



Calendar of Events

Installation of Assoc. Pastor Michael Mauriello
February 6, 10:30 a.m. (Reception follows)

Young Adult Super Bowl Party
February 6, 5:00 p.m. (@the Wunderlich's)

Financial Resources Committee
February 9, 7:00 p.m.

Missions Ministry Team
February 9, 7:00 p.m.

Board of Elders
February 10, 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Wrinkles' Cupcake Cruise
February 11, 6:30 p.m.

Dudes' Night (Sr. High Youth)
February 12, 4 p.m.

Children's Education Ministry Team
February 13, Noon

Worship Planners
February 13, 5:00 p.m.

A Time for Everything Concert (Daniel and Krista Sweetser)
February 13, 7:00 p.m.

Explorers' [Membership] Class – Session 1
February 20, 9:00 a.m.

Concert of Prayer
February 20, 6:30 p.m.

Middle School Youth Lock-In
February 25, 7:00 p.m.

Explorers' [Membership] Class – Session 2
February 27, 9:00 a.m.

Weekly/Bi-Weekly Dates:

Crown Ministries (Assuming sufficient enrollment)
Mondays, 7:00 p.m. beginning Feb. 14

IGNITE – Sr. High Youth
Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.

Ladies' Bible Study (Daytime)
Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.
Childcare provided

Ladies' Bible Study (Evening)
2nd and 4th Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

CLUB 180 – Middle School Youth
Fridays, 7:00 p.m.

Showers at VCL

Bridal and baby showers are a way we encourage and bless one another at VCL. You don't need to be well acquainted with the one being honored to attend – or to host! Each gathering provides the perfect opportunity to get to know some of your sisters in Christ, and it is a wonderful chance to spur on the honoree as she enters a new chapter of life! So come one, come all! (If you love to throw a party – or if you're willing to prepare a meal for a new mom - please contact Jennifer Fischer!)

Congratulations to Kelvin, Anne and Landon Tohme who welcomed Lauryn Anne on December 15, weighing 6 lbs, 15 oz, and measuring 20 inches.



Welcome to new members Brandon Bou-lais, Robert and Janet Coy, Jackie Schlosser, and Ashley Whited.

Winter Retreat Report by Harold Lutz

From January 28th-30th 10 of our high school students and 6 leaders travelled to Fort Wilderness in Rhinelander, Wisconsin for our annual Winter Retreat. The trip there was an adventure as we drove through a snow storm and had our vehicles ice over! Fort Wilderness is a beautiful place and everyone on the trip will tell you that the venue itself was worth the adventurous ride there. The beauty of God's creation was on full display all around us.

The theme of the weekend was Identity Crisis and each of the three main sessions during the weekend focused on defining God's identity along with our individual and corporate identity in relation to God. We also had a breakout session for the fellas and the ladies to meet separately to discuss our identities as men and women of God. We concluded our weekend discussions with this point: "We are those whom God has called to be His people. The God of grace calls us together and gives you grace so you all can give it to each other, so you all will stick together." Our prayer for the students is that they would grasp their identity as God's people and they would be able to, by the grace of God, show the world that they are His by their love for one another.

Our students also enjoyed some time of worship and contemplation, broomball (we made it to the championship game!), tubing, cross country skiing (or as I practiced it, cross country falling), lots of trips to the coffee shop, a seniors versus all the other students competition, late night board games, and a wonderful talk show hosted by Tyler Hamrick and me in which we conducted interviews with each of our session speakers asking the questions that all of our youth group really want to ask but may just be too afraid to ask. On a very important note, have no fear, Pastor Mike does indeed have a plan in place in case the zombie apocalypse occurs during a Wednesday night youth group meeting. We are all now very relieved.

Thanks to Brian Lutz, Tyler Hamrick, Brandon Bou-lais, John Ingersoll, Mike Mauriello, and Meghann Lutz for all of the time and effort put into making this weekend possible. Their love and care for each and every student present was clearly evident this weekend.

Congratulations to Yohan and Inae Park on the birth of their son, Simon Siyeong. Simon was born on January 16, weighing 5 lb, 11 oz. and measuring 19 inches.



Congratulations to Nathan Johnson on his white rose. Nathan asked Jesus into his heart over Christmas.

Update: Commentaries to the Congo

During the summer, various individuals at VCL gave money to bless Congolese pastors with the Africa Bible Commentary. VCL recently received word that these commentaries have been purchased and shipped from England. They are currently en route to Bangui, Central African Republic, and they are expected to arrive at the end of February or beginning of March. When they arrive in Bangui, they will be carried into the Congo, where President Bosokpale and the leaders of CECU (the Evangelical Free Church of the Congo) will distribute them to select pastors who are in need of this biblical-theological resource.

