



Knowing Christ, Making Christ Known

I hope that if anyone ever asks you what Elmwood is all about you can answer with confidence that we are all about *Knowing Christ* and *Making Christ Known*. That is the mission statement of the Elmwood Church of Christ. That is the mission that I hope guided you throughout 2007. I hope that is the mission that will guide you throughout 2008.

What does it mean to know Christ? How do we go about attaining this knowledge? Why is this important? What does it mean to make Christ known? How does that look? What things should we do? And, again, why?

I think those are important questions to answer. The answers may seem obvious to you, but maybe not to others.

I'm going to spend the next two Sundays sharing with you my answer to these questions. We are going to explore *Knowing Christ* this Sunday. Next Sunday we will explore *Making Christ Known*. My prayer is that you will come to a better understanding of this mission, and by coming to a better understanding you will not only see this as Elmwood's mission statement, but you will adopt this as your own.

-Gilbert

***Our vision:
Knowing Christ, Making Christ Known***

Skipping the Familiar

There are a lot of verses in the Bible that tend to become people's favorites, the Lord's Prayer, the Great Commission, Acts 2, John 3:16, among many others. I have found it can be quite beneficial to memorize scriptures, allowing me to find important scriptures quickly as well as remembering them during my daily life, allowing the text to shape my life.

However, often, while reading through passages of scripture, I find myself skimming over the very passages that I had earlier found to be important enough to memorize. How ironic! The verses that I consider to be important, I tend to skip because I "already know" what those verses say. I often forget that the Word of God is living and active, and that its meaning is not static, but speaks to a person's life situation, even as that situation changes.

I would just like to encourage myself and anyone else who might be in a situation like mine, to remember to read the whole text. As we change, through life events, the text strikes us in different ways lending different meanings that allow the text to continue to encourage us and enrich our lives.

-Phil

Prayer Concerns....

While visiting her parents in Pittsburgh for the holidays, **Mandy Anderson** fell and has a severe sprain requiring her to use one crutch. She is still recovering from shoulder surgery and will have a torn disc in her back repaired in the future....**Terri Miller** requests prayers for her daughter, **Angela**, who is pregnant. She has had a difficult pregnancy....**Paul Thomas**, Thelma Hoyt's brother in Indianapolis, was dismissed from the hospital and now receiving hospice care....**Mike & Marilyn Hart**, Mindy's parents, were both hospitalized over the holidays. Her mother had gastrointestinal problems, and her father suffered a mild heart attack, followed by angioplasty....Continue praying for **Lynae Stafford, Herb King, Barbara Scott, Bob Stafford, Max Houlton, Perry Achor, Paul Thomas, Eileen Richardson, Henrietta Frampton, Seth Mullen, Delores Nolan, Chris Crable, Ginger & Terry Maxwell-Spenard, Scott Baker, Mickey Rigdon, Rick Sims, Matt Rigdon, Willie & Calvin Batts, Ellen Raguette, Marie DeWoody, Beth Holt, Elizabeth Tinkle, Sue Sill, Hattie Coffel, Kaden Koebecke, Irene Sims, Mary Tavana, Dick Waterstraat, Paul & Argie Verett, Delpha Allen, Ivan Ellis, Valley Stockton, Eagle Bailey, Minnie Scott, Anna Dale, Irene Fox, and Burnell Gulden.**

Serving in our military: **Michael Farris, & Michael Bryenton** in Afghanistan; **Ti Draughon** in Iraq; and **Chris Martin**, in South Korea.

Thank You!

The family of Chuck Smith (Brenda Gibson's nephew who was in a serious accident that left him paralyzed from the chest down) want to thank everyone for their prayers and cards. Chuck is home with physical therapy three days a week. His spirits are good, but he'll have a long battle. With God's help, good will come from this. Once again, thank you to everyone.
-Brenda Gibson

Thanks to all who have prayed for me during my high risk pregnancy. God has blessed us with a beautiful baby girl, Reese Elisabeth. We are home and doing well. Thanks again for your prayers and help during this time.
-Dana & Amos Miller

Dear Elmwood Church of Christ,

Mental Health America would like to thank you for your generous donations to the Holiday Gift Lift. Your thoughtfulness and contribution has helped ensure that people in our community are remembered during the holidays.

Your support is so valued. Our Holiday Gift Lift simply would not be possible without the support of friends like you. Sincerely, Lauren James

Christmas Card Fund Update

The total Christmas Card Fund donation was \$1,477. This money will go to the *Let's Start Talking* mission team from Elmwood who will be leaving in early summer. They will likely go to a destination in Asia. Because of the weather and no worship at Elmwood on December 16, two names were left off the list of donors. We want to include Janet Boston and Phyllis Gray on that list and sincerely thank everyone for the donations that were sent.



