

THRIVE!

M A G A Z I N E

Issue #4

celebrating the stories and milestones of Calvary Church

January 2010

Excited To Serve!

Dr. Don Orvis

Part-time Interim Executive Pastor



Dr. Don and Nancy Orvis

Pastor Dan approached me last July asking if I would consider serving as part-time Interim Executive Pastor at Calvary, while continuing full-time as President of Face to Face International (F2F) headquartered in Scottsdale, Arizona. He called it an "experiment."

In this "experiment," I would commute once or twice a month, giving 8-10 days per month to Calvary. With a BlackBerry, e-mail, and a computer, we both thought it might work. I expressed that I would need the unanimous approval of our F2F Board.

I also thought that this position might be a way for Nancy and me to say "thank you" to Calvary. For 40 years, Calvary, the first church to support us, had stood with us through Campus Ambassadors, Denver Seminary, Medical Ambassadors International, and now F2F.

We, too, remember those great times of speaking at Calvary over Labor Day weekend for nearly 20

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JO JOINER

MY NAME IS...

We asked Calvary member Jo Joiner, at almost "90-years-young," to share her story with us, and asked some of her friends to tell us how Jo has impacted their lives...because we were pretty sure she wouldn't mention that part. ---Editor

My name is Josephine. People also call me Josie, Jose, and Jo. But the greatest name I've ever been called is "Christian."

The Lord has been patient with me. The wonderful transformation from "Josephine" to "Christian" did not occur until I was thirty years old.

God's work in my life began many years before that day. I look back on my early years, growing up in Washington, Iowa with mixed emotions. In many respects I was a very happy child. I remember how much my father loved me. He was always happy to see me and he brought me delight by giving me sticks of Juicy Fruit gum. Then, when I was only six, my father died, leaving my mother a widow at age thirty-nine with five children to raise. These were the years of the Great Depression so there were many challenges that my mother faced in providing for our family.

I would discover later that my father was a man who trusted Christ. He was raised in a devout Christian home. I spent many happy

times with my grandparents who were joyous Christians and who shared God's love with me. As I look back, I'm sure God was using them in my early life as a model to show me how to live.

As I grew older, I had an awareness of God being with me. If someone had asked me, "Jo, are you a Christian?" I would have told them that I was. After all, I reasoned, wasn't I being the best person I could be?



Look how much I was doing for God. I was very happy with the way I was living. In school I was a busy person, volunteering to help. Showing compassion. Always looking for the good in others. I had lots of friends. And I kept myself out of trouble, even when faced with temptations in my college years.

During those years, I now realize that God was beckoning me to a true relationship with Him.

He began to make that clearer to me after I was happily married and living in Muscatine. My husband Otis and I attended church and Sunday School regularly and we were somewhat knowledgeable about the Bible. One evening we were invited to attend a special citywide revival meeting. The speaker for the evening was a Messianic

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UPCOMING EVENTS

CALENDAR

january :: february :: march :: april 2010

Date	Event	Description	Location	Time
JANUARY 10	WINTER CLASSES	Four Class Options for Adults on Sundays	Various	10:30 AM
13	CALVARY UNIVERSITY	Four Class Options for Adults on Wednesdays	Various	6:30 -7:45 PM
17	FINANCIAL PEACE	Preview of the Class. Class begins 1/31/10.	Space 6	6 PM
MARCH 7	MEMBERSHIP CLASS	Get connected here at Calvary!	TBA	10:30 AM
APRIL 3-4	EASTER SERVICES	Three Services will be held	Calvary Auditorium	6 PM SAT 9 AM SUN 10:30 AM SUN
3-4	TIM HANNIG	Special Guest Illusionist will perform during our three weekend services, and at various MCSD Schools during the week.	Chapel	6 PM SAT 9 AM SUN 10:30 AM SUN

CALVARY UNIVERSITY - WINTER SESSION BEGINS JANUARY 13, 2010

Calvary University is offered as a supplement to your small group community experience. It is meant to fill in some of the gaps in your bible knowledge, and give you ways to take greater responsibility for your own spiritual growth.

