



VOLUME 57, ISSUE 5
MAY 2011

first touch



Lauren Alexander
Lakeshore High School



Nathan Bednar
Lakeshore High School



Kyle Kendall
St. Joseph High School



Kaley Kitron
St. Joseph High School



Sarah Klug
Lakeshore High School



Brian Spitters
Lakeshore High School



Kara Reinhardt
Lakeshore High School



Sophia Abbyg
St. Joseph High School



Madeline Kovarik
St. Joseph High School



Josh Lane
Michigan Lutheran High School



Jessica Lucker
St. Joseph High School



Drew Pifer
St. Joseph High School



Mel Schweir
St. Joseph High School

Congratulations **TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2011**

GRADUATION SUNDAY is on June 5, 2011, and we invite all of our graduating high school and college students to join the processional as we honor and pray for you. If you are graduating from high school or college and would like to take part in the processional, contact Alecia Eichberg at 983-1524 or alecia.e@myfirstchurch.com. Whether you walk or not, be sure to send us

your senior picture, the name of the school you are graduating from, and your degree (if college) to be included in our special graduation bulletin. The deadline to be included in the bulletin is May 17. This is a very special time of life for you, and we want you to know that your church family celebrates the wonderful future that God has in store for you!

FEAST&FUN

A trip to Essenhaus Restaurant

It's a great opportunity to get together with other groups from the area for a fun day out, with great old style gospel music!

ON THURSDAY, JUNE 16, Prime Timers will be taking the church bus down to Middlebury, Indiana, for Feast & Fun 2011, an exciting meal and entertainment event just for older adults sponsored by Church of God Ministries.

Feast & Fun will be held at Essenhaus Restaurant featuring a delicious Amish meal of fried chicken, roast beef, mashed potatoes, dressing, green beans, salad, bread, beverage and their famous Der Dutchman pie. It's going to be a great day!

After this great meal, enjoy music by *The Gospel Jubilee Quartette* (Dale Landis, Paul Max-

field, Jerry Byard, and Jack Tomlinson).

Cost for the meal, program, and transportation is \$26. Registration deadline is June 6, 2011. Tickets are nonrefundable. If someone from your group cannot go, simply invite another person.

Make checks payable to: **First Church of God, St. Joseph**, memo: *Older Adult Banquet*.

For more information, call Contact Bob Confer 269-983-1524, or Dean and Sandy Snyder 574-753-3621, or Kirk Bookout at Church of God Ministries at 800-848-2464.

FIRST CHURCH FOOD DRIVE fill empty bags

*return filled bags
the following week
of May 21-22*

ON MAY 14-15, the Prime Time ministry will be distributing empty plastic bags to be filled with non-parishable food items. Food will benefit SMCAA. Return filled bags the following week, by placing under the green awning before the service, or to the SMCAA truck in the parking lot on May 21/22.

HYMN SING MAY 22, 6pm a fun evening

*join us at
Crystal Springs
Church of God*

ON SUNDAY, MAY 22, 6:00pm, we will be joining other Church of God congregations at *Crystal Springs Church of God* for a fun evening of singing some of our favorite hymns. Refreshments will be served following this good time of fellowship.

announcements

FIRST TUESDAY

Join the First Church pastoral staff in the Sanctuary at lunchtime the first Tuesday of each month for prayer and fasting. Our next *First Tuesday* is June 7, 12:00-1:00pm.

WALKING IN SPRINGTIME

First Church walkers meet at Grand Mere Park in Stevensville every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10am. Meet promptly at 10am in the parking lot for a brisk walk. Join us!

WCG

Women of the Church of God will meet Tuesday, June 7, at 1:00pm in room 5. Norma Jean Schmidt will present a geographical study on Domestic Hispanic Culture. All women are invited to attend.

JUVENILE DIABETES SUPPORT

Is your child battling Juvenile Diabetes? Our support group meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7pm. For more info, contact Francine Jordan: 269-757-2310, fjordan@myarbonne.com; or Brenda Shepard: 269-556-1322, shepard5@sbcglobal.net.

