



Larry's Latest

THE DREADED 'E' WORD

I love it when someone else can listen to what you say and then restate it better than you could say it yourself! That was my experience reading Dan Jones (First Christian, Garland) as he reviewed a sermon I preached at his church recently:

‘Nothing fancy about it. Just a simple invitation from one friend to another. Philip had encountered Jesus. And now? Now Philip went and found somebody to share it with. He found Nathanael. And despite Nathanael’s sarcasm, despite his skepticism, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” Philip persisted.

We should take note. Philip didn’t debate with Nathanael. Didn’t lay out an elaborate argument of proofs. Philip made a simple invitation. And in so doing helped connect Nathanael with Jesus.

I think it’s likely that Nathanael had already heard of Jesus. Jesus did spend his early years in Galilee, no more than five miles from Nathanael’s hometown, Cana. And I’m guessing that Philip’s invitation wasn’t the first time Nathanael had heard of Jesus, seen Jesus, or even talked with him.

Regardless, Nathanael comes. And I think it’s testimony to what **Rev. Larry Ross** preached in his Evangelism sermon to us . . .that Christian evangelism is a process of coming closer to Jesus Christ; that more often, moments ripe for conversion are the fruit of many previous experiences, many invitations, many conversations, many other occasions when those whom we know see in us, see in others, see in the conduct of the Church, something about Jesus that they want for their own lives.

Larry described this journey toward faith by referring to what’s called The Engel scale. The Engel Scale describes the growth of a person from no effective knowledge of God (-8) through to growth as a Christian (+5). **James Engel**, missiologist, suggested that the average person needs about ten significant encounters with the Gospel before they are ready to make a commitment:

- 8 Awareness of a supreme being, no knowledge of the Gospel
- 7 Initial awareness of the Gospel
- 6 Awareness of the fundamentals of the Gospel
- 5 Grasp implications of the Gospel
- 4 Positive attitude towards the Gospel
- 3 Personal problem recognition
- 2 Decision to act

- 1 Repentance and faith in Christ
- 0 New birth
- +1 Post-decision evaluation
- +2 Incorporation into the Body
- +3 Conceptual and behavioral growth
- +4 Communion with God
- +5 Stewardship

The Engel Scale teaches us that faith is a work of God over time and that you and I are called to participate, however big or small, in that process. And so our evangelistic strategy? Prayer, care, share and most of all, hang in there. God is at work.’

~Dan Jones

You should know by now that one of my passions, as Area Minister, is evangelism and church growth. I want to be as helpful to the local church as I can be in helping them conceptualize and implement a church

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I Love to Tell the Story: Experiencing the Easter Vigil

Rev. Jennie Churchman

One of my favorite hymns is “I Love to Tell the Story.” You know it: “*I love to tell the story of unseen things above, of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love...*”

It’s the third verse that gets me every time:

*“I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song,
‘twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.
I love to tell the story, ‘twill be my theme in glory,
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.”*

I love this hymn because it speaks to me; it tells my story. I know the story of Jesus very well, and yet I hunger and thirst to hear it again and again. It is Good News that never gets old: the gracious, saving acts of God-with-us. The story of Jesus is our salvation history, and it is a story that must be told.

Our early Christian brothers and sisters understood that. They understood how important it was to preserve and pass on our salvation history. They understood that all Christians—new converts as well as “those who know it best”—must know the story of our faith, really know it, from the inside out. That is why they created an extraordinary service of worship called the Easter Vigil. In one single evening, beginning on Saturday night and continuing until the dawning Easter Day, our early Christian brothers and sisters gathered together to proclaim and celebrate the saving acts of God throughout history and in Jesus Christ. They told the story from Genesis to the Gospel. Then they baptized new believers, broke bread together, and celebrated the miracle of the resurrection.

Sound intriguing? It does to me. I cannot imagine a more powerful way to experience the mystery of Easter. To hear all of God’s saving work, from creation to the empty tomb, gives us the big picture of the resurrection. Our salvation history didn’t begin with the star of Bethlehem; it began with “Let there be light.” The Easter Vigil makes that clear.

So it is that on Saturday, April 7, beginning at 9:30 p.m., **The Way** at Northway Christian will experience the Easter Vigil. The service will start in darkness. Then the Paschal flame will be ignited as the community sings, “*Light of the world you stepped down into darkness; open my eyes, let me see.*” And then we will proclaim our whole salvation history through word, song, and sacred acts. This will be a service like no other. In fact, we believe that very few, if any, Disciples congregations observe the Easter Vigil. So not only will we walk in the footsteps of our ancient Christian brothers and sisters, we will also blaze a trail for our own fellowship.

