



MIDDLETOWN NOW!

CALLING DISCIPLES TO BE THE KINGDOM NOW!

March-April 2010



All across the life of our church the Spirit is calling people into deeper and deeper discipleship. More and more people are opening their lives to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, making radical life changes, and taking the risk to Be the Kingdom Now! This issue of Middletown Now! shares the stories of how people in our church are answering the call to connect, grow, serve, and give in the power of the Kingdom. Read on and find out...

Connect...how MCC staff are answering the call to embrace God's movement in their hearts and embrace new formed passions and gifts (pg 3, back page).

Grow...how one small group is growing deeper in care and study and opening themselves to exciting new opportunities of service led by the Spirit (below, right).

Serve...how one family is taking giant steps to follow the call of the Spirit into a distant mission field and open the door for others to follow (below, left).

Give...how one man's generous spirit of outreach has come full circle (pg. 7).

Can you hear the Spirit calling? Are you willing to answer the call to a deeper level of discipleship? The same Holy Spirit is calling each and every one of us in our own unique way to Be the Kingdom Now!

Called ... Mission Mexico



Amy Westlake attending to the emotional needs of some of the children at the Pan de Vida Orphanage.

For the past two years, I have faithfully prayed, "Here I am, Lord. I want to be your servant. How can our family glorify and serve you? Please show me Your way." Each time I prayed, my heart and mind were filled with the same gentle message, "Amy, know my Word."

I began to read the Bible. From the moment I picked it up, God gave me a deep hunger to keep reading it, and I literally

could not put it down. For the first time in my life, scripture was ALIVE! Through reading the Bible, I began to truly know God. When I read Acts 1:4-5 and 8, I realized what was missing from my life: the power of the Holy Spirit. At that moment, I prayed and asked God to baptize me with the Holy Spirit... and He did. From that day



Dr. Rodney Westlake examines some of the children at the Pan de Vida Orphanage.

See Westlake, page 5

One Group Answers the Call to Serve ...



Linda McCarty

I believe that any time we become involved in any organization the more opportunity we have to receive blessings. Small groups have been a wonderful venue for me to become acquainted with many people and to form some very dear friendships.

Becoming a small group leader gave me the opportunity to use my passion for sharing the gospel. I stumbled upon teaching Sunday school for children 15 years ago and discovered a passion for sharing the Bible with others. Then, the MCC staff gave me the tools to become comfortable as a small group leader. I believe the Lord wants us to really understand who He is, how to understand scripture, and how the scripture applies to our life right now.

Becoming a small group leader gave me the opportunity to use my passion for sharing the gospel.

To examine the views of others and pray about them has been personally rewarding for me and allowed spiritual growth to occur in my life. Participating in non-

See McCarty, page 6

Called to Be ...

In his book *Called: Becoming Who You Were Born to Be*, Kary Oberbrunner lays out a fundamental contrast between what we in the church often expect and what we should expect. He observes that a common understanding of discipleship includes this trajectory:

1. Accept Jesus and ask him into your heart.
2. Don't do bad things now.
3. Withdraw from culture.
4. Hang out with other Christians.
5. Go to church.
6. Read your Bible and pray.
7. Be happy that you are saved and not going to hell.
8. Tell other people about how happy they can be if they follow those seven steps.

He calls this way of following Christ a passionless life, suggesting that Jesus actually calls us to live in this way:

1. I want your whole life – everything – including your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
2. I want to form myself in you.
3. I want to transform you and then have you transform culture.
4. I want you to be in the world as I was.
5. I want you to be the church, the incarnation of me.
6. I want you to embody the Word to others.
7. I am giving you abundant life now and will do so throughout eternity.
8. Be my hands and feet in this world and see people as people, not projects to convert.

Jesus has great compassion for us. He loved us enough to die for us. But we do Christianity no favor by lowering the bar on discipleship. When we present an accommodating, no-commitment version of discipleship we are altering the Gospel.

The Jesus I see in scripture says "follow me." We can't put Jesus in our pocket like a religious trinket that grants our wishes and helps us fulfill our own version of the American Dream. Discipleship is bigger and grander.

Oberbrunner believes the world rejects Jesus because the one we present asks too little of them. They don't reject him because he asks too much. No one wants to devote their life to something that requires so little of us.

The vision God has given our church is a big one. We are calling disciples to be the Kingdom Now. Put emphasis on the word **BE** and you will understand just what God is asking us. **BE** means nothing less than the total commitment of your life.

Are you open to what God wants to do with your life? Are you open to the idea that God wants to use you right where you are? Few questions are more important than these two. God will only use you to the degree that you are open to him.

