



MIDDLETOWN NOW!

CALLING DISCIPLES TO BE THE KINGDOM NOW!

January-February 2010

Being the Kingdom – That’s what we’re about!

Before I opened a single present on Christmas, I had already received the best gift I could imagine: the blessing that God’s vision for this congregation was taking hold, and that you were living into it! Again and again, I heard about the many ways God was at work in our midst – stories of YOU being the Kingdom! The first-ever “ChIP-mas Blitz” yielded results way beyond my expectation – with over 20 groups serving together, giving of their time, their resources, and a little of themselves to make Christmas a little brighter for someone else in this community!



Word got back to me that Sunday Conversation threw an awesome party (with their children!) for the residents at Middletown Christian Village. Dozens of hands filled shoe boxes for children at the

Cabbage Patch. On Christmas Eve, my email was flooded with pictures of the PBS Sunday School class delivering presents to the Spanjer family in Valley Station, shown here.

And then there was that early morning phone call on Christmas Eve: on the other end of the phone was the excited voice of one of our Elders who couldn’t wait to tell me about delivering presents to Hunter (shown on page 6) and his family the night before!

Continued on page 6

Upcoming Sermon Series: *Beloved...*

The world stamps us with labels like unworthy, damaged, ugly, failure, and broken. But God’s love erases those stamps with love and calls us his *Beloved*. Beginning the second weekend in January we are starting a series of messages in the Gospel of Matthew called *Beloved*. See page 3 for more information.

Jan. 9-10	Spirit	<i>Matthew 3:13-18</i>
Jan. 16-17	Bread	<i>Matthew 4:1-4</i>
Jan. 23-24	Test	<i>Matthew 4:5-7</i>
Jan. 30-31	Worship	<i>Matthew 4:8-11</i>

Got Small Groups?

Where is God’s Kingdom?

The Disciples once asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was coming. They asked about its time of arrival, but Jesus answered *where* it is instead of *when* it was coming: “**the kingdom of God is among you**” (Luke 17:20-21).

One of the understandings about the kingdom of God, or heaven, is that the kingdom of God cannot be brought by us. In our understanding, it is something that totally depends on God’s hands. In Scripture, one thing is clear: we don’t need to wait for God’s kingdom *since it is in us and among us*.

Here is our confusion though: Do we need to do something to keep the kingdom among us? The name *God* implies perfection, so then God’s kingdom should be perfect even on earth. Yes, if the kingdom is God’s, it should be perfect even in this bewildered world. The problem is that the vessels of the kingdom of God are human beings, who are flawed and imperfect.

God shows us that we can fully enjoy God’s kingdom through Christ Jesus. The problem is that we cannot fully *embrace* the kingdom. The church in medieval times was obsessed with the kingdom: that it would be embodied by either the second coming of Jesus or our sacred death. But many churches between the early church and the medieval church were seeking God’s kingdom on earth. They were the people who had a conviction that God’s kingdom was among them. (If you would like to discover more about this, please read *Saving Paradise* by Disciples theologian Rita Nakashima Brock. It is fun to read.)

“Got Small Groups?”

In Acts 2, we witness how we can *be* God’s kingdom on earth. It was possible because they were in a community in which they walked together on their faith journey.

Because we are not flawless beings, we easily get lost in our journey. We need someone who can convince us to get back to our path when we have gone astray. We need someone who can pray with us when we weep. We need someone who can help us dig deeper in Scripture to understand God’s will.

Continued on page 6

Let's Risk It All? Let's Play It Safe?

How would you describe yourself? Are you a "let's risk it all" kind of person? Or are you a "let's play it safe" kind of person? Maybe you're the kind of person who dislikes dividing people into categories. We'll save that discussion for another day.

But for the sake of discussion, which way do you lean? Taking risks or playing it safe? You probably already know what I prefer. I was born a risk taker. Those times when I chose to play it safe usually didn't end well for me. Most of the great moments in my life have happened when I took some great risk ...

- ◆ answering a call to ministry when I was absolutely terrified of public speaking
- ◆ becoming the pastor of a dying church in neighborhood plagued with crack houses and violence
- ◆ giving away an entire weekend offering to a missionary
- ◆ leaving a community and a church I loved to move to Louisville
- ◆ suggesting we have a miracle Sunday to raise 100,000 dollars on one weekend and give half of it away.

