

The Spirit at Bethel



May 2009

Sherwood Park, Alberta

Sharing the love of Jesus with a hurting world

Compassion

Bobbi Belsek

Sometimes when I think about being Christ's hands and feet to those around me, I get stuck thinking that I can't really do a whole lot to help. After all, "the least of these" are really people halfway across the world that I can't help. I have learned, though, that even I can have an effect on someone on the other side of the world...right from my own home!

I sponsor a child through Compassion Canada, and through this fine organization, I am able to have a positive impact on a child, his family and his community in a country on the other side of the world!

Each month I send money to my child through Compassion, and it goes toward paying for his food, shelter, education, and other basic needs. I also send letters, drawings, and pictures to my child on a regular basis. In return, my child sends me letters with pictures drawn all over the backside of the paper! Compassion also sends me regular updates on my child and his situation, as well as pictures of important stages in his life.

Compassion programs are delivered to children through local churches by local people with the help of Compassion. I imagine these would be much like our Sunday schools! Such programs make it easier for sponsored children (and their families) to stay connected to the church. Although Compassion only directly supports individual children and not their families, parents of sponsored children often become curious about the church after seeing the change in their children's lives!

It is amazing to be able to see my little boy grow up and learn new things in school. I feel so blessed to be able to be a part of his life. When all I seem to get in the mail are bills, it is very exciting when I get a letter from my sponsored child! I love hearing about the progress he is making at school and what he does in his spare time!

I have been given the tremendous privilege of being able to share this ministry with those I encounter everyday and at church. Compassion has even provided me with many packages of information about specific children so that I can help people become sponsors right away! I would be thrilled to meet with you (possibly over tea?) to discuss this amazing opportunity and to answer any questions you have. If you or your family would like to look into sponsoring a child, please feel free to contact me (780-434-2837 at home or erikbelsek@aol.com).



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The Spirit at Bethel is the monthly newsletter of Bethel Lutheran Church, Sherwood Park, Alberta. Laila Klaszus and Kris Buchholtz are coeditors. We welcome submissions relevant to Bethel and the church. You can leave your submission in our mail slots at church or email them to lailaklaszus@gmail.com or bucbunch@telus.net. Deadline for the June issue is May 25.

COMMON ROOTS CONCERT

Connie Bromley, Worship Coordinator

The sanctuary at Bethel rang with the tones of beautiful music Sunday night, April 19, as the *Josephburg Men's Chorus*, the *Friesen Family Band* and the *Concordia Community Chorus "Vienna Choir"* performed their selections.

The church was filled to capacity with close to 450 people.



One of the signature traits of the *Josephburg Men's Chorus* is that they sing their music from memory. What a treat it was to hear the close four

part harmony of the men's voices as they shaped the dynamics of each sacred selection so beautifully. It seems that another of their traits might be their sensitivity to the text and how graciously they present that in their singing. This twenty voice group, directed by Greg Jeffrey, has been singing for 30 years. Over those years they have brightened the days of residents in numerous nursing homes and senior centres in the Strathcona County/Fort Saskatchewan area, and have also given many concerts in schools, churches and community halls. They have recently returned from a tour of Alberta. Accompanying the group on the piano was Janetta Bartz. We were so thankful to have had the opportunity for this chorus to sing for our concert at Bethel.



Second on the program was the *Friesen Family Band*. The demonstration of talent by this group awed the concert crowd! The variety of

instruments played by one person alone was overwhelming. Silas (14) played trumpet, flute, recorder, percussion and bass guitar! To hear Silas, Simone (12), Godwin (10) and Amos (8) sing such intricate four-part harmonies was stunning to those of us who struggle to hold our parts when singing with a mixed group 😊! Junia (2)

knows the words to all of the songs, but is still too young to handle a microphone. The music the group sings has mostly been composed by the parents, Louise and Chris Friesen. They are a Mennonite family who uphold their faith in God by sharing it through music. Needless to say, their segment of the concert ended with a standing ovation, and the box they brought with their CD's was empty when they went home! If there was anyone at the concert who would still like to purchase one of their CD's, you may go to their website (www.friesenfamilyband.com) and order one.

Dr. Joy Berg, the conductor of the *Concordia Community Chorus' "Vienna Choir"*, is a familiar face at Bethel. This year she led a three-week workshop on the history of hymnody in the church. She has also played the organ for worship and conducted the massed choir for the *"Potpourri of Mozart"* concert in 2006. This particular choir that sang for the **Common Roots**



concert will be traveling to Austria to participate in a Haydn festival in July of this year, thus the name "Vienna Choir."