Sadly, some people live their whole lives resisting this idea that God wants to use them. We want someone else to do it for us. But when it comes to reaching the world **YOU ARE THE PLAN**. There is no other plan. There are people in your life who will never hear the Gospel unless you flesh it out for them. Do you really understand what is at stake?



David Emery, Senior Minister
Middletown Christian Church

Are you receiving weekly e-mails from David?
If you would like to, contact the church office,
245-9793 or mcc500@middletownchristian.org.



Continuing Sermon Series: *Being ...*

March 6-7

Lust ... Keeping it in check (Matthew 5:27-30)

March 13-14

Divorce ... Preserving your marriage (Matthew 5:31-32)

March 20-21

Trust ... Keeping your word (Matthew 5:33-37)

March 27-28

Loving your Enemies ... The real test (Matthew 5:38-48)



Visit David's blog
for more stories and insights.

<http://bethekingdomnow.blogspot.com>

Kingdom Callings and Staff Transitions

One of our key values at Middletown Christian Church is helping people answer the call to ministry by discovering and nurturing their unique passions and gifts. This goes for our staff as well as the general church. When ministry needs have arisen calling for professional leadership we have looked to the call of God's Kingdom and realigned according to the strengths and gifts of our staff. Now is such a time.

Dave Seely—Worship and Music Minister

For over 17 years Dave Seely has served as our Youth Minister. He has led 100's of kids into a deeper relationship with Christ through devotion, reflection, fellowship and service. The longevity of Dave's calling is rare among youth ministers and we have been blessed.

Along the way Dave has answered the call to ministry time and again as he wore a number of hats in addition to his youth ball cap. Three years ago when an important need arose Dave stepped up and has provided important leadership for our praise teams. With the growth of the church and the addition of multiple worship services and of praise teams, Dave has become increasingly pulled to and fro between youth and worship.

This past year we began a process of discernment and prayer with Dave, his family, the elders, and the board regarding his particular call at this time in his life. Knowing we needed help with the growth of our worship services and were facing a needed overhaul of our youth program to receive a growing number of children from our new children's ministry, Dave listened for the voice of God to lead him where he could serve best. A growing passion for music and worship was kindled in his heart.

Dave will continue to serve as our youth minister through May and the end of the school year. Beginning the first of June Dave will become our full-time Worship and Music Minister. He will begin working creatively to plan worship and music across all worship services. One of our major goals is to develop our own "MCC voice" when it comes to praise music through writing more original songs and re-arranging favorites. He will continue to build all praise teams, write music, work creatively with sermon and liturgy preparation, promote increased worship attendance, provide guidance for other campuses, and build teams to share in our worship and music ministry.

Amanda O'Mahoney—Director of Choral Ministries

Amanda O'Mahoney's role will become more focused as the Director of Choral Ministries. She will continue to oversee all children, youth and adult choral programs and as well as our handbell choirs. There are exciting plans for the future growth of our choral program at MCC.

Dave Seely will supervise Amanda, our accompanists and volunteer praise members and be the divisional representative on staff for worship and music.

Adam Kilchenman—Youth Intern

Adam Kilchenman has been serving as our Seminary Intern for a year and a half and has been a member of the church for three years. He is a very talented young man. Many of you have experienced his teaching, worship leadership, and preaching.

As he nears the completion of his seminary matriculation, Adam is hearing a call to youth ministry. We have the unique opportunity to work with Adam over the next four months and explore that call together.

A Youth Ministry Team is being formed and will grow with Adam and will work with youth and parents to re-vision and re-cast youth ministry for the future.

Answer the Call

Please join our Board of Directors and Elders in continuing to pray for Dave, Adam, and Amanda as they seek to faithfully answer God's call in their lives. And if our music, worship, or youth teams asks you to get involved, I hope you listen for God's call in your own life. It's all part of Calling Disciples to Be the Kingdom Now!



*Jeff Howell, Executive Minister
Middletown Christian Church*

Making Kingdom Now Real in The Valley



Ed Huckleberry, Campus Minister, The Valley

Real people making real confessions of faith. Real people worshipping God. Real people serving their local and global neighbors. The Valley is a place where real people are making Kingdom Now a part of their lives and they are having an impact on the Valley Station and Pleasure Ridge Park communities in Southwest Louisville. On March 14 The Valley will recognize one year of ministry. The Valley will not celebrate its first anniversary with cake and punch so much as it will celebrate with acts of community service.

