

the

JANUARY 2009 EDITION

FOCAL Point

CENTERED ON ACTIVITIES OF TOLEDO FIRST SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH FAMILY

✧ We begin with Hope & Plans ✧

As a church family we begin the New Year with hope. Hope in the coming of our Lord. Hope for our congregation's future because of your generous giving of your time, talents, and treasure. Thank you for being a part of the Toledo First church and for helping us grow from the children's divisions up a Christ centered church shouting the Gospel with our lives.

Movie Night

In the New Year we have some wonderful outreach opportunities. Starting on Saturday night January 17 following Connections, the Toledo Junior Academy Home and School is sponsoring a Movie Night. See the article about that but plan on mingling with lots of children and their parents. On February 21, 2009 there will be another Movie Night.

Taking Charge Community Finance

On Wednesday January 21 and 28, temporarily taking the Prayer Meeting slots, Shanyin Stewart will again be teaching her Taking Charge Community Finance classes. In the past we have charged \$20/person for the material, but this time, in an effort to see if this outreach opportunity will be supported by the community and the church and is worth continuing, we are making it totally free. Americans spend \$450 billion on Christmas every year and the credit card bills will be rolling in about that time. So if you, your family, or friends have questions about your finances, bring your receipts and come to the class. Pick up an invitation card on the table in the back of church. Ask your friends and neighbors if they need help with getting on a budget or getting out of debt. Taking Charge can help them. If you can help us place advertising on the radio about this class, please contribute to the evangelism fund.

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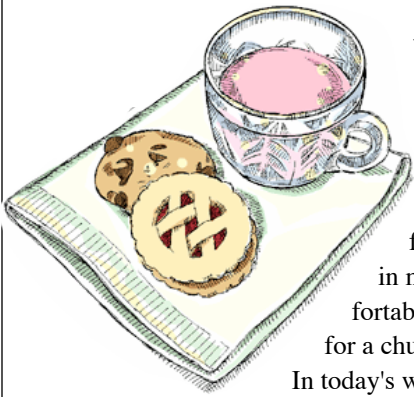
Welcome 2009,
a new beginning

Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; Behold all things are become new. 2 Cor. 5:17

A Christian is the keyhole through which other folks see God. —Robert E. Gibson

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You can be a part of a new friendship ministry

Eat-n-Greet is the new buzz word at TF. You may have noticed refreshments in the lobby some weeks after the 11 o'clock service and wondered what the special occasion was. Or you may have thought, "Mmm, think I'll grab a bite to eat on my way out the door."

What's happening is that our church is embarking on a purposeful ministry, utilizing the familiar association of food to create a relaxed atmosphere of friendliness, with newcomers in mind. We want anyone who may come through our doors Saturday mornings to feel comfortable; whether it's someone taking that first step into the "church scene," or someone looking for a church home.

In today's world people are very skeptical of religion, but are looking for that something or someone to fill the hole in their heart. It is our desire at TF to make everyone feel accepted just as they are and demonstrate that God loves them like crazy.

And what easier way to create an atmosphere of comfort and acceptance than around food. The gospels record many encounters with Jesus involving food; sometimes lavish spreads, sometimes very simple fare.

Eat-n-Greet does not happen every week, only those weeks there is no potluck. The venue is the main lobby of the church immediately following the 11 o'clock service, with the presentation being very simple. The purpose of this ministry is for fellowship; especially with newcomers and those who may look a little out of place. Eating is secondary and this is not meant to be a meal, only a vehicle to the greater goal of demonstrating love for people. Keeping this in mind, we ask that children be accompanied by an adult when going to the food table.

Everyone can be part of this ministry. In fact, you are vital to it's success. All you need to do on the weeks you attend church is to stay by for awhile after the service, pick up something to hold in your hands, whether you eat or not and walk across the lobby, finding someone to shake hands and exchange a little conversation with.

If you find this a difficult thing to do or you don't know what to talk about, just ask the person you are meeting a couple questions about themselves. People usually feel comfortable talking about themselves. Spend a short time with one person and then move onto someone else. That way no one feels trapped without something to say. And don't forget to take a couple bites of cookie and hang onto your drink while you chat.

We can all become intentional in befriending new faces and everyone likes food. So the weeks we have *Eat-n-Greet*, share a little food and conversation. Better yet, invite your friends to church and let them find out for themselves just how friendly TF is. —Sheila Case ##

We begin with Hope *(continued from front page)*

Who the teams will be this year we don't know, but when they will clash is Sunday February 1, 2009 @ 6 PM. A joint venture by Youth Operate and Connections, this year's game will have a distinctly outreach oriented theme. We're calling it the Souper Bowl Party because we'll be collecting cans of soup to give to those in need. So in addition to lots of free food [donations are accepted but not required] and a huge 25' screen to watch the game, we'll be collecting cans of soup. So make plans now to bring your soup and mingle with the crowd. Pick up the invitation card at the back of the church and share it with someone else. If we all brought one other person, the room would be packed! What a fun way to introduce your friends and family to the pastor of your church!!!

The following week in February, I hope you save the 14th for Valentines 4 India. Last year's banquet sponsored by Youth Operate benefited Rwanda Clean Water. This year's banquet will benefit India. Save the date: February 14, 2009.

