

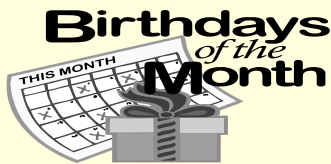
HARVEST

May 2010

TIMES

The monthly newsletter of Harvest Community Church

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 4



May 2010

- May 1 Jude Desgranges
- May 3 Michael Vipond
- May 4 Treston McGarry
- May 8 Lee Ann Vipond
- May 10 Sarah Oosterhouse
- May 12 Elle Hilley
- May 13 Nathan DeVries
- May 16 Dianne Kreh
- May 17 Katie Carr
- May 18 Isaac Duits
- May 19 William Kastanek
- May 21 Drew Bomhof
- May 26 Grant Russell
- May 27 Lydia Duits
- May 27 Bob DeJong

If we missed you, please call the church office



August 9-13

Census by Pastor Ben

Like millions of other Americans and most of you, I took the few minutes it takes to fill out the 2010 census form. It was no big deal, but to listen to the politicians the act was crucial. I don't pretend to know everything that is at stake with how many people live in this country and how population shifts and trends determine new policies and plans. I just do as I'm told and answer a few questions and mail it back.

The Old Testament gives several accounts of census-taking among the people of God, none so (in)famous as the one King David took as recorded in II Samuel 24. The king sent out an entourage of trusted men with the assignment to count all the fighting men of Israel. His trusted general, Joab, questions the wisdom of the order, but in the end he heads up the mission. Almost 10 months later the counters return with the report: 800,000 able-bodied men who can carry the sword in Israel; another 500,000 in Judah. End of story. Not quite.

Joab's hesitancy was a wise one. David's desire to know the number of fighting men in the land displayed a misplaced trust in the number of soldiers available to him. All throughout his industrious and successful military career, David had shown a remarkable trust in God. How many times did he look over the army of an enemy and lead his army in the Psalm he himself had written: "Some my trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God!" "Charge!"

After the numbers are reported, David experiences a convicting stab of conscience: "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O Lord, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing." (:10). David sins; David confesses; David repents; God forgives; end of story. Not quite. For we go on to read that God sent to David a prophet by the name of Gad, with this word from God: "I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you: Three years of famine in your land, three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you, three days of plague in your land." In other words, "choose your own poison." Put yourself in David's shoes at this point. Which one would you choose? David does the wise thing and doesn't choose. Instead, these words: "I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for His mercy is great." In other words, "Lord, you pick."

This passage poses a lot of difficulties for us New Testament Christians, not the least of which involves the nature of God's forgiveness. David's repentance is sincere. Unlike his previous "big sin" involving bathing beauty Bathsheba where it took the prophet Nathan to awaken his conscience, here David comes to the place of confession and repentance all on his own. And with the



Alpha Women's Center Annual Lifewalk

For those of you who don't know, I used to volunteer at Alpha Women's Center in Hastings. Every year Alpha would do a "Lifewalk", which is a fund raiser for the center and a walk in honor of life. This year the walk is called "Walking for M.A.P. (My Alpha Place)". It will be held on Saturday, June 12 at 10:00 am in Hastings. More details to come as the date approaches. This is a great time to donate to this wonderful ministry, so mark your calendars for June 12th, 2010!

Alpha Women's Center has since changed their location, name, and logo. They are independent from the Grand Rapids center and working as a self-supported non-profit. I do not know all the details about the reasons for the independent status, but I do know God provided a way for them to maintain their ministry as it was on the brink of extinction. The ministry is near and dear to my heart. They offer pregnant, abortion-minded, post-abortive, parents of young children, and women in general practical aid and spiritual guidance. Bible studies are done with clients and information on pregnancy and parenting is given through lessons that allow them to earn free items such as diapers, clothing, books, etc.