March 13-14 Anniversary Activities

- ◆ Repair work on the homes of senior citizens
- ◆ Trash pick-up along Dixie Highway & Kendall Street
- ◆ An American Red Cross blood drive on Sunday
- ◆ Bring new missionaries to The Valley

To find out how you can be involved in these activities, contact Ed at reved@thevalleyonline.org.

2011 Valley Vision

People's lives are really being transformed, their relationship with God is growing deeper, they're learning that serving others brings them closer to God.

Out of what's really happening at The Valley the Leadership Team has cast a vision for what the campus will look like by January 2011. They see our pews filled on Sunday mornings, requiring a second Sunday morning worship service. They see a campus with expanded youth and children's ministries. They see a campus with increased community activity. They see The Learning Center @ The Valley at capacity.

It is a vision that presents challenges, but it's a vision that can be realized by embracing a commitment to prayer, study of the scriptures, service to our community, and a campus-wide invitational attitude. Above all it will require The Valley campus to be a generous campus. We will see all that God will do when we live sacrificial lives for the greater purposes of the Kingdom.

We must not shy away from these goals. Whether you are a part of the Middletown or Valley campus, these are your goals too. We all have a role to play in assisting The Valley to have a Kingdom Now impact in its community.

This vision, this snapshot of The Valley in 2011, is exciting because it means the campus is reaching people with the Good News of Jesus Christ. There is no way for any of this become reality if people are not attracted by the way we live out the gospel at home, at work, at the store, or anywhere we are.

Kingdom Now is something very real at The Valley.

What You Can Do

Become a Missionary - Work and worship with us for three to four months.

Volunteer - Volunteer for one or more of our neighborhood walks, special events (Easter Egg Hunts and VBS), or at The Learning Center. This is a great way for individuals, small groups, or families to serve this ministry!

Pray - Of course, everyone has the ability to pray. Pray that God will continue to send people to The Valley campus who are looking for or will respond to God's call in their lives. Pray for God to give us wisdom and courage to step out of our comfort zones in order to be the Kingdom Now. Pray for our leaders. Pray for our people. Pray.

Join us for a Neighborhood Walk

Saturday, March 6
8:30-11:30 a.m.

Volunteers needed to walk the streets in the Valley Station area and place informational hangers on doors. This is a great group serving opportunity! To volunteer, contact Jerry Crowe, 458-9685 or jbird78@juno.com.

Life Change @ The Valley - Alvie Dupin



"I don't know why we were gone from the church for so long, but I'm sure glad I came back." Alvie Dupin became a member of Valley Christian Church in 1960, but shakes his head as he says, "I was away from this church for 26 years." Following the Restart of The Valley on March 15, 2009 Alvie was one of the first people to renew his commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to serve the Kingdom of God through The Valley. Alvie rides the TLC bus every Tuesday and Thursday, he is the first to step forward when he hears about people in need, and he is the praise team's biggest fan. Other members have noticed a change in Alvie, that he is so giving, so loving, and fun-loving. After years away from the church he says it's so good to be here and doing something for the church. Alvie has found a new lease on life through his faith in God and being the Kingdom Now.



Westlake *continued*



forward, my prayer life changed. I now had a relationship with the Holy Spirit. No longer did I do all the talking when I prayed, but now I listened.

I continued to faithfully pray, "Here I am, Lord. I want to be your servant.

How can our family glorify and serve you? Please show me Your way." This time I could feel the Holy Spirit's presence and hear God's voice, "Amy, I want you and your family to go to Mexico." "Mexico?" I thought. "But, God, I don't know how to speak Spanish... and my daughter (*Luch, pictured above*) is starting kindergarten in three months..." I looked for every reason and excuse not to go, but God continually eased my doubts and confirmed His calling for our family's life.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." – Acts 1:8

Three months later, we packed our car and roof rack and began our journey. That is all we took – our family and a few possessions. Days after we arrived, God faithfully began to reveal His plan for us. He led us to the people He wanted us to meet, took us to

the places He wanted us to see, and placed a clear message in our hearts: to use our hands to bless others.



In October, a friend took us to the Pan de Vida orphanage. The moment we walked onto the orphanage grounds, we could feel the Holy Spirit's power and presence. We immediately knew this was the reason God had called us to Mexico. He has given us a BIG heart for orphans and children in poverty in Mexico and He has given us a BIG vision to serve them.

As God reveals to all of us through His Word, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." (Acts 1:8) When you are called, God fulfills His promise. He will provide everything you need to be Christ's hands and feet – all you have to do is listen and obey.

