



Building Bridges • Transforming Lives

# first touch

*This is a monthly publication of First Church of God, St. Joseph, Michigan*

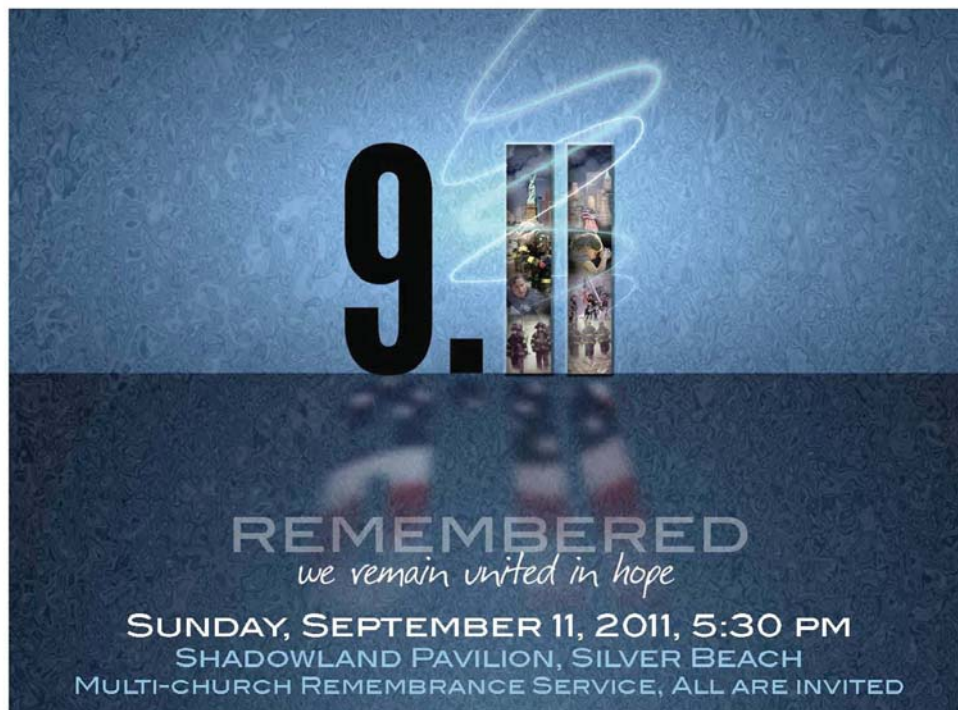
## Area Churches Unite in Remembering 9/11

Ten years ago, a handful of ordinary men attacked our country, killing thousands. When the two towers in New York City fell to the ground, it transformed not only the landscape, but our very lives. In that darkest of hours the hope of Christ shined most brightly. As fear snatched at the hearts of us all, we turned to God, and He gave us hope and courage and love.

On Sunday, September 11, 5:30pm, First Church of God partners with two Benton Harbor congregations--Overflow Church and United Methodist AME Church--in Shadowland Pavilion at Silver Beach, as we unite in the hope Christ gave us on that dark day of our nation's history. Bring your chairs/blankets and join us. Silver Beach does charge a parking fee (\$6-Berrien County residents/\$8-non-residents). In case of rain, we will hold the service at our SJ campus of First Church.

The Berrien County Sheriff Department Honor Guard will join us as we thank Christ for the heroes and remember the victims. There will be music, prayer, and a message of hope.

Please join with us in this remembrance service as we remain united in hope.



# Community Cafe is First Church Family Time

Community Café is a way for your family to enjoy a good meal together before Wednesday night activities.

We are looking for a few more helping hands to make it a reality. We need people to help set-up, to do food preparation, serving, and clean-up.

Please consider serving your church family in this capacity. Contact Pastor Greg at 983-1524 ext.12 for more information.

## DivorceCare Support begins Sept 13

Don't go through separation/divorce alone. Led by Randy & Sherrill Schwalich, *DivorceCare* is a caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences.

Meet weekly with other people who understand what you are going through and want to help. You'll gain access to valuable *DivorceCare* resources to help you through your pain as you rebuild your life.