Here are some other dates I hope to see you support: Business Meeting January 26, 2009. Agenda includes Finance Committee recommendations for budget and year at a glance. Starts @ 7 PM and will conclude @ 8:30 PM with optional Q&A to follow. Business Meeting February 23, 2009. Business Meeting March 30, 2009. —Pastor Mike ##

Hope is faith holding out its hand in the dark.



Christmas was in the air!

Every December is busy and this one was no exception. It started with the Christmas Tea on December 6, planned by Kendra Bills and the Women's Ministry team.

Photo 2 was taken at TJA's school Christmas program on December 18. Pam Neal put up the tree in the foyer and it was beautifully decorated by the students of Toledo Junior Academy with their Christmas

art projects. In photo 4 Kid Connect children are learning to shine like stars for Jesus. Pastor Rachel and Youth Operate provided the Agape Candlelight Communion [photo 5]. We thank Jeff Batchelder

for his ministry of taking photos at most church events. He is shown in the last photo on the right with his wife, Shelly. *Thanks, Jeff! ##*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JAN 3 & 17
1st Potlucks of the New Year!

JAN 17
Movie Night - Come & mingle with TJA & JMLC families

JAN 21 & 28
Taking Charge Community Finance Classes

JAN 31
International Food Fest

Remember: You can see this newsletter in beautiful color by visiting toledofirstadventist.org



Remember Sunday nights when you were a kid (or an adult) and you couldn't wait to watch The Wonderful World of Disney? Want to see a fun family movie, one for kids of all ages? Then come to church January 17 at 7 PM for a night of laughs! Toledo Junior Academy will again be hosting Movie Night in the fellowship hall! If you came last time, you'll remember what fun we had! We'll provide the popcorn

free of charge. Drinks and other movie snacks will be available for purchase.

We're inviting all our friends and families from TJA and James Meade Learning Center—why don't you invite yours too!
—Kendra Bills ##

Take Charge!

It's the new year. Time to take charge. Bills rolling in from Christmas spending? Like to make some changes? Want to have a little money left at the end of the month? Taking Charge Community Finance classes are for you! We'll be offering the classes

on two Wednesday nights, Jan. 21 and Jan. 28 @ 7 PM. It's free! So invite Uncle Harry, Neighbor Sue and Joe the Plumber. You come along too to fill a space at the table. Financial Advisor, Shanyn Stewart, will walk us through what we can do to **Take Charge.** ##

Valentines for India

Remember the beautiful banquet, Valentines 4 Rwanda last February? This year we will be raising money for a charity in India. Plan now to come to the banquet on February 14. ##

International Food Fest

The date is set! January 31st, 7 PM. Mark your calendar & don't be late for ethnic foods from around the world, prepared by our own great chefs. ##

Manuscripts

Pastor Mike's sermons will soon be available in manuscript form at the church website, toledofirstadventist.org. Check it out. ##

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Where Your Heart Is...



Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-21, "**19Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**"

If it's true where your treasure is, your heart will be also, the reverse should also be true. Where your heart is, there your treasure will be also. That's why I've chosen the title, "Where Your Heart Is," for our 1st sermon series of 2009.

In the past, I've been taught that "treasure" is money and the "storehouse" of Malachi 3:10 is the conference office. But to be honest, I don't think that's what the prophet Malachi had in mind when he wrote what he did 2500 years before the Adventist Church existed! So we'll be talking about what else Malachi meant. And how badly Jesus wants to be Lord of all our time, talents, and treasure.

We'll be answering questions like: What does Jesus treasure? How much tithe does it take to support Pastor Mike and his family? Is God greedy? Is God needy? And we will conclude with a fascinating new study of a very old parable Jesus told that shocks His followers today as much as it did when He first told it in Luke 10.

The bottom line is with the economy tanking and anticipated giving trends changing, we as a church family together need to be proactive and take more ownership and responsibility for what is happening at Toledo First. Not from a spirit of fear, but of faith [2 Timothy 1:7]. So what can you do?

- Please make plans to attend the entire series January 17-February 14, 2009.
- Please pray for me as I prepare during the first two weeks of January for this series too.
- Email me [mike4tune@gmail.com] your helpful YouTube vids, illustrations, cartoons, or anecdotes about giving.
- And let me know if at the end of the series you would be willing to take part in a sixth installment on February 21 where I wouldn't be preaching, but YOU and other Toledo First givers of your time, talents, and treasure would be the ones sharing short [5 min] testimonies about how God has provided. If you don't want to get up front, you could write it down and someone will read it for you. I'm praying the result of this series will yield a spirit of unity and commitment, not hostility and compulsion!!! —Pastor Mike ##



The Souper Bowl - Feb. 1st - 6 PM

It's not just a game. At TF it's never been just a game. It's an opportunity to invite someone to your church for a non-threatening social event. And this year, it's even more. We're collecting cans of soup to give to the needy. So if you can, bring a can of soup AND a friend. You'll both enjoy free food and [hopefully] a great game. No worries about the halftime show. We'll have an alternative. Did I hear comedian?

Testimonies of NFL heroes? Rodeo highlights? Country western singers? Aw, just wait and see. ##

Business Meetings are for you!

At the first business meeting of the new year, we will look at the new budget for 2009 proposed by the Finance Committee. Come to ask questions and offer your support on Monday, January 26, 7:00 - 8:30 PM. Each member is an important part of the church family and this is family business. ##