Four new classes will be offered:

- The Other Side of Broken, taught by Tom Norton. Meets in Community Space 6
- The Truth Project II, taught by Bruce Martin. Meets in the Chapel
- New Testament Survey, taught by Dan Schoepf. Meets in Community Space 3
- Basic Theology, taught by Scott Mauck. Meets in Community Space 2

Classes will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 - 7:45 pm. The session will last 8 weeks, through March 10, 2010.

The cost is \$10 per person. Brochures with detailed information are available at the Information Center. Please note there is no childcare or meal served during the Winter session.

ADULT COMMUNITY HOUR CLASSES - WINTER SESSION BEGINS JANUARY 10, 2010

Sunday Mornings from 10:30 - 11:45 am.

Four classes offered:

Starting Point taught by Bruce Martin. Meets in the Serving Area.

Next Step taught by Paul Zobel. Meets in Space 6

Marriage: Built to Last taught by Scott Mauck. Meets in The Chapel

Weekend Teaching Intensive. Various leaders. Meets in the Auditorium

AMY GUBSER

NEW FACES

Paul and Nicole Zobel and their family have lived all over the United States. In fact, they have moved 12 times in 18 years. But in August 2008, they moved to Muscatine and they have not hesitated to step up and get involved at Calvary. We wanted to introduce you to this family, and hope you get to know them a little better!

Both Paul and Nicole were born and raised in Madison, WI and they were married in 1991. They met in middle school during a woodworking class. Little did they know when they were sitting in class cutting their names out of wood, they would eventually start dating their senior year of high school, get married, have a great family, and move all over the country!

After a number of moves and starting a family in the meantime, they moved back to the Madison area in 2004. Paul subsequently accepted a position with Grain Processing Corporation where he oversees the marketing of the corn-based *World's Best Cat Litter* product, and they made the move to Muscatine. They have three children; Sarah (10), Luke (7), and Noah (4). Nicole is a stay-at-home mom, and is a registered dietitian.



The Zobels: Nicole, Paul, Luke, Sarah and Noah

When their family moved to Muscatine, they visited several churches and started attending a church regularly in North Liberty. However, the Iowa winter weather started preventing them from traveling and they started attending Calvary on the weekends they couldn't make it to North Liberty. And by the end of January 2009, they were attending Calvary every weekend.

They started attending the Starting Point class, and soon became table leaders. Nicole also joined the Mom's Bible Study. And most recently, Paul started teaching the Next Step class this past September. While they lived in California, Paul earned his Masters of Divinity degree and had an interest in being a pastor. He is no doubt using some of that knowledge while teaching this class.

The Zobels love hanging out as a family at home, whether it is working on school work, playing or spending time together during prayer time or devotions. The kids also like to travel to Wisconsin in the summer, where they can spend time with extended family.

We are so glad they eventually landed in Muscatine, and encourage you to get to know them!

Davis Schrock

by Deidre Pearson



Davis and his Kindergarten Small Group

Davis Schrock loves to serve. His desire to serve may even be genetic. He says he gets it from his parents and grandparents.

"I come from a long, long line of serving. My whole entire family has been helping Ted (Colschen) with Spring Valley Bible camp all the way back to my grandparents," Davis said with a smile. "My grandpa (Art Sissel) basically had to be pulled off the lawn mower at Spring Valley because he wanted to help out and my grandma (Virginia Sissel) made him not help out because he was getting too old."

So it seems natural that Davis, a 15-year-old Muscatine High School student, would want to follow in their footsteps, as well as in the footsteps of his parents, Gary and Joy Schrock.

For the past two summers Davis has served at the camp, located just outside of Muscatine, as a member of the Summer Worker Assistance Team (SWAT) – preparing and serving meals, cleaning and maintaining the camp and even cleaning bathrooms – and looks forward to another summer of the same in the coming year.

Besides helping at camp, Davis is also leaving his footprints all over Calvary Church – in KidZone, on stage, and at Nexus, Calvary's program for high-school students.

Every weekend Davis serves in KidZone by helping lead a small group of children in the kindergarten and first grade room along with Audra Diedrichs.

"Davis is fun, he is creative, he is enthusiastic," Diedrichs said. "He has a truly caring heart for the children in KidZone. He's a good leader and a fantastic Christian role model."

