



Larry's Latest

Surprised by Joy!

OK, so I underestimated the North Texas Area. I won't make that mistake again! I assumed that the Swine Flu scare and competition from the Dallas Mavericks would result in fewer than normal folk coming out to the Area Assembly. Write it on your calendar: Larry was wrong! We lost count after the 240 bulletins were snatched up before the main rush even came into the sanctuary. Even more impressive was the crowd of folk who stayed for the reception, and spent time working on the new Regional Vision and Mission statements. My thanks to every person who came, sang, and enjoyed a very good day at Northway Christian Church.

This new Regional Vision and Mission is all about becoming a community of missional communities. Just as our churches are made up of small communities of social networks, families and groups of friends, so the Area Church and Regional Church are each 'communities of communities'. We may not see each other except at Area, Regional and General Assemblies, but when we do, regaining a sense of identity is not hard to do: we are church, at our best, TOGETHER.

Through praying together, studying scripture together, and sensitivity to the nudge of the Holy Spirit, most of the churches in the Area are becoming focused on a mission beyond their own survival. Five congregations have met several times over the last year to urge one another on to do mission, forming a real sense of community. At anniversaries and building dedications I have attended, there are always many, many congregations represented. And all it takes is a reading of the newsletters that come to the Area Office to get a sense of momentum building and new life springing forth as churches do mission beyond their walls, and often in partnership with other churches! And nowhere does that sense of Christian Community become stronger than in the camps, conferences and retreats we enjoy. There, with people from many, many churches, we see church from a new perspective. We enjoy God together.

I remember one time when I was a teenager. I was so focused on the new bowling ball I had purchased that I walked into a plate glass window instead of through the door opening! When we are focused on ourselves alone, we are in danger. When a church is only interested in itself, it dies. But when we become a MISSIONAL COMMUNITY, life can (and does) spring forth.

13 Youth Selected to 2009-2010 Youth Ministry Council

The Youth Ministry Council for 2009-2010 was selected Saturday, March 28 at First Christian, Garland. Members selected to return to the council were: **Curran Kelley**, Northway, Dallas and **Katherine Wright**, First, McKinney. Newly selected members of the council were: **Annah Bruno**, Casa View, Dallas; **Caytie Clark**, First, Rowlett; **Lisa Drake**, Creek-wood, Flower Mound; **Logan Dunne**, First, Rowlett; **James Evans**, Highlands, Dallas; **Jake Johnson**, First, Garland; **David Mathews**, First, McKinney; **Trevor Mills**, Creekwood, Flower Mound; **Anna Plunkett**, Northway, Dallas; **Natalie Shoemaker**, Irving North; and **Zayn Waller**, United Disciples, Richardson. They were installed at the Area Assembly on May 3. These youth will participate in planning the 2010 Mid-Winter Retreat and 2010 CYF Conference and attend Christian Youth Leadership Seminar this June at Lake Brownwood.

Katherine Wright was selected to serve as Youth Representative to the Regional Youth Council and will represent the North Texas Area at Regional Events in 2009-2010.

Continued on page 3

In this issue:

Irie's Insights
Page 2

Youth News
Page 3

Area News
Page 4

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Editor

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Irie's Insights

Now I know some of you may think what I'm about to say is a bit strange, but I'm going to say it anyway! I was thrilled when I discovered the 2009-2010 Quadrennial Service Project was, *Human Trafficking: Breaking the Chains of Modern Slavery!* You see, for over six years it has been my joy and pain to serve women who are victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation. While the damage done to these girls who become women is unfathomable, having the opportunity to be a part of God transforming their lives has been both amazing and life altering.

Each Wednesday night I'm privileged to stand before these precious women and share the love and healing power of a God who cares, restores, and makes all things new. One such woman is Gwen.

Gwen is a thirty-eight year old mother of three. When she was twelve years old her mother gave her away. You heard me right "gave her away"! Now, Gwen's mother didn't give her to just anyone, she gave Gwen to her uncle, her brother. He was a PIMP. Not only was he a pimp, he was a drug dealer and terribly abusive. In Gwen's words, her uncle "turned her out."

To be "turned out" means to be introduced to a life that is cruel, dangerous, and damaging to one's soul - he made Gwen, a twelve year old little girl, have sex with adult men...for money. This is the heart of Human Trafficking - forced/coerced sexual exploitation. You see, Human Trafficking isn't just an international phenomenon, it occurs in Any City, USA - right here in the DFW Metroplex - right in Gwen's own family.

