

HARVEST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

NOV/DEC 2009

What's your Christmas Worship Event?

Our culture constantly vies for our attention, encouraging us to worship people or things other than the One on whom we should be lavishing our attention. The gift-giving frenzy of the Christmas season is one prime example. Do you sometimes find yourself spending all your time and resources focused on parties and shopping rather than on Christ? This advent season, it is our desire to reorient our focus. To that end, we invite you to participate in the **Advent Conspiracy**, which will include:

- watching and discussing segments of the Advent Conspiracy DVD in Barnabas on Nov 8, 15, and 22.

- considering ways to celebrate Advent and Christmas by "spending less," possibly including an evening at church for making simple, inexpensive gifts together (if people have ideas, please let Eric know). One group has already offered to give gifts of artwork, i.e., paintings that reflect on the meaning of Advent, which will be hung, one per week, during Advent.
- providing opportunities to "give more," such as Operation Christmas Child (led by youth), and special Advent giving opportunities during

worship (Nov 29 - local ministries; Dec 6 - Sioux Assembly in Wakpala; Dec 13 - Divino Salvador Church in Zaragoza; Dec 20 - overseas missionaries; Dec 24 - Harvest families).

- encouraging individuals, families, and groups to consider how they can creatively keep Jesus at the center of Christmas and "tell the Story" that the world so needs to hear.

Join us in this exciting and life-changing journey as we seek to put Christ back at the center of Christmas.

Gentlemen, Start your...Crockpots!

On November 29th, following our 4 PM evening service, we will hold our Annual Chili Cook-Off! Men, pull out your favorite recipe, purchase your ingredients, and start cooking your pot of chili to enter in the competition! Following are the rules:

- Only men may participate
- You must sign up at least 3 days prior to the event
- Your chili needs to have a name

- All chili should be labeled as to taste (mild, sweet, spicy, too hot to handle).



Last year's winners...Floyd Benda (hottest chili) and Rod Hanley (best-tasting chili)

Keep an eye out for the sign-up sheet, which will be available beginning next week. We will also be in looking for women willing to judge.

The chili will be served for our evening meal, and we ask everyone to bring a salad, dessert, or TUMS® ☺ to share. Last year's winner, Rod Hanley, will be relinquishing his chef's hat, so don't miss out on your chance to win this year's bragging rights!

Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.

Ephesians 5:2 (The Message)

LOOKING AHEAD:

- November 6-8:
Ladies' Retreat
- November 15:
Children's Play Practice & Operation Christmas Child Wrap Party
- November 20-22:
Youth Retreat
- November 22:
Children's Play Practice
- November 29:
Evening Service at 4 PM; Men's Chili Cook-off -5:30 PM
- December 6:
Children's Play Practice
- December 12:
Children's Play Practice
- December 13:
Children's Christmas Play
- December 24:
Christmas Eve Service

Blessings to you from your Harvest family. We are so thankful for you and your many contributions to the life of our church!

Happy Thanksgiving



**COSTUMES
NEEDED:**

Bumble Bees
Elves
Brownie or Girl
Scout uniforms
If you know
anywhere we can
find some of these,
please contact
Jodi Stone.

*Parents—Please
mark these dates*

**CHRISTMAS PLAY
PRACTICE:**
*for
1st to 6th
Graders:*

Nov. 15 @
6:15-7:30 p.m.

Nov. 22 @
12:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Dec. 6 @
12:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Dec. 12 @
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**CHRISTMAS PLAY
PRACTICE**
**Pre-K through
Kindergarten:**
We will be
practicing with this
age group in their
regular classes
during second hour
Sunday School from
now - December 13.
They will also need
to attend the
rehearsal on Dec.
12 @ 6 -8 PM.

Children's Ministry

The **Fall Harvest Party** was a huge success that included 25 kids dressed in fun costumes! We played a game of kickball, painted pumpkins, ate snacks, had a costume contest and even did a little Karaoke. Great fun was had by all involved!

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The children have begun practicing for the **Christmas musical**, "The Christmas County Spelling Bee." The performance will be December 13 @ 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. It is going to be a wonderful musical full of humor and God's Word. As the characters participate in the spelling bee, they will be learning the different

names of Jesus. The winners will get the lead roles of Mary and Joseph in the nativity play. The other contestants will fill in as shepherds, angels, etc. , and some are not so happy about that! Don't miss seeing the wonderful young talent we have at Harvest. We know you will be blessed by this production.

God's Mission in Zaragoza

Please join us this month in praying daily for our Zaragoza Team. Ponce Ortiz, Bob and Alice Snyder, Mark and Patrick Hubbard, and Elisha Stenzel will be heading to Zaragoza the week of Thanksgiving.