David Stern, Calvary's Children's Pastor, says it is obvious to him that Davis enjoys being there with the children.

"He not only works well with the kids, but he can get down on their level. He's not just the cool high-schooler," Stern said. "He's very dedicated. If he says he's going to be there,

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY:::

Preview the class on Sunday, January 17 at 6:00 pm in Space 6.

Classes will be offered in English and Spanish, and will begin on January 31, 2010 and run through April 25, 2010.

Visit the table in the Calvary Commons to sign-up for the class.

For more information, contact Dave Schmidt at 563-263-3367, or dave@calvaryonline.org.

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Jewish man who began to share verses concerning salvation.

He quoted John 3:16-17, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

He pointed out my sin condition in Romans 3:23-24, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

And then my heart was stirred when I heard the words of Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

I left the meeting very upset, saying to myself, "I can't believe that all the good works I do amount to nothing! Surely I am getting closer to God by doing good things."

In the months that followed we were involved in a weekly Bible Study. As a

result, both Otis and I came to realize that we needed to repent of our sins. And we earnestly did that. God also showed me that all my works done in my own power were as nothing. He had provided everything for me through His grace. I could not earn salvation through "my goodness." It was only through faith in Jesus that I could have an eternal relationship with God. I wanted that relationship and I made a decision to accept by faith what Jesus had done for me. I now wanted to do good works in the name of Christ and for His glory. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

I became the new Josephine with the new name of Christian!

Since that day, almost 60 years ago, I have seen the faithfulness of the Lord. In Isaiah 55:11, He promises "So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it." How wonderful to know that Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit in my life is guiding and directing me in His paths to do the good works He wants to accomplish! "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in

them." (Ephesians 2:9)

As I look back over my years of walking with the Lord, Psalm 71:17-18 especially speaks to me:

O God, You have taught me from my youth, And I still declare Your wondrous deeds. And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to all who are to come.

I want to go on "declaring God's strength." I want Jesus to shine through my life. I want Him to use me to show His unblemished beauty to those I meet. I would challenge you to do the same. Reach out to those around you who are waiting to hear of God's saving grace.

In the front of my Bible, I carry this poem that I found several years ago in Our Daily Bread devotional—a special reminder that the most beautiful people in the world are those that remind us of Christ.

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wonderful passion and purity;
O Thou Spirit divine, all nature refine
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.
-Oshorn*

What friends say about Jo...

"I was a very busy Mom to two girls, and the wife of a very busy husband. I took my job seriously. Those three people were my life, but as the years went by, the girls left for college and I was lonely and felt rather useless. My husband was still busy with his job, and I found myself at loose ends.

I was invited to attend a Bible study that Jo Joiner was leading. I accepted the invitation. It was a wonderful group of Christian women who were eager to study and pray. I had grown up in the church and thought I knew all there was to know, but I soon found out there was so much more!

Jo was patient and encouraging, and not judgmental. She helped me understand that I needed a Savior, and nudged me toward a personal relationship with Christ, and to complete faith that all that comes to me has been His will, and Christ will help me through it. I owe my spiritual growth to Jo. At her invitation, I went with her to Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) in Iowa City for several years. I am still attending BSF here in Ames, where we live now. I'm still learning and my faith is still growing.

When we were young, we thought we had our life all planned. However, our script was not followed at all. Christ had a plan for us that was so much better. He took us to Muscatine for 37 years. I shudder to think what might have happened (spiritually) had I not been put in contact with Jo. The impact she had on my life was incredible. I'm grateful – my family is grateful, and I'm so happy to tell others. To God be the glory!"

- Mary Jo Mentel

Grace Ann Boynton gets emotional when she talks about Jo.

"I knew Jo when I was a teenager because we went to the same church – so I've known her for years and years. She's an incredible lady and mentor. Jo took me under her wing when she had just lost Otis and I was going through a divorce, and she has always been there for me. We've shared Christ, Bible study, life and friendship. She lives her faith and reflects Christ's love, and I've never known anyone like her. If you've ever looked into her eyes, they just sparkle and twinkle, full of life and Christ. She's so full of fun and laughter, you come away from an encounter with her uplifted. There is no one quite like Jo."

