



The Connection

Volume 9, Issue 1, January 2011

Imaginary Hugs

by Tina Houser

One of the delightful parts of being in children's ministry is simply interacting with the kids, each one incredibly different from the next. One day I was alone in the building, when a young mom came in with her three very young children. I welcomed each one and collected hugs as they came down the hall ... except for Jeff, the 4-year-old, who was wearing a moody, long face. He refused to hug me, explaining that he was ALL OUT.

Just a week or so before, a retired teacher gave me a beautiful oak treasure chest that she had used for years in her classroom. Her now deceased husband had lovingly carved it for her. I had not decided what to do with this chest exactly, and had set it outside my office until I found a place for it. Jeff finally came in my office and wanted to know what was in the box. I told him to go look. He came back to report that the box was empty. I responded with a questioning look and told him he had better check again. After the lid was carefully lifted back on its hinges, Jeff looked so far into the chest that his little feet were about all that was left in my sight. Once again he returned with the answer that the box was indeed empty.

This time I accompanied him to the chest. I told him that the treasure chest was where I kept my hugs and asked him if he would like some. Mischievous 4-year-old eyes lit up, because he definitely wanted some of my treasure chest hugs.

continued on page 5

A Place to Hide

by Nancy Jennings

There's a place to hide by Jesus' side
a safe haven of peace from peril and strife.
Hearts that are broken in a sea of sorrow
can find solace for their tomorrow because
Jesus knows and Jesus sees all our pain,
holds the key to keeping us sane.
Enter into his palace of peace
lay down your battles of woe
Allow Him to build a bridge of hope
to be the best friend you'll ever know.
Love unending will embrace your dreams
and guide your steps aright,
no FEAR can hold you down
in the middle of your night.
Jesus reigns in Justice and Truth
where wickedness cannot dwell,
He's holding man's reward of heaven or hell.
Allow Him freedom to anchor your soul
bring joy into tomorrow and make you whole.

Connecting to Life Stories

Page 2

Feliz Navidad from Guatemala!

by Kim Agrellas

It is hard to believe that this will be our sixth Christmas in Guatemala! What a blessing it is to know that we have dear friends and supporters back home who continue to remember us in prayer, who encourage us, and who are financial partners in ministry with us. Are you aware that we would not have been able to serve the last 5 years without all of you? Our work in Guatemala is a team effort, so as you read our newsletters please recognize that the relationships built, the help extended to those in need, and the love of Christ being shared is being accomplished by God, through YOU!



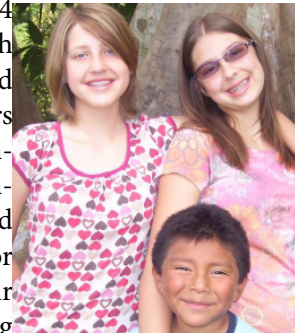
With that in mind, here are a few of YOUR accomplishments this past year:

Providing educational leadership and administration to the 230 students at the Christian Academy of Guatemala. Meeting the educational needs of missionary kids so their parents can focus fully on their ministries.

Providing safe shelter for 20 women and 25 children at El Refugio, our abuse shelter. Providing room and board, medical and dental, education for women and their children, discipleship, job skills training, and a hope for their future.

Organizing and leading teams and visitors who come to serve. At least 45 people came this past

year to work with us in a variety of ways at the school, at the shelter and in communities. Our summer team from College Place Presbyterian constructed homes for 4 families, three of which lost their homes and some family members in mudslides. They conducted VBS in two communities, brought and purchased supplies for 7 families who lost their homes and others living in temporary shelters, worked in community development, helped at an orphanage, paid for new roofs for families in a squatter's village following their collapse from a volcanic eruption, celebrated with church and community volunteers in that squatter's village, and purchased much needed items for the shelter.



Working with individual families to help them toward financial independence, to assist with medical needs, and to provide for the education of children.

