

February 2012

“Dee Dah Day”

In *The Life You've Always Wanted*, his book about spiritual disciplines for ordinary people, pastor and author John Ortberg tells the story about his children and a “Dee Dah Day” moment. He was drying off his kids after their bath, when his youngest daughter Mallory, dripping wet, leaped out of the tub past the dry towels, and proceeded to do a “Dee Dah Day” dance. Her father tried to grab her, but as he did so, she ran faster and faster in circles around him in a euphoric dance, chanting, “dee dah day, dee dah day!” It was a simple dance expressing her great joy. He explains that when words were not adequate to give voice to her enthusiasm, and she was too happy to hold it in any longer, she simply danced to release her joy. Finally, her father, being irritated, barked out, “Mallory, hurry!” So she did—running in circles faster and faster and chanting “dee dah day” faster and faster. “No, Mallory, that’s not what I mean!” he shouted. “Stop your dancing and get over here so I can dry you off! Hurry!” Then suddenly she stopped and asked a profound question: “Why?” And Ortberg said he realized he had no good answer to her question.

In a recent discipleship class we thought about this question: “Why?” We turned the question on ourselves. Why hadn’t we experienced more joy in our lives? Why are some of us joy-impooverished? As each one of us was reflecting on life and past experiences, we realized there are reasons for this deficit. Most of the time we are in such a hurry. We don’t stop and pay attention. We are preoccupied with our own little agenda, or trapped in a routine of moving from one thing to another without reflection. One person said she had not grown up with the practice of joy because her family rarely expressed it. Another person commented that as we grow up, life seems to be more about responsibilities than joy.

But in the letter to the Philippians, there’s a command given to all who are in Christ, “to rejoice”

and again “to rejoice.” Maybe we missed the connection: to rejoice actually means *to be filled with joy and enthusiasm*. Some of us may protest: “How can I be joyful when I am facing cancer? How can I be joyful when I’ve lost my job? How can I be joyful when I have gone through yet another miscarriage? How can I be joyful when....?”

The answer is that joy is not just a feeling but it is an attitude of trust. It is the choosing of joy “in spite of” suffering, sickness, trials and uncertainty. One theologian calls it the “defiant nevertheless” set against bitterness and resentment.

Authentic joy *is* compatible with pain and hardship. Yes, it seems contradictory but it’s true. True joy comes to those who have devoted their lives to something greater than personal happiness. True and lasting joy in the present means entrusting yourself to God now and for the future. In John 15, after giving his disciples commands to live a life of obedience, Jesus says, “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that *your joy may be complete*” (John 15:11). In Hebrews 12, we read that Jesus, for the “joy set before him” endured the cross. Can you imagine! For the *joy* that he knew in the Father, Jesus could even submit to the cross. Jesus was a joy-bringer and Jesus exemplified joy even in the most trying circumstances. Our God, the Father of Jesus, is a God of joy and of sorrow.

But joyfulness is a learned skill. It doesn’t just bubble up—it is intentional. You need to take responsibility for your own joy. In our group discussion about this kind of “Dee Dah Day” joy, we realized that some of us had a joy deficit growing up. Some of us grew up with more duty and responsibility than freedom and joy. Others recalled rules and only birthdays and Christmas were celebrations. Even now, we are not experienced in practicing joy. So we began to think of ways to experience joy intentionally every day.

(cont.)

Here are some ways to begin:

- Be grateful for each day. “This day” is the day that the Lord has given you. Rejoice that you have “this day” to live and breathe and move.
- Be a joy-bringer and surround yourself regularly with joy-carriers. Some people are joy-carriers and others are joy vacuums—they suck it out of you. Bring words of love, peace, and encouragement. Spend some time with joy-bringers to fill up on your own joy.
- Practice celebration! Find moments in life: a good grade on a test, progress in medical treatment, a successful day at work, and celebrate! Feel free to dance a jig of joy when you feel like it!
- Set aside a day a week for celebration: Eat foods you love to eat, listen to music that moves your soul, surround yourself with beauty—and as you do, give thanks to God for his goodness.



