



Thanks for the Memories, Elmwood

Wow! I began as a 25 year old young mother—Melanie was 5 years old and Matt was not quite 3 years old—wanting a part-time job with Christian people. That was 37 years ago! (*Note: there was one year I didn't work, so officially I have been working for Elmwood for 36 years, though I began on November 13, 1974.*) That part-time job turned into more of a full time job and a great “career” serving the Lord for the most wonderful people I can imagine.

Along the way I have worked with 4 pulpit ministers: James Holland, Ken Chaffin, Gayle Crowe, and now Gilbert Kerrigan; 11 campus ministers (*I won't name them all*); and 15 different elders and numerous deacons during my time at Elmwood. Many people, especially Purdue students/couples have come and gone during that time. The building has undergone many changes—remodeling updates and windows added through the years! But one thing has always remained the same—YOU—the congregation of God's people who meet here at Elmwood. You have taught me so much through the years and I'll continue to learn as God will hopefully continue to change me into the person He wants me to become. I can't begin to list all those who have influenced me, given me a hug when I needed it, or said a kind word, lifted me up in prayer when I was going through a tough time, helped me with their expertise, and loved me when I didn't deserve it. When I lost my father this summer I was blown away at all the people who came to the funeral home and/or expressed their love and concern through cards and flowers.

Many have asked what I'm going to do with “all my time” now that I won't be working. I'm sure God will show me what I need to be doing. I'll be looking for my “burning bush moment” that Gilbert talked about a few weeks ago. I have a wonderful husband who is looking forward to me being able to do things and go places with him, and we have seven grandsons who can keep us busy.

I want to close by expressing to you all how much I have appreciated your support and love. I will miss coming in and doing the things I have done for so many years. I have dearly loved my “career” serving the Lord by serving you. The years have flown by. God has blessed me tremendously. I'll still be around—it will just be different! I love you all. As Gilbert begins each Sunday: *God is good all the time...all the time God is good!*
—Sherry Marks

Choosing Your Battles

I've read a couple of articles lately about the battles we choose to fight. I find them to be a good reminder of the importance of Christmas. Our hackles are raised when we hear another store has insisted that their employees say “Happy Holidays” rather than “Merry Christmas.” We may even stop shopping there. We are upset when city-wide decorations are nixed from this year's celebration, and don't want to hear about Kwanzaa, or Hanukah, and we aren't too sure about that 12 days of Christmas song.

But then I wonder... how did Jesus observe Christmas? Did he institute a mandatory celebration of his birth? No. Instead he came to earth to “proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor” (Luke 4:18-19).

When the angel foretells Jesus' birth to Mary, her response is one of praise where she acknowledges that in His coming “He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty” (Luke 2:52-53).

The lack of clean drinking water kills more people than almost anything else in the world. And while Americans spend 450 billion dollars annually on Christmas, it would only take 20 billion dollars to ensure everyone in the world has clean drinking water.

Instead of fighting the battle to get others to recognize the importance of Christmas, let's start fighting the battle of getting ourselves to recognize it!

—Phil Travis



Barb Newberry has moved. Her new address: 2412 Silverado Circle Lafayette 47909

Thank you!

Jan Swensen reports that his PET scan last week found no evidence of any cancer. He wants to thank the members of Elmwood for their prayers and concern for his recovery from melanoma. *—Rick Swensen*

Thank you brothers and sisters for all your prayers, cards, phone calls and food during my recent surgery. Friday I learned I do NOT need any further treatment as the melanoma was stage one. Praise the Lord! *—Dorothy Miller*

One service on December 25 and January 1 at 10:45 and NO Bible classes. There will be NO preschool worship on 12/25/11 and 1/1/12.

December 18, 2011

Class: 157 Worship: 294

Contribution: \$9,697.36

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Ginger Maxwell-Spenard had knee replacement surgery this Wednesday, December 21....**Phil Mullen** spent most of last week in the hospital after having foot surgery. He was able to go home on Saturday night, but will continue to go to the hospital daily for the next two weeks to receive antibiotic infusions for infection....**Betty Lucas** is receiving rehab from knee surgery at Creasy Springs....**Rachel Kesler**, Barb Newberry's son-in-law's cousin, is recovering from a serious accident in Atlanta, Georgia.... **Christian Coats**, Diann Doty's nephew, is hospitalized with a serious infection....**Jill Peterson**, mother-in-law of Christi Branstetter's nephew, has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.... Continue praying for **Argie Verett, Terry Spenard, Herb Whiteman (now at home), Bob Calhoun, Michelle Mullen, Steve Cable, Lorraine Weckerly, Cain Harris, Mary Weaver, Annie Crowder, Dave Hostetler, Jeanette Tidrick, Janet Achor, Max Raines, Mary Lou Baugh, Marceena Miller, Tammy Beaver Linda Weeks, Kaden Koebcke, Mickey & Carolyn Rigdon, Marie DeWoody, Wanita White, Phyllis Gray, and Jan Swensen.**



