

THE CURRENT

RIVER OF LIFE CHURCH | AIKEN, SOUTH CAROLINA

Spring 2009

PASTOR'S CORNER: PILOT'S PROCLAMATIONS

By: Senior Minister John Zimmermann

Tucked into the over-all drama of the unfolding story of the Easter season are many sub-plots of great interest and instruction. The story of Peter's denial. The story of Mary's first recognition of the risen Christ. The story of the thief on the cross acknowledging Jesus as his savior. All of these are great stories tucked into the greatest story of all. One of the more intriguing sub-plots is the encounter between Jesus and Pilate, the Roman Governor. This story is filled with drama and at times a great hope for Pilate to perhaps come to a realization of Jesus as his savior. We see his struggle with not knowing what exactly to do with Jesus. Jesus made him uncomfortable. I am sure he wished that he did not have to deal with him. His life, his rule, his personal and political kingdoms were facing a shaking he would have preferred to avoid. We would love to believe that the result of this encounter was a giving of his life to Christ but in three clear proclamations or statements from his own mouth we see instead the very essence of the most common rationalizations that people of all ages, then and now, use to reject the claims of Christ on their life. All three are recorded in John's account of this encounter as given us in chapters 18 and 19 of the book of John.

Declaration number 1: "What is truth?" (John 18:38) As Jesus de-

clares that those who truly seek truth will hear and know him, Pilate responds with this statement of rationalization, "What is truth?" Pilate declares what our society now celebrates: a regard of truth as relative, changing, unknowing, and therefore we should not be challenged by it. Our society rejects the claims of Christ because He so clearly declares that there is an absolute truth and He represents it.

Declaration number 2: "Behold, the man!" (John 19:5) Pilate was confronted with two options. On the one hand the people were declaring to him that Jesus was just a man, a trouble maker who thought himself a Messiah, but was not. On the other hand were the claims of Christ Himself. Before the Jewish leaders and Pilate He had declared Himself a King with a Kingdom above and beyond this earth (Jn. 19:36). The Son of God (Lk. 22:70). The human heart doesn't want anyone king but self, so it rationalizes that Jesus was just a mere man. Pilate wrestled with this but ultimately brings Jesus out before the people openly declaring which opinion he was of, as he declared, "Behold, the man!"

Declaration number 3: "Behold, your King!" (John 19:14) After further conversation with Jesus, Pilate comes out one final time before the people and this time at first blush it appears as if he has had a change of heart. May-

be this Jesus is more than just a man, maybe He is a King. But look closer. He declares Him to be your king. Not Pilate's king. Not THE King of Kings. Just perhaps a king for some. Attempting to relieve his discomfort he seems to be saying, okay, maybe you are a king of some sort, but I will not make you my king. How well Pilate would fit in with our society today. You know how it goes. God is fine for you. I'm glad you find this Jesus thing helpful in your life. For me I've got other things happening. You ever hear that?

We however, are not like Pilate! We are in agreement with the Words of Christ Himself. He IS the Son of God. He IS the King of Kings. He is my King. He is your King. We celebrate this truth this Easter season.

Pastor John

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DATES TO REMEMBER

MAY

Friday and Saturday, May 8-9

Children's Ministry
Yard Sale

Sunday, May 10

Mother's Day

JUNE

June 5-7

ROLC Summer Outreach

All church-sponsored events must be recorded with Linda Solomon in the business office with an Event Form prior to being placed on the calendar.

EASTER PRODUCTION '09

Heavenly News!

By: Jeff Moorehead, Guest Writer

"Heavenly News," River of Life's 2009 Easter production, ran for two consecutive showings on Saturday evening, April 4, 2009 and again on Sunday morning, April 5, 2009. Written, directed and produced by our own Kay Mortimer, and featuring Cindy Burgess and Rachel Steiner in the lead roles, the drama centered on a temporary visit to Heaven by an earthly reporter who was more focused on her own needs "down here" than on the truth of what was going on "up there."

However, thanks to visits from numerous angels, culminating with the crucifixion and later appearance of Jesus Christ as our risen Savior, this all-too-human reporter gave her entire life to Christ, and, despite her initial protestations of wanting to remain in Heaven, she signed off her report anticipating a return to this little planet to spread the Good News. A special thanks is given to all who labored over the past few months to make this production a reality, from the

actors, to the stage crew, to the technical personnel. "Heavenly News" presented to our church body, and to many visitors attending both performances, a portrait of Jesus that we all need to be reminded of: that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that no person can have eternal life without Christ as Savior.



