



Now That's Going Too Far!

One of the great benefits of travel is the opportunity to visit other churches. On a visit to a city which shall go unnamed (can you spell G-r-a-n-d O-l-e O-p-r-y?) I visited a church that has launched a fund drive for a new building. Being the nosey sort I picked up some of the literature. This church is headed for trouble. A few examples on their "strategies for creative giving":

- Postpone a major purchase. Put off remodeling a bathroom. Get by without that wide screen TV for another 3 years. Could the car last another 3 years?
- Go on a "luxury" fast. Consider going without your favorite luxury and instead give that amount to the building fund. Going without a cup of coffee at Starbucks three times a week comes to \$1,560 at the end of three years!
- Stop paying for things you don't use. Are you paying for a land line when you actually live on your cell phone? Do you really need high speed internet access? Do you rent storage rather than go to the bother of actually getting rid of stuff?
- By the time you order lunch and pay the tip you've probably dropped \$10. If you brown-bagged once a week and gave that \$10 extra weekly, it would come to \$1,560 for three years.
- Could you contribute any raise you receive in 2005 to the building project? Say you received a raise of \$100 a month. If you gave that much extra monthly you'd have given \$3,600 at the end of three years!
- Do you have stuff around the house you could sell? What if you sold something on E-bay? Or decided to sell the antique pie chest you found in your parents' attic? The extra auto? The coin or stamp collection?
- How about mowing your own lawn? If you spend \$25 a week for 20 weeks, that comes to \$1,500 for three years!

This church is in trouble. It's actually asking its members to sacrifice, to cut into their lifestyles, to look at their spending habits, in order to contribute to a facility that will be used 24/7 for ministry and outreach, nursery facilities, youth facilities, and will have room for them to grow, to teach their children, to carry out ministries. Imagine expecting people to dig down and sacrifice! G. Crowe

Formation and Transformation

There are vast differences between formation and transformation. Formation, everyone knows, is like taking a vase and painting it or smoothing out the rough edges. But when you are finished, it is still a vase. Transformation, on the other hand, is when you take a formless piece of clay and turn it into a vase. It becomes something completely different than what it is was originally.

Ask yourself a question. Do both of these concepts exist currently in your life? In this church community? Do we focus both on 1) formation, the growth of existing Christians and 2) transformation, getting non-Christians (the lump of clay) in touch with the potter (God)? Our time is well-spent in both areas, but to spend time in only one area would be disastrous! We can help form individuals with the help of God, but not those who have not yet experienced *transformation*. We can put individuals in contact with God so that a transformation takes place, but to abandon that individual and not focus on *formation* would also be tragedy. May we all work together to make this community a church that forms and transforms the lives of those around us. ~Dan

\$\$ Two Steps Toward \$\$ God-Honoring Finances

In the next few weeks, two special events will take place at Elmwood to help all of us take a look at the way we use the financial resources God has given us. This is an important topic. You may not have realized these facts:

- Financial stress is the #1 reported cause of divorce.
- Debt is the #1 deterrent to Biblical giving.
- An average of 14% of the average family's income is currently consumed by credit card debt.
- 50% of all credit card holders struggle to make their minimum monthly payment.
- Last year 40% of Americans spent more than they earned.



Because of this, the elders have requested that we devote significant time this spring to examine this crucial topic. First, a two-sermon series will be preached on the topic beginning April 3. In preparation for these sermons, small books will be given to every family in the church. In this booklet, titled *Escape the Debt Trap: Let the Lord Lead you Out*, are five chapters. We are asking that every member of the family read the first two chapters before coming to worship on April 3, and the last three chapters before April 10. The books will be distributed this Sunday, March 27. (Extra copies will be available for guests who may wish to join the study.)

Second, beginning on Tuesday night, **April 19**, a special six-week course, *Good Sense*, will be taught by Brent Branstetter and Janet Boston. This course will look at Biblical financial principles that will, literally, transform your finances and your life. Details on this course will be explained on April 3 and 10, and opportunities to register will be given on those Sundays.

Focus on the Family Programs

Upcoming *Focus on the Family* programs are heard on local radio, WHPL-FM 89.9 at 6:30 PM Monday-Friday.