Continue to remember the following people who are home-bound or in a nursing care facility: **George Kenworthy, Paul Marks, Delores Hill, Irene Sims, Dorothy Walters, Dovie Hurst, Ethel Cable, Hattie Coffel, Valley Stockton, Henrietta Frampton, Ruth Carter, Clifford Farner, Willie & Calvin Batts, Mary Walker, and Charles & Carolyn Moore.**



In the military: **Matthew Kauffman** is in Germany. **Evan Slaughter** is in Afghanistan. **Dustin & Zach Whiteman** are in Afghanistan.

No Newsletter next week.



The following people contributed \$1,674 to the Christmas Card Fund which will benefit the flood-ravaged church in Bangkok, Thailand. They send their Merry Christmas wishes and a Happy New Year to you all!

Bill & Sue Adams
 Laura Barlament
 Ramona & Tommy Bartlett
 Bill & Carol Bell
 Elaine Borie
 Janet Boston
 Josh, Gina, Kinley & Knox Boyd
 Karen Brainard
 Andrea Browell
 David & Donna Brown
 Mary Kay & Gary Ciesielski
 Hedi Devine
 Gene & Jeanie Dilling
 Shirley & Willard Farmer
 Bernie & Armilda Follick
 Margaret Gustafson
 David & Vicki Henke
 Gene & Nancy High
 Jim & Marihelen Johnson
 Jim & Teresa Jones
 Camilla Lawson
 Craig & Angela Loy

John & Sherry Marks
 Joe & Joyce Mathews
 A.C. & Irene Miller
 Oscar & Dorothy Miller
 Jim & Marsha Moore
 Barb Newberry
 Delores Nolan
 Miranda & Rashelle Parson
 Becky, Annabelle, Spencer, Evy & Carrie Pitt
 Sam Postlethwait
 Joe & Gail Ruhl
 Farrell & Phyllis Simmerman
 Rob & Pauletta Smith
 Bob & Penny Stafford
 Greg & Chris Sutherlin
 Rick & Doris Swensen
 Phil & Katy Travis
 Joy Walker
 David & Lorraine Weckerly
 Patty & Bryan Wenning
 Wanita White

Spiritual Disciplines: Study

Yes, I already know you're in finals this week. Yes, I know the last thing you want me to talk to you about is studying. Yes, I'm still going to do it anyway. ☺

I'll confess that while our particular tradition of Christianity is deeply rooted in studying God's Word, and as a minister I spend lots of time in study in the Word, this is probably one of the hardest disciplines for me on a regular basis. Why? Probably because I do so much work-related study of the Word, it's easy to neglect personal study. Likewise, I think in our tradition we may get so familiar with the Word that really coming to it with fresh eyes and studying it may be very difficult. It is also my conviction that with a great academic background, we may actually define studying the Word in a different way than what God really intended.

A great example of missing the point of studying God's Word is found in Matthew's account of Jesus' birth (Matthew 2:3-6). When the Magi appear before Herod, they know all about the coming King, but Herod doesn't. So he goes and asks some teachers of God's Law about information relating to the Messiah and where He is to be born. These guys know God's Word back and forth, and they have no problem calling up Micah 5:2 where the prophet foretells Bethlehem as the Messiah's birthplace. The interesting thing is that we see no interest, no follow up or anticipation from these teachers. They are asked the information, they know the information and recite it. But it hasn't moved their heart in any way to seek the Messiah, even with the extraordinary things they are witnessing with the account of the Magi. They have missed the point of knowing God's Word!

What we need to realize first and foremost about the Discipline of Study is that we are not doing it to gather information. We are engaging in study in order to have our lives changed. This makes studying God's Word radically different from any other type of studying you and I are used to.

Study may sound at first like the discipline of meditation that we talked about last week, but there are some significant differences. The biggest difference is that while meditation is primarily focused on applying truth to my life, studying is learning how to humbly accept what truth is. Before I can figure out what a passage of Scripture means for me, I first have to figure out what it means. Study allows us to mold our ways of thinking to conform to God's way of thinking, so that we see truth as He sees it. Only then can we meditate on His truth and person in a way that effectively applies truth to our lives. Practicing the discipline of study well involves four things:

1. Repetition – regularly studying teaches our minds to approach God in specific patterns and priorities. Going over a section of Scripture repeatedly will sift out important words and concepts for us to take notice of.
2. Concentration – centers our mind and decreases the external “noise” of life so we can hear what is said.
3. Comprehension – insight and discernment. Often this looks like “praying while reading,” asking God to “turn the light on” in our minds about what is being said so we can understand it clearly.
4. Reflection – defines the significance of what we are reading. This usually leads us into meditation as we “chew” on the truth we've explored in the Word and start the application process.