Please pray for safety in their travels and that their trip will bring honor and glory to God.

A special offering will be collected on November 15th to support this team and the church in Zaragoza. Please prayerfully consider how you may be involved in this ministry.



Body-Building Boards

On November 2nd, members from all of Harvest's boards (Deacons, Mission, Facility, Elders) and Harvest staff members met together to kick off our new board year. Not only did the boards share a delicious meal and excellent fellowship, but they also reviewed Harvest's core values and discussed how they are currently being addressed as well as ways in which we can improve.

Are you familiar with Harvest's Core Values? They are:

We seek to live in community

- We desire to provide a true and healthy experience of "family" for all kinds of people, including those who have suffered pain and loss in their nuclear and extended family relationships.
- We actively seek to rejoice with one another as well as bear one another's burdens in all areas of life, not just the spiritual.
- We encourage relationships across generations, and struc-

ture our activities to include a balance of age-specific and age-mixed opportunities.

- We seek to be genuinely welcoming to all who choose to participate with us.

We seek to live in authenticity

- We aim to be honest with God and with one another about our struggles with sin and weakness, not pretending to be something we are not.
- We seek to relate to God both publicly and privately in a way that is genuine, without showmanship or pretense.
- We desire to be active in demonstrating, not just talking about, love to a world desperately in need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We seek to live in humility

- We purposefully share leadership, including our Sunday morning teaching, among gifted individuals rather than looking

to one individual.

- We seek to serve alongside and encourage other local churches and ministries, including but not limited to those with whom we share our facility.
- We desire to emphasize what is most central and important to the historic Christian faith, not allowing secondary issues to distract or cause division.
- We trust in Jesus Christ himself, and not simply in our own human efforts, to draw people to saving faith.

If you have input on how we can address these values in a new or different way, we'd love to hear your comments! Share them with any of our staff or board members and we will discuss them at our upcoming board meetings.

Branson Hills Ministry Center Facelift

Each week it is looking better and better! Special thanks go out to all who have volunteered



October Work Day Tear Down

their time, talents and energy to tear down the old overhang and assist in rebuilding the new entryway to the Branson Hills Ministry Center.

Please join us in extending special thanks to Wayne Newcome and Ponce Ortiz, who have shouldered the majority of responsibility for this project.

As opportunities become

available to help in finishing up this project, we'll be sure to let you know.



Check out the new roof!

Women's Ministries

If the church seems a little empty on November 8th, it might be due to 30 women participating in the **Ladies' Fall Gathering Retreat** at the Rockin' Z Ranch. Speakers for the weekend are Susan Parry and Lee Gaar.

Please pray that God will use this time away for the ladies to grow in deeper relationship with Him and with one another.



On December 1st, the women will enjoy a **Christmas White Elephant Party**. So, ladies, start searching for your "White Elephant" and watch the bulletin for the time and location. Ladies of all ages are invited to join in the fun and fellowship.

JUMP (Youth Grades 7-12)

On October 25th, the youth donned some quite creative "old people" costumes, headed to the church, and participated in an **Old Time Hootenanny!** They played crazy games such as "Blender Bender" where food was blended then drunk through a straw, and "Blind as a Bat" in which sight was impaired and whiffle bats were involved...you probably don't want to know the rest!! Our Youth definitely know how to have a good time!

The first Sunday of November found the Youth thoroughly enjoying a **Progressive Dinner** with appetizers at the Hubbard's home, dinner at the Rapinchuk's, and dessert at the Warwick's. A round of "speed friending" with the Cohan Community Group following their shared dinner gave the youth an opportunity to meet a "different generation" of the Harvest family.



If you are in junior or senior high and you have not checked out the youth group, you are definitely missing out. In addition to Bible Study on Wednesday evenings, Guys/Gals nights on alternating Thursdays, and Sunday morning equipping hour, the Youth have a **calendar full of exciting events.**



UPCOMING EVENTS

November 15:
Operation Christmas Child Wrap Party

The entire Harvest Family is invited to join in this worthwhile project while "getting to know" our youth. Bring items to place in shoeboxes and help the youth pack and wrap these gifts for children across the world.

November 20-22:
JUMP Youth Retreat

The youth are looking forward to an amazing weekend away! Rod and Donna Hanley will be the guest speakers, and great food and fun is also planned!

If you'd like more information about the youth or any of their upcoming events, please contact our Youth Leader Bill Gebhart or a D-team member (Hillary Bargman, Marcia Emsheimer or Brendon Rapinchuk).