A CALL FOR
VOLUNTEERS

YARD SALE
Friday & Saturday
May 8-9

*If you can help on
Wed, Thur, Fri or Sat,
contact Denise Merchant
or Cassie Zimmerly.*

FAMILY AND MARRIAGE COALITION

Marriages and Families at ROLC

By: Roger Rollins, FAMCO Director

Frequently these days, when young ladies come into the Aiken Pregnancy Care Center to be tested for pregnancy, they are disappointed when the test is negative. You might think these are married ladies who have been hoping to finally have a child. But usually this is not the case. These are single young ladies who wanted to get pregnant because they thought if they had a baby, they would finally have someone who loved them.

At the Freedman Parenting Center here in Aiken County a group of young people come together

four days a week for teaching on relationships. Most of them are girls, between the ages of 15 and 30 years. The only requirement, for either boys or girls, is that they have a child of their own, and they not be married. They are searching for help.

We have a lot of young people growing up in this community who don't know what it is like to be loved in a healthy, Christ-centered way. How about your family? Do you love your spouse and your children so that they know they are loved?

Our society today teaches all kinds of love, except God's unconditional agape love. The kind that says I don't love you for what you do; I love you for who you are. And you are God's creation.

Consider the following two points: 1) the family should be the place where we receive our love and affirmation first and most, 2) in order to do that we must honor those in our family.

The family is the representation of God's kingdom on earth: the husband (Christ), his bride (the church - us!), and the children (those we introduce to Christ

and He brings into the family). That's why Satan is out to destroy the family. As the family goes, so goes the world.

When we honor each other in the family, we honor God. God has made it very clear that if we don't love one another we don't love Him. We honor others by first putting God first in everything. He then enables us to put others first before ourselves.

So let your family, your spouse and your children, know you love them. Honor God. Honor your family.

BIBLE VERSE: FRIENDSHIP

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls for he has no one to help him up.

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10 NEW KING JAMES VERSION

What is our purpose?

By: Denise Merchant

In Matthew 28:19 we are told to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Crosland Park may not be a nation in its self but it is, as Pastor John says, “Our Jerusalem.”

Many years ago North Aiken Baptist Church was started for the residents of Crosland Park. Today stands River of Life Church in a beautiful new facility. Although the building is new our mission is not. The purpose of River of Life Church remains the same:

“To be a people who pursue God’s presence; passionate in worship, persistent in prayer, planted in His Word, purposed in evangelism; empowered by His Spirit which flows through God’s River of Life.”

If we are to be a body that pursues God’s presence, if we are to

be passionate in worship, persistent in prayer, planted in His word, if we are to be a people who are purposed in evangelism and empowered by His Spirit, then we need to flow across the street and do so.

In past years River of Life has conducted summer VBS programs and Summer Celebrations. We have had guest speakers and musical artists. While all these endeavors were wonderful and blessed, they did not pull in the number of residents of Crosland Park that we had hoped. This year we are truly going to the nations, well, Crosland Park anyway. We are going to bring the Good News to their front door. River of Life will be hosting a three-day outreach to Crosland Park on **June 11-13, 2009**. We have a concert in the park planned for Thursday night (meal included), a dinner and show on Friday night, and a block party on Saturday. This will take the place of VBS and Summer Celebration.

You have heard the expression that no man is an island. No one or two people can do this by themselves. The word tells us in Ephesians 4:16, “From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” We are in need of each individual to use the talents and gifts the Lord has given them for His purpose of Kingdom building. Ultimately our goal and purpose for this outreach is to make disciples. While our initial evangelism goal is Crosland Park, it goes far beyond that. Many are in need to know that there is hope and His name is Jesus. Please pray about where the Lord would use you in His plan for this outreach and beyond; this is just our first step!!

Please contact Pastor John, Keith or Denise for more information about how you can be “purposed in evangelism.”