“If you bring joy and enthusiasm to everything you do, people will think you’re crazy.”

If we don’t rejoice today, we will not rejoice at all. If we wait until conditions are perfect, we will still be waiting when we die. If we are going to rejoice—may it be *this* day. This is the day the Lord has made. This is the Dee Dah Day.
- Delianne Koops

COME TO THE WATER: Connecting Lent and Baptism

The season of Lent is a time of reflection and preparation. In the early church, Lent was not primarily an extended period for meditation on Christ’s suffering; instead, it was a time for preparing candidates for baptism. The catechumens (those preparing to be baptized) would spend time in study and prayer to prepare for their baptism on Easter Sunday. This season of Lent, we will do a series of messages focusing on baptism as a mark of our identity of belonging to Christ and of the renewal that is ongoing in all who are baptized.

River Terrace Church has received the gift of a beautiful, new baptismal font which we hope to dedicate on February 26, the First Sunday of Lent. During the Lenten sermon series, we will keep the baptismal font standing in the center at the front of the church, so that as we hear and reflect on the significance of baptism, the font will be a visual reminder of our baptismal identity in Christ.

Ash Wednesday February 22

Return to the Lord Your God

Jonah 1:1-10, Mark 1:14-15

Rev. Delianne Koops preaching

We begin this journey with a service of ashes on Ash Wednesday. Ashes are a symbol of repentance. When God instructed Jonah to go to Nineveh, he told him to tell the people to give up their evil ways and their violence. This is the call we hear on Ash Wednesday—a call to give up our evil ways and to repent. Repentance means stopping and turning toward God. Just as the ashes of Ash Wednesday symbolize repentance and mark each believer as belonging to God, so the waters of baptism mark the child (or adult) as a belonging to God.

First Lent February 26

The Red Sea: Remembering Your Baptism

Exodus 14:21-31, Romans 6:1-13

Rev. Delianne Koops preaching

The story of the Israelites trapped between the sea and the enemy is gripping. The waters of the Red Sea are waters that save but also judge. Pharaoh and his army are judged and die in the waters. By God’s hand, the waters parted and the Israelites marched through to safety and were delivered from slavery. God redeemed them, and they came through the waters of the sea into a new identity: people belonging to God. In baptism we, like the Israelites, come through the waters and rise again at the other side. Romans 6 (also Colossians 2 and 3) has the imagery of dying with Christ and then being raised. “Since, then you have been raised with Christ. set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For

you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

Second Lent March 4
Wonder Bread Miracles
Matthew 4:1-11
Rev. Dominic Palacios preaching

As soon as Jesus’ identity is announced in his baptism, Jesus is put to the test. Matthew recounts the story of how Jesus, the newly announced Son of God, has his call and mission subjected to a series of three tests, or temptations, by the devil in the wilderness. As we explore these temptations, we may ask, “Are they only Jesus’ temptations or are they ours, too? What does Jesus’ victory mean for us when we are baptized into Christ? How does Jesus give us grace in the wilderness through his victory?”

Third Lent March 11
**God’s Covenant Calls Us to Christ-likeness:
Living in Community**
Ephesians 4:17-5:8
Rev. George VanderWeit preaching

What does covenant Christian community look like—one that has been covered in the waters of baptism? And what does remembering our baptism say to our community? Although there are different modes of baptism, baptism is the same for everybody, marking out the church as the body of Christ—the family of God. Baptism reminds us at a deep level that we are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are members of the body of Christ, taking our place in the story of Jesus Christ and the ongoing purposes of God.

