



WINTER DELIGHT



"To help each other to be excellent in loving and forgiving." Community Festivals bring our sites together for words of encouragement, a variety of activities and numerous tasty dishes which are enjoyed by all ages. 2 km of trails are lined with verses that have spoken into people's lives.



"Be devoted to one-another in love"- Romans 12:10a

CHURCH OF CHRIST CHRONICLE

... pursuing the God life

Winter 2014

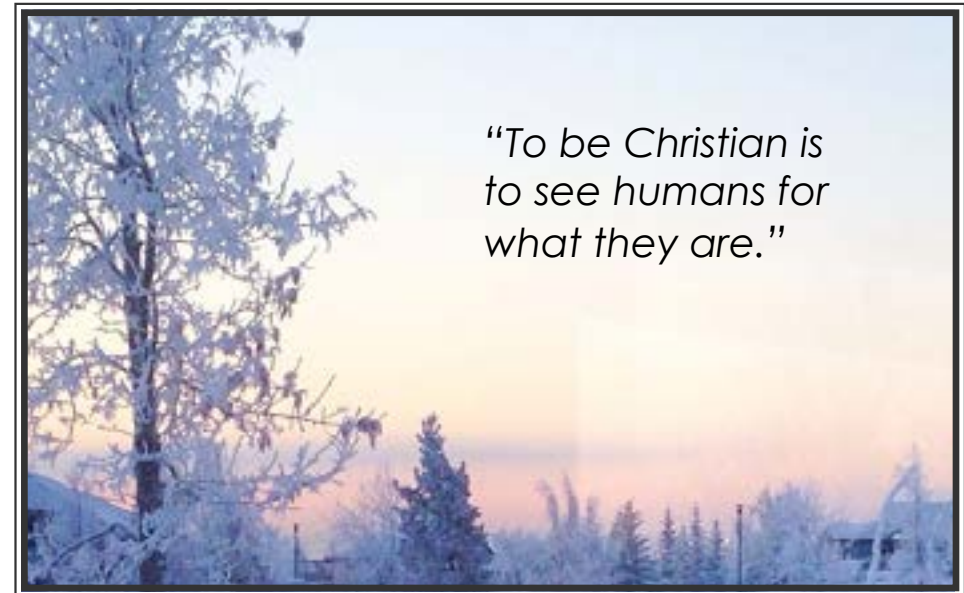
CREATED FOR CREATIVITY

By Jim Biggs
Creative Arts

Imagine selecting ten random people, giving them paper and pen, and asking them each to list the top ten things that they can't live without. When you compiled their lists, what would be the most common answers?

Food and water, probably. They're pretty much a given. Love would be up there too. Pop songs are always telling us we can't live without love. Cell phones might make the list.

I would bet my left arm that nobody would say, "I can't live without creative arts", or if they did say that, it would be far down the list. The idea of art as necessary to life doesn't seem too prevalent these



"To be Christian is to see humans for what they are."

days, with the possible exception of musical arts. People might say that the arts are fine in their place (ie: peripheral or optional) but who is seriously going to argue that without art we die?

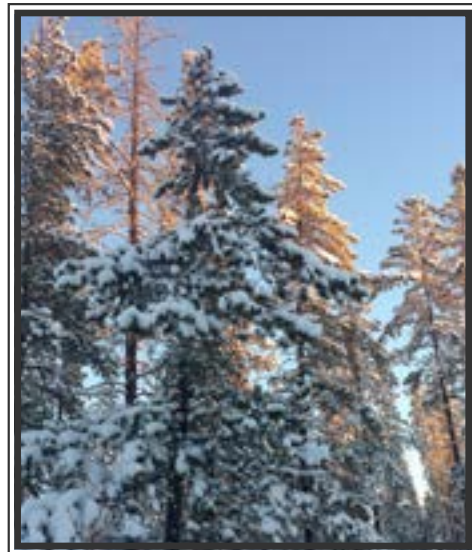
Christians, that's who.

Christians understand human beings as something other than chance collections of atoms. Christians see humans as so much more than consumers, or voters, or meaningless accidents of nature, or just animals at the top of the food chain.

To be Christian is to see humans for what they are. To be Christian is to understand each person as an image bearer of God, a living, breathing,

dearly beloved creature of a living, breathing, intensely loving creator. We can no more abstain from art than can our Maker, because, well, that's who He is, that's what He does. So what else can we do? He made us all in His image: wired us to be little creators. Re-creators, actually: we can't create trees but we can make wood carvings. We recreate.