The new name is "My Alpha Place" and it's new location is 838 West Green Street in Hastings. They are stationed now in a house with no stairs to climb. This is a benefit for pregnant women and the older women who volunteer. The new motto is "Mentoring Families...Modeling Christ" which is what My Alpha place is all about. They are always looking for volunteers to help out, whether it be counseling women who come in, or helping with different projects. The latest project is the building of a memorial garden for those who have had an abortion and have since regretted it, as a way to honor their children. The center is open Tuesdays from 4-7 pm, Wednesdays from 10 am -4 pm, Thursdays from 5-7 pm, and Saturdays from 10 am-1 pm. The phone number is 269-948-9013. Feel free to contact Becky Oosterhouse with questions.

-Becky Oosterhouse



On the weekend of April 17-18, sixteen men from Harvest Church enjoyed the setting of Maranatha Conference Center for what some have called the "first annual" men's retreat. The subject of the weekend was THUMOS. Thumos is a Greek word which doesn't translate easily into the English language. Some possible synonyms would be courage, verve, guts, inner fire, etc.

Each session began with a video clip to illustrate the concept of Thumos, and so we enjoyed scenes from Braveheart, The Gladiator, and The Patriot. Following the clip, Pastor Ben gave a talk, followed by smaller group round table discussion over prepared questions. Among the topics of discussion were MIA: A Marital Spirit, Soulful Manliness, and Thumos in action. We challenged each other as to how this God-given attribute needs to find expression in every area of a man's life. What does Thumos look like in the workplace? The home? Within marriage? Within the Church of Christ.

During the Men's Sunday School class following the retreat we were encouraged to not let the subject be just another interesting thing we learned, but rather to seek God out and listen for His call to be the kind of man He created and equipped us to be: men of THUMOS.

MAY EVENTS

- May 1 Elder's Meeting
- May 2 Communion
- May 2 CHEERS Small Groups
- May 6 National Day of Prayer Vigil and Service
- May 8 Men With Tools
- May 9 Mother's Day
- May 9 Youth Group
- May 9 I Samuel Study
- May 12 Year End Coffee Break/Little Lambs
- May 16 CHEERS Small Groups
- May 18 Evangelism/Prayer Team
- May 19 Consistory
- May 23 I Samuel Study
- May 23 Youth Group



WWW Dot

Have you visited the Harvest Webpage yet? A Harvest Website committee met in January to review the website and to determine who, when, or what could be accomplished using this website.

We have had 658 visits from 9 countries or territories (Jamaica, Vietnam, India, Russia, Canada to name a few). Once on the site 2,738 page views were recorded. The most popular page is the SERMON page. Each week the Bulletin is posted by Friday evening prior to Sunday worship. Miss a week...check the website copy of the bulletin for what you missed. Many visits were the result of our Fan page on **cont. on page 4**

PRAYER

for such a time as this

The National Day of Prayer is Thursday, May 6. There is an opportunity to come together in prayer for our nation, our community and our families here at Harvest that evening at 7:00 pm. You are also invited to participate in a day-long prayer vigil by choosing a half hour time slot (on the prayer room door) when you will commit to praying. In preparation for this event here are some prayer guidelines taken from the National Day of Prayer Guide:

How to P.R.A.Y.

Praise—Thank God for what He has already accomplished through Jesus Christ.

Repent—Confess your sins and shortcomings. Repent personally and on behalf of our nation. The Lord is quick to forgive when we come to Him.

Ask—Ask God to reveal truth, turn our hearts back to Him, and bring healing.

Yield—Yield to the Lord and recognize He has heard our prayers and will answer according to His will. He is waiting to provide guidance and direction!

GOVERNMENT—“I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness.” I Timothy 2:1-2.

Our response—Pray for local, state and federal leaders. Ask God to grant them wisdom, discernment and hearts open to His leading. Pray that believers would be faithful to lift up our officials and the decisions that will affect our nation’s future, so that biblical principles might prevail in the public square and throughout the halls of government.

CHURCH—“May they be brought complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.” John 17:24

Our response—Pray for unity among believers in the Body of Christ. Ask God to inspire and empower His children for His purposes—reaching the lost for His glory and encouraging one another in Christ. Never before has it been more imperative that the church serve as a “city on a hill” (Matthew 5:14) before a hurting world.

MILITARY—“Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you

wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

“You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.” Psalm 81:4-6

Our response—Pray for the brave men and women serving in our armed forces. Ask God to grant courage, protection, and strength for our military—as well as for their families awaiting their safe return.