At the age of 12, Otis and Jo Joiner were my youth leaders at the Presbyterian Church in Muscatine. Our paths separated for a while but then I met up with Jo again 25 years later at a Bible study.

It was there that we studied the life of Jesus. My questions about life after death, and heaven were answered through Scriptures. Jo helped me understand that Jesus was more than a baby born to celebrate Christmas. My relationship with Jesus became personal. In April 1992, Jo prayed with me and I asked Jesus to be in my life.

Jo is more than kind words - she leads by example. I love her.

-Cheryl Petersen

Vera Fuller of Muscatine counts Jo Joiner as both an inspiration and a great friend.

"She's one of the best friends I've ever had. Jo is one of the closest. I'm so grateful she came into my life. She's one of those people you can always count on."

"Jo has been a great influence in my life. We played Bridge together before we were in a study, so I've known her for about 35 years. She had asked if I would be interested in coming to a Bible study, and that was over 20 years ago – I've been in a Bible study all those years. You just grow so much as you participate in Bible study. I hadn't read the Bible much before, only just a few passages, but I have drawn so much from studying it. When we study, it speaks directly to you. It's so helpful to have all those ladies praying for you, too, especially when you're sick. We're a close-knit group and we love one another."

"Jo is a person you would like to be like because she is such a devout Christian and great friend."

MISSION: ACCOMPLISHED

“Wild and crazy!” That was Mona Askren’s description of the Family Fun Night held in KidZone on October 31. If you weren’t there, you missed a lot of fun – and a lot of noise, a lot of kids running around, and the opportunity to find out what the inside of a wet diaper feels like.

Just to be clear, there were no wet diapers involved. But there was a large container of goop, more technically known as sodium polyacrylate. (It is, in fact, the stuff that diapers are stuffed with, that absorbs liquid that somehow finds its way into the diaper.) Children I spoke with reported that the goop felt rather like applesauce, or perhaps jello. Hidden in the goop were various items the kids had to find.

When they weren’t sticking their hands in goop, the kids were going through an obstacle course (including the very popular slide in the 4’s & 5’s room), posing for pictures, or shooting q-tips through straws at a bucket. All in all, not exactly your typical Saturday evening at KidZone. (Not that your typical Saturday evening is exactly the ultimate in quiet and sanity...)

So why was KidZone turned into the setting for potential chaos on Halloween? Children’s Pastor David Stern feels that “Halloween for the Christian, is about outreach.” Since it was a church night, and service was being held as usual, the outreach had to come indoors. Family Fun Night provided “something that kids would not only be excited about coming to, but would be willing to invite their

friends to attend.”

Outreach is a big part of KidZone year-round. At Easter we had illusionist Tim Hannig illustrate the Gospel to kids at Calvary in an amazing way. In the summer, we enjoyed Swim Nights (free evenings at the Aquatic Center), plus the Summer’s End Celebration. And reaching out way beyond Muscatine, KidZone



Pastor David Stern snuggled down for the night...

children bring in their pennies, nickels, dimes, and dollars to help children far away at the Prime System School in Liberia.

Those donations are why, on Saturday, December 5, passersby may have noticed a tent pitched on top of the church building roof. During the day I only noticed the squat gray shape because I was looking for it, but after dark it was brightly lit with flashing Christmas lights. And inside was a sub zero sleeping bag, where David Stern slept that night to fulfill his promise to the kids in KidZone.

And what was this promise? If the KidZone kids met their fundraising goal of \$2500 for the CIA (Christmas in Africa) project, Pastor David promised to sleep on the church roof. As the weeks went by, it looked more and more likely that he would get to enjoy a comfortable night in his own bed. Up until the final week, the goal seemed nearly unreachable. Then suddenly a last-minute surge resulted in a final total of \$3444.19, which will buy drinking cups and new clothes for children at the Prime System School, plus allow for community outreach and discipleship.

And of course it also resulted in a night on the church roof. Surprisingly, the temperature (28 degrees) did not turn out to be much of a discomfort. The size of the sleeping bag, on the other hand... Pastor David remembers that bag having “a ton of room” when he was a kid. But somehow “As an adult, that extra room seems to have disappeared.”

