

GENESIS

Serving Members and Friends of the
First United Methodist Church of Homosassa

Open Hearts—Open Minds—Open Doors
We are a Stephen Ministry Church



February 2011, Volume 15, Issue 1

What happens when you quit? Just stop, refuse to do anymore? You have done all you are going to do and that's it! Some people quit early. They finish their last day of school and they quit learning. Some develop a philosophy of life by the time they are 21 and they lock it in, they quit thinking about right and wrong, good and bad. There was a man who bought a radio, tuned it into the local gospel radio station and took the knobs off. He didn't need knobs, he had made up his mind what he was going to listen to and that was it. Some join a church and quit going to Sunday School. They know all that the Bible can teach and they don't need to come anymore. Some quit when they retire, just that, quit. Quit the job, quit being active, quit being involved. What happens when you quit? Someone once said that the only sign of life is growth. If you are not growing, if you are not out there trying to be better, stronger, more informed, then you are going backwards, you are not growing, you are not really living. The United Methodist Church believes that we are called to move on to perfection, to be a better person, a better Christian today than we were yesterday, to be more Christ like every day. To be able to do that you have to grow, you can't just quit.

Not quitting means opening our minds to new ideas and new visions, to seek learning and opportunities to be involved. The church offers just this in Sunday School. It gives you an opportunity to expand your mind and ministry. All you have to do is not quit.

The church can do anything it wants. It can reach out, it can share the good news of Jesus Christ, it can grow, it can bring new understanding and life, but only if we don't quit.

What happens when you quit? You rust out. You slowly fall into disrepair, the parts stop working and it all slows to a crawl. I don't know about you, but I would rather burn out, go out with a blaze of glory, with a book in one hand and a hammer in the other.

Don't quit on learning, don't quit on ministry. Use the talents and brains God gave you, and grow!



“Everyone Becoming A Disciple of Christ”

The purpose of an organization’s mission statement is to give it direction, focus, and motivation. It clearly states why an organization exists and what it intends to accomplish in the future. The mission statement of the First United Methodist Church of Homosassa was adopted on January 27, 2005. All of us need to memorize the mission statement and do all that we can to make it a reality in our lives.

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YOUTH COORDINATOR

Crystal Wiseman

SOUND TECHNICIAN

Sharon Cooley

NIGHT SECURITY

Michael Rodgers

CUSTODIAN

Dale Evans

The Purpose of Genesis Is To:

NOTIFY its readers of what has happened, what is happening and what is scheduled to happen.

EDIFY believers by printing material that encourages and strengthens their Christian walk.

GLORIFY God by being one of His instruments of communication at FUMCH and wherever else he may choose to spread the Word through this publication.

TRAVEL WITH FRIENDSFuture trips:**Historic Bok Tower and Gardens**

March 2011, Date to be announced

Walk through the beautiful gardens with azaleas and rhododendrons in bloom, along with many other spring flowers. Throughout the sanctuary the 60-bell carillon can be heard.

SHOW PALACE AND DINNER THEATRE IN HUDSON

April 2011, Date to be announced



Karen Kline

How healthy is your Heart?

February is traditionally designated Heart Month by the American Heart Association. Do you know that each year 500,000 Americans die of heart disease and that half of them are women? About fifty percent of these deaths occur in people who have had no previous symptoms of the disease. Risk for heart disease increases at age 45 for men and 55 for women

Dr Denton Cooley from the Texas heart Institute compares the heart to the engine of a car. Both the heart and are engine are responsible for keeping their bodies moving. Most people, are careful to use the right gas in their cars and to schedule regular check-ups and oil changes, but what about their heart maintance? Do they continue to eat high-fat, high-salt diets? Continue to smoke, or have little exercise? Over the past years there have been amazing advances in the treatment of heart disease, but none of it works unless people themselves take action.

The Texas heart Institute has a quiz on their website: www.texasheart.org: "How Healthy is your Heart?" To take the quiz go to "access you risks" It gives you a series of questions, then scores the test and zeros in on areas of concern with more information.

If you do not have computer access you can review the following risk factors. Keep in mind that each risk factor increases your chance of developing heart disease.

1. Do you smoke?
2. Do you have high blood pressure?
- 3 Do you have a family history of heart disease?
4. Do you have diabetes?
5. Are you overweight?
6. Do you have high cholesterol?
7. Do you get less than 30 minutes of exercise daily?

If you have asked yes to any of these questions or find you don't know the answers, it is time to discuss your risks with your doctor. Even if you already have heart disease it is a good idea to review your risks and see if there are ways to improve your health and protect your heart.

God's LOVE has
been poured
into our
HEARTS
through
the
HOLY SPIRIT
that has been
given to us.



