

the

MAY 2008 EDITION

FOCAL Point

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



God fabricates in motherhood

A channel from above

That longs to share with every child

God's Comfort, Grace and Love!

—Peggy Ferrell

* Made to Worship? *

Made to Worship written by Ed Cash and beautifully sung by Chris Tomlin was named song of the year at the 2008 Christian Music Awards. But according to the Barna Group, more and more Americans don't know why we worship. In fact, only one third of the people surveyed even know Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. Fewer than half of Americans surveyed can name the first book of the Bible. And 80% of born again Christians believe the phrase "God helps those who help themselves" is in the Bible [which it's not. That bad theology came from Ben Franklin].



All of which makes me think that EVERY time we gather for worship should be like opening night of a 52 week evangelistic series explaining why we're there. Because one of those Americans could be visiting for the first time. Even if they—and in some cases the "regulars" inside—don't know why. Revelation 12:10 & 12 says it this way: "They [us] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb [Jesus]. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them!" Who and why do YOU worship? —Pastor Mike ##

No matter how old a mother is, she watches her middle-age children for signs of improvement.
—Florida Scott-Maxwell

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

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



Goodbye Pastor Nathan... God go with you

Pastor Nathan French is shown above left at the piano, then at the commissioning service on April 19 where Pastor Mike gave him a large loaf of bread as a reminder to continue sharing the Bread of Life with people. He was also given a jug of grape juice representing Christ's shed blood, and a servant towel reminding him to continue humbly serving

others and giving the glory to God.

Pastor Mike commended Nathan for structuring our youth ministry known as YO [Youth Operate], and for his authenticity and honesty as he's worked within the church and also in the community in serving the homeless and getting involved with Aurora House, Cherry St. Mission, Food for

Thought and other local organizations.

The middle photo and those on the right were taken April 26th, Nathan's last day at Toledo First. The youth posed with him at Sabbath School, Nathan was given a pair of large sunglasses at the farewell potluck, and in the middle photo he had just unwrapped a gift from members and friends—a GPS to help get him to his

destination. He plans to further his education and continue his ministry in California.

We pray that God will bless him abundantly. We shall miss his creativity, his ready smile, quick wit, and God's love that shone through in all he did.—
DeLaura Caulder

P.S. Thanks to Jeff Batchelder for taking and sharing these pictures. ##

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 10
Mother's Day Afternoon Tea, 2 - 4 PM

MAY 13
Fundraising Mtg. for new Gym, 7 PM

MAY 24
YO Cafe, 8:30 AM
Fellowship Potluck, 12:30 PM

MAY 28
JMLC Graduation, 7 PM

Computer Training

The YMCA & JCC is presenting computer training lab classes in Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher and Access. All 3-hour sessions are held mornings and afternoons on Fridays — May 9 through July 18. Please call Carla Szczechowski for more in-

formation or to register, 419.725.7823 or email her at cszczechowski@ymcatoledo.org. Funding is provided by SEC Excelsior Grant. ##

Help for Ohioans

The office of Ohio Treasurer, Richard Cordray, has

created a free website to help Ohioans find tools to make the best financial decisions in these challenging times. The website, www.yourmoneynowonline.org provides information on how to eliminate debt, how to manage credit, how to make big purchases sensibly and how to approach the major decision of buying a



The Focal Point is published monthly by Toledo First Seventh-day Adventist Church ~ 419.882.6200 toledofirstadventist.org

Oh, the Joy of Visitation & Prayer

Before heading out to my first visitation experience in Toledo, the only thing I knew was that I wanted to be there for others. Since I still can't tell my east from west and north from south Dave Case graciously offered to drive us to the Toledo Hospital for what would become the first of many visits. As I held the small piece of paper in my hand I began to slightly panic. I stared attentively at the black ink that vividly spelled, *Charles Ray*, and within seconds my thoughts went everywhere! *Charles Ray*... I kept thinking about how I was about to go to a hospital to tell a man in pain that he is precious to God and that despite the trying times, God never leaves us alone and deeply loves us but other than his pain, all that I knew about him was exactly what was written on the piece of paper, *Charles Ray*.

Uncertain of what to expect but trusting in the Lord, I managed to shut my thoughts off and focus on the point of visitation, simply being there. We walked in the hospital, towards the information desk, up the elevator, turned left, walked down the hall, turned right and continued to the end of the hall – just as the receptionist instructed! - and finally, there we were. The first person we met was Charles' mother, Pearl. She stood outside the room and patiently waited on the nurses who were attending her beloved son, "Chuck." It is impossible to forget the scene. She stood outside quietly and mustered all the strength she could to stop the tears from flowing. Although she was very sad about Chuck's health, she was also comforted by his optimism and his strong faith in God.