As both a parent and a KidZone volunteer, I sometimes find myself asking (usually asking myself, but sometimes Pastor David) whether the undeniably fun part of KidZone starts overshadowing the more important spiritual goals. (And I have to answer myself that in large part, it no doubt depends on the example that we adults set by having our own priorities right.) From what I’ve seen over the past few years, at least in my own son’s spiritual development, KidZone, under Pastor David Stern’s leadership, is getting it right.

2010 WEEKEND SERIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN:::

Can you imagine being known as “the disciple Jesus loved”? Not sure I would mind that identity! Let’s take that bit of knowledge and investigate that disciple’s perspective of Jesus.

Our task for 2010 is to work our way through the Gospel of John and confirm that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31).

Bring your Bibles and let’s discover how crossing paths with Jesus changed the world of ordinary people like John the Baptizer, Nicodemus, Judas, Peter, and others.

THAILAND-BOUND:::

The house is sold, the boxes are inventoried and Don and Jane Hodge will be leaving shortly for the country of Thailand, where Don will be overseeing some work for Bridgestone-Bandag.

Be sure to give them a farewell hug in the next few weeks (they are often Guest Servants, and not hard to find!), and be praying for their transition to a new environment. And be watching for the next issue of THRIVE! which will contain some of Jane’s notes and perspective about seeing God at work, and finding her way in this very different place.

CHARITY:WATER SCRAPBOOK



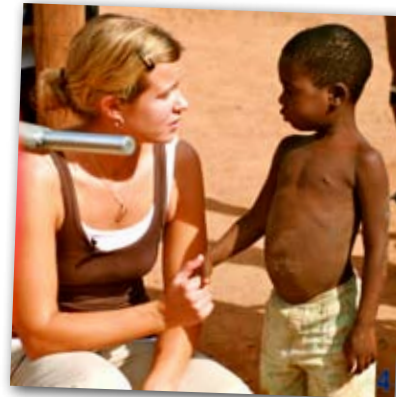
It has been increasingly difficult in the last year or so... Impossible really. For me to separate myself from statistics. Statistics like 4500 kids will die today from water. Difficult to separate myself from images like this child.



Because when I see this child...I also see these children. And somehow God has captured my heart with the realization that it is no more acceptable for someone else's child to suffer than it is for my own.



So in an effort to ensure that no mother has to sustain the lives of her children with a liquid that kills them, I boarded a plane to see. To see the mothers. the children. The families. To hear their story. To tell their story. So we don't forget...



I spent a week with charity:water staff in Liberia...seeing completed water projects and areas still in need. I did my best to take it all in. To listen intently. To shake their hands and touch the faces of the children. Look in their eyes. And deliver the message "we see you." We are aware and we are acting/advocating on their behalf.



Village leaders took us to show us their old water sources. Where they would walk to collect water before they were equipped with a borehole and/or a hand pump. These were generally mud holes. I can't tell you how beautiful this is in comparison. Their new water source.



Unbelievable beauty in this country. Striking people. Generous. Resilient. Strong. Much to be learned from them.



Returned with great gratitude for the privilege and honor of being a tiny part of their story...for the "smallness" of the world...for the ways that water has changed me and set me free.

I know the Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy. (Psalm 140:12)

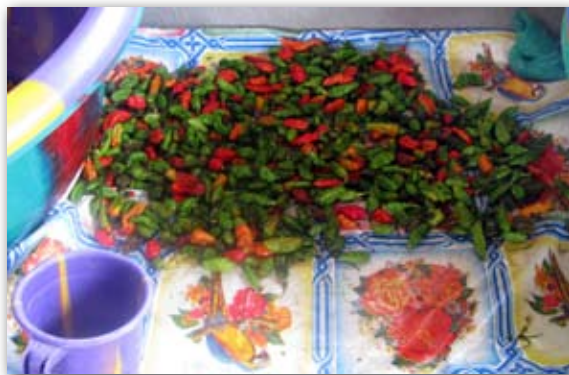
BENDU NANWOE

Tim Debold recently returned from Liberia where he and Don Lampe represented Calvary Church as they presented 132 new sponsorships to Prime System School of Christ. With total scholarships valuing at over \$100,000 annually, Calvary is committed to giving oversight and accountability for these and other funds. Additionally, Tim and Don continued research on job creation and opportunities for future short-term teams. Tim wrote this account of his encounter with Bendu Nanwoe.