The Africa Bible Commentary is a unique accomplishment, written by Africans for Africans in response to a perceived lack of biblical and theological depth in the African church. The Africa Bible Commentary provides solid exposition on every book of the Bible as well as application and illustration on issues which African Christians deal with, which are often neglected by commentaries which come from a Western perspective. What a beautiful way for Village Church to participate in the global body of Christ building itself up in love, "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Eph 4:13)

A Message from the Elders

The elders want to thank you for your financial support; because of it, VCL finished the year with more in income than we had in expenses. The generosity of the congregation is encouraging. At the same time, we fell short of our budget last year, and we can report good news only because we held down expenses. Expanding VCL's ministry requires reaching our budget. "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7). Our rule of thumb (individually and as a board) is a 10% tithe. As elders, we want to encourage everyone in the church to ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in determining your contribution to the ministry here and around the world.

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Senior Pastor Lee Eclov
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Ministries Administrator Susan Eclov
Office Manager Susan Beck
Custodian Angela Fischer

Elders: Warren Anderson (chair), Bob Fischer, Carl Johnson, and Jim Stamoolis



Village Vine

February 2011

Beware of Blind Spots: New sermon series will help us see

By Pastor Lee Eclov

There is a strange story—a miracle story—in Mark 8, where Jesus heals a blind man, but in stages. When Jesus first touches the man's eyes, the man says, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." (Which is about what I would say without my glasses.) Then Jesus touches him again and Mark reports, "He saw everything clearly." Why would Jesus do that? Do you think he got distracted mid-miracle? Was this guy's blindness a really bad case requiring two treatments? Perhaps the man jerked his head away at the crucial moment.

The very next thing Mark reports is Jesus' question to the disciples, "Who do people say I am?" And then, "Who do *you* say I am?" To which, Peter replies, "You are the Christ." The blind see. But then, Mark says, "He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things... be killed and after three

days rise again." And Peter "rebuked" Jesus for saying such things. Well, maybe the blind don't see all that well. Peter is a disciple without his glasses.

Mark, in chapters 8-12, shows us just how blind we can be sometimes to just what Jesus came to do, and to what being his disciples really involves. That will be the focus of the sermons for the next three months. The series is called "Blind Spots: What Christians Miss." These sermons, which will walk us toward Resurrection Sunday on April 27, will also be the focus of our observance of Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, March 9.

See the *Vine* flap for upcoming sermons. You can always listen to or read our sermons at evcl.org/sermons, or pick up a free CD at the Information Desk.

Elder Board Begins Work for 2011

By Pastor Lee Eclov

The Elders met for about nine hours January 13-15, taking care of routine new year business, as well as many hours dedicated to Bible study, prayer and discussions about direction for VCL in the year ahead.

The first order of business was the election of officers: Warren Anderson - Chair, Carl Johnson - Vice Chair, and Jim Stamoolis - Secretary. Pastor Michael Mauriello was welcomed to his first board meeting, as was our intern, Scott Swingle.

We began our retreat on Friday evening studying Mark 8-9, which will be part of the preaching focus on the next three months. We asked ourselves how this passage should help us guide VCL over the next few months.

February is Camp Awareness Month at VCL. Timber-Lee Christian Center in East Troy, WI, offers fantastic winter and summer options for our children and youth. And Parent-Child weekend retreats are now available in the fall.

Basic summer camps are filled with swimming, playing games, exploring the beautiful grounds as well as large group worship sessions with dynamic youth speakers and worship bands. Specialty camps focus on learning new skills in a variety of areas. In order to help our kids make camp a reality, the C.E. Ministry

We spent several hours considering our adult discipleship philosophy and strategy. We have two strong congregational elements in place to help us—the weekly worship service and our Growth Groups. We especially tried to think through how we could be more purposeful in our use of the Sunday 9 a.m. hour in "being and making disciples of Jesus Christ," which is our goal as a church. We will continue discussions in this area. Pastor Michael will probably be our point person in this area, given his doctoral studies at TEDS in education.

We also discussed how we can do more to maximize cross-generational relationships in our church, and talked about evangelism and stewardship issues.

Team offers camp promotion and camp scholarships.

This month you will have THREE opportunities to contribute to our "Tip Jars", located at the welcome center and the camp table in the foyer. While you are enjoying our energy packed *trail mix* or *Walking S'mores* or other tasty treats, please be generous in donating to the tip jars. We are not fussy and gladly accept loose pocket change or checks made payable to VCL and dropped into the Tip Jars. All proceeds go to help fund a terrific week at Timber-Lee for some lucky VCL kids!

Aaron's Army Recruiting Drive

By Pastor Lee Eclov

"Bad preaching is a curse on a prayerless congregation." Bruce Thielemann

My unchurched friends at Einsteins are surprised to hear how much work goes into the preparation of a sermon and that I don't just pick some subject that's on my mind. But you don't have to be at VCL long to know that's not how it works. You know that our sermons are the product of a deep commitment to the power of the Bible, and to many hours of prayerful study, thought and writing every week. But there is a secret ingredient absolutely essential to giving preaching muscle: prayer.