~Amy Westlake

Amy and Rodney Westlake have been members of MCC since 2006 and are currently living in Mexico with their children Lucy (age 6) and Jack (age 4), pictured above with one of the children from the orphanage.

Have YOU Heard the Call to Serve?

Check out these opportunities to serve away from home!

Each of us are called to serve in different ways — for some it's volunteering in our community. But, if you feel called to pack up your suitcase, leave the comforts of home and serve the poor, MCC has heard the call to empower you to do just that. A series of hands-on mission opportunities are being planned, and we invite you to consider being part of that effort!

For more information about how you can be part of one of these trips, contact Marla Cautilli, 432-5004 or marla@hhministries.com.



Pan de Vida Orphanage
(Mexico)

Family Mission Trip
April 1-10



Hand in Hand Ministries
(Appalachia)

Individual Mission Trip
June 27-30



Sunset Gap
(Cosby, Tennessee)

Youth Mission Trip
July 25-30



Loma de Luz Hospital
(Honduras)

Individual Mission Trip - Fall 2010

McCarty *continued*

threatening discussions around scripture allows us to explore how the Lord is speaking to us is one blessing of the small group experience. The objective is to challenge our own understanding and not necessarily to debate someone else's beliefs.

Another blessing from the small group experience has been praying together over concerns we have for each other and those we know. Through our prayer time we get to know each other's hopes, worries, praises and heartaches. Recently, one of my groups noticed many prayers revolving around cancer and the needs of our elderly parents.

I believe that God used those prayer concerns to raise our group's awareness of another concern in our midst. One of our members, while eating at a nearby restaurant, was served by a woman who seemed to be in poor health. During the course of their discussion, our member found out the server had been treated for cancer, had no family here to help her, and could not afford to take off from work to get adequate care and rest. Our small group, along with

I believe that God used those prayer concerns to raise our group's awareness of another concern in our midst.

assistance from the external missions team at MCC, was able to pay for her rent for a month and purchase food for her. This allowed her to take time off for another surgery she needed. Would we have noticed this woman's need if God had not raised our awareness through our prayers? I don't know, but I really believed the Holy Spirit nudged us.

In addition, our prayers for our aging parents prompted a desire to help at Middletown Christian Village with the elderly. I wasn't really sure of what opportunities were available, but upon inquiring, I learned they needed some help with leading the worship service on Sundays. Our group led worship there during January. What a hidden treasure that was! Besides worshipping with the residents, we really got to know some wonderful senior citizens. We shared our time and they shared their values and life experiences with us. A true blessing!

There are wonderful opportunities that abound from the small group experience. Get involved! You will be blessed!

We're Called to be in Community

Get involved in group life.

Form a Small Group. Grow in Faith - Share in Love!

Visit us at www.MiddletownChristian.org/Groups.

For more information, contact Paul Tche, 245-9793 or ptche@middletownchristian.org.

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, March 21 @ 6 pm

Sunday, April 18 @ 6 pm

VALLEY CAMPUS:

Sunday, March 21 @ 9:15 am

Sunday, April 18 @ 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

Welcome New Members!

Middletown Campus

Brittany Amos
Janeane Correll
Patrick Crawford
Nicholas DiLuca
Rob DiLuca
Stephanie DiLuca
Susan DiLuca

Katy Hannah
Brandi Hitzelberger
Erik Hitzelberger
Scott Holt
Sherrill Holt
Claudia Lauber
Marc Lauber
Harold Leach
Vickie Leach
Donna McCullouck
Norma Pusateri
Rebecca Salazar
Victor Salazar
Rachel Sherman
The Valley Campus
Danni Sisco

Lenten Sermon Series: [Re]

...from the Latin prefix that means "again" or "anew." Three days after the crucifixion God reached into a dark tomb and gave Jesus life "again." This great news is more than a historical event, a doctrine to be believed, or a promise of heaven when we die. It means life "again" for the broken, guilty, depressed, addicted, and spiritually dead now. Christ is alive and at work in our world bringing life "anew" to those who will receive it. This series is going to show how the resurrection changes everything.

April 3-4 [Re]surrection
(Matthew 28:1-10) Easter Weekend

April 10-11 [Re]demption
April 17-18 [Re]sistance
April 24-25 [Re]veal
May 1-2 [Re]cieve
May 8-9 [Re]volution



Called to Be Generous

What my father taught me about giving...

My dad, Bill Smart, passed away on Sunday, February 14. He was 90 years old and had lived at Middletown Christian Village for the last few months of his life.

My dad taught me what it means to live by faith. He and my mother were always actively serving in their church (First Christian in Versailles).