This group of 60 people is only a portion of the 130 who normally make up the *Community Chorus*. The choir sang selections by both Canadian and American composers. The audience had fun participating in the American selection "Down by the Riverside." The selection "Gift of Song" was composed by Trent Worthington and Martin Murphy – Martin is another familiar face at Bethel, since he has sung "Were You There" at many of our Good Friday services, including last year.

Bethel's Blended choir made up the fourth choir of the evening. They joined the *Vienna Choir* on "Trust in the Lord" by Larry Nickel, and also on "River in Judea" arranged by John Leavitt. With the **Josephburg Chorus** and **The Friesen Family Band** joining in on this last selection as well, the crowd was treated to a "grand finale" by 100 singers.

A great big “thank you” goes out to those who helped to make this concert possible: Pat and Mel Lenz, Blended Choir members, ladies from WWF, Recycled Teens, and those who donated snacks and treats to be served following the concert. With the wonderful turnout for the concert and the enthusiastic comments made by the audience, the time and effort put into planning and serving made the event a worthwhile community outreach effort.



Breaking Forth in Finland, Lapland and Estonia

Arlen and Elsa Salte, Founders
Break Forth Ministries

Break Forth Ministries is gearing up for our third Break Forth Finland event. This will be held on May 20 and 21 in Tampere, Finland. We anticipate a crowd of 10,000 at Break Forth Finland. One of our favourite Break Forth Canada artists, Michael W Smith, will be with us in Finland. Arlen will be preaching, teaching and leading in worship several times. The primary theme of Break Forth Finland 2009 is “The Power of Unity in the Body of Christ.”

Right after Break Forth Finland in Tampere, Finland, we will be traveling to the city of Rovaniemi in Lapland in the Arctic Circle. We will hold Break Forth Lapland among the Sami people. A tremendous revival is moving throughout the North. We are truly looking forward to seeing God at work in miraculous ways and to provide training to many leaders.

From Rovaniemi, Lapland, we will travel to Tallinn, Estonia to hold Break Forth Estonia. This will be held in the largest church in Estonia, the Oleviste Church. We anticipate over 2,000 will attend.

We believe that it wasn't ‘by chance’ or ‘by luck’ that our ministry relationship began in

Finland several years ago. God knew what He was doing when we began holding outreaches across Finland years ago in youth gatherings, churches and in many public schools.

Of the 53 nations surveyed for regular church attendance by NationMaster in 2005, at the bottom were Denmark at 45th lowest (5% attendance), Latvia at #46 (5%), Norway at #47 (5%), Sweden at #48 (4%), Finland at #49 (4%), Estonia at #50 (4%), Iceland at #51 (4%) and Russia at #53 (2%). If you look at a map of the entire Nordic and Baltic areas, you will notice how Finland is strategically placed for ministry in an area of great Gospel need.

This will be an exhausting schedule to maintain. Please ask God for strength, Spirit-leading and a great response to the Gospel.



Children's Spring Musical

Normay Wiebe, Worship Coordinator

Invite your friends to this year's Children's Spring Musical on Saturday, May 9 at 6:00pm or Sunday, May 10 at 9:45am or 11:00am. Please note the change of date from what was originally set. It is now being performed on the Mother's Day weekend.

The 47 actors and singers have been working



The 2005 Musical

hard to prepare for this special event. There are gorgeous sets painted and we've all been praying that those who participate and those who come to watch will glimpse a greater vision of the

incredible gifts that God has given them and open opportunities for ways to use those gifts.



Reflections on the 40-Day Prayer Vigil

During this year's Lenten Season, each member of a group of Bethel Prayer Warriors devoted one hour a day each to prayer. Some were willing to share some reflections on their prayer time.

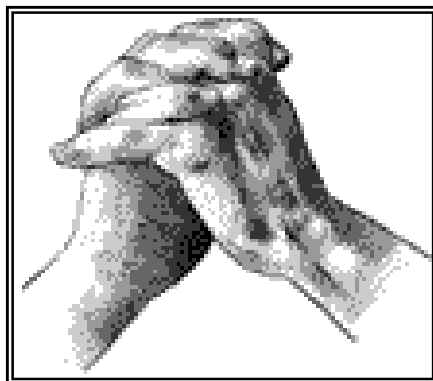
I am not a prayer warrior by any means, so signing up to pray for an hour each day during Lent was a new but gratifying experience for me. In my life prayers have usually been snippets of talks with God. At first I thought an hour was *sooo* long; however with the many prayer requests that poured in through "the blog" an hour quickly passed by! It was comforting to know that many people were praying for our and other's requests and very rewarding when blessings resulted. As a couple we found ourselves closer in prayer and feel blessed to have been part of the Lenten Prayer Warriors. - Catherine Williams

