

# HILLTOP NEWS

"A city on a hill cannot be hidden." Matthew 5:14b



**ARISE,  
SHINE;**

for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD  
has risen upon you.

Isaiah 60:1, NRSV

GRAAFSCHAP CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

January 2012

In the twilight  
In the twinkling of an eye  
Just around the bend  
Look to the sky..  
A new day will begin  
An era will be gone  
A new year will start  
Different than before.  
Nothing will last  
All will be changed  
All will be new  
On that very day.  
Be prepared  
It's on its way  
A new life is coming  
It may be today.

Linda Louisa Johnson



**January Birthdays:**

- 2 - Rev. James Lont, 82 years
- 14 - Gladys Genzink, 86 years
- 27 - Leon Scholten, 92 years
- 27 - Pauline Schrottenboer, 89 years
- 28 - Gertrude Scholten, 95 years
- 31 - Jay Wolbert, 84 years



**January Anniversary:**

- 19 - Russell & Jean Goeman, 61 years



We would like to thank everyone who helped decorate the church for Christmas. - Diand & Mark Breuker



I am blessed to be remembered by so many of you with cards and "Happy Birthday" greetings. I thank you and I thank the Lord for his blessings to me!  
- Adrianna Scholten

Thank you for the Christmas cards given.  
- Luke Templeman

Thank you to all who made donations to the high school summer mission trip through the Thanksgiving offering, desserts after the congregational meeting, and Quality Car Wash coupons. With your financial support we are on our way toward reaching our goal!  
- High school Mission Trip Participants

Dear Graafschap Church,  
Thank you for investing in our families that we serve here at Buen Pastor Migrant Head Start and Day Care. Through your kind giving we have been able to continue to provide services to sixty-one children this past season. Once again, your gift was greatly appreciated. Sincerely yours, from the families, children and staff of Buen Pastor.

Dear Graafschap CRC,  
Home Missions would like to thank you for your gift to us. In the last three years alone, your church has given over \$8,000 to Home Missions above Ministry Shares. We are very grateful for your support and partnership. Due to your support we are able to extend grant funding to over 120 new churches and new campus ministries in ministry year 2012. So, THANK YOU very much.

- Laura Posthumus, Advancement Liaison

### Verna Bruischart at Resthaven Maplewoods

Dear Members,

I have lived at Resthaven, Maplewood. Food is good, staff is very friendly and helpful, and members are very friendly.

They have activities every month for any who want to take part in them. Every Tuesday morning I take part in Bible study, which I find very interesting.

Also, this month we took a trip to see the Christmas lights in the area of Resthaven. I love living at Resthaven Maplewoods.

I am glad to be part of the Family of God. Have a happy new year!  
- Verna Bruischart

JANUARY 2012						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- 3 - Education Committee, 7:30 PM
- 4 - Prayer, 6 AM  
House of Prayer, 6:30 PM
- 5 - Ladies Aid, 1:30 PM
- 9 - Men's Bible Fellowship, 7:30 PM
- 10 - Sewing, 9 AM  
Evangelism Committee, 7:15 PM  
Heritage Center Committee, 7 PM
- 11 - Prayer, 6 AM
- 12 - Elders, 7 PM  
Volleyball, 7 PM
- 15 - Cadet Sunday
- 16 - Men's Bible Fellowship, 7:30 PM
- 17 - All Committees Meeting, 7 PM
- 18 - Prayer, 6 AM  
Executive Committee, 7 PM
- 19 - Ladies Aid, 1:30 PM  
CPR, 4:30 PM  
Volleyball, 7 PM
- 20 - Meghan Derks/Kyle Redder Wedding, 6 PM
- 22 - Couples Club, 4:30
- 23 - Men's Bible Fellowship, 7:30 PM
- 25 - Prayer, 6 AM
- 26 - Council, 7 PM  
Volleyball, 7 PM
- 29 - Heritage Center open after AM service
- 30 - Men's Bible Fellowship, 7:30 PM
- 31 - Heritage Center Open House, 7-9 PM

