



A Day to Remember

Nothing could ever have prepared us for the incredibly lavish send-off you gave Lisa and me last Sunday. Touching prayers and comments at the morning worship . . . wonderful dinner at The Trails . . . great impromptu "roast" over dessert . . . then the 4:00 reception with a dazzling array of refreshments (Cheri Vaughn's cake, lots of goodies, always-smiling serving staff) which eased the way for lively conversation and lots of memories recalled . . . from there into the auditorium for an enthusiastic worship time as Farrell is so gifted to lead . . . then comments from all six of the ministers and elders that we will treasure forever . . . the "retired" Elmwood Boys doing an encore performance . . . our induction into honorary ECY membership with a sharp jacket and a handy tote bag as perks of membership . . . the presentation of the memory book to which so many members (present and former) had contributed . . . the video tribute that Lee had prepared (with the conniving help of our son!) . . . Bill Farris's gift of one of his family's quilt tops which Bonnie Ryves had quilted . . . the breathtaking stained glass . . . the monogrammed throws from Cheryl Woody's "Two Tulips" boutique . . . and all the above photographed by Phyllis & Farrell Simmerman and coordinated by Pauletta Smith, Dorothy Miller, Sharon Porter, Peggy Linback, Becky Pitt, Christi Branstetter, and Scheryl Gaylor. The day was capped off with a moving prayer by Max Houlton. It was a day long to be remembered.

How this church embraced us 20 years ago and has held us close to its heart all these years! Jesus told his disciples as he was about to die, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." People who become a part of the Elmwood family get caught up in passing on the love and the caring with which they are embraced when they come. May it ever be so!

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." *G. Crowe*

WELCOME Cody Sipe to Elmwood's pulpit!

Dark Rooms

Sitting in the dark is something that I often find my students doing at the CSC. I will come into the room in the middle of the day and all will be dark, the lights not turned on at all. I don't understand why they do this! Every time I enter the room, I ask if they would like the lights on. Most of them grunt or say nothing at all, so I turn them on and leave the room. Later in the day I will come back only to find that they are turned off again.

It occurs to me that this is a wonderful metaphor for how the world lives. The world lives in darkness and many times has neither the drive nor the ability to let the light shine in their lives. Occasionally someone will show people the light, but many will let it go dark again and be content just living in the dark.

One preacher's favorite comment is "the hope of the world is the local church." It isn't the state funded programs designed to reduce pregnancies or educate better; it isn't aligning oneself with the "right" political party. The hope of the world is the *local church*.

The local church is the primary means through which Jesus will turn on the lights in this dark world, and keep them on. This, of course, means that we have work to do. We have to reach out across the street and touch people's lives where they are. This means walking into dark rooms. That can be a tough job for a people living in the light. But dark rooms are where we must go so that the light of the Christ may illuminate them.... ~Dan

Pray that with all of the "New" that will be around us we will take this opportunity to "reNew" our focus on our relationship with God and with one another.



Our sincere sympathies to the Swensen family on the death of **Mark Eddy**, Lisa's husband, on Tuesday, January 30. Elmwood has had him in our prayers since he was first diagnosed with cancer a number of years ago. No additional information at this time.

Crowes' Timetable

Gayle will be driving to Nashville on Wednesday, January 31. (Dick Mullen will be going with him to help him unload.) The address of World Christian Broadcasting's program center, to which mail to Gayle may be directed: 605 Bradley Ct., Franklin, TN 37067-8200. His cell phone will remain the same for now: 765-427-4634. Email address will be gmcrowe@aol.com. (After this week the crowe@elmwood-church.org address will be disabled.) Lisa will be in Nashville this weekend for interviews with two development staff at Vanderbilt on Monday.

Read:
Exodus 19-36;
Luke 15:1-18:17

2007 Spiritual Adventure Week 5: January 29-February 4

Sometimes we fail to appreciate how consistently and deliberately the Lord Jesus shocked his contemporaries. His words and his actions persistently offended the religious and self-righteous, and I suspect His behavior would have made many of us uncomfortable as well.