Those risks were huge, but they have also been some of my most life-giving moments. Taking risks has also served me well in my personal life. If I had not taken a risk and walked into the restaurant where Teresa worked to ask her out on a date, we would have never been married. I honestly cannot imagine my life without her.

But, today I turned 48, and I was slapped in the face with that reality by 10 emails advertising Viagra. Every guy must be in a data bank somewhere, so that when they turn 48 the Viagra ad campaign kicks in. Getting older is hard enough on a guy, but to get kicked in the manhood on his birthday is a low blow.

But the Viagra ads are not what worry me. What concerns me is that, as I get older, I'm becoming more risk averse. Everything inside me used to recoil at the very idea of playing it safe. Now, it's just a little too easy to go with the flow... to *not* rock the boat. Everything is great... life is good... why take a risk?

I don't want to be the "risk taker" who became the "let's-play-it-safe" guy. I want to be a life-long risk taker. I want to **be** the Kingdom Now, and I just don't see how it's possible without being a risk taker. *There is nothing safe about following Jesus.*

This leads me to the church. Most churches never reach their full kingdom potential because they prefer to play it safe instead of taking risks. Usually, this is because of the unwillingness of the pastor (and/or leaders) to take risks.

They won't take a risk because they're afraid of losing something, but in the end they lose everything. Actually, playing it safe really isn't safe at all. Take a look at the empty parking lots of churches in our community who choose to play it safe.

In reading through the Gospels it is easy to see that the early church never played it safe. Individual followers of Jesus never played it safe either. They put their lives on the line. They shared their possessions. They took the Gospel to the ends of the earth. They were beaten (or worse) for their preaching.

I think one of the worst things a church can do is to play it safe. It's sort of like when a football team goes into a "prevent" defense, which usually *prevents* them from winning the game. I've seen it so many times; when a team loses its aggressiveness, it's over! The church was not called to play defense, we play offense; we don't run from the gates of hell, we kick them down! We are not called to see how many we can keep, but how many we can reach!

I've made my fair share of mistakes as a leader. I know I will stand before Jesus one day and be held accountable for every dumb thing I have done. However, one of the things I pray I don't hear Him say is, "You dishonored me by playing it safe! I didn't die on a cross so you could please people...I died on a cross so that you would reach them!"

I'm not writing this to announce some new risk that we are about to take as a church, so don't pass out waiting for the other shoe to drop. I'm writing this instead to remind you that we can't afford to play it safe in the world we are living in today. The stakes are too high. People need Jesus. We must be willing to take huge risks to be the church God is calling us to be.

So don't let me, the "risk taking" pastor become the "play-it-safe" pastor, and I won't let you, the "risk taking" church become the "play-it-safe" church. Hold me accountable and I will hold you accountable. I don't know what risks God is going to ask us to take in the New Year, but you can be sure that God will challenge us to go places we've never been before. We can't wait around for people to find us ... we must do all that we can to find them. Let's take some risks! We're the church ... we have been given the greatest message ever ... we have the power of the living God ... the direction of the Holy Spirit ... and God is not limited by the limits of our imagination.



Visit David's blog
for more stories and insights.

<http://bethekingdomnow.blogspot.com>

For anyone who has known David Emery, Senior Minister, for long, it shouldn't be a surprise that he doesn't fear risk. In fact, most of us wait with baited breath for the next big adventure he'll take us on. Fasten your seat belts for 2010!



Beloved, Blessed & Being ...

Exploring the Gospel of Matthew

Beginning the second week of January, we will launch a series of messages in the gospel of Matthew. Beginning February 6/7, we'll start a series of messages on the Sermon on the Mount. We're going to spend eight weeks taking apart the fifth chapter of Matthew's gospel. At first glance, you might think this is going to be a dry, academic experience ... but you'd be wrong. The Sermon on the Mount talks about what it really means to be the Kingdom in today's world. Join us from now until Easter as we dig deeper into Matthew's Gospel.

Beloved ...