MEN'S SUMMER BASKETBALL

The First Church Men's Basketball League registration is starting! Registration fee is \$35. Registration deadline is Sunday, May 29. For more info and to sign-up visit us online at myfirstchurch.com/mens-basketball. If you would like to be a team captain call Bob Moyer: 269-369-4164.

HOST AND EXCHANGE STUDENT

Grace Christian School has two international students that would like to enroll at GCS for the 2011-12 school year. One senior boy and one senior girl are in need of host homes for the end of August 2011-June 2012. Housing stipends are available. Contact GCS office for info: 269-463-5545.



SENIOR PGA CHAMPIONSHIP, 2012

you could be a volunteer at the 15th hole!

FIRST CHURCH OF GOD IS SPONSORING the 15th hole for the 2012 *Senior PGA Championship*. The tournament will be held at The Golf Club at Harbor Shores beginning Tuesday, May 22nd through Sunday, May 27th, 2012.

We are responsible to have 70 marshals who will each volunteer four (4) shifts of five (5) hours each. You must be physically fit, have knowledge of the game, able to stand for long periods of time, and be at least 21 years of age. The cost for you to marshal is \$125 (uniform fee). All volunteers will receive the following...

- Volunteer uniform: golf shirt, hat, and windbreaker jacket
- Access to all six days of the tournament
- Round of golf/cart at Harbor Shores

- Meal vouchers
- Preferred parking
- \$10 discount in the PGA Golf Shop
- Official program
- The opportunity to see legendary golfers up close
- The privilege of helping First Church shine in the public eye and thereby promote Jesus
- The opportunity to make new friends

This should be a fun event and well worth the investment. Please be sure to sign-up early since there are limited spaces available. **Register today since we are almost full!**

PLEASE NOTE

The only official way to register is to go online. This is a first come first serve op-

portunity, so please register at the Senior PGA website. If you have any questions, please contact Steve Winkler at swinkler72@gmail.com or 269-605-3414.

TO REGISTER

1. Go online to <http://2012spga.pgalinks.com>
2. Scroll down to a green bar that says: **By Invitation Only.**
3. Enter Your Access Key: **firstchurch**
4. Hit **GO**
5. On the next page you will select the **Register** button.
6. Simply **follow the prompts** and fill in all of the information.



HEALTH
moments



MAY IS National Blood Pressure Month

"There are fewer stress reduction strategies more effective than leaving our problems at the cross..."

I HOPE ALL OF YOU EXPERIENCED a blessed Easter, and that the confidence and joy of the Resurrection continues to be a blessing to you every day. As we enter into May, we are aware of the beauties of Spring, as well as the busy schedules associated with spring sports, Mother's Day, and graduations. In addition, May is also recognized as **National Blood Pressure Month.**

What do my Blood Pressure numbers really mean?

Blood pressure is reported in two numbers such as 120/80. The top number, *systolic blood pressure*, refers to the pressure caused by the beating of the heart and exerted on the walls of the arteries. The lower number, *diastolic blood pressure*, refers to the pressure that continues in the arteries when the heart is resting. Optimal/Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80.

What is high Blood Pressure (Hypertension)?

- Prehypertension is 120/80 -139/89
- Hypertension Stage 1 is 140/90 – 159/99
- Hypertension Stage 2 is 160/100 - 179/109 or higher for adults.

What are the symptoms of high Blood Pressure?

NONE. High blood pressure has no clear symptoms. This is why it is so important to have your blood pressure checked frequently! There are blood pressure clinics held monthly on both campuses.

What causes high Blood Pressure?

The cause of high blood pressure is unknown 90-95% of the time. This is called Primary hypertension. Secondary hypertension results from a cause that can be identified. Common causes include heart and kidney disease.

I have high Blood Pressure, now what?

High blood pressure can be controlled in most cases with a variety of medicines and lifestyle adjustments. It is important to be confident that the plan you work out with your Doctor will help you. This also means that it is very important to take any medicines your Doctor has prescribed for you, even if you feel fine. High blood pressure can be a dangerous disease because there are no clear symptoms associated with it, and it can lead to heart disease, stroke, and kidney problems.