When I met with Bendu she was standing over a wash tub in the Liberian sun, cleaning the cups and bowls from the four hundred and sixty meals she prepared and served that day to the children of Prime System School of Christ (PSSC). It was a beautiful day, so she was able to set up the wash tubs outside the kitchen giving her a bit more room to do her work, and providing me with an opportunity to speak with her without being too much of a nuisance.

Bendu has been the main cook at PSSC for the past several years. She also is the mother of three children attending the school. She has daughters in the 3rd and 7th grades, respectively, and her son is in 2nd grade. She is married and her husband works part time as a waiter at a local restaurant. Her mother is living in a village close to Paynesville but her father passed away several years ago due to illness. Bendu was born in Paynesville and has lived there most of her life. Only during the war was she away from her home. It was then that she, her husband and first child left Paynesville to escape the warring rebels advancing toward Monrovia. After their return, she started working at PSSC.

Bendu begins her work day at 6:15 a.m. to prepare the meal for the school children. The meals are typically rice and vegetables, prepared in two large pots over coal-burning stoves. She puts chicken in the meal when enough money is available to purchase it. Money had not been available until just recently, but due to the additional sponsorship



Vegetables, prepared for the students' meal by Bendu.

funding coming from Calvary, she has been able to include chicken, an important source of protein, with each meal. Every school day the children line up outside the kitchen door to receive their meal, served in plastic cups. (The cups, by the way, were purchased with funds raised by Calvary KidZone.)

Sometimes this meal might be the only one the children receive that day, so it is extremely important to their health that they receive it. Later in the day, after everyone has eaten, one of the classes comes out to help clean the dishes and kitchen. Bendu says she loves this time the most, because the children enjoy helping and having fun while working with her. After the kitchen is cleaned, the dishes washed and everything put away, her work day is done. Typically she's done around 1:30, which aligns well with her children getting out of classes.

Two of Bendu's three children attending PSSC are sponsored through the VisionTrust program at Calvary Church. She works as the cook at PSSC to pay the tuition for the third child. She believes PSSC is the best education around Paynesville and wants all her children to continue there through high school, something she nor her husband never had an opportunity to do. PSSC currently includes kindergarten through 8th grade but it is expected to start high school classes next year, thanks to the continued support from Calvary Church and VisionTrust.

At the ending of the conversation with Bendu, she asked me to tell everyone this:

"Thank you, Calvary Church, for your sponsorship and prayers. Please continue to pray for our children's future, as we continue to pray for your health and safety, and that your hearts will always have a place for us. God Bless You."

*Davis Schrock
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he'll be there."

He's also not afraid to get up in front of the children and be a little silly – or serious if need be – as an actor in the dramas that are so often used in KidZone to illustrate the lesson for the week. Or in front of the entire church, for that matter. Davis has also been seen on stage in an occasional drama at "Big Church."

On Sunday evenings Davis is an active participant at Nexus, Calvary's ministry for high school students. He especially enjoys having Steve Ott, the new youth pastor, lead worship for the group.

But once a month the students do something a little out of the ordinary. They break into groups and "unleash their relentless love" throughout Muscatine. While one group helps with odd jobs at Jessica Faye's Closet, a local agency that provides free clothing to children in need, others visit residents at area nursing homes.

On Monday mornings, Davis doesn't leave his servant attitude at home. He takes it with him to school. The MHS sophomore has been involved in a variety of school activities from football to speech and debate, and sees them all as an opportunity to share the love of Christ with others.

"I started a tradition last year of praying before the musical and the plays. I don't think it was done before. At speech and debate tournaments we have a lot of overnight stays and I can connect with the guys there and challenge them," Davis said. "On the bus rides to and from football games I threw down a lot of challenges to my teammates. They asked me questions about things, and I'd do my best to help them."

Sometimes Davis's heart aches, when he sees what some of his classmates are going through, but he feels a special joy when he is able to help them, and he gives the glory to God.

"I actually get kind of burdened down sometimes because I see all the problems in the high school, in people's lives and stuff, and I guess God made me with a big heart because I really feel bad and I want to help anyone I possibly can," he said. "God gave me a lot of problem solving abilities. People know they can come to me."