*DivorceCare* meets Tuesdays at 6:30pm in the Heritage Room of First Church St. Joseph campus (enter thru the green awning). The next

### ***When the Hurting Doesn't Stop...***

You probably know friends, neighbors, co-workers or members of your family who are hurting because of the death of someone close to them. Please tell them about our weekly *GriefShare* support group. By doing so, you can be an important part of their healing.



Or you could be going through a time of grief yourself. If so, we offer information, resources, and prayerful support at GriefShare. We meet Wednesdays at 6:30pm in the Heritage Room of First Church St. Joseph campus. The next session begins September 14.

For more information, call: 269.983.1524

Sign-up online at [myfirstchurch.com/support-groups](http://myfirstchurch.com/support-groups)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Women of Church of God**

Women of the Church of God will meet Tuesday, October 4 at 1:00pm in Room 5, for a study on the Book of Ruth and hospitality. All women are welcome to attend.

### **Prayer Shawls**

Love to knit/crochet? Want to learn? Bring your knitting/crochet needles (and yarn, if you have it) and help us create shawls to bless those who need healing/comfort. We meet Tuesday, September 13, 9:30-11:30am.

### **Military Support Group**

There will be no Military Support Group meeting in September. Our next meeting will be the third Sunday of October. For more information, contact Mark/Lisa Baldwin at 269.429.1930 / [baldwinideaworks@yahoo.com](mailto:baldwinideaworks@yahoo.com)

### **FCOG Pre-School**

Openings are still available for our fall session. Contact Kathy MacTavish at 269.983.1816 for more information.

### **Men's Bible Study**

Men's Bible study meets Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30pm, beginning September 7, to discuss weekend messages and how they apply to our lives.

### **Juvenile Diabetes Support Begins Sept 13**

Led by Francine Jordan and Brenda Shepard, this support group meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm (in Room 8 & the Youth Center). For information, contact Francine at 269-757-2310/ [fjordan@myarbonne.com](mailto:fjordan@myarbonne.com) or Brenda at 556-1322/[shepard5@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shepard5@sbcglobal.net).

### **Community Safety Day**

The Chapel (4250 Washington Avenue, SJ) is hosting a Community Safety Day in their parking lot on Sunday, September 18, 2-4pm. Police, Fire, EMS, and other agencies will present safety information. Local emergency personnel will answer questions, provide tips, perform demos, and hand out information. For more info, contact Greg Kovacs at 269.208.3833.

# Brittons Don't Say Good-Bye

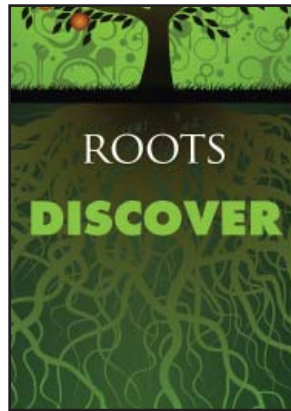
Chris & Amanda Britton launched their World Race missions trip on Monday, September 5. Chris writes these words to their First Church family:

“When Amanda and I moved to St. Joe a little over two years ago, we looked at it as a temporary stop that we were eagerly looking to leave. That is until we met all of you! You all have been the best of friends to us and I have to say it's because of your encouragement that we decided to take this leap into the unknown. Words cannot describe what you all mean to us... I ask that you please don't say “goodbye” to us as we leave as I feel that implies that we are moving out of your lives and you out of ours. Rather I think a “see ya later” is in order. To me “see ya later” means we're going away for a little while but we'll be back. Also to me “see ya later” means we might be separated by thousands of miles, but we won't forget you.

If you would like to subscribe to updates of Chris & Amanda Britton's mission trip, visit their blog at:

[chrisbritton.theworldrace.org](http://chrisbritton.theworldrace.org)

We will also be posting updates as we eagerly follow their work for God.



# Discovering First Church

Sundays Oct 9 - Nov 13 | 11:00am-Noon OR

2-Saturdays Oct 15 & 22 | 8:30am- noon

Your first point of connection at First Church and an important first step in learning what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ at First Church is our DISCOVER course.

In DISCOVER, you will learn our church's history, beliefs and vision, and be challenged to move from spectator to participant in unity and community.