- Mar. 25* *Do Jews Need Jesus?*—David Brickner and Lon Solomon discuss the need for Christians to reach out to Jewish people.
- March 28* *Helpful Advice for Young Families*—Our panel offers helpful advice to parents of young children on a variety of topics.
- March 29* *Life Principles of Dr. James Dobson*—Focus on the Family staff member Paul Batura offers a behind-the-scenes look at the life and leadership principles of Dr. James Dobson.
- Mar. 31, Apr. 1* *Spiritual Warfare: The Story of Stephan Morin*—Margy Mayfield recounts being abducted by a wanted felon and leading him to Christ. (Parts 1 & 2)
- April 4* *Learning to Embrace Brokenness*—Lon Solomon talks about why Christians need to be broken in order for God to use them greatly.



Congratulations, Gene & Nancy



Though their anniversary isn't until **April 17**, **Gene and Nancy High** will celebrate their **50th** anniversary next week by taking their entire family (sons and grandsons) on a cruise! They leave Florida on Sunday for Grand Cayman Island and Jamaica. Congratulations Gene and Nancy!

Attention Parents:

Since this Sunday, **March 27**, is the 4th Sunday of the month, there will be **no Children's Church** for grades 1-5.

—Joe Ruhl

LUM Meal Providers

Serving dinner at Lafayette Urban Ministry next Monday night will be: **Marilyn Walters, Sherry Risley, Bill & Sue Adams, and Harold & Judy Riddle.**

March 20, 2005

Class: 193 Worship: 293

Contribution: \$6,925

Budget: \$8,100

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THE GOOD FIGHT...

Midwest Leadership Training for Christ Convention

March 25-27, 2005

Marriott East, Indianapolis, Indiana

It is hard to believe, but the big weekend is here. I pray that all of you are planning to make the short drive (about 1 hour) over to Indy to support all of our young people as they showcase their God-given talents, gifts and abilities. Registration opens at 3:00 pm on Friday and there is a very important meeting at 8:00 pm. We have students in events beginning at 6:00 with Puppets (Seth Ratcliff, Levi Ratcliff, Michael Merriman, Nelson Tilley, Taylor Gamble, Andrew Simmerman, Josh Stafford, Evan Ratcliff, Noah Merriman, Tyler Lee, Patrick Ruhl, Peter Bell, and Ben Stafford). The next event will be Live Modern Drama at 8:45 (Noah Merriman, Tyler Lee, and Josh Stafford). Friday's activities will come to a close with a devotional for all 7th - 12th graders at 10:00 with Express from Ohio Valley College and Autumn from Rochester College. Saturday's events begin bright and early with Bible Bowl at 8:00 am (Josh Stafford, Noah Merriman, Mark Moore, Ben Stafford, and Dylan Shields). Next is Small Group Singing at 1:45 pm (Andrew Simmerman, Patrick Ruhl, Josh Stafford, and Ben Stafford). Our final Elmwood event is Large Group Singing at 5:00 pm (Chris Crable, Philip Devine, Jesse Jones, Tyler Lee, Michael Merriman, Noah Merriman, Mark Moore, Seth Ratcliff, Natasha Risley, Patrick Ruhl, Andrew Simmerman, Erin Simmerman, Ben Stafford, Josh Stafford, Rachel Stafford, Kelsey Sutherland, and Nelson Tilley).

Please remember that everyone is welcome to attend the convention at no charge as an observer. If you have not already registered, you may do so at LTC Central at the hotel when you get there. Also, please remember that display events: Christian Art, Bulletin Boards, and Scrap Books can be viewed during the convention except when they are being judged on Saturday morning. There will also be displays for Pre-Convention events like Service Challenge, Leadership Challenge, Christian Writing and Christian Websites. We hope to see you all there!

No Time to Rest!

We still have more stuff coming! First is Celebration at Rochester College April 1&2 - if you would like to go, let Sharon or me know now. Next is the Area-Wide Retreat (April 15-17) at Bedford...\$60 and registration info is due by April 4. Finally the 48 Hours of Passion Retreat in Cincinnati is April 29-May 1. See me if you are interested.

