path mirrors the journey pilgrims made to Jerusalem and other holy sites and provides a means of deepening one's own spiritual journey. On April 22, Good Friday, the labyrinth will be set up in the chapel from 1:00 to 8:00 p.m. Hosts will be there to answer questions and help you experience the labyrinth.

This month in **Children's Church**, we are learning about

~ HUMILITY ~

PUTTING OTHERS FIRST BY GIVING UP WHAT YOU THINK YOU DESERVE.

Memory Verse: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourself." *Philippians 2:3, NIV*



Week 1: April 3rd Served

Scripture: (Jesus washes the disciples' feet) • *John 13:1-17*

Bottom Line: Treat others as if they are more important than you.

Family Discussion: Can you think of three different ways you can put someone else first? Name three people you can put first this week.

"Humility is the mother of all virtues; purity, charity and obedience". Mother Teresa

Week 2: April 10th Arrested

Scripture: (Jesus prays and is arrested) • *Luke 22:39-44; John 18:2-11*

Bottom Line: To put others first, you may need to put God first.

Family Discussion: What does it mean to "put God first"?

"Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life". Proverbs 22:4

Week 3: April 17th Crucified

Scripture: Jesus is tried and crucified) • *Mark 14:53, 55-65; 15:1-20, 22-33, 37-39*

Bottom Line: Jesus put you first when He died on the cross.

Family Discussion: Name some ways Jesus showed humility. What was the most important way He put others first?

"In peace there's nothing so becomes a man as modest stillness and humility". William Shakespeare

Week 4: April 25th Resurrected

Scripture: (Jesus is buried and resurrected) • *Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20*

Bottom Line: You should put others first because Jesus is ALIVE!

Family Discussion: Why did Jesus stick around after He rose from the dead? Why didn't He go back to heaven immediately?

"When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom". Proverbs 11:2

Thank You Notes

Thanks so very much to all my friends and church family at Christ Reformed Church for your prayers, beautiful cards and notes, visits and flowers during my recent illness, recovery process, and difficult times. The continuous support from "Called to Care", Rev. Wakefield, and Michelle will always be remembered and greatly appreciated. ~Jean Frock



Dear Friends:

Thank you for your words of support and encouragement as I worked toward my Ecclesiastical Council this past Sunday. Your presence and your prayers were a great gift to me and will forever enrich my memories of the experience.

~God bless you all, Michelle Beadle

Bright, energetic, beautiful, and spirit-filled music greeted us Sunday Morning as the young people of the Middletown High School Vocal Ensemble shared their joy and passion for song. Like the first day of Spring, they rose up assuring us that glorious sunshine and warmth is here to bless our lives. We paused in Children's Church (upstairs) to listen and one little girl exclaimed that they sounded "just like angels from above." She was correct! Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Bower for the gift of your musical talents.
~ All HizKidz in Children's Church and Ms. Carol



You-Can-Two-Can Campaign Update



The Youth Sunday School Program's **You-Can-Two-Can** campaign to collect food for the Middletown Food Bank brought in an additional 84 items in March, bringing our total to 432. That's about 62% of our goal of 697. Please be sure to leave your contributions with your Sunday School teacher or put them in the Sukkah in the coffee hour space to ensure they get counted with the *You-Can-Two-Can* totals.

Vacation Bible School—SonSurf Beach Bash

July 11-15, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The beach is a great place for kids to explore God's good creation, enjoy fun and games, and spend quality time with friends and family, making it an ideal 'destination' for this year's Vacation Bible School experience. **SonSurf Beach Bash** is an open invitation for all rising kindergarteners through 5th graders to celebrate the Good News of Jesus Christ simply by joining the party! We'll listen to gnarly music, tell most-excellent Bible stories, play radical beach games, create awesome crafts, and nosh on scrumptious snacks. Once again, we're teaming with Holy Family Catholic Community to host an exceptional summer experience right here at Christ Reformed. So mark your calendars and keep an eye out for registration information in the months to come.