FAMILY—“If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.” Mark 3:25

Our response—Pray for families in your community and across the nation. Ask Him to strengthen marriages, encourage parents toward His priorities, heal relationships and secure traditional values in the home. This God-ordained institution has the potential to impact the culture mightily as husbands, wives, parents and children embody the love, grace and truth of Christ.

God is sovereign and nothing comes as a surprise to Him. Whether we face fluctuation economic times, threats from abroad, unrest at home, or other troubling circumstances, our Heavenly Father is not caught unaware. He stands ready to respond to our needs when we humbly ask for divine intervention in the affairs of men. He is “our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1)

Census cont. from page 1

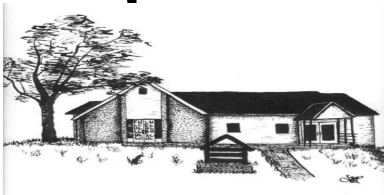
Dynamic duo of forgiveness and cleansing on God’s part (IJohn 1:9). Is David forgiven for the pride behind the soldier census? Yes. Then why the “pick your own poison”? Because the forgiveness of sin does not equal the removal of sin’s consequences. That’s the hard lesson. It’s the principle of sowing and reaping which Paul lays out in Galatians 6:

“Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

Again, it’s a hard lesson. But we can be sure David didn’t take another census of fighting men in his lifetime, having learned his lesson. Do we learn ours? How much of what we are tempted to blame God (and others) for is but the reaping of our own sowing? Now that is a question to place before our God.

If you read the rest of the story as it’s found in II Samuel 24, there is some good news. David buys

cont. on page 4



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WWW Dot cont from page 2

Facebook. Photos of church activities are posted prior to and after events such as Crop Walk and Variety Show. One Sunday morning very soon, the committee will be giving a short presentation to the congregation. -Evie David, Website Coordinator



**Why
God
Made
Mothers**

Brilliant answers given by 2nd grade school children to the following questions:

Why did God make mothers?

1. She's the only one who knows where the scotch tape is.
2. Mostly to clean the house.
3. To help us out of there when we were getting born.

How did God make mothers?

1. He used dirt, just like the rest of us.
2. Magic plus super powers and a lot of stirring.
3. God made my Mom just the same as he made me. He just used bigger parts.

What ingredients are mothers made of?

1. God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and everything nice in the world and one dab of mean.
2. They had to get their start from men's bones. Then they mostly use string. I think.

Why did God give you your mother and not some other mom?

1. We're related.
2. God knew she likes me a lot more than other people's moms like me.

What kind of little girl was your mom?

1. My mom has always been my mom and none of that other stuff.
2. I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy.
3. They say she used to be nice.

What would it take to make your mom perfect?

1. On the inside she's already perfect. Outside, I think some kind of plastic surgery.
2. Diet. You know...her hair. I'd diet, maybe blue.

If you could change one thing about your Mom, what would it be?

1. She has this weird thing about keeping my room clean. I'd get rid of that.
2. I'd make my Mom smarter. Then she would know it was my sister who did it and not me.
3. I would like her to get rid of those invisible eyes in the back of her head

**April Caption
Contest**



**Best caption
wins a prize!**

No captions
submitted.



Census cont. from page 3

piece of property on which to build an altar and sacrifice to the Lord so that the plague that afflicted Israel would end. The piece of property ends

up later to be the location of Solomon's temple, THE evidence of God's dwelling with His people. Just as forgiveness does not equal the removal of consequences, consequences do not equal the absence of God.

One of my favorite garden plants growing up was rhubarb...raw. We didn't have a garden growing in our back yard But the neighbor two doors down did It included rhubarb. I helped myself...often. Until I got caught. Consequence: Mow our neighbor's lawn for the summer, with our push mower. I can still hear my mom's voice: "You like it over there so much in the garden, you'll have a ball mowing his grass all summer." I'm sure I grumbled with every move of that old lawn mower, although I don't remember. What I do remember is mom having Kool-Aid ready for me when I got finished. And I remember never touching the rhubarb again. Lesson learned at the hands of one whose love I never doubted.