Each year at this time I look for volunteers who agree to **pray three or four times each week for the preaching—just the preaching—at VCL.** I call this

Good News, Bad News, Good News, Good News, Good News

By Jim Hansen

"The good news," said the preacher one Sunday morning, "is that we have enough money to pay our budgeted expenses this month. The bad news," he concluded, "is that the money is still in your pockets."

No, this comment did not come from Pastor Lee during his recent series on giving, but VCL did have its good news, bad news during the past year.

The good news is that our expenses were down \$15,000 in 2010 as compared with 2009. The bad news is our giving was down \$23,000 this past year.

The good news is we refinanced our mortgage in 2010, paid \$10,000 less in mortgage payments in 2010, paid \$31,000 more in principal and \$41,000 less in interest. The bad news is we still have a mortgage, just under \$1.3 million at the end of the year.

After that, it's mostly good news for 2010.

The good news is that our end of year surplus (income

VCL Missionary Visit: Mark and Brenda Brown

By Scott Swingle

Mark and Brenda Brown are not your stereotypical missionaries. They do not live and serve tribal people in Africa, nor are they bringing the gospel to the unreached somewhere in the Amazon. Their home base? Lawrence, Kansas. Their mission field? The secular university. The Browns recognize that there is a battle taking place at the secular university for the hearts and minds of tomorrow's leaders, and thus the university is a key missionary battlefield. Veterans of Campus Crusade, the Browns have been ministering to college students for over 20 years, and now they are involved in launching a new ministry which targets university professors and equips them to impact students and faculty for Christ on their campus. This new ministry is called Faculty Commons. The Browns are based out of University of Kansas, and they serve the Faculty Commons staff from all over the Great Plains region.

In one week, VCL will have the privilege of receiving Mark and Brenda Brown. They will be joining us on February 13th, sharing about their ministry in an extended time during the 9:00 hour as well as being interviewed by Pastor Lee during the morning service.

group Aaron's Army since Aaron was a famous spokesman for the Lord in the days of Moses, his brother. Would you consider signing up for this vital ministry? You can do so by writing "Aaron's Army" on the Friendship Register, by calling the church office, or by sending me an email at byeblad@aol.com. If you have been signed up in the past you need to do so again, because I don't want to presume that you'll be able to continue.

To help you pray more knowledgeably I will write to you occasionally with specific prayer needs for our preaching ministry—perhaps something in the nature of the texts we're working on, a special spiritual struggle, or a unique opportunity. We also make sure you have a preaching schedule. Thanks.

over expenses) was \$23,000. The good news is that we paid less in maintenance expenses (\$13,000 less), utilities (less \$2,000), and ministries/church expenses (\$1,000 less). The **good** news is we paid **more** in expenses for missions, \$4,000, and staff, \$7,000.

And year 2011? Well, the good news is our 2011 budget is more missions (\$64,000 from \$54,000), and less mortgage. The bad news is that the total budget is \$20,000 more than 2010 giving.

Finally, the good news is we have a wonderful sanctuary and meeting place, with heat and light, a snow-plowed lot, and a preacher who doesn't have to sell bagels to make ends meet. The good news is that we have a vibrant church to spiritually enrich us in our confidence in the best good news of all, the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Thank you all for your support in 2010.

Jim Uren and the Missions Ministry Team are preparing other opportunities for people to connect with them during the weekend. Those interested should contact Jim and take advantage of this special opportunity to become acquainted with the Browns and their ministry. Missions involves not only bringing the gospel to the unreached at the ends of the earth; it involves being a strategic witness in places of global influence. Mark and Brenda Brown are doing just that, and we at VCL are honored to be supporting them in their ministry.

Catch-Up with the Kanés

Well, at least two of them. Lynn Kane, and daughter Lydia, will be making an appearance at VCL during the worship hour on Sunday, Feb. 20. Lynn and Bryan, who are now situated in Eugene, OR with 1-year old Lydia, were familiar faces at VCL where Bryan also served his internship. Now he and Lynn are working on the birth of a new church, Resurrection Fellowship. Lynn is returning to participate in a concert at Trinity.

Explore Membership at VCL

By Pastor Lee Eclov

We don't talk too often about membership at VCL, but it is a significant part of church life. Membership is a clear step in one's commitment to the church and is an encouragement to the other believers in the church. Essentially, to become a member at VCL a person must make a clear profession of faith in Christ and affirm our Statement of Faith.

