



Calendar of Events

Scott and Jeanne Swingle All-Church Wedding Shower

March 6, Immediately After the 10:30 Service

Financial Resources Committee

March 8, 7:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday Service

March 9, 7:00 p.m.

Childcare provided

Board of Elders

March 10, 7:00 p.m.

International (Iowa State) Student Luncheon

March 13, Immediately After the 10:30 Service

Worship Planners

March 20, 5:00 p.m.

Concert of Prayer

March 20, 6:30 p.m.

Weekly/Bi-Weekly Dates:

Crown Ministries

Mondays, 7:00 p.m.

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.



Don't forget to "Spring Ahead" and move your clocks one hour forward before you go to bed on Saturday, March 12th!

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!)

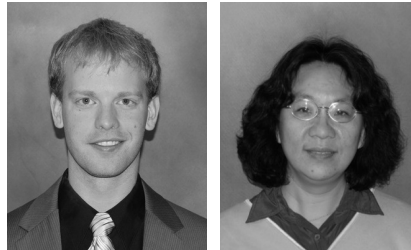
Congratulations to Eric and Bethany Hughes who dedicated their daughter Amalia on January 16th.



Congratulations to Adam and Katrina Johnson who dedicated their boys, Reuben, Nathan and Simeon, on February 20th.



Welcome to new members Daniel Sjogren and Judy Tao.



Pastor Michael Mauriello was installed as our new Associate Pastor on February 6th. **Welcome** Michael, Londa and girls.



About 25 VCL kids and their friends joined Mr. Wrinkles for his Cupcake Cruise on February 11. Two ports o' call took us to Windy Willows Island to learn about some strange, local wildlife and to Valentine Volcano for some quiet story time. Showcased this year was an on-board talent show where many travelers performed - including singing, dancing, piano playing, drawing, stand-up comedy, magic show, gymnastics and karate demonstrations. We ended the evening at the Captain's Table creating our own cupcake treats.



What Do You Do With a Used Bible?

VCL asked itself this same question recently after some housecleaning yielded about a dozen used Bibles in various editions and sizes. It just didn't seem right to consign them to the recycling bin. So an internet search put us in touch with the Bible Foundation in Newberg, OR. This unique organization calls itself a distribution ministry and can best be described in one of its public service announcements.

English Bibles are being sent to over 30 countries besides the United States and they go to hospitals, nursing homes, inner city churches & ministries, rescue missions, ship ministries, prison & jail ministries, homeless shelters, street ministries, ethnic neighborhood ministries, migrant camps, and individual ministries. Bibles, even damaged ones may be taken to a collection site. A list of the collection sites is available on web page www.bf.org or contact Bible Foundation, PO Box 908, Newberg, OR 97132; (503)538-4897.

There are numerous collection points in the US, but the easiest thing to do is simply send your used Bible(s) to the Bible Foundation. Be sure to ask for the **library rate at the US Post Office**, which is very inexpensive. You will receive a donation acknowledgement card in the mail for your tax deductible contribution.

Village Church of Lincolnshire

201 N. Riverwoods Rd.
Lake Forest, IL 60045

Phone: 847-295-7707 Fax: 847-295-7757

Email: evcl@evcl.org

Website: www.evcl.org

Senior Pastor
Associate Pastor
Ministries Administrator
Office Manager
Custodian

Lee Eclov
Michael Mauriello
Susan Eclov
Susan Beck
Angela Fischer

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



Village Vine

March 2011

Enriching Easter: Ash Wednesday and the Journey of Lent

By Scott Swingle

Since the early days of the church, Christians have thought it good to prepare themselves for Easter. Here is the celebration of the most significant event in human history, the centerpiece of the Christian confession—the resurrection of Jesus from the dead—and it is all too easy to watch this sacred day to come and go as fast as a birthday. The wisdom of the church fathers was to prepare the church for this sacred celebration by inviting believers to participate in the journey of Lent. As Advent prepares believers to celebrate the incarnation of Jesus at Christmas, so Lent prepares believers for the celebration of Jesus' resurrection at Easter.

