

July 2009

The Messenger

“Tri,” Try Again

Last summer I was invited to be the camp pastor at Covenant Point Bible Camp in Iron River, MI, for one of the weeks of family camp. After talking it over with Cari and praying about it a bit, we decided to accept this offer to serve in this way; plus, we as a family received the opportunity to participate in family camp. Having never attended family camp as a child or adult, we did not know what to expect. Also, I was rather nervous having neither preached in a camp setting, nor five days in a row. Our week happened to be the last week of camp for the summer, which coincided with Covenant Point’s yearly fundraiser, a triathlon. So in addition to preaching and participating in family camp, we were invited to raise money for camp and join the triathlon. This was going to be a crazy week!

As 2008’s summer progressed I dutifully sought to make progress in two areas above and beyond my regular duties as pastor. In addition to preparing my sermon for each Sunday, I hoped to each week write one of my “sermons” for camp. Also, I endeavored to diligently train for the triathlon. The sermon preparation was surprisingly smooth. I had decided to select a parable for each day, and Dr. Klyne Snodgrass’ book, Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables (Eerdmans 2008) was an invaluable resource.

Training for the triathlon began smoothly, too. Covenant Point’s triathlon consists of a one-half mile swim, a 25-mile bike ride, and a 7-mile run. I started Memorial Day weekend by hopping on my mountain bike and heading to Rock Cut State Park. As the days and weeks progressed, I lengthened my rides to almost 30 miles each outing, and my running slowly crept up to 4 miles at a time. Swimming wasn’t much of an issue, but I knew that I had to put some time in the pool. I spent a month on my mountain bike and then a friend loaned me a “road” bike. Road bikes are ultra-light, super fast with very skinny, bald tires.

On July 3rd, I went out for my typical early morning bike ride. This time, however, I took the road bike. Immediately, I knew I was riding a special machine. This thing was fast! I decided to be sure to take it easy around my course to and from Rock Cut. As I approached home heading west on Spring Creek with about a mile left, I stuck out my arm to signal my left hand turn across 4 lanes of traffic. As I looked behind me to see if any cars were coming, the front wheel of the bike seemed to crumple in front of me and I fell toward the asphalt head first. Two vivid images from this fall are etched into my brain. First, I can still see the pavement approach in my mind’s eye (and I am really glad I wore a helmet). Second, I remember the sensation of wondering when I would stop sliding down the road.

When I came to a complete stop, I hurried over to my borrowed bike hoping it was okay – and it was fine. I then wondered about my body. I did some deep knee bends, twisted my back side to side, and turned my head several ways. Everything seemed to be in working order until I tried to lift my arms over my head. I heard a grinding, crunchy sound coming from my left side. I thought perhaps my shoulder popped out of joint. I happened upon a good Samaritan who put the bike in the back of his pickup and drove me home.

Cari took me to the Emergency Room and by 7 am, I learned I had a broken collarbone. I was told, if it hurts, don’t do it. Two weeks later, it still hurt. But family camp approached, and with it, the triathlon. Slowly I began running; slower still, I began swimming using one arm. And so we left for Covenant Point, wondering what the week would hold and whether I would participate in the triathlon.

Family camp was phenomenal! Cari said, “this was the best vacation ever, because someone else was in charge to make sure our kids were having fun.” The people we encountered were fantastic. In sermons since we returned from camp, I have introduced the church to the Steve Barg family. Steve and Susan’s son, Aaron made a huge impact on our family at camp. Aaron, almost 18 years old, was born with a chromosomal condition known as trisomy-13, which left him wheelchair bound and mostly blind and deaf and mute. But he had the most amazing smile and spirit. You couldn’t help but be uplifted and loved in Aaron’s presence. Aaron’s mom encouraged me to participate in the triathlon in spite of my still-broken collarbone as a tribute to Aaron, who has to overcome a lot of obstacles just to attend camp. So I swam (one-armed), biked (on a real fast bike without falling off) and ran (yuck) for Aaron. In September, we attended Aaron’s 18th birthday party, but in January, we attended his funeral.

This spring I was invited again to serve as camp pastor for family camp at Covenant Point. And concluding our week, the camp has scheduled its fundraising triathlon. The purpose of the fundraiser is to ensure the camp is fully accessible to people with special needs like Aaron. Once again I will swim, bike, and run for Aaron. The emotional pain of Aaron’s absence may actually be greater than the physical pain of the experience.