January 9/10-30/31

The series will begin with the baptism of Jesus and then explore the three temptations he endures in the desert. The deep truths of these stories will touch the core of what it means to experience God. It will also reveal the dangers of placing our faith in anything other than God.

(Full schedule on cover)

Blessed ...

Feb. 6/7-13/14

In this two-week series, we'll look at what Jesus says about being blessed. You'll be surprised at the people on his list. Then we'll look at what Jesus says about who we are in Christ as Salt and Light.

Being ...

Feb. 20/21-March 27/28

For the six weeks of Lent, we'll get down to the nuts and bolts of what it means to be the Kingdom in today's world. As we move toward Easter, we'll cover everything from how to deal with anger, preserving marriages and keeping your word. This will be a very practical series directly from the teachings of Jesus.

Explore Sermons in a Small Group

New groups will form in early February to study the Sermon on the Mount using the sermons in the *Blessed ...* and *Being ...* series. For more information, see page 6.



The Festival of Young Preachers

January 7-9, 2010

St. Matthews Baptist Church

3515 Grandview Avenue, Louisville, 40207

Come and witness a most inspirational event. One hundred young preachers, ages 16-28, will gather for the first annual Festival of Young Preachers at St. Matthews Baptist Church.

Two of MCC's very own, **Katie Beachy** and **Adam Kilchenman** will be preaching during this very special event. Come show your support for them as they stand to preach in response to God's call upon their lives. Scholarships will be awarded to the young preacher with the largest attendance. **Adam will preach in the Fellowship Hall at 10 a.m. Sat., Jan. 9 and Katie will preach at 10:55 a.m. in the Chapel on the same day.**

For more information about the Festival, visit www.academyofpreachers.net. To volunteer at this event, contact Linda Smith, 245-7441.



Adam Kilchenman is MCC's Director of Emergent Ministries. He will preach at 10 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.



Katie has "grown up" at MCC! She's a high-school senior and very active in youth leadership. Katie will preach at 10:55 in the Chapel

Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow

*Don't stop, thinking about tomorrow,
Don't stop, It'll soon be here,
It'll be better than before,
Yesterday's gone, yesterday's gone.*
Fleetwood Mac

I was a big Fleetwood Mac fan in the 1970's and 80's. Wasn't everybody? The song "Don't Stop" was one of the band's biggest hits. As I listen to the song on "Classic Rock" radio stations today, the lyrics take on a new meaning for me and The Valley. We will celebrate our first anniversary on March 14, 2010, and during our first year we have seen God work in powerful ways on the campus. God is using our Kingdom Now ministry to touch the lives of people who may have felt uncomfortable in other churches. We are touching the lives of people who want to put into practice what they hear on Sunday mornings; they are people who want to have an impact on the Valley Station and PRP communities.

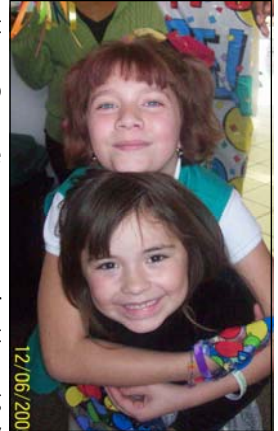


Progress can be measured in the number of people who have come forward to be baptized or to become an active part of our Kingdom Now ministry, in a significant rise in worship attendance, and in the amount of effort we are putting into external mission

(outreach) work in the communities we serve. As we celebrate our first anniversary, it will not be a time to sit back, relax, and pat ourselves on the back for a job

well done. Our first anniversary must be used as a time to re-commit ourselves to our Kingdom Now mission and vision and build upon all the progress we have made.

A year ago The Valley received tremendous assistance in laying the groundwork for success when seven or eight families from the Middletown campus committed to being missionaries on The Valley campus. Several of the families fell in love with our campus and have decided to make it their home. Now we are seeking new missionaries with a passion to help continue the work that God is doing at The Valley. With the beginning of the new year, a new opportunity is being offered to individuals and families at MCC to become missionaries in 2010. We would love to welcome new missionaries to The Valley by the beginning of Lent (mid-February) with the commitment running through the end of May. If this interests you, please pray about it then follow where the Spirit leads. At The Valley we must never stop thinking about tomorrow because it will soon be here and it **will** be better than before.



