

Cambridge United Methodist Church
CIRCUIT RIDER February '12

NEW MEMBERSHIP CLASS TO BE HELD TWO SUNDAYS, FEB. 19 AND 26 FROM NOON TO 1:30 P.M. (OVER LUNCH)

Are you interested in finding out if you would like to join Cambridge UMC? Come and join us for two sessions of a New Member class to be held for two Sundays at the end of February. We will meet over lunch during those two Sundays and then you can decide whether or not you want to join. Taking the class does not obligate you. Come and learn some basic information about what it means to be a United Methodist and what membership means. Interested? Contact Pastor Jean or call the church office and sign up by noon on Friday, Feb. 17th. We will need to know numbers in order to have sufficient food and supplies.

- Pastor Jean

WEDNESDAY LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS AND LENTEN STUDY TO RETURN!

Answering the call for both the popular soup suppers and a need for more opportunities for Spiritual Growth for all ages, we are again going to hold our famous Wednesday "Lenten Soup Supper and Lenten Study" for all of Lent. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, we will hold our first **Soup supper to begin at 5:30 pm.** From **6:15 pm to 7pm there will be a Lenten Study** that will feature a short introduction and then questions for discussion at the table. **Meant for all ages, we invite families to take part in this time.** Our Wednesday schedule will run from **Feb. 22 through March 28.** There will be NO soup supper during Holy Week (from April 1 – Palm Passion Sunday through April 8 Easter). But do join us for our special holy week service *(see article on the back of the calendar).*



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE ON FEB. 22 AT 7:00 PM

We will begin our Lenten season by holding a special Ash Wednesday service on Feb. 22 at 7:00 pm. During this service you will have the opportunity to partake of both Holy Communion and have the imposition of ashes (either forehead or back of hand).

Do you know where the ashes come from? Only ashes from palms (often the palms from the previous Palm Sunday) produce the black ash. The ash is then mixed with some vegetable oil in order to be able to apply it.

On Ash Wednesday, we remember our mortality and open ourselves to moving through the 40 days of Lent (not including Sundays) as a means of preparing for Holy Week.

Please come and share this special way of ushering in the Lenten season.

- Worship Committee

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Musings from Pastor Jean— “When We Cannot Stay Silent”

Over the past several weeks I have been thinking more deeply about how staying silent when we disagree with someone or a group is really giving them and their idea(s) tacit assent, and that we need to start speaking up and politely, but firmly, disagreeing. Unless we speak out about what we believe, no one is going to know that we believe, think, or feel differently. We need to start naming and claiming our own beliefs before it is too late. I cannot tell you what to do or say, but I encourage you to at least wrestle with the ideas I am presenting to you here.

I am talking about those difficult conversations that we need to have sometimes, when staying silent is really not the best way to go - either because people are being hurt, bullied and/or untruths are being expressed, or because opinions are being shared and our agreement is assumed, when in reality we do NOT agree with them - and it becomes important that we stand up for what we believe as a justice issue or because we think it is too important to stay silent. I am NOT talking about a conversation in which the two parties already KNOW they disagree and talking/debating about it would either hurt and/or destroy the relationship. Please know there are times when the relationship is more important than the disagreement. We all have to decide the difference. But if the people do not know there are differences between us, then I think speaking up instead of staying silent is our challenge.

Therefore, I would like us to learn how to hold those difficult kind of conversations and become comfortable having them. Since difficult conversations can be, ...well, difficult and sometimes scary, then it seems to me that we need to prepare ourselves for them, and to provide a place for finding the resources to be able to learn how to hold them, to support each other in our attempts, and to be able to debrief with each other after we have done so. I am hoping that we can create some small groups and/or times in which we can practice these skills. I look forward to your thoughts and ideas about this. But let me first tell you about the context out of which my musings arise.

Whether the topic is politics, social justice issues, religion, theology, stories, jokes or even gossip about someone else, there are plenty of people who will spout out what they think and then assume that everyone else agrees with them. If we do not say anything, then they have “won” the argument. I am not advocating uncivil and rude responses, but I am talking about standing up for what one believes and not abiding by the “Minnesota Nice” myth. We can grant people their different opinions without allowing them to dictate what we ourselves should believe, act or vote on issues or candidates.