Our bylaws require anyone applying for membership to "receive instruction in the doctrine, bylaws, history and philosophy of ministry of VCL and the Evangelical Free Church of America." Taking prospective members

Safety In-Service Training

By Susan Eclov

The C.E. Ministry Team conducted a teacher in-service training on Sunday, January 23. We walked through our Emergency Evacuation Policy. A copy of the policy is posted in each room.

Teachers are responsible for evacuating their students out of the classroom to a safe place. Parents will locate their children in the parking lot and notify teachers when they are taken. Although children will get an annual evacuation drill, adults should be aware of the evacuation process as well.

The fire alarm will sound LOUDLY and lights pulse should we have a smoke or fire emergency. VCL is linked directly to the Lincolnshire-Riverwoods Fire Station. Children will exit through the two end doors of the building and adults will exit through the main entrance doors or the front right exit door of the auditorium.

We also talked about what to do if we have a tor-

Diving In

By Pastor Michael Mauriello

I can't tell you how excited Londa and I are to be ministering at Village Church! We both feel so blessed to be a part of a church where we were mentored and already have so many strong connections; and we look forward to making new ones as we renew and strengthen older ones. Thank you so much for your encouragement to us through the candidating process! We feel warmly welcomed and are thanking God for you, our family in the faith.

I would also like to say some specific thanks. First, thank you Rich Soderberg and Jim Lindberg for the new shelving in my office! They are beautiful. Thank you also to those who I had a chance to have a meal with over my candidating week: Don Hedges, the Rumley family, Ted and Margaret Ward, Bob Betts, Ed Nekarada, and Jim Uren. Thank you to Susan Beck who is helping me feel my way around the processes in the office. Thank you to Chris and Jennifer McNiven who have been wonderful friends to Londa

through this process is usually my privilege as pastor. Sometimes I do so informally—a couple of hours over coffee—but more often I offer a two week Explorers' Class.

Our next Explorers' Class will be at 9 a.m. on Sunday morning, Feb. 20 and 27, in my office. Not only do we cover the topics required, but it is a time to get better acquainted and to answer questions you might have. If you haven't taken this important step, I hope you'll join us. You can learn more about membership at www.evcl.org/membership.

nado. Children will be taken to the restrooms. Adults should move to the hallways and should kneel down flat on the floor, with head tucked under your arms. Teachers were also trained in case of a hostile intruder.

Allergies in children have now reached an epidemic status in the US. We have two children in our church with severe allergies. We have taken appropriate action to eliminate peanuts and other allergy-producing products from our classrooms. As adults, you can help by cleaning up any food or beverage spills immediately. If you would like more information about specific reactions and what to do, please contact me.

First Aid kits are available throughout the building including the church office. The Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is located just outside the church office and a wheelchair is located near the coat racks.

and me over the last several months. Thank you to Jared and Tammy Smith, who encouraged us along the road of candidacy. And thank you to Lee and Susan Eclov for giving me a place to stay while Londa and I worked on our housing arrangements.

The youth ministry teams also deserve a very special word of thanks for all of the hard work and great ministry to the Jr. and Sr. High. A very special thank you to Harold Lutz and Brandon Boulais; both of them gave a lot of hours and attention to our teenagers. Their love for the students is inspiring and humbling, as well as their commitment to Jesus and love of the Scriptures. It is a blessing to work with you both.

As I've been setting up shop in the office and starting to connect with folks, I only get more and more excited, and humbled, by the call you have extended to me. We are so grateful to the Lord for you and the ministry you have entrusted to us. Thank you! We can't wait to dive in.



An invitation for kids to come aboard **Mr. Wrinkles' Cupcake Cruise:** Friday, February 11, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Games and activities are age-appropriate for 3-12 year olds and are fully supervised. There will be exciting Ports O' Call and sumptuous eats at the Captain's Table. We hope that many of our passengers will participate in the greatest talent show on virtual water! Please register your attendance & talent by February 8 to Mrs. E. Don't miss it!

Preaching & Worship Series



Blind Spots: What Christians Miss

- 2/6 Now You See Him, Now You Don't
Mark 8:1-33
- 2/13 Deny Ability
Mark 8:31-9:1
Communion
- 2/20 Foresight
Mark 9:2-13
- 2/27 He Who Must Be Obeyed
Mark 9:14-29
- 3/6 Whose Side Are You On?
Mark 9:30-50

Prayer Requests



FEBRUARY PRAYER LIST

Please tear off this list and use it in your regular prayers for VCL

- Seeing Jesus and our place as his disciples more clearly through the sermon series beginning from Mark 8-12
-
- Our missionaries, Mark & Brenda Brown, with us on 2/13, and one of our church planters, Lynn Kane, with us on 2/20
-
- Adjustments for Pastor Michael and his family
-
- Our Elders considering how VCL can be more effective in adult discipleship and in cross-generational fellowship
-
- How can we expand our involvement in compassion ministries in our area