

THE STONE NEWS

STONE CHURCH OF WILLOW GLEN, PRESBYTERIAN USA DECEMBER 2010



GOOD KING WENCESLAS: REDISCOVERING OUR COMPASSION

by Ken Henry

*Good King Wenceslas looked out,
On the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about,
Deep and crisp and even;
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Tho' the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.*

*- From Good King Wenceslas
by John Mason Neale (1853)*

The chancel opera, *Good King Wenceslas* by Richard Shephard, will be performed by Stone's Chancel Choir, along



with other musicians and special guests, during the Worship service, on Sunday, Dec. 19.

This opera recalls the legend of the good king of Bohemia (c. 907-935) who gained a reputation for being kind and generous to all. Tragically, the king was assassinated by his brother, and yet, mythically speaking, King Wenceslas has

always been revered as the monarch who cared for the poor of his country.

In both the opera and the familiar Christmas carol, the king sets out to teach a local page, a boy who is clearly spoiled and irresponsible, the importance of lifting up those who struggle on the edge of poverty.

This musical presentation poses the question: Why should we care for the poor? Better yet, why should busy and productive people make time in their schedules for loving the lonely, the lost, and the most neglected people in our society? And yes, why should we make a great effort at Christmas when we have so many other things to do?

The answer? Rediscover the Christmas story, and you'll rediscover your compassion.

(continued on page 5)



For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:
and his name shall be called
Wonderful, Counsellor,
The mighty God,
The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.

A Blessed and Merry Christmas from the Stone News Staff

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE AT STONE

Dec. 5 Second Sunday in Advent

9:30 am Worship & Communion;
Rev. Dr. Ken Henry preaching;
Rev. Joey Lee assisting;
6 pm First Night; Rev. Aimee Moiso

Dec. 7

6:45 pm Advent Taizé Service

Dec. 12 Third Sunday in Advent

9:30 am Worship; Rev. Aimee Moiso preaching

Dec. 14

6:45 pm Advent Taizé Service

Dec. 19 Fourth Sunday in Advent

9:30 am Worship: *Good King Wenceslas*

Dec. 21

6:45 pm Advent Taizé Service

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

5 pm Family Candlelight Service
11 pm Candlelight Service;
Rev. Dr. Ken Henry preaching

CHRISTMAS GIFT TO CAPITAL FUND AT STONE CHURCH

Stone Church entered into a period of renovation several years ago. To pay for the extensive work that needed to be completed, a *Capital Campaign* was begun on June 1, 2003, for which pledges were solicited.

As work progressed, the final cost of the entire project (including deferred maintenance) was \$1.9 million.

The *Campaign* ended on May 31, 2008. The cost of the remaining debt (which is \$108,000 per year) has been absorbed into the operating budget. By the end of 2010, we will have spent about \$350,000 from the operating budget paying off the loan.

The good news is that, as of Oct. 31, 2010, the

remaining principal debt is now \$501,000. Let us celebrate that the members of this congregation have paid \$1.35 million in gifts for the renovation.

Praise and thanks to all who have given so generously to this place of worship and fellowship.

There are a number of members and friends who continue to give gifts each year to reduce the principal in order to more quickly finish this project.

Will you join with us this year in helping to reduce our capital debt in order to use more of the operating funds in the future for the important ministries of Stone Church?



ADVENT TAIZÉ: THE POWER OF PRAYER

When Marcus Borg, scholar and theologian, was recently at Stone for *The Henrietta Perdue Memorial Lecture Series*, he spoke briefly about contemplative prayer, saying "Contemplative prayer in a group is more powerful than individual practice."

Since 1998, Stone has been living out this belief through the service of contemplation and prayer called *Taizé*. At that time, the Session authorized the service for the first Tuesday of each month throughout the year, as well as all Tuesdays in Advent and Lent. The services have been held continuously for the 12 years since.

Many different folks have found power in that time – the power of healing, of comfort, of spiritual depth. They have been of all ages, many from Stone's congregation, many from outside the church.

In a candlelit sanctuary, in silence, in chant, in scripture, in spoken and inward prayer, participants have known the truth of Dr. Borg's statement: There is power in group contemplative prayer.

Advent Taizé Services: Dec. 7, 14, 21; doors open at 6:30 pm, service begins 6:45 pm. - Alice Thorn

ATTENTION PARENTS! DEACONS' ANNUAL PARENTS' DAY OUT!

