

J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 1

the

Cross & Flame

A Publication of the Vernon United Methodist Church

Humorous New Year's Resolutions

Check out these New Year's Resolutions! Maybe some of these sound familiar???

- Just for today, I will not sit in my living room all day in my nightdress. Instead, I will move my computer into the bedroom.
- I will no longer waste my time relieving the past, instead I will spend it worrying about the future.
- I will do less laundry and use more deodorant.
- I will give up chocolates totally. 100%. Completely. Honestly....
- I will try to figure out why I "really" need nine e-mail addresses.
- I resolve to work with neglected children -- my own.
- I will read the manual... just as soon as I can find it.
- I will think of a password other than "password."

Exceeding Our Own Expectations

By Sandi Bodnar

"We must exceed our own expectations" Nelson Mandela

January 30th will be Consecration Sunday. We will come together to worship, declare our pledges of time, talents and treasurers before God and each other; have our Pot Luck lunch and time of fellowship. It is a way to prepare ourselves for the coming year and the work we are called to do.

Afterward, we will leave to go to our homes having "devoted ourselves solemnly to a purpose." That's what consecration means. But will we be clear about what purpose we have devoted ourselves to? It is important that we are. How would it be possible for us to keep a covenant, or even make any type of meaningful commitment, if we are not clear about what our purpose is? Where are we now, Where are we going, and Why do we want to go there? Let me share with you my answers to these questions.

Where we are now, I believe, is on the right road. We have chosen a calling over a career. We have left our nice warm homes to be here early on a Saturday, making sure the clothing ministry is open or come after work and spent hours keeping our missions organized and efficient and trying very hard to anticipate the needs of others. We bring food for the food pantry, or hot meals for the Community Dinners. We volunteer in the mornings during the week to fill out paperwork and hand out food. We offer counseling, prayer, or a sympathetic ear. We have hammered and painted and shoveled and cut grass, raked leaves and planted flowers. We have brought supplies for coffee hour, or set

In This Issue

Page 2
"Exceeding Our Own Expectations" continued
By Sandi Bodnar

Page 3
February Events to Remember
Announcements

Insert
January 2011
Calendar

"Exceeding Our Own Expectations" 'cont...

up coffee and put out baked goods and cleaned up after everyone has left. We have visited the sick, those in prison, the lonely, offering comfort and a kind word, bringing food and running errands when needed. And all the while, we have supported this church and its ministries with our tithes and offerings. I could go on and on. I've only scratched the surface.

Where are we going? We are moving forward. Stretching, reaching, learning, growing, going deeper. There are so many out there in need and so many different needs to be met. We will always have good use for the resources we have and our resources will always be exhausted. At least I hope that is the way it will be. Learning to use all that God provides us, in meaningful ways, holding nothing back and never denying others for the sake of our own preservation. Growing in trust and understanding that if God has called us to a task, He will provide, in fact has already provided, all that we need to fulfill the work we are called to do. How could it be otherwise? Which brings us to our final question of "why". Why do we want to go there?

If you consider a doctor I know who has cared for Medicaid patients, or people who find themselves, at times, in financial difficulty because they cannot say no to someone whose needs are greater than their own, the world would call them suckers and by the world's standards, they are. The world would ask "why would you do something like that?" But they know who they

are in Christ and that's where they find their freedom and therefore, peace. Peace about what they have done and peace about why they are doing it. Being "Christ like". When we trust that with God's help all is well and if not, all will be well, we are released from a world that wants to tell us who we should be and free to finally become who God created us to be.

We do this first by learning for ourselves that all lives have equal value, then understanding that we are not loved because we have value, but that we have value because we are loved, finally we live lives that carry that message to the world. Finding Christ within ourselves, we give Him to others. And we do that by the sharing of our time, our talents and our treasures. Which brings us back to Consecration Sunday.

Take the time this month, before you are asked to fill out your pledge cards, to think deeply about what you are doing and why you are doing it. Ask yourself these questions. Where am I now? Where am I going? And why do I want to go there? Then move forward. Don't just do "your part" but strive to do all you can. Exceed your own expectations. Because it is not that we see and then believe, but that by first believing we start to see and to understand.