Human Trafficking has many layers and one form of it is called Familial Prostitution, the selling of one's family member for sex in exchange for drugs, shelter, or money. Sadly, this is a large and overlooked problem in the United States. In fact 9 out of 10 assessments performed by Shared Hope International (an organization addressing Domestic Minor Trafficking in the U.S.) reported familial prostitution as a severe form of Domestic Minor Trafficking occurring in the community. The Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act identifies these parents/relatives as traffickers.

But let's get back to Gwen's story: As a victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Gwen began using drugs to medicate her pain and ease her feelings of shame, self-hatred, and worthlessness. As an adult, and because she had no skills, support or education, she continued to trade sex for money in order to survive. That is, until four years ago. One night Gwen came to the Wednesday Night Bible study and soon joined New Friends New Life, a local ministry helping survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation start new lives. Gwen began attending the Wednesday Night Bible study and receiving mentoring and support. Today, Gwen is a loving mother, with a full-time job she simply loves. Gwen is also a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and has begun a bible study at her place of employment. Gwen has a new life in Christ and new friends who love honor and respect her.

So Kudos to DWM for taking on the challenge of reaching out to women in the margins-women who are victims of Human Trafficking.

If you're interested in volunteer opportunities or making a financial contribution, please contact **Lalla Shackelford** at (214) 965-0935 or to send monetary donations to New Friends New Life, P.O. Box 192378, Dallas, Texas 75219.



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
First, Denison
Monica Park, Garland
Irving North
First, Lewisville
First, Plano
Central, Sherman

Youth



News

2009 Summer Camps and Conferences (All camps at Disciples Crossing, Athens)

Discovery 2 Camp (completed grades 2 and/or 3) Directors: Dottie Cook and Britton Palvik	June 26 - 28
*JYF 1 Camp (completed grades 4 and/or 5) Directors: Anne Dotson and Karyl Dunne	June 22 - 26
JYF 2 Camp (completed grades 4 and/or 5) Directors: Linda Green and Jennifer Weems	June 29 - July 3
JYF 3 Camp (completed grades 4 and/or 5) Directors: Megan Ammann and Adam Fambrough	July 20 - 24
*Chi Rho 1 Camp (completed grades 6 and/or 7) Directors: Tricia Beckham and Paul Carpenter	June 8 - 13
Chi Rho 2 Camp (completed grades 6 and/or 7) Director: Stephen Gumber	June 15 - 20
Chi Rho 3 Camp (completed grades 6 and/or 7) Directors: Mike Fielding and Anne Ross	June 22 - 27
Eighters 1 Camp (completed grade 8) Directors: Angie Leisure and Josh Toulouse	July 12 - 18
*Eighters 2 Camp (completed grade 8) Directors: Dan Bubach and Arthur Stewart	July 26- August 1
Niners Conference (completed grade 9) Directors: Analease and Peter Mitchell	June 29 - July 4
NEA CYF Conference (completed grades 9 - 12) Director: Cory Glover	June 8 - 13
TBA CYF Conference (completed grades 10 - 12) Directors: Kristen Jack and Troy Smith	June 15 - 20
*NTA CYF Conference (completed grades 9 - 12) Directors: Tammie Johnston and Mike McConachie	July 6 - 11

*Camps staffed by North Texas Area

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

<u>Late Registration Fees (after My 15 for June Camps/June 15 for July Camps)</u>			
Grand Camp	\$190	Eighters Camp	\$410
Discovery Camp	\$165	Niners Conference	\$370
JYF Camp	\$295	CYF Conference	\$370
Chi Rho Camp	\$355		

13 Youth Selected

(continued from page 1)

Alexandra Nied who serves on the General Youth Council for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) also serves on the Youth Ministry Council in an ex-officio position.

Congratulations to all these youth!

Adults serving as advisors with the Youth Ministry Council for 2009-2010 are: **Rebecca Anderson**, First, Garland; **Carroll Sims**, First, Lewisville; **Chris St. Clair**, First, McKinney; **Arthur Stewart**, Creekwood, Flower Mound; **Casey Tanguay**, Northway, Dallas and **Aaron Todd**, United Disciples, Richardson. Rebecca is the Regional Adult Representative from our Area.



Patricia and José Almanza, (second and far right) pictured above with Hispanic pastors visiting Mexico.