Other things you can do for your blood pressure include:

- lose weight if you are overweight
- reduce your intake of salt
- stop smoking
- develop and follow a planned regular exercise program (*after talking with your Doctor*)
- use relaxation and stress management strategies. Our faith life is an important part of healthy living. There are few stress reduction strategies *more effective* than leaving our problems at the cross, and living our days hand in hand with Christ.

For questions and if you want more information, feel free to contact me:

Beth Fiskars, RN/BSN, Parish Nurse
269-983-1524 x40 or
beth.f@myfirstchurch.com

ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE

thank you, thank you, thank you

"We could not have achieved such wonderful results without all of your help and contributions!"

GOD IS SO GOOD. Our Rummage Sale was a huge success. We thank you for your donations, and hours of help in sorting, marking, and selling merchandise. We especially appreciate all the gifts of food for the workers and positive encouragement. We are so blessed.

During the sale many needy people were helped with vouchers for merchandise. We cleared \$9,100 which will be used for Women's Hands-On Ministries projects including The Safe Shelter and a Benton Harbor elemen-

tary school. Women of the Church of God donations will include Children of Promise, Paraguay Ministries, Heart for Lebanon, Joseph Steiner, Tammie Tregallis, Warner Camp and other missions projects throughout the year.

We could not achieve such wonderful results without ALL of your help and contributions. We are grateful!

Nancy Hemingway, President WCG
Ann Frakes, WHM Coordinator



ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETS

here are some of the highlights

IN OUR CONTINUED EFFORT to have the best communication possible, here are some highlights from our most recent Advisory Council Meeting.

We approved the financial report, including the proposed 2011-2012 operating budget. This financial report was presented to the congregation at the FCOG Association Informational Meeting.

We discussed some future facility improvement goals, such as remodel the entrance flooring, paint the Sanctuary, move some mailboxes, create ministry booths in the Gathering Area, and move/create office space. We have money set aside for the entrance flooring remodel and would not do the others until we have the money budgeted. We are waiting for some quotes to come back.

The Advisory Council discussed the proposed Bylaws adjustments as recommended from the Bylaws Com-

mittee. The proposed changes are: wording of Senior Pastor/Lead Pastor, Advisory Council phrase of responsibility, Nominating Committee terms, presentation process for new ideas from the congregation, and clarification of Robert's Rules Edition. These were discussed at the informational meeting and will be posted in the Gathering Area prior to the Association vote on May 21st and 22nd.

Pastor David updated the Advisory Council about the upcoming Leadership Summit. We want to provide the necessary tools to enhance our leadership culture of the church. He also mentioned the *Do Something* sermon series, the increased number of people joining in foot washing ordinance, and that we had the largest attendance ever this past Easter weekend.

Pastor David mentioned that we did get the land purchased for the Malawi, Africa mission building. We want

to raise \$50,000 by the end of the year to go towards this project. Jim Bolton has agreed to lead this project.

We continue to work on our next multi-site campus. We are trying to figure out the location, since that is a key ingredient to getting the budget and leadership defined.

The Advisory Council discussed ways to have better communication with the congregation.

Advisory Council Chair, Michelle Kerns, stated that Bob Dowsett's term is ending and that we are grateful to him for his years of service.

The Advisory Council is made up of the following elected people: J. C. Anderson, Arden Bradley, Rajean Alexander, Bob Dowsett, Michelle Kerns, Gary Bolin, Vance Price, Mitzi Tompkins, Dave Eichberg, John Fozard, and Mark Krenz.