Fourth Lent March 18
For All Who Are Far Away
Acts 2:38-39
Dr. Neal Plantinga preaching

In Acts 2, when a once-scoffing crowd is pricked to the heart and asks, “What must we do?” Peter’s response is simple. “Repent, believe, and be baptized.” Peter invites the multitude of Jews and devout people from every nation under heaven to come forward for a baptism of repentance with the promise that they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The real miracle is that Jews are accused of killing the nation’s Messiah and, instead of killing the messenger, are “stabbed to their hearts.” This is quite remarkable. Even more, is that haunting promise, “for you, and for your children, and for all who are far away.”

Fifth Lent March 25
**God’s Covenant Calls Us to Christ-likeness:
Identity**
Isaiah 42:6, Heb. 8:8-13
Rev. Len Kuyvenhoven

Basic questions of life are: who am I and what do I live for? In baptism we receive an identity—belonging to Christ. Throughout history, God has acted as a covenant-making God who both wills and moves through his people. In covenants made with his people: Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sinai, David and the new covenant—God makes promises. The old covenants point to the new covenant, sealed in the blood of Christ: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ the new creation has come; the old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Cor. 5:17). In baptism, God makes a promise to be our God, and we are called to respond in obedience. We are called to be reborn into the likeness of Christ—as the Apostle puts it, “until Christ is formed in you” (Gal. 4:19).

Sixth Lent (Palm Sunday) April 1
Born a Child and Yet a King
John 11:53-57, Matt. 21:1-11, Philippians 2:5-11
Rev. George VanderWeit

After Jesus’ baptism, he began preaching, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Baptism reminds us that the gospel is more than an idea, it is a call to live a different life. The gospel is a matter of allegiance and recognizes Jesus’ followers as disciples and as citizens of this new kingdom. To be baptized is to be someone who has had citizenship transferred from one dominion to another. Yet Jesus’ kingship was not of self-exultation but of humility and submission. In Philippians 2 we read that the attitude of Jesus was that “he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant...he humbled himself.” He rode into Jerusalem, not with a courtly procession on a royal carpet, but on a donkey.



Maunder Thursday April 5
Celebration of Holy Communion
Rev. Delianne Koops preaching

Easter Sunday April 8
Dr. Neal Plantinga

From the Search Committee and Interim Team

The Search Committee is using several pathways to find our next senior pastor. First, we posted ads in several magazines that are read by pastors in the Reformed tradition. Those ads have prompted a dozen or so responses, and we expect more before the March 1 deadline. The second path is following up on names suggested by members of the congregation and Search Committee. We are listening to sermons preached by these possible candidates and learning more about them by talking with people who know them. In other words, we are looking at candidates who have applied and also at candidates who are qualified, but have not yet shown interest. We ask for your continued prayer for this process and for the Search Committee.

Until the arrival of the next senior pastor, the Interim Management Team will continue to oversee the everyday affairs of the church along with the Council. We are pleased that our staff and guest ministers have provided good messages for us, and in the next few months, we will have the opportunity to hear a number of other fine preachers including Dominic Palacios, Len Kuyvenhoven, Heidi DeJonge and Duane Kelderman. Our staff, Neal Plantinga, and George VanderWeit will also preach from time to time.

Search Committee members are: Wayne VanDerKolk, chair, Beth Betten, Eunice Bossenbrook, Dave Geers, Wendy Hofman, Andrew Huisjen, Delianne Koops, Joe Nelson, Cheryl VandeHaar, and Dave VanderHaagen.

Interim Management Team members are: Jack Harkema, chair, Eunice Bossenbrook, Wendy Hofman, Delianne Koops, Dave VanderHaagen, and Wayne VanDerKolk. Call Wayne or Jack if you have questions.

Spiritual Formation Opportunities on Sundays at 10:15 am

Faithful Learning - Gym

Once again, Campus Edge Fellowship is proud to sponsor a discussion series that seeks to explore the intersections of faith, learning, and life. Each week, we invite faculty members of Michigan State University to share their academic work with the River Terrace Church community. In the subsequent discussion, we explore what this work reveals about the God we worship and how it forms our faith.