On Saturday, Dec. 4, from 10 am to 2 pm, let the Deacons of Stone Church take your children off your hands for a few hours.

You'll have time for shopping, lunch or just relaxing while your children enjoy crafts, games, movies and lunch!

For kids 12 and under; reservations required.

RSVP to Joyce Summers.



"YULE" BE SORRY IF YOU MISS THIS EVENT!

Look for the *Make-Your-Own-Yule-Log Event* on the Church Patio after Worship on Dec. 12.



Materials will be provided to create your personal fireplace (or really any place!) masterpiece. And this can be a *green project* for your family – you don't have to actually burn the log to enjoy making it part of your Christmas tradition – just recycle it in your yard waste at the end of the season.

Contact Fred Oliver or John Lococo for more information.

THINGS ARE GROWING!

by Mary Jo Blazek
Children's Ministry Coordinator

Things are growing around Stone Church these days.

The Church School children have been working on a wonderful winter garden in the backyard. Each week the children, with the help of our master gardener Caryl Westerberg, have prepared soil, planted both plants and seeds, created a path, and cared for all of it with love.

The lettuce is taking off, the edible pansies are blooming, and

our snap peas are starting to climb their trellis. All of this is happening while the children learn not only how to care for a garden, but also how to care for all of God's creation as they study the related Bible lessons.

Something else is growing at Stone: our members. This past month, we welcomed many new members and baptized eight children. All of this shows the *blooming* going on here at our friendly church. The congregation is blossoming with new energy, and the number of children is increasing, showing



that our membership is on a fabulous growth spurt, just like our thriving winter garden.

The children's program is expanding, as well, to include a Sunday morning choir. The children will be performing with the Chancel Choir at this year's presentation of *Good King Wenceslas* on Dec. 19, under the direction of Peggy Spool, Artistic Director of the well-known Vivace Youth Chorus.



Things are growing at Stone Church. Welcome to all!



MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT AT CUTTING RANCH

Nine middle-schoolers participated in the *Cutting Ranch Retreat* this year.

In addition to enjoying the wonderful animals, the group engaged in a Bible study that explored all we receive and how we can serve as Christians demonstrating God's love.

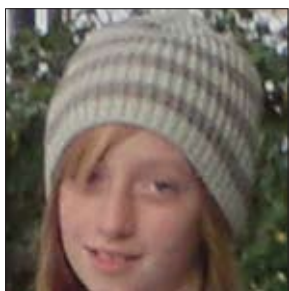
We also learned the following prayer with motions:

You see we are alive.

We are part of all creation.

What we are is a gift from God.

What we do is a gift to God. -Rosaleen Zisch



ADULT EDUCATION LOOKS AT CONFLICT, SABBATH, AGING, NELSON MANDELA

Stone's Adult Ed classes meet Sunday mornings at 11:15 in the Fireside Room. Childcare is provided. All are welcome!

Dec. 5: A Divided House: Faith-Based Conversation on Conflict Resolution with Ken Henry & Joey Lee

From Ken Henry: So you, a Stone Church progressive Christian, have a friend or family member who attends a non-denominational church, or what I might call a *Costco Church*. And this person sees scripture completely differently from the way you see scripture.

How do the two of you speak about your faith without coming to blows? How do you begin to have a meeting of the minds ... or do you?

In this class, we'll discuss how you might approach faithful disagreements with friends and family members. I will give a brief lecture on the interpersonal dynamics of discussing faith issues, and Joey Lee, Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of San José, will shed some light on how local churches resolve and heal from church conflicts.

Dec. 12 & 19: The Sabbath: Tradition, Discipline, or Anachronism? with David McCreath

The Sabbath has an ancient and complex history. Jewish scholars have sought to determine if God was observing the Sabbath when the serpent tempted Adam and Eve, leading a contemporary scholar to state, "Remembering the Sabbath and keeping it holy, for God, means abandoning his children to their own impulses. God's rest is man's fall."

This two-week class will explore some of the Biblical literature, cultural responses, and the possibilities of spiritual growth in recovering the meaning of the Sabbath.

Jan. 9: Helping Aging Family Members with Danielle Myers-Rickard

The Health Ministry Committee offers a special class focusing on resources for caregivers.