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
Ephesians 5:19-20 NIV

HARVEST TEACHING SCHEDULE

November 8:
Matthew 14:22-36

November 15:
Matthew 15:1-9

November 22:
Congregational Sharing

November 29:
Psalm 2

December 6:
Psalm 72

December 13:
Psalm 89

December 20:
Psalm 110

Please consider reading through these Scriptures each week and praying for the individual who will be sharing God's Word.

Community Groups

Community Groups are a great way to get connected at Harvest. There is a **Women's Bible Study** that meets every other Monday at 6:30 PM, a **Men's Group** that meets at Clocker's Restaurant on Tuesday mornings at 6:30 AM, and a **College Group** that meets at 12:30 PM the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month at the Marshalls. For more information or a listing of additional community groups, check out the Harvest website at www.harvestefc.org.

Staff Members

Staff Elder	Eric Bolger
Worship	Allison Hamm
Youth	Bill Gebhart
Children's Min.	Jodi Stone
Admin. Asst.	Julie Marine
Church Admin.	Dori Rapinchuk

We're on the web
at:
www.harvestfc.org

Please welcome our
new members:

Chris Benham
Justin Carswell
Mandy Carswell
Amy Danford
Grace Gage
Sarah Hubbard
Weston Marine
Jonathan Paterson
Michelle Newcome
Caleb Williams
Janice Williams
Richard Williams

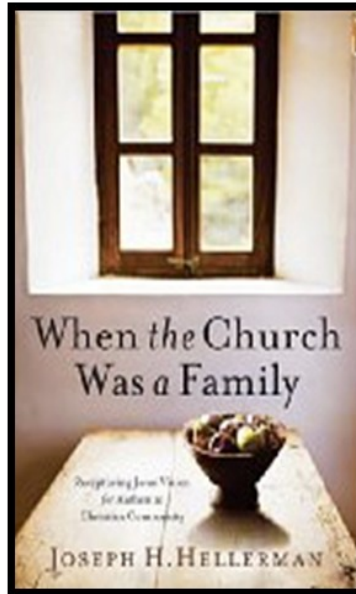
If you have suggestions for the next newsletter, or if you have questions regarding any information contained in this newsletter, please contact Dori Rapinchuk at drapinchuk@yahoo.com or 417-598-0541.

Book Review

**Book Review:
When the Church Was a Family: Recapturing Jesus' Vision
for Authentic Christian Community**

by Joseph H. Hellerman

Review by Allison Hamm



Spiritual formation occurs primarily in the context of community. People who remain connected with their brothers and sisters in the local church almost invariably grow in self-understanding, and they mature in their ability to relate in healthy ways to God and to their fellow human beings... It is a simple but profound biblical reality that we both grow and thrive together or we do not grow much at all. None of this is terribly novel. We all know it to be the case. So why do we so often sabotage our most intimate relationships, seek help from others only after the damage is irreversible, and continue to try to find our way through life as isolated individuals, convinced somehow that God will remain with us to lead us and bless us wherever we go? Why do we continue foolishly to operate as if our own immediate happiness is of greater value than the redemptive relationships God has placed us in? Why are we seemingly unable to stay in relationships, stay in a community, and grow in the interpersonal contexts that God has provided for our temporal and eternal well-being?

Community. We've all heard about it more times than we can count. For some, it's a word filled with a vibrant, here-and-now kind of joy that describes the rich tapestry of relationships we're blessed to experience. For others, it might have the hollow ring of an elusive utopian ideal. And I suspect that most of us live somewhere in between those two extremes. We've experienced some of both. We've heard lots of different perspectives. And we're all for it, but – what was it, again?

In *When the Church Was a Family*, author, scholar, and pastor Joseph Hellerman beautifully and engagingly describes a vision of the church that is not only historically and theologically grounded, but communicated out of a deep love for God's family and a faith in the Spirit's presence among us. In this context, Hellerman addresses the problems of American individualism by contrasting it with the family-structured society of the early church. Rather than simply extolling the virtues of the early church in a vague and impractical way, Hellerman explains how family-group relationships of the early church should serve as a model of spiritual growth for the family of God in all times and cultures.

Now, let's be realistic here. I know we're all really busy, and most book reviews get a cursory glance, if that. This particular book may not even sound like your cup of tea. You're also probably wondering why I didn't choose a book about, say, worship – right? So to give you an idea of how strongly I feel about it, let me just say that I read a **lot** of books. About three a week, to be exact – which is only to say that this one stands head and shoulders above a whole lot of excellent reading material. It's one of the two best books I've read all year, and lends passion and depth to a topic that I believe is foundational to understanding everything else about how we live and learn and worship together in – community. There's that word again.

If you only read one book a year, make it this one.