Romans 5:5, NRSV



Within the Church

Greeters
 Ushers
 Music Ministries
 Attendance Tracking
 Biblical Travel Ministry
 Blood Bank
 Christian Education
 Communion Stewards
 Counters
 Disaster Relief Programs
 Flower Arranging Ministry
 Folding & Mailing
 Funeral Receptions
 Genesis Newsletter
 Library
 Lenten Soup Suppers
 Online Picture Directory
 Parish Nurse Ministry
 Prayer Ministry
 Singles Ministry
 Stewardship
 Audio-Video Ministry
 UMW Circles
 United Methodist Women
 Visitation Care Group
 Wednesday Night Dinners
 Youth Ministry

Outreach Ministries

Annual Seminar for Elder Needs
 Bus Ministry
 Disaster Relief & Response Team
 God's Clods (Clown Ministry)
 Health Related Workshops
 Hugs for Soldiers
 Knit for Kids Ministry
 Linda's Loaves
 Men's Monday Morning Work Group
 Men's Wed Morning Prayer Breakfast
 Missionaries to Haiti, Siberia, and Thailand
 Nursing Home Ministries

Parish Nurse
 Prayer Shawl Ministry
 Prison Ministry
 Shut-In Visitation
 Stephen Ministry
 Tuned To Revival Quartet
 Thrift Shop
 Volunteers in Missions
 Vacation Bible School
 Welcome Bags World
 State Travel Groups

Small Groups

Bereavement Group
 Cancer Survivor
 Contemporary Issues
 Individual Bible Study Groups
 Fibromyalgia Support Group
 PAWS
 Saturday Sisters
 Serendipity

Discipleship Classes

Companions in Christ
 Disciple I & IV

Benevolences

CROP Walk
 Equipment for Handicapped
 Food Pantry
 Habitat for Humanity
 Holiday Food Baskets
 Methodist Children's Home
 Salvation Army
 SHARE
 St. Andrew's Mission
 The Heifer Project
 The Path
 Toys for Children

Community Outreach

AA
 Al-Anon
 After school tutoring
 Camp-E-Nini-Hassee
 FCAT tutoring
 Hospice
 Isaiah's Place
 Kiwanis Breakfast
 Our Father's Table



Homosassa First United Methodist Church Donates to Lancaster CI

Homosassa First United Methodist Church representatives Jack Radabaugh and Joe Henry are pictured with the Chaplain Ronald Knowles as they delivered 1,000 Snickers candy bars to share with the inmates and staff of Lancaster Correctional Institution for Christmas.

Mr. Radabaugh and the First United Methodist Church started the tradition of providing annually for this form of Christmas joy about eleven years ago. The candy comes wrapped with a Christmas message from the church. Lancaster Correctional Institution once again wishes to say a big THANKS to all who give in the effort to create a joyous Christmas to those incarcerated at this time of year.

Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
Isaiah 60:3, NRSV



THE WAYS OF THE KINGDOM

“The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you. (Luke 17:20-21)

Before my husband and I built our house, that house was “within us.” We dreamed of the house, planned it in detail and acknowledged the work and money it would take to turn the house into brick and mortar. Within us the house existed long before it could be seen outwardly.

Jesus told Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world... But now my kingdom is from another place. (John 18:36) He told the Pharisees they could not see the kingdom no matter how carefully they looked, because the kingdom of God is “within.”

Jesus could “see” the kingdom because he had been born of the Spirit of God as well as of flesh. Jesus told Nicodemus, “...no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” Then he explained that no one can enter the kingdom unless he is born of water and the Spirit—a fleshly, human birth and a second birth from above by the Holy Spirit. (John 3:3-7)

Paul explains that the moment we invite the Spirit of Jesus to live in us, we become new creations, people who have

the kingdom of God within. Learning the ways of this new “within us” culture becomes important for now we are called to be kingdom ambassadors—representatives of the kingdom of God among people who can neither see nor understand the eternal life God offers unless we show them Jesus.

When on earth, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, went about preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” (Matthew 4:17) The kingdom came near because it lived within him. Wherever you or I go, if we have received the Spirit of Christ, we have the kingdom of God within us. So we become the “kingdom of heaven” come near—in the line at the grocery store, at the gas pump, in the doctor’s office.

What kind of kingdom ambassadors are we in the mundane pathways of our lives?

Father, make us aware of the kingdom within us and help us be your representatives wherever we go.



**OPERATION:
TASTE OF HOME**
Sunday, March 6th, 2011

A Soldier serving in Iraq wrote:

"Back at home, Girl Scout cookies are a once-a-year event that one might miss if they didn't go to Target on the right weekend, or if a co-worker wasn't helping a daughter sign people up for some boxes. Here though, in a world that has none of the comforts of home, your simple box becomes so much more than just cookies. They become a way for the battle-hardened and battle-weary Soldiers in my Company to not be completely disconnected with home."



A Love Letter

In the New Testament, John writes a letter about God's love and the love we should show to other people.

DIRECTIONS: Working from left to right, write down all the 1's in the word blanks. Continue with the 2's and finally the 3's. Then read about love, from 1 John 4:11-12, NIV.

lives 3	in 3	us 3	Since 1	and 3	God 1	so 1	loved 1	his 3
us 1	love 3	we 1	If 2	also 1	is 3	made 3	we 2	ought 1
to 1	love 2	love 1	one 1	complete 3	one 2	another 1	in 3	us 3
another 2	God 2							

1 John 4:11-12, NIV

Answers: Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

UMW NEWS

Everyone is cordially invited to attend
our next UMW Unit Meeting (with all five circles)!

Call to Prayer and Self-Denial

Saturday, March 19, 2011, at 10:00 a.m.

Program: "Give the Gift of Love" BRUNCH

Presented by Myrna Evans - Spiritual Growth Coordinator

Hosted by: Helping Hand Circle

A very special thank you to Helen Swett, former UMW
Conference Vice-President, who performed the installation
ceremony of our unit's 2011 UMW Officers.

