

BRIDGING THE GAP

FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS CHURCH OF GOD
5500 Old Collinsville Road Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208
(618) 632-1438

Rev. Terry L. Clayton, Senior Pastor

Brian Pope, Associate Pastor

www.fhcog.org

Volume X No. 9

April 2005

IN THIS ISSUE

From The Pastor's Desk.....	1
Sermon Outlines for April.....	2
Sunday School Spotlight.....	2
Senior Adult Class News & Views.....	2
JOY Class.....	3
Women of the Church Of God.....	3
Men4Him.....	3
Fellowship Groups Underway.....	3
Discipleship/Bible Study.....	4
New Members Luncheon.....	4
Opportunity Knocks.....	4
Makeover Update.....	4
Notes From the Treasurer.....	4
To Think About.....	5
Editor's Note.....	6

about the pen as a winner. So in reality, it grew into a Rhode island red, a chicken much more valuable than any in the chicken yard. REAL WINNERS CAN TAKE THE TEMPORARY LOSSES BECAUSE ULTIMATELY, THEY KNOW THEY WILL WIN!

The teams in the final four are there because they believed in themselves. There are no losers in the final four. They have survived. They have fought the battles. They know the odds. There are a least four ingredients to get to the final four. These are also applicable to life as well. CONDITIONING, UNIFORMS, DEFENSE AND OFFENSE.

First is conditioning. Conditioning is preparation, personal growth and learning. The Bible says to "Be Strong in the Lord." Why?-- because there is a struggle against the spiritual forces in our daily lives. We must be in shape and ready for the fight. Teams cannot win without conditioning. You have to be ready! The Christian who does not condition their Spiritual life cannot face adversity and win. These persons end up whining and complaining when the crisis comes. Sooner or later everyone has an opportunity to go to the foul line with four seconds left and the game on the line. CONDITIONING WILL DETERMINE READINESS!

For the Christian this means giving your best. Pray without ceasing. Love when it is easier to get even. Forgive when it is easier to hold a grudge. Listen when it is easier to speak. You cannot be strong in the Lord without the conditioning of the Christian life. You have to practice the Ten Commandments, not just study them. You have to live by the sermon on the mount, not simply teach it.

Second is the uniform. Uniforms identify teams and equip the player. Without the proper equipment they could not play well or safely.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

"The Final Four"

Four teams will come together this month for the NCAA BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP OF 2005. When you reach the final four, it is time to put up or shut up. It's time to lay it on the line. It is time to take your best shot. No pain No gain, No guts, No glory.

IT NEVER ENDS, YOU WIN, BUT IT IS TEMPORARY! It reminds me of the story of the Easter Chicken. A cute purple chicken was given to a little girl for Easter who lived on a farm. As it grew it began to look different from the other chickens in the pen. The color faded, and it had a hard time with the other chickens. They would peck on its head and chase it around the pen. But it soon began to grow much larger than the other chickens, and took on an air of self confidence. It had been a loser but now it moved

Paul says to put on the full armor of God. You must be able to identify the player by his uniform. We must model Christ. It is not good enough to condition ourselves; we must put on the uniform. The uniform of Christ is integrity, honesty, unselfishness and most of all love.

Third is the defense. Defense means not being intimidated, reaching back for a strength you did not know you had. There is no glory in defense. The best defensive team rarely gets credit. In the Christian life the defense is rarely recognized. These are the loyal people, people who have served even when there is no glory.

Fourth is offense. Offense means hard work, being a self starter and knowing your direction. Paul knew the importance of a good offense when he wrote that we should have our feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

YOU CANNOT SIT IN CHURCH AND EXPECT YOUR CHURCH TO GROW. YOU CANNOT WAIT FOR THE LOST TO COME WITHOUT ASKING THEM. WE MUST TAKE THE OFFENSIVE.

Lots of people want friends, but an offense means you must make the effort to be a friend. Lots of people want to be in condition, but you have to exercise and take the offensive. Lots of people want to lose weight but you have to take the offensive to cut back on food. Lots of people want more money, but you have to take the offensive in managing the money you have. Lots of folks want to be good Christians, but you have to take the offensive in being like Christ. The questions really come to all of us, how bad do you want to be in the FINAL FOUR?