Thank you for the many cards I received for my birthday. The thoughts expressed were greatly appreciated.  
- Clarence F Walters



### Used Stamps Needed

We are collecting used and new stamps for Wycliffe Bible Translators. Please save yours and put them in the fall container in the hall on the table next to the kitchen. Thanks, Adrianna Scholten



### Zuni Christian Reformed Mission December Prayer Bulletin

It was "one of those days". I taught the first graders their math lesson and sent them to their desks with an assignment. As I worked with the second graders in a circle on the rug, I overheard Percilla Chimoni, our educational assistant, again explaining the math to two first grade girls. After I finished, I called each to me and one at a time, gave them more practice with the concept they found hard. And what do you know? Minutes later, I heard Percilla again walking the girls through the steps of their math. There was an edge of justified impatience in her voice. I went over to her and said to the class, "I think Mrs. Chimoni needs a hug." We all laughed as I hugged her. She continued tutoring the bewildered twosome, but the girls still didn't understand. Awhile later Mrs. Chimoni took a group to the library and I knelt beside the struggling pair. After a few minutes of fruitless effort, I wailed to the kids, "Now I need a hug!" They swarmed me hugging and laughing. When they had returned to their desks and I was refocused on helping the two, a child called out, "Now can we cheer?" "Not yet!" I told her.

I told the story to a colleague and suddenly recognized that this small classroom vignette is a picture of our ministry in our community. These December days when Zuni traditional religious ceremonial life consumes the hearts, minds and resources of the entire community, it sometimes seems to us as Christians that we stand helplessly (with a touch of impatience?) alongside our students, their families, our friends and neighbors explaining over and over again the Truth of the Gospel. Daily, we tell our children the story of Jesus. Daily, the Christians in Zuni come alongside people to

be the hands and heart of the Lord. In word and deed, prayer and praise, Christ is proclaimed. Like baffled teachers who wonder, "How can we make this clearer? Why don't they 'get it'?" We who have seen the Light of Christ wonder why those we love settle for darkness. Why such a dogged pursuit of 'other gods'? Then from out of God's merciful storehouse comes the consoling encouragement of prayer--your prayers, our prayers for each other, the Holy Spirit's prayers for us all. So we ask you to pray for us. Pray for the salvation of souls in the Zuni Pueblo. Pray for the Glory of the Lord to be revealed.

Looking back on that afternoon in my classroom, when the question "Now can we cheer?" was asked, I wish I had said, "Yes." I wish I had acknowledged the gift of seeking minds, the gift of persistent teachers, the gift of an encouraging company. I didn't then, but I do so now. Raise a cheer, good Christian men and women! In the town of Zuni, there are many whose empty hurting hearts seek the Truth; there are bold and faithful witnesses to the Gospel; there is the beauty of your sustaining prayers; there is the patient work of the Holy Spirit.

Kathy Bosscher  
Principal

### MINISTRY REPORT TO CLASSES AND COUNCILS:

Our denomination issued a six page report for January 2012. This is a summary of the report. The theme of this report is "Transitions and Renewal". Back to God Hour International, Calvin College, Calvin Seminary, Home Missions, the Denomination Offices and Dordt College have recently experienced or anticipate changes in leadership. This sparks a new opportunity for change and renewal.

**Chaplaincy and Care:** We grew from 117 to 122 chaplains in 2011, but seeing less demand for hospital chaplains and more for hospice ministry. Efforts to encourage this ministry include presenting the need to 13 different educational institutions, and working together with several of our agencies to identify gifts to determine the best ministry fit.

**Disability Concerns:** In cooperation with RCA, Disability Concerns is collecting stories, poetry, videos, and photos of artwork from people who have mental illness. Protecting people's identity by publishing by permission and respecting requests for not publishing the submitter's name, these items will be used to increase our sensitivity to this problem.

**Faith Alive** offers an increasingly wide range of materials published, using media such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to introduce new products. The Banner is changing from print-based to an e-base,

providing for "kitchen table" conversation in reader responses.

**Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action:**

Noting half the world lives on less than \$2 per day, resulting in malnutrition, it reports a second year of Show of Hands campaign in support of Millennium Development Goals, targeting an attempt to end poverty by 2015. While this is not possible, work for justice is. Current activities include supporting three young journalists traveling across Africa to study climate change, working with Race Relations to offer a new curriculum on immigration, and partnership with Hope Equals to work for peace in the Middle East.

**Pastor-Church Relations:** Highlights include the Specialized Transitional Ministers (STM) to help congregations in transition, developing a training tool to help pastors and congregations communicate together, putting pastor and congregation profiles on the web, and leading pastor retreats.

**Safe Church Ministry:** Reports finding a fulltime director to be a big challenge. New resources include *Safe Church Ministry: A Church Leader's Role*, and *What does Safe Church Ministry Do?* It also sent out bulletin inserts for Abuse Awareness Sunday.

**Race Relations,** cooperating with other CRC agencies and the RCA, report developing Dance of Racial Reconciliation (DORR), developing a study guide, and sending a CD, *Facing Racism*, to the churches. It has given \$11,000 in scholarships in 2011 to college students.

**Sustaining Congregational Excellence and Sustaining Pastoral Excellence:** Much of this has been funded in the past through the Lilly Endowment, but the program will continue through denomination funding. The two programs will be streamed into one.

**Calvin College:** Gaylen Byker retires as president. His time in office leaves a legacy of growth and development. Prayer is for both President Byker and the new president announced and to be interviewed by Synod 2012. He will join a team of committed Christians to the mission and Reformed identity of the College.

**Calvin Seminary** welcomes Rev. Jul Medenblik as the new president. Currently 310 students are enrolled, 130 in the Master of Divinity program. 82% are male, 18% are female. While the majority of students are CRC, students come from 30 denominational backgrounds representing 20 different nations. 53 students come South Korea. A new five year Master of Divinity cohort program is scheduled to begin 2012.

**Canadian Ministries:** CM reports of "reforming Relationships" art tour, paintings called "Kisemanito Pakitinasuwin-The Creator's Sacrifice" depicted in Woodland Cree at Wanaskewin Heritage park in Saskatoon. Efforts at reconciliation include: attendance at Truth and Reconciliation Commission's National Event, "Blanket Exercise" at Classis meetings

(explaining the history of Aboriginal people's interactions with European settlers) and "Day of Encouragement" events at colleges and universities. The Centre for Public Dialogue has been researching Indigenous education as an important issue of reconciliation.

**Back to God:** Rev. Jimmy Lin is serving as interim director due to the passing of Rev. Heerspink. The *Today* booklets are now available through web site ministry. Chinese ministry is reaching mainland China, Arabic ministry is reaching Muslims, and Spanish and Russian ministry is using social media.

**Home Missions** reports of an increased focus on prayer in its ministry.

**World Missions** reports of its work with the Tiv people. This ministry was begun by two South African missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1911. Twenty-five years of work produced 25 converts. The CRC took over the work in 1954, and this is now a denomination (NKST) of 500,000 people. This group operates more than 500 primary schools, 50 secondary schools and one university. Graduates have taken leadership positions in Nigeria, Iyorwese Haghar is Nigeria's High Commissioner to Canada, and John Orkar taught at Calvin College and served CRWRC.

**Dynamic Youth Ministries** reports improved retreats and resources like Equip Magazine. New conventions include Live It, and The Marion Project.

**Partners Worldwide** is growing as a ministry. It works closely with CRWRC and CRCNA to use the market place as a ministry, an idea gaining traction. This ministry helps people in the third world start businesses, a meaningful opportunity for witness.



**Baby Bottle Project:** This is an advanced notice to tell you we will make baby bottles available from Lakeshore Pregnancy Center Sunday, January 8. This will help this important ministry to help mothers to choose life. The help to these mothers and babies is vital because these usually crisis pregnancies.