DISCOVER is offered on Sunday mornings, Oct 9-Nov 13, at 11:00am, or as a 2-Saturday morning seminar on October 15 & 22, 8:30am-noon.

Sign-up online at [myfirstchurch.com](http://myfirstchurch.com).




Discover the forgotten and astounding story of our nation's founding in this weekly DVD series that presents the moral foundation of our country.

Led by Harry Burritt, this class meets Tuesdays, 7:00-8pm, in Room 7, beginning Tuesday, September 20.

Sign-up online at:

[myfirstchurch.com](http://myfirstchurch.com)



**The Good Word**  
RESOURCE CENTER

**BOOK OF NOAH:**  
Memoirs from our Past

Book by Noah Byrum and the Gospel Trumpet available at The Good Word

**THE GOOD WORD**  
BOOKSTORE  
at our SJ campus

Visit us for books, Bibles, & gifts

**Open at every service & weekdays**



**High School Brunch**  
Sunday, September 11  
11:00am-Noon  
in the Attic downstairs at our SJ campus

**All high school students are invited to eat, worship, & talk with friends.**

**brunch returns**



# Meet Esther Anahí Kurrle

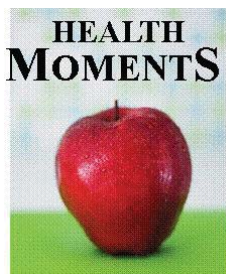
Two years ago we started the process to adopt a Paraguayan child. On August 31, 2011, we received the good news that we have received guardianship of a girl who was abandoned at birth, now our daughter, while we wait for the adoption process to be complete.

Her name is Anahí (pronounced Onna EE). Anahí means “beautiful as a flower” and is the vibrant red flower that you see in the header of our newsletter (CoralCockspur tree). We added “Esther” (one of our favorite Bible figures) to her name. We can’t stop giving thanks to God for His faithfulness in bringing us this beautiful flower into our lives.

Love and blessings,

Norberto, Julie, Timothy & Esther Kurrle (missionaries in Paraguay)

NOTE: Read more about God’s miracles in Paraguay at [kurrles.blogspot.com](http://kurrles.blogspot.com).



I hope you and your loved ones enjoyed a relaxing and peaceful Labor Day holiday. As we approach fall, we are aware of the role of education in our lives. Students and teachers are returning to the classroom, and many of the educational programs of the church are resuming (please see the brochure [Opportunities for Growth, Fall 2011](#)). This month I would like to share with you some thoughts on intellectual health. May the Lord bless the use of our intellect!

--First Church Parish Nurse Beth Fiskars

## God is the Source of Intellectual Health

Our intellect is one dimension of wholistic health. It refers to the creative use of our mind. A person who is intellectually whole strives to develop his/her mind and use it for the glory of God and for the benefit of the human community. The development of our minds is far too important to be limited to the classroom; it is a gift God gives us for our lifetime.

**Intellectual health starts with recognizing that God is the ultimate source of all knowledge and wisdom.** God is the source of all wisdom. The Bible has much to say about our intellect: “...*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding*” (Psalm 111:1). Without this perspective, our efforts at intellectual development are wasted. “*Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish*” (Isa. 29:14).

**Our intellect affects all other aspects of our life.** All the other dimensions of our being (physical, emotional, spiritual, social, vocational, and environmental) are affected by our thinking. For example, self-depreciating thoughts can give us a stomachache, make us feel sad, and contribute to poor work efforts. Instead, the Bible encourages us with

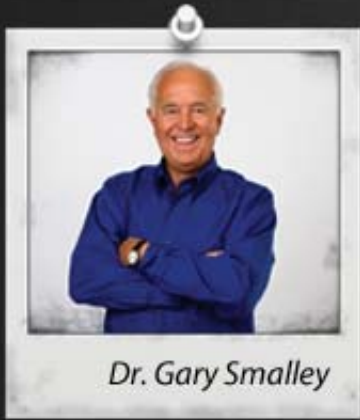
these words, “*Wisdom brightens a man’s face and changes its hard appearance*” (Ecclesiastes 8:1). True understanding and godly use of our intellect helps us to be whole and joyful, and helps us to find a purpose for our lives.