Providing financial assistance to the Estrada family who are now raising 12 children, 5 of them being those orphaned after Tomasa's death. Traveling with the children to help them maintain ties with their extended family and village.

So, we write this letter to thank you for the lives YOU have changed, the love YOU have shared, and the hope YOU have given! And we thank God for you and your willingness to make a difference. You have given the gift of hope and love.

With love, appreciation and Christmas blessings,
Mark, Kim, Amanda, Megan and Zachary Agrellas

Prayer Partner Ministry

by Gordon Jennings

Prayer partners is an important ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus' great commission to the church is "Go ye into all the world," but to a small group of twelve He said, "Go to Jerusalem and wait and pray until you are endued with power from on high."

After the Holy Spirit had come thousands were converted and men from heathen nations cried out, "We do hear them speak the wonderful works of God."

Without a small group of people committed to seeking God's anointing upon our leaders and church we will fail, but we have the promise of victory and healing in God's Word if we will pray and seek His face.

"If my people which are called by my name will turn from their wicked ways and humble themselves and seek my face; I will hear from Heaven and heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord." Zechariah 4:6

Meet with us every Sunday morning as we take time to pray for the needs and the leading of God's spirit upon our body of believers.

Sunday Morning 8:30-9:00 AM

10 Power Principles on Church Strategy

compiled by Will Mancini*

#1 Programs don't attract people; people attract people. (Aubrey Malphurs)

#2 Think steps, not programs; strategy makes the next step simple, easy, and obvious. (Andy Stanley)

#3 Strategy is a missional map; therefore, communicate it visually. (Church Unique)

#4 As a whole, cluttered and complex churches are not alive. (Thom Ranier)

#5 Growing people grow people; consuming people consume programs. (Church Unique)

#6 Strategy as assimilation should not be confused with spiritual formation; one is about getting individuals into the body of Christ, the other is about getting the life of Christ into the individual.

#7 Strategy connects programs and events vertically with the mission and horizontally with one another. (adapted from Bill Donahue)

#8 The fewer specials you have, the more you sell. (An executive chef said this in an Auxano Vision Pathway, talking about church strategy.)

#9 Churches need strategy because mission and values alone are not enough to remove competing pictures of the church's future. (Church Unique)

#10 The two biggest reasons people don't get more involved are 1) they don't know how and 2) nobody invited them. (Auxano survey work)

**Will Mancini emerged from the trenches of local church leadership to found Auxano, a first-of-kind consulting ministry that focuses on vision clarity. As a "clarity evangelist," Will has served as vision architect for hundreds of churches across the country, including such notable pastors as Chuck Swindoll and Max Lucado. Will holds a Th.M. in Pastoral Leadership from Dallas Theological Seminary and has authored Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture and Create Movement; he also co-authored Building Leaders with Aubrey Malphurs.*

Connecting to Ministries



Everyone is invited! Meet Friday nights at 7:00 PM to share in support and encouragement to conquer your hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Dinner provided the fourth Friday each month at 6:00 PM for a small donation.

Senior Adult Ministries meets January 6th and 20th at 10:00 AM. Anyone 55 years or older is welcome to come and see what they're all about. Laughter is the best medicine. Come join in the fun and fellowship.

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All are invited
Saturday Morning, January 8
8:00 AM

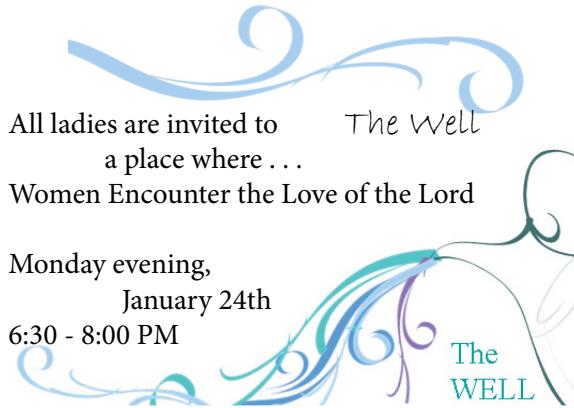


home groups
FIND A PLACE RIGHT WHERE YOU FIT AND START GROWING TODAY.