Are we really being “nice” to allow someone to think that we agree with them when we do not? Sometimes staying silent helps perpetuate misinformation, stereotyping, or allows discrimination and various kinds of biases to be further spread about. Is this not a clear violation of the Great Commandment of “loving God, neighbor and self” and of the 9th Commandment to “not testify falsely against a neighbor”? And even if it is not discrimination or a harmful issue, but a clear difference of opinion or theological difference, is staying silent really the best thing to do? Again, silence creates the belief that we agree. At a minimum I believe we need to make sure we are not perpetuating hurt for someone else. Words DO hurt, and stereotyped jokes or epitaphs are a form of verbal violence and abuse. Regardless of our age, we can help stop that kind of abuse. There would be no Civil Rights or reforms of any kind had everyone stayed silent.

On Jan. 12, Kay Roberts facilitated a training session at CUMC called, “**The Rule of Christ**” which deals with handling conflict and differences of opinion or understanding of a situation, not only in church settings, but in our lives – at home, work, school and the playground - using the steps suggested in Matthew 18. Part of the training shared examples of situations where because no one questioned an individual about their statements or disagreed with their assumptions, major upheaval and sometimes very negative outcomes occurred. All along the way in these situations, we realized that if someone had just spoken up, the end result might have been different. All too often, even though people disagreed, people remained silent.

When discussing this reality of staying silent, one of the attendees to my “*Gnawing on the Word*” class on Sunday, January 22, 2012 called herself a “coward” for not claiming her own beliefs when faced with some major theological differences espoused by a life-long friend. She expressed frustration with herself and with the situation and wondered how she could do better. Our conversation in the group provided additional stimulus for this Musing.*

I am sympathetic to her pain for there are many layers in such a situation: long-term friendship, religious differences, wanting to be respectful of other’s beliefs, etc., but I am still not convinced that saying nothing is the best policy in her situation or in many other circumstances when those differences are **unknown to both** parties. I am not advocating that we get into long debates. It is unlikely that we are going to change any minds. We probably cannot. What I **am** advocating is that we politely acknowledge the other’s belief, but then add that we believe differently. At least it gets it out in the open that what was originally said is not a “universal” belief.

How might we handle such a situation? “I” statements are always a good tactic when dealing with differences. For example: *“I hear you say that you believe ‘...(fill in the blank)...’. I appreciate the depth of your belief and how it impacts your life. I want you to know, however, that I feel/believe/understand it differently. My personal understanding of ‘(fill in blank)’ is this....(fill in blank)”. Even though we do not agree on this, I value our relationship. Can we agree to disagree about this?”* Such a statement from you will establish and allow the differences, but keep what is important at the forefront – the relationship – rather than getting into a theological fight in which neither side will end up either happy or content. If they continue to want to argue it, you can always say that you don’t want to hurt the relationship by continuing the discussion, but that you just wanted to make it clear that you did not agree with the opinion/statement/belief that had been shared. We do not have to continue a debate once a difference has been established – particularly when we know nothing will change! It is a case of claiming our place in the discussion.

My deep concern about this habit of silence lies not only with our public uncivil discourse on various justice issues, but that those issues are often couched in religious language or Biblical proof-texting as a means to prove their speaker’s truthfulness. I am deeply concerned about the fact that most progressive Christians have allowed Conservatives and Fundamentalist Evangelicals to publically state what it means to be a Christian to the extent that most people in society assume that the Fundamentalist viewpoint IS what Christianity is all about and that there are no other alternatives. When public Christianity is taken over by those who claim to have “THE way and the only way, no questions allowed and no alternatives admitted”, then it is no wonder that the majority of people today want nothing whatsoever to do with Christian churches and/or religion and would not consider coming through our doors. Not only is that a statistical current reality, but they also then have no idea about the positive open and alternative side of Christianity and the hope and community it can offer people in the difficulties and stresses of life. The verbal and sometimes physical violence and abuse done in the name of religion (and all religions are guilty of this), is deplorable. The sad fact is that the media picks up on the extremists’ language and behavior because it is catchy “news” and therefore most religions get negative publicity.

