



It Doesn't Get Any Better!

A weird, almost scary feeling. For the first time in 16 years, we shut the door after our LIFE Group met tonight knowing that there will not be another. We'll still be here in January, but Bill and Carol Bell will have become the leaders for our group. To do the math—16 years times roughly 25 LIFE Group Sunday nights per year comes to 400 LIFE Group meetings. That's a lot of coffee and a lot of paper plates!

Once we make our move, for the first time since college days we will be church hunting. Of course, we have our unwritten list of priorities for what we'll be looking, but right at the very top of the list is the fact that we'll be looking for a church with a strong LIFE Group ministry. We've changed over the past 16 years. Before, we thought fellowship was something that happened over a piece of cake in a fellowship room. Now we understand that real fellowship—genuine fellowship in the Lord—happens best like it did in Biblical times, "from house to house."

My favorite part of the LIFE Group evening is the time for prayer. And most especially, the prayer time is best when everyone around the circle—young and old, men and women, experienced and novices—talk to God about how the lesson for the evening has impacted them and will/should impact them in the future. Short prayers or long, well articulated or choked through tears, formal or informal—none of that matters. This is prayer in which people we know and love are willing simultaneously to touch the throne of God while touching the rest of us. Life in the spirit of Jesus doesn't get any better than that.

At the same time, I love the fun stuff, the kidding around, the favorite recipes and the hugs as people leave. Until we are well established in a group in our new church, be assured that every Sunday night about 6 PM we'll be reliving some of the great experiences we've had with you....and you....and you.... *G. Crowe*

***Our vision:
Knowing Christ, Making Christ Known***

Santa Claus vs. Jesus

It is about this time of year that holly takes the botanical spotlight, elves work harder, and sugar plums begin practicing their dance routine for their Christmas Eve recital in our heads. Yes...it is Christmas time again already.

It's also about this time every year that I try to compare Santa to Jesus. I do so for anthropological reasons as well as theological. Both are revered in culture; both are mentioned frequently around this time of year; and both have servant-like roles. But, much like you would imagine, that is about the sum of the similarities between the two figures.

Santa makes a list and checks it twice, saddles up the reindeer, travels the whole world over, and leaves presents for the children who were good that year.

Jesus, on the other hand, has no list to check twice. He made certain that any list held against us was abolished on the cross. He does not come to us once a year. He stays with us every day, never forsaking or abandoning us. He does not give gifts based on who is good or bad. Instead, he gives freely to all who believe. He knows (and we know too) that there are none that are good, only God alone. Notwithstanding our sin, the gift of the Spirit has yet been lavished on all who believe!

I wonder if that world realizes that it honors a poor, plastic imitation of Christ's goodness instead of basking in the glorious riches that the Son has to offer. But the world will never know *unless we tell them* the truth: side by side...there really is no comparison.

~Dan



"A King Is Coming to Town" 2006 Children's Christmas Musical

The 1st through 8th graders will practice **this Wednesday, December 6**, from **6:30 until 8:00 PM**. **This coming Sunday**, practice will be from **2:00 until 4:00 PM**. The four-year-olds through kindergarten practice during class time on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings.

Christmas Community Needs

The Holiday Gift Lift Program of the Mental Health Association distributes new essential items to adults who might not otherwise receive a gift over the holiday season. Eligible recipients include Tippecanoe County residents residing at Logansport State Hospital as well as patients of Wabash Valley Hospital, clients of the Mental Health Association Homeless Shelter, and residents of nursing homes located within Tippecanoe County. Please continue to brighten the holiday season for those in need this year and donate a new unwrapped gift. Suggested gifts: sweatshirts, sweaters, warm socks, nightwear, hats, gloves, sweatpants, scarfs (xl-xxl adult sizes, please). Gifts may be placed in the collection box located in the Farris foyer.



Congratulations to the December, 2006, graduating class at the CSC:

Alison Ruhl, who grew up at Elmwood and graduated from Harrison HS in 2002, is graduating in Elementary Education with a Reading Specialist endorsement. She has done her student teaching at Klondike in 4th & 5th grade. "My plans are very open for the future, as long as it includes teaching!"

Ryan Middleton graduates with a bachelor's in Computer Graphics Technology. His specialty has been web development. The first of the year he begins a job with 1 up! Software in Kokomo. He and Stephanie will be moving to Kokomo, but are happy to be close enough to visit Elmwood often.

Robbie Mullinax graduates this month from the Krannert School of Management with a BS in Business Management and minors in Marketing and OBHR (Organization Behavior and Human Resources). He leaves in a few days for a 6-week Air Force training class in Montgomery, Alabama, then will be assigned to Barksdale AFB in Louisiana for nine months leading up to pilot training. His goal is to fly fighter jets in the Air Force. Amber will be here until May when she graduates and moves south.

Wednesday Night Prayer Time

The first Wednesday night of each month at 7:00 PM, everyone is invited to come and pray with other Christians. Meet in the Farris foyer this Wednesday night, Dec. 6.



Thank You!

*Dear Elmwood family,
Thank you for the beautiful basket of flowers at Dad's service. Your remembrance of us at this time with flowers, calls, cards, and visits have touched and comforted our family through the last few days. Thank you for the love and care you give to us.*

*In Christian love,
Mike & Scheryl Gaylor*

Thanks for everyone who offered to host military people in their home for Thanksgiving dinner.

-Kenny Palmer

Coming in February

In a long-awaited two-night series, **Joe Ruhl** will present his reflections on "**Why I Believe**" at the 6 PM worship on February 4 and 11.

