

the

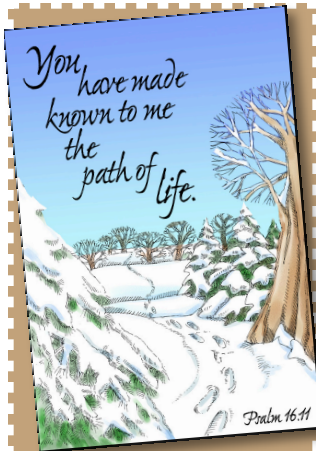
NOV / DEC 2009 EDITION

# FOCAL Point

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

## ✧ The Banquet Journey ✧

*Come to a Toledo First Church Spiritual Retreat*



*“... journey with Christ  
... into tomorrow. For  
you never walk with  
Christ long but what the  
dawn breaks, the sun  
shines and hope breaks  
through.*

—C. Neil Straight



A major all-church event is being planned for the weekend of December 11-13 at Lial Renewal Center. Just minutes away in Whitehouse, Lial is a beautiful, spacious facility designed especially for groups like ours wishing to engage in meaningful spiritual retreat experiences. And that is precisely what we are planning: a church-wide spiritual retreat. We’re calling it *The Banquet Journey*.

For some time we have been trying to discern how God is calling us as a community of believers. We know that He wants us to be active and engaged with the needs of our neighbors, but the “how” and “where” questions are more difficult to answer. Earlier this year in a thoughtful act of holy desperation, Pastor Mike and I called the church to a season of prayer and fasting. Many participated and even took the time to call and share the impressions they were receiving. The message was clear: God was pleased with our outreach, but we would not reach full effectiveness until we got equally intentional about nurturing our church’s *inner* spiritual life.

And so we prayerfully drafted a spiritual “master plan” and began to implement it at Toledo First. The launching of Wednesday night’s “Soup for You” program has been astonishingly successful. Attendance is close to 30 (up from the eight who attended prayer meeting last

*[Continued on third page]*



*Live near to God, so all things will appear to you little in comparison with eternal realities. —McCheyne*

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Toledo, Ohio  
Permit No. 370

Toledo First Seventh-day Adventist Church  
4909 West Sylvan Avenue  
Toledo, Ohio 43623  
Address Service Requested



## Our windows received a much-needed face lift!

It is doubtful whether our windows would have made it through another winter. The wood around them had taken a beating from the sun, rain, snow and ice and the insects loved the rotting wood! The southern exposure windows were the worst, so that's where the work started. Photo 1

shows the entrance when only the right side had been completed. The improvement is obvious! The workmen found the impressively large hole in photo 2 on the north side of the building—large enough for a squirrel! Photos 3 & 4 show the high elevation windows to the east which allow beautiful

light into our sanctuary. In photo 3 the bottom of the windows are finished and the overhang is partly done. In photo 4 Henry is painting the new wood-replacement. The last photo shows the wonderful result of replacing our rotting, worn-out wood with azec, a tough vinyl product. (They

even washed our windows—making them sparkle!)

*These photos were taken by Mike Carter with his iphone. He is working with Henry Van Wyk in getting all of our window work done before winter weather comes to stay. ##*

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**NOV 7**  
Book-Bake-Craft Sale,  
7:30 PM

**NOV 14**  
Pathfinder Sabbath  
& Pinewood Derby

**NOV 21 &  
DEC 19**  
Film Fests @ 7

**DEC 11-13**  
Church  
Spiritual  
Retreat

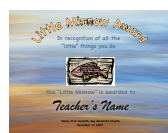
*Remember: You can see this newsletter in beautiful color by visiting [toledofirstadventist.org](http://toledofirstadventist.org)*

### Tea is cancelled

Toledo First will not be hosting a Christmas Tea this year, but Women's Ministry is looking toward May for a Mother's Day Tea. ##