Best wishes and God Bless you Helen!

Submitted by Kim Bennett
UMW Publicity Chairperson

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

FIND A ROOMMATE!!

GET A REGISTRATION FORM!!

The District Spiritual Life Retreat for Women

APRIL 1-3, 2011

Leesburg Life Enrichment Center

This year's theme: "Finding Peace"

Contact: Lori DeClue 352-364-2121

or ladeclue@yahoo.com

for further information

Through Serendipity, the Holy Spirit is doing wonderful things.

January, 2011

To: Church Council

From: Serendipity Men
Bible study & prayer group

Re: Annual Report

The Serendipity men's group nearly two years ago adopted a ministry for the homeless and low income persons. At that time we began a free will offering within our group. A short time later we also began holding a monthly pancake breakfast to raise funds. This completes our second full year.

During 2010 nearly \$7,000 was raised. Of this amount, \$5,476.25 comes from our pancake breakfasts. We estimate nearly 20% of that amount is from donations over and above the suggested \$4 per person for breakfast. Other income of \$1,459.33 comes from additional donations. About one-half is the generous offerings of Serendipity men each Tuesday and the balance from various groups and anonymous individuals.

On the expenditure side, pancake expenses were \$2,308.23. Expenses for low income and homeless were \$1,970.95 and \$860 was spent for other items. That included assisting with the purchase of the steam table (\$200), assisting two men with registration to the annual men's retreat (\$290), transfers to the Pastor's discretionary fund (\$150) and a donation to Nature Coast Ministries for blankets (\$200).

Currently, we have a balance of \$2,416.59 at year-end.

We are thankful for the opportunity to serve God and His people. And we are thankful to all who have supported us. May God bless you all.

Thank You!

The family of Amy Donnellan is grateful for all the cards and support through her illness and death.

Neil & Karen Kline, Amy Kline, Sarah & Adam Papp

Thanks to my church family for their prayers and cards during my illness and surgery. Thanks to the car group for cards, flowers, and Sunday program. Thanks to Pastor Mark for his many visits and encouraging words!

Betty Davis



The SHARE Program has been discontinued in its entirety. Please watch for new programs coming our way in the near future!

Thank you to everyone who helped make SHARE a success at our church.

Sincerely,
Jo Marie Goocher

PLEASE GIVE
“THE GIFT OF LIFE”

**BE SURE TO MARK YOUR
CALENDAR FOR THE
FOLLOWING DATES:**

Sunday, March 13, 2011
Sunday, May 8, 2011
Sunday, June 9, 2011
Sunday, July 3, 2011
Sunday, August 28, 2011
Sunday, October 23, 2011
December 18, 2011



**Remember that the blood donated stays
in Citrus County, and if you donate you
may draw from the blood bank. “There
are NO SUBSTITUTES for blood!”**



PIECES OF LOVE



Send special reminders of your love by creating messages that people can assemble and enjoy.

What you need:

- Large wooden craft sticks
- Tape
- Permanent markers
- Scissors
- Zippered sandwich baggies

What you do:

1. Make a rectangle out of seven craft sticks by placing them next to one another, long side against long side.
2. Tape the sticks together.
3. Turn the sticks over and draw a special picture or message. You can include this Bible verse: "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19, NIV).
4. Cut through the tape to separate each craft stick.
5. Put all the sticks in a baggie.
6. Give your special messages to family members, friends or teachers — along with directions for viewing them.



"We were on the way out the door before I remembered I needed something for the Valentine party at Sunday school."



FEBRUARY 2011 ANNIVERSARIES

13

1
Olive & Alex Stevens
~ 60 years ~

2
Sharon & James Haskell
~ 47 years ~

Ann & John Sandstrom
~ 46 years ~

8
Joyce & Don Foxwell
~ 55 years ~

14
Alice & Robert Yusko
~ 3 years ~

15
Eve & Thomas Walsh
~ 8 years ~

16
Diane & John Gibbs
~ 48 years ~

17
Loretta & Alan Burcaw
~ 21 years ~

Althea & Art Stuckey
~ 47 years ~

23
Dorothea & Waldo Shellenberg
~ 54 years ~

25
Janet & Jerry Tanner
~ 34 years ~

26
Rosalie & Wayne Haynes
~ 34 years ~

Ina & Joe Ryder
~ 11 years ~

27
Gail & Richard English
~ 42 years ~

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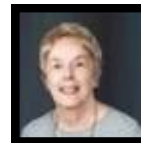
REMEMBERING



Armin Marvin
12/16/1933
to
12/9/2010



FAREWELL TO A DEAR FRIEND



Dorothy Jones
112 Lakeview Terrace Drive
Altoona, Florida 32702

We wish her the best in her
new home and church family!

