

Charter Oak Church

## REFLECTIONS

turning to my Father & your father, to my God and your God." Mary Magdalene  
to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them  
had said these things to her. On the evening of that first week, when  
the Lord said, "Peace be with you!" After he had shown them his hands  
and said, "The disciples were of those who had not seen Jesus  
"Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you  
& with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

# Jesus: Sent to Engage



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# Baptism Weekend

Welcome to  
REFLECTIONS

February 2012

A monthly publication  
from the people of  
Charter Oak Church.

Doing life together  
Sharing stories



# February Worship

*SENT*

## February 4/5-Pastor Whitehead

Jesus: Sent to Engage, *The Bread of Life*

Experiencing God-Chapter 4: Love and God's Invitation

## February 11/12-Pastor Whitehead

Jesus: Sent to Engage, *Words of Conflict*

Experiencing God-Chapter 5: God Speaks, Part 1

## February 18/19-Pastor Whitehead

Jesus, Sent to Engage, *Unbelief Revealed*

Experiencing God-Chapter 6: God Speaks, Part 2

## February 25/26-Pastor Whitehead

Jesus, Sent to Prepare the Way, *Promise of the Holy Spirit*

Experiencing God-Chapter 7: The Crisis of Belief

2011 General Fund Giving	1,184,069
2011 Actual Spending	1,150,505
Difference	33,564

Building Fund	
Monthly Mortgage	\$26,054
Mortgage on Phase 2	4,873
2011 Giving	403,606
2011 Actual Spending	422,387
Difference	-18,781

# Coming in March

SENT series continues with Jesus: Sent to Engage (John 6-10)

March 24/25 —>

Three services

Saturday, 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.



## Ways to Serve

Baby Holders needed! Do you enjoy holding, rocking and cuddling babies? Would you be interested in spending time with the littlest members of our church family? We need you. Contact Melissa Conte, 724-744-0008 or email [missconte@wondstream.net](mailto:missconte@wondstream.net) for information on how you can get involved with this important ministry.

### February 4

Mission trip to 8th Avenue Place in Homestead.

### February 4/5

“Souper” Bowl Weekend. Help stock our Food Pantry by bringing donated cans of soups and stews to worship service with you on Super Bowl weekend.

### February 13

Food Bank Delivery, 9:00 a.m.

### February 18

Food Pantry Distribution, 8:00 a.m.

## Save the Date

**February 19-Discovering Charter Oak Church** will be held at 2:45 p.m. for anyone who is interested in learning more or rediscovering what Charter Oak Church is all about. People who are interested in pursuing membership with Charter Oak Church are required to take this class. At the class conclusion you may choose to stay and continue with the membership portion.

**February 22-Ash Wednesday Service, 7:30 p.m.**

**March 11-Semi annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser** to benefit student and adult missions.

**March 24/25-Children’s Musical, Under God’s Sea in 3D** will be presented during a special three service weekend.

**March 3-Mission Trip to 8th Avenue Place**

**March 17-Food Pantry Distribution and SERVICE Saturday**

## I am sent...

I was first introduced to Children’s Ministry at Charter Oak Church twelve years ago. It was then that Maxine Wilson saw in me a gift that I had not fully realized. And it all started with an ask.

Maxine had a tradition back then to ask fathers to teach on Mother’s Day so that teachers who were mothers could have the day off. What first started as just playing games with the 3rd graders to fill up an hour has turned into twelve amazing years of touching the lives of kids and seeing them grow in their spiritual journey. And that has all been due to the support and love of Maxine.

Anyone who had the opportunity to serve with Maxine Wilson will attest she has two passions; love for her Savior, Jesus Christ, and love for kids, His kids. There is nothing that brought Maxine more joy over her 22 years in Children’s Ministry than to witness or hear of a child giving their life or growing closer to Jesus.