Danielle Myers-Rickard, Program Coordinator for the Council on Aging Silicon Valley, will be our guest speaker.

She will give an overview on the Council on Aging and the resources they offer, with a focus on aspects of caregiving. Books on resources available in Santa Clara County will be provided to all attendees.

Jan. 16 & 23: Nelson Mandela and the Making of a New Nation

In this class, we will explore the remarkable story of how Nelson Mandela almost single-handedly created the new multi-racial country of South Africa and kept it from turning into a bloodbath.

On Sunday evening, Jan. 16, we will see the movie, *Invictus*. In preparation for the class, read *Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game That Made a Nation* by John Carlin.

There are no classes on Dec. 26 (Christmas), Jan. 2 (New Years), or Jan. 30 (Congregational Meeting).

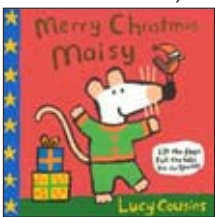
For more information about any of these classes, contact Pat Magee, Chair, Adult Education Sub-Committee.

NEW TITLES WITH A CHRISTMAS THEME: TOYS, CELEBRATIONS, ANGELS AMONG US

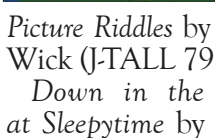
If you want a beautiful calendar for the new year, look in the Library's Calendar Exchange box! And if you have some to donate, just leave them there or on the book cart near the Social Hall. All extras will go to Sacred Heart where they're much appreciated.

- Sue Williams, Library Coordinator

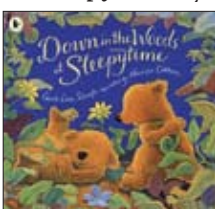
New for our younger members:



Merry Christmas Maisy by Lucy Cousins (1st Books Cou)



I Spy Christmas: A Book of Picture Riddles by Walter Wick (J-TALL 793 Wic)

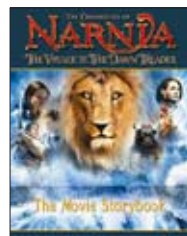
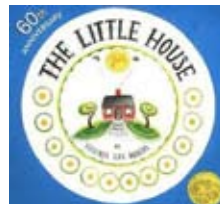


Down in the Woods at Sleepytime by Carole Schaefer (1st Books Sch)



The Ultimate Lego Book by The Lego Group (YA 745.5 Leg)

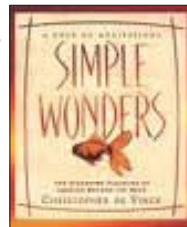
The Little House by Virginia Lee Burton (J Bur), given by Ruth & David McCreath



The Chronicles of Narnia—the Movie Storybook by C.S. Lewis (J-TALL Lew)

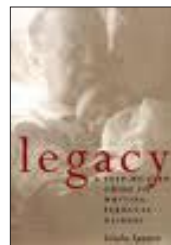
On the adult side:

Simple Wonders: The Disarming Pleasure of Looking Beyond the Seen by Christopher deVinck (242 deV)



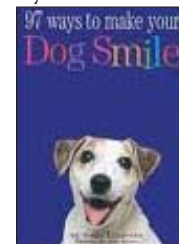
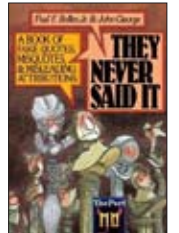
Westminster Abbey by Jarrold Colour Publications (726 Wes)

Legacy: A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing Personal History by Linda Spence (808 Spe)



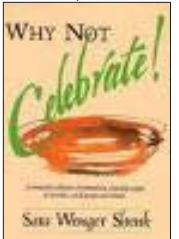
Old Willow Glen: A Photographic Sketchbook by Elizabeth Giarratana (728 Gia)

They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, & Misleading Attributions by Paul Boller & John George (808.8 Bol)



In our adult special sections: 97 Ways to Make a Dog Smile by Jenny Langbehn (ECOL 636 Lan)

Why Not Celebrate! Celebrations for families, small groups, retreats by Sara Wenger Shenk (Fam-R 249 She), given by Rebecca Kuiken



A Warm Moist Salty God: Women Journeying Towards Wisdom by Edwina Gateley (Women 248.8 Gat), given by Rebecca Kuiken

Angels Among Us ... By the Real Santa Claus by Phil Smart; foreword by Bill Gates II (Spec Needs 361 Sma)



And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night ...”