LIFE GUARDS Needed

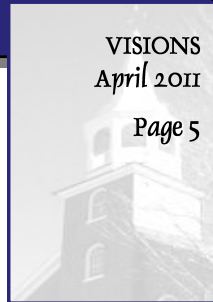
'Apply Within'



There's no doubt about it - pulling together an exceptional VBS program takes a great deal of effort! VBS is a unique experience for many children growing up in church because it's designed just for them, bringing the Good News to life through engaging activities in a kid-friendly environment. But of possibly even greater significance is the impact VBS has on children who don't normally go to church. Last year over 20% of our VBS participants claimed "no church affiliation" on their registration form, which means when they grow up some of their most fundamental

understandings of prayer, bible study, worship, and Christian fellowship may come from their memories of attending VBS.

VBS is more than just a fun time for the kids in our church. It's an authentic encounter with the Lord that enriches them for life. In fact, when you volunteer your time and talents to help create and provide a VBS program, you bring a whole new meaning to the title "Life Guard." In order to make this year's **SonSurf Beach Bash** a success, we need your support. Whether you are interested in being a troop leader, running an activity station, organizing logistics, or using your decorating skills to transform our space into an ocean-side paradise, your gifts are in demand. We need help both behind the scenes and out in front, during the event and in preparation for it. Please prayerfully consider how you could help us this year and contact Michelle Beadle in the church office. There are plenty of positions open - simply listen inside for the call of the Spirit and apply within.



April Basket Class

NO BASKET CLASS IN APRIL

We will not have basket classes in April because of the Spring Break and Easter holidays. Watch for a great tote basket with a wrought iron handle for May when we will return to our regular schedule. We will be holding classes in June before taking our usual summer vacation.

Cemetery Clean-up for Mowing Season



Spring is here! ...and mowing season will soon begin. The Cemetery Board asks everyone to please remove all decorations from the cemetery to be ready for the mowing season. Please remove items **before Saturday, May 14**, our Church "Clean-up Day". Call Mickey Keller at 301.371.5276 with questions.

Church "Clean-up" Day — Saturday, May 14 — 8:00 am to Noon

The Church Property & Cemetery Boards are hosting an Outdoor "Clean-Up" Day on **Saturday, May 14 from 8:00 am—Noon**. Everyone is welcome to come and help! The gardens need tending and winter debris needs to be cleaned up.



The Book Club is resuming for the spring! Please join us.

We'll meet at 7:00 PM in The Parish House on the following dates:

Wednesday, April 27th We'll discuss *The Walk* by Richard Paul Evans.

"Life is good for Alan...a beautiful wife, a great house, and promising job. Everything changes at once, and Alan is forced to pick up the pieces and move on. He starts with a simple step and decides to go for a walk across America."

Wednesday, May 25th We'll discuss *The Thirteenth Tale* by Diane Setterfield.

"This debut novel is a rich story about secrets, ghosts, winter, books and family. *The Thirteenth Tale* is a book lover's book, with much of the action taking place in libraries and book stores, and the line between fact and fiction constantly blurred."



Annual Easter Egg Hunt



Parish Life will once again be hosting the Church's Annual Easter Egg Hunt on **Saturday, April 23rd between 2:00 and 3:30 pm**. We will have age-appropriate egg hunts, Easter egg coloring, crafts, cupcakes to decorate and eat, and lots more. Please add your name to the sign-up sheet in the narthex if you are planning on attending, so we will have a count in order to prepare for the Hunt.

EGG HUNT — EGG COLORING — CRAFTS — EASTER SNACKS

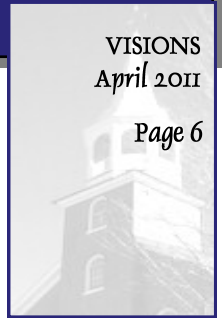
Easter Morning Continental Breakfast

Parish Life is busy planning for our Easter Sunrise Continental Breakfast, which will be held at 7:15 am in the Social Room after the Sunrise Service. We will be serving bagels, muffins, fruit, juice and coffee. Please add your name to the sign-up sheet in the Narthex if you are planning on joining us. You do not need to attend the Sunrise Service to attend this breakfast. Everyone is welcome!

HOPE TO SEE YOU BRIGHT AND EARLY EASTER MORNING!

Save The Date!