Lent has its roots in the early Christian practice of fasting before Easter, which was taking place at least by the early 200s. By 325, the idea of a 40-day fast developed, inspired by the 40-day fasts of Moses, Elijah, and the Lord Jesus. The fast would begin on Ash Wednesday and would last for six weeks until Easter (which adds up to 40 days, not including Sundays). This Lenten fast was originally designed for new converts preparing for baptism and for repentant sinners to be welcomed back into the church on Easter Sunday. But it was not long before the whole

church was invited to participate in the journey of Lent, remembering their own continual need for repentance, self-denial, and renewal.

The invitation to Lent is officially extended to the church on Ash Wednesday. This is a day for contemplation of our mortality and our need for the resurrection life of Christ. In the Ash Wednesday service, Christians receive a touch of ashes on their foreheads as a reminder that we are made from the dust, and it is to dust that we will return. The ashes also lead us into a spirit of repentance, as we mourn our own sin, claim God's forgiveness, and renew our commitment to holy living.

Ash Wednesday is just the beginning, however, the entrance of the tunnel. At the other end is Easter, the celebration of not only Christ's resurrection, but our own resurrection, present and future, as members of his body. It is good and right to prepare ourselves for this holy celebration, and the Christian practice of Ash Wednesday and Lent can help us out in that regard. The Ash Wednesday service at VCL will be this coming Wednesday at 7pm.

Triangle of Hope: A New Congo Project

By Scott Swingle

For the past two years, VCL has been in partnership with the evangelical church in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We began by joining the Congo Consortium, a meeting of several churches who collaborate strategically to support the evangelical church in the Congo. We then sent two of our own on a vision trip to the Congo (missions chair Jim Uren and former associate pastor Jared Smith), which increased our passions and our idea bank on how VCL in particular could make its own special contribution. Since then, we have supported the church through prayer, resources, and unique projects which give a boost of support to our Congolese brothers and sisters.

This year, we have a special new opportunity, and this one with an added bonus. The project involves seat sacks, which are little sacks which hang on the back of school chairs to hold a child's school supplies in the classroom. Rather than having desks with a compartment to store school supplies, the classrooms in the Congo use chairs and tables. Thus, these seat

sacks are a very useful item, which is why the Elikya Center has taught widows and orphans how to make these seat sacks and sell them to help them make a living. Elikya means "hope" in Lingala, the language of Congo, and the Elikya Center provides hope to widows and orphans by training them in a trade to help them make a living for themselves.

What role will VCL play in this? We are hoping to purchase 350-400 seat sacks from these widows and orphans at the Elikya Center. What is the added bonus? We will be donating these seat sacks to South Elementary School, in nearby North Chicago. South Elementary uses chairs and tables in their classrooms, and so they are in need of seat sacks. The result? Local elementary school children are blessed by tangible resources for their classroom, while widows and orphans are blessed by support for their work. VCL is grateful for this opportunity to participate in this double blessing in the name of Jesus.

A Visit From Our Africa Missionaries

By Scott Swingle

It is a rare thing to encounter people like Dave and Patsy Alfors. Here is a couple who have given their lives to infiltrate difficult people groups in the heart of Africa and share the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Alfors began their mission work in the Congo, planting churches among the Water People, an unreached people group who live in a swamp area of the Congo River. After twelve years, they had seen sixteen new churches among these people and were able to hand over the ministry to native African pastors.

But they did not just pack up and go home. Dave and Patsy began targeting another people group in Africa, a group called the Fulbe (or Fulani) people. The Fulbe are a huge nomadic group who came originally from the northern Africa region and migrated to western Africa. They were the first people group in western Africa to convert to Islam, and they were instrumental in the spread of Islam throughout western Africa through jihad and conquest. This proud people have even identified themselves as "the missionaries of Islam."

