

# The Connection

Volume 7, Issue 12, December 2009

## What's church leadership up to?

by Bret Larreau

I'm glad you asked! On the recommendation of Steve Hood and Lloyd Moritz (independently), the board and pastors have all read the book; *Winning on Purpose* by John Kaiser, which addresses the challenges of developing and maintaining healthy church leadership:

*Winning on Purpose offers leaders a way to organize congregations for success by creating structures that enable church life and health. As a comprehensive and powerful application of the Biblical call to mission, Winning on Purpose sets forth the Accountable Leadership strategy. This model of leadership brings together standards for mission, boundaries, and accountability, and then shows how these standards come to life through the performance of four key players: the board, the pastor, the staff, and the congregation.*

The Church of God "manual" on what to do when you have a change at the senior pastor position suggests a serious review of who we are as a church and what our needs are for a leader in this role. This is supported by many church leadership resources and authorities, including our District Pastor, Lloyd Moritz. This introspection has resulted in some pretty serious "Aha's!" with regard to how we have been functioning as a board and the structure required to optimally enable ministry leadership from pastors, staff and volunteer ministry team leaders. Consider the fundamental difference between governance and ministry to begin paralleling our thought processes.

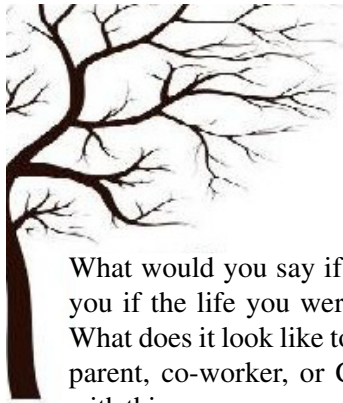
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## Third Annual Family Breakfast December 12, 2007 8:00 AM

*Breakfast and celebration courtesy of the Men's Ministry. The breakfast is free, but donations will be accepted.*

RSVP by calling the church office or circling B on your communication card with number attending.





## Family Life

by Pastor Brent

What would you say if someone were to ask you if the life you were leading is relevant? What does it look like to be a relevant spouse, parent, co-worker, or Christian? Let's start with this.

How do you define Relevant? The Merriam-Webster dictionary puts it this way: having significant and demonstrable bearing on the matter at hand. Wow...so what we're talking about here really is more than merely existing and aiming for adequacy. God longs for us to live life to the fullest, and there are two aspects to this. He hopes for us to experience that full life, but we also need to live that full life. There is a difference. We get something out of it...but we also are to put something into it.

I would argue that we all have an area or two in our daily routine in which we are truly being relevant. It's those areas that almost come natural...we're gifted there. Yet, many of us do have those relationships, responsibilities, or practices that beg for much more attention than we are giving them. These are things that may not necessarily suffer because what we are putting into them is adequate...barely enough.

The big question is really a challenge. Take a few minutes to ask yourself this question: "Is there an

area of my life that is just o.k. that I desperately need to make a relevant part of my daily Christian walk?" If its marriage, the question would be, "What can I change to be having a significant and demonstrable bearing on how I communicate love and acceptance toward my life mate?" If we can take this approach toward things that really matter in life we will cease getting by, and begin living the life of relevance that God has called us to be living.

'Adequate' makes you blend into society...  
'Relevant' is you leading it!



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*continued from page 1*

We have asked a few volunteers to join the board and pastors in the form of a “task team” in understanding how these principles must be applied to our body. The added input is necessary to really look from outside *our* perspective at the organizational relationship that exists at every intersection of ministry and leadership. We have at least five meetings, including two Saturday sessions scheduled before the Christmas break, to put together a plan to bring to you at the semi-annual business meeting in January.

According to our bylaws, the board will serve as the search committee for the senior pastor. We have finalized the ministry description and posted it the week of November 16<sup>th</sup> on the web and with the Church of God offices in Anderson. Also notifying Lloyd and the district office of our official “opening” of the position, he suggests considering a pastoral search coaching resource, Ministry Connect, to further clarify our goals and objectives in hiring the right person. Several PNA churches have used this resource with great results. The board is in the process of reviewing their services offered and will make a decision soon. Additionally, we have acquired the service of a volunteer to assist us in coordinating paperwork and the administration of receiving and organizing applications and associated materials once they start rolling in.

