

# Third Word News & Notes



APRIL 2013



## *Pastor's Message*

### ANNOUNCING A NEW SPIRITUAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

On Saturday morning, April 6 at 9:30, eight of us met in the Fellowship Hall to hold the first meeting of what we are calling a **Spiritual Growth Opportunity**. I chose that designation for this new endeavor, which we intend to hold monthly, because it will be more than a Bible study. It will be an opportunity for Third Church members and friends to meet with the Pastor in a comfortable setting around a table, over a cup of tea or coffee to consider, discuss, and exchange thoughts on important topics of mutual interest with a view toward growing in faith and understanding. Participants are encouraged to bring questions of their own to add to our conversation.

At our first meeting we watched a 25 minute DVD presentation. It was produced by former National Geographic photographer, Dewitt Jones. The landscapes and people from around the world were beautifully filmed and photographed. The accompanying narrative was equally well thought out, thought-provoking, and inspirational.

The theme of the message we heard and discussed was, **Celebrate What's Right with the World**. What a refreshing idea this proved to be! I thought to myself, "what a novel concept, yet, it should be our default position rather than an occasional glimmer of hope in an otherwise bleak outlook on life." How sad that most of us see our glass as half empty rather than half full most of the time. But, is it any wonder when we are bombarded on a daily basis with stories reported by the media that constantly tell us what's wrong with our world, our society, our government. It seems that the Evening News is by definition, "bad news," but that should not determine our outlook on life, especially since we believe that God's will for the world is "Good News."

We are told all the time that we live in a world of scarcity, loss, and fear. We hear cautionary slogans like, "Buyer beware," "Eat or be eaten," "Dog eat dog," and "Law of the jungle." These reinforce our fears and put us in a defensive, competitive posture that blinds us to the abundance of resources and goodness that the world has to offer. Vision controls our perception, and perception controls reality. If our vision is one of fear and scarcity, that becomes our reality. If our vision is of abundance and goodness, that becomes our reality. Jesus drew on lessons from nature because he saw so much goodness and abundance in it. He taught us the good news that God loves the world and has not given up on it. There is much to celebrate in every situation. Celebrating what is right in the world enables us to put the negative in proper perspective, and energizes us to fix what's wrong.

Celebrating what's right with the world frees us from fear, opens doors of opportunity for us to do our best, and be our best for the world. Amen.

*Blessings,  
Pastor Norm*

## Sunrise Service

Our Sunrise service was very well attended this year. We had about 55 at Miner Street Cemetery to enjoy a beautiful morning service at 6:30am. There were about 10 Deacons on hand to serve a delicious breakfast to all of the attendees after the service. They had eggs, bacon, homefries, toast and many baked goods donated by our members. It was a great way to start off the day.



## Easter Services



There was a great attendance at our 10:00 am worship service. Don Keathley began our hymns with a solo of "The Holy City". Our Easter Pageant was called "Seeds of Joy" is to highlight Jesus' resurrection and our lives that are transformed like seeds of plants or trees. Thanks to our cast: Matt Tomer, Emily LaValley, Samantha Ehlers, Kate Pillion, Atalie Sweet, Hannah & Abby Blakeslee, Garrett Hoyt and Josh Kennedy. We were blessed by the Choir to help us in song as well as the congregation. Everyone in the service had a part. Thanks to Pastor Norm, Leslie Coutsouridis and Joan Fisher for helping to coordinate the music and to start off the pageant. Cory Hassmann, our resident, artist make wonderful drawings for our seed packets. The service continued with wonderful music, sharing of joys and concerns and a sermon. The worship ended and the fun began for all of the children who participated in the annual Easter Egg Hunt. Thanks to the 7/8 grade class who stuffed all of our donated candy, the children has many treats to find. Thanks to all who participated.



## Survey Results

The Strategic Planning put together a survey for the congregation. The questions were to gauge the degree to which church is a positive experience for our members and the degree to which their spiritual needs are being met. The highest scores were in spiritual needs and opportunities to utilize their talents were 96.5%. The lowest score which was at 82.76% showed a need for improvement in recognizing volunteers. The committee will be taking the following steps as their 2013 Agenda. Develop a strategy so that committees and committee chairs can recognize their volunteers after each event. Make sure that all committees make new members welcome and listen to all new ideas. Develop new member integration process for those who are new to the church. Develop marketing to target new members to visit and join Third Church. Develop data for a talent pool to help with burn out and re-staffing of various positions throughout the church. The committee will continue to work with church committees and church members to reach our goals for this year and the years to come.

**Don't wait for extraordinary opportunities. Seize common occasions and make them great.**

Orison Swett Marden