Which is why, say the Christians, we die without art. It's not that we fall dead tomorrow if we don't paint something today. It's worse than that: if we fail to understand who we are, if we create ourselves in our own images, if we alienate ourselves from our Creator, we still walk around and buy stuff and vote, but we become



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progressively less than the little re-creators we were made to be. We worry. We work ourselves to death. Our indulgence and consumption increases while our capacity for love and life decreases. Art suffers. We shrivel. The walking dead.

“Which is why, say the Christians, we die without art”

So, for instance, Christians produce things like the Sistine Chapel instead of churning out ugly functional box buildings for churches. When we're thinking straight, we do art for architecture because we understand ourselves in the image of God. Same in music; Handel's Messiah instead of rap. Given the choice, Christians would rather spend an hour painting or quilting or carving than an hour watching TV. It's an image thing,



Our Young Adults worked hard to make this event a success - for a full house!

you might say. It's understanding who you are and why you're here.

Just before Christmas, we did a Dinner Theatre event here at the Church of Christ. By all accounts it was a great event. I wasn't here, but I can tell you why it was a great event. It was good because it was art. We didn't just have food; the chefs raised it to the level of art. We

didn't just “have a theme”; we spoke gospel with music and drama, driven by passion and intelligence. We even had an auction, which raised money for Aurora House. It was a cultural event in the best sense—the creation responding to the Creator. Artists doing what they were created to do.

Another chance for that is coming on April 12. We want to



Enjoying a coffee together



Testimony



Lots of tasty food!



Drama, music and shadow play



Silent auction with local art

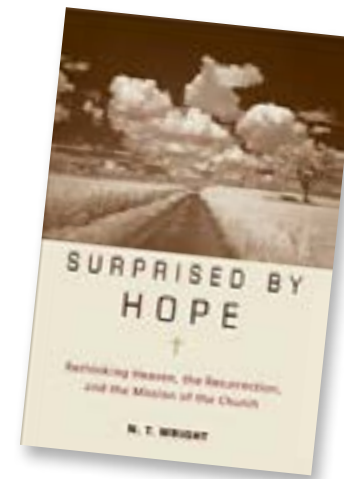
RYAN'S READS



By Ryan Duford
Highland Park

I love reading books and quotes and want to share some of my recent reads with you!

Check out our website for events, sermons, digital bulletins and articles, information about our church and more:
www.gpchurchofchrist.com



• **Suprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church** by N.T. Wright - One of the books that has most changed my life recently.

Following his resonant exploration of a life of faith in *Simply Christian*, N.T. Wright takes on one of life's most controversial topics, a matter of life, death, spirituality, and survival for everyone living in the world today.

He tackles the question of what happens after we die and shows how most Christians get it wrong.

• **Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination** by Eugene Peterson - This has to be one of the best books I've ever read.

Peterson's eloquent meditation on the Revelation of St. John engages the imagination and awakens the intellect to the vitality and relevance of the last words on scripture, Christ, church, worship, evil, prayer, witness, politics, judgement, salvation, and heaven.



Suggest a book! Email me at: ryan@gpchurchofchrist.com ■

Dinner Table



Discussions

“Dinner Table Discussions” is a co-operative initiative for ministry leaders and families developed in response to requests for mentoring and discipleship programs (and aligning with our Strategic Ends).

These gatherings offer presentations, information and strategies to strengthen home and church, as well as opportunities to share experiences or questions with each other over a meal. Youth are able to grow in their leadership skills and church family relationships while facilitating a childcare program.

The next Dinner Table Discussion is scheduled for April 6 from 3:30 – 6:00 pm at our Highland Park site. \$20/family helps to offset the cost of resources, materials, food and childcare.

The next discussion will focus on factors that impact attachment to God.



EVANGELISM - GOOD NEWS?

By Malorie Petersen
Personal Reflection

What do you think of when you hear the word “Evangelist” or “Evangelism”? I don’t know about you, but I used to have a pretty skewed understanding of what those words meant. I’m not sure if my misunderstanding was just my limited life experience, but those words used to conjure up images of bible-thumping “fire-and-brimstone” preachers. Even my own attempts at “evangelism” as a teenager were actually more like an insurance sales pitch: We’re bad people. Jesus died so that God will let us into Heaven when we die. We just need to say the “magic words” and try to follow the rules and then we have a ticket to eternal bliss after we leave this sorry planet, instead of going to hell.