*Enjoy the Journey,
Pastor Clayton*

SERMON OUTLINES FOR APRIL 2005

**THEME FOR THE MONTH:
"EACH ONE REACH ONE"**

APRIL 3

AM SERVICE: PASTOR CLAYTON
SERMON SERIES: "YOU ASKED FOR IT!"
SETTLED IN SODOM GEN. 19
CHILDREN'S MOMENTS: CHILDREN'S CHOIR

PM SERVICE: PASTOR CLAYTON
BIBLE STUDY: THE TRINITY
GOD'S THREE-IN-ONENESS

APRIL 10

AM SERVICE: PASTOR CLAYTON
SERMON SERIES: "YOU ASK FOR IT"
DO NOT ENTER! JONAH 1:1-3
CHILDREN'S MOMENTS: HANDBELLS

PM SERVICE: REPORT FROM THE
STATE WCG CONVENTION

APRIL 17

AM SERVICE: PASTOR BRIAN POPE
CHILDREN'S MOMENTS: CHILDREN'S CHOIR

PM SERVICE: PASTOR BRIAN POPE

APRIL 24

AM SERVICE: PASTOR CLAYTON
SERMON SERIES: "YOU ASK FOR IT"
CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW? LUKE 22:31
CHILDREN'S MOMENTS: HANDBELLS

PM SERVICE: OPERATION "OUTREACH"

SUNDAY SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

SENIOR ADULT BIBLE CLASS NEWS AND VIEWS

We're very happy to have the Campbell's back with us, from their sojourn to the Sunshine State. Larry won first prize at the Illinois Day held at Siebring, FL. For his efforts he won a Stanley 6 screwdriver set with a wall holder, no less.

Stella continues to visit her mother-in-law in a nursing home in Cape Girardeau, MO. We are agreeing with Stella in much prayer for her.

Good to have Kenny back with us after his bout with the bronchitis. Jane was down with the same illness. We missed and prayed for both of them.

We were sorry to hear that Jeff, Gwen's son, broke his leg. She is with him, there in Springfield, IL. Our prayers are with him and Gwen.

We are moving right along in our studies in **SAVED BY GOD**, having completed four of the five lessons. We discussed the subjects: That all have sinned, God's judgment is just, We are justified by faith, and look forward to the last one. We have victory in Christ. In Unit II, we will be looking at the subject, The Christian Life. Sounds very interesting eh? Come and let's learn about it together.

*God loves you and we do too.
Ivan DeHart*

J.O.Y (JUST OLDER YOUTH) SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

We are winding up our study of the Secrets of the Vine with a few weeks of round table discussions that have been very good! We are developing personal action plans as well as some ideas for the church body to consider.

The target date for starting our next study, "The Dreamgiver" is April 17th. An excerpt from the back cover of our study guide reads: "The Dream Giver is a journey from the ordinary to the extraordinary. It invites you to follow the Dream Giver to find your destiny in an inspired life dream that is uniquely yours. Each person has been created for a life of purpose and significance. This captivating series...will show you how to rise above the ordinary, conquer your fears, and overcome the obstacles that keep you from living your Big Dream. "

The author, Bruce Wilkinson, uses the scriptures to show us how God has given dreams to many and that there was always a process that they went thru to get to their dream from Abraham, Noah, Moses, David, and Paul to name a few. All of these individuals did not consider themselves capable or worthy of their Dream but the Lord showed them the way. It is no different for us today and this study will show us how and why. Come be with us in the Fellowship Hall as we start our path towards dream fulfillment!!!

"Nobody succeeds beyond his or her wildest expectations unless he or she begins with some wild expectations."---Ralph Charell

Candy Niemeyer, Teacher

WCG NEWS



As the "Bridging the Gap" goes to press, we will have had our March "Spring Fling:

meeting....a great time of fun and fellowship—an evening planned by Carmen Hamilton and Carol Pollard—with special "spring" sweets by Stella.

Our nineteen (19) ladies going to the Illinois State Convention will be given all the information needed for departure time, etc. as we go to "Celebrate the Journey With Joy" at the Ramada Inn in Peoria. -- Ladies remember to give your state offering to Phyllis Field before we go.

Great plans are being made by Kim, Kelly and Shannon for the Mother/Daughter Banquet. To be held Friday, May 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the church.

We are so glad it is time for Ruth and Warren to come home! The WCG new year begins in April and we are looking forward to a good year! We ask the church to remember our WCG in prayer as we seek God's blessings and direction.

Stella Simms

MEN4HIM

Our appreciation breakfast for the fire department and police department had to be post-poned due to a scheduling conflict. The new date has not yet been set.