**God has provided us with delicious food for our minds.** “...*Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things*” (Philippians 4:8). Often it seems we spend a lot of time thinking about things which are not worthy of our consideration. If only we would focus our thoughts on things which were right and excellent, what a different world we could create! “*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 4:7).

Praying each one of you finds a way to stimulate your intellectual health to bring honor and glory to God. Check out the great classes offered here at First Church! See the brochure [Opportunities for Growth, Fall 2011](#) for classes offerings and details.

**BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC** - Get your blood pressures taken free at both of our campuses on Sunday, October 2

Beth Fiskars RN/BSN, Parish Nurse | 269.983.1524 (ext 40) | [beth.f@myfirstchurch.com](mailto:beth.f@myfirstchurch.com)



Dr. Gary Smalley

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MONTH DAY YEAR

D O H

## DAY OF HEALING

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2011

HONEYWELL CENTER, WABASH, INDIANA

First Church of God and Southwestern Medical Christian Counseling Center are partnering to offer an opportunity to attend the Day of Healing conference sponsored by Wabash Friends Church. The conference will be held Saturday, November 5, in Wabash, Indiana.

Keynote speaker is Dr. Gary Smalley, well-known author and speaker on marriage and family relationships. Over 35 workshops cover topics such as, strong marriages, family relationships, emotional intelligence, and mental health issues. Everything from personal development to church leadership makes this a day that offers something for everyone. Sessions are developed to promote growth and understanding; they

provide support for the many challenges Christians encounter in everyday living.

This is an excellent program for those who are involved in the caring/service ministries, as well as for personal growth.

Cost for the conference, transportation, and lunch is \$40. Registration packets detailing the conference schedule and individual workshop sessions are available at the Welcome Center at our SJ campus and at the church office. Registration and payment must be completed and returned to First Church by October 10.

Questions? Contact Pastor Bob Confer at 269.983.1524 (x14)

# Two Powerful Caregiving Seminars Offered

Are you caring for a friend or relative? Being a caregiver can be both rewarding and stressful. First Church is hosting two free workshops this fall that can give you tools to make caregiving more meaningful and efficient. Learn ways to take care of yourself as well!

Register for either (or both!) of these free workshops by calling Hospice at Home: 269.429.7100

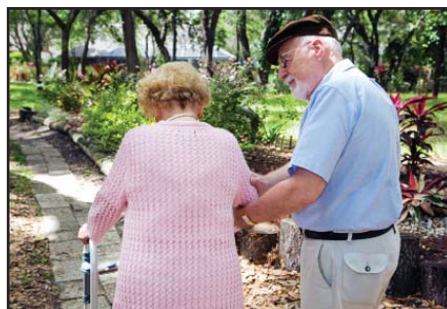
## Entering the Caregiver Zone

Thursday nights, Sept 15, 22, & 29 | 6-8pm

This free workshop is a *Hospice at Home* workshop, partially funded by *Area Agency on Aging* and hosted by First Church

Learn how to:

- Discover community resources
- Manage stress
- Organize important documents
- Monitor safety and risk
- Develop personal effectiveness
- Decrease your sense of burden



## Powerful Tools for Caregivers

Sundays & Thursdays, Oct 2-20 | 6-8:30pm

Many caregivers found this seminar beneficial, including those caring for a spouse/partner or adult children caring for parents.

The older adult you care for can be living with you or across the country.

Class participants report that they:

- are better at caring for themselves
- have fewer feelings of anger, guilt & depression
- can better cope with demands of caregiving
- are more likely to use community services



# Fall Programs are All About Kids

Moms, Dads and Kids!

**The best hour in a kid's week!**

**Welcome Back to KidZone.** It has been a great summer of VBS,

*Summer Splash* and *Play* and much, much more. What kid could forget *Lil'k* or that crazy Johnny Rogers from *KidMO*? VBS was a blast! Kids know that God is wild about them. Now we are settling back into our fall routines and do we have some great stuff in store for your kids this fall!