We will be hosting the DOXA Youth Choir and DOXA Ringers from First United Methodist Church, Lakeland FL on **Thursday, June 16th**. The 25 members of the DOXA youth ensembles will be completing their 2011 East Coast tour with a concert that evening in our sanctuary. They perform in many styles from Classical to Gospel and Contemporary. They are directed by Rev. Lee Lance and Matthew Corl. We will be providing a covered dish supper and overnight housing for the 25 youth and their five adult chaperones. Mark the date to attend the concert and contact Diana Corl (dwcorl39@comcast.net or 301-371-7737) if you can host one or more members of the group. Watch for more information in the coming weeks.



USHERS

April 3	Team 4
April 10	Team 5
April 17	Team 6
April 21 (Maundy Thursday)	Team 1
April 24 (8:15 Service)	Team 2
April 24 (10:30 Service)	Team 3

SOUND TECHNICIANS

April 3	Nick Fink
April 10	Matt Anticevich
April 17	Tony Verdi
April 21 (Maundy Thursday)	Luke Verdi
April 24 (8:15 Service)	Chris Johnson
April 24 (10:30 Service)	Nick Fink

NURSERY VOLUNTEERS

April 3	Mary Johnson
April 10	Kim Hughes
April 17	Renee Huffer
April 24	Dana Austin

ALTAR FLOWERS

April 3	Gail Patrick
April 10	Lewis Corl
April 17	Michael Locke
April 24	Jean Frock

MIDDLE SCHOOL HELPERS

April 3	Trevor McClure
April 10	Olivia Remsberg
April 17	Clark Zecher
April 24	Jordan Bramhall

LAYREADERS

April 3	Andrew Corl
April 10	Ellen Cook
April 17	Wendy Campbell
April 24	Beth Tucker

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS/GROUPS

April 3	Gloria & Terry Tasker
April 10	Lisa & Mike Remsberg Discipleship Board
April 17	Sarah & Gregg Petermann Mentors of Confirmands
April 24	Deanie & Lee Warren

**Church Attendance
March 2011**

	8:15 am	10:30 am
March 6	39	152
March 13	49	133
March 20	54	130
March 27	59	146
March Average	— 191	
2011 Average	— 190	

Baptisms

Jocelyn Noelle Bentz, daughter of Ryan & Krista Bentz, was baptized on March 6, 2011.

Krista Dawn Bentz was baptized on March 6, 2011.

Memorials

Marie L. Jennings died on February 26, 2011. A service celebrating her life was held on March 2, 2011.

Order your Easter Flowers in dedication or honor of special family members, friends or an event. These flowers will beautify the Altar on Easter Sunday. An order form is enclosed.

Deadline to order is April 11th.





What is a Hospice of Frederick County Ambassador?

A Hospice Ambassador will share the end-of-life care option of Hospice with others, with the goal to increase awareness and understanding of Hospice care and to help dispel myths associated with it. Bunny Cramer recently attended a Hospice Ambassador meeting and want to share some of what she learned.

Hospice Myths:

Hospice is only for cancer patients. No! Hospice has helped people with various advanced stage life-limiting illnesses such as Alzheimer’s Disease, COPD, Congestive Heart Failure, Lou Gehrig’s Disease, Debility, Dementia and more. Assessments are needed to determine if a person meets certain criteria.

Hospice is only called at the very end. No! Some people are on the program for several months to over a year and some have even improved enough to leave the Hospice program. The earlier a person comes into Hospice, the sooner they can benefit from positive supportive services which help improve quality of living.

Hospice hastens death. No! Hospice promotes the quality of life that remains. They are advocates for living and aim to offer support to patients and their families so that life for them is as pleasant and comfortable as possible.

Only a physician can refer someone to Hospice. No! Anyone can call Hospice and refer someone to the program. Certain members of the Hospice team as well as the Medical Director can assess the patient’s situation and determine if they are appropriate for Hospice care.

Once on Hospice, a person must stay. No! A patient may leave at any time for any reason. Even while on the program, patients can continue to visit with their own doctors just as they always did.

We plan on having someone speak to the Called to Care Ministry about requirements on being a Hospice Volunteer. Anyone interested will be welcome to attend this meeting. If anyone has any questions about the Hospice program we will be happy to help you find answers.