We are receiving responses to our requests for donations for the Men4Him Auction which will be held on May 14. If you know of a company or someone who would like to contribute something for the fundraising auction, please see Bill White.

We will keep you posted as to the upcoming events as they become known to us.

Bill White

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS UNDERWAY

This year you had to sign up to be placed in a Fellowship Group. So, we only have two groups now. They are kind of large but everyone probably won't be able to make every meeting so it should work out fine. The groups have met and are planning some exciting things for the next six months. We will form new groups again in the fall. Isn't it exciting to really get to know your brothers and sisters in the Lord? I have heard this over and over how much fun everyone had that took part in the groups during the first round. So, keep up the good work and try your best to be there for your group's gathering each month.

Darla Clayton

DISCIPLESHIP/BIBLE STUDY

There is going to be a "new" thing for Monday afternoons at 1:30 p.m., beginning April 4. We are starting a Discipleship and Bible Study class. Now, whether you are a new Christian or one for many years, all of us can learn from God's word and from each other. I know a lot of you work and are unable to attend but there are still several of you that could come. If you are not able to attend please pray for us as we endeavor to learn more of what God has for us through His blessed word.

Darla Clayton

NEW MEMBERS LUNCHEON!

Pastor and Darla would like to have a Sunday luncheon with all the new members to our congregation on Sunday May 1st right after our morning service. We want to welcome you to our fellowship and tell you more about our congregation. This will also help you to get more acquainted with each other and with us. You will hear more about this later but want you to mark your calendars now so you can attend.

Darla Clayton

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

**Seminar by Liz Curtis Higgs
"Loved by God"**

**St. Matthew United Methodist Church Belleville,
ILL.**

Friday, April 22, 2005

7:30 p.m. "A Desperate Heart"

8:30 p.m. Dessert Reception

Saturday, April 23, 2005

9:00 a.m. "A Seeking Heart"

10:00 a.m. Brunch

11:00 a.m. "A Devoted Heart"

Ticket Cost \$20.00

(The cost of the live speaker, reception and brunch are included in the ticket price.)

Liz Curtis Higgs is the author of twenty-two books. Her fiction books include Thorn In My Heart, Bookends, Missed Signals. Her most recent nonfiction include: Unveiling Mary Magdalene, Bad Girls of the Bible, Really Bad Girls of the Bible, Rise and Shine. She has also written five books for young

children: The Pumpkin Patch Parable, The Parable of the Lily, The Sunflower Parable, The Pine Tree Parable, and Go Away, Dark Night.

For more information talk to Phyllis Field or Darla Clayton. Tickets should be ordered as soon as possible to insure availability.

MAKEOVER UPDATE

HELP! 1 or 2 porta cribs or 1 crib is needed for the church nursery. Would love to have new ones, but a used one in good condition will work, too.

The following is an overview of what has taken place in the nursery:

Room areas are now reversed with the toddler play area in the front and the crib baby area in the back of the room.

Shutter doors were added to the open window looking out at the hallway.

Heavy half door dividing the room was replaced by a light weight half door.

One set of wood cabinets was turned around to give storage for both areas of the room.

Each area was painted and given a wallpaper border to give each area a theme - Toddler Area is 'The Beary Patch' and the Baby Area is 'Noah's Ark'.

Equipment and toys were added - exersaucer, swing, bouncy seat, activity walker, crib mobile, bear chair, hand puppets, felt board animals, shape sorter, wooden puzzles stored in a wooden case, stackable rings toy, multi cultural dolls, motor skills mat, vehicles with roadway mat, and Legos. ----- *Phyllis Field*

The five bathrooms have been completed. The sound booth has been completed also. A lot of character has been added to our church, don't you think. Thanks to all who donated money and their time to make all of these projects a reality.

NOTES FROM THE TREASURER

Eph 4:4-7 (The Message Bible) You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly. You have one Master, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all. Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness. But that doesn't mean you should all look and speak and act the same.

Out of the generosity of Christ, each of us is given his own gift.

The church's Annual Business Meeting will be Wednesday, April 27th. I will be posting the Proposed Budget for April 2005-March 2006, two weeks before on April 13th. We will be voting on members for the Board of Trustees and the Board of Deacons as well as our Sunday School Superintendent and Secretary. We will also need to approve next year's budget. I urge and request that all church members be in attendance.

Candy Niemeyer, Treasurer

TO THINK ABOUT

WHAT IS EASTER ALL ABOUT?

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though He may die, he shall live." -John 11:25

Most people know that Easter is the day to celebrate "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ," but not everyone knows what this means! What does "resurrection" mean? Why is it so important?