Grow close to others in relationships centered on our faith in Jesus. For more info on joining a home group, contact the church office at 529-1212.

All ladies are invited to *The Well*
a place where . . .
Women Encounter the Love of the Lord

Monday evening,
January 24th
6:30 - 8:00 PM



Better Moms Make A Better World

MOPS
Mothers of Preschoolers

Mothers of Preschoolers and MOMSNext meet January 13th and 27th from 9-11 AM in Baker Hall. They exist to encourage and equip mothers. Guests are always welcome! Contact Shannon Naftzger at 876-1302.



Connecting to the next Generation

Page 5

continued from page 1

I reached both hands down into the chest and pretended to scoop out hugs. (Then again, was I really pretending? After all, has anyone ever seen a hug before it's given?) I flung the invisible hugs toward the little boy, who immediately pretended to catch them and rub them all down the front of his shirt.

After several scoops I asked him if he needed one for his daddy and, of course, the answer was yes. I hefted the big hug from the wooden chest which, upon attempting to catch it, knocked Jeff off balance, stumbling backward and into the wall. What a vivid imagination! It was time for the little family to go, and this time when I asked Jeff for a hug, he said, "Sure!" and readily embraced me.

Every time he came in the building he had permission to open the chest and replenish his supply of hugs. I witnessed him doing that often over the next couple of months. One day, I met him at the chest; he was looking deep inside. I asked if I could toss out some hugs to him. That's when he looked up at me and said, "You do know that there's nothing in this chest, don't you?"

Jesus sent His disciples out into the world with the mission to enter the personal worlds of those they met. He wanted them to understand their life situations. To reach out to a child, to actually serve the littlest of children, sometimes that means entering their personal world--a world that understands the imaginary and embraces the places that only thoughts can go. When was the last time you laid down your inhibitions and shared a child's imagination?

The place was my office. The utensil God used was an empty oak chest. The result was two hearts restored to joy.

Youth News

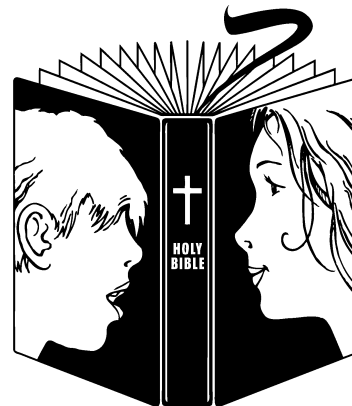
by Ken Paine

As we start the new year, we've fallen a little behind on finalizing plans for January. We're planning a middle school retreat towards the end of January or early February, and a high school retreat in mid-February. We also plan to have at least one event for middle schoolers and one for high schoolers in January, but haven't got those finalized yet.

Information will be forthcoming in the bulletin, on the web page, by email (if you want to be added to the youth email list, send an email to youth@bluemountainchurch.com), or check the facebook page (BMCC youth). Sorry, I don't do twitter.

In January we'll be starting a new set of lessons during middle school (Sunday evenings at 6:00pm) and high school (Thursday evenings at 7:00pm) youth groups. We're also starting a new set of memory verses to continue to 'Store God's word in our hearts'.

Please keep praying for the youth of this church, along with praying for our next senior pastor. God has great things planned for this church.