Middletown Neighbors In Need....Needs CRUCC

With the closing of CASS, cutbacks and unemployment, there is a need for the following items in our community. Please leave your donations in the box marked in the Narthex.

- ◆ Gently used sheets and towels
- ◆ Men’s undershirts
- ◆ Personal items (shampoo, razors, etc.)
- ◆ Fruit juice
- ◆ Jello (with sugar)
- ◆ Sandwich makings



Blood Drive

SATURDAY, MAY 7TH

8:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Chapel

Please give the Gift of Life!

You are eligible to give every 56 days.

March of Dimes March for Babies



The mission of the March of Dimes is to celebrate babies that are born healthy and also to raise funds for those babies who need help when they enter the world a little bit too soon. Debbie Bruns, along with TeamBruns, will be walking in the March for Babies at Baker Park on **May 1st** in honor of her daughter Morgan. For more information or to make a donation, check out Morgan’s page at <http://www.marchforbabies.org/thebrunsfamily3>. Thanks so much for your support!!



JAN - MAR 2011

Our Church has donated over 471 food bank items to the Middletown Food Bank

Well Done!

One Great Hour of Sharing

Each week we offer prayers for the many places in the world where human suffering is happening on a large scale. Japan, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Sudan are but a few of the recent places where food, water, shelter and safety are in short supply. One Great Hour of Sharing is an offering that makes the love of Christ real for individuals and communities around the world who suffer the effects of disaster, conflict, or severe economic hardship. This offering is taken by all Christian denominations and supports more than 100 relief projects around the world. This year’s OGHS offering will be collected on **Sunday, April 10th**. You can place your offering in the envelopes distributed in worship on April 3 or simply write a check to the church and note it "OGHS."



*Christ Reformed
United Church of Christ*

Rev. Mark Wakefield, Pastor
Rev. Michelle Beadle, Associate Pastor

Contemporary Worship 8:15 a.m.
Sunday School for All Ages 9:15 a.m.
Traditional Worship 10:30 a.m.
Coffee Hour following Worship

Church Office Hours
Monday-Friday: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
301-371-6610
Fax: 301-371-6912
christreformeducc@comcast.net
www.christreformeducc.org

P.O. Box 333
12 South Church Street
Middletown, Maryland 21769

Non Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
PERMIT 2202
Frederick, Maryland 21701

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**CHRIST CHURCH
CHILDREN'S CENTER**

301-371-0360
Daycare – Early Learning Center
Kindergarten thru 5th Grade
6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Monday – Friday

*Reaching out to help people to know God through Jesus Christ.
Equipping people to love God through the community of faith.
Sending people to serve God throughout the world.*

Sunday, April 17

Palm Sunday

8:15 am & 10:30 am Service

On this day when we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, we'll welcome our confirmation class into membership in the church at the 10:30 a.m. service. As part of a community-wide Holy Week observance, we'll also erect a wooden cross in front of the church on which people can nail prayers, confessions and other burdens.

Thursday, April 21

Maundy Thursday

7:00 pm

"Is it I, Lord?" was the question asked by each of the disciples at the last supper when Jesus said that one of them would betray him. It is a question that still resonates today and serves as the backdrop for our Maundy Thursday gathering. We'll share communion as part of the service.

Friday, April 22

Good Friday

1:00 pm to 8:00 pm

The story of Christ's crucifixion is humbling and has very personal meaning for each of us. On Good Friday the church's labyrinth will be set up in the chapel between 1:00 and 8:00 p.m. You are invited to use it as an aid in journeying into the mystery of Christ's death. At 8:00 there will be a simple service when we will burn the prayers and burdens that have been nailed to the cross in front of the church.

Sunday, April 24

Easter Sunday

6:15 am, 8:15 am & 10:30 am

We'll celebrate Christ's resurrection at three services of worship. We'll watch the first rays of sun come up over Braddock Mountain from the county park near the schools. The service will start at 6:15 a.m. Following the service the Parish Life Board will host a breakfast in the Social Room. We'll then celebrate worship with communion at 8:15 and 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary.

H O L Y W E E K