Ending 2007 with 3 new Babies!

Joshua & Linnet Chia from Singapore, recently added **Irwynn** to their family. He joins sisters, **Claral & Hannah**. He was born December 23, weighing slightly over 8 pounds.

Dana & Amos Miller welcomed **Reese Elisabeth** on December 28. She weighed 6 pounds 5 ounces, and measured 19 inches long. Though born a few weeks early, she is doing fine.

Isaiah Jackson Bird was born Sunday, December 30. He weighed 8 pounds 9 ounces and measured 20.5 inches long. Mom, Sarah, and father, Mark, are excited to have him home. Congratulations also to grandparents, (former *Elmwood members*) **Mark & Sue McClain**. Now in Canton, Georgia, they were here for the big event!

December 23, 2007

Class: 133 Worship: 255
Contribution: \$9,292

December 30, 2007

Class: 134 Worship: 215
Contribution: \$5,694

Budget: \$10,000/week

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Too Slow...Again!

I used to tell a former colleague that I was going to develop a seminar called, "Stop the World – I'm Getting Off." The two of us would talk about how life in general and ministry in specific was often carried out at breakneck speed. Too often I have felt like I just go from one meeting or event to the next and have little time for myself to be prepared for the opportunities to serve that lie ahead. At least in the ministry area, it looks like someone else beat me to the punch. Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger wrote a book called **Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples**. The book has many church leaders (including some of ours) really thinking about how we do church. One review of the book puts it this way: *"The simple revolution has begun. From the design of the iPod to the uncluttered Google home page, simple ideas are changing the world. Simple Church clearly calls for Christians to return to the simple gospel-sharing methods of Jesus. No bells or whistles required, so to speak. Based on case studies of four hundred American churches, authors Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger prove that the process for making disciples has quite often become too complex. Simple churches are thriving, and they are doing so by taking these four ideas to heart: Clarity. Movement. Alignment. Focus. Each idea is examined here, simply showing why it is time to simplify."*

Interestingly, the book begins with a minister returning from a conference with a mind full of ideas but with little hope of implementing them because he will only return to the race he left when he went to the conference. Interesting because as you read this, Phil and I are at the National Conference on Youth Ministries ...our heads are going to be full, but I am resolved (yes, a New Year's Resolution) to do things a little differently this year. It may be that **Simple Church** will have some effect and it is likely the conference will, but let's be honest, we are all living too fast – trying to do too much. I personally believe it is time for more quality and that may mean a little less quantity. I don't expect there will be huge changes in what we do – in the youth group, or in the church at large, but we may at least have a better handle on why we are doing things. I'll admit it, I have been guilty (bet you have too) of doing things just because someone else was doing it and it looked cool or seemed right or you name the motivation. I have long believed that we have made God's plan for the church more complex than He ever intended. Sometimes it seems like some of the really good things we are doing are just because we can. I wonder if we don't need to step back, reevaluate, and refocus on what matters most. That's my plan for 2008 – join me, won't you?

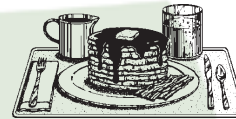
Oh yeah, pray for Phil – he's going to get bombarded with my ideas, we are rooming together and we are on the same flight home. Happy New Year! – Lee



We at Elmwood are greatly saddened to learn of the death of **Lisa Crowe's** brother, **Joe Luttrell**. He died very unexpectedly in Monterrey, Mexico, on December 18, just before flying his NetJets charter flight home (he was a pilot). He died of a massive heart attack at the age of 60. He was very well known in the Nashville, Tennessee area, having owned numerous businesses there. He was such a dynamic person who loved his family and served his 91-year-old father, Woodrow, so devotedly. He will be greatly missed by all. Our sympathies to his wife, Wanda, Lisa and Gayle, and of course, Woodrow. His funeral was at the Woodmont Hills Church in Nashville on December 23.

Knowing there will be many who want to send cards, their addresses are listed here. **Wanda Webb**, 5618 Hillview Drive, Brentwood, TN 37027; **Gayle & Lisa**, 4033 Sweetberry Drive, Cane Ridge, TN 37013; and **Woodrow Luttrell**, 319 White Oak Lane, Nashville, TN 37221.

Fellowship at its best



Men of all ages are invited to attend the men's breakfast Saturday, January 19, at 7:43 AM, at Elmwood in A-2. If you haven't had the opportunity to attend you are missing out on a great time of Christian fellowship.

We will have a great breakfast prepared by Bob Evans and we will be spiritually motivated by Gilbert Kerrigan. Please plan to join your brothers in Christ for a special time together shared in song, prayer, and fellowship. **This is a great opportunity to bring a guest.** Put your name on the sign-up sheet in the Farris foyer. This will enable us to order the correct amount of food. God is smiling!