If you put checks in the bottle, please make them payable to Lakeshore Pregnancy Center. Donations by check are tax deductible. This is not a function of Right to Life, which is not tax deductible.

# Our Beautiful Mission Newsletter

December 2011



Sue, Ray, Bryan and Anita at Ray and Sue's farewell dinner, October

## Kid's Corner

*Faith - "Aunt Judith has died and most people are still sad, but 2 of my very best friends have been adopted and 2 other of my friends went back to their mom. I love Beautiful Gate and you should come!"*

*Elijah - "I enjoyed the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was filled with laughter, big meals, and fun! We went to Port Elizabeth in September and I got to pet a cheetah which was heaven. In 2 more days we will have been here 1 year and I am happy."*

*Marcy - "I got to pet a Cheetah and hold snakes and baby lions. I like that Ms. Nancy, Miss Terp, and Ms. Lori came. I love all the Beautiful Gate kids and I love everybody else!"*

## The Official Handover - Bryan is the new Director!

On October 20, 2011, we attended a farewell dinner for Ray and Sue Hoakonsen as they stepping away from their role as directors and moving to Cape Town, South Africa to begin a new ministry. There were many special friends of Ray and Sue who gave speeches and shared some of their special memories of Ray and Sue, and then Ray shared the complete history of Beautiful Gate, which was very good to hear as we all reflected on how far

God has brought Beautiful Gate over the past 10 years. Ray and Sue have an amazing faith that God will always provide. Bryan and I are stepping into our new roles trusting that God will continue to bless Beautiful Gate for the next 10 years. We may only be a part of the next 4, but we know that God has great plans to prosper Beautiful Gate as the staff and volunteers do their best to care for God's little ones.

## Mission Teams

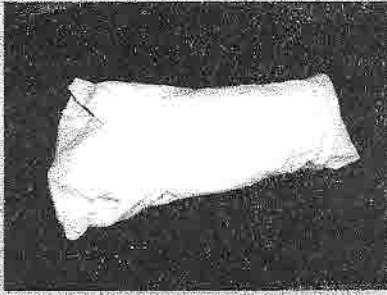
In the beginning of October, we had a team of 22 middle, high school, and college aged youth from Johannesburg come to Beautiful Gate for 4 days. They did some painting, planting flowers, and any other job the maintenance men could get them to do. We received a few emails after they left that were very encouraging and one of the leaders said: after hearing our testimony, he is seriously considering going into the mission field. God is so amazing that He can use our family to encourage others. Then on October 14<sup>th</sup>, we had a team from Haven CRC (our home church), come for 10 days. They helped us with so

many projects to prepare for Ray and Sue's farewell as well as our big 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary open house here at BG. They were such a blessing to us and we never could have pulled off either of those 2 events without their help, but one of the best parts was when they handed out a solar powered audio Bible to each staff member. One staff member mentioned that it was the only Bible they had ever owned and another said that her eyes have grown so weak that she can no longer read, but now she can hear God's word. Praise God for the opportunity to share His Word!



Our friends from Zeeland and Holland, Michigan

James 1:27



Baby Judith passed away on November 16, 2011. She was laid to rest November 24, 2011.

### Yet I will Praise the LORD – Blog Post from November 19, 2011

Though there are starving children living next door to me,

Though my son's best friend is an orphan being raised by his older sister, and often does not have enough food to eat,

Though I do not have enough money to help some of the kids who need it desperately,

Though God has not chosen our family to be a forever family to the boys we love,

Though my heart has more scars in one year than it had in the first 34 put together,

Though God has called home a precious baby girl whom I love dearly,

Yet I will praise the Lord. His name will be praised in all circumstances and I will put my trust in Him because He has good plans for us.

One very important lesson I learned 12 years ago when my sister took her life was that God allows very painful and bad things to happen. He could have stopped her, blocked the lies of satan, and took her out of her desperate situation, but He did not.

