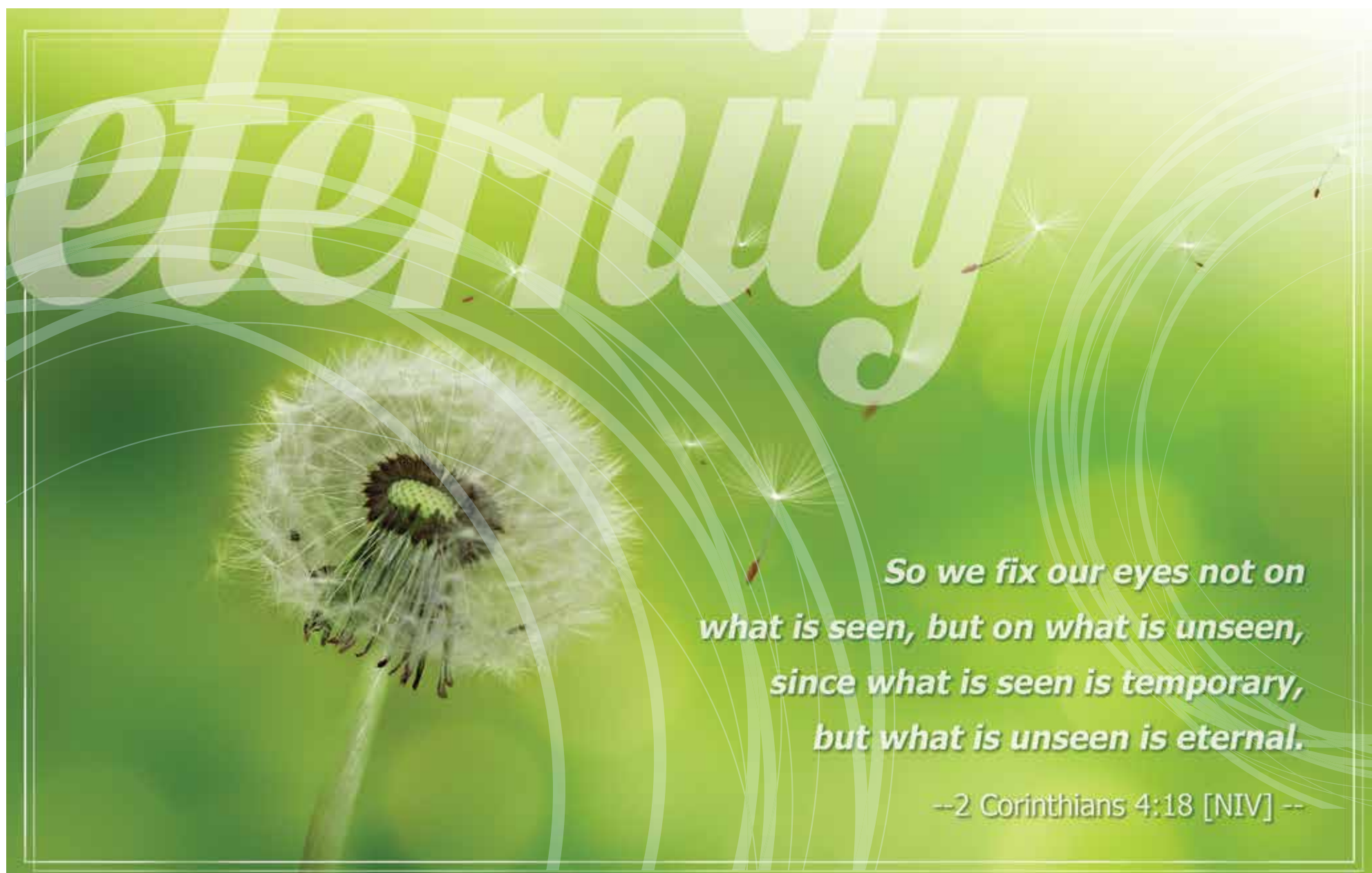


CSC NEWS

Celebrating God At Work

Centre Street Church • Calgary, Alberta

Spring / Summer 2017



*So we fix our eyes not on
what is seen, but on what is unseen,
since what is seen is temporary,
but what is unseen is eternal.*

--2 Corinthians 4:18 [NIV] --

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18-20 Family Fest 2017

cschurch.ca





INTRODUCING PEOPLE TO JESUS AND HELPING THEM
BECOME FULLY DEVOTED FOLLOWERS OF JESUS.

- Senior Pastor** Dr. Henry Schorr
- Central Campus** Saturday 6:30 pm
Sunday 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 6:00 pm.
Children's Ministry provided for all services except Sunday 6:00 pm.
3900-2nd Street NE, Calgary, AB T2E 9C1
Tel: 403.293.3900 Fax: 403.520.2698
Lead Pastor: Pastor Kent Priebe
- North West Campus** Sunday 9:30 am.
Crowfoot Crossing Theatre
(91 Crowfoot Terrace NW)
Lead Pastor: Dr. Lawson Brown
- Bridgeland Campus** Sunday 10:45 am.
Gateway Church (235 - 8A Street NE)
Lead Pastor: Rev. Tim Hayes
- South Campus** Sunday 10:30 am.
St. Mary's University (14500 Bannister Road SE)
Lead Pastor: Rev. Wayne Smele (interim)
- Airdrie Campus** Sunday 10:30 am.
Airdrie Koinonia Christian School
(77 Gateway Drive NE, Airdrie AB)
Lead Pastor: Pastor Travis Wilkins

CSC News is Published by the Communications Department of CSC

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CSC is a member of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada.