What does this have to do with us? The Visioning Team is working hard to figure out what Cambridge UMC should be in this city and Isanti County area. They are trying to figure out what our mission needs to be, and what and how that message will be communicated. CUMC was begun by folks who wanted an alternative to what was out there in the mid 1950’s and that doesn’t seem to have changed much in the years since. However, a church cannot have its mission be a negative: “we aren’t them”. We need to clearly claim our mission and message and not remain silent any longer in the face of those who proclaim that their belief system is the only truth. Unfortunately, those voices seem to be the loudest in today’s world and we cannot remain silent in the face of their efforts.

For example, particularly when it comes to religion, there are many who will vehemently argue that their belief system is “right” and that if one only reads the Bible, then their position will surely be substantiated. The problem with that argument is that it assumes that when one reads the Bible, there is only “one truth” that emerges, rather than letting the Holy Spirit work allowing continuing revelation and inspiration. The UCC motto, “God is still speaking” speaks to that idea.

The idea of there being just one right way as stated in the Bible is also predicated upon the belief that the Bible itself was dictated by God, and therefore things should be obvious. This is an assumption that I, for one, do not hold. I hold the Bible as sacred, but I do not believe it was dictated by God. Inspired, yes; but dictated, no. Even if I wanted to believe that, there are just too many internal inconsistencies and outright contradictions for such a claim to hold any validity for me.

The Bible is a book of books, first orally shared and then written across several centuries, with various human committees making the determination as to which “book” was to be included first in the Old Testament and then later in the New Testament. Our current New Testament canon was decided in the 5th century AD.

The writers of the various books of the Bible never intended that they be used as a scientifically factual resource answering our current issues. Today we are the products of the Enlightenment and the scientific revolution – a mindset totally unthinkable and unavailable to the early biblical storytellers and writers. For example, today we would not say that someone who was mentally ill was “demon possessed” but that is what is believed in the Bible. We therefore would not take that language literally, but would seek to understand what the meaning and purpose behind a story about “demon possession” means for us now and how we can translate it to have current spiritual understanding. God did not stop speaking to us in the 5th century. Nor has our knowledge and understanding of history, context, archeology, psychology, biology, physiology, geology, physics, the cosmos, etc. stayed the same as was known in the 5th century. God gave us the brains to learn. To deny our accumulating knowledge seems to me to be a rejection of how God created us to be.

This is not to say I reject the sacredness or importance of the Bible in my own spiritual journey or in our communal worship and education. Rather, to me, the sacredness of the Bible is enhanced by seeing it as the collection of sacred documents that my Judeo-Christian faith tradition has deemed essential and through which my ancestors in the faith worked to try to explain their relationship with God, their history, their story and their faith and why it is important. To me, the differences, the internal challenges and the variety all provide rich fodder for my own belief that one's faith is something that needs to be continually growing and developing, not something that is stagnant and rigid. My faith is based upon my relationship with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, and not on a single standardized set of statements or dogma which may have no logical application or make no sense in the 21st century. We can hold onto what is important and spiritually "true" without having to have everything be "factual" or literal. We can therefore keep ourselves open to God's continued revelation without being afraid when our understandings change.

Additionally, to hold to the idea that there is just one right way is to assume that any one person, one group, or one faith can know the whole mind of God. Such a belief is not only ludicrous, it is impossible. Why do we stay silent in the face of that reality?

All religion is an attempt to understand the unknowable, a way of trying to explain life, and a way of trying to figure out our place in the universe and how and why we exist. There are many paths that contain partial answers. I do not proclaim that I have all of the answers, but I am wrestling with the questions and seeking answers along with all of you.

I am a Christian because that is how I was raised. It is both my heritage and my faith path because I believe it contains many of the truths that resonate with me. It calls and challenges me to lead a life of love, understanding and compassion for all people, and it holds a mandate to work for justice for all, as I believe Jesus called his followers to do. I understand my role to be that of sharing the good news that Jesus brought us: that the Kingdom of God is present among us and that we are to be creating it in the here and now, not waiting for some time in the future, or only after we have died.

Within the Christian tradition there are many differences of understandings. I am not telling you what you should or should not believe. But by the same token, I expect the same courtesy. I am sharing so that we have specific examples upon which to dialogue and so that you understand where I am coming from. CUMC has people all along the theological spectrum.