Luke 2:8, KJV

It is hoped that we do not get so bogged down in other preparations that we forget that this is Advent, leading up to our “abiding in the fields.”

Can you imagine Christmas without being able to give your loved ones

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

a gift? The clients at *Next Door Solutions to Domestic*

Violence can, so we are gathering new unwrapped items for their exchange shops, at which children can select an



item for their mother, and mothers can select items for their children. Gifts needed include toys for the little ones, personal grooming items for the teens, and clothing for everyone. Wrapping paper and tags are also welcome. Circles will gather items at their meetings, or you can take them to the church by

Dec. 5. Contact Claudia Hamm for more information.

The faithful group in charge of Fair Trade Sales announces that they must raise prices for coffee due to shortages caused by weather in the producing areas. Regular coffee will be \$6.50, coffee beans will be \$7, and decaf coffee will be \$7.50. They also announce a *coffee of the month*, which is *Breakfast Blend* in December. And a reminder – be sure to pick up your gift basket order.

Our coupon and S.H.A.R.E.S. card programs are thinking about holiday treats and baking, so naturally we turned to all those delicious Pillsbury mixes. All of your coupons are welcome even if you don’t bake! Last year Smith School received \$331 – maybe we can do even better this year.

Looking forward, put the *PWP Epiphany Tea* on your calendar for Jan. 9, from 2 to 4 pm, at Stone. This is getting to be a tradition for us – one we are happy to have.

And a final remembrance: Book Group I is greatly saddened to have lost Liz Shandera. She was an insightful and inspiring person who added so much to our discussions.

Dec. 5. Contact Claudia Hamm for more information.

PW Schedule for December:

Amethyst Circle, noon, Dec. 1, Church Library

Emerald Circle, 11:30 am, Dec. 2, Rhonda Lakatos’ home

PWCT, 9:30 am, Dec. 9, Social Hall

Fair Trade Sales & Christmas Basket Pickup, 10:30 am, Dec. 12, Social Hall

Sapphire Circle, 6:30 pm, Dec. 13, Jeanette Rapp’s home

Lunch Bunch, 11:30 am, Dec. 14, Taiwan Restaurant

Bible Study with the Rev. Marge Palmer, 9:30 am, Dec. 16, Church Library. This will be Lesson 5 of the Book of Revelation. The study is open to everyone interested: Have you read the entire book? This is an adventure!

Book Group II, 2:30 pm, Dec. 20, Rosaleen Zisch’s home, reading *Empress Orchid* by Anchee Min

Prayer Shawl Ministry – Please contact Janice Goertz.

The Focus Group and Book Group I will not meet in December.

- Catherine Amos

The Men’s Ministry of Stone Church includes a mission work team, a book group, and a flying group.

MEN’S MINISTRY

For more information about any of these activities, contact Parish Associate David McCreath.

Men’s Book Club to Pick Winter and Spring Reading

The Men’s Book Group will meet Dec. 13 at Bill Lakatos’ home to choose four books to read January through April of 2011.



Due to parking limitations at the Lakatos’ home, attendees should carpool or use light rail. Call Bill Lakatos for instructions.

- Bill Ribble

GOOD KING WENCESLAS: REDISCOVERING OUR COMPASSION

by Ken Henry

(continued from page 1)

Near the end of the opera, one of the kings declares, “A gift that is freely given, a gift from your heart, returns you to your father.”



It’s a bit complicated, and I hate to spoil the ending, but I think you can guess what he means. This seems to be the moral center of the musical: Discover the child in a manger, embrace him, offer him your gifts – your most precious gifts – and you will discover that God calls each of us to offer these same gifts to the poor and, by doing so, to discover our true selves.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus offers us the key to a meaningful Christmas. One evening, while sitting at table in

the house of a Pharisee, Jesus makes the following comment to his host, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed ...” (Luke 14:13-14a).

This Christmas season, Nancy Kromm and the choir invite you to enjoy *Good King Wenceslas* on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. May this presentation stir your compassion and may you find meaningful ways to share your many and abundant gifts with those in need.

Merry Christmas!

Rev. Dr. Ken Henry

“Ye who now will bless the poor
shall yourselves find blessing.”

HOW ARE WE DOING ON PLEDGING?