December 3, 2006

Class: 232 Worship: 319

Contribution: \$9,716

Budget: \$8,550

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**Graysville – January 12-14, 2007
RENOVATE 2007 Youth Rally –
Bloomington, IN**

The North Central Church of Christ is really excited about this year's RENOVATE Rally! From our keynote speaker and class teachers to our concert and special activities, everything has been scheduled to build you and your group up. In other words, we are not just filling time...we are working to making RENOVATE the best youth rally for your heart and soul!

There is a \$10 registration fee, which includes admittance to the youth rally, lunch Saturday, and a ticket to the Taylor Mason concert Saturday Night! Now that is getting the most "bang for your buck!"

Our theme is *Graysville: Black and White Choices for a Gray World*. It seems like everyone is confused about what truth is. Is there an absolute truth? Can two conflicting ideas both be true? These questions (among others) will be discussed during our time together. Our speakers and teachers will have prepared months just for a few minutes of your attention in order to share what is on their hearts.

Sound like the kind of rally you want to be a part of? I will be teaching one of the classes at RENOVATE. The registration fee makes it affordable for everyone and there is even housing provided in members' homes at no charge if we make our reservations in time. Of course, there are local hotels, and we will do our best to make it affordable, but free is really cheap! Sign up Sunday and let's be part of this great event.

Winterfest

Gatlinburg, TN – February 16-18, 2007

It is always one of the highlights of the youth ministry at Elmwood and it is coming soon....Winterfest. This year's theme is "The Prize." Jeff Walling and Mitch Wilburn will be the speakers and Watershed will lead worship. In concert this year will be Jars of Clay and Need To Breathe. Costs for this year are \$21 registration, \$10 for the concert and \$10 for T-shirts...that is if you register in time to get the early bird price...after that, it will be about \$15 more. I have made tentative reservations at the Riverside Motor Lodge (2 blocks from the Convention Center) and costs for lodging may actually go down a little which is good since we don't know what gas prices will do. Ten rooms have been reserved, we can get more, but we will need to know soon. We also need to know soon if you plan to go so we can work out transportation. Remember the Outreach Ministry has made some funds available so we can invite our seeking friends! – Lee



Barb Newberry is in St. Elizabeth Hospital, room 2106, with congestive heart failure....**Lila Fassnacht**, friend of Lori Kuchta, is in Home Hospital with respiratory problems....Continue praying for **Jim Willison**, **Willard Farmer**, **Delores Hill**, **Kaden Koebecke**, **Sue Durham**, **Annie Crowder**, **Ella McBride**, **Linda Smith**, **Steven Rutledge**, **Marcia Swails**, **Gail Monnet**, **Mark Eddy**, **Amy Weismiller**, **Lynn Robinson**, **Delpha Allen**, **Anna Dale**, **Minnie Scott** (*Elaine House Nursing Home, Crawfordsville*), **Carrie High** (*Regency Place*), **Irene Fox** (*George Davis Manor Nursing Home*), and in *Rosewalk Village*: **Ruth Marks**, & **Burnell Gulden**.

Serving in Iraq: **Jon Kiefner**. Serving in South Korea: **Amanda Martin**...**Jeremy Crable** will soon be deployed to Afghanistan, and **Brian Guthrie** will be going to Iraq in January.

Christmas Card Fund



In lieu of sending cards, once again we are offering all who wish to contribute to the Christmas Card Fund, to do so now. You may hand your check to one of the elders or ministers, or drop it into the mail and send it to the church. If you give cash, be sure to attach your name on a piece of paper. **In the December 19 newsletter we will include a list of all who have contributed to this fund and who thus send their greetings to member of the congregation.** This year you have 2 options: your donations can go towards the CSC building fund or the mission work in Fiji for Mike & Timbra Wiist (where the Boyds, Middletons & Alison Ruhl participated in Let's Start Talking last summer).



- Dec. 6, 6:30 PM**....1st-8th graders practice
- Dec. 6, 7 PM**....Bible Classes for all
- Dec. 10, 2:00-4:00 PM**....Children's Musical practice
- Dec. 10, 6 PM**....Gayle Crowe preaching
- Dec. 17, 6 PM**....Children's Musical program
- Dec. 24, 9:30 AM**....Brunch for everyone instead of class
- Dec. 24, 4 PM**....Afternoon devotional; no 6 PM worship
- Dec. 31**....Regular worship schedule

Read:
Rev. 7-14;
Psalms 138:1-143:6

2006 Spiritual Adventure

Week 51: December 17-23

BAD NEWS, GOOD NEWS

If ever there is a slice of reality in Scripture, Revelation 7-14 is it. It reads like the history of our lives: down, up, down, up. In one paragraph we read about a fiery red horse with a rider who has power to take peace from the earth. Then we're marveling at the martyrs who have given their lives in the cause of faith. The next paragraph pictures everyone from the kings of the earth to slaves hiding in caves and among the rocks of the mountains wishing they could die rather than face the wrath of the Lamb. From there we go to angels standing around the throne of God saying, "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

Plunging to the depths, rising to the heights. Remind you of anybody you know, like, maybe, yourself? One minute your life is great, a few hours later it's the pits. A compliment is followed by a slam. Good news brings rejoicing, then the phone rings again with sadness and despair. Sometimes it seems we've been in the basement for ever; other times it's hard to remember those rough times.

God's promise is not to smooth out our paths so we don't feel the pain—if that happened, we also couldn't feel the joy. His promise is to walk with us, first to hold our hand to steady us through the storm and rain, then to watch us skip and jump when the good times roll. He's not a controlling, menacing God; he's an enabling, freeing God. Are there three woes in Revelation 9-10? That's OK because the seventh trumpet is coming in which we hear loud voices saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Right now are you soaring or groveling? In whichever state you find yourself, God is there.

-Gayle Crowe