February 5: **Rob Tempelman**
Professor, Department of Animal Studies

February 12: **Jack Harkema**
Distinguished Professor of Pathology
and Diagnostic Investigation,
College of Veterinary Medicine

February 19: **Peter White**
Postdoctoral Scholar of Evolution Education,
Lyman Briggs College

February 26: **Perry Ng**
Professor, Department of Food Science
and Human Nutrition

Join us in the gym to learn more about the world God has created and the people in our congregation studying that world.

“The Last Words of Jesus”

January 22-February 19 - Music Room

In the weeks between Christmas and Lent we may want to hear again the last words of Jesus and apply

his words to our lives as his disciples today. Jack Voss is the class facilitator. Please come to listen and share in the discussion.

The Hole in Our Gospel

February 12-March 25 – Quad

Are you challenged by poverty, hunger, women's issues, prisons, the AIDS epidemic? Would you like to explore ideas about the Christ-like response to issues of justice?

You are invited to attend a Sunday School Class entitled *The Hole in Our Gospel* which will explore biblical justice and appropriate responses by the church and individuals to justice issues. The 7-week class will meet from February 12 to March 25, 2012 with Grace Kreulen facilitating. It is based in a study of Rich Stearn's book *The Hole in Our Gospel*. In addition, Kris Van Engen, the denomination's justice mobilizer and CRWRC staff member, will meet with us to pull it all together and explore living out our faith in the broader community.

This class is for all adults, especially those interested or involved in outreach such as Faith-in-Action Ministries (Kid's Hope, Prison Ministry, Christian Services, etc.) and Missions (Missionary Support, Nigerian Partnership, Disaster Response). Together we will explore scripture and gain some understanding of what it means to be Christ's agent for justice in our communities and the world today.

Pastoral Care General Meeting

Monday, February 27

Lessening the Fear and Stigma of Dementia

We all know someone in our family, extended family or among our friends who, as they grow older, have some cognitive impairment such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease. As the North American population grows older and lives longer, more and more people will be affected. In one estimate, by 2050, as many as *sixteen million* Americans will have some form of dementia, with Alzheimer's being the most prevalent. There's another implication say authors Thibault and Morgan (*No Act of Love is Ever Wasted*): "If you haven't yet been a caregiver, you likely will be one."

While acknowledging the role of medical and professional care, these experts argue that a key determinative factor in the sufferer's well-being is social context—the community. The Shepherding Elders in our congregation are on the front line of caring in our community. At the Feb. 27 meeting, we will have a panel from our board discuss how we can best respond and support those who suffer from dementia and in what practical ways we can support his or her family.

Anyone in the congregation who is interested in this subject, is warmly invited.

Mom to Mom's February Plans

Barb Ilgen

We will continue to study and discuss parenting from the Biblical and practical application perspectives during February. Our meeting on February 7 will focus on sibling relationships. February 14 is a special day for many reasons; besides being Valentine's Day, we will have workshops rather than the usual lesson. Sue MacLeod will return with another cooking workshop including tasting and a recipe book: "The Importance of Using Whole Foods to Feed Your Family." There will be two other choices as well: low-impact exercises by Amy Larson and gratitude journaling by June Mears Driedger. Moms will select two of the three options. We do NOT meet on February 21 because some schools are on break for Presidents' Day or professional development day. Our last meeting of the month on February 28 begins our last unit on "Parenting Power: Examining Biblical Blueprints for Family Life."

Mom to Mom meets on Tuesdays from 9:30 am to 11:30 am. We begin in the gym with delicious food and fellowship, followed by a DVD lesson. Small group discussion follows downstairs. Our little ones (birth to 3 yrs.) are cared for by nursery attendants. Kid to Kid is for 3-5 year olds who are nurtured by wonderful volunteers as they sing, listen to a Bible story, do a craft, enjoy a snack, and play in the gym.

It is not too late in the year to join us. We look forward to welcoming you!