Tuesday 1

9:00 WW Prep.
 10:00 Staff Meeting
 10:00 UMW Ex. Meeting
 1:30 Stephen Ministries
 3:00 Serendipity Bible
 3:00 Stephen Ministries
 5:30 Weight Watchers

Wednesday 2

7:00 Mens Prayer Group
 9:30 Weight Watchers
 10:00 Siegel Bible
 10:00 LaMountain Bible
 3:00 Benson Bible
 5:15 Music
 5:30 WW DINNER
 6:00 Bells
 6:30 Youth Group
 7:00 Choir

Thursday 3

9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
 2:00 Disciple I
 2:00 Green Team
 3:00 Quartet Rehearsal
 4:00 A/Video Rehearsal
 7:00 Creative Worship
 7:00 Disciple I
 8:00 AA
 8:00 Al-Anon

Friday 4

GENESIS DEADLINE
 9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
 9:30 Disciple IV
 10:00 Wise Bible

Saturday 5

8:00 Saturday Sisters
 8:00 Winter Work Shop
 8:30 Red Cross CPR
 9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
 10:30 Bereavement
 10:30 Gods Clods

Sunday 6

COMMUNION SUNDAY
 8:00 Traditional Worship
 9:30 EBADOC
 9:30 Traditional Worship
 10:45 Sunday School
 11:00 Traditional Worship

Monday 7

8:00 Work Crew
 8:30 Tracking Committee
 9:30 Visitation Comm.
 11:00 Exercise Class
 1:00 Diabetes Support
 6:00 Stephen Ministries
 6:30 Disciple IV

Tuesday 8

9:30 Faith Hope Circle
 9:30 Helping Hands C
 10:00 Staff Meeting
 1:00 Dorcas Circle
 2:00 Stewardship
 3:00 Serendipity Bible
 4:00 Kitchen Committee
 5:30 Weight Watchers
 7:00 Salty Circle

Wednesday 9

7:00 Mens Prayer Group
 9:30 Weight Watchers
 10:00 Siegel Bible
 10:00 LaMountain Bible
 1:00 Shawl Ministry
 2:00 100th Ann. Com.
 3:00 Benson Bible
 5:15 Music
 6:00 Bells
 6:30 Youth Group
 7:00 Choir

Thursday 10

9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
 9:00 Back Pack
 9:15 Ruth Circle
 2:00 Disciple I
 3:00 Quartet Rehearsal
 4:00 A/Video Rehearsal
 7:00 Disciple I
 8:00 AA
 8:00 Al-Anon

Friday 11

9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
 9:30 Disciple IV
 10:00 Wise Bible
 2:00 Cancer Support

Saturday 12

8:00 Serendipity P/cakes
 8:00 Saturday Sisters
 9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
 10:30 Bereavement

Sunday 13

DISCRETIONARY SUNDAY
 8:00 Traditional Worsh.
 9:30 EBADOC
 9:30 Traditional Worsh.
 10:45 Sunday School
 11:00 Traditional Worsh.

Monday 14

8:00 Work Crew
 8:30 Tracking Comm.
 9:30 Visitation Comm.
 11:00 Exercise Class
 1:00 Alzheimer Support
 6:30 Disciple IV



Tuesday 15

9:00 WW Prep.
10:00 Staff Meeting
1:30 Stephen Ministers
2:00 Finance Committee
3:00 Serendipidity Bible
3:00 Stephen Ministers
5:30 Weight Watchers

Wednesday 16

7:00 Mens Prayer Group
9:30 Weight Watchers
10:00 Siegel Bible
10:00 LaMountain Bible
3:00 Benson Bible
3:30 Staff/Parish Relation
5:15 Music
5:30 WW DINNER
6:00 Bells
6:30 Youth Group
7:00 Choir

Thursday 17

9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
9:00 Back Pack
9:00 FOLD MAIL
2:00 Disciple I
3:00 Missions Committee
3:00 Quartet Rehearsal
3:30 Trustees
4:00 A/Video Rehearsal
7:00 Creative Worship
7:00 Disciple I
8:00 AA
8:00 Al-Anon

Friday 18

Council Reports Due
9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
9:30 Disciple IV
10:00 Wise Bible

Saturday 19

8:00 Saturday Sisters
9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
10:30 Bereavement

Sunday 20

PANTRY SUNDAY
8:00 Traditional Worship
9:30 EBADOC
9:30 Traditional Worship
10:45 Sunday School
11:00 Traditional Worship

Monday 21

8:00 Work Crew
8:30 Tracking Comm.
9:30 Visitation Comm.
11:00 Exercise Class
1:00 Fibromyalgia Supp.
6:00 Isaiah Foundation
6:00 Stephen Ministries
6:30 Disciple IV

Tuesday 22

10:00 Staff Meeting
3:00 Serendipidity Bible
5:30 Weight Watchers

Wednesday 23

7:00 Mens Prayer Group
9:30 Weight Watchers
10:00 Siegel Bible
10:00 LaMountain Bible
1:00 Shawl Ministry
2:00 100th Ann. Com.
3:00 Benson Bible
5:15 Music
6:00 Bells
6:30 Youth Group
7:00 Choir

Thursday 24

9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
2:00 Disciple I
3:00 Quartet Rehearsal
4:00 A/Video Rehearsal
7:00 COUNCIL (music)
7:00 Disciple I
8:00 AA
8:00 Al-Anon

Friday 25

7:00 Our Father's Table
9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
9:30 Disciple IV
10:00 Wise Bible
1:00 Our Father's Table

Saturday 26

8:00 Saturday Sisters
9:00-Noon (Thrift Store)
10:30 Bereavement

Sunday 27

NEW MEMBER SUNDAY
8:00 Traditional Worsh.
9:30 EBADOC
9:30 Traditional
10:45 Sunday School
11:00 Traditional Worsh.
2:30 NCCB CONCERT

Monday 28

8:00 Work Crew
8:30 Tracking Comm.
9:30 Visitation Comm.
11:00 Exercise Class
1:00 Stroke Support
6:30 Disciple IV

"Somebody has said there are only two kinds of people in the world.