And, in the early hours of Easter morning, we hope to experience the miracle of new life in Christ as we baptize someone—or several someones—into the Christian faith.

Join us for the Easter Vigil. Join us as we recount and relive our salvation history. Join us as we tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

Easter Vigil at **The Way** at Northway Christian, Dallas
Begins Saturday, April 7 at 9:30 PM
Ends Sunday, April 8 after midnight

North Texas Area Assembly -- Sunday, May 6

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Lyn T. Robinette
Editor

NTACC Deadlines
May 1, 2007
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Search and Call

The following congregations are in various stages of the Search and Call process for ministerial staff. Please keep them in your prayers:

First, Anna
Midway Hills, Dallas
First, Denton
First, Ennis
Western Heights, Garland
First, Paris
First, Richardson

Coretha's Corner

It seems that spring has sprung . . . or is beginning to, at least. All the signs of new life that I'm seeing along the roadways, and in my own backyard, are so uplifting! And, as I visit around the North Texas Area, I'm seeing signs of new life in our churches and among our fellowship. Just some examples:

- ~ one of our smaller congregations has decided to "adopt" one of our new church starts, sending them financial contributions and keeping them in prayer, rather than worrying about the future of their own congregation.
 - ~ the attention to detail that one of our congregations has given to the ministry of hospitality, including providing rocking chairs in the back of the sanctuary for the benefit of mothers with young children.
 - ~ the excellent CYF Midwinter Retreat held in January, with the first intentional participation of youth from District 2 of TCMF.
 - ~ hearing the witness of young people attending the Chi Rho Midwinter Retreat in February, who openly shared stories of what their baptism meant to them.
 - ~ the tremendous amount of dedicated, talented adults in our Area who give so freely of their time to work with the children and youth of the Area.
 - ~ the excitement of the planning team as another great Women's Spiritual Life Retreat is planned for April.
- I could go on for a few more pages, but I just wanted to share a taste of what I've witnessed during these winter months. As Christians, we believe in resurrection and new life, and all we need to do is open our eyes and look around, and we can see that new life "bustin' out all over" in the NTA!

Joy and blessings,



Larry's Latest (con't.)

growth strategy that works. I will make time to help your church. Just call!

We do know that one of the most effective evangelism strategies is in the launching of new congregations. We have 13 new congregations in the NTA since 2000, but our New Church funds are depleted. To that end, we will take a SPECIAL OFFERING at the 2007 Area Assembly at East Dallas Christian Church at 3 PM on May 6. Our goal is to raise \$45,000 toward New Church Planting in honor of the 45th anniversary of this Area. I trust that your church is saving dollars for this!

As churches AND individuals, our evangelistic strategy should be:

PRAYER: *to pray for those not yet in a settled relationship with God.*

CARE: *to seek to meet legitimate human need because it is what Jesus would do.*

SHARE: *to be honest with people about the reason we have hope within us.*

HANG IN THERE: *relational evangelism takes place over long stretches of time.*



North Texas Area Assembly
Sunday, May 6, 2007
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Dr. Newell Williams, Speaker

East Dallas Christian Church
629 N Peak St.

Come celebrate 45 years of ministry!!

Clergy Lunch

There will be an Area Clergy lunch on Saturday, May 5, at 1:00 p.m. Special guest will be **Rev. Sharon Watkins**, General Minister and President of the the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. The lunch will be at Midway Hills Christian, 11001 Midway Rd., Dallas.

Clergy Retreat

Area Clergy are invited to attend a Retreat on April 9 & 10 at the Catholic Conference Center, 901 S. Madison Ave., Dallas. **Rev. Kathryn Godby**, Associate Minister, First Christian, Fort Worth will lead a session on Tuesday morning. Cost is \$55 for 4 meals and lodging and \$35 for meals only. Registration deadline is Wednesday, April 4.

Disciples Women/CWF News

Plans to attend this year's Spiritual Life Retreat April 13 - 15 at Disciples Crossing in Athens. The theme is "Branching Out in Faith." Presenters will be **Rev. Irie Session**, Minister of the Area's newest church start, New Life Christian, Dallas; **Rev. Coretha Loughridge**, Area Associate Minister; and **Rev. Deborah Morgan**, Minister of East Dallas Christian. Come join women from all Disciples of Christ churches in the North Texas Area for spiritual renewal, Bible study, music, worship, relaxation, nature walks, fellowship and fun. Limited "First-Timer" scholarships are available. Registration is due by March 30. Information is available from your church's Disciples Women.