As a legacy to Maxine, a scholarship fund has been created in honor of her many years of love and support for the children of Charter Oak Church and the surrounding community, by the teachers and leaders who were mentored by her. The scholarship will provide opportunities for children to participate in Children’s Ministry activities who otherwise may not be able to and therefore miss the chance to hear about Jesus and His love for them. These activities include Mission Possible, Vacation Bible School and church sponsored camping weeks.

~Jeff Claney

If you have a heart for children and/or wish to honor the work Maxine Wilson has done through Charter Oak Church, we invite you to make a contribution. Simply make your check payable to Charter Oak Church and mark on the memo line and envelope, Maxine Wilson Scholarship Fund.

## “SQUIRREL!”

One of my favorite movies is **UP**. It doesn't fit into my normal movie genre, but it really speaks to me on so many different levels. There is a scene where the main character, Carl Fredricksen, is in pursuit of his life dream and is getting directions from a talking dog (it's an animated film). The dog is very focused in his directions when all of a sudden he yells, “Squirrel!” and then goes back to what he was saying. Although the dog can talk, he is still a dog and dogs chase squirrels. That is a good reminder to me of how easy it is to get **distracted**.

I believe God is at work in the lives of the people of Charter Oak Church. More people are reading and reflecting on the Bible everyday than ever before. We have over 200 people working through the **Experiencing God** study. We have had two miraculous healings – cancer was present one day and it was gone the next. We are studying the **Gospel of John** as a congregation on weekends. Our students went on a weekend retreat where many of them committed or re-committed their lives to Jesus. All of this is bringing unity to our family here at Charter Oak Church. It's exciting to see God working in and through us. I have heard story after story of how people are listening to God and seeking to join Him where He is at work.

The reality is when God's people are walking in obedience with Him, distractions will definitely pop up that seek to keep us from fully engaging in the activity of God around us. There have been many of these distractions around here lately, some that are more than just a “squirrel.”



## News From...

### United Methodist Women

A **Prayer and Self Denial luncheon** will held on Tuesday, February 7 at 12:00 p.m. All women of the church are invited to participate in the special luncheon marking the beginning of the Lenten season. Guest speaker, Cynthia Griffin, Vice President of Greensburg District United Methodist Women will present the program. In case of inclement weather, the luncheon will be rescheduled for March 13.

### Children's Music

Charter Oak Church's kids are working hard on the annual **Children's Musical, Under God's Sea in 3D** which will be held during a special three service weekend on March 24/25. Don't miss our kids as they bring worship through music on, Saturday, March 24 at 6:00 p.m. and at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 25.

### Easter Gift Bags

Pick up a gift bag after all worship services on February 25/26 and help make Easter special for our Food Pantry children. 156 gift bags were filled for children in need during the Christmas season. Well done, Church!

### Church Office

We are excited to announce the hiring of Lori Plummer as Charter Oak Church's Office Administrator. Lori brings with her many years of experience in office environments and a love for God and His people. Lori has two sons, AJ and Aaron. Welcome Lori!

### Thank You

We are so grateful for the love extended by our church family through encouraging hugs, cards, and special care after the passing of my mother, Shirley Acerni. God has blessed us beyond measure. ~ Cindy Jonczak and family.

## Ministry Spotlight

### Wesley Library

Charter Oak Church is pleased to have both an adult and children's library. The Wesley Library, located next to Common Ground on the upper level of our building is a warm and inviting place for adults to explore the world of the written word.

The Wesley Library not only offers a wide assortment of fiction books, but also has an impressive collection of commentaries and non fiction books on spiritual growth. Commentaries are a very helpful tool when studying the Bible.

The library is always open for your enjoyment and is staffed on Sunday mornings with our very own librarian, Meg Rumbaugh. It's a great time to stop in and ask questions.

Check out our library and while you're at it, check out a book, too!

## News From...

### The Church Office

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the retirement of Brenda Riggle as Food Service Manager of Charter Oak Church. After nearly ten years of employment, Brenda is leaving her position to spend time with her family and support her husband in his new business. Her retirement will be effective on March 29. Brenda has been a bright spot in all our lives. She has made every event and activity fun and special with her talents in the kitchen and her smile. She will be missed, especially on Sunday mornings as she weaves her way through the crowd with cookies and muffins.