All of this is a far cry from the “messenger of Good News”, that an “Evangelist” is supposed to be. We need to decide what the “good news” actually is. Is the “good news” that life on this planet is depressing and meaningless, and that death is even more painful if we don’t get our ticket stamped? Or is the Good News that Heaven came to earth. That God became human. That God wants an actual relationship with each and every one of us?

Jesus is the good news. Jesus didn’t just come to stamp admission tickets into heaven. Jesus came to give us the opportunity to have a personal and intimate relationship with God himself. Jesus gives us the gift of forgiveness. The gift of redemption. He gives us the gift of friendship and love. He gives us the gifts of Heaven now. Being a Christian doesn’t mean enduring a meaningless life in hopes of getting into Heaven someday. Being a Christian means befriending Christ and pursuing a loving relationship with God so that he can establish the Kingdom of Heaven through us.



Evangelism isn’t some kind of religious sales pitch. Evangelists are children of God that are so in love with their Savior that they just can’t help but bubble over with excitement when they talk to others about this amazing relationship. This isn’t some cosmic numbers game with God and the Devil competing for souls! This is a loving God who refuses to force himself on anyone, but freely offers choice. This is a God who humbled himself and became human so that he could pursue us and relate to us.

And THIS is GOOD NEWS! ■

Many thanks to everyone who shared their photos or other creative visuals for our church use! 
Here's a sampling of what was shared in December.

PHOTOGRAPHING CHRISTMAS



CREATED FOR CREATIVITY - continued from page 2



Joan thanks everyone for coming



Fun and games between acts



Singing Christmas Carols

do an arts festival entitled “Jesus in Everything”. So, if you can write songs, or want to write them, you should do it. You should bring them forward and we will make a festival out of them. If you can draw, or carve, or quilt, or dance, or any other artistic thing, you should bring it forward. Not just to have a teeny talent time, and not just to do

“It’s about understanding who you are and why you’re here.”

more church stuff. You should do it because that is why you are here on this planet—to live and be in the image of God. That is why we are all here—to express the glory of God and to show the glory of God and to be the glory of God.

To do art, in other words. You can’t live without it. ■

SPRING FESTIVAL, ANYONE?

Talk to Ryan, Jim or Mavis at the church office if you’d like details about the “Jesus in Everything” Creative Arts festival planned for Saturday, April 12.

Let us know if you’d like to contribute an artistic work (of any kind), help prepare or serve food, or volunteer to set up or clean up.

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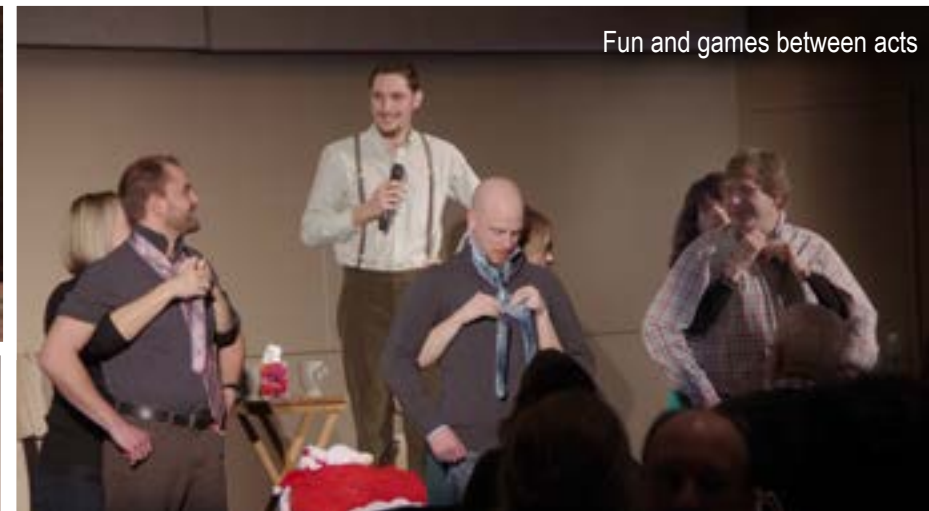
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