There is nothing like that special time I spend with my Saviour in praise and prayer. To be a part of this special vigil was an honor, a time to reach further in prayer along side prayer warriors of our 'little community', Bethel. The blog was something I had never participated in before so I was in awe at the special way we could interact. - Jo-Ann Hemingway

I was so blessed by this prayer vigil. The time when I prayed was just before my kids all walked in the door from school. During these months, prayer prepared me to welcome them with more of a sense of peace and love than I ever have before. It was a very special time for me. - Normay Wiebe

There were times when the needs seemed almost overwhelming. It made me think of our

pastors and how often they might feel that way, as they constantly have to deal with people and situations where there is great need. It was a reminder to me to pray for them and to also remember that "We do not need great faith, only faith in our great God" – Corrie Ten Boom. - Heather Higgs



I often share a few thoughts with God throughout the day; however consciously dedicating a given amount of time to prayer also heightened my consciousness to His responses. You know how one writes a common word, and one day it looks different and you

question whether you've spelled it correctly? For some reason there is a different awareness to the word. For me, this time in prayer has helped me to look for and see the miracle of God participating in my life. What a humbling and reassuring feeling. - Heather Steinke

I was happy to be part of the Lenten Prayer Vigil; thank you for this opportunity. I didn't even know what a "blog site" was before. When offering a prayer, I felt a certain comfort/strength knowing that many others were praying with me throughout the 24 hours of each day. Prayers were heard and God answered. - Marilyn Jansen

I really did enjoy the experience and found it incredibly edifying to pray for others and to hear of answered prayer. I also found it to be a real growing experience in my own prayer journey. It was a blessing and a privilege to serve the Lord in this way. - Jay Hough

I feel extremely blessed to have joined with a community of believers who intentionally set apart time in their day throughout the Lenten sea-

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son to spend time with Jesus. Most of my prayer life in the past has been thanking God and asking Him for help in various situations, but rarely did I slow down enough to ask Him what is on His heart and what He would like to share with me today. I am now fully convinced that we worship a God who longs to be intimately involved in our lives, if we are willing to give Him an opportunity. Being a part of so many answered prayers was a real faith encourager! - Amy Ostermayer



Did you know that your computer has a history?

Anonymous

Editor's Note: The editors of The Spirit do not usually accept unsigned submissions. In this case, however, to protect the confidentiality of the Bethel family involved, we are making an exception, on Pastor Marv's recommendation, because the message is so very important for all parents of youngsters using the computer. We thank the anonymous writer for sharing this very personal experience with the Bethel community. The writer and writer's son, as well as all parents – indeed, all people – struggling with this issue, are and will continue to be in our prayers.

Did you know that your computer has a history? Did you know that your computer's history can be a somewhat sordid one?

Ask me how I know.

We thought we had done everything right: our computer was located in a central location in our home; we monitored (or so we thought) our son's computer usage; we told our son that use of the internet was off-limits when we weren't home, and we trusted him to obey us on this. Our son hadn't really shown any interest in girls yet, so we had few concerns with leaving him home alone with the computer. After all, the internet was off-limits, and he was a good kid ...

He's still a good kid. His parents, though, feel like idiots.

Yes, as you may have already guessed, our computer had quite the history when I recently learned how to check it. It took me exactly two minutes to discover how to do so. (Just google "how to view my computer's history" and follow the instructions that come up for your browser ... it's really, *really* easy.) How I wish I had learned how to do this months ago! Fortunately, my son didn't know how to view - and delete! - our computer's history either, so the evidence was there, waiting for someone to discover it.

When we confronted our son about his pornography habit, he was remorseful. .. and relieved. "I was hoping I'd get caught," he confessed.

"I was hoping I'd get caught."

How do I take that confession? Is it a comfort that he knew what he was doing was wrong, or is it distressing that he *knew* it was wrong, but didn't (or couldn't?) stop?

From the day he entered our lives, we have done our best to protect our son from much of the garbage in this world. We have been careful about what movies and television shows he viewed. We are diligent about getting to know his friends. We make it a point to know where he is, and who he is with. We have encouraged his involvement in sports, and church, and music. He excels academically. We are *involved* parents.

But we didn't see this coming. We feel like we let our son down. We failed to protect him in his own home, his refuge from the world. We let the filthiest garbage waltz right into our home ... and into our son's mind.

Don't get me wrong: he let us down, too. He broke our trust by breaking the rules and going on the internet when we weren't home. That, by itself, is at least as disappointing as the fact that he was visiting porn websites when he did so. He now has to live with a lot of smut in his memory banks, and he will also have to earn back his parents' trust.