*Little KidZone* kicks off the year with a focus on how much God Loves Them! They will be learning that god Loves them no matter what and that they can always count on Him! Great teaching and great leaders will be there each week for your kids!

Big *KidZone* starts off with the theme Grow-Up! We will be getting into the book of Luke and studying how Jesus "grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men." (Luke 2:52) Our virtue for the month of September is "Knowledge;" kids will focus on how discovering something new can help make them better at whatever they do.

**WOW!** – Worship on Wednesdays at our St. Joseph campus - is just going to be... well... a big WOW! Your kids will not want to miss a single week of WOW! This year kids will have the opportunity to earn achievements through the year in scripture memorization, worship, sharing about God and much much more. Kids will be awarded achievements weekly as they meet their individual goals.

All kids have been promoted to their new classes. Please help us in checking their grade placements (printed on their tags) to make sure we have them in the right spot! Please let us know if there are any changes that need to be made.

It all begins September 10/11. So much fun! So much excitement! Be sure your kids don't miss a single WOW or Kid Zone. I believe God is going to do some amazing things this year.

--Bill Shepard, Pastor of Children & Families

## Hands, Hands and More Hands!

We need some hands. Can you lend us yours? We just need them for 60-90 minutes each week. That's it. We'll gather all the tools you need. **ALL YOU NEED TO BRING WITH YOU ARE YOUR HANDS AND YOUR SMILES.**



We have some openings that we need HANDS to fill! The cool thing is you have an opportunity to use your hands to make an eternal difference in the lives of kids!

Are your hands available? Contact Pastor Bill at: 983-1524 x50 or bill.s@myfirstchurch.com.

### Wednesday Nights:

- 2nd Grade Small Group Leader
- 4/5 Grade Boys Small Group Co-Leader
- Technology Leader
- Small Group Assistant



### Saturday Nights:

- 1st-2nd Grade Small Group Co-Leader
- 3rd-5th Grade Small Group Co-Leader



### Sunday Mornings:

- 2nd Grade Small Group Leader
- Small Group Assistants in Grades 1-3



## Just for the Kids....

Are you in 1st Grade? Or Second Grade? Or Third Grade? Or Fourth Grade? Or Fifth Grade? Well, if you are, then this note is just for you!

Each week, our Joyful Noise Worship Team meets on Wednesdays at 6:00pm. "What does the Worship Team do?" you ask. Well, we.....

- Lead Worship during each KZ hour at the St. Joe Campus
- Play a role in Jingle Jam through song and drama
- New this year: we will lead the Easter Jam with a JNWT Musical Play

If this sounds like something you would like to do, then join us! There is always room for one more. Can't start in September because of football or Dance? Join us when you are done! We look forward to singing with you! Questions? Please see Pastor Bill

Deadline for First Touch articles  
1st Friday of each month  
Send to: [teresa.l@myfirstchurch.com](mailto:teresa.l@myfirstchurch.com)

**FIRST CHURCH OF GOD  
2 LOCATIONS**

St. Joseph Campus & General Office  
2627 Niles Ave., St. Joseph, MI 49085  
SERVICES: Saturdays at 6pm  
Sundays at 9:30 & 11AM  
OFFICE HOURS  
M-Th, 8-4:30 | 269-983-1524  
[jennifer.r@myfirstchurch.com](mailto:jennifer.r@myfirstchurch.com)

Benton Heights Campus  
990 N. Euclid Ave., Benton Harbor 49022  
SERVICES: Sundays at 11am

WEBSITE: [myfirstchurch.com](http://myfirstchurch.com)

**PASTORAL STAFF**

**Lead Pastor**

*Rev. David Colp*

**Executive Administrator**

*Rev. Gregory Gordon*

**Prayer/Missions**

*Rev. Rick Blumenberg*

**Children**

*Bill Shepard*

**Older Adults/Pastoral Care**

*Rev. Bob Confer*

**Young Adults, Worship**

*Dan Deitrich*

**Benton Heights Campus Pastor**

*Rev. Mary Shawl-Ranke*

**Students**

*Rev. Chris Spitters*

**Discipleship/Women**

*Sandy Mason*

**Outreach**

*Jenny Fry*

**Advisory Council**

JC Anderson	14
Larry Holben	14
Vance Price	14
John Fozard, Oklahoma	14
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	