I distinctly remember walking in and seeing him with a huge smile on his face as he unapologetically kept charming the nurses away. One of them even said that she loved taking care of him because *he* built up *her* self-esteem! How amazing is that?! As soon as Chuck noticed that Dave was holding a Bible he asked to see it and started sharing with us how much he loved the writings of Paul. As he flipped through scripture he was also reciting verses from Psalms and telling us how those had kept him strong throughout the years. When he finally found the book of Romans, he handed the Bible back and said, "Read to me." And ever since, we have followed him wherever he is!

We read to him, pray with him but most importantly – learn from him. It didn't take very long for me to realize that Chuck's sense of humor, his gentle manners, optimism and complete dependency upon the Lord began to strengthen my understanding of his everlasting love. I walked in hoping to brighten up his day but as it turns out, the strength and

perseverance of Chuck and Pearl has brightened my understanding of faith in God.

Dearest saints and church family, if you haven't done it already, please - Visit. Visit. Visit. We don't have to wait for someone to be ill, please don't wait for someone to be ill. Use the phone directory, make a call, set up a time, but even if it's on the phone - pray for one another. God is amazing and through the simple act of "being there" with someone, He manifests Himself in the midst. —Pastor Aly

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men." —1 Timothy 2:1 ##

We're honoring mothers

Ladies, we invite you to join us for a delightful Mother's Day Afternoon Tea, May 10, at 2:00 p.m.

We're planning some scrumptious treats, wonderful music, and a time to honor our mothers. Please sign up on the bulletin board outside of the church office. All seating is reserved once you sign up. No need to rush and be extra early, your seat will be there for you. In keeping with the Victorian tradition, please remember to bring your teacup with you to enjoy a soothing cup of tea. We so look forward to seeing you there! —Kendra Bills ##

Come  to the

*Mother's Day
Tea*



Let's build a gym at TJA

We are working on getting members together to form a fundraising committee for

the construction of a new gym at Toledo Junior Academy. Please come to our first meeting on Tuesday, May 13th at 7:00 PM in the church fellowship hall. At this meeting we will get organized and gather ideas on how to go forward with our fundraising effort. A gymnasium will be a great addition to the church and school. And what a tool for outreach! I hope to see you there. Please call me if you have any questions or suggestions. — Kyla Reams @ 419.283.1199 ##



Snapshots of Baptism Day

Thank you to Jeff Batchelder for the photos above taken on April 5, 2008. Notice the large bubbles in the picture at far right! It was a wonderful day of celebration, praising God for

the seven who committed their lives to Christ. [See the page highlighting each of the people baptized.] ##

LOVE OF THE AGES

is May 10, 2008, at Kettering Church, 3939 Stonebridge Rd., Kettering, Ohio.

It celebrates the vision of hope by Ellen White

when she had the vision which led to the book, *The Great Controversy*.

You are invited to the all-day celebration beginning at 9 AM

JMLC awarded two stars

Congratulations to the James Meade Learning Center for earning two stars.

The award is based on the Step Up To Quality Program which is a quality rating system designed to recognize licensed child care centers in Ohio for quality improvement. JMLC has met the benchmarks based on research that demonstrates improved outcomes for children.

Programs can be awarded one, two or three stars. Currently in NW Ohio, there are seven child care centers with a two star rating. JMLC is a quality child care center and very proud of the accomplishment! Thank you to all who supported the JMLC as an outreach in our community and a special thank you to Toledo First family for your prayers.

— Tanya Purcell ##

Business Meeting

Our next church business meeting is set for Tuesday, June 3, 2008 @ 7 PM. This meeting marks six months to the day since the December 3rd meeting in which we voted to try the new worship service for six months. All members are invited to come to share your thoughts— always spoken with truth, in love. — DeLaura Caulder ##

Sports Connection

Starting this month the youth will meet for sports activities on two Sundays a month [check the calendar]. We thank Craige Rieger for leading out. ##

Signs of the Times

Did you know that for the price of a pizza, you can give someone a slice of heaven?