-Kevin Walters



January 6, 6 PM....Singing with Farrell Simmerman
January 13, 6 PM....LIFE Groups resume meeting
January 19, 7:43 AM....Men's Breakfast in A-2

God Is Smiling

I am sure we all know the Elmwood Church of Christ Mission statement; **Knowing Christ and Making Christ Known**. God calls us to seek and find those who are lost or have slipped away from Him. It is our responsibility to search His word and continually to take it into our hearts and apply it into our daily lives. Throughout scripture God reminds us to be good stewards of what he has given us.

Over the past several months you have noticed several improvements being made at Elmwood. In these improvements you have seen concrete repair to the side walk by Elmwood Avenue, parking lot cracks sealed, and parking lines repainted. The old storage shed was torn down and a new one has replaced it to provide storage for Noah's Ark, LTC, VBS, lawn care equipment etc. The educational wing has had numerous rooms that have received new carpet. The upstairs hallway was re-carpeted. The fellowship room has been totally renovated. There have been two closets built to store the chairs and tables for easy access and a small room was made for the sound equipment. This room has received new carpet and a fresh coat of paint.

Still in process are: painting, driveway re-sealing, gutters (between the two buildings) and fascia repair, and a new front sign. These are being planned in the near future and will be done in the spring if it is God's will. Please be praying for Elmwood.

Several of our members were involved in the process of ripping out the old carpet, scraping the floors and moving furniture to allow the carpet layers to put the new carpet in place. This process turned into more than we had anticipated. The floors upstairs had to be hand scraped. When we got down stairs and attempted to tear up the carpet in A-2 we discovered we could have used a mule to help pull the carpet up (glue holding tight)! But by getting more help, cutting the carpet into smaller strips, wrapping them around ourselves and using leg power—we got the job done. We had to scrape all the glue off the floor, but we were able to borrow a power scraper that made the job a whole lot easier.

We could have not accomplished this without the help of the Elmwood family. If you helped **(God knows who you are)** it was greatly appreciated and most importantly God is smiling. We were able to be blessed with twenty-five plus people who were instrumental in helping us throughout this process.

God has blessed us so richly to live in a society that allows us to freely worship him. He also has blessed us with the building we have to worship Him in, and to share His presence with our friends, family, and visitors.

I pray we can continue to use our resources that we have and continue to serve God with a ready and willing heart, and to help in all ways that we can.

Let us not forget the writings of Paul in Philipians and Colossians: *We "can do everything through him who gives [us] strength" (Philipians 4:13). "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17).*

Kevin N. Walters

Reaching Out with Food

God's heart and hand are with the poor and needy. He sees their plight and longs to rescue, to deliver. Our Father is always at work. As His family, we are privileged to see Him in action and to be involved in His provision for the poor in our community.

For more than 20 years, Elmwood has stocked and staffed a food pantry that provides assistance to the needy. The pantry is open to the public from 1:00 to 3:00 on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons each week. In 2007, approximately 275 families were served each month. Those who visited the pantry were welcomed and allowed to select items of their choice. Each left with one or two bags of groceries depending on their family size. For the year, more than 50,000 pounds of food were distributed.

Those directly involved in the food pantry ministry on a regular basis during 2007 are listed below. Talk with them about their work. Hear about the joy they experience in their service. Find out firsthand what God is doing. You may discover that God is calling you to reach out to others through the Elmwood pantry. If so, there are a number of ways to be involved.

- 1) The food pantry brings new families to Elmwood each month and puts us in contact with many people who need the Lord. Pray for those who come for food. Pray for those working that they will have opportunity to make meaningful connections and share Jesus.
- 2) Put your love for others into action by volunteering to greet and help those who visit the food pantry. You can work one or two afternoons a month on days that best fit your schedule.
- 3) Help transport food or restock the pantry. There are opportunities every week and these tasks can often be performed at a time that you choose.
- 4) Donate groceries, make monetary contributions towards the purchase of items, or arrange for donations from local businesses or organizations. Watch the weekly newsletter for specific needs.

Pantry workers			Food transportation & stocking
Lori Baker	Bernie Follick	Marsha Moore	Ted Holderfield
Joy Batcha	Gene High	Delores Nolan	John Marks
David Black	Nancy High	Sandy Seele	Joyce Matthews
Janet Boston	Delores Hill	Pauletta Smith	Joe Seele
Hedi Devine	Rose Hunt	Dick Waterstraat	Farrell Simmerman
Shirley Farmer	Margie Moffitt	Janice Waterstraat	John Stafford
Armilda Follick			