Let's start w-a-a-y back at the dawn of creation, when God created Adam and Eve and put them in the Garden of Eden. He told them they could eat any fruit in the garden, except for the fruit of ONE tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You guessed it- they ate the forbidden fruit. Because of this bad thing Adam and Eve did, they began to die. Not all at once- Adam lived to be about 900 years old! God had intended for people to live forever, but once Adam disobeyed God, he began to die, and now we all die sooner or later. Death is the punishment for sin.

Sinful people cannot survive in God's presence, because He is so holy. But God wanted to be friends with mankind once again, and He wanted them to have a chance to live forever again, like He originally planned. In the Old Testament, He told His people to sacrifice animals to take away their sins. They did this for many years, but the blood of goats and bulls can only hide sins, it can't take them away. A perfect sacrifice is needed to take sins away completely.

About 2000 years ago, God sent His Son Jesus to our planet. Jesus lived a perfect life- He never did anything wrong. Jesus would make the PERFECT sacrifice!

Jesus was nailed to a cross, on a day we now remember as Good Friday. He died, and was buried in a tomb. Three days later, some of His friends came to visit the tomb, and they were amazed to find an angel there instead of Jesus! Jesus wasn't there! The angel told the friends that Jesus had risen from the dead- He was alive!

When Jesus died on the cross, he was taking our punishment for us. We deserve to die, but he died in our place. All we have to do is BELIEVE that He did this for us, and we will live forever with Him up in heaven! Our bodies will die someday, but the "real" us will still live. That's called "everlasting" or "eternal" life. Isn't that good news!

On Easter Sunday, Christians everywhere are rejoicing! They are celebrating because Jesus is alive, and if we believe Him, we can live forever, too! Hallelujah!

<http://www.calvary.com/beantown/easter.htm>

God Provides Strength to Face Fears

Long ago, in a certain tribe, there was a custom of initiation for a 6-year-old boy to test the beginning of his bravery for growing into manhood.

At the setting of the sun, the warriors of the tribe would bring the boy into the deep woods and draw a large circle on the ground. They told the boy to sit in the middle and not to go out of the circle all night. Then they left him alone.

As the darkness closed in, the little boy sat and listened to the moaning of the wind through the trees and the howling of the wolves in the distance. He knew the woods were full of bear, panther and bobcats.

Shivering with fright at 2 a.m. the boy couldn't keep his eyes open any longer and with tears on his face he curled up on the ground and fell asleep.

In the early dawn, the little one slowly opened his big brown eyes, and just outside the

circle he saw his father, the great warrior, standing with his bow drawn, ready in an instant to protect his son.

The father stayed awake all through the night guarding his son, defending that helpless child from harm. As that little child became a man, he knew that there was a Great Spirit that walked with him all his life, making him confident and brave.

We have a Heavenly Father who protects us through all our dark nights and trials. According to the Bible, "He never sleeps and he never slumbers, he watches us night and day."

No matter how dark things may seem, God is always with you. As King David said, "The Lord is the strength of my life of whom shall I be afraid. Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. For in the time of trouble he will hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle will he hide me." Psalm 27

Faith is stronger than fear. Crowd fear out by filling your heart and mind with faith. People who have faith can conquer every obstacle, for God wins every battle.

Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do after having done all is to just stand and surrender the situation up to God. Put the problem or trial in his great hands and leave it to the master.

Just as a child must pass many tests in school to graduate, we too are in school...the school of life. Thankfully we are taught by the greatest teacher. He has all power. Nothing can happen to you without his unfailing heart of divine love allowing it.

Remember that this test of character will pull out of you the steadfast faith he put within you. His love produces over-whelming faith and great courage.

When you stand for God, he will stand for you. Shakespeare wrote, "God shall be my hope, my stay, my guide and lantern to my feet."

Faith is to believe that which we do not see. Have faith in God's perfect love for you. If you love him, you will believe him.

So, be not afraid though the night seems dark. At dawn's light you will find the great warrior is guarding you. And he has never lost a battle.

(Written by Catherine Galasso for the Suburban Journals.)

Editor's Note

Articles and comments may be emailed to billandkaren@mail.com or placed in the envelope on the bulletin board, near the stairs to the Children's Church room.

New deadline for submission of articles is the third Sunday of the month in hopes that we can inform before the beginning of the new month. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Thank You, Karen White

God made the world round, so we would never be able to see too far down the road. "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11