I have shared some of my beliefs because I know that they represent areas in which either you agree or disagree and over which there might need to be some difficult conversations among us or with others – family, friends, community members. These and similar discussions arise in the "*Gnawing on the Word*" class held every Sunday to which everyone from High School on up is invited to join. This may be one place to help us become comfortable talking, sharing and even disagreeing with each other such that we can practice for those even more difficult conversations with people even further away from us on the theological continuum.

Is speaking up going to be scary? Probably, but I believe we are in a critical place and a time where unless those of us who hold a different view of Christianity speak up, we will have lost the chance to share the good news of the Kingdom of God that can exist in the here and now as being a viable reality. The ears of the vast majority of what is called "the unchurched" may be permanently closed in the face of no other known alternative.

We need to speak up and break the silence so that other may know that we offer a Christianity that is not just "one way", but one that is open to multiple understandings, diversity of opinion and open to the diversity of all of life; where our spiritual journey is a process and path and not a destination; where growth is encouraged; and believing that using one's brains is seen as giving respect and honor to the God who gave us those brains; and where everyone's ideas, presence and journey counts. And, we can also agree to disagree and still be the body of Christ together.

Compared to what I am hearing out in society and what I hear from clergy and laity around me in this area, this would be a real alternative. If we don't agree with what is being offered, we need to first speak up, and then offer another option.

So, I've given us a challenge to break the silence: to speak up politely and respectfully to each other and to the world so that others will know there are truly Christian alternatives. I believe this challenge will also enhance our own spiritual journeys. Will you accept? Let me know what you think.

**Permission was granted by this person to use her words/ideas for this article.*

Blessings,

Jean

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL NOTES

JANUARY 24TH, 2012

By: Mark Ziebarth Administrative Council Chair

The Ad Council met for the first time in 2012 on January 24, 2012. We welcomed three new members to our group: Jeff O' Brien, Judy Lundeen, and Greg Wuerflein.

- We began the meeting with a prayer from Pastor Jean.
- Fred Nolan reported on the financial status of the church and we ended 2011 in a better position than we have in past years. Fred presented a detailed report that will be included in the newsletter.
- Members of Ad Council that attended **The Rule of Christ** Training and pastor Jean provided a brief update on the training held on January 12. We had a few members absent from the meeting and decided to table detailed discussions until February. We are thinking of ways to communicate the plan to the entire church family.
- Vital Congregations was reviewed and we determined some goals for our church:

Average Weekly Attendance Goals:

- 2011-133 Worshippers
- 2012-143 Worshippers
- 2013-155 Worshippers
- 2014-165 Worshippers
- 2015-175 Worshippers

Profession of Faith Goals: This is a goal of people confirming their faith and is for confirmands and adults who are new to the church.

- 2011-12 New POF Members
- 2012-3 New POF Members
- 2013-6 New POF Members
- 2014-9 New POF Members
- 2015-5 New POF Members

Small Group Goals:

These are groups meeting that are connected to our church.

- 2011-12 Small Groups
- 2012-15 Small Groups
- 2013-16 Small Groups
- 2014-17 Small Groups
- 2015-18 Small Groups

Members in Mission Goals:

This is the information collected from our pink sheets each week at church.

- 2012-50 Members doing mission each week
- 2013-60 Members doing mission each week
- 2014-70 Members doing mission each week
- 2015-80 Members doing mission each week

Dollars Given to Missions:

This is our Apportionments plus other mission projects.

- 2012- \$20,000 per year
- 2013- \$25,000 per year
- 2014- \$30,000 per year
- 2015- \$35,000 per year

These are goals that we will be monitoring and sending reports to the Minnesota Conference each and every week.

- **Imagine No Malaria:** We as a church have dedicated ourselves to contributing \$3,000 per year for 5 years to the program. The Ad Council began to brainstorm some ideas for making this a priority for our church.
- **Ash Wednesday:** Soup Supper at 5:30 and Church Service at 7:00. Rest of Lent: Supper at 5:30 and Program at 6:15.
- Local leadership information was collected to give to the Minnesota Conference.
- Meeting adjourned and our next meeting is scheduled for **February 28, 2012 at 7:30.** Anyone is welcome to attend.