Disciples Hispanic Pastors Visit Partners in Mexico

Felix Ortiz, Global Ministries Latin America and Caribbean Area Executive and **Huberto Pimentel**, Disciples National Hispanic Pastor, led a group of six pastors (**José and Patricia Almanza**, from the North Texas Area; **Hector Hilario Curiel**, **Vilson Hurtado**, **Israel Martinez**, and **Juan Davila Ortiz**) on a People-to-People pilgrimage to visit partners in Mexico April 22-29, 2009.

North Texas Area Bulletin Board

Bob Williams Elected to Christian Church Foundation Board

Outgoing NTA Moderator, **Bob Williams**, of Warren Avenue Christian, Dallas, has been elected for the 2010-2013 term to the Board of Directors of the Christian Church Foundation. "As a lifelong Disciple and a respected businessman, he has the core competencies the church needs in making sure we have a strong Foundation perpetuity," said the **Rev. Gary W. Kidwell**, Foundation president.

The Foundation is the general ministry of the Christian Church that deals with permanent funds and investment of church-owned endowments.

HELM Fellow from NTA Congregation

Higher Education & Leadership Ministries (HELM) Leadership Fellows are undergraduate students who plan to serve as leaders, both lay and clergy, in the church. These members of the Christian Church create projects that involve them in the campus community and develop their leadership skills. As the largest Disciples undergraduate institution, TCU has a large share of Fellows. One of them is **Caroline Hamilton**, a sophomore from First Christian, Lewisville. She organized Christian Spirituality workshops, providing opportunities for TCU students to explore both new and traditional spiritual practices.

Rob Chandler Family Education Fund

Many of you are aware of the death of **Rev. Rob Chandler**, the son of **Bob and Cherry Chandler**, husband of **Tonya** and father of three children. A fund has been established to help with the future educational expenses for the children: **Chance**, 20, **Cherylanne**, 14 and **Colin**, 5. Friends and family can now provide assistance through generous acts of love and remembrance. Checks should be made payable to First Christian Church, Bryan/College Station, marked "Rob Chandler Family Education Fund," and sent to Brazos Valley Bank, 4030 Hwy. 6 South, College Station, TX 77845.

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns**Joys**

Congratulations to these recent Brite Seminary graduates: **Paul Carpenter, John Clay**, and graduating from Truett Seminary at Baylor University: **Elizabeth Grasham-Reeves**. Elizabeth was ordained May 16 in Lakewood Christian, Waco and Paul was ordained May 23 at First Christian, Gainesville.

Congratulations to **J. Allen and Shirley Lowe** at the birth of their newest granddaughter, **Madison Reese Lowe** in February. They recently were able to take time to visit her in Corpus Christi.

Congratulations to **Revs. Joe & Alicia Harker** at the birth of their son, **Matthew Joseph**.

Minister News

Rev. Casey Abney Matthews has been called to serve Central Christian, Frisco as minister.

Rev. Christal Fisher has been called to serve First Christian, Aubrey as minister. Christal is a student at Brite.

Rev. Roy Clemmons has been called to serve First Christian, Ennis as minister.

Sympathy

Sympathy to **Rev. Bob Chandler** and his wife, **Cherry**, at the death of their son, **Rev. Rob Chandler**, of Bryan/College Station.

Area Calendar**June**

Area Board Meeting
Community Christian, Richardson
June 6, 2009

NTA DWM Board Meeting
First Christian, Denton -
10:00 a.m.
June 13, 2009

Stalcup Lecture on Christian
Unity - 3:00 p.m.
East Dallas Christian
June 14, 2009

Southwest DWM Women's
Assembly
Embassy Suites - DFW
Airport South
June 26 - 28, 2009

Christian Youth Leadership
Seminar (CYLS)
Lake Brownwood
June 28 - July 1, 2009

July

NTA YMC Planning Retreat
Northway Christian, Dallas
July 1 - 3, 2009

Office closed for Holiday
July 4, 2009

Texas Christian Missionary
Fellowship Annual Assembly
Jarvis Christian College
July 8 - 11, 2009

Area Cabinet Meeting
Area Office - 5:30 p.m.
July 21, 2009

General Assembly
Indianapolis, IN
July 29 - August 2

August

Area Men's Breakfast
First Christian, Carrollton
August 1, 2009 - 8:30 a.m.

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