God could have healed this baby girl. He could have saved her and allowed her to live long on this earth. Her mother was just about to sign the adoption papers which would have released her for adoption and He could have provided a loving family with a beautiful, sweet baby girl, but He did not.

Who am I to question His plan? In Jeremiah 29:11 God tells us that He has a plan for us and it is not in His plans to harm us. So while this may look like "harm" to our human eyes, God is sitting outside of time and orchestrating something good. I love God with my whole heart and although that heart is still hurting and scarred, it is trusting in Him completely. His love endures forever and I choose to accept His will and plan as I know that He is in control.  
Anita

### Our First Year at Beautiful Gate!

It has now been a full year since we arrived at Beautiful Gate and left Zeeland, MI on December 4, 2010. God has been faithful to us and here are a few highlights of this past year:

- 13 children have been adopted
- 5 children have been reunited with their biological families
- 3 children have gone into foster families
- 2 children have gone into the arms of their Father in heaven
- Bryan became the director of Beautiful Gate on October 21, 2011
- Elijah and Faith finished their first year of school on October 13, 2011 (started in Feb.)
- Mercy started school on November 14, 2011
- We hosted 9 teams from all over the world
- We also hosted many volunteers, long and short term, 7 in all
- We started a Bible study in our home on Thursday nights

Thanks for your support this past year and for helping us make a difference in Lesotho.



Cool and crazy times in Port Elizabeth, SA!

If you would like to support us financially, please send a check to:

AFBG  
C/O Danell Czarnocki for Geurink Missionary Fund  
6950 Edison Avenue  
Chino, CA 91710

Follow us at: [ourbeautifulmission.blogspot.com](http://ourbeautifulmission.blogspot.com)

Send us a letter: Geurink Family  
PO BOX 339  
Ladybrand, 9745  
South Africa

Email us at: [bageurink@hotmail.com](mailto:bageurink@hotmail.com)



Dear Family and Friends,

I just wanted to thank you for your continued support for our family. We have been here at Beautiful Gate for a year now. It has been a year filled with wonderful blessings such as seeing many of our new little friends being adopted. I was surprised at how many of our adoptive families have found our blog and so when they show up, they say they feel like they already know us. It has been nice because these adoptive parents have been sending emails and pictures so we know how our little friends are adjusting to their new families.

This year has been one of surprises, such as when Ray and Sue felt God telling them it was time for them to move on to a new ministry and hand over Beautiful Gate's operations to Bryan and I. We never expected that when we decided to come to BG, but we are feeling God's peace about His calling us here for "such a time as this." It is not a job that either of us feel very prepared for and so we would definitely appreciate your prayers for us in this area. It is through our weakness that God's glory will shine as we know we could never do it on our own ;)

It has been a year of tears. Saying good-bye to two precious little girls as they passed into the arms of Jesus was a time of many tears. Also, seeing the two boys we really felt a connection to and were looking into adopting, being reunited with their mother was a time of many tears for our whole family, but God has a plan and we trust His will in these moments of sorrow. We have also shed many tears of joy as we watch new moms and dads meeting their children for the first time. Their love shines in their eyes and just brings tears of pure joy to our eyes.

It has been a year of emotional rollercoasters as we see the effects of joblessness, hunger, poverty, hopelessness, sickness, and desperation. Our eyes have been opened wide to the reality of living in a third world country. Yet we see the love for Jesus displayed in the lives of our Basotho friends. We see the joy of the Lord in the singing and dancing of these hurting people, and in their trust that God will never leave or forsake them no matter how painful their circumstances.

While we have these ups and downs, we are reassured that our God has brought us here to teach us, stretch us, and grow us deeper into a relationship with Him. He has brought us here to use us but also to fill us. We will never be the same, but we never want to go back to who we were before God broke us. We will be forever aware of the needs of those around us whether here in a third world country or when we are back in Zeeland 4 years from now.

My children are being exposed to things that I never could have prepared them for. They have many new friends through BG, the neighbor kids, and the many volunteers and mission teams who have come to BG. They are learning compassion and seeing the effects of injustice. I could never teach them these things and they will never forget. God has opened their little eyes to so many things, but please keep praying for them as it is not always easy for them to process what they see, and it is hard to say good-bye to all those who have come and gone out of their lives.