Shop Notes

Roy Turbett

It doesn't seem like it, but Shop Talk is in its third season and has had over 50 participants drop by for woodworking and Christian fellowship. All too often we are reminded that, in polite society, we shouldn't bring up the subject of religion lest we offend someone. But Jesus gave us a great commission when he said "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The intent of Shop Talk is to do just that by providing a comfortable place for Christian men and women to have a conversation about Christ with neighbors and friends who might otherwise feel uncomfortable attending church. We again take our inspiration from Jesus who says "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." So if you have a neighbor, friend, son, or daughter you want to have a conversation about Christ with, join us on Friday or Saturday morning from 9 am to noon. The shop is nice and warm, there are lots of tools to play with, great coffee and treats, and, best of all, conversations about Christ.



Youth Ministries

Chris Allen, Youth Pastor

January was a month the youth will never forget. We kicked off our Sunday night **Reign** (9th-12th graders) and **Powerhouse** (6th-8th graders) with **Lock-In**. This was an all time extravaganza. We began with a group meal, followed by worship from the **PB and J Band** (Pete and Blythe White and Jake Baker). Jennifer VanderGalien spoke with us about mission trips and her experiences in being a missionary. Then we unveiled our summer youth trips. The middle schoolers will participate in **Impact Lansing** again. The high schoolers will go to Hamilton, Ontario to work at **Serve**. More information is available below. We followed up our worship service with a trip to the MAC. Swimming, tennis, and dodge ball were the games of choice. Then we returned to RTC for Nerf Wars, Ultimate Tronsbee, Rock Band, and Karoke. At 8:00 am the youth left with tired eyes and smiling faces. The youth and leaders of Reign and Powerhouse would like to invite all middle schoolers and high schoolers to come check out our program each Sunday night at 6:00 pm!



For Middle Schoolers: Impact Lansing!

During July 8-14 the middle schoolers will be doing our second local mission trip with Trinity United Methodist and South Church. We will stay at Trinity United Methodist. Cost is only \$75 for the whole week! A booked band will lead worship for the week. We will be doing service projects throughout the greater Lansing area in the morning. In the afternoon we will have a "summer camp" experience with activities like Mobile Laser Kombat and Whirleyball. This is set to be a fun and an enriching time for our kids.

For High Schoolers: Mission Ontario!

During July 14-21, the high school youth will travel to Hamilton, Ontario, Canada for Youth Unlimited's **Serve!** We will participate in service projects throughout the greater Hamilton area which will include visiting nursing homes, leading games with youth, meals on wheels, painting, and building structures for those in need. We will stay at a church all week. Cost is \$150. In the evening we will participate in worship and hear several relevant and refreshing messages from leading youth workers. This is going to be a brilliant experience.

Messages on the Lord's Prayer "Bringing Heaven Down"

February 5	Forgive Us Our Debts Delianne Koops preaching
February 12	Do Not Lead Us into Temptation Chris Allen preaching
February 19	Yours Is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory Kory Plockmeyer preaching

Special Offerings for February

February 5	Benevolence
February 12	Youth Service Scholarship Fund
February 19	World Relief (Embrace AIDS)
February 26	Dynamic Youth Ministries

Games, Games, Movies, and More

Game Night for Adults

Friday, February 3, 7:00 pm, Fellowship Hall

Bring your favorite game, your own beverage, and a snack to share. Your ideas for future game nights are welcome. Contact Judy Hamilton at 332-4669 with your questions.

Scrabble Anyone?

Thursday, February 16, 1:00 pm



How strong is your vocabulary? Meet with your friends for a challenging game of Scrabble. Come to the Fellowship Hall and enjoy!

Friends and Flicks

Thursday, February 16, 6:30 pm



Women of all ages are welcome to join us for a fun and relaxing time. We meet at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall for fellowship, popcorn, pop, and a movie. The movie, *Life as We Know It*, starring Katherine Heigl, Josh Duhamel, and Josh Lucas, is about two single adults who become caregivers to an orphaned girl when their mutual best friends were killed in an accident. The movie starts promptly at 7:00 pm.