Love Lifted Me

By: Kerri Solomon

Love lifted me
beyond the emptiness
of my life
Over the sinking sand
I was drowning in
Through the wilderness
of discouragement
and above the guilt
I had accepted as mine
Love lifted me
far atop
the great mountain
I could not climb....
Now I stand on the rock
that is higher
and freely say
Love set me free

CHURCH SERVICE TIMES

SUNDAY

Sunday School
for All Ages 9:15 am

Sunday
Morning Worship
10:30 am

Sunday Evening Worship
6:30 pm

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WEDNESDAY

Church Dinner 6:00 pm

Overflow Youth Ministries
7:00 pm

Ministries for all ages
7:00 pm

SATURDAY

Evening Prayer Service-
every 1st and 3rd Saturday at
7pm in the new sanctuary.



OUR GOD, IS A GNAWSOME GOD ...

Creations Youth Conference

By: Larry Morris

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to go into a secular place and just present the Word with the purpose of uplifting people and giving them your joy? Living Fire got a chance to do just that in March in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Each year, Living Fire travels to Gatlinburg to participate in the Creations Youth Conference by presenting puppetry, clowning, and sign art. The team also teaches puppetry and sign art at the conference. This year about 100 young people attended. This number presented a new opportunity for ministry for the team. Instead of performing in front of a large crowd and teaching 50 young people at a time, our team was paired with a church youth group that had no experience in presenting ministry with the creative arts nor had they witnessed on the streets as a street ministry. What an opportunity!! We were asked to pour our experience and gifts into them so they could take home a complete program to present to their church and start their own ministry team! What happened? We met with them Friday evening and set the first teaching time for 8:00am Saturday morning. Have you ever tried to get up early at a youth conference where sleep is an unheard of commodity (well maybe not that bad)? Everyone showed up!!!!!! We taught them sign art and puppetry for over two hours. At 10:30am, we all met together for corporate ministry. We were one of two experienced teams there and presented the Word in all three forms each corporate gathering along with the other experienced team. At 12:00pm, both Living Fire and Peagram, our church we were

mentoring, were called together and I told them we were taking the ministry to the streets of Gatlinburg! Wow! Deer in the headlight looks abounded. Simply put, we went. At the first square, while we were setting up for a sign art, a mother with her handicapped son came to the fountain and started to take pictures. I offered to take a picture of the mother with her son. When I handed the camera back, she said "You are a believer aren't you?" God gives us opportunity. We were able to tell her about the group and ministry. She watched both programs with her son. Her son had a joy and childish delight the entire time and told us thank you when we were done. That time was ordained by God. Our young people touched the face of God in ministering to this young boy who lived so much in his own world.

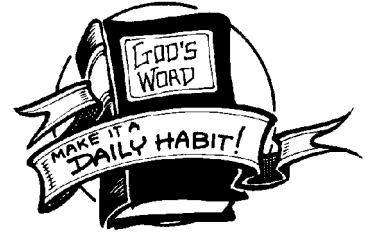
At our next place, one of the Peagram girls was talking to a woman explaining about the ministry when the woman called her husband over and told him they needed to start back to church so their son could experience what she saw in the faces of our and Peagram's young people. Such boldness from a teen who had never witnessed on the streets before!

Please keep Living Fire in your prayers. God has opened doors for this group this past year that have been mind blowing in their variety. We have been called to minister in places from the streets of Gatlinburg to the gym of East Aiken Elementary School to Crosland Park. Where God opens doors, we will walk! He has opened doors for the next three

months sending us into another school, Crosland Park, and our annual mission trip to Asheville. Our young people are excited to be ministering the Word and eager to take His Word where ever He directs!

They are your young people, your children, and your missionaries. Cover them with prayer and send them out. God is so faithful. Peagram is the seventh

other group Living Fire has had the privilege to help start their creative arts ministry group.



CHILDREN'S CORNER

The Five Responsibilities of a believer are:

- Preach the Gospel (II Corinthians 5:18-21)
- Stand against satan (Ephesians 5:10-17)
- Know where you are seated (Ephesians 2:6 Seated High)
- Know that you have the power and usage of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2 & Matthew 28:18)
- Know that you are a new creatures in Christ (Ephesians 4:17-32)

Needs in the children's area.

We are in need of workers in all areas of children's ministry at this time.

Those areas are:

- Nursery
- Children's Church
- Wednesday night (Mission Minded Kids and Deep River Kids)
- Sunday School teachers, helpers, and substitutes teachers

Please pray about sowing seed into the next generation.

Email the editors at currentnewsletter@aikenriveroflife.org with any comments.