Signs brings Jesus and people together. People you know. People you love. *Signs* makes soul-winning economical. For \$13.99 you

can send *Signs* to someone you want to reach for Jesus. Mail your check to *Signs of the Times*, P. O. Box 5398, Nampa, ID 83653 or call 1.800.545.2449. ##

Happy 90th Birthday

We wish Wanda Graham Happy Birthday and you can, too. Send a card to her at: 886 W. Graceway, Napoleon, Ohio 43545. She celebrates her 90th birthday this Sunday — Mother's Day, May 11th. Happy Birthday, Wanda! ##



Memorial Day

On this Memorial Day, we remember those who gave their lives for our country. And we pray for those who continue serving to keep America free, especially those who are in harm's way. ##

THE STORY —

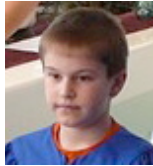
On April 5, 2008, the congregation of Toledo First joined all of heaven in rejoicing over seven baptisms. Praise God for these followers of Jesus.

Brendan Leibengood, 11, is the eldest child of Troy and Cindy Leibengood. He's a Boy Scout and is on the school Safety Patrol. He loves to read and collects



nutcrackers. He has attended Camp Mohaven for two camps and enjoys attending Ohio Camp Meeting with his family. He is big brother to Tyler, Alec, Cassandra and Carrie-Ann. ##

Tyler Leibengood, 10, is the second child of Troy & Cindy Leibengood. Tyler is a good debater and has loved puzzles since he was 18 months old. He enjoys cooking new recipes and has a strong singing voice. He is a Boy Scout and collects post cards. ##



Shaelyn Good, 11, was born in Toledo. Shortly after birth, she and her mother went to live with Glen & Dorothy Good and soon her mother got a job driving truck. She left Shaelyn in Glen & Dorothy's care. In March 2000 they adopted her. Dorothy passed away in September 2000.



Shaelyn is active in Big Brothers & Big Sisters, Girl Scouts, swimming and the school band. She plays piano and organ, as well.

She said, "Baptism means I can start a new life with Jesus...It reminds me of how Jesus was baptized by John and how Jesus gave his life for our sins and now I am saved. Also it means that I will be more a part of the church family and able to help more with the younger kids." ##

IT'S ALL ABOUT

Stephanie Frankhauser, niece of Nicole Rieger, wrote: "God has always been a part of my life, even as a child, but it had seemed as I grew up, I grew farther and farther from God..."

Recently I was in a very dark place. I felt very alone and very scared and very overwhelmed...

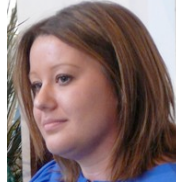
One day I felt like I needed to call my Aunt Nicole and ask her to come and see me. She was someone who to me radiated love and peace. I didn't know quite what it was or how she got it, but I knew that was what I wanted. She came to me and introduced me to the loving God that she knew. We spoke about Jesus and how He was always with me, even when I felt alone, and that God would never ever give up on me. She brought me to church and showed me what God's grace really looks like.

I asked God to take over in my life... I remember praying and praying so hard hoping that God would hear me and He sure did! After that moment, I felt changed. I felt like a huge weight and burden was lifted off me and I felt God's love in a way that I never had before...

For me, my baptism is the perfect way to symbolize the way I have given my heart, my soul and my life to Jesus. It wasn't a hard decision for me in any way. The transformation that I can see in myself as I grow closer and closer to God is AMAZING." ##

Craige Rieger, husband of Nicole and father of Cody, Chad, Netania and Caleb, has been attending church with his family for years.

He wrote: I accepted the Lord's invitation to follow Him in October 2000. You may be asking, "Why did you



BAPTISM

wait so long to be baptized?"

I just didn't think I was ready or good enough. Over the years God has put a lot of great people in my life to show me His love, grace and mercy. I know that I will never be good enough. It is His grace that makes it possible for me to become part of His family, and now is the time. ##

Cody Rieger, 13, is the eldest child of Craige & Nicole Rieger. He wrote:

"I had been thinking about baptism for awhile when Pastor Mike asked me if I wanted to go through baptism class. He said that a couple of other kids were, and that I should ask my parents about it. I think God had stepped in and put the pastor there at the perfect time because I was too unsure about the whole baptism thing. This was the perfect opportunity for me to learn about what baptism was all about and if I was ready to do it. After talking with my parents and God we decided that I was ready to go through the class.

Over the past several weeks I have learned what baptism is all about and decided that I am now ready to make a commitment to grow in Jesus and follow Him to heaven. ##

Chad Rieger, 11, is the second son of Craige & Nicole

Rieger. He wasn't sure he wanted to be in the baptism class with Pastor Mike at first, but decided on his own that he would also like to follow Jesus' example in the waters of baptism. He said, "I want to follow God all the way to the Kingdom." ##