Linda Morrow
President

Disciples Men/CMF News

Area quarterly men's breakfast will be Saturday, May 5, at 8:30 a.m. at Melissa Christian in Melissa. Trinity-Brazos Area is hosting the 60th Annual Tri-Area Men's Retreat scheduled for May 18 - 20 at Disciples Crossing. The theme for the retreat is "Become Like Little Children" and the keynote speaker will be **Rev. Dani Loving-Cartwright**, Regional Minister. Cost is \$75 per person before May 4, after that date please add \$10. Registration information is available at your church and at www.ntaccsw.org. "Leading With Passion" is the theme for the Regional Men's Leadership Training to be held April 20-21 at the Wyndham Gardens Hotel (I635 & Coit) in Dallas. **Rev. Herb Lynsky**, Coastal Plains Area Minister will be keynoter.

Robert Turner
President

Youth News



2007 Summer Camps and Conferences

*Discovery 1 Camp (PYF) (completed grades 2 & 3 with adult)	
Directors: Rebeccah Dixon and Jo Beth Lines	May 26 - 28
Grand Camp (Lake Brownwood) (ages 4 - 10 with grandparent)	
Director: Rita Morrelli	May 31 - June 2
NEA CYF Conference (completed grades 9 - 12)	June 4 - 9
Director: Bill Blanks	
*Chi Rho 1 Camp (completed grades 6 & 7)	June 11 - 16
Director: Ken Crawford	
TBA CYF Conference (completed grades 10 - 12)	June 11 - 16
Directors: Derek Tompkins and Billie Baker	
Chi Rho 2 Camp (completed grades 6 & 7)	June 18 - 23
Director: Mark Bridges	
Niner's Youth Conference (completed grade 9)	June 18 - 23
Directors: Isaac Varner and Kayla Coffee	
*JYF 1 Camp (completed grades 4 & 5)	June 25 - 29
Directors: Ann Dotson and Karyl Dunne	
Chi Rho 3 Camp (completed grades 6 & 7)	June 25 - 30
Directors: Tiff Austin and Bill Jeffreys	
Discovery 2 Camp (PYF) (completed grades 2 & 3)	
Director: Melissa Lumpkin	June 29 - July 1
Eighth Grade 1 Camp (completed grade 8) (Eighther's)	July 1 - 7
Directors: Greg and Kelly Gray	
*NTA CYF Conference (completed grades 9 - 12)	July 9 - 14
Director: Mike McConachie	
Wilderness Camp (completed grades 5 - 7)	July 13 - 15
Directors: Dan Bubach and Greg Gray	
JYF 2 Camp (completed grades 4 & 5)	July 16 - 20
Directors: Emily Steeples and Kathy Barnes	
*Eighth Grade 2 Camp (completed grade 8) (Eighther's)	
	July 29 - August 4
Directors: Jason Mangham and Jeff & Vicki Robinett	

* Primary NTA leadership

The registration deadline for each camp is the Monday closest to 3 weeks prior to the start of the camp.

Early Bird Fees (before April 16, 2007)		Regular Fees (after April 16, 2007)	
CYF & Niner's Conference	\$275	CYF & Niner's Conference	\$300
8 th Grade Camp	\$310	8 th Grade Camp	\$335
Chi Rho 1, 2 & 3 Camp	\$260	Chi Rho 1, 2 & 3 Camp	\$285
JYF 1 & 2 Camp	\$205	JYF 1 & 2 Camp	\$230
Discovery Camp	\$ 85	Discovery Camp	\$ 95
Grand Camp	\$110	Grand Camp	\$130
Wilderness Camp	\$ 85	Wilderness Camp	\$ 95

Forms are available from your Youth Minister, church office or can be found at www.ntaccsw.org

Chi Rho Mid-Winter asks "Are You Going MY Way?"



Chi Rho youth listen to the keynoter during the weekend at left and below.



Youth, at left, participate in a drama group planning their part for worship.



Have You Thought About...

Joining a General Assembly Mission Pre-Event July 18-21 in Fort Worth

Disciples Can... Disciples Share will begin Wednesday at 6 p.m. and conclude Saturday at noon. All ages and skill levels are welcome.

Various service opportunities in the Texas Christian University area will be offered at homeless shelters, food banks, nursing homes, and community clean up.

Cost is \$60 per person and includes a place to sleep at a church, showers, meals, insurance, t-shirt and work supplies.

A great opportunity for a local mission trip for your high school or middle school youth groups. A great chance for families to serve together or for adults in a local church to go on a mini-mission trip!

Register at [http:// 2007GeneralAssembly/GA07Mission.htm](http://2007GeneralAssembly/GA07Mission.htm)

North Texas Area Bulletin Board

Share an Hour . . . Shape a Life

One hour a week of your time can change the life of a child. Volunteer as a tutor or mentor for a child in elementary, middle or high school ~ for one hour a week and you can help shape a child's life. Opportunities to volunteer are offered through Communities In Schools Dallas Region, Inc. in 59 sites (primarily schools) in nine school districts.