In the meantime, the subject of an interim senior pastor has been broached and is under serious consideration. In the absence of solid direction from the board on this subject, Brent, Dan and Ike have put together an interim plan to carry us through Easter. The board appreciates their continued diligence and perseverance in providing ministry leadership.

It is with deep sadness that we move forward in the process of finding replacements for Sharon Steele and Steve Hood on the board. On one hand, it doesn't seem right as they can not be “replaced.” However, we know that God's the one in charge and this is all part of His plan, so we do indeed move forward in obedience in the search for new elders.

Communication is critical! And we realize that there needs to be more of it. To that end, you'll find this article, the board and task team minutes posted outside the library, the special business meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and maybe some familiar venues for fellowship and communication popping up over the next few weeks. Also, the task team and board meetings are open and several folks have dropped in lately to just get a feel for what's going on. If you want to learn more about what's going on, buy or borrow *Winning on Purpose* and/or check out [www.ministryconnect.net](http://www.ministryconnect.net).

We appreciate your continued support and are humbled to be of service in His Name!



*Celebrating December*

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
|    | <i>Birthdays and Anniversaries</i>  |   |
| 1  | Quinn Anderson<br>Debbie Sands  | 14 Ernest LaFont<br>16 Richard Easton<br>17 Melvin Bowen<br>Carol McMillan<br>Jeffrey Spence    |
| 2  | Sharon Hale<br>Megan Hoppen<br>Zamora Wilson  | 18 Claire Clark<br>Garett Dumler<br>Joey Stephens   |
| 4  | Skylar Sams<br>Hailey Sams<br>Matthew Skifstad                                      | 19 Dora Gonzalez<br>20 Scarlett Figgins<br>22 Chelsie Ellingford<br>Davin Jones<br>Kevin Linn   |
| 5  | Kenneth McMillan  | 24 Bob Hoppen<br>Bill Thrasher  |
| 6  | Barry Culbertson<br>Ken Erb<br>Paul Henline   | 25 Cristy McNeil<br>26 Paul Davisson<br>27 Carrie Schultz                                       |
| 7  | Charlie Greiner<br>Ashley Kershaw<br>Evan Walker<br>Valerie Vicari<br>Olivia Watson | 28 Mark Farr<br>Don Groat<br>Jolene Quen  |
| 9  | Ruth Hicks<br>Sarah Jameson   | 29 Kevin Blair<br>Alex Jones<br>Vance Jones<br>Kathy Nelson<br>Cameron Spencer<br>Cyndi Walters |
| 10 | Nora Carrillo<br>Ryan Evans<br>Bryce Henline  | 31 Don Lemons   |
| 12 | Jean Bell<br>Vincent Cannone<br>Brandon Snider                                      |   |
| 13 | Michael Clark<br>Amber Stratton<br>Neosha Guse<br>Zelda Kelso<br>Andrew Miller      |   |



- 2 Jeff & Sandy Goodson  
14 Dan & Claudia Huntley  
23 Calvin & Cristy McNeil  
28 Gene & Jinny Daniels  
29 Michael & Laurie Klicker



*Women's Ministry*



**Christmas Remembered™**

Annual Women's Christmas Tea

Monday December 7, 2009  
6:30 pm

A beautiful candlelit night of fun, laughter and remembering Christmas past.

**The Well**

a place where....

Women Encounter the Love of the Lord

Will be back in January 2010!



## *Christ's Birthday Observance*

from the Church of God website

*“And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was.”*  
Matthew 2:9b NLT

One of the most familiar images of Christmas is that of the wise men following the star of Bethlehem and being led to the home of the baby Jesus. We see this scene represented in nativities, Christmas cards, stories and songs. These wise men or scholars recognized God in the bright eastern star and chose to follow it. They made a pilgrimage to find Jesus and worship him.

The Christ's Birthday Observance is a tool to help churches celebrate advent with prayer, devotion and celebration. The Observance helps us bring focus upon Christ during a season that is filled with commercialism and busyness.