One of the surprises of the gospels is the account of the very unlikely people who were drawn to Jesus—tax collectors, sinners, the Pharisees who represented the dregs of society. In those days tax collectors were not merely unpopular, they were thought of as pariahs. Because they dealt so often with Gentiles, tax collectors were religiously "unclean" as well. Honest Jews could only regard such people as disloyal, dishonest, and disreputable. "Sinners" could just be ordinary people who lived with indifference to the observance of the pious. Such people were drawn to the Lord's teaching—a fact that infuriated the Pharisees and teachers of the law.

The problem was not so much sinful people's response to the Lord, but the Lord's response to them. After all, who could object if sinners came to learn? Jesus welcomed sinners. They felt comfortable in his presence! In a culture where sharing a meal meant acceptance and even approval, how could a good man behave like that? How could he enjoy their company and have them enjoy his?

The religious leaders were people who claimed to know God and were offended by the kind of people Jesus attracted. "Those who follow Jesus are not our kind of people." It is precisely this prejudice that leads to what follows: "then Jesus told them this parable." In fact, he tells them three parables: about a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. Each parable is addressed to the self-righteous Pharisees, putting a mirror before them and opening a window into heaven. They, in fact, know far less about both themselves and God than they think they do. How can we say we know God if we do not know what gives Him pain and brings Him joy? The Lord wants us to see that the Father's heart hurts for the lost, and rejoices when the lost are found. He uses concepts we all understand. When something of value is lost, we do not despise it. We search for it and rejoice in the finding of it. We feel this way, but the amazing discovery is that God does also. All these parables tell us about our Father in Heaven who wants not one to be lost. It tells of His great compassion for all people.

—Don Vice



The Tilley family has recently moved. Their new address:

Ed & Barbara Tilley
3661 Stone Gate Ct.
Lafayette 47909
Phone: 474-5161

LUM Meal Providers

Serving dinner at Lafayette Urban Ministry last Monday night were: **Joe & Cheryl Woody, Marihelen Johnson, Amos & Dana Miller, and Jim Levick.**

January 28, 2007

Class: 205 Worship: 322

Contribution: \$5,775

Budget: \$8,550

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Farewell Gayle and Lisa

Well, this is one I really didn't want to write. I know I have written about Gayle and Lisa's leaving in a previous newsletter, but now it has become real. I don't know how you properly honor folks who have given so much for so long, but we sure tried – thank you Dorothy Miller, Pauletta Smith, Dave Weckerly and crew. I honestly do not know the average tenure of ministers in the churches of Christ, but I guarantee you that Gayle messed it up. I have heard of only a handful of ministers who have stayed with a church family for 20 years or more. If the average tenure of a youth minister is 18 months to 2 years, I suppose a preacher's average might be about 3 years.

If you were here for the festivities yesterday – the meal at the Trails, the reception and the service at 6:00, you heard many share how Gayle and Lisa have ministered to this church. Their love for Elmwood is obvious and overwhelming. Sherry has also done a nice job of letting you know of her perspective (in this newsletter)...she has been Gayle's secretary for the whole 20 years! I'm finally convinced I am not going to wake up and realize it is a bad dream. Tomorrow, several of us are going to help Gayle with the first load as he prepares to head for Tennessee on Wednesday morning. His office is bare and depressing; Gayle doesn't want us to dwell on that...he expects exciting times ahead for this family of believers.

As I mentioned yesterday, before coming to visit Elmwood nine years ago, I had never been to Indiana before. The area was fine and the church seemed great, but a major pull for me to come to Indiana was the opportunity to serve with Gayle Crowe. Over the past eight and one half years, Gayle has been my brother, my friend, my mentor, my voice of reason, my confidant in ministry and so much more. You may not know this, but Gayle even let me show him there is more than one way to throw a Frisbee! Men like Gayle (and women like Lisa) are few and far between. The only person I may have been closer to in ministry was Sharon's dad – he and I worked together for 6 years.

It is time to move forward and see who the Lord has prepared to come our way. Soon you will be hearing about the search committee's establishment. Soon, we will be bringing individuals and families in to visit with us about the work here at Elmwood. Cody Sipe is has agreed to speak on Sunday mornings through May and I know that he will challenge us and be a comfort as he is someone we already know and love.