Ed Huckleberry, Valley Campus Minister, has come a long way since his Fleetwood Mac days. (Thank goodness he cut that hair, but his hearing's never been the same!)



Shown to the left and above: Girl Scouts, who meet at The Valley each week, provided hospitality after worship one Sunday.



The Valley & Southwest Dream Team's Banner Program

The Valley is showing its support for Southwest Louisville by taking part in the Southwest Dream Team's avenue banner program. Banners bearing The Valley name are located at two very busy intersections within a half-mile of the church, Dixie Highway and Valley Station Road (at Valley High School) and at Dixie Highway and Johnstontown/Stonestreet Roads. The banners say "Southwest Louisville: Pride, Excellence, Integrity." The banners will fly for at least two years. The Valley is proud to be a part of such a great part of Louisville Metro and to be a part of such a great program to tell others how good it is to be in Southwest Louisville.



How Do We Know That God Is Blessing TLC @ The Valley?

By comments from a parent like “I picked my son up from school today to go to the dentist and he insisted that I still bring him to TLC, even though there was only a half-hour left.”

By comments from the teachers “that they have seen a sharp improvement in the students who attend TLC”

By comments from the students that “we love to come to The Learning Center.”

By the fact that, through connections made at TLC, one student was able to have the surgery that enabled him to continue being an active young boy. His family was also blessed by a very giving Sunday School Class at MCC, enabling the entire family to have a great Christmas (6 children and 2 parents).

The Learning Center, while still new, has begun its initial year with a resounding success. We can see God’s hand in every aspect of the operation of TLC.

We thought you might enjoy a capsule review of a typical night at TLC. The evening starts with the MCC van picking up the students at their schools and delivering them to The Valley where they have a snack and play games until 4:30 p.m. Then they break out into study groups. The same volunteer leads these groups each Tuesday and Thursday which has allowed

a real bonding between student and volunteer, and a smoothly flowing environment which has been very conducive to learning. At 5:45 p.m. the entire group meets for read-aloud time. Dinner is served from 6-6:30 p.m. Afterwards, students are either picked up by a parent or taken home in the church van.

At this time, all of our students have been from one school, Sanders Elementary. After the first of the year we already have one student from Wilkerson Elementary enrolled and several good possibilities from Layne Elementary.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the 45+ volunteers that have stepped forward to make this effort a success. Without each and every one of you, TLC would still be just an idea.

Watch out Valley Station – WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE!!

- JoAnn Harris, Program Coordinator



Act as Mentor in Making Disciples Program

“I originally signed up because Linda McCarty suggested it as a possible fit during our “Got Purpose” meeting. I signed up again because it turned out to be one of the best things I’ve ever done. It was so interesting to see things from a young person’s perspective - he taught me as much as I did him. Greg will always have a special place in my heart. I was so blessed that his mother shared her son with me, and I cried when he was baptized.”

Tomy Clark, MCC member
& Making Disciples mentor

Making Disciples is designed to help third-fifth graders decide whether or not it is time for them to take the next step in their relationship with God. When it begins in February, Making Disciples pairs each student with an adult mentor for their journey. The student can choose their mentor or ask the Children’s Ministry staff to match them with one of our volunteers. Together, student and adult will explore the Christian faith while

studying the Gospel of Luke. When you come to the end of your studies, each student will decide whether or not it is the time to be baptized.

If you are interested in being a mentor and establishing a meaningful and life-changing relationship with one of our children or youth, please contact Laura, Jackie or Ed. Background checks will be required.



*Baptism of Henry Mullins
upon completion of the
program*

Middletown Campus: Contact Laura Mauzy, Director of Children’s Ministries or Jackie Wilham, Asst. Director of Children’s Ministries at 245-9793 or children@middletownchristian.org.

Valley Campus: Contact Ed Huckleberry, Campus Minister, reved@thevalleyonline.org or 934-1233.

Being the Kingdom *continued*



Hunter's story is unique, one that is truly special, and one that brings home the powerful vision of what it means for this church to reach out and be the Kingdom. Hunter is a fifth grader who attends The Learning Center @ The Valley. He was born with a rare birth

defect that required a series of surgeries to repair his bladder. A few weeks before Christmas, we learned that Hunter was facing an upcoming surgery and that his family might have to delay the procedure because they could not afford to put gas in their car and pay for travel expenses to Indianapolis. A quick decision was made to help that family and little did they know what was in store.