There are those who wake up in the morning and say, "Good morning, Lord," and there are those who wake up in the morning and say, "Good Lord, it's morning."

16 FEBRUARY 2011 BIRTHDAYS

2
Cyrynda Walker

3
John Hoadley
Karen Kline
Syble Little
Harold Marvin
Judy Powell
Gini Slusher

4
Phyllis Grotjahn

5
Neretta Brobst
Carolyn Roth
Arlene Stohrer

6
Nell Lent
Marjorie Ottman

7
Allen Stone

8
Hilda Theriault

9
Bill Barton
Dylan Patton
Wanda Wheeler

10
Eden Kimble
Pam Milat

11
Robert Bockholder
Bud Ludwig
Barbara Smith

13
Shirley Cromer

14
Pamela Patton
Hendrik Pouderoyn

15
David Brightman
Bill Jahn
Harold Slusher

16
Judy Lipovetz
Robert Little
Judy O'Gorman

17
William Britland
Marilyn McKown
Delmar Meewes
Bernice Wade

18
Alice Hurley

20
Candy McFarland
Patricia Urzen
Marilyn Watson

21
Joyce Foxwell
Neil Kline
Pat Layman
Jack Radabaugh

22
Jim Roth

23
Ann Morrison

24
Christine Annear

25
Richard Hartley
Donna Ludwig
Jack Ness

26
Marguerite McClain

28
Richard Evans.

Happy Birthday!

**IN OUR PRAYERS
(as of 1/??/2011)**

AVANTE
Annie Preston

BRENTWOOD
Evelyn Bash
Joyce Minnicks

CYPRESS COVE
George Cole

DIAMOND RIDGE
Betty Duncan

HUNT RESIDENCE
Bill Marquis

LIFE CARE
Alma Kadel

SUGARMILL MANOR
Shirley Hart
Grace Payne

SUNFLOWER SPRINGS
Ruth Eaton
Fran Graham
Joanna Miller

Abbye Jean & Bill Richner

WOODLAND TERRACE
Shirley Weber.

ANGELS

If only I had angels' wings,
I'd ride the rainbow's bend,
And there, beyond the universe,
I'd meet the Lord, my Friend.

Angels walk among us
In ways we do not know
To shelter us beneath their wings
And set our hearts aglow.

In daylight or in darkness,
I have no need to fear;
I know that I'm protected
By angels hovering near.

Have you ever met an angel?
You don't have to look too far,
You probably see one every day,
No matter where you are!

who is this God who is present in our lives?

Christians talk a lot about the *nearness* of God—we take comfort in the fact that “God is with us;” we talk about feeling God’s presence in our lives. But who exactly is this God who is “near” us? The understanding that God is present among us could be comforting or terrifying, depending on the nature of God and the purpose behind that closeness.

Today’s **Slice of Infinity** devotional talks about this mysterious “nearness,” and explains why God’s watchful presence is encouraging rather than frightening:

There are many who take comfort in the thought that God is among us, comforting our fears, quieting our cries of distress, standing near those who call, moving in lives and history that we might discover the God who is there. Knowing that Christ is with me in struggle and darkness is one of the only reasons I don’t completely surrender to my fears and stop moving forward....

But what good is it if there is a throne but it is empty, a kingdom without a king, a god who is close but like straw? Who is it who is near us? If god is an impersonal force, or a tyrant, or a distant, semi-interested being, the kingdom is no refuge.

The promise of God’s nearness is one that Christians rightfully utter as encouragement and cling to in joy, in fear, and in sorrow, knowing the face and character of the one who is near. When God promises his presence in Scripture it is more than just a promise of proximity and intimacy. There is a

purpose for God’s nearness, the pledge of relationship, the promise of community. It is not an empty or superficial presence, having taken on the things humanity itself to draw intimately near.

How do you discern, on a daily basis, God’s presence in your life? How would your life be different if God did not promise to walk beside us in such an intimate way?

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www.gospel.com*

17



Attention all Ladies! If you would be interested in the formation of a women’s small group Bible study, “The Serendipity Women,” please call Kim Bennett at 382-3941. This small group would be based on various topics of study using

The Serendipity bible (The same resource that “The Serendipity Men” use) as well as other sources of learning.

Our focus would be based not only on study, but putting what we learn to use, by reaching out to others with opportunities that God presents to us.

Dear praying friends,
As we move into a new year, we can't help but look back in amazement at what God did in 2010. Three missionary families joining our team...four new Thai ministry partners...a new ministry schedule for Elaine...new leadership responsibilities. We can't say it's been easy. In fact, as the curtain falls on 2010, the burdens sit heavy on our shoulders and the attacks from the enemy seem to be mounting. However, we are honored to belong to our Lord and to be serving Him in these exciting ways. As 2011 begins, we covet your prayers more than ever, friends. Your pleas to the Lord on our behalf are a tremendous blessing and encouragement to us. May the Lord bless you as you faithfully remember our family in prayer.
Praises

✝.....Earlier this week, we were able to **extend our education visas** through September 2011 one day before the deadline. Praise God that He led the immigration officer to just sit down and fill out the extensions without a question or comment. Suffice to say that is *highly* unusual in these circumstances. Please pray that we now would be able to smoothly work through the process of transferring our visas over to the new Pioneers International Foundation in the coming months as Joe must have a volunteer visa and work permit ASAP to serve as foundation director.