### Awards to be given

Little Minnow Awards will be given again this year to recipients for the little things they do (which are not little things at all!). This will



be the third year the awards have been given on the Sabbath before Thanksgiving at 11 o'clock worship, this year the date is November 21. ##

### Aurora Tea/Spa set

Toledo First's Women's Ministry will be holding a Tea/Spa Day for the women

of Aurora House on December 6. Anyone wishing to help to make this day special for the women at Aurora House, please contact Kendra Bills. ##

### Business Meeting re-scheduled

The Church Business Meeting scheduled for November 30 has been changed to Monday, December 7, 7

PM. All church members are invited to attend to hear the latest plans, and to help make decisions that affect our church building, finances, programs and church life. ##

The Focal Point is published bi-monthly by Toledo First Seventh-day Adventist Church ~ 419.882.6200 ~ [toledofirstadventist.org](http://toledofirstadventist.org)

## The Banquet Journey

*Continued from first page*

year). And many of our guests are community members who have walked in off the street or discovered our website. The goodness of God is truly astonishing.

We have also had the church open for prayer every Wednesday from 10 AM - 6:00 PM. Tables with various prayer activities have been set up and scattered around the sanctuary. Although we have not had a large turnout for this event, we have had a faithful and encouraging group of ladies who have made it their business to pray for the heart of the church, for members, for leaders, for the ill and for the larger community. We have also had a smattering of others (including people who have simply read our sign outside) come in to pray. Again, we thank God for His goodness.

All this leads to *The Banquet Journey*. We see winter as a time to buckle down, to hide from the ice and cold through activity, production, and especially holiday food! But in the midst of freeze, it is important to slow down and internalize the season for all it can tell us about our life with God. Winter is commonly associated with death, disappointment, “the winter of the heart.” But as believers in Jesus, we know that death never stands alone. Because of the resurrection, death holds a promise of life.

We celebrate Easter in the spring, symbolizing the newness that came to us through Jesus on resurrection Sunday. But Friday and Saturday are equally important to our Easter calendar, for there would be no resurrection if Jesus did not die. Similarly,

there can be no spiritual resurrection in our lives unless we, too, experience a Friday spiritual death. Saturday—Sabbath—is the glorious in-between, where we look back at death (crucifixion Friday) and forward in hope (to resurrection Sunday). At *The Banquet Journey*, we want to explore how this spiritual imagery impacts our lives as Christians today. We want to journey



from fasting to feasting, from inner death to personal resurrection.

So here’s how you can participate: Mark your calendars for December 11-13 and call or send an email to Dee at the church, confirming that you plan to attend (419.882.6200 or [dee@toledofirstadventist.org](mailto:dee@toledofirstadventist.org)). We want to urge everyone to participate. We considered canceling services at the church that weekend, but have decided to remain open for guests who may drop by unexpectedly. The point to be taken here is that we are planning the retreat with our entire church family in mind. Meals will be planned and there will be programs for children running simultaneously so that your whole family can attend. Please

come experience how God is moving in our midst!

We will begin our journey together on Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM and will continue all day Sabbath. On Sunday our program will run from 8:30 AM till Noon. Accommodations are available on-site for couples or singles who would like to make this an extra special weekend escape. At \$40-\$50 a night, the rooms are nice and there is a lovely breakfast and hearth room downstairs. Contact Dee if you would like to reserve a room (there are only 15 available!).

If you plan to drive in each day (an easy 20 minute drive from Toledo), the retreat is free. We are, however, looking for fifty people willing to donate \$20 to cover food and center rental costs.