New relationships were forged that would allow that family to experience love and support that was beyond what they knew. When Joann Harris (Program Coordinator of TLC) delivered the check to the family, Hunter's response was "Mommy, why would anyone want to do that? They don't even know me!"

"You all at the Learning Center have been a God-send to my family" – Hunter's Dad

Our church bookkeeper, Laura Raque, was amazed to learn that surgery was the same one that her

"I can't say enough how much you have made my life better." – Hunter's Mom

daughter experienced 25 years earlier. She felt a call in her own heart and reached out to a mother that felt completely alone in the world in a way that no one else could. Now that's being the Kingdom!

The Pathfinders Sunday School class collected money and shopped and wrapped for the family of 7 – providing a Christmas unlike any they had ever experienced. Now that's being the Kingdom!

As a congregation, you said "Yes!" to God's call to take a huge risk, and expand our ministry with a second campus in Valley Station. Now that's being the Kingdom! And because of that "yes", Hunter's family has been awed and transformed by the power of God working through the people of this church.

I wonder what God may call us to in 2010 and what we may say "yes" to! I can only imagine the lives that we can touch in a powerful way. My prayer is that we will be open to God's leading and each come to know that "the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21)!

Thank you for helping
me do better
in school
Love,
Hunter

Small Groups *continued*

In order to be God's kingdom, we need each other. God's kingdom lives in our relationships. We were created to be in relationships, not in a vacuum. That is why a community of faith is so vital to our spiritual walk. As we experience God through our small community of faith, we can then reach out to those who haven't experienced the kingdom. Yes, we can serve children, women, and men in our community because we have already experienced the love of God through our faith community.

Do we really want to **be** the kingdom of God? If the answer is yes, how can we know that this is true? If we are in small groups and serve each other and people in the community, then the truth lies upon that.

I am not saying this because I am a minister for small groups and pastoral care. I am saying this because many wonderful things happen when people are in good relationships with others. Where can we be ourselves and be embraced as we are? In a small group of people who have experienced God's mercy and forgiveness. Small groups are places that can provide intimate *divine* love.

Our small groups are not a perfect kingdom, and that is okay. We cannot be, and God understands that. But I can say that our small groups are God's kingdoms on earth because we receive and share God's saving grace through small groups. Got small groups?

If you'd like to be part of a small group, visit www.middletonchristian.org/groups to complete an interest form, or contact Paul Tche, 245-9793 or ptche@middletonchristian.org.

Dolly Mills, Serve Minister, spends a lot of her time being the Kingdom by working to connect small groups with opportunities to serve others. She is also completing a program at Lex. Theological Seminary to become a licensed minister.



Paul Tche, Grow Minister, has a Master's degree in Medieval Philosophy, a discipline dominated by logic. In a major departure, he now spends his time pondering the Kingdom of God which is most illogical.



KingdomConnect

Explore what it means to be a Kingdom Now church and engage in the work of the Kingdom!

Join us for an upcoming session:

MIDDLETOWN CAMPUS:

Sunday, January 17 @ 6 pm

VALLEY CAMPUS:

Sunday, January 17 @ 9:15 am

Meet our ministry staff and learn more about our congregation's Kingdom Now vision and values.

Find a small group, engage in team ministry, and bring your questions. It's the way to get connected!