Greg Gordon
Executive Administrator

kids st. joe



VBS PANDAMANIA PandaMania, where God is wild about you, will be July 10-14, 6:00-8:30pm, at the SJ campus. If you would like to help with Vacation Bible School this summer, please contact Kris Key: 662-816-1020 or krisandher4boys@att.net. For those interested in helping with VBS, please attend an informational meeting on Tuesday, May 17, 6:30pm, in the Fellowship Hall.

kids benton heights



SUMMER FUN FOR KIDS! From June-August the Benton Heights campus will host *Summer Fun* for children of all ages! Starts June 14 - August 9, Tuesdays, from 4-7pm. Volunteers are needed. Contact Vickie Fellner at: ms vick9@yahoo.com or 269-470-3150.

middle school MINISTRY



IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE another year of D-Groups has almost finished up! We have had a great year working with our Middle School youth. We were able to do some awesome activities from a Hayride out a Five Pines to Winter Retreat at Warner Camp. D-Groups will be wrapping up Wednesday, May 18. However the fun doesn't end for the summer. Lunch Club (for 6th and 7th grade grads) is a great way to see friends over the summer while doing something for others. Registration forms will be available soon. Make sure you don't miss out on it this summer!

high school MINISTRY



COME JOIN US for Tribe on Sunday nights at the St. Joseph campus down in the attic at 7:00pm. All high schoolers are welcomed!

DURING THE MONTH OF MAY, Tribe will meet the 15th and the 22nd. For Memorial Day weekend, Tribe will take a break. Tribe will start back up June 12th. Check out High School with FC on **Facebook** for more information.

WARNER SUMMER CAMPS

Summer camp is a great way to connect with God, have fun with your friends, and make new ones! Check out these summer camps...

HIGH SCHOOL CAMP

June 27 - July 1, 2011

MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMPS (2) are directed by Chris Spitters

August 1-5 (5th-6th-grade grads)

June 20-24 (7th-8th-grade grads)

KIDS CAMP is directed by Bill Shepard

July 5-8 (3rd-5th-grade grads)

GRANDS CAMP is directed by Bob Confer

A camp for grandparents and their grandkids

August 19-20

Register online at warnercamp.com or call WC at: 269.434.6844

SERVING TWO LOCATIONS

ST. JOSEPH CAMPUS | General Office

First Church of God
2627 Niles Ave, St. Joseph, MI 49085

Service Times:

Saturdays at 6:00pm | Sundays at 9:30, 11:00am

BENTON HEIGHTS CAMPUS

First Church at Benton Heights
990 N. Euclid Ave., Benton Harbor 49022

Service Time: Sundays at 11:00am

OFFICE HOURS

M-Th, 8:00am-4:30pm | 269-983-1524
jennifer.r@myfirstchurch.com

Deadline for First Touch articles

1st Friday of each month

Send to: teresa.l@myfirstchurch.com

Website | myfirstchurch.com

Website | e-newsletter: Julie Beam
send to: juliecbbeam@aol.com

PASTORAL STAFF

Lead Pastor

David Colp

Prayer/Missions

Rick Blumenberg

LifeGroups/Assimilation

Ryan Carrell

Discipleship/Older Adults/Pastoral Care

Bob Confer

Young Adults/Worship

Dan Deitrich

Executive Administrator

Gregory Gordon

Benton Heights Campus Pastor

Mary Shawl-Ranke

Student Ministries

Chris Spitters

Advisory Council

JC Anderson	11
Bob Dowsett	11
Vance Price	11
John Fozard, Oklahoma	11
Arden Bradley	12
Michelle Kerns, Chair	12
Mark Krenz, Arizona	12
Mitzi Tompkins	12
Gary Bolin	13
Rajeane Alexander	13
Dave Eichberg	13
Greg Gordon and David Colp	

Staff Missionary

Joseph Steiner

Church of God, Debrecen, Hungary

Missionary Partners

Camille Melki, Beirut, Lebanon

Church of God in Paraguay

Tammie Tregellas, Malawi, Africa



fathers, sons, and grandfathers let's all go camping

Connect with your Father/Son while fishing and canoeing

ENJOY FIVE DAYS OF canoeing, fishing, camping, and fun with your son (grandson, nephew) as a gathering of First Church dads/men and sons/boys head up north to the beautiful Sylvania Wilderness near the Wisconsin border.

Over the last fourteen years, fathers/sons/grandfathers have enjoyed this trip together, formed bonds, and made lasting memories. We will enjoy nature and some wonderful days of fishing and canoeing on the various lakes of the Sylvania Wilderness area.