- Lee



Naomi Hunt had surgery on Tuesday to rebuild her broken ankle/leg....**Joe White** began daily radiation treatments last Wednesday. He hopes also to begin a new cancer medication this week....**Rose Hunt** will have an evaluation on Wednesday of a malfunctioning neuro-stimulator....**Elaine Borie's** father, **Burnell Gulden**, began chemotherapy for lymphoma. Plans are to move him to Rosewalk Village on Tuesday afternoon....**Margaret Gustafson's** sister, **Geneva Hamilton**, was transferred to a nursing care facility at Kokomo....**Terry Pepper**, Pauletta Smith's cousin and Paul Verett's nephew in Texas, continues treatment for cancer of the brain.... Remember to pray for **Elizabeth Tinkle, Bob Stafford, Minnie Scott, Eunice Whitesell, Ken Nicholson, Sr., Mark Eddy, Ramona Farris, Irene Fox, Delpha Allen, and Bernice Todd**.

Expecting babies in the near future: the **Sipe, DeWoody, Hombs and Studebaker** families.

Serving in the military: **Josh Hunt**, now home on leave, will return to Iraq next week; **Loren Sniffen** is in Afghanistan.

New Wednesday Night Class for mothers with young children

Becky Pitt is teaching a new class on Wednesday night, at 7:00, for mothers of young children. They are using the book, *Mom, and Loving It*, by Laurie Hilliard & Sharon Autry. She invites mothers to come and sit in on the class as they hope to encourage one another in this "exciting" and yet sometimes "trying" time of their lives. Questions? Call Becky at 471-9155.



March 23, 7 PM....Bible Classes for all; LTC training
March 25-27....Leadership Training for Christ

in Indianapolis

March 27....LIFE Groups meet

May 20-21....Promise Keepers in Ft. Wayne

Oct. 21-22....Men's Retreat at Camp Tecumseh

Read:

Deuteronomy 11-27;
Luke 8-10; Psalms 70-76;
Proverbs 12:4-17

2005 Spiritual Adventure

Week 14: April 4-10

Never Forget

From: Deuteronomy 11:18-21

Ever leave the house and have this nagging feeling that you forgot something? Chances are you did. Remembering isn't always easy. In fact, storing memories is quite a complicated process for our brains. First, a protein called Creb enters the nucleus of brain cells and switches on certain genes. The proteins these genes produce then "hardwire" the memory into the brain. This happens because the structural proteins change and strengthen synapses in the brain and move neurons in and out of contact to one another.

Confused? Me too. I don't really understand it but I can appreciate how complicated it is because I forget a lot of things. I forgot to write this article on time. Just last week I took my laptop on a trip with me but forgot the power cord. And although I know I've forgotten lots and lots of things over the years...I can't remember what they are!

I don't like forgetting. And neither does God. In Deuteronomy 11:18-21 the Israelites are admonished to do anything they have to do in order to remember the laws and commands that God has given them. In fact it is vital to their survival as God declares that they will be blessed by remembering (and obeying) and cursed by forgetting (and disobeying). In some ways the same principle affects us today. While God's commands aren't designed to completely protect us from troubles, they definitely help. And in the end we will certainly receive the ultimate blessing for remembering. So do what you have to do to remember (and obey) God's commands. Those are memories you can't LIVE without.

-Cody Sipe

 Weekly Schedule	 Elders	 World Missions
Sunday Worship 8:00 a.m. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Life Groups 6:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 p.m.	Bill Bell 463-1139 Joe Matthews 474-8369 Rick Swensen 463-6822 Don Vice 471-8653	Kevin Chambers World Christian Broadcasting Anchor Point, Alaska 99556 Loren and Penny Hollingsworth Phuket, Thailand 83000
	 Staff	
Elmwood Nursery School & Pre-K Preschool: Tues-Thurs 9-11:30 am Pre-K: Mon-Thurs 9-11:30 am Director, Susan McClain 447-2874	Ministers Gayle Crowe 447-6940 Lee Porter 463-6993 Dan Cooke 743-0954 Office Manager Sherry Marks 447-2874	City of Children Ensenada, Mexico Bren and Cheryl White P.O. Box 245 New Market, MD 21774



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