RSVP at Connection Point - Childcare is available

Our Team

David Emery <i>Senior Minister</i>	Laura Mauzy <i>Director of Children's Ministry</i>
Jeff Howell <i>Executive Minister</i>	Jackie Wilham <i>Asst. Dir. of Children's Ministry</i>
Ed Huckleberry <i>Valley Campus Minister</i>	Cathy Carr <i>Youth Intern</i>
Dave Seely <i>Youth Minister</i>	Shaun Morris <i>Nursery Coordinator</i>
Seung (Paul) Tche <i>Grow Minister</i>	Carrie Johnson <i>Weekday Preschool & Kindergarten Director</i>
Dolly Mills <i>Serve Minister</i>	Tracey Hardin <i>Weekday Preschool & Kindergarten Office Manager</i>
George Claiborne <i>Director of Resource Ministry</i>	Angie Hopperton Joanna Ximenes <i>Accompanists</i>
Amanda O'Mahoney <i>Director of Music Ministries</i>	Laura Raque <i>Bookkeeper</i>
Larry Vallon <i>Director of Evangelism</i>	Becky Skaggs Debi Longfellow <i>Administrative Assistants</i>
Adam Kilchenman <i>Director of Emergent Ministry</i>	George Irvin Jim Mallory <i>Custodians</i>
Scheri Stewart Mullins <i>Director of Communications</i>	

Middletown Christian Church ♦ (502) 245-9793

www.middletownchristian.org

Welcome New Members!

Middletown Campus

Rachel Ball
Ryann Ball
Norman Barker
Sharon Barker
Eric Baugher
Jake Baugher
Leslie Baugher
Nate Baugher
Zach Baugher
Kelley Bright
Eric George
Howard Griffith
Linda Griffith
Caston Hafling

Clayton Hafling
Eric Hafling
Katie Hafling
Kristie Hafling
Joan Henry
Barbara Kindermann
Dieter Kindermann
Debi Longfellow
April Pruitt
Ken Pruitt
Gingy Reid
Rachel Reynolds
Ellen Sewell
Tony Sewell
Kim Wagner

The Valley Campus

Jennifer Chamberlain
Scott Coveyow
Pat Risner
Sherry Metts-Risner
Jeanie Oldham
Terry Oldham
Diane Williams

Generosity Matters ...

Because of the generosity of our church family, God's vision is becoming a reality. Thank you for your continued support of God's work here at Middletown Christian Church and The Valley.

General Fund Update

Middletown Campus

January—September 2009	\$ 1,235,315
October	121,711
November	168,230
December	<u>170,928</u>
Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,696,184
Budgeted	\$ <u>1,734,204</u>
Over (Under)	\$ (38,020)

Valley Campus

January—September 2009	\$ 48,630
October	5,583
November	5,724
December	<u>7,992</u>
Tithes & Offerings	\$ 67,929
Budgeted	\$ <u>74,904</u>
(Under)	\$ (6,975)

Information as of this printing, 12/28/2009

Leave a lasting legacy; remember your church in your estate planning.

Blessings in a Backpack Launched in 3 Local Schools!



When we began plans to launch our Children in Poverty Initiative, the first people that arrived to help were, not surprisingly, educators or people working in the local school system. People with a background and passion for helping kids! Our initial conversations revealed the significant obstacle that hunger posed for our local school children, and

therefore the biggest opportunity to affect positive change on impoverished children in our community. We also discovered that, despite the fact there are many worthy organizations serving the poor and the hungry locally, hundreds of school children in the Middletown area were going without food on a weekly basis.

According to the Coalition Against Hunger, nationwide there are 12 million kids who live in households where there's not enough money to buy food. Blessings in a Backpack was developed in 2005, here in Louisville, to combat that very issue. The program is designed to ensure that elementary school children whose families qualify for federal free and reduced meals have enough food on the weekends. By negotiating substantial discounts with its food industry partners and providing the backpacks for kids to take home, Blessings is able to provide staple food that's easy to transport

and prepare. Their national buying power is able to provide one child with backpacks full of food on the weekends for an entire school year for only \$80!!

Because of your generosity and support of the CHIP tree, this program will be expanded to 3 of our local elementary schools beginning this month! Throughout the school year, our efforts will help children to be more healthy and attentive in school, will better equip them to break the cycle of poverty that many of them live in. Better test scores, improved reading skills, positive behavior, improved health and attendance have all been attributed to the success of this program which is currently feeding over 23,000 kids in 100 schools across the U.S. Thanks for your ongoing support of these efforts!

Notice of Congregational Meeting

Middletown Campus
Sunday, January 17 @ 5 p.m.

Valley Campus
Sunday, January 17
(immediately following worship)

The 2010 Budget will be presented.
Please plan to attend!



500 North Watterson Trail
Louisville, KY 40243

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