THE CANDY CANE PROJECT=SWEET

"Look at the Candy Cane, what do you see? Stripes that are red, like the blood shed for me. White is for my Savior, who's sinless and pure! "J" is for Jesus, My Lord, that's for sure! Turn it around and a staff you will see. Jesus, my shepherd, was born for me!"

Once upon a time, before the term "Unleash" became familiar to folks at Calvary, there was a small group comprised of four women who understood the call to care for those in need. They met year 'round to encourage one another, grow in their friendship with Jesus and each other, and they knew they had been given much and they had much to share with others, so they developed small projects in order to give back to other people.

The women, Karen Brookhart, Andrea Failor, Mona Askren and Lynann Edkin, discovered they each had a passion for children, and last year, this foursome partnered with Family Resources to provide for children who may have been missed by other agencies at Christmas time. The initial list of 70 names of children in need grew to 113, and the women were amazed to discover how eager the people of Muscatine were to come alongside to give and help. Said Karen, "Really, we've just provided a way for people in the community to do good. People want to help – they just don't know how sometimes."

Encouraged by community response, the women expanded the scope of the Candy Cane Project (CCP) this year by collecting names, not only from Family Resources, but also from Lutheran Services, the Domestic Violence Shelter

and Muscatine Center for Strategic Action. Their goal was "Spreading Christmas Joy to Muscatine Children in Christ's Name," and it didn't take long for the project to be embraced by friends and families in a number of Muscatine churches, including Calvary, St. Mathias, Mulford E-Free and First Baptist Church. This year's list of 175+ children's names was eagerly distributed, and the women found



Candy Cane Project Volunteers in front of the Gingerbread House.

sponsors for each one.

"We ask sponsors to provide a \$20 toy, warm hat and gloves, and a book," Karen explained. "And people from the community have given money donations to the project so each family can have a Christmas dinner. Lee Insurance provided hams this year, and we did a food and toy drive in November. We also try to provide a homemade pie (this facet is headed up by Amy Gubser) to give dinner a personal touch. Also this year, Calvary and The Andrew Landers Project have donated the new Christmas CD for each family. It helps keep the name of Christ in the whole effort." The gifts are given to the parents to give to the children, or given to the agency that represents them, so that the dignity of families can be preserved. We just want to provide some joy for children, regardless of their circumstances, and we'd

like our group to remain pretty invisible to them."

Karen, married to Jamie and the mom of 5 active young children, leverages her God-given administrative gifts on the Candy Cane Project. Besides caring for her own family, she is a Girl Scout leader and PTO President, in addition to working part time. In listening to Karen's recitation

of the things she doesn't do, it's almost possible to be lulled into missing all she does do. However, it is quite clear that a project of this magnitude doesn't "just happen."

The beauty of the CCP is that it provides a framework for many people and groups to be involved. A number of local Girl Scout troops have taken on a facet of the effort, and fill stockings for each of the sponsored children. "There are actually several "mini-projects" within the framework of one umbrella," explained Karen. "If

people have an idea and have the energy and resources to make it happen, as long as it fits into the goal of the project, they can run with it. Jill Thomas decorated the Student Center in a "Candyland" theme for the celebration party for the families on December 21st—"She is such a supporter of this project...she has been a real encouragement to me personally," said Karen. "And Amy Fortenbacher has joined the team as our treasurer, coming on board with a lot of passion and great idea." So this year's event is history, and Karen, Mona, Lynann and Andrea can gather again in the living room with a cup of hot cocoa or tea. They will continue to encourage each other in life and challenge each other to pursue Jesus, and it won't be long before the words "next year" will slip into the conversation.

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years. Deep relationships and memories were built with the Calvary family.

After unanimous approval of the F2F Board and the Leadership Board of Calvary, I began my duties as part-time interim executive pastor on October 1, 2009.

With a church campus valued at more than \$18 million dollars, a staff of nearly 30, and an operational budget of

\$2 million, carefully written and implemented policies and practices are extremely important. Being of special assistance to Pastor Dan is another important function I have and enjoy.

In short, Nancy and I are excited to serve Calvary Church—a church that took a risk and started supporting us way back in 1969!