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I've learned a lot over the past few weeks. I've learned that kids - yes, even good kids like our son - can disappoint their parents; boys are especially susceptible to the siren call of online porn when they think - or know - that no one is looking. I've learned about xxxchurch.com, the Christian porn site that provides tools for those - Christians and non-Christians alike - who are struggling with pornography...whether that struggle is a personal addiction, or that of a loved one. I've learned that accountability software exists which will send a list of all questionable sites visited on my computer to a specified email address once or twice a month. I've learned that there are easy-to-install and -use filters available that will keep much of the garbage that's online out of our home. I've learned that online pornography is a widespread and growing problem in our society, a source of addiction for many men, young and old alike. I've learned that I would very much prefer to be proactive and at peace with having done what I could to make our home the refuge it should be, than to be reactive and filled with regret at what I could have, and should have, done earlier.

So please, **especially if you have a son:** check your computer's history today. Install a filter. And if you at any time find something you didn't want to find, pray for wisdom, grace and gentleness, and speak the truth in love to the one who has succumbed to this insidious temptation. And hold him ... or her ... accountable.

Accountability software: www.x3watch.com
 Filter Reviews: www.internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com

***Finally, brothers and sisters,
 whatever is true, whatever is noble,
 whatever is right, whatever is pure,
 whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--
 if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--
 think about such things.***
NIV ***Philippians 4:8***

Crocodile Dock—it's coming!

Deloyce Elle
 Director of Children's Ministry



Jacques le Croc

In just a few short months, Bethel Lutheran Church will be transformed into the *Bethel Bayou* when our **Crocodile Dock** VBS begins. Kids will be worshipping God through songs and prayer, and discovering life-changing Bible truths



Tucker Turtle

in fun and memorable ways.

To have the best adventure possible, we need lots of energetic individuals who can give some time and love to the kids who will attend. So let me share a few ideas

about ways you might be able to make this program a success. Please check out the following list, and then pray about where God might use you.

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Rocky Raccoon

Bayou Crew

Leaders:

Shepherding groups of children through each day's activities...and there's no preparation!

You are a friend, helper, and encourager

as you get to know the children by name.

For those of you who are **dramatic**, we need individuals at the Bible Bayou sharing the Bible event each day, as well as people to help with the skits during large groups. Scripts will be provided well in advance to allow you time to learn the material.

At the **Crawfish Craft** station, you will be assisting the students as they complete a craft each day which emphasizes the daily take-home point. All supplies are provided. You can even get a sample of the crafts to make beforehand.

The **Snack Shack** helpers prepare and serve the snacks to keep the kids energized for the day. Serving here is a great opportunity to meet all of the kids, as well as visit with other members of Bethel throughout the week.

There are two weeks to choose from: July 20 – 24 and August 17 – 21. You can come to one or both, even if it is only for a few days. Each person is a valuable part of the team to make this outreach ministry possible. Volunteer forms will be available at the Children's Ministry display at the upcoming ministry market, as well as in the announcement bulletin during the month of June. Be sure to check it out. If you have any questions, please speak with Deloyce: deloyce.elle@bethelchurch.com or 780-417-7775.

Ninth Annual Ladies' Salad Supper

Becky Ziprick

If you've never come before or if you are an expectant returnee, we encourage you to bring a salad to share and especially a friend, coworker, or family member to join you on:

**Wednesday, June 3, 2009 at 6pm
in Bethel's Activity Centre**



Our guest speaker, Sheryl Ludke, will be our travel guide with her topic "U-Turns And Detours". An excerpt from Sheryl:

"When we're in our 20s, many of us think we know where we are headed in life. We make our plans and set out towards the destination of success. My husband and I were confidently traveling our career routes when we consulted our "GPS", or God's Positioning System." Deciding to follow God's path for us meant discarding our carefully charted maps and heading off in some unexpected directions."

Come and join us for God's blessing, lively conversation, laughter, great food, and the opportunity to meet some new friends.

Tickets are on sale for \$2.50 on Sunday mornings and at the church office during the week. Proceeds after expenses are donated to A Safe Place Women's Shelter in Sherwood Park.





**COME ONE, COME ALL
TO THE MINISTRY
MARKET!!!**

**Make plans to attend
Bethel's next Ministry
Market on Sunday,
June 7, 2009 in the
Activity Centre be-
tween 9:30am and
12:30pm. This is your
chance to get more in-
formation about – and
to become involved in
– the many ministries
here at Bethel!**