✝.....Elaine hosted an enjoyable Cool Shade of Life Church women's group **Christmas party**, which included two non-Christians (see "*Women's party*" photo). The good news is that our living room is getting

too small for the number of women coming each year! We also helped to host a Christmas party for PIONEERS members in *Chiang Mai* as well as a Christmas outreach party at CSLC. A busy Christmas season as always!

✝.....Speaking of Elaine, **she returned safely** on Dec. 12 from 3½ weeks in the U.S. visiting family and Brittany. While the jet lag was a struggle, she was able to get heavily involved again in all the aforementioned Christmas events. Thank you for your prayers for safe travels and a good visit.

✝.....Cool Shade of Life Church held its **fifth baptism ceremony** last month that included three members of Elaine's youth group (see "*Baptism*" photo, with the three teens in the front center next to Pastor *Ogaat* in the brown T-shirt). It was a real encouragement for Elaine to see these young people that she has been teaching make a public profession of their faith. CSLC has now totaled 17 baptisms in its four years of existence. Praise God!

✝.....This month's **cultural photo** is "*Big C*." One of the sillier times of the year in Thailand is the new year, when all the local retailers trip over themselves creating "gift sets" that are unique. Big C is a Thailand retailer that goes to town on this idea. Pictured is one of 48 sets (yes, 48) that Big C had available for sale via its Web site. While we're not exactly sure that Corn Flakes, Campbell's soup and a ceramic bunny are exotic, the price sure is: US\$37.63 for this set. But then again, nothing says "Happy New Year" like almonds and canned rambutan!
Prayers

✝️.....**Elaine's health** is again a major struggle for our family. She began having terrible pains on Christmas Day and found out during a long doctor visit two days later that she had a kidney infection. Then, two days after that, she was hospitalized as the pain in her back had not subsided. It turns out the kidney infection was unrelated and is now cleared up. However, the back pain persists and is complicated as the diagnoses have gone from diabetes to gallstones to severe inflammatory arthritis. She finally was discharged from the hospital today with some improvement in the pain. Please pray for this issue to be solved and cured. Even more importantly, please pray for Elaine's overall health to improve as the constant illnesses and painful episodes have become a real burden on us all.

✝️.....One of our bigger responsibilities of the year as PIONEERS leaders comes up this month as **we review Annual Ministry Plans** with Team Leaders and HOME Team members. There are nine TLs and three team members with whom we must review the annual plans. Please pray for wisdom, God's clear direction and stamina through this challenging and important process.

✝️.....The first family to come to Thailand under a **Pioneers International Foundation visa/work permit** arrives early this month, with another close behind in early February. Please pray for the process to go smoothly for these families as the first visas are always the most challenging because the government is more strict until they determine that the foundation is, indeed, a legitimate endeavor.

✝️.....Joe was able to accompany another PIONEERS couple to **visit our team partner, Pastor Moses**, in

Mae Ai a few days ago. (Joe just fitted the trip in the day after we got our visas and the day before Elaine was hospitalized.) Kenneth and Maxene Boland's church in Michigan will review a grant proposal that we submitted to assist Pastor Moses in getting his ministry center site paid off and the buildings renovated to begin work on the Bible school, second church and expanded orphanage. Please pray for those handling the grant process at the church to make wise decisions as they have received a number of worthy proposals to consider.

✝️.....Our teammates, Greg and Chris Small, are doing a great job **getting their ministry foot in the door**, so to speak, in a nearby neighborhood with the hope of doing CP work there soon. The trick is that they will be on home assignment from mid-May to mid-August and will return to a rental house that they will have to immediately leave because the house has been sold. As a result, they need clear direction from the Lord as to whether they should move into the targeted neighborhood before going back to Australia or afterwards. Please pray for the Lord to open doors in this situation as He sees fit.

Until all have heard,
Joe, Elaine, Brittany, Justin, Caleb & Jamie

(see pictures on next page)





News from the Wooster's

February 2011

Greetings Dear Friends from cold, windy and snowy Missouri !! (Sounds a lot like Siberia doesn't it ?!)

What a whirlwind month is has been! We arrived in December for Joshua's graduation, and Kevin's sister from Georgia. Unfortunately Laura's family wasn't able to make it because of the weather up north☹. All in all, it was a great time of food, games, family time, and more food.

January brought us a week of making calls to supporters and friends and preparations for our trip to Colorado then back-track to Missouri. (We thought we'd drive the extra 10 hours to see Corey again and see where he's stationed.) Our time in Missouri is for furthering education and some training related to the work in Russia. The training will help us to look at what we're presently doing and look at areas where we can improve the work. We'll have opportunities to share ideas with others who have the experience(s) of working in similar situations for 20+ years.

We are scheduled to be here until the middle of February, at which time we will drive back to Florida for a week conference at our home fellowship in Sarasota. Then the next journey will take us up the east coast ending in Massachusetts ... whew! Just a reminder, we are in the States until the end of May and look forward to seeing many of you during our time here.

