

BRIDGING THE GAP

FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS CHURCH OF GOD
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Volume XI No. 1

January 2007

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Pastor's Thoughts

God Pours His Love on Us! The Cycle of Victorious Giving

Heaven hasn't downsized. God's resources aren't subject to budget cuts. So when you are on the expecting side of an investment, you can look for a lavish return. Jesus said, "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13). In other words, if earthly parents do their very best to meet the temporal needs of their children, how much more will your heavenly Father do in meeting your spiritual needs?

But His blessings don't end with meeting spiritual needs. He is concerned with meeting temporal needs as well. In fact, God has already lent us the raw material of life: time, health, family and friends, intelligence, skills, possessions, and so forth. We are to act responsibly in managing that loan. **This is called being a steward of His**

resources, stewardship. Jesus explained the concept of stewardship in the parable of the talents. He told the story of a landowner who went on a journey, entrusting his possessions to three servants that were left behind. To the first servant he gave five talents, to the second he gave two talents, and to the third he gave only one. It is intriguing to see how the servants used what had been entrusted to them. They reported to him after his return. The man with five talents invested his master's resources and returned with ten talents. The second returned with four. But the last hoarded his loan, digging a hole and burying it. All the servants shared an opportunity. But not all of them acted with responsibility.

God is a wise heavenly father. He doesn't give us material possessions for our detriment. He gives for our good. In return, He expects us to handle his material blessings with a sense of responsibility.

There's an interesting story about a man who was hiking a mountain range. Coming across an old-fashioned pump, he stopped for a drink. A tin cup was tied to the pump handle. The traveler noticed a note in the cup as he untied it. He quickly took the note from the cup and read, "It is save to drink from this well. I fixed the pump and put a new washer in it. The washer dries out and the pump needs to be primed. Under the large white rock west of the well is a bottle of water. There is enough water in it to prime the pump, but not enough if you take a drink first. Pour a little of the water into the pump to soak the leather washer. Then pour in the rest of the water and pump fast. You will soon get water. The note continued, "**Have Faith**" this well won't run dry. After you have pumped all the water you want, fill the bottle back

up and put it where you found it. Put this note back in the cup, and tie the cup to the handle. Another thirsty traveler will soon be along.

What a beautiful portrait of God's supply! This well won't run dry. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah voiced it when he wrote, "My people will be filled with my bounty." So the question is for all of us is HOW BIG IS YOUR MEASURING CUP? What size is the spiritual container you will use to dip into God's supply?

Enjoy the Journey,
Pastor Clayton

Sermon Outlines for January 2007 STEWARDSHIP MONTH

January 7

AM Service: Isn't It All Mine?
Pastor Clayton

PM Service: Fresh Service
Pastor Brian

January 14

AM Service: The Blessings We Don't Deserve
Pastor Clayton

PM Service: Are You Satisfied? Eph 3:16
Pastor Clayton

January 21

AM Service: How Am I Doing?
Pastor Clayton

PM Service: Men 4 Him Fish Fry 5:00 PM
Service at 6:00 PM
Pastor Clayton

January 28

Children's Sunday

AM Service: Lasting Returns!
Pastor Clayton

PM Service: Fresh Service
Pastor Brian

New Study for Wednesday Evenings

We will begin a new study from the Eagle Bible series called "Psalms that Sing". It is written by T. Franklin Miller and comes from the publication board of the Church of God. You don't want to miss this thirteen week study starting January 3, 2006 at 7:00 PM.

Jr./ Sr. High Youth Group

Our group would like to wish the entire congregation a Happy New Year and thank-you for your support during our Christmas Food Drive. December was a busy month in the life of the church so we did not get to have all of our regular Sunday evening meetings so Jim and I got creative and provided some alternatives. On Dec. 10th, the Youth Group had a "Christmas Outing" after the church Holiday Dinner that combined fun and games with community outreach. Bill Beltz allowed us the use of his 15 passenger van so we loaded everyone up and we went bowling! I believe Victoria Pope was the winner on one lane and Matt Cain was the winner on the other. (Thank-you Matt and Jennifer for coming along and providing more adult supervision.) I saw some very interesting bowling styles including Tyler actually palming the ball.