This year as we enter the season of advent, let us pilgrimage together. Let us go on a journey where we remember the story of the Christ child. Let us join in fellowship and prayer with other pilgrims on the road. Most importantly, may we keep our eyes fixed upon the star, the very work of God, which leads us to a sacred, holy relationship with our Savior.

*We will observe Christ's Birthday Offering on December 20<sup>th</sup>. Meditation Journals for December are available in the lobby. They are free.*



## What's Happening at . . .



by Candy Whittaker

Thank you for all the canned food donations! We appreciate your help with The Ark canned food drive. Our goal was to gather 200 cans—we received 215. The Blue Mountain Action Council food bank will be the recipient of the canned goods.

For our community service project for the month of December, the Preschoolers will visit an assisted living home and sing Christmas songs to the residents. The Before and After School kids, as well as the Preschoolers, will make cards to bring to a nursing home.

We will be open most of the holidays. During the 2 weeks of Christmas break, we will have fun activities such as crazy hair day, backwards day, pajama day, etc. We will also have Chapel, which is a time when all the classes gather in the sanctuary for a devotional time, as well as a worship time. It's a way to make the time here at The Ark fun and the holidays meaningful.



## What is the Penny Plan?

by Joyce Paine

Your pennies and change, given the first Sunday of every month, help our church body sponsor six Children of Promise from developing countries around the world. The cost is \$25.00 a month to sponsor each child and that money provides each child food, basic health care, education, and Christian love. For Christmas we send each of them an additional \$10.00 for a Christmas gift. Please consider giving a little more this month to cover this small amount we give to bless them at Christmas time.

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This letter is from one of our Penny Plan Children, Maung Si Thu from Myanmar:

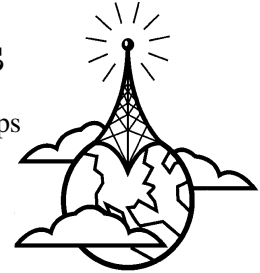
*Dear Sponsor,*

*I hope all of you are in good health under the grace of God. Thank you very much for supporting me with school materials, rice and clothes monthly. Now I am studying in grade seven. I have four family members. Please pray for my grandma. She has operated her eyes. We go to Sunday School every week and are glad to go there. How many family members do you have? Do you have any children my age in your family? God bless you.*

*Maung Si Thu  
Myanmar*

## Faith Promise News

by Vic Phillips



A number of years ago I visited a friend's photo shop in Los Angeles. I watched four photo techs take an hour and a half to photograph one item for a Christmas gift catalog. I expressed to the owner my amazement at the lengthy process for one item. He said, "Yeah, this is high class."

While many of us buy gifts that our relatives and friends can use, a lot of it is junk that will end up in a box in the garage or a yard sale.

Last year, someone I know gave money for the loom for Carmen in Guatemala. He told his relatives at Christmas that their gift was to help someone that really needed it. His nephew said, "That was the right thing to do." This year the nephew is doing something similar.

This year, instead of giving a lot of unwanted junk, why not give a gift to a needy family, something they really need? Or meet the need of a Christian missionary. Give your relatives and friends a card saying what you gave in their name.

As Pastor Mike used to say, "Just a thought."

### Newsletter Deadline

Articles are always welcome from any member of Blue Mountain Community Church. Submit it to [bmcc\\_newsletter@charter.net](mailto:bmcc_newsletter@charter.net). The deadline is the second Tuesday of each month at 9:00 AM. The editor reserves the right to edit for content and space.

## Behold the Child

by Jerry Ousley

I'll never forget seeing my children for the first time. Our first, Jeremy, was like looking at an awesome creation of God. Our second, Megan, was as if I were looking down on a tiny angel. I gazed upon these children with the longing of a father. These children would carry on the legacy of Deb and me. They were truly wondrous to behold.

Of course I think our children are the greatest, best-behaved, and prettiest in the world. That's my biased opinion and frankly I think every parent should feel the same about their own children.

