



Special points of interest:

- E-Team returns from Thailand!
- Expanding our capacity...
- Easter Musical on the horizon!
- Exploring Rescue, Relief, Recovery & Restoration...

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Decisions & Directions by Steve Ratliff

The past couple of months we've been discussing how to address overcrowding at our 11:00 service. Thanks to those of you who have shifted to an earlier service! A couple of weeks ago we included a survey in the bulletin concerning adding an evening service on Saturday or Sunday. Around sixty people indicated that they would "definitely" or "probably" attend an evening service. Preferences for Saturday evening and Sunday evening were fairly even.

Some of you expressed great enthusiasm for an evening service. Others of you expressed concern over the impact of adding another service on our pastoral staff and volunteers. After considerable discussion both within the pastoral staff and among our elders, we have decided to postpone beginning a fourth service until August. Though this decision delays adding a service for six months, waiting until fall will allow us time to plan more thoroughly, design necessary systems, and to recruit people to serve (worship team, childcare, greeters/ushers, building close-up, etc.). This will also allow us the time to think through possible

ministries that might complement and enhance an evening service (such as Life Groups that meet before or afterwards).

We understand that a long-term solution to overcrowding involves expanding our facilities. We discussed such an expansion at a recent overnight retreat that included current elders, former elders, and those nominated to serve as elders this next term. We discussed growth issues in light of the Reveal Survey and in the context of the five areas of our Vision (a deepening of prayer, welcome and acceptance, a lifestyle of worship, a plan for spiritual transformation, and active compassion).

The consensus among our elders is that now is the time to expand our facilities. In past years we have had only a vague sense that we need more space, but we sense now that expanded facilities are strategic for the vision God has set before us. An expanded facility would allow us to continue growing in each of the five areas of our vision. We will therefore soon be recommending that the Executive Board (comprised of representa-

tives of the elders, deacons, and trustees) form a building committee to set this process in motion. Virtually all areas of ministry at Faith could use additional space. A building committee will have the responsibility to evaluate these needs and plan accordingly. We welcome your input during this process, beginning at our congregational meeting on the 15th.

Even though this article has been about worship services and physical spaces (which can seem rather impersonal), I really have people in mind. I keep thinking about specific people who have entered into our fellowship this past year and found relationships – both with other people and with God Himself. Like all churches, Faith has its strengths and weaknesses, but God has been pleased to use us in the lives of many. Our heart is to participate with God as fully as possible in this good work. And so we seek Him concerning things like adding worship services and expanding our facilities.



E-Team Back From Thailand! By Diann Goodyear

We are very grateful to the church for helping us minister to missionaries at the South East Asia conference we attended in Thailand. Your financial help as well as your prayers were a blessing to us and to them.

After flying into Bangkok on January 5th Ken & I traveled to the conference site by car. As soon as we arrived on the 7th we started meeting with missionary area leaders. The other missionaries came on the 10th and we continued meeting with individuals until the 15th. Ken

and I met for 9 days with people from 5 different nationalities who minister in 4 different countries. It was a joy to shepherd the shepherds knowing that these people go on to help many others. We were welcomed into the conference like we were family. People were very open with their lives. It was such a privilege to be there.

From the 16th until the 19th we were able to spend some time with Steve & Ellen. They were still finishing up the conference and ministering themselves. It

was a delight to see Steve and Ellen at work. Steve is truly leading his flock in love and devotion. Ellen is ministering in hospitality and even had people in their hotel room at the conference all the time. Their love for their work radiated in all they did. It blessed us to see how God is using their lives. Our hearts are full and blessed at seeing all that God did in many people's hearts. We made some good friends and would love to go back and connect with these missionaries again.



Worship Notes by Micah Peacock

Welcome back to the students! I hope the break was refreshing. To the Faith community - it's been really encouraging to see you entering into worship on Sunday mornings. I pray that you're able to connect with God in ways that bring Him due glory and that are meaningful to you. The heart attitude of our weekly gatherings is a result of, and extends into, our lives between Sundays - our workplaces, our routines, our conversations.

The worship team rotations are currently full, so we won't be adding new members to the team for the remainder of the spring. How-

ever, if you are interested in serving with us, please don't let this keep you from talking with me. I would enjoy taking some time to talk through what it would look like, some expectations, etc. It is likely that a few spots will open up in the summer and into the fall, so if you think you might be led to be a part of the team, please come see me. Thanks for the understanding and support.