Thank you for helping us by your prayers, encouraging emails, financial support, and for sharing our story with others. I am amazed at the emails we get and connections we are making all over the world and I thank God for you and your willingness to be a part of our mission to not only the children at Beautiful Gate, but also to the neighborhood of Ha Thetsane here in Maseru. We could not have done it without you. Thank you so much!

May God bless you abundantly in the coming year,

Anita, Bryan, Elijah, Faith and Mercy Geurink



Psalms 37:5, NRSV

### INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS MINISTRY

Dear Friends:

This is of course a real encouragement and inspiration to see your support bathed in prayer reach the Office of Action, which in turn informs me. I never will be able to express sufficient thanks and appreciation for what you have done and are doing in this ministry. We are so thankful.

There are again two huge ships on which we expect to be sailing shortly and during Christmas and new year, to stand in support of the community of sailing seafarers.

It is a huge challenge to minister to them all. They will not be at home, neither will they have the chance to thank and praise God in a church for the miraculous Christmas wonder He has brought about into this world. They will have no 'happy Holidays'. Instead they will be at work on overtime. The ship must sail, 'the show must go on.' But we will be there to remind them that God is very much in our midst despite the fact that for most of them it will not be possible to sing the carols and hear the Gospel proclaimed in a worship service.

We have spoken at every distinct Reformed Seminary in both the USA and in Canada soliciting the services of a committed graduate burdened with a missionary spirit for the thousands of seafarers coming to one of our cruise ship ports—without any positive response.

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of harvest therefore to send out workers into the harvest field." — Jesus (Matthew 9:37-38)

In His Service,

The Rev. Hans Uittenbosch



Everything else is  
WORTHLESS when  
compared with the  
**INFINITE VALUE**  
of knowing  
**Christ Jesus**  
my Lord.

Philippians 3:8, NLT

### FROM NORTHERN LIGHTHOUSE BEACON

Praise:

- Praise God as we come to the end of this year for His provisions for us financially.
- Praise God for the stories of changed lives at the NL and His restoration in the lives of people who were estranged from Him
- Praise God for the completion of the remodel in the Church office, we are grateful for the people and the finances to make this happen.
- Praise God for the growth in numbers that we are having on Sunday mornings.
- Praise God for the community that is forming in two of our Missional Communities as we strive to learn to live life together and as missionaries to those in our lives.
- Praise God that our current preaching series "The Flight" is having a great impact on many as we work through some hard practices to live out from the book of 1 Peter.
- Praise God for the connection with many churches in Lincoln who have the heart and desire to work together for the kingdom.

Prayer:

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to convict and breath new life into many who are saying they want to follow God yet continue to fall into their past ways of life. Pray for the addictions to the past to be broken in all of us.
- Pray for wisdom on how to continue to grow and to help those who come find and follow Jesus. What a great opportunity with great responsibility.
- Pray that as we continue in the numerical growth to be attentive to the priority of training up others to do the ministry.
- Pray for the NL as we go through the holidays that we can really serve Jesus and be with family.



## UNITED IN PRAYER

# Timing ●

I do not recall if it started with a phone call or with an email, but I do know that Doug Walcott of Drenthe CRC in Zeeland, Michigan contacted me to see if we had a work project for a team of guys from their church to come and do. Every few years these guys have blessed our church with the gift of their volunteer, extremely skilled labor.

I remember not knowing what we would have them do and then from somewhere came the idea of removing the chimney from house that has become our beloved office.

It took some work to get the permit and get everything lined up, but it worked out and six men from Drenthe came in mid October and removed the chimney and the carpet and patched up the gaping hole they created in the roof and the ceiling. We were left, however, with the flooring and it also was a good time to repaint the entire interior of the offices.

So we emptied out our offices and a few of us went to work. Several of the guys from the NL and the Charity Autos crew did the repainting and have helped to lay down a new Laminate flooring.

