New Life Christian Church January 30, 2010

New Lifer News

A Time to Celebrate Together!

by Bob See

You won't want to miss this Sunday as we will be baptizing many students who are taking a stand for Christ and declaring their desire to follow Him. We're planning the baptisms at 11:35 at the New Life Central venue, closing out the 10:30 services. Both Torch and the Gathering will wrap up early to join together at Central to celebrate this great moment in the lives of these young people. **And if YOU have come to faith in Christ but haven't been baptized in water, you too can take advantage of this moment and be baptized too by contacting one of the pastors or staff.**

21 Days of Prayer & Fasting

by Bob See

Next Monday, February 1, we enter our season of prayer and fasting. **We're encouraging New Lifers to set aside 21 days (3 weeks) of extra prayer and focused attention on your relationship with God.** Pick up one of the special brochures we have available (at the info center in the main facility) that explain how to participate. Furthermore, we have various books on prayer and fasting available for purchase in the lobby, following services.

As you have probably heard us mention, New Life isn't the only church in the area entering a season of prayer and fasting. Several Peoria-area churches have also been led to set apart Feb.1-21, and they will be meeting every evening during the three weeks for a combined prayer and worship service. These **services will be held every evening at 6 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church in downtown Peoria (700 Main St.).** It seems God is at work in many area churches, and it will be a great experience to connect with other believers as we seek God's love and power to be manifested in revival and evangelism throughout this region.

Creating Spaces

by Jason Morris

Our walls speak. Sometimes they don't relay the same message to everyone who observes their colors and patterns, but they do create a certain atmosphere that promotes a commonality among the crowd in the room. All of us have a uniform visual experience at New Life on Sunday mornings, though each person walks away with his own unique perception.

A few months ago we took the walls on the stage in New Life Central from a neutral light gray to a notably muted black. Our goal was to create a palette to work with as we explored new ideas for visually connecting our messages together each week as we moved through a particular message series (or "sermon series" for you old-schoolers). Every series, whether it's fourteen weeks in First Samuel or two weeks on finances, has its own themes, and we continually strive to find creative ways to put the senses of our church body in touch with those themes from the moment we arrive on the first Sunday in a series to our dismissal in its final week.

Our latest series *The Prototype Church* is a study of the first Christian church that ever existed in scripture, and as the preaching team spent hours brainstorming the content of what we would focus on in these few weeks, the concept of building a church from the ground up kept emerging in conversation. I remember Bob See asking us in effect, if we could just stop New Life as we know it and start over, how would we build our church so that it reflects the values of that first church in Acts?

This concept of building from the ground up is what inspired the idea of blueprints as a visual support for the series, but lines on a blue wall didn't seem to get us all the way to our desired visual destination. We wanted to impart the idea that this was the first church of its kind. It remains ancient to us and Luke captured its details as he scrawled the Acts of the Apostles down on scrolls that would weather and fade over time. Our final decision: a blueprint on a scroll-like background melding the aged and the modern that would grow each week, implying that the church is a growing establishment that will never fully arrive at its completion until Jesus returns, but that has a plan and a purpose.

Michael Harms initiated a plan to make the visual elements happen and recruited a team which included his wife Peg, his brother Nick, and others to stretch canvas over frames and paint them to look like scroll paper. Jon Lange agreed to show up weekly to trace projected images of blueprints on the wall in New Life Central and The Gathering, and he paced himself so that the images would grow from week to week without ever coming to completion.

The magnitude and intensity of man-hours required for changing spaces from one theme to another is sizeable, and it keeps us coming back to this: we need people with a passion and willingness to step in and give of themselves in order to see these kinds of tasks completed with artistry and excellence. If you see Jon, Nick, Peg or Michael, thank them for reflecting this kind of heart and in the meantime consider what your part might be in helping take the visual arts to the next level. We're not putting all this energy and time into our walls because we think it looks cool. It's because God isn't boring. He's innovative and He has made us as creative beings. When we pour ourselves into crafting an aesthetically harmonious backdrop for large-group worship over the course of weeks and months, **we do it because we believe that God has something life-changing to speak to us through his Word, and who's to say He won't speak to some of us through walls?**