We next loaded back up and went to Build-A-Bear and B. Dalton Books in the mall. The kids were allowed to make 2 bears each and to buy 2 books each which the youth group will be donating during the Christmas season to various groups. I believe a good time was had by all. On

Dec. 22 a full day of activities was planned. As of my writing this, all the details are to be worked out but essentially each youth was being encouraged to bring a friend for another day of outreach and fun. We will be delivering the bears and books to the pediatric floor at Memorial Hospital for them to give to the kids who are in the hospital during Christmas. We are also going to Karen White's daycare to share books and bears with her children as well. Our group will also be going to the Fairview Heights Food Pantry to deliver the food that was collected and to learn more about their ministry.

Our afternoon plans are to have lunch together and to go see the movie "The Nativity" which is a new release this year telling the Christmas Story. Mine and Jim's goal was to help our young people get outside themselves more during this holiday season and do for others. We also wanted our youth to have a chance to share with a friend a day of Christian fellowship and learning about the true meaning of Christmas.

Next year we will continue our studies on learning the basic tenets of the Christian Faith and then begin exploring what other faith belief systems are about. Jim and I want our young people to be able to know that THEY KNOW that the only way to the Father is thru Jesus Christ, His son. Many of our young people already have friends who are Jewish, Jehovah's Witness, Muslim, Atheist, etc.; and they need to understand why those belief systems are false so that they can "lovingly" talk to their friends about being a Christian.

Continue to remember all of us in your prayers!

Jim and Candy Niemeyer, Youth Leaders

Amanda, Alexis, Ben,

Lei'ah F, Leah W., Tyler ,

Andrew, Cameron, Kierra,

Caitlyn, Ashlyn , Victoria , Austin

God doesn't call the qualified; He qualifies the called.

Youth Group Fundraisers

We want to thank the entire congregation for your support of our soda machine and our Sunday morning donut fundraising projects. The monies collected thru these projects help cover the registration costs of the Illinois State Youth Convention. This year's convention will be in Springfield April 27, 28,29th.

If you have problems with the soda machine, please see Jim or Candy Niemeyer so that we can correct any problem.

The Church that Faith Built

Bill Beltz, the director of the NICE foundation, joked that Pastor Guillermo Herrera (Pastor of the Church of God in Jinotepe) has taught him two Spanish phrases: "por fe" (by faith) and "nos vamos" (let's go). Those two phrases really tell the story of the Church of God in Jinotepe, Nicaragua. We had a dream to send national missionaries to Nicaragua to start a church. With Costa Rican help we help ran with the dream seeking funds for the project by promoting it in the United States. By faith Guillermo Herrera, his wife Juanita Blanco, and their children Leslie and Xochilt, left Costa Rica and moved to Jinotepe, Nicaragua, where they knew no one and had no contacts.

Through faith they evangelized in parks, on the streets, and door to door.

Through faith new believers came to Christ.

Through faith they started worship services in their home.

Through faith they gathered for early Morning Prayer seeking the blessing of the Lord.

Through faith a lot was purchased.

Through faith a pastoral house built.

Through faith this new church building, a sanctuary to accommodate 250, classrooms, bathrooms, kitchen and dining area, is now a reality.

Through faith the church prayed and believed and went out to serve the Lord.

On December 3, 2006, the beautiful new church building was packed with standing room only. The worship team led the enthusiastic congregation in joyful praise and worship as we thanked God for his generosity to the Church of

God in Jinotepe. The Nicaraguan, Costa Rican and United States flags stood at the side of the platform as a witness to the unity of Christians from the three nations in building the new church. Dancers with ribbons, flags and tambourines rejoiced in the Lord. Even the children sang specials and danced for joy. Pastor Guillermo preached a sermon on faith!