The trip will be made on our new church bus. Cost is \$180/person. This includes: canoe rental, camping fees, transportation, camping meals...everything you need, except for four meals

while we are on the road. Sign-up by placing a deposit of \$90/person (half of the cost) in the silver 'Registrations' mailbox in the Gathering Area by Sunday, May 22.

Make checks payable to: First Church of God. First come, first serve! Space is limited to the first 24 persons to sign-up.

You do not have to have a son to go. Consider adopting one or invite another man to join you. Sons must be at least 10 years old and must be with a parent or an approved adult guardian.

For more info contact Garry Zick: 269-429-3478, or Pastor Bob Confer 269-983-1524 x14.



Benton Heights Kids DO SOMETHING!

HOPING TO MAKE MOTHER'S DAY a special day for ALL women, the kids at the Benton Heights campus put their love (and a little dirt) into a special project.

They planted flowers in china tea cups with matching saucers and tied tags on the handles with satin ribbon. Printed on each tag was a Bible verse from 2 Thessalonians 1:3, "We can't help but thank God for you, because



your faith is flourishing and your love for one another is growing."

The kids had a hard time containing their excitement as they paraded into the worship service to surprise the women with their handiwork. As the kids passed out their gifts, all could see the women were touched and a few tears were even shed as generational bridges were built and lives were transformed in a small but memorable way.

**DO
SOME
THING**

MAKE YOUR
LIFE COUNT



let's **DO SOMETHING** together!

"It was amazing watching a bunch of young adults...hanging out with people from the surrounding neighborhood."

WITH THE SUN SHINING and a small but mighty army of volunteers we delivered almost 300 beautiful flowers to the neighbors surrounding both the St. Joseph and Benton Heights campuses on Sunday, May 1st. It was May Day and the kick off for our six week outreach called DO SOMETHING.

As volunteers knocked on the doors of surrounding houses in St. Joseph they also made an offer for First Church to help out with yard work and minor house projects on June 12. Not only did God touch the hearts of those who received flowers, but also those who took the time to knock on a neighbor's door and share God's love through the gift of a flower and offer of help. Here is a story shared by one volunteer...

"My son and I dropped off flowers in our own neighborhood because we live near First Church. Not everyone was home, so we wrote little notes on the cards. One woman who we left a flower with, who is also someone that my son has helped quite a bit with miscellaneous household jobs, was especially touched. She called us that night

to personally thank us for such a wonderful gift on May day and how the discovery had made her whole day. It was fun to fill someone's day with God's love!"

Together with the flowers that were delivered to the neighbors in Benton Heights, invitations were given to join the young adult group, *House*, for a free dinner on Tuesday night. It was amazing to watch a whole bunch of young adults bring their contributions to the taco bar and spend a couple of hours eating and hanging out with many of the people from the surrounding neighborhood. *House* plans to have monthly meals for the neighborhood throughout the summer. God is smiling!

We will continue to sell the book, ***DO SOMETHING: Make Your Life Count***, by Miles McPherson. This book is the basis for our 6 week sermon series. Miles shares amazing stories of people who have really made their life count, and also those whose lives have been impacted by someone who chose to DO SOMETHING. Books are \$10 and can be purchased at the Welcome

Center and the Good Word bookstore at First Church.

Last week's bulletin included a DO SOMETHING prayer calendar. We are counting on the prayers of First Church to be the foundation for what God is going to do through us out in the community. If you didn't get a prayer calendar please pick one up at the Welcome Center and begin praying for our community and how we as a church can impact it in a huge way.

I hope that you are considering volunteering on June 12th, as we go out into the community that day to serve as our act of worship. Beginning May 21/22, after all services, you will have an opportunity to sign up for a project. There will be something for everyone...young and old! We will even provide childcare for kids under 3 years old. Please pray about how you, your family, or your Life Group might get involved in serving our community and lets all DO SOMETHING!

*Jenny Fry and the
Community Outreach Team*