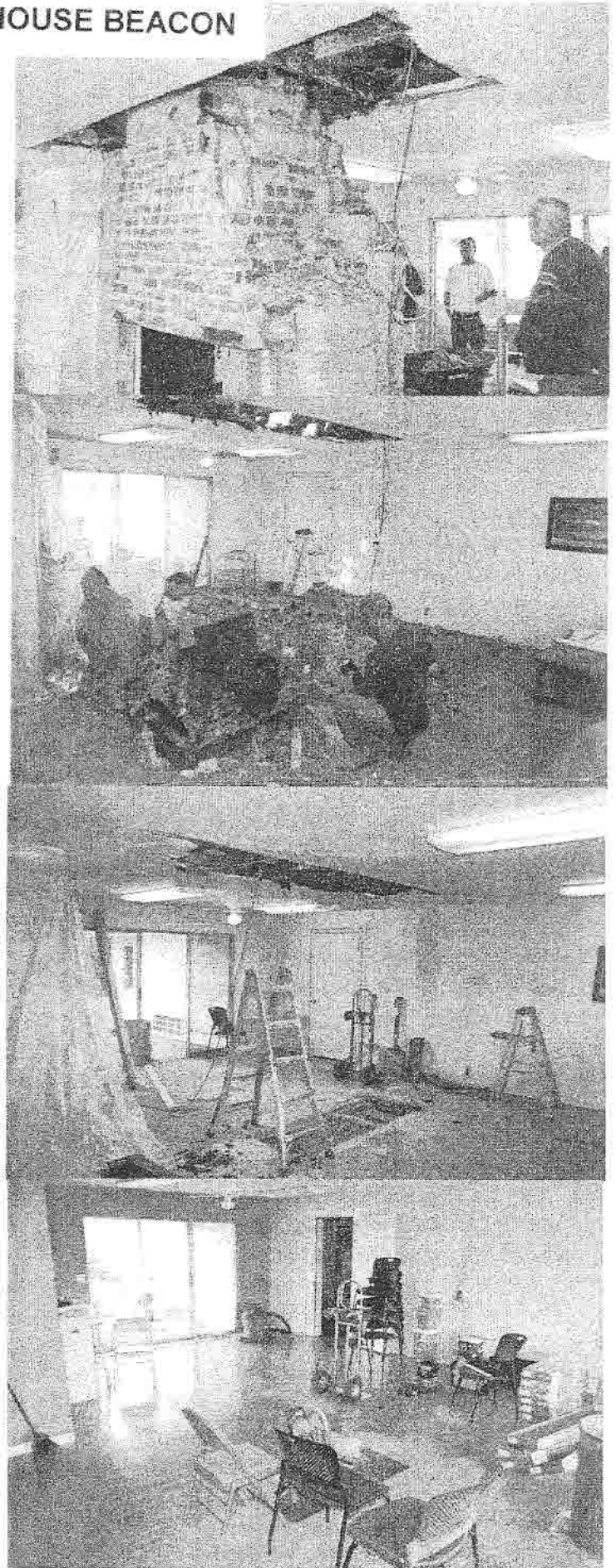
The work could not come at a better time as it gives us a larger room for programs like RIP and possibly more options for Sunday Mornings. Although the State has taken out the bridge over the freeway, cutting off any simple route to the church from town for the winter, church has been packed.

This past week Beth said to me on Sunday afternoon, "I have never not been able to find a seat at church before." That has been the reality as the past few weeks we have had more and more people coming to Sunday Morning worship and have had to again change the seating to get everyone in.

Now we face the challenge of seeking God's will for our church as we face the growth. Thanks to the transformation of the house we have the option of offering an introduction to Christianity at the same time as worship. We are also exploring others options with the Salubrious time and considering the possibility of a second service (although in the past this has not been an effective option).

Thanks to the men of Drenthe and what appears to be Holy Spirit timing, we now have a great new facility for great new ministry options.