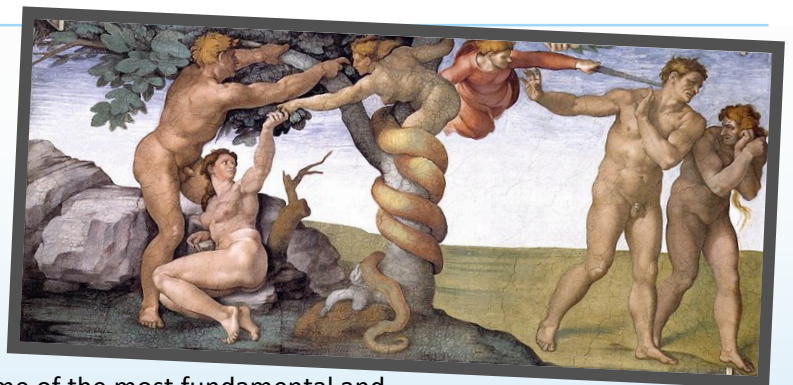
Find real purpose and meaning in the commitment you will make, indeed the covenant you are making with one another. Then pray for the courage to "devote yourself solemnly to that purpose."

COMING IN FEBRUARY!!! A New Sunday School Class on Creation & Evolution!!

Creator, Creation and We, the Created

As the foundation stone of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, the Book of Genesis unfolds some of the most fundamental and arresting stories of world literature – the Creation; Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel. Yet the meanings of these enigmatic stories are vehicles of the wisdom of God that can inform our contemporary and scientific world.

In this class, taught by Ernie Vanderkruik, we will undertake an archeological dig through the layers of meaning and interpretation to discover the kernels of wisdom that can enhance how humanity understands itself, our place in the universe and how we, the Created, can appropriately use the resources of Creation according to the desires of the Creator. Come and explore with us how our faith informs the use and understanding of technology and science. Sunday morning at 9:30AM in the library.



Mission & Outreach

“Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these who are my brethren, you’ve done it unto me...” Matthew 25

A special “Thank You” to everyone who helped to spread the Christmas message of God's love to people of need in our community! With your generous donations, we were able to make about 40 food baskets, supplemented with home baked cookies, pancake mix and syrup and fulfilled the 48 requests on our Giving Tree.

We were also able to provide a meal and a time of fellowship at our December Community Dinner Wednesday evening. The true spirit of Christmas was reflected in your actions, as we helped to spread joy to people in our community.

Upcoming Events

This month's **Community Dinner** will be held as always on the last Wednesday of the month, on January 26. The theme is **Soups and Stews**. Please sign up to help in the Fellowship Hall.

We need volunteers and workers for the **Clothing Ministry** in January and February. Please sign up in the Fellowship hall.

We appreciate your donations, but please remember we can only accept **winter clothing, shoes and linens**. Unfortunately, we have no room to display or store other items.

If you have larger items you wish to donate - furniture, housewares, please contact Dot Saski (das@nac.net or 973-827-6760) or the church office (973-764-3188) and we will post them on our Clothing Ministry bulletin board.

We currently have the following requests from visitors to our Clothing Ministry. If you can help with any of them, please contact Dot Saski or the church office.

Small microwave
Dorm fridge
Bunk bed
Sheets and blankets (twin and queen size)
Comforter (queen size)

The next meeting of the Missions & Outreach Committee is **Friday, January 7th at 7PM**.

All are welcome!



Don't Forget About Me!!

The Vernon United Methodist Church **Caring Hearts Ministry** of the food pantry, the clothing ministry and the fund is serving many families and individuals in need. These ministries depend on your generosity to thrive. Make a donation today to the Caring Hearts Fund in honor of someone you love, for birthdays or other special occasions, and let them know how they're making a difference! Thank you.

Help us, Help you, Help others...

COMING IN AUGUST 2011!!!



BIG JUNGLE ADVENTURE

**Vacation Bible School!!!
August 15th - 19th!!**

At Big Jungle Adventure, kids learn that they are never alone during the adventure of life because Jesus is by their side! At VBS 2011 kids will connect, share Jesus' love, and have a WILD good time!!

The Vernon United Methodist Church

303 Rt. 94

P.O. Box 345

Vernon NJ, 07462

To:

For more information or to hear sermons online, visit us on the web at:

www.vernonmethodist.org