To the worship team (and anyone else who's interested) - I'd like to offer our assistance with loading the truck that's carrying supplies for the Haiti relief effort. This will likely happen during the last week

of this month, and I'll be sending out an e-mail when a date is solidified. Be on the look-out for that, and continually be thinking of how you can be involved in the effort as a whole. We worship God by obeying His command to reach out to those in need.

Again, I welcome feedback from you, the congregation of Faith E. Free. It helps me to better understand how I and the worship team can better facilitate sincere and truthful worship of our King. Also, feel free to contact members of my leadership team - Kevin Carnes, Wendy Condra, David Grieger, and Norma Roozeboom.

“This understanding should keep us dependent upon God and thankful to God in relation to our work”

Online Pictorial Directory

Numerous people have asked about the possibility of publishing an updated pictorial directory in order to learn the names of others at Faith. After considering several options, we have decided to publish an online pictorial directory. An online pictorial directory has a couple of advantages to a photo-directory: it can be updated easily (when new people come to the church or when people move away), and photos can be taken quickly on a Sunday morning (instead of a complicated process of scheduling appointments and reviewing packages of photos). You will be

able to print a copy of the online directory if you would like one.

Who should be included in this directory? If you consider Faith to be your church home in Manhattan, we want to include you in this directory. The more of us who are included in the directory, the more valuable it will be as a tool for “putting names with faces.”

When and where will photos be taken? Each Sunday in March a photographer will be set up in the library just off the foyer. Simply stop by the library after one of our morning services

and have your picture taken.

Will information on an “online directory” be secure? Those listed in the directory will be given a password that allows them to access Faith's online directory. You will be able to find the directory via a link on our web site. This directory will only include photos and names. We will continue to publish a paper directory twice a year that includes names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.

Stewardship Principle



Financial Update

	January
General Giving (non-designated)	\$60,920.17
Other (missionary support, etc.)	6,205.00
Total Receipts	\$67,125.17

Our ability to work and earn money is a gift of God.

When the children of Israel journeyed in the wilderness for forty years, God miraculously provided for their every need. They didn't toil and labor for food and water; God simply supplied. As they prepared to enter the Promised Land, Moses warned them not to forget God's past provision

and not to develop a self-sufficient attitude once they entered the Land. At the beginning they would inherit houses they did not build and vineyards they did not plant. But eventually they would soon begin working and earning money to provide for their families. In that context Moses gave this command in Deuteronomy 8:18:

“But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth,

that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”

God is the One who gives us the desire and ability to work hard for the money we earn. This understanding should keep us dependent upon God and thankful to God in relation to our work and to the money we earn. As we seek to “experience God in all of life,” let's acknowledge that **our ability to work and earn money is a gift of God.**



Children's Ministry Calendar by Chris Barker

It is a blessing to serve at Faith. The quality children and families I get to work along side of is something that serves as a great source of encouragement to me.

I wanted to get a few updates out to everyone so you can start marking up your calendars for things to come. The Children's Department is buzzing with some exciting opportunities on the horizon.

Faith is planning on hosting an **Easter musical** on March 28th at 6:30PM. We will be holding practices at 11:00 on Sunday morning for all Elementary aged children in the elementary wing. Even though we've already had the first practice we'd still love to have others join us. Preschool aged students in will be able to participate in the musical by singing a couple of songs that evening as well. Their practices will be at 9:00 sharp Sunday mornings before Sunday school

class starting on February 21st. We will have a rehearsal on Saturday the 27th from 10am until Noon and then again on the 28th from 11:00am until 1:30ish. Lunch will be provided. It is very important that participating students be at as many practices as possible.

Vacation Bible School is a big event that we are excited to host again this year. Vacation Bible School dates are June 7th-June 11th. Keep your eyes and ears open for more details as we will be gearing up the volunteer registration soon. If you have an interest in serving on the VBS leadership team please get in touch with me and we can talk.

I am working hard at improving on communication. This Sunday you will notice a bulletin board change by the preschool Check-in counter. There you will find relevant reminders about up-

coming events and useful tidbits about the Children's Ministries at Faith. One such event is the Haiti Relief luncheon hosted by the Jr. Girls. If you have been touched by the devastation in Haiti join us for a sub lunch directly after the 11:00 service on February 14th.

Lastly, we are in the process of recruiting some new leaders into the children's ministry. Please cover this process with prayer. Pray for those being asked and for those doing the asking. Our hope is that in all things God will be honored by our children's department here at Faith.