Please pray for God's clarity and divine wisdom. We have been at this point of growth before, and desperately want to know God's specific will for our specific church in relation to the growth. Pray that we would be faithful in presenting the Gospel to so many who need the truth.



# Michael ● ● ●

The first time I met Mike I must confess I was filled with judgment. It just so happened that I was driving the community van to bring people home after church that day and he was my last stop. He was covered in gang tattoos and spoke with an authentic East LA accent (If I know what one is). Although he spoke of trying to change his life and get away from the gangs I had my doubts, as he had was the latest boyfriend of a lady who just a week earlier got out of an abusive relationship. So yes, I have to say that I believed the odds were not in his favor.

He continued to show up for several weeks before one Sunday this Spring he pulled me aside to talk to me about wanting to do what was right. He said he was "tired of playing the game." He shared with me that he and his brother were on trial for theft of a car and although the police had little against him he knew what he had done and wanted to make it right. We talked about his options, and what the biblical thing to do would be.

Over the next several months it was great to see how when he trusted God, things began to work out. In the end he paid restitution for the damages and was not jailed again.

Then for a few weeks he and his girlfriend stopped attending. I felt that my original judgment was coming true and that we were witnessing one more person who experienced the joy of the gospel only to be pulled away.

Then the call came for them to get a ride to church again and I was pleased to see them back. It turned out that they had some work issues (funny how one has to work hard to pay restitution) and that his girlfriend's daughter had been very sick.

I was impressed when he called to tell me how God had been speaking to him through the current message series on 1Peter. Not only was he learning in church, he was reading it on his own and was excited to explore the upcoming chapters.

But what really revealed to me the power of the gospel to transform the life of this one-time entrenched gang member was when he started to quote all kinds of Scripture to me in connection with his desire to follow Jesus. He was relating to Paul, and sharing about how God was helping overcome his racism to black people (contrary to his past—"in LA they shot and killed us and we shot and killed them.") He shared how now he and Terry (our Elder, who is African American) had been hanging out and how he was being transformed from hatred to love.

I love to marvel at the Grace of God as I watch His power to transform all people, all nations, all cultures back to Him.

# Family ● ● ●

Done!

A great sense of relief hit our home on October 16th as Beth and I completed the Marathon and half Marathon along with Sam and Beth's sister Lydia.

It was a completion of not only that one run but all the hours of training that were necessary for the completion of this goal.

At the 17 mile mark I experienced a severe cramp in my calf and although it was over halfway, that still left me with nine miles to complete. I was able to stretch and run through it and was pleased to make two of my three goals. 1. finish the race. 2. run it in under 10 min. miles (9.41) and beat my time from 2003 (not so much, but hey I am 8 years older).

Beth also completed the half along with Lydia and Sam came in a little later and I would say he proved to be the smarter runner as he took it easy, mixing the running and walking and feeling like he could have kept going at the end (a feeling that I did not share as I hobbled to the car).

The most humorous part came at about the three-mile mark, where the half marathoners and the full marathoners separated. At the point of division stood a lady holding a large white sign that said "Crazy" with a large arrow pointing to the left for the half marathon and "insane" with an arrow pointing up to the hill that awaited the full marathon runners.

Pictures of the Marathon crew and kids at the Pumpkin patch



# CzechPoint

## Winter

A Newsletter of Tom and  
Leslie Johnson, Missionaries  
to the Czech Republic

### *Prague Believe It or Not!*

The Czech Republic remains one of the most secular lands in Europe, and Charles University is now regarded as a leading university in Europe, but one of our Czech colleagues has just been offered a 7-year part time contract to write commentaries on the epistles of Paul for Czech Christians as a paid university research fellow. If I had not been aware of this discussion for a long time, I would hardly believe it. Please keep Dr. Peter Cimala in your prayers for 2012 to 2018. Yesterday we spent some time discussing what he should write. Imagine something like this from the most secular state university in your state! *Soli Deo Gloria!*



Tom and Leslie on the Charles Bridge