Please contact Pastor Rachel for more details about this unique experience being planned for you, and then call Dee and sign up. Most importantly, begin praying now that *The Banquet Journey* will be for you a time of growth and soul-renewal. — Pastor Rachel ##

*(Photos on this page were taken at Lial Renewal Center in Whitehouse.)*





## Can Christmas change the world?

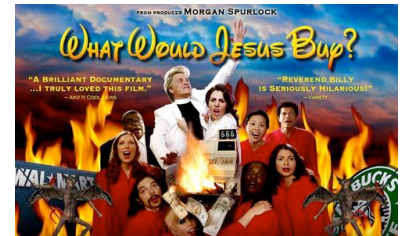
Many American Christians have decided they can, to put it bluntly, love both God and money. Proof of this can be seen every Christmas. When we spend \$450 billion/year each year. That's about \$900/family. But what would happen if Christians proactively decided to spend less and give more this year? How? We could start by giving our children or grandchildren no more than three presents. Since that's how many Jesus received at his birth. Or if that's too radical, consider drawing names or giving one less gift than last year. The money we save could be given to help Hannah collect more socks. Or it could be collected to build a baking vocational school for children of sex slaves in India. If we reduced our spending on products we don't need by 1/3 this year, nearly \$149 billion could be made available to comfort the dying receiving hospice care. Or poured into local non-profit organizations like our

very own Haven of Hope providing home make overs to needy families in Toledo. Or some could assist Serenity Farms in continuing to provide family counseling and animal therapies to children and adults experiencing difficulty with addictive behaviors, eating disorders, and victims of abuse. They're just south of Toledo in in Luckey, Ohio.

What if instead of making lists and giving exorbitant gifts, what if this year we all decided to spend less and give more presence? One church school decided to do just that. They put on their annual Christmas program, but this time rented out a larger local school and invited the homeless and teen moms among other marginalized people. Over six hundred people attended and they ate, sang, and played together as one community. One couple getting married in December decided they were not going to spend \$27k on a wedding [which is the average American wedding cost these days] and instead spent less than \$2k on the entire wedding and reception giving what they would've spent to help build wells in Africa. Another family agreed not to exchange presents. On Christmas day, the time was spent listening as each person described the charity they chose to help, the gift they gave, and the result.

Talking about giving, C. S. Lewis said it this way: "I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them" [*Mere Christianity*, p.86].

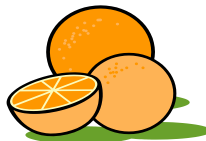
Christmas changed the world the day Jesus was born in a cold, dark stable; Christmas can change the world again!!! Please come learn how starting November 21 @ 7 PM for Film Fest where we'll be watching and discussing "What Would Jesus Buy?" This hilarious but thought provoking look at Christmas will jump start our new Christmas sermon series starting on Sabbath November 28. Each week, we'll be talking a little more in the 11 o'clock service how Christmas can change the world. —Pastor Mike ##



---

## Fruit arrives soon

The first shipment of Florida fruit arrives Sunday, November 22, for pickup at the school between 8 AM & Noon. Orders are due by Friday, November 6th. Please call the school at 419.841.0082. This month you may order a full case of Grapefruit or



Navels for \$26. Half cases are \$15. Or, order Tangerines 1/2 case for \$26. Variety packs are also \$26 and include 10 Tangerines, 16-20 Navel Oranges and 6 Grapefruit.

December's order is due Friday, December 4, with pickup on Sunday, December 20, 8 AM - Noon. All of the same fruit is available in December and pricing is the same as November. Variety packs are only available in November and December. ##



## Book-Bake-Craft Sale coming November 7

Thanksgiving and Christmas are just around the corner (believe it or not!), and we're ready to help you with your planning, baking and gift-giving. The annual Book-Bake-Craft Sale always features a wide variety of books, music and other gifts to purchase from the Adventist Book Center (ABC) in Mount Vernon, Ohio. You may pre-order specific books which they will bring with them to our Sale. In addition, take this opportunity to take stock of your pantry and freezer. What health food items will you need before Spring? Order these from the ABC and they will bring them, too. Order by calling 1-800-643-5714.

This year, proceeds from the Bake Sale and Craft Sale will go towards the gym fund for Toledo Junior Academy (TJA). Please let Karlene Langford know what baked goods you can bring. She's coordinating this part of the sale so there will be a variety to choose from. Either sign up at the church bulletin board or call the school office, 419.841.0082.