**BOOMERLIFE**

**Dinners for Six**

It's a great way to make new friends and/or renew old friendships while sharing a casual dinner in a home environment. One person in the group hosts and provides the main dish and drinks; everyone else brings the rest! Everyone hosts one time.  
INFO: [boomerlife.firstchurch@gmail.com](mailto:boomerlife.firstchurch@gmail.com)

**Baby Boomers Learn about Social Security**

Beginning Sunday, September 11, 11:00am, Greg Kachner will lead six sessions that cover financial topics every Boomer should know. Come for fun and fellowship, as well as for knowledge about Social Security and other tricky retirement issues.



Financial Peace class begins Sept 14, 6:25pm, at our SJ campus. Kit (\$100) available at The Good Word.

**“WHAT AM I  
DOING  
HERE?”**

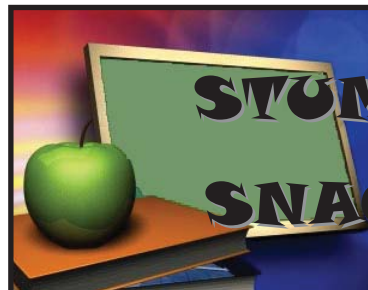
Get your questions answered!

**ALPHA COME & SEE  
DINNER & DISCUSSION**

**Wednesday, Sept 14**

**6:30pm**

**Bring a friend--it's free!**



**STUMP PRE-SCHOOL  
SNACK FOOD DRIVE**

The First Church of God Women's Hands-On Ministry is collecting non-perishable, healthy snacks for the students at Stump Early Childhood Center in Benton Harbor. The teachers will use the items in their classrooms for at-risk students who arrive hungry or will be going home to an empty kitchen. Thank you in advance for your HANDS-ON help!

**ESPECIALLY NEEDED ITEMS:**

- |                 |              |                |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Tissues/Kleenex | Handi-snacks | Crackers       |
| Hand Sanitizers | Pudding      | Granola bars   |
| Clorox wipes    | Jello cups   | Raisins        |
| Juice boxes     | Fruit cups   | Plastic Spoons |



Please bring items to volunteers at the green awning entrance of our SJ campus as you come to service on Sept 24 & 25.



## August 25 Advisory Council Meeting Highlights

Your Advisory Council has a continued interest to keep you informed, in regards to the affairs of the church. Since we just held an Advisory Council meeting, we want to share some of the meeting highlights.

The Advisory Council met with all of the pastoral staff and some of the ministry leaders. This provides us with an opportunity to talk about things that have happened, future plans, and other events. During this time we talked about tracking volunteer hours, meetings with community leaders, worship, and the Leadership Summit.

In the business session of the meeting we heard reports on the following:

- Pastor Greg presented the financial reports for July and the CPA financial review for fiscal year ending June 30, 2011. The accountants were quite pleased and our books were in order.
- We are planning to have an internal capital drive in order to raise funds to lower the debt. The current campaign pledge ends this November.
- We received an annual report concerning the churches Endowment Fund. This is a fund that continues to grow with investments so that we can use the money for new ministries and ministry initiatives.
- Pastor David presented the state of the church report. Topics: the search for a worship pastor, our multi-site strategy, the "Do Something" campaign, the Lake Michigan baptism with 50 people being baptized, plans for the church in Malawi, and internal and external outreach programs.
- We discussed ways to improve communication between the Advisory Council and the congregation.
- Pastor David gave an update concerning the Indianapolis church plant that Pastor Ryan Carrell is leading.

Those were the main points from the most recent meeting. We continue to seek ways to reach more people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and be obedient to what God has called us to do here at First Church.

Please feel free to contact the Advisory Council with questions or concerns.

Your Advisory Council Members,

*Rajean Alexander, J. C. Anderson, Gary Bolin, Arden Bradley, David Colp, Dave Eichberg, John Fozard, Greg Gordon, Larry Holben, Michelle Kerns, Mark Krenz, Vance Price, Mitzi Tompkins*