A Tropical Luau for Graduate Students

Friday, February 17, 7:00 pm

Despite global warming, winter in East Lansing can make one pretty miserable. Campus Edge Fellowship invites you to warm up at a tropical luau. We'll have a pig roast, limbo competition, party games and more. Join us at River Terrace Church. Luaus are not just for Hawaiians, after all.

Hooray for Hollywood

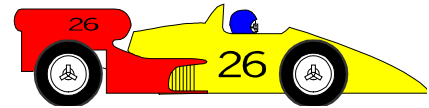
Saturday, March 3, 7:30 pm

A barbershop style tribute to Hollywood at the Wharton Center, "Hooray for Hollywood" features the Capitol City Chordsmen, the Patch Chords, and several Lansing Chapter quartets. For reserved seat tickets (\$20 each), contact Bill Osterhouse, a barbershop chapter member, at 202-9886.

Calvin/Hope Basketball Game

February 11 at 3:00 pm

The Calvin/Hope men's basketball game can be viewed via satellite on Saturday, February 11, 3:00 pm, at the Spartan Hall of Fame Restaurant, 1601 Lake Lansing Rd., Lansing. Calvin fans: RSVP to Derek Bajema (980-4009); Hope fans to Kristin Hintz (339-1867). Come and cheer on your team.



Plan to attend the
Cadets/GEMS Pinewood Derby Race
Wednesday, February 29, at 6:30 pm
in the gym.

Embrace AIDS Update

In 2011 River Terrace donated \$12,417 to support church-based HIV-AIDS programs in Nigeria. Two thirds of this was from offerings and one-third from the Christmas Gift Catalog. Monies will be used by our partners, CRWRC/Beacon of Hope and the NKST Church, for HIV testing, school fees for orphans and vulnerable children, microloans for persons participating in HIV/AIDS support groups, and HIV prevention education. The Missions Committee/Nigerian Partnership Team thank you for providing support for this important ministry. For more information see Mark Menning, Nancy Kelly, or Grace Kreulen.

Administrative Assistant

We are looking for someone who loves people, has experience in Microsoft Office programs (Word, Excel, Power Point), and is willing to learn other church software programs. Some knowledge of website maintenance, church music, and accounting would be a plus. We are looking for a full-time person, but if needed, we will consider part-time. A full job description is available in the office or on our website at www.riverterrace.org. Please send a letter of interest and your resume to eunice@riverterrace.org by March 1, 2012.

Israel Study Tour

In Genesis 13, God tells Abraham, "Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." In June 2012, River Terrace Church is invited to do as Abraham did and walk through the land of Israel. Tim Blamer, RTC member and administrator/teacher at Lansing Christian School, will be leading a study trip to Israel for LCS this summer. Walking the land will bring the Bible to life in new, inspiring, and powerful ways. As we walk in the footsteps of Abraham, David, and Jesus, our faith will be deepened and our passion to live for god will be strengthened in ways that will last long after we return home.

The trip will provide an opportunity to:

- Experience and study the bible in its original setting, in the land God gave to his people.
- See the world and experience a culture and land very different from our own.
- Experience and learn about the modern history of a very important part of the world.
- Grow individually and together with others in the community.
- Experience the land of the Bible by hiking through deserts and up mountains; swimming in seas; visiting the city of

David; walking where Abraham, Elijah, Paul, and Jesus walked; and learning with our heads, hearts, hands, and feet.



Information about the trip can be found at lcsisrael.weebly.com. The trip will be June 18-29, 2012 and cost \$3,599. To reserve a spot, download the application form from the website and send in your deposit. Contact Tim Blamer at tblamer@lansingchristschool.org for more information. Tim will also be teaching in the Adult Forum during March if you would like more information then.