OUR VISION TEAM IS MEETING TWICE A MONTH

Did you know that our Visioning Team is meeting twice a month on Thursdays from 6 to 9 pm with our facilitator, Kay Roberts, and working hard on your behalf? These dedicated and committed people have been looking at Isanti County statistics (finding out who we are in this area), looking at what we as CUMC needs to be in the community and area and what our purpose is all about. We have been learning a lot and you will hear pieces of what we have discovered about this area in upcoming worship services. Can you name what CUMC is best known for in the community? (*answer in another part of the newsletter*). Does YOUR neighbor know where we are and what we are about?

-The Visioning Team

UMC IMAGINE NO MORE MALARIA CAMPAIGN

\$750 PER QUARTER TO FULFILL OUR \$3,000 FOR FIVE YEARS PLEDGE

You have read about in previous newsletters or in the media about the *Imagine No Malaria* Campaign that the United Methodist Church is conducting with the World Health Organization, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other groups to combat malaria in Africa and eliminate it by 2015. CUMC pledged \$15,000 over five years to this campaign because we believed so strongly in this effort.

What that means is that we owe the MN Annual Conference **\$3,000 per year for five years** which breaks down into **\$750 a quarter** that we will be billed starting now in 2012. We need to have every committee, every person in the congregation help us raise this money all during these five years in order to fulfill our pledge. Money raised by special events, individual gifts, given or by groups or committees needs to be funneled through the church office in order for it to be sent in to get credit for the church. Please help us think of ways to earn/raise this money for this wonderful cause! Watch for a special "Imagine No Malaria" contribution jar and sample mosquito nets that will be found in the Fellowship Hall during Coffee Hour every Sunday.

Why don't you consider making a donation (100% of the money goes to the effort, NOT administrative costs) as **birthday or anniversary gifts**, or **special occasion gifts** in honor of someone, or next year's **Christmas gifts**. We will publish those names you give us and the occasion for which it was given. We will not publish amounts, just that you have given money towards the campaign in each month's newsletter as a way for us to keep track of where we are in the overall goal. Most of us do not need more "things". Let's help the church help this effort so people can simply live.

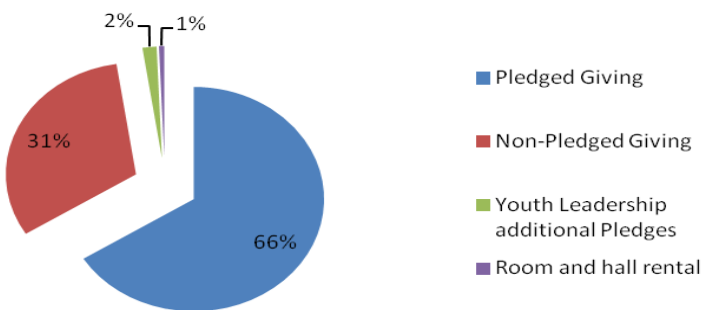
Another idea is to discuss this within your family, or at work and find ways of raising some funding. Money can come from outside sources and many people find this a worthwhile charitable contribution. This is a long-term project, but one that is of interest to all ages. Malaria is especially harmful for those under 5 and the elderly. Our money will go towards buying sleeping nets, education and health services. Let's help eliminate malaria!

2011 Year End Financial Report

By Fred Nolan, Finance Chair and Financial Secretary

THANK YOU to the 156 families and individuals who contributed \$257,745 to the general fund, missions and activities of the Cambridge United Methodist Church in 2011. While the 57 pledging givers need to be acknowledged for providing 68% of the total income, all givers, individual gifts and donations—even for coffee and rental fees are needed to pay our bills, salaries, maintain the church building, and carry out the missions of the CUMC. This averages to \$1,652 per giving unit (individuals and families) at CUMC.

2011 Giving & Church Income



Pledged Giving	\$ 170,290
Non-Pledged Giving	\$ 81,251
Youth Leadership additional pledges	\$ 4,504
Room and hall rental	\$ 1,700
Total Giving	\$ 257,745

In our expenditures this year, based on Ad Council action in 2010, we have clearly separated the General Fund from Dedicated Funds as you can see in the tables on the next page.

In the General Fund:

- We finished the year up for both expenditures and giving. Fortunately the growth in giving was larger than the growth in expenditures.
- We met our budgeted amount for apportionments, but we budgeted only 2/3rds of CUMC's apportionments.
- SPRC salaries were up primarily because we had 25 pay periods in 2011 due to a shift from paying the 15th and last day of the month to paying on the 1st and 15th of the month. This will correct itself in 2012.