Praises:

- Safe travel from Russia to the U.S.

- A vehicle has been provided for our time here in the States
- Family time over the holidays

Prayer Requests...

That we would be able to get certified as teachers of a foreign language (TESL) while here.

For our finances we are down over 30 percent from 3 years ago.

We would use our time wisely
Wisdom and always showing HIS love and joy!

Even though we are here in the U.S., *please* don't forget that the work in Russia continues. Our fellow workers continue to work with the fellowship and the community projects. We appreciate your prayers and faithfulness in partnering with the work.

Blessings and Joy!

Kevin & Laura



Who Are You?

Seriously, who you are? How do you define who you are? Is it by what you do or what your job is or was? Do you still have some label indelibly stamped upon you which comes to mind when you are asked that question no matter how hard you try to get rid of it? Or do you define yourself by who God says you are? If you don't, I hope this will be the year you will sit down with your Bible and let God show you who He says you are. Or get into a Bible study where you can ask some questions and someone will help you find those Scriptures where God tells you who you are in Christ. God wants you to know who He says you are if you believe in His Son as your Savior. You are a child of God, His beloved, fearfully and wonderfully made, and so much more. Ask Him, He wants you to know!

What New Spiritual Discipline Have You Tried?

I would really like to know! One of the mailboxes in the Administration Building hallway is labeled Spiritual Formation. I'd like to hear from you about what one(s) you've tried and how it went. With a little feedback I might know better how to plan some things this year; maybe some workshops, a class, an informal question and answer time... Is there a spiritual discipline you'd like to know more about?

Since I'm asking this question, I thought I'd include a list & description

of some of the lesser known spiritual disciplines:

SECRECY: Consciously refraining from having our good deeds and qualities generally known, which, in turn, rightly disciplines our longing for recognition.

MEDITATION: Prayerful rumination upon God, His Word, and His world.

FASTING: The voluntary abstention from an otherwise normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity. (We most often think of food. It could be an activity which seems to take too much of our time.) The purpose is always to turn our focus toward God.

CONFESSION: Sharing our deepest weaknesses and failures with God and trusted others, so that we may enter into God's grace and mercy and experience His ready forgiveness and healing.

GUIDANCE: Experiencing an interactive friendship with God that gives direction and purpose to daily life.

CELEBRATION: Utter delight and joy in ourselves, our life, and our world as a result of our faith and confidence in God's greatness, beauty, and goodness.

SILENCE: Closing off our souls from "sounds," whether noise, music, or words, so that we may better still the inner chatter and clatter of our noisy hearts and be increasingly attentive to God.

As part of a Second Year Covenant Project for the Two Year Academy for Spiritual Formation I have two more questions. You may come upon these questions elsewhere, but I want to be sure everyone in our congregation who receives Genesis has the opportunity to answer them so I am including the questions here. It will also give all of you the opportunity to think about the answers and return them by mail to the church or to that same mailbox I mentioned previously.

**Do you believe God answers prayer?
If so, what in your life has caused you to believe God answers prayer?**

This is just for us and nothing will be used for any purpose without your permission and it's fine to request that your name not be used. This is merely a way of building up one another's faith and sharing our stories, or perhaps just to cause us to think about the ways God has answered our prayers personally.

Marilyn Watson

"Christ has no body now, but yours. No hands, no feet on earth, but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ looks compassion into the world. Yours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which Christ blesses the world." - Teresa of Avila

*definitions taken from THE 'Renovare' Spiritual Formation Bible (Compiled by Richard J. Foster, Dallas Willard, Walter Brueggemann, Eugene H. Peterson). Used with permission.

STEPHEN MINISTRY MOMENT

Are you experiencing a 'Winter' in your life? Our Stephen Ministers Can Help!

The winter weather we've had recently can be symbolic of what can sometimes happen in a life. A crisis hits and we feel like we're buried beneath a drift of snow. Relationships can become 'icy,' or we can feel "frozen" by life circumstances.

Little difficulties build up like "slush," making us slip and slide, causing every decision to seem treacherous. Life seems dreary, and we begin to doubt if spring will every come. We can wonder, "Is God even there?"

Stephen Ministers are here to provide Christian care, giving you the emotional and spiritual support you need to make it through a "winter" in your life. Contact, Carol MacKenzie 382-8926, Karen Kline, 382-7263 or Kay Bast, 382-4908. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to walk beside you.

David is the author of most of the Psalms. The book of Psalms is full of praises to God. When we think of a Bible person who praised God, often it is David who comes to mind. But David, like any person, didn't always feel in the mood to praise God.

Not another giant!

David's hands shook as he wiped the sweat from his brow and replaced his helmet. The afternoon sun beat down on Israel's troops, engaged in another fierce battle with their enemies, the Philistines. These were no ordinary soldiers. One, a distant cousin of Goliath, carried a bronze spear with a tip that weighed 300 shekels (about 20 pounds). He bragged he'd kill David this time with his new sword. "Will these ugly, godless giants ever give up and go home?" David teased, trying to draw his first officer's attention away from his own weakened condition. "Please, Sir, let me escort you to the top of the hill where you can oversee the battle," begged his first officer. "You're much too tired to fight any more today." David grabbed the horn of his saddle and straightened his aching back. "I've faced a few giants in my day, and with God's help, I will kill one more!" His horse charged forward into the thick of the battle. His head throbbed as he tried to recall the faith he had as the young boy who challenged a giant with a simple slingshot. Suddenly, David was blinded by the glare of a silver blade. Thundering hooves raced faster and faster toward him. Clutching his shield, he prayed, "I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies" (2 Samuel 22:4). David's nephew, Abishai (a-BISH-eye), had been watching David's back all day. When Abishai saw the Philistine charge at David, Abishai quickly struck down the enemy and killed him. Even though David was very tired, his army won a great victory that day.