Dave and Patsy Alfors have been working among the Fulbe since 1997. They began in Central African Republic and then moved to Cameroon, where they are currently. They work among the Fulbe Muslims

in a village in northern Cameroon called Mesquine. Dave prepares Bible studies and tracts in Fulani, the Fulbe language, and has seen many people come to know Jesus Christ and grow spiritually. Patsy goes into the villages and tells Bible stories to women, developing relationships with them and eventually telling them about Jesus. Through their patient, faithful witness, Dave and Patsy have reached many Fulbe Muslims with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Alfors are back in America to visit their supporting churches. VCL is one of those churches, and we are privileged to host them the first weekend in April. Come and hear real stories of the work of God in Cameroon.



Hearts for Our Kids

By Susan Eclov

One of my favorite times of year in our children's ministry calendar is Lent. On Sunday, March 13, you will see colorful hearts hanging in the foyer. Each heart has a picture of one of our kids – from infants through high school. Anyone who wants to participate can pull down one of these hearts and take it home as a reminder to pray for that student during the 6 weeks of Lent. You can pray for many things, but we would ask you to pray for spiritual development. We have listed one big idea for each week of the program.

There are two other important steps that we ask of you: 1. Please let us know that you have taken a heart and which child you are praying for. This is so easy to do because we attach a pink form to the heart for you to complete and leave at the Information Center. 2. Please let the child know that you are the one praying for them. Last year we were able to identify all but 4 and this year we are hoping for 100%. You can see why this is important because the students want to know that they are being prayed for.

It is not required, but many people choose to give a small gift to their student at the end. The envelope attached to the heart allows you to send bookmarks, notes of encouragement, or gift coupons. This is a great way that we serve one another cross generationally. It connects our kids to the rest of the congregation and supports them in their spiritual journey. Thank you for praying for our kids.

Teaching Teachers

By Pastor Michael Mauriello

I'll never forget the day I walked into my Introduction to Christian Education (EM 500) class during my first year of Divinity school. Dr. Phil Sell said, "Your preaching classes will prepare you for your last ministry position. But we often neglect to prepare you for your first two or three positions, where teaching rather than preaching is the skill that is required." How right he was! Learning to be a great educator is a huge skill that many students find they need after they've completed their studies. God has blessed Village Church with many thoughtful, talented, and growing students who will go into all kinds of ministry: pastoral, counseling, missionary, social, and educational ministry. A common skill necessary for all of these vocations is the ability to teach well. Beginning March 16, I'll begin a short curriculum on teaching during Lee's weekly time with Trinity students at 11:00 in the basement of the chapel on campus. We'll learn different learning strategies, fostering small group discussion, and other skills for teaching. Anyone is invited to participate, but I especially invite our Trinity students to come and attend. I hope this will be a time which will be fruitful for getting to know each other better, and for you to continue to hone and develop a needed skill for your ministries now at Village Church, and later when you graduate and move on to your next ministries. Looking forward to seeing you there! (Students should bring a sermon, presentation, or lesson they have prepared in the past for discussion and friendly critique.)

Volunteer for the Uplift Prayer Ministry

By Pastor Lee Eclov

Prayer for one another is a crucial part of our church's life. When there is a critical need for prayer within our body we normally send word to the whole church via email and some phone calls through the VCL Prayer Chain. But sometimes there are other prayer requests which our brothers and sisters have which are for extended family or friends, as well as for personal opportunities to share our faith with others. It isn't our practice to send these to the whole church, but only to those who have volunteered to pray for such concerns.

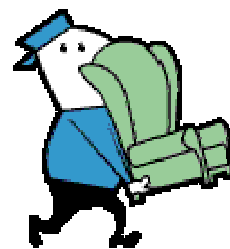
During March we invite you to sign up for the Uplift

prayer group. Those who volunteer will receive these periodic requests for special needs and opportunities. Typically in the past there have been two or three of these kinds of requests per week, at most, so you are not likely to be inundated with more matters than you can effectively pray for.