Many of you have responded in faith and love to help the church in Nicaragua. The NICE foundation has encouraged and supported this new ministry in a gracious and generous way. The North Webster Congregation came on board early in the project and made it possible for us to purchase the lot for the new church and pastoral house; they continue to be generous supporters. A host of individuals and churches gives monthly gifts to keep the ministry moving forward. You've made a great team, and we couldn't have come to this place without your faith, prayer, love, gifts and encouragement. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Truly ¡por fe nos vamos!

We arrived a few days before the dedication to help with finishing touches and details of the dedication service. We were awe struck as we walked through the new church. Cristian, Juanita's nephew, was finishing up a mural of the hands of Jesus releasing a dove flying over the mountains to a flowing river that seems to be the source of a fountain Guillermo had built. The new deep green tile was shimmering in the light and a stack of plastic chairs stood in the corner ready to be set out. A drum set was waiting for the worship team to practice. Black carpet needed to be carried into the church so it could be installed on the platform and down the center aisle. A cement parking lot that boasted two new basketball hoops sits in front of the church. There are plants and planters around the church for a natural touch in the midst of the cement and buildings. The downstairs was equally impressive with large classrooms, beautiful doors, bathrooms that include showers, a large kitchen and a dining area all with the same ceramic tile as the sanctuary. Ephesians 3:20 comes to mind – "immeasurably more than we ask or imagine!"

The day before the dedication of the church we attended two graduations. Juanita was awarded best student of the year (valedictorian). Juanita hopes to go on to the university to study psychology to be able to be a more effective counselor in their ministry. Leslie wants to take

an eight-month intensive English course, but the family doesn't have the funds. However, Leslie has learned well the faith lesson so he took his need to God in prayer. Sunday afternoon after the dedication service Leslie received a check to cover the full cost of the course – by faith!

There was still one more amazing faith lesson. The church in Jinotepe has stated a new work in Granada despite not been able to find a reasonable place to rent. They have been looking at a lot they thought would be a great place for the new church so by faith they were trusting God to bring it to pass. After church on Sunday the NICE foundation gave Guillermo and Juanita a check to purchase the lot – ¡nos vamos!

Bless you!

Kathi and Wayne Sellers

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New church



To see more pictures of the dedication and our ministry in Costa Rica go to <http://picasaweb.google.com/wkgozo>

JOY SS Class

We are continuing our study with the book "The Purpose Driven Life." Chapters under the section "You Were Planned for God's Pleasure" have been:

Planned for God's Pleasure
What Makes God Smile?
The Heart of Worship
Becoming Best Friends with God
Developing Your Friendship with God

Although most of us have already read this book once, we have learned much studying it together. The discussions have been rich and we've learned we have room for growth.

Our Christmas Party was the 15th held in the Fellowship Hall. We had a good turn out and a good time. Instead of exchange gifts this year we brought fabric, craft items and/or cash for sewing machines for Nicaragua. Bill and Shirley will be taking these items when they go to Nicaragua.

Another December project we did was fix a "Joy Basket" for Verla Logsdon who is a resident of Rosewood Nursing Home. We put 25 gifts in a basket - one to be opened each day in December through the 25th. Phyllis tells us she has enjoyed opening a gift each day. We remember how faithful Verla was in her Sunday School attendance and was Sunday School Secretary for 40 years. She still remembers a lot of your birth dates!

We are sad and happy....Jason West will be leaving soon for South Korea. We will miss him in class. He is a great asset to our class and our "Star reader." But, we know this is a wonderful teaching opportunity for him. Jason, God bless as you begin this new venture!

The New Year is almost here! Do you have any resolutions in mind? If you aren't a regular Sunday School attendee, 2007 would be a good

time to give it a try. The Joy Class will roll out the red carpet for you! We were glad to have Patty with us this past Sunday. We will continue our study in the Purpose Driven Life in the New Year. May we all live purposefully in 2007! God Bless!