I'll say it one more time, "Thank you Gayle and Lisa." We are forever indebted to you for your labor of love among us. May your house sell quickly and may Tennessee be better than you dreamed! – Lee



Roy Stafford, John's father, will have gall bladder surgery on February 5....**Juanita Bird**, Mark Bird's grandmother, had surgery on Wednesday in Jackson, Tennessee, for breast cancer....Continue praying for **Henrietta Frampton** (*Home Hospital, room 4402*), **Seth Mullen, Willard Farmer, Annie & Elaine Crowder, Paul & Argie Verett, Beth Holt, Kaden Koebecke, Linda Smith, Marcia Swails, Lynn Robinson, Delpha Allen, Anna Dale, Minnie Scott, Carrie High, Irene Fox, Ruth Marks, & Burnell Gulden.**

Serving in our military: **Jeremy Crable & Michael Bryenton** (*Afghanistan*); **Brian Guthrie** (*Qatar, Persian Gulf*), **Philip Devine & Robbie Mullinax**, stateside training; **Jon Kiefner** (*Amanda Guthrie's brother in Iraq*); and **Amanda Martin** (*South Korea*).

Cash Contributions

Internal Revenue Service has created a rule change that impacts the deductibility of **cash** contributions to charitable organizations for personal income tax purposes. If you wish to take an income tax deduction for your cash contributions to Elmwood in 2007, you will need a receipt.

In order to accommodate this IRS change, we have placed envelopes in the pew racks. After January 1, 2007, **if you make a cash donation to Elmwood and if you wish to deduct the contribution on your income taxes**, you will need to place your donation in one of the envelopes and write your name on the envelope before placing it in a collection plate. We will use the envelopes to record your cash contributions. In January of 2008 we will provide you with a letter of acknowledgment to serve as your receipt for your 2007 cash contributions.

This rule change does not impact contributions made by check and you do not need to be concerned with the envelopes if you do not take a tax deduction for your cash contributions. See Bill Hodges if you have questions about this change.



Jan. 30, 7 PM...Bible Classes for all
Feb. 4, 6 PM...LIFE Groups
Feb. 25 & March 4, 6 PM...Joe Ruhl shares
"Why I Believe"

Read:
Leviticus 14-27
Luke 22-24

2007 Spiritual Adventure

Week 7: February 12-18

In our Leviticus reading this week, God is giving his people commands about living. There are commands relating to fleshly and spiritual cleanliness and safety. For me, there is one chapter that stands out amid all the others. God's laws for the Israelites are brought to a conclusion in Chapter 26.

It all comes down to obedience or disobedience. How wonderful are the blessings for those who obey God's laws (verses 1-13). The best blessing of obedience is summarized in verse 12, *"I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people."*

How sad the consequences of disobedience (verses 14-39). *"If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve."*

Yet, in all this, God provides them one final "out" (verses 40-45). *"But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers—their treachery against me and their hostility toward me...I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the LORD."*

God has not changed since his instructions to the nation of Israel. Our reading in Luke describes how far God was willing to go to provide us with the opportunity to possess the blessings of obedience. *"He told them, 'This is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'" He sent his son to die that we might come to repentance, be forgiven for our disobedience and be recognized as belonging to God.*

What a great and awesome God we have. How thankful we are that God is long on patience.

2 Peter 3:9 (NIV) *"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

Thank you, God, for your patience and your love!

—Joe Mathews



This Week's Highlight:

Thanks, Gayle, for 20 years

My chance to tell stories on Gayle Crowe. Oh, the stories I could tell! No one else here has worked with him daily for the last 20 years, except me! (And I never wanted to work anywhere else in those 20 years.) I could tell from the beginning that he was going to be picky but that was okay—I'm a bit of a perfectionist myself. So, though he has been teased a lot about that, it never really bothered me. Well, maybe after the tenth time of redoing something it did!

Much was said, in fun, at the program last night at the church, and I'm sure he enjoyed it all. But what I have to say is only good things. Never have I been around someone who had much to brag about—as far as degrees, Bible knowledge, etc.—who is so humble. He never asks anything of anyone that he himself wouldn't do.

I know the congregation as a whole doesn't know half of what Gayle has done all these 20 years. He has been there for so many people in their time of need. I remember well when my nephew died in a tragic accident and Gayle and Lisa were there at the hospital to offer hugs and words of comfort. I know others—the Kinzers, Bells, Mullens, Bakers, Staffords, etc.—could tell similar stories of how Gayle responded in their time of need.