We wish her well and send her with loving prayers on to the next season of life.



What we do and what we say in the midst of these distractions are critical. Scripture says, *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."* (1 Peter 5:8) On the surface these distractions can seem so insignificant – waterline freezes in the prayer room, sound system board blows up before Saturday worship, changing Food Pantry Distribution and Service Saturday because of weather. However, it puts us into the opportunity to stay focused on God or sin. How I react and how you react – what we say and what we do, really matters.

I want to encourage you to dig in to God's Word every day, to pray, to serve, to see where God is at work and join Him there. The work of God at Charter Oak Church is obvious. The unity that is happening here is glorifying to God. Let's not let any distractions keep us from what God is doing in us and through us. Be self-controlled and alert. Trust in Jesus. Do the next right thing in becoming a fully devoted follower of Jesus. The best is yet to come as together, we...

Love God, Love Each Other, and Love the World,

Pastor Chris

## Coming in February



## I am sent...

About two years ago, I found myself sitting in Harmons, Jamaica, the same place Charter Oak Church goes on mission trips each fall. It was my final college spring break before I graduated from Penn State with an engineering degree. I was anxious to see what God had in store for my life, which I assumed would be getting a job with an engineering firm and beginning a normal life. God had other plans for me though.



When the missionary spoke about the possibility of young people coming to serve for an extended period of time, God had me dialed in. I've always had an easy life at home with more stuff than I ever needed, but God wanted me to go somewhere that they didn't have it so easy. He wanted me to truly go to the ends of the Earth and serve the less fortunate. I always refused to believe that the great commission was speaking to all of us, but it really is.

I started seeking out options about where He wanted me to go. I had no clue. Did He really want me to go? After seeking Him, I hooked up with a connection to a hospital project in Uganda. Africa? Really God? I took the plunge and gave my commitment just before graduation, leaving most of my friends and family thinking I was nuts. I was preparing to go halfway around the world to live in a third world country for several months to help build a hospital. I didn't care what they thought though. I wasn't in this to please men, but God. I spent five months preparing for the trip, but it never felt right. To be honest, I didn't have a heart to go there, just to serve God.

Finally it fell through leaving me stunned. I put my life on hold for this? That feeling was only momentary though. One passage really kept me going: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Psalm 42:1-2). God reminded me of when He first told me I was to go and serve the less fortunate.

I called the Jamaican missionary, and he knew my soul was thirsty for God. The next month I was on a plane for the most incredible experience of my life, living in a small village in the mountains of Jamaica for ten weeks.

When I returned, I began my search for full time engineering jobs but soon realized I didn't have a heart for it. I started to pray about it, but Jesus was drowning me out by telling me to go into ministry. He was actually talking over me while I was trying to talk to Him! He knows I'm a bad listener and need to be told more forcefully sometimes. I'm feeling the same strong call to go into ministry as I felt when God moved me to serve after graduation. It's the kind of urge that you just can't ignore, no matter how hard you try. I have to put the same trust in Him as when I committed to go to Uganda and eventually Jamaica.

As I've learned in the Experiencing God study, it isn't about finding God's will for my life; it's simply about finding God's will. Sure we need to give our talents to Him, but sometimes we just need to follow Him. We need to be with Jesus. He says "where I am, my servant also will be" (John 12:26). I'm not exactly sure where He's going to take me, but I know if I'm near Him, I'll be right where He wants me. Lately I've gotten pretty involved with the youth group and spent Vacation Bible School talking to the kids. Both of these are a stretch for the guy who generally has no patience for anyone younger than himself. I know God can use me there as long as I remember that it's Him I'm working for and not myself or even the church. I'm currently in the process of interviewing for a couple positions in the church my fiancé and I intend to join near where she teaches high school math. I'd appreciate your prayers. God is calling all of us to go to different places and do different things. He can use all of us perfectly for His will. Read His Word, talk and listen to Him, follow Him and you will be used. You will be SENT.



-Greg Impink