Connecting to One Another

Page 6

Celebrating January Birthdays and Anniversaries

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1 Marty Ybarra
Sierra Ybarra | | |
| 2 Reva Ewing | | 7 Dave and Cindy Houk |
| 3 Jeff Simmons
John Ermacoff | 18 Rick Maxwell
Chris Osborn | 9 Jack & Debbie Sands
Paul & Leanne Howard |
| 4 Doris Cook
Maegan Houk | Austin Walker | 24 Vincent & Kelle Cannone |
| 5 Michael Klicker | 19 Carrie Freiberg
Ed Hendricksen | |
| 7 Holly Carrera
Sara Huie
Angie Williams | Dave Houk
Elise Pettyjohn
Nancy Stewart | |
| 8 Carol Schirman | 21 Andrew McMillan | |
| 9 Gary Burns
Kariss Carrillo
Travis Haen
Rosalie Vogt | 23 Chelsea Steiner | |
| 10 Xander Freiberg
Dona Rahn
Allison Snider | 24 Jessica Groat | |
| 11 Ben Brink | 26 Morghan Carrera
Jerold Cook | |
| 12 Russ Kroum
Kendra Voeks | Betty Eyestone
Donna Hibner
Stephanie Sept | |
| 14 Dave Sept | 27 Jean Lamb
Steve Mize | |
| 15 Marie Hickman | 29 Brenda Hobbs | |
| 16 Christine Alexander
Ethan Guse
Shane Mings | 30 Anna Frazier
Bill Parker | |
| 17 Louise Doyle
Rick Guse
Frances Winters | 31 Randy Knudson
Myron Rogers | |

January

At a Glance

- 5 Building and Grounds 6:45 PM
- 6 SAMS 10:00 AM
Celebrate Recovery Leaders 6:30 PM
- 8 Men's Breakfast 8:00 AM
- 10 EOD Commission Meeting 6:30 PM
Worship Commission Meeting 6:30 PM
Ark Commission 6:30 PM
- 11 Quilter's Guild 6:00 PM
- 13 MOPS 9:00 AM
- 17 CE Commission Meeting 6:30 PM
Board of Elders Meeting 6:30 PM
- 18 Missions Commission 6:30 PM
- 20 SAMS 10:00 AM
- 23 Semi- Annual Business Meeting AFTER SERVICE
- 24 The WELL 6:30 PM



Dear Friends and Faithful Supporters,
We thank God for the incredible blessings he has poured out upon us. The past two months have been an amazing journey of faith and faithfulness. The Lord has been leading us all the way through this process. As you know, we stepped out in faith to add an on-field experience in Haiti to this semester. As of today, we have been blessed with almost half of the funds we need. It has been a growing experience for us all to see how God has provided. As we pack our luggage this week we are faced with new challenges of cholera and a looming tropical storm. Please pray for us as ten students and four staff members fly to Haiti. We will be there for one week, gaining as much understanding and real missionary perspectives as we can in the time given there. It will be a simple extension of the lessons the students have been learning along the way this semester.

When we grow weary we are reminded of the blessings God has poured out upon us. Our new team has been working together in harmony and meeting regularly to communicate. I have been blessed to see how we have been encouraging lifting one another up. Our students have challenged themselves to live out what they preach and love to

the needy, bridge over to other cultures and reach out to the unwanted. This has been accomplished through field trips, lectures and conviction of the Holy Spirit. Their gardens are growing, we are eating produce from the labor of our hands, student projects are coming together and the students are getting excited about serving the least of these. As a teacher and director, nothing makes me happier or prouder than to watch the light bulbs come on in the faces of our students and then watch them as they apply it. This is one thing I will cherish after the trip to Haiti.

Once again, all of the above could not be accomplished without you, your love, prayers and support. These young lives are being challenged and molded by the spirit of God in ways we could have never programmed or ordered. The staff here is simply amazed at how God guides the steps and arranges things we could never have imagined. Everyone here wants to thank you for being part of our foundation and support base. May God richly give back as you have so freely given to this program and to the world. Thank you for helping us all;

Equip God's People
Embrace the Lost and
Empower the Poor.

Blessings and Peace,
Philip Murphy

Quick Connect



Semi- Annual Business Meeting

January 23rd

After Service

Come for updates on our finances,
pastor search and more!

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