He is well known in the community for his funerals. That may sound odd, but funeral homes in Lafayette have regularly called him to do funerals for people he doesn't even know. He does such a good job of weaving detailed family remembrances into his funeral message and never fails to offer words of comfort and the healing words of Jesus. He has always wanted to make sure Elmwood is shown in a positive light to the Lafayette community. I have, through the years, heard nothing but

complimentary comments about him from people we do business with.

Change is hard for me, and there have been MANY changes in the office over the last 20 years. Through it all Gayle has been patient, never rushing me into something I didn't understand. His love and concern for the physical welfare and spiritual lives of Elmwood members is heartfelt. He is truly a man of prayer.

I know God is sending Gayle where he wants him to serve him at this time. Gayle is such an exceptional writer. No one I know can come up with articles that challenge, inspire, and teach as well as he does. There are people on our newsletter mailing list (nearly 100 out of state people) who ask for the newsletter just to read his articles. Someone at the *Journal and Courier* just last week told me he reads Gayle's article every week. He said of all those he reads, Gayle's, by far, is one of the best. World Christian Broadcasting is getting a first-class writer that will represent them well. But I think they already know that!

Gayle Crowe is a class act. He always knows the right thing to do in any situation. He is kind, considerate, compassionate, loving and full of hope for the future. Though our future won't include him, he has influenced how our future will be by what he has done the last 20 years.

With tears in my eyes I reluctantly say good-bye and thank you for 20 wonderful years in which I feel I have grown tremendously because of who you are. I love you and Lisa and wish you well. God bless you on the next leg of your journey.

—Sherry

By the way, I think Gayle and I have done roughly 1000 newsletters together! I wonder if he'll miss doing them.

Welcome Cody!

This Sunday Elmwood welcomes Cody Sipe as the interim pulpit minister. Cody is no stranger to the pulpit at Elmwood, as he preached three memorable sermons last fall on the topic of spiritual fitness. Cody is presently in the last stages of finishing a dissertation for his Ph.D. In addition to his preaching, he will also work with the song leaders in arranging the order of worship from week to week. Thanks, Cody, for agreeing to take on this role for us right now. We anticipate many good things over the next few months!

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 25 and March 4**.

Opportunities. . .

- Beginning **Wednesday, February 7, and running for 7 weeks**, the Good \$ense Budget Class, taught by Janet Boston will meet at **6:00 PM** (*please note time is one hour before Wednesday night Bible classes*). The class is limited to 24 people. You may sign up in the Farris foyer. All questions can be directed to Janet at 477-7668.
- Shults-Lewis Children's Home has sent information for two employment opportunities. They are taking applications for the position of Administrative Assistant. This position will directly assist the Executive Director, help with other agency operations and provide support services to the Development Department. Hours of work will be from 8:00 AM until 4:30 PM Monday through Friday. Benefits include medical insurance, vacation and sick time and a retirement plan. Applicants must have good computer skills, be organized, dependable and have excellent people skills. Send resume to Ray Crowder, Executive Director, P.O. Box 471, Valparaiso, IN 46384.
- The other position is for someone to join their counseling staff to work directly with the residents in a therapeutic setting. Providing individual, group, and family counseling, as well as presenting workshops with the Family Institute are required. Salary, health insurance, and retirement pay are offered with the position. Send resume to Rob Salley, Ph.D., Director of Program Services, Shults-Lewis Child and Family Services, P.O. Box 471, Valparaiso, IN 46383. You may call 219-462-0513, ext. 241, for more information.
- **Help Parents Protect and Nurture Young Children** – Matrix Lifeline Pregnancy Center seeks enthusiastic volunteers as they expand their *Earn While You Learn* parenting education program. Orientation sessions designed specifically for those who are interested in supporting and educating young families will be held on **February 7 and 8**. Volunteers are needed to work one-on-one through the existing program, and others to help offer parenting education and mentoring to an even greater number of families as a new series is launched with group evening lessons this spring. Join them on Wednesday, February 7, from 9:30-11:00 AM, or Thursday, February 8, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM at the Matrix office, 1824 Maple St., Lafayette. Call 742-1533 or email katiematrix@insightbb.com today to RSVP for the session of your choice and come to explore the possibilities.