General Fund 2011 Expenses:	Year to Date	Budget
Kitchen/Fellowship	0.00	500.00
Worship & Praise Team	1,967.12	2,181.00
Hospitality	485.94	800.00
Education	1,246.58	4,000.00
Youth Ministry	1,967.55	2,880.00
Missions - Outreach	3,759.46	0.00
Apportionments	24,000.00	24,000.00
Library	261.47	600.00
Finance Committee	1,760.10	1,000.00
SPRC Administration	17,477.36	11,080.00
SPRC Salaries	99,685.35	93,643.64
SPRC Benefits	44,568.49	46,832.88
Board of Trustees	234.32	3,200.00
Board of Trustees	39,249.12	37,400.00
Total Expense	<u>237,541.50</u>	<u>228,117.52</u>
Income - Expense	<u>13,956.67</u>	<u>10,274.48</u>

In the Dedicated Accounts:

- The Harvest and Holly, Salad Luncheon (Camperships), and the additional pledges for Youth Leadership in 2011, were transferred from the General Fund to Dedicated accounts in 2011, which is why they have zero balances as of January 1, 2011.
- The youth leadership part-time positions are in general fund for 2012 and will not be a dedicated account in 2012.
- The Capital Plant funds from the sale of the parsonage were transferred by the Trustees to Roof Repair in order to repair the roof in the summer of 2011.

Dedicated Funds 2011				
	Jan. 1, 2011 Balance	Year to Date Receipts	Year to Date Expenses	Dec. 31, 2011 Balance
Harvest and Holly	\$ -	\$ 3,417	\$ 803	\$ 2,614
Youth Ministry				
Salad Luncheon	\$ -	\$ 4,818	\$ 3,489	\$ 1,329
Youth Leadership	\$ -	\$ 4,504	\$ 4,645	\$ -141
Memorials	\$ 6,453	\$ 5,124	\$ 5,762	\$ 5,814
Over 50 Group	\$ 31	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31
Crisis/Emergency	\$ 2,202	\$ 7,275	\$ 6,412	\$ 3,066
Special Gifts	\$ -	\$ 3,413	\$ 2,179	\$ 1,234
Roof repair	\$ -	\$ 71,375	\$ 64,609	\$ 6,766
Endowments				
Building Capitol Fund	\$ 58,454	\$ -	\$ 58,454	\$ -
Total for selected ded. accounts	\$ 67,139	\$ 41,472	\$ 87,898	\$ 20,713

Cambridge UMC

404 N. Cypress St.

Cambridge, MN 55008

Pastor: Jean Rollin
Administrative Asst: Sara Gilbert
Choir Director: Frank Wells
Custodian: Mark Simmons
Organist: Dorcie Larson

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Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.

The Circuit Rider

Birthdays

February 1st—Luke Olson	February 13th- Marlys Schluck
Del Larson	John Wheelock
February 2 nd – Bob Erickson	February 16th— Brooklyn Terwilliger
February 2 nd – Josh Jarvimaki	Trudy Hervey
February 5 th —Gary Lundeen	February 18 th – Bonnie Boese
Richard Chenoweth	Mary Norton-Larson
February 5 th – Mary Lebak – Valleen	February 20 th —Garon Sutherland
February 6 th – Skip Strandberg	February 21 st – Dawn Vanhees
February 7 th — Samantha Lawrence	February 22 nd – Penny Messer
Maxine Pasch	February 23 rd – Patrick Macki
February 8 th – Cathy Conrad	February 27 th —Mic Dahlberg
February 12 th – Jill Nyberg	February 28 th —Aspen Jenkins

Anniversaries

February 21st – Gordy & Loretta Schroeder
February 24th – Norman & Marie Johnson



HOSPITALITY HAPPENINGS—WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Thank you to everyone who continues to help make “Common Grounds” Coffee hour happen each Sunday! Your efforts in making and serving coffee, other beverages and treats are appreciated. This is a great opportunity for service in ministry and the fellowship of working together in the kitchen is lots of fun. Please sign up on the sheet located in the Fellowship Hall treat table each Sunday. Thank you .
-Hospitality Team

February:	March:
5—	4th—
12—	11th—
19—	18th—
26—	25th—