Two local Disciples pastors have already stepped up to make a difference! **Rev. David Cartwright** and five laypersons from Community Christian, Richardson volunteer at Richardson West Junior High School, across the street from the church. The church was looking to make a presence in the school when CIS staff from the school came to them asking for mentors and tutors for the students. David notes, "Our people are there to provide an adult affirmation team for at risk students. We are adults who are there for the students on a consistent basis to listen, encourage and support them."

Rev. Harold Elias-Perciful, pastor of First Christian, Carrollton, volunteers at Farmers Branch Elementary School. **Victoria Mendoza**, CIS Campus Manager, wrote, "It's always a pleasure to catch a conversation between Harold and his students; his sense of humor and ability to relate well to the students makes their time together very special. His positive attitude is contagious and leaves his students excited about his next visit. Harold is a great friend and role model."

Kudos to these Disciples who are making a difference in the lives of children in our communities! For more information about Communities In Schools Dallas, please call **Carolyn Bullard** at 214.827.0955 ext. 229.



Did You Know or Consider....

Your Sunday School class or small group might want to make arrangements to carpool or ride the train to Fort Worth for a special one day General Assembly outing. Register on site (\$40/day), Attend business sessions, workshops, mission efforts and worship. Look what's going on at www.disciples.org/ga

Disciples in the Christian Church in the Southwest Region automatically receive a discount on our registration fee. We pay \$95 for pre-registration instead of \$125. (Registration fees increase on June 1)

You can support General Assembly even if you can't attend. With a gift of \$25 you will receive a copy of the General Assembly News. With a gift of \$50, you will receive the News and an Assembly Docket. With a gift of \$100, you will receive the News, a Docket and a DVD. Register for Non-Attending Support at www.disciples.org/ga

You can support General Assembly with your prayers. Begin to pray daily for our denomination and its leaders. Pray that God's will be done through our decisions and our study and that God's name will be glorified through our worship and our mission. Sign up for 10,000 Disciples Praying at www.disciples.org

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Joys

Congratulations to **Warren Avenue Christian, Dallas** on their 137th Anniversary celebrated March 4.

Congratulations to **Rev. Irie Session** on her Ordination at Rosemont Christian Center on March 24. She is the minister of a new church start, New Life Christian.

Sympathy

Sympathy to **Rev. Wesley Sims** and family at the death of his wife, **Christine**, in February. A memorial service was held at Warren Avenue Christian.

Minister News

Rev. Charlotte Coyle has been called as Transitional Minister to Midway Hills Christian, Dallas.

Rev. Gary Bronson has been called as Transitional Minister to First Christian, Ennis.

Rev. Bob Chandler has been called as Transitional Minister to First Christian, Paris.

Rev. J. Allen Lowe has been called as Senior Minister to Creekwood Christian, Flower Mound. He will begin in May.



Above, Members of First Christian, Lancaster attended dinner at Ministers Week where they were presented the first Brite Award.

Area Calendar

April

Area Office closed for Good Friday
April 6, 2007

NTA Clergy Retreat
Catholic Formation & Retreat Center
April 9 & 10, 2007

Licensed Minister Training - 8:45 a.m.
First Christian - Grand Prairie
April 14, 2007

Disciples Women Spiritual Life Retreat
Disciples Crossing - Athens
April 13 - 15, 2007

Stalcup School of Theology for the Laity
Fred Craddock
First Christian, Arlington - 8:30 a.m.
April 21, 2007

May

Disciples Men/CMF Quarterly Breakfast
Melissa Christian - 8:30 a.m.
May 5, 2007

Area Assembly - 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
East Dallas Christian
May 6, 2007

Clergy Sexual Misconduct Prevention Seminar, Rosemont Christian, Dallas
May 12, 2007

Area Cabinet Meeting - 5:30 p.m.
Area Office
May 15, 2007

Clergy Sexual Misconduct Prevention Seminar in Spanish - 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Houston, TX
May 17, 2007

Disciples Men/CMF Retreat
Disciples Crossing, Athens
May 18 - 20, 2007

Discovery 1 Camp
Disciples Crossing - Athens
May 26 - 28, 2007

Grand Camp
Lake Brownwood
May 31 - June 2, 2007

Young Adult Retreat
Disciples Crossing - Athens
May 31 - June 3, 2007

June

NTA Board Meeting - 9:00 a.m.
First Christian, Duncanville
June 2, 2007

North Texas Area of the Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest
2400 Lone Star Drive Suite 101
Dallas, TX 75212-6309



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North Texas Area Assembly

Dr. Newell Williams
Guest Preacher

Sunday, May 6
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

East Dallas
Christian Church
629 N. Peak St.