If you would like to be part of this Uplift prayer family, send me an email (byeqlad@aol.com) or write "Uplift" on the Friendship Register. If you have email that is how we will communicate with you. If you do not, we will have a phone chain to let you know the requests.

Compassion at VCL

By Pastor Michael Mauriello



Compassionate care for neighbors, for those who grieve, and for those in financial trouble has always been a part of the community of God from God's call to Abraham to Jesus' instructions to the Church. Over the last few years, Pastor Jared paved the way for us in exploring new opportunities for our church to be more intentionally involved with compassion. Our church's involvement with LOVE INC., a furniture donation ministry for those who can't afford tables, beds, and chairs, was a direct result of Pastor Jared's work to help our church connect more frequently with God's heart for compassion. But not everyone can lift heavy couches, haul them down steep staircases and push them through narrow doors.

Over the last month, David Hooper and I have been exploring new avenues for others in our church to find ways of connecting with compassion. David and I have made contact with three organizations: Christogether (a networking organization), PADS of Lake County (a public mercy organization with several shelters and community health projects), and Faith Alive! (a Christian movement in Waukegan and the North Chicago area that is trying to create stronger and longer relationships with churches in the North Shore area and those of Waukegan). David and I have been challenged personally about our own framework for compassion, and we hope in the coming months to present new opportunities and ways of thinking about compassion to the community of Village Church. Please pray that we would make wise evaluations, careful decisions, and fruitful connections with these and other organizations, and not exclude other possibilities as we think about this part of our church's ministry.

VCL Families to Host International Students



During their upcoming Spring Break from Iowa State this month, 19 international students will be staying with VCL families. In addition to seeing Chicago and attending church at VCL on Sunday, March 13, there will be luncheon in the Great Room immediately following the service to allow the VCL church family to meet them and make them feel welcome. The majority are graduate students from China, Africa and India and only a handful have had exposure to the Christian faith. Hospitality team leader Sharon Johnson is coordinating this annual VCL event.

Mornings With Michael

By Pastor Michael Mauriello

It's been such a pleasure to come back to Village Church and to start ministering in our education hour on Sunday Mornings. If you haven't had a chance to get to know me a bit, let me invite you to *Mornings with Michael*. Starting at 9:00 on Sunday mornings in the Great Room, we're having conversations on discipleship and growing maturity in the Christian faith. We're asking four questions in our time together over the next few months. "What is a life?" asks what the nature of a human life span is, and how a person begins to think through foundational questions of being, purpose, and patterns that relate directly to discipleship and Christianity. We'll next focus on "What about Jesus?" and take a look at his life not simply as the pattern of our discipleship, but as the source of power for our discipleship as well. Then we'll ask "What is the goal of discipleship?,"

exploring what a disciplined person "looks like" both universally and in our particular context. And finally, we'll ask, "How does a person grow?" so we have a sense of the changing nature of a disciple over time and as he or she grows in maturity.

It's a great time of discussion, and I hope you'll come with your own thoughts and convictions and questions, ready for a fun and challenging time of conversation. I don't like to spend my mornings alone, so grab some coffee and keep me company on Sunday mornings at *Mornings with Michael*.



Preaching & Worship Series



Blind Spots: What Christians Miss

- 3/6 Whose Side Are You On?
Mark 9:30-50
- 3/13 Paradigm Shift
Mark 10:1-31
- 3/20 What Do You Want Me To Do for You?
Mark 10:32-52
Communion and Child Dedication
- 3/27 The Fruitless Curse
Mark 11:1-26
- 4/3 Heir Apparent
Mark 11:27-12:17

Prayer Requests



MARCH PRAYER LIST

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

- "Heart for Our Kids" – praying for the children of our church during Lent
-
- Elikya Project for Congo: Seat Packs from Congo for a school in North Chicago
-
- How can we expand our involvement in compassion ministries in our area
-
- A lot of new people are attending VCL — Pray that we will be loving and wise in meeting and welcoming them into our fellowship