Unfortunately, the practice of entering into the Lenten season has often been reduced to the question: "What are you giving up for Lent?" This is a fine question, but it can only take us so far. The real question of the Lenten season is: How will I find ways to return to God with all my heart?

from an Ash Wednesday sermon "[Lent: An Invitation to Return to God](#)" by Ruth Haley Barton found linked at the blog [A Ruach Journey](#)

A Vote on the New Statement of Faith by Brian Anderson

On June 26, 2008, the Evangelical Free Church of America National Conference voted to adopt a new Statement of Faith. This decision does not automatically make the new Statement ours; each local church must decide if it will adopt the new Statement or to retain the 1950 EFCA Statement of Faith. This is a decision that we will make as a church at the February 15th Congregational Meeting.

As a church we were involved in many of the presentations and discussions that led to the adoption of a new Statement by the National Conference. Over several years there was a thorough process where multiple draft revisions were presented and public discussions held at national and district meetings. This resulted in a formal recommendation for a new Statement presented at the 2007 National Conference with the final vote taken in 2008. This revision was conducted with great thoroughness and care.

There were several reasons that

drove the desire to refresh the Statement. First, there was a desire to strengthen the Statement so that it might be reaffirmed and thereby continue to be a standard that is truly embraced and not become a historical document that is given mere lip-service as happens all too frequently in churches. Second, every doctrinal statement is a product of its time and is couched in the terminology and issues of its historical setting. Over time the meanings of words change and new issues arise. In addition, there were other theological issues that were not mentioned or simply were not on the radar screen in 1950 and which ought to be addressed today. And third, a revision of our Statement of Faith would provide an opportunity to update archaic language, to clarify some theological ambiguities, to seek greater theological precision, and to craft a Statement that might be better suited as a teaching tool in our churches.

We understand that it is natural to get nervous when things like doc-

trinal statements are changed. But we believe that the process over the past several years to arrive at a new Statement of Faith has strengthened the 1950 Statement of Faith. We also believe the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the only absolute, authoritative, inerrant Word from and of God. A creed or statement of faith is a brief summary of what it true as revealed in the Bible, but it is not the Bible and therefore it is not inerrant and it is, and must be, revisable as new errors and heresies arise.

The elders strongly recommend that we adopt this new Statement of Faith. We believe that it does indeed strengthen our current Statement in a number of important ways. And so, this coming Monday we will discuss and vote on this matter of great importance to us as a church. Please be in prayer for this significant decision.





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life...helping others do the
same.

New Orleans or Haiti? by Russell Soppe

“Will you still go to New Orleans now that Haiti is in such need?” In the last few weeks I’ve been asked variations of that question. The question is a serious one. Quite frankly I’ve wondered the same thing myself. How do we think about such tragedies? How do we choose? Out of an effort to love our neighbor we must think deeply about these things.

As I’ve prepared myself and the team headed to New Orleans in March I have learned a great deal along the way from Lowell Bliss. Most disaster agencies and experts view disaster in four stages: Rescue, Relief, Recovery, and Restoration. The first stage is obvious. Get in as quickly as possible and rescue everyone you possibly can. The second stage which rapidly follows res-

cue efforts is very similar. Get in and give supplies, treatment, and any other kind of relief you can to as many as you can. Recovery and Restoration, however, happen at a different pace, over the long haul. People’s lives, livelihoods, and homes need to be recovered and life needs to be restored.

Which brings us back to the original question, “Will you go to New Orleans now that Haiti is in such need?”

Haitians needed rescue, they now need relief. Haitians will need recovery and restoration for years to come. In love for our neighbor we who are able to give and sacrifice do so in love for the Haitians, now and until the end. New Orleanians received rescue and relief. They now need recov-

ery and restoration. We who are able to give and sacrifice do so in love for the people of New Orleans, now and until the end. Haiti needs now what New Orleans received four and a half years ago. New Orleans needs now what Haiti will need in the years to come.

The fifteen of us who are heading to New Orleans in March are mindful and prayerful that both Haiti and New Orleans need help, albeit in different ways. Both places are so full of people needing love, compassion, assistance, prayer, support, and service. God is directing the fifteen of us to lend a hand in the efforts toward recovery and restoration in New Orleans. Many others of us have been raising money, collecting supplies, arranging transport and

much more for relief in Haiti. To learn more about how to get involved with Haiti or New Orleans check out www.EFCA.org or give us a call here at Faith to hear about our community and church wide efforts from here in Manhattan. May we continually love all people at all times in all places.