Ruth Pope
Teacher

(Editor's note: We will miss Ruth as our teacher as she and Warren go to Florida for the rest of the winter.)

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEALS

Want a challenge for the New Year? Faith Weavers will begin the first Wednesday night in January. This is a wonderful children's program and we want to continue supporting it. If you have never prepared a meal for 30-40 people, perhaps you would like to give it a try! You will be blessed and those who eat your meal will be blessed! It doesn't have to be a five course meal - something simple and food that children and adults both like. We have almost every Wednesday night covered through February. If you would like to work with someone to learn more about preparing a meal, please let Brenda Caito, Gwen Campbell or Carmen Hamilton know. You are reimbursed for your food expenditures (save you receipts and give to Carmen).

The Wednesday meals are \$3.00 for adults; \$2.00 for kids 10 and under or \$10 maximum per family. The profit from the meals helps support the program. We start serving at 6 pm.

Thanks to all those who have prepared meals the past four months and all who will be preparing in the weeks ahead.

Ruth Pope

Men4Him

What a great time was had by all, Saturday, December 16, who were able to join us for breakfast and the sharing of the gifts for the Nursing Home residents at Rosewood Nursing Home. The WCG ladies and our men work well together. Thank you for your continued support. All the men who helped prepare the breakfast did

a fantastic job. We do appreciate each and everyone.

We are looking forward to providing a Fish Fry for the church following the morning worship service January 21st. We are grateful for the support from the congregation and wish to show our appreciation by serving you in this manner.

Plans are underway for exciting things in the near future. As we finalize the details we will give you more information.

Our desire for the New Year is that you will grow stronger in your relationship with Christ and enjoy the blessings you will be receiving to the fullest.

We are blessed!

Bill White

Get Acquainted With The Family!

Over the past several months we have had several new families to become a part of this congregation. Now, this is just to help you get to know them a little better.

Ken and Kathy Bowman have come to Scott AFB, where they live. I have already found out that Ken really likes "regular" coffee; none of that other stuff will do!

Jordan (age9) and Jayla (age6) Carpenter were invited by Mikalah and Morgan to Faith Weaver Friends. Now they have been coming to SS and church on Sunday.

Tyler Dascotte has been coming for several months now with Leah and the rest of the Willeford family. It really is a small world because pastor Clayton's Daddy worked for Tyler's Grandfather in herrin!

Scott and Jana Drake, along with their four children Jordyn (12, Kamryn (10), Jerred (4), and Keyrstyn (1) have come to us from 1st Church of God in Charleston. They have moved to Belleville and will be with us after the holidays.

Bud and Jan Evans live in a very unique home (three sides underground) and the front over looks a lake with a lot of fish in it. And Bud mops floors!!!

Kaitlyn Barnes has been coming for several months now. She started coming with the Floyd Family and has made many friends already.

Bill and Patty Lett live in Belleville. Patty works

at one of the area senior homes and is the activity director.

Patricia Lofland is also at Scott AFB. Her husband is currently servind in Iraq and she just returned one week before his leaving from Africa. Another note: Small world again because she worked with Dan Niemeyer while there. They have two small children Kaitlyn (4) and Patrick (2).

Frank and Diannee Mehelic drive from Granite City to attend church with us. Their daughter Megan is getting married in March and that is how they got acquainted with our church. They are already a part of our Marriage Class.

Clifton and Jodi Norton came to us from Germany. After many emails to Pastor, we were excited to meet them and greet them into our family. They have two small children Donna (3) and Audrey (7 months). They also live at Scott AFB.

Mary Trunnell has attended here for several months. The church was close to her home and very convenient. She lives in the new complex by the bowling alley.

Now we need to get to know each and everyone of these new families. God has truly blessed us and we welcome them into this part of His family!