I keep getting asked, "How are we doing on pledging?" so I thought I'd give you all an update. I do appreciate your caring about this!

As of Nov. 29, pledges for 2011 totaled \$430,958. Thanks to all of you for your wonderful generosity! We're well on our way to meet (and hopefully surpass!) our goal of \$460,000.

But there are still 36 families who pledged in 2010 who haven't pledged yet this year.

If you haven't pledged yet for 2011, we've mailed you a pledge form and hope you will submit your pledge immediately.

The Budget Review Committee will be meeting in early December to make important budgetary decisions, and the more pledges we have in hand, the better we can plan for the coming year.

If you need another pledge form, contact Guy Lohman, or go to the Stewardship website:

www.stonechurch.org/Stewardship/index.php

Print the form, fill it out, sign it, print your name, and mail it or bring it in to the church office.

We also encourage you to sign up for automatic withdrawal from your checking account (that form is on the same website), to save you the hassle of writing checks and remembering your envelope.

This also saves Stone the cost of printing envelopes and depositing your checks.

Please note that if you've already signed up for automatic withdrawal, we would still like you to turn in a pledge form each year, to confirm your intention for the coming year.

Finally, please let Guy Lohman, Ken Henry, or Sally Magee know if you will be unable to honor your 2010 pledge, so we can plan accordingly.

Thanks again for your generosity to Stone Church!

- Guy Lohman, Chair,
Stewardship Committee

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2010 DUE BY DEC. 31 PLEDGE ENVELOPES AVAILABLE AFTER DEC. 17

Stone's financial staff has two important end-of-year reminders.

2010 Contributions MUST be in by Dec. 31, 2010

Contributions to Stone Church for 2010 are due on or before Dec. 31. In accordance with IRS regulations, 2010 contributions *must be made* during 2010 to be deductible on your 2010 tax return.

Please ensure that contributions toward your 2010 pledge are either received in the church office by, or postmarked no later than, Friday, Dec. 31, so your 2010 statement will show your exact contributions and will conform with tax law. Donations received after Dec. 31 will be recorded in 2011.

Pledge envelopes are available after Dec. 17

Pledge envelopes for 2011 will be available in the Social Hall after Dec. 17.

Those who pledge on a weekly basis will receive a 54-envelope box. Those who pledge on a monthly or quarterly basis will receive a smaller 14-envelope box.

Pledge envelopes are not provided for those making a one-time contribution or for those with direct withdrawal of funds from bank accounts.

If you have any questions, or want to receive envelope boxes, please contact Mary Breuleux, Church Treasurer, or Sally Magee, Financial Secretary.

SESSION: 10 NEW MEMBERS PLUS 8 BAPTISMS!

At its regular meeting on Nov. 16, the Session began with a lively gathering that filled the Fireside Room. Ten potential new members shared their experiences in the church and were then received by the Session into the life and membership of Stone. As though that were not exciting enough, Session then authorized the baptisms of eight children.

Ken Henry led a conversation about the future of youth ministry at Stone, which he says is rebuilding leadership following the resignation of Mary Alice Collins. He wants to form a *Parents-of-Teens Task Force* and set up a day-long retreat to discern new directions.

Guy Lohman, Stewardship Chair, gave an optimistic report of *Consecration Sunday* results to date. David Jaffer, Budget & Finance Chair, gave a *cautiously optimistic* financial report of where we are in the current 2010 budget.

A report on the new *First Night* service was positive. About 35 people attended, including high school students who liked the

service on the whole. There was praise for the Rev. Aimee Moiso's leadership.

Don Skipwith, Deacon Moderator, presented a proposed new congregational and community support network called *StoneCares*, which would replace the former Ripples program. It is intended to create a mechanism for people to make requests for help, and to supplement the work of the Deacons, with leadership provided by Deacons. Session gave Don approval to create the program.

Session approved a new job description for the Office and Facilities Manager. The Personnel and Administration Committee began advertising the position immediately.

Jonathan Miller, Christian Education Chair, reported that the use of the church nursery continues to be a sensitive issue. As there are legal requirements for cleanliness, and the church could be liable for infractions, the nursery cannot be used without authorization.

- Alice Thorn, Clerk of Session



On Saturday, Nov. 20, Stone's Handbell Choir played for the Presbytery's Worship and Communion Service at First Presbyterian Church in downtown San José.