How did David respond? He sang a very long song of praise to God. You can read it in 2 Samuel 22.

You may not you may not always feel in the mood to praise God. David probably didn't always feel like praising either, but throughout his life, he had learned that prayers of praise can change any situation. When you're in a good mood, make a list of things to praise God for. Put this list where you can easily find it. Then someday when you find it hard to think of something to praise God for, get out your list. Praise God, and soon you'll find yourself in a great mood (and don't forget to thank Him for changing your mood).

Pat Verbal, founder of Ministry to Today's Child, is a children's pastor, speaker, and coauthor of *My Family's Prayer Calendar*. Excerpted from "David's Very Bad No Good Day," originally appearing in *PrayKids!®: Way to Go God!*. Used by permission of NavPress, www.navpress.com. All rights reserved.

PrayKids!® is a bi-monthly publication with the mission "to encourage a passion for Christ through prayer" in elementary-age kids.



How to Date Your Spouse
DR. GARY AND BARB ROSBERG
America's Family Coaches

If you're like many married couples, you've gotten caught up in the routine of jobs, parenting, church, and other commitments. And many of those couples are so busy they don't take time to nurture the foundation of their family - their marriage and their relationship with each other. But when that marriage foundation begins to crumble, everything else will come down with it. And that's why we want to coach you on *how* to nurture that relationship - and one of the great ways to do that is by dating your mate.

When you were single, dating was a time to get away alone, to talk, laugh, and have fun together. You took time to learn more about each other, about your past and your dreams for the future. But here's the deal: Now that you're married, you need to do the same thing! You need to get away alone and *continue* to talk, laugh, and have fun together! You need to learn *more* about each other! And that's why dating shouldn't stop with marriage.

Dating your mate will help the two of you begin to reconnect, rekindle the romance in your relationship, and pull your marriage out of the rut it's stuck in. But it's not just going to happen on its own. It's going to take time, effort, and planning. It means you're going to have to make your marriage and your spouse a priority. And that's why we want to help you get motivated to start dating your mate again, by coaching you on how to get the ball rolling.

First things first - your spouse needs to come to the top of your priority list - just a bubble behind Jesus. You need to give your spouse priority access to your time - instead of just the leftovers. Priority time for your spouse means occasional date nights and getaway weekends. These type of events need to be planned ahead of time, of course, because if you wait until the last minute, you may have trouble fitting them into your busy life. But priority time *also* means smaller time slots each day, such as having dinner together, taking a brief walk, spending time talking, playing a game, or watching a favorite program together.

If you and your spouse haven't really "dated" for awhile, and you're not sure where to start, just start simple. Think back to what the two of you enjoyed doing together *before* you got married. Think about what your spouse likes to do. Think of something new the two of you can try together. It doesn't have to be something elaborate! If you used to go for walks in the park together - try that! If your husband loves sports - go to a game with him! If your wife loves antiques - go antique shopping with her! If the two of you have never taken dance lessons - sign up and go together! The idea is to get the two of you some alone time together - time to reconnect as

husband and wife!

We realize that people are different and there are different lifestyles and different areas of the country. And we know people are at different stages - some have little children, some have difficult work schedules. People have different financial situations. The point of this article is to jump-start your thinking.

So, as you begin reconnecting and get back to dating your mate, here are some things you need to consider:

- *First, get the right perspective.* Recognize that you have to give you and your spouse some time. If you've been stuck in a rut for awhile, you have to realize that you didn't get there overnight and you won't resolve everything overnight. But you can begin today to work on reconnecting, rekindling the flame, and reuniting your hearts and souls.

- *Reconnect with God and be in prayer.* Seek God's help for wisdom and discernment as you consider how to go about this dating process. If there has been much pain and hurt in your marriage, you may need extra strength and courage to forgive or ask for forgiveness. If there has been distance, you need wisdom to know how to reconnect. Ask God to bless your endeavor.

- *Make a commitment.* You need to "do" the dates, but not just as a quick fix. Planning some dates and going out with your spouse is only the start. You need to maintain your marriage by constantly being aware of your spouse's love needs and striving to meet them on a daily basis in your everyday life.

Keep it up! Don't stop dating just because you went on a couple of dates and your spouse seems to be appeased. Or because you think you've done enough to get out of your rut. Or because you think you've run out of ideas. Be creative! Your dates don't have to be expensive or elaborate, they just need to *be*. You and your spouse need special times together. That's what dating is all about. It should never stop! So keep on dating!

So, *here's the drill* today. Ask your spouse on a date. It can be as simple or as fancy as you want. Take your spouse to dinner. Go for a walk. Whisk your mate away for an overnight getaway. The sky is the limit! You were probably pretty creative when the two of you were dating before you got married - so draw on that again! We can guarantee you one thing: The rewards will be well worth it!

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