

Raising faith in

The Backyard

with a passion for generous stewardship ■ October 2011

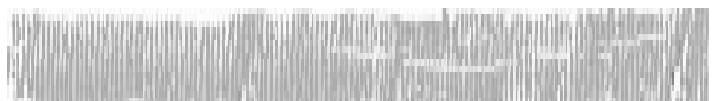
Conversation and Open Dialog

Do you want to know what the highlights of my weeks have been recently? Wednesday morning Bible Study and Sunday morning's Discipleship Forum, which is subtitled "On Being and Ordinary Radical". In both forums we talk; we share conversation which consists of really digging in to God's Word and what God is saying to us right now... today...in the context of our everyday lives. We wrestle, we laugh, we tell stories of how God is both challenging and changing our perspectives on what it truly means to be a disciple of Jesus our crucified and risen Lord. In both arenas, we are learning more about each other and, more importantly, our Lord who has called us to be in community with one another.

Another highlight has been the first of several open forums on "Worship", held each fourth Sunday morning at 9 a.m. in Classroom 5. I'm leading that

forum and I am seeking to make it an engaging, creative look into what it means to worship God. I'm hoping that we will all be a bit transformed on our outlook and understanding of what it means to worship God in this day, in this time, placing all of that in the context of how God's people have worshiped God throughout all of time. Interested? Come and see every fourth Sunday!

And, while you are thinking of engaging in that Forum, consider joining me or Sue Loudermilk's session every Sunday. Why? Well...our new purpose statement, "Serving God, Changing Lives – 365!" beckons us all beyond where we have been. Being in a group talking about real discipleship, on the ground, hands and feet kind of stuff... will change US! It has been changing me, that much I can profess, and I invite everyone to dive in and "get wet". The water's more than fine...it's beautiful...it's transformational. Come and see!



Noisy Offering October 16

Hi everyone! I hope you are all doing well! Thank you so much for your generosity last month for our African Initiative Noisy Offering! It was hugely successful!

This month our noisy offering is dedicated to a familiar cause, the **Seafarer's Christmas boxes**.

Every Christmas hundreds of sailors come from all over the world to the Port of Houston. These sailors are not allowed to leave the port and have to spend Christmas away from their families. Every year the Men of Hosanna put together boxes with goods such as deodorant, razors, calling cards, postcards, etc. These boxes also include candy and small games such as cards. This is one of Hosanna's many efforts to spread the Christmas Joy to people who otherwise might not be able to enjoy it. The funds will be used to help purchase the items to stock the shoeboxes full of goodies for the sailors.

If you would like to be noisy in other ways, help is always needed for packing, wrapping and delivering the boxes. Seafarer's also welcomes visitors to their center if you would like to volunteer. Volunteers are needed to "answer phones, host events and provide practical assistance" to the seamen.

If you would like to contact the Seafarer's Center directly you can visit their website at houstonseafarers.com or call: (713) 672-0511.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at: abbybrown2011@yahoo.com or (832) 457-8710. I hope everyone has a blessed and noisy month!!

Have a blessed and noisy month!



Glimpses of Grace 2011

Year-to-Date Gifts

Through September 30, 2011:

World Hunger	\$854.00
African Initiative:	
WomenCraft	\$18,200.00
Kagera Scholarship Fund	\$575.00
Buffalo Wings Fundraiser	\$1,155.90
Benevolence	\$18,143.11
Helping Hands	\$1,410.00
Mulkey Scholarship Fund	\$604.00
Habitat for Humanity	\$2,000.00
Garage Sale	\$3,903.39
Northwest Assistance Ministries	\$290.00
Rachel's Day	\$268.00
Hunger Rumlings	\$1,106.00
Mulkey Fundraiser	\$5,917.00
Disaster Relief	\$200.00
Crop Walk	\$1,335

Mission of the Month Gifts:

January — WomenCraft	\$755.57
February — The Life Center	\$729.00
March — Lutherhill Ministries	\$701.80
April — Habitat for Humanity	\$758.50
May — Lutheran Campus Ministries	\$595.52
June — NAM SOS Food Drive	\$668.76
July — Care Net Pregnancy Center	\$551.00
August — NAM Back-to-School Drive	\$770.83
September — African Initiative	\$793.92

Helping Hands:

January: Two families received money for assistance; Four individuals received items from the food pantry.

February: Four individuals received food, one received rent assistance.

March: Four individuals received food.

April: Five families received food.

May: Four families received assistance.

June: Five families received food; two received gift cards.

July: Six families received food.

August: Four received food, assistance and gift cards.

September: Ten received food, three gift cards, one financial assistance

Helping Hands Fund Balance: **\$1,822.57**

God's cake....

Sometimes we wonder, 'What did I do to deserve this?' or 'Why did God have to do this to me?' Here is a wonderful explanation!

A daughter is telling her mother how everything is going wrong, she's failing algebra, her boyfriend broke up with her and her best friend is moving away.

Meanwhile, the mother is baking a cake and asks her daughter if she would like a snack, and the daughter says, 'Absolutely mom, I love your cake.'

'Here, have some cooking oil,' the mother offers.

'Yuck' says her daughter.

'How about a couple raw eggs? '

'Gross, mom!'

'Would you like some flour then? Or maybe baking soda?'

'Mom, those are all yucky!' To which the mother replies: 'Yes, all those things seem bad all by themselves. But when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake! '

God works the same way. Many times we wonder why He would let us go through such bad and difficult times. But God knows when you put these things all in God's order, they always work for good! We just have to trust God and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful!

Th

anks to the generosity of the members of

Hosanna, \$670 was donated to the KIDS (Kids in Desperate Situations) Fund at Eickenroht Elementary School.

We purchased 12 T-shirts (for \$480) and donated an additional \$190 for the fund.

A committee at the school chooses the families who receive help from this fund. They must be unanimous in their approval before help is given. Principal Robbie Green told us of these purposes for which the fund has been used recently:

- Food for families who may have lost benefits from the government temporarily
- Dress code items for families who are not able to provide for their children
- Tennis shoes for children who have grown and don't have new shoes
- Electric bill for a family whose father unexpectedly lost his job.

Through the Backgate



What is stewardship?
Simply stated, stewardship is using the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks (calls!) us to do.

The Bible deals with our possessions in:

- Over 2,100 verses
- 1/6 of New Testament
- 2/3 of Jesus' parables

Two-thirds of Jesus' parables have to do with our possessions.

- There are 500 verses on prayer.
- 500 on faith.
- 2,000 on things we accumulate.
- 1 out of 7 verses in the four gospels deal with giving or sharing with the world.

Stewardship is discipleship.
How much is yours?
How much is God's?
Actually, all we have, all we are, belongs to God. Everything!

The 4 D's of stewardship:

- Desire.
- Decision.
- Discipline.
- Delight.

Stewardship of Time:
The secret to time management is not learning how to save time or to get more of it; the secret is knowing how to use it.

Trusting comes before giving. It teaches a reliance on God that is fundamental to our relationship with God.

Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want, but the realization of how much you already have.

Christian giving is the normal, steady, increasing outflow of the Christian life.

Like breathing.