As for the Craft Sale, we're asking that those gifted in this area bring what you can. Anything is welcome, whether you like to knit, make greeting cards, make beaded trinkets, whimsical toys, wind chimes, sew

handbags or aprons—be creative—it's up to you.

Thanks to all who participate, either by bringing or purchasing items. We appreciate you! —Dee Caulder ##

## TJA News

“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6. Toledo Junior Academy's mission is to “educate students for success in life and eternity.” The teachers and staff are proud to assist parents in letting their children know how much God loves them and with Him all things are possible.

The 2009-10 school year has brought changes to the TJA family. The teachers are as follows: Mrs. Lucinda Naus-Kindergarten; Mrs. Dana Holland-Principal/Grades 1-2; Mrs. Natalie Hood-Grades 3-5; and Mrs. Jennifer Landeros-Grades 6-8. God has continued to bless our school. To date we are proud to announce that there are 53 students enrolled! We have big aspirations for our school and with your continued prayers and support, they will be accomplished. —Dana Holland, Head Teacher ##

## For Sale

Anyone interested in purchasing older desktop computers should contact Dana Holland at the school at 419-841-0082. We're asking for a small donation of \$40 each. The computers are in good condition. ##

*A Christian is one who makes it easier for other people to believe in God.*

## The art of keeping Christmas



How can we best keep Christmas?

By sinking the shafts of our spirits deep beneath the sparkling tinsel of the surface of Christmas and renewing within us the radiance of the inner meaning of the season.

By following the Star on an inward journey to Bethlehem to stand again in awe and wonder before the babe in a manger.

By rediscovering the faith and simplicity of a little child, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

By being still and listening to the angels sing within our hearts.

By quietly evaluating our lives according to the Master's standards as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount.

By reaffirming the supremacy of the spirit in man's conquest of himself.

By rededicating ourselves to the Master's ideals of peace, brotherhood and good will....

By resolving to give ourselves away to others in love, joy and devotion.

— Wilferd Peter in

*The New Book of the Art of Living*

# Pathfinder Day & Pinewood Derby

Less than 20 days until the 2009 Pathfinder Day & PineWood Derby (November 14). Once again the morning service will have guests from around Ohio with our very own Pastor Mike Fortune speaking. In the afternoon, our Pathfinder guests will be working on Pathfinder Honors (very similar to Boy Scout/Girl Scout Awards). In the evening, they will be joining Connections in worship. After a quick supper, we will begin our PineWood Derby.



This year in helping with food baskets for our area, we are asking our guests to give **two pounds of food per car as their entrance fee**. This will help our church meet the needs of our local food baskets. The race is scheduled to begin close to 7:00 PM as it has in the past. Many of our guests will be spending the night in area hotels so that they do not endanger their youth in their drive back home after a full day of activities.

We invite the church “youth” at heart to build their own PineWood Derby car and come and race with us. We have several “promised” propelled cars coming this year and that always adds to the excitement. The rules of the regular cars are the same as the Cub Scout rules:

- Width: - 2-3/4" - Length - 7" - Weight - Not over 5 Ounces
- Width between wheels - 1-3/4"
- Bottom clearance between car and track - 3/8"
- Height: not over 3-7/8"



**Remember the entrance fee this year is two pounds of food for the food pantry – or \$3.00.**

Once again we would like to thank all the church members who help us with this event – whether it is the AV guys who run the track, the deacons/deaconess/greeters who help the guests find their way around the church, or just those of you who help supply food for our guests to eat for lunch and supper.

Thank you so much for your support.

Toledo Torchbearers Pathfinder/Adventurer Club

---

## How good God is

During a recent visit, my 3-year-old granddaughter told me that her father, an associate minister at a Presbyterian Church, sometimes preaches the sermon.

“Does he tell the people how good a girl you are?” I asked her.

“No,” she replied. “He tells them how good God and Jesus are!”

—Roscoe E. Puckett, Jr. of Richmond, VA ##