He was the most generous person that I've ever known. He and mother decided early in their marriage that they wanted to be more generous. So every year, they increased their giving by \$10 per week (that may not sound like much, but when you live to be 90 years old, it adds up!).

They were disciplined about their giving. The first check that he and mother wrote each month was to give away. He and mother were passionate about giving to support their church and to support Week of Compassion. They also helped put several students through seminary.

They were so passionate about the ministry of Week of Compassion that for many years Dad and Mother matched whatever the rest of their church gave to Week of Compassion!

Recently, he sent a gift to First Christian in Versailles – designated for the Week of Compassion's Haiti relief efforts – to help with the church's gift to Week of Compassion.

Dad never expected to be a beneficiary of Week of Compassion, but after last year's ice storm, a gift from Week of Compassion helped to purchase generators for Middletown Christian Village.

My dad was very humble about giving. Most of the time, he and mother gave anonymously.

I remember one time my dad told me "your mother and I never missed a penny of the money that we've given away." My dad taught me what it means to give with a glad and generous heart.

~Sherrill Holt

(Sherrill and Scott Holt are new members at MCC)

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—February 2010

Actual	
January	\$ 138,442
February	
2/6, 7	43,094
2/13, 14	<u>36,164</u>
Tithes & Offerings	\$ 217,700
Budgeted	\$ <u>265,960</u>
Over (Under)	\$ (48,260)

Valley Campus

January—February 2010

Actual	
January	\$ 6,696
February	
2/7	1,420
2/14	<u>2,729</u>
Tithes & Offerings	\$ 10,845
Budgeted	\$ <u>10,861</u>
Over (Under)	\$ (16)

Information as of this printing, 2/16/2010

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

Our Team

David Emery
Senior Minister

Jeff Howell
Executive Minister

Ed Huckleberry
Valley Campus Minister

Dave Seely
Youth Minister

Seung (Paul) Tche
Grow Minister

Dolly Mills
Serve Minister

George Claiborne
Director of Resource Ministry

Laura Mauzy
Director of Children's Ministry

Carrie Johnson
Weekday Preschool &
Kindergarten Director

Middletown Christian Church ♦ (502) 245-9793
www.middletownchristian.org

Dave Seely Answers God's Call

"If I don't actually hear a voice, how do I know I'm being called?"

I've wrestled with that question all my life. It's easy to know when people are calling. As a child, playing in the back yard, I knew what the call to dinner sounded like – my mom yelling, "David, Mark, Danny, SUPPER!" I knew what to do when the senior minister in KC called me to youth ministry in '81, or when Dr. Sutherlin called me to ministry at MCC in '94.

But what if it's God who is calling? No audible voice (at least, for me, not yet!), but a call nonetheless. What then? Well, I've come to the conclusion that God calls each of us through people as well. It was God calling me to youth ministry, through Buck Jones; God calling me to VBS mission work in Andros, through Jim Brooks. On and on it has gone. God calls ME by using people like you! Over the years, I have paid attention to the voices in congregations, voices among my colleagues and voices within the circle of family and friends, which have affirmed and encouraged my musical and creative gifts. I have heard God calling me to music and worship ministry for decades! But beyond hearing the audible call of so many of you who have encouraged my singing, playing and songwriting, I FEEL the presence of God, the JOY of God, the Spirit of God dancing and celebrating and bubbling up within me when I am playing a guitar and singing praises in harmony with others. It has become a passionate voice in my spirit of late, growing louder and louder. In worship, I cannot help but

turn my face upward and close my eyes as I experience the living God dwelling within me, and my soul gives glory to the One who created me. My heart's desire is to help EVERYONE who comes into our sanctuaries experience the joy and praise of our Loving God in such powerful ways that they are transformed, renewed and filled to overflowing with the grace and goodness of God. Because my soul is completely at peace when I am in worship, whether praying, singing, listening, meditating or dancing, I know that it is God calling me to give my best to all that give praise and honor and glory to Jesus and to the One who calls Him Beloved.

Though I am "officially" leaving youth ministry, I expect to be involved in many ways with our youth for years to come as we seek new and imaginative ways to shout praise and worship God together. Music and worship has always been a large part of youth ministry. After almost 29 years of ministry with youth, I will certainly miss many of the "front line" experiences, but be assured I will always be near the front of the crowd of witnesses who bless, encourage, love and pray for our middle school and high school disciples who have so much to teach us about hope and joy and childlike faith.



*Dave Seely, Youth Minister
Middletown Christian Church
(Dave will begin his new ministry in June.)*



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