They performed the prelude, which included: "Two Fanfares for Bells," by Michael R. Keller, and "Give Thanks," by Henry Smith, arranged by Kevin McChesney.

Participating ringers were: Deborah Crim, Sue Fitch (filling in from PCLG, for which we were grateful), Joy Cox, Doug Cox, Stan Searing, Kendall Searing, Mary Johnson, Katherine Webb Calhoun, Derk Johnson, and Jean Raby, Director.

- story and pictures courtesy of Dan Raby

SAVE THESE IMPORTANT 2011 DATES!

Jan. 13 - Feb. 24: "Wake Up with John and Ken Henry"

A continuation of the study of John, in the Church Library, on Thursdays, at 6:30 am.

Jan. 30: Deacons' Winter Event for Seniors

For more information, contact Nancy Weiss or Sue Evans.

March 18 - 20: Annual Women's Retreat at St. Francis

We are especially blessed this year that our weekend is being planned and led by Jane Odell. Her many gifts of leadership are renowned in our Presbytery. For more information, contact Rosaleen Zisch or Colleen Blackburn.



Jody Meacham caught these interesting perspectives of the Chrismon Tree in our Sanctuary.



STONERWORKS AND MEN'S MISSION TEAM HELP BLACKWOODS; BLANKET DRIVE IS BIG SUCCESS

StoneWorks continues to provide myriad opportunities for helping others in our own church, in the community, and throughout the world.

Men's Mission Team and StoneWorks Build Ramp for Blackwoods

Saturday, Nov. 13 was a glorious fall day filled with sunshine and the sound of power tools and hammers.



Members of the Men's Mission Team met at the Campbell home of Dhar and Carl Blackwood to build a wheelchair ramp for Carl and Dhar to more easily egress and access their home.

Carl, who is bed- and wheelchair-bound, will now find it easier to get to doctor appointments. He will no longer need the services of Bruce Raby and Ken Stutz to negotiate the doorways and stairs.

Dhar shares, "It is truly edifying and soul-satisfying to belong to such a vibrant congregation that so naturally ministers to the body and spirit."



The design was drawn by our own architect Steve Nelson, and the Men's Mission Team provided the materials, as well as the labor.

The workers, pictured at left with Carl, were (clockwise from left) Leland Wong, Jody Meacham, Maureen Ryan, and David McCreath. Mark McKee (pictured below left with Maureen and Leland) and Dhar were also part of the work crew. - Maureen Ryan

Blanket Drive is Big Success

Gail Chaid, Michelle Vasquez, and Sacred Heart Community Service would like to thank everyone who contributed to the recent Blanket Drive.

Gail and Michelle (pictured below) report that the blanket collection was very successful - they collected 40 blankets over two Sundays.

Since Sacred Heart continues to collect all season long, additional donations of new or clean, gently used blankets can be added to the *Donation Station* at the top of the stairs at Stone Church, or you



can go directly to the Sacred Heart *Donation Station*, located in the parking lot at the back of the building, any time from 8 am to 4 pm. You can drive your car right up to the station, and they will help you unload it. - Gail Chaid

Additional Sacred Heart Donations

In November, Sue Evans took 146 pounds of food, and Karen Scott took 13 bags of clothes, 7 bags of toiletries, 4 2010 calendars, 8 bags of paper bags, and 12 egg cartons, to Sacred Heart Community Service. StoneWorks sincerely appreciates your generosity.

WANT TO MEET OTHER STONE MEMBERS?

TRY "TABLES FOR 6, 7, 8"

Have you wanted to make a connection with another person at Stone, but haven't found a way to make it happen?

Tables for 6, 7, 8 is a new program brought to you by the Fellowship & Renewal Committee to provide just that opportunity.

Here's how it works: *Tables* will run from January through April 2011. You are invited to sign up for three or four months of meeting for a meal (dinner, lunch, brunch, picnic - whatever works for your group) so each team in the group has the opportunity to be the host. When you sign up, you will be asked to name someone you don't know well, but with whom you'd like to become better acquainted.

The sign-ups will be used to generate *Tables of 6, 7, or 8*. Then, each *Table* group will communicate to plan their unique journey. This is a great opportunity for singles, as well as couples - you don't need a partner to participate. Come one, come all!

For questions, contact June Tablak or Katherine Webb Calhoon.

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