I hope that this will help you approach the Study of the Word with fresh eyes. I also hope that it convinces us of the importance of study, not so we can cram for life's final exam, but so we can know what God's truth is to be able to apply it to our lives effectively. It may be hard in the beginning, but I'm convinced that as you grow in the real knowledge of God's word, your joy in God will also grow, and that is a reward that is more than worth the effort!
- In His Grip, Travis

Thank you, Elmwood!

Elmwood Church:

Thank you very much for allowing me to present my message about the James Connection and our orphanage at Angels' Place. And thank you very much for all your support of this blessed work. Your church now sponsors over 15 children at Angels' Place!

Since I spoke to you on December 4, the stewards at Angels' Place have conducted Bible lessons which have led to 25 baptisms. Now 47 children have become Christians. Who knows what this will lead to. Already one of our boys is studying to become a preacher.

Thanks again from a fellow priest.

—Jan Swensen

Holiday Gift Lift for MHA

Mental Health America will still receive donations until the end of the year. Most needed items include: sweatshirts/suits, sweaters, flannel shirts, hats/gloves, sleepwear, warm socks (XL and 2X+ adult sizes are the most needed). Other items needed: toothbrushes & toothpaste, body wash, body lotions, deodorants, disposable razors. A box for your donations is in the Farris Foyer for your gifts. Your gifts are most appreciated.



December 21, 7 PM....Bible classes for all
December 21, 7 PM....Caroling (all are invited) at designated places; meet at Elmwood to divide into groups
December 24, 8:00 PM....Christmas Eve service
December 25 & January 1....Christmas & New Year's service, 10:45 only; no Bible classes
January 7, 7:43 AM....Men's Breakfast, A-2

Read:
 Genesis 1:1-10:32; Matthew 1:1-4:25
 Psalms 1:1-4:8; Proverbs 1:1-23

2012 Spiritual Adventures

Week 1: January 1-7

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”

I want to focus my Spiritual Adventure on Jesus’ testing in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11). You may remember that Israel also spent some time in the wilderness. There are many similarities between the two events, and I don’t think it is by accident. In Exodus 4:22 Israel is called God’s *“firstborn son.”* Jesus is also God’s Son (Matt. 3:17). We are told that Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness. Israel spent 40 years. Both events were seen as tests to determine faithfulness and trust (Deut. 8 and Heb. 5). The main difference between the two is the outcome.

While Israel failed their test, Jesus proved to be faithful. Israel, called God’s son, failed the test of sonship. Jesus proved his sonship though this test.

Israel griped and complained about their hunger. They blamed God for their hunger, and wished to be back in Egypt (Ex. 16:3). Jesus, having all the power of God at his fingertips, refused to use that power to his own advantage. He refused, when hungry, to turn stones into bread because he was God’s son and lived totally dependent on his Father.

Israel put God to the test (Ex. 17:1-7), yet Jesus refused to test God in such ways. It is not a lack of faith that prevents Jesus from leaping. In fact, it is his strong faith that keeps him from taking the leap.

Finally, after being offered the world Jesus refuses to bow down to anyone other than God. Repeatedly, throughout Israel’s history, they were known to play the role of *harlot*. They turned their back on God in order to worship other gods (Ex. 32:1-7). While Jesus’ love follows the love described in Deut. 6:5, Israel’s love for God was *“like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears”* (Hos. 6:4).

While both Israel and Jesus are called God’s son, it is Jesus who truly lives up to the title. He proves his sonship through his faithfulness and obedience.

—**Gilbert Kerrigan**

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 Mathews 474-8369 Joe Ruhl 463-7012 Rick Swensen 463-6822 Don Vice 471-8653 Staff Ministers Gilbert Kerrigan 418-3652 Phil Travis 743-0954 Travis Hutchinson 447-2874 Office Sherry Marks, Manager 447-2874 Carol Bell, Secretary 447-2874	Kevin Chambers World Christian Broadcasting Anchor Point, Alaska 99536 Loren and Penny Hollingsworth Phuket, Thailand 83000 E-mail: lholly54@yahoo.com Bren and Cheryl White P.O. Box 245 New Market, MD 21774
		

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