I invite you to join me in this endeavor by contributing financially, sponsoring me to raise money for Covenant Point so that the camp can touch the lives of people with special needs the way Aaron touched mine. We leave for Covenant Point on August 2, and the triathlon is August 9. Please make checks payable to Covenant Point, I will bring them with us to camp. Seeking to Serve the Least of These, Pastor Eric



Birthdays

- 1 Kurt Anderson
Candice McCulloch
- 2 Matt Link
- 5 Gladys Anderson
- 6 Jonathan Brown
- 7 Arlene Schweiger
- 8 Troy Jackson
- 10 Pearl Wienke
- 13 Matthew Carlson
- 15 Mike Bliss
- 16 Rosalie Pearson
- 17 Joan Boettcher
Wesley Nelson
- 18 Todd Johnson
- 19 Marshall Johnson
- 21 Ann Mary Ferguson
- 22 Kimberly Haase
- 23 Louise Berg
- 25 Nancy Rainwater
- 26 Wayne Augenson
- 31 Pam Zollar



Anniversaries

- 2 Mayford & Pearl Engstrom
- 3 Charles & Noel Carlson
- 8 Erin & Tim Clark
- 14 Robert & Lorrie Werthman
Mike & Stacey Parlapiano
- 23 Philip & Kathy Adams
- 24 Gerald & Christine Bauer
Doug & Kathie Knight

Remember in Prayer

Gene Felts and family in the passing of his father.
The family of Wayne Womack (our former custodian) who passed away this week.
Lorna Bjurstrom home from SAH.
Sue Warren recovering from ankle surgery.
Betty Lockett in rehab at P.A. Peterson.
Emil Drews, Kent's father, in rehab.
Doug Swanson recovering from angioplasty.
Justin Holmertz serving in Afghanistan.



Church Family Military News

The following items are being collected to send to Afghanistan: candy, body powder, and deodorant, National Geographic – adventure series, phone cards, chapstick and crystal light (individual drink mix packages). There is a box in the southeast narthex where you can drop them off through July 12th. The package will go to Justin Holmertz so consider leaving a card or note for him. He will share the contents with his fellow soldiers and distribute some items to the local Afghans. Thanks!



New Address

Eleanor Anderson
 202 N. Showplace Dr. Apt. 251
 Rockford, IL 61107 (815) 332-3755

Thank You

Your recent donation of \$88 is an investment in the lives of individuals who are often neglected, criticized, and ignored; individuals who are homeless in Rockford. With our sincere gratitude for your mission work with us to reach the homeless, Kay Larrick, The Carpenter's Place

On behalf of my family, I want to thank you my Broadway family for your prayers, cards and visits on the passing of my father.
 Sincerely, Gene and Colleen Felts

The beautiful, thoughtful cards received for our birthdays were much appreciated. Thanks to all who came to help us celebrate our 80 years. Family and friends are very precious to us. You made it a day to remember.
 Thank you, Al & Gladys Damrose

Portrait Missing

Would the person who removed the picture of Pastor Robert Hjelm from the historical cabinet kindly return it. Thanks, Wes Nelson



Broadway Covenant Church
3525 Broadway
Rockford, IL 61108

Return Service Requested

SKILLS CAMP 2009

At the time of writing this article we are near the end of Skills Camp week. It is hot and uncomfortable outside and for the most part cool and comfortable inside. By the time you read this, Skills Camp 2009 will have concluded. Many of you were involved in one form or another in making Skills Camp a success and are very aware of what Skills Camp is all about. For those who did not have the opportunity to experience Skills Camp first hand this year read on. Skills Camp 2009 saw a record number of campers. We had 30 pre-schoolers and 84 first through sixth graders. 114 kids in total. There were 54 adult volunteers involved throughout the week including 18 high schoolers and college age adults serving as counselors. Our counselors were involved from the early morning to late afternoon each day and bonded with the kids and served as wonderful role models. Our counselors exhibited dedication and an eager willingness to serve throughout the week and we should be very proud of them all.

The theme for Skills Camp 2009 was True or False? The theme verse was Jeremiah 10:10 - *But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King...* Through the stories of Elijah, the children learned that God is the true God, the living God, the eternal King. These stories were brought alive through skits, music, worship, and small group talk back times in which the children learned 1) the One True God is our provider and wants us to confidently share what He has given us, 2) the One True God hears our prayers and wants us to choose to serve Him only, 3) the One True God knows our deepest needs and wants us to fully commit to follow Him, 4) the One True God hates sin, but loves to forgive and wants us to humbly repent, and 5) the One True God is eternal and wants us to spend the rest of eternity with Him because he loves us.

As in previous years, the camp offered a wide array of skills for the children to choose to participate in each day consisting of gardening, stamping, cooking, legos, trash to treasure, and for the birds in which the kids constructed bird houses and other items related to birds. Also, they battled the heat and were involved in various sports opportunities like basketball, soccer, volleyball, baseball/softball, and backyard games.

The hot weather added challenges and many improvisation opportunities throughout the week. Despite these challenges everyone persevered and the One True God was glorified.

Many thanks to all who volunteered their time and talents to make Skills Camp 2009 possible. Special thanks go to our coordinators, Michelle Gustafson and Cheryl Ecklund, whose creative and administrative talents together form a team greater than its individual parts.