When the shepherds, and later on, the Magi, visited the infant child Jesus, I'm certain that they had some of these same thoughts. But they had even more reason to be awed to be in the presence of this child. He was not just a beautiful baby lying in a manger, but He was the Messiah the King of kings, the Savior of the world! There was great reason to be impressed and to rejoice. It not only meant that salvation had come, but He would pay the price to finally, after all those centuries, restore man in his proper relationship with God the Father.

The word "behold" means not just to take a quick glance, but to gaze in amazement and to contemplate just what the meaning of what we are seeing is. This Christmas we need to behold the Child. Not just mention His name in a quick prayer at Christmas Dinner, or to simply read the story of the birth of Christ, but to gaze on Him in contemplation of what He means to us.

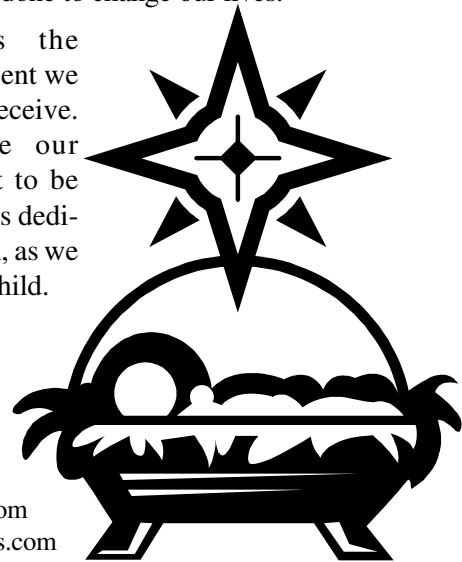
In this current economy, no matter how bleak things may seem, regardless the fact that most of us will have a lean Christmas because of the lack of money, we can still have the best Christmas we have ever had because we have taken time to behold the Child.

What are we beholding? Are we gazing on the gifts the pretty wrapped boxes under the tree? Are we beholding all the delectable food spread on the table? We may even be beholding the great debt that so many incur during this time of year. What are we beholding?

We must behold the Child! Yes, there is reason to celebrate because the Savior has come into the world, but we must set our priority right. We must realize what and who we are celebrating. When we do we will be forever changed. He alone can give us reason to rejoice when the world says we should be weeping. He only can make our hearts to be merry when all others say we should mourn. He has brought us life in the midst of death. Behold the child!

When the shepherds heard the good news of the infant child, Jesus, they dropped everything. A good shepherd would never leave his sheep. But this was special. They entrusted the flocks in the hands of God and immediately went to behold the Child. Today, this Christmas, let's realize that the most important aspect of our lives is to behold the Child. Let's gaze upon the Savior and what He has done to change our lives.

Jesus was the greatest present we could ever receive. Let's make our greatest gift to be our own lives dedicated to Him, as we behold the Child.



Story from  
faithwriters.com

## *Weekly Events*

### **Sunday**

Middle School Youth 7:00 PM

### **Tuesday**

Boy Scouts 7:00 PM

### **Wednesday**

Adult Bible Study 6:30 PM

High School Youth 7:00 PM

### **Thursday**

Taking Off Pounds Sensibly 5:30 PM

Worship Team Rehearsal 6:30 PM

### **Friday**

Celebrate Recovery Dinner 6:00 PM

Celebrate Recovery 7:00 PM

## *Monthly Events*

- 3 SAMS\* Christmas Party 6:00 M
- Celebrate Recovery Leaders 6:30 PM
- 7 Ladies Christmas Tea 6:30 PM
- 8 Quilter's Guild 6:30 PM
- 10 MOPS\* 9:00 AM
- Board of Elders Meeting 6:30 PM
- 12 Family Breakfast 8:00 AM
- 14 EOD Commission Meeting 6:30 PM
- Worship Commission Meeting 6:30 PM
- The Ark Commission Meeting 6:30 PM
- 16 Ark Christmas Program 4:00 PM
- 18 Building & Grounds Commission 6:45 PM
- Missions Commission Meeting 7:00 PM
- CE Commission Meeting 6:30 PM
- 24 Office Closes 12:00 PM**
- Christmas Eve Service 6:00 PM
- 25 Office Closed for Christmas**

*SAMS- Senior Adult Ministries*  
*MOPS- Mothers of Preschoolers*