Arian Schorr Managing Editor
Vidette Heller & Elsa Henderson Copy Editor/Proofreader
Jen Airhart Graphic Design/Layout

Contributing Writers in this Issue

Karen Doerksen Elsa Henderson Lori Klaus
Janice Richardson Shari Scott

Contributing Photographers in this Issue

4th Musketeer Team Anhorn Family Colin Brown
Karen Doerksen Encounter God's Presence Team
Fernandez Family Tracey Fox Jared Harrison
Hilstad Family Chloe Pilon Elmer Riegel
Shelly Sylvester Tara Whittaker Jodi Woelke

CSC News welcomes comments and feedback on all editions of this newspaper. Please email: communications@cchurch.ca

My Plan vs. God's Plan

The prevailing will of Jesus in the life of Jill Hilstad

LORI KLAUS
Contributing Writer



Jill Hilstad in New York. Photos from the Hilstad Family

The Cocoon Years

When Jill Hilstad was growing up in the small mountain town of Canmore, life felt very safe and idyllic. There was seldom a need to step outside her comfort zone or try anything new because the world around her was always constant and predictable.

"The kids I met in kindergarten were with me all the way through school," she says, "so I never really had to learn to make new friends. Familiar people were always around me. Growing up, my church was small, and I was related to half the people in the congregation!"

Home-life was equally secure, with dedicated parents who modelled love for the Lord, each other and their children. In fact, because she loved her childhood so much, it became Jill's goal in life to someday replicate what her parents had.

She assumed she would marry young, have children and raise a family just like the one she grew up in. As such, she never really considered any alternatives. Furthering her education did not seem like a necessary pursuit, nor did exploring the world outside her small community.

"I had no aspirations to go to university and no interest in travelling or experiencing other cultures. Missions wasn't even on my radar."

Looking back, Jill says the plan she had for her life was limited to what she thought was best. "I only had a handful of dreams, and growing up, I was shy and fearful of the world, so I figured staying in my comfort zone was best."

God, however, had other plans for Jill! Faithfully, one step at a time, He began revealing His desired path for her and slowly building her confidence for what would lie ahead.

The First Big "Push"

After high school, a huge challenge for Jill was moving from small-town Canmore to the big city of Calgary to attend university. Although she was not particularly interested in earning a degree, being in a school environment felt safer than being out in the world, working. At least she was used to going to school! Not only did Jill uproot herself from the only community she had ever known, she also moved into residence and learned how to navigate the transit system of a large, unfamiliar city. These were things she never thought she could do, but they were part of God's plan to begin launching her out of her "bubble." For the first time ever, Jill had to branch out. She had to meet new people and find her way in a world so much bigger than the one she came from.

It was during these years she discovered she had a love for linguistics and communication, so Jill pursued studies in this new area of interest - one she never would have discovered had she not taken that first big leap to attend university. She also took part in Discipleship Training School (DTS) through Youth with a Mission.

Travel? I cannot do that!

If riding the transit system in Calgary felt scary, imagine how wildly intimidating it was for Jill to travel overseas to South America by herself! The same young woman who was previously frightened of the outside world now found herself living in Puerto Rico and travelling all over the country to complete her DTS! Everything was unfamiliar - the environment, the language and the culture. Although she admits to having some fear and negative assumptions going in, Jill says the experience was

...continued on page 3

life-changing. She returned home not only with a love for Latin American culture and memories of the warm, inviting people she met there, but also with a new openness to see and experience other parts of the world. Jill has since travelled with outreach groups to both Colombia and Venezuela, doing street evangelism and serving in local orphanages.

Where Do I Fit In Now?

After completing university and moving to Rocky Mountain House to take her first job, Jill returned to Calgary in 2010 to re-establish her life here and be closer to family.

At first, Centre Street Church seemed far too large and wasn't even an option for a home church in Jill's mind. After trying several other churches, however, she often found herself back at CSC.

"Each time I attended, the sermon or something that someone shared would speak to my heart. I remember hearing Paul Brandt share about Human Trafficking and thinking, 'The things that are on the heart of this Church touch my heart!'"

Jill decided to attend CSC regularly and became part of the Northwest Campus congregation. At first, though, it was a journey of perseverance to discover where she fit in. Finding authentic connection with people can be challenging for someone who is not naturally outgoing, especially in the context of a church as large as CSC. Jill says that sometimes you have to change your definitions a little in terms of what "community" is supposed to look like. It doesn't have to be a small, tight-knit congregation where everybody knows everybody else - it can look a bit different. For Jill, the start of true fellowship at CSC came through a Young Adults group hosted by Pastor Lawson Brown. There, she met a close friend, and through that connection, was introduced to a Missional Community group that does life together and focuses on finding ways to put their Christian faith into action.

For those struggling to find connection, Jill says, "Keep putting yourself out there! You don't know what God is doing behind the scenes or the doors that are going to open, so just keep going!" She also says it is important to be real and let people know your struggle. Finding connection

was a process, but Jill is glad she stuck with it!

"God is so faithful. He has placed me in a community of people at church who challenge me and support me. He has given me the opportunity to share my story with them as a group and one-on-one. He has allowed me to be involved in their lives, and given me the opportunity to listen to their stories and encourage them where they're at, based on where He has taken me."

God's Plan Fulfilled

Jill was once content to stay where she was. TODAY, she is passionate about sharing the love of Christ with people who extend far beyond her own four walls and small corner of the world. She has travelled to interesting, far-away places where people need to hear the Word of God, and the Lord has used her to be part of sharing it with them!

Jill was once wavering in her pursuit of education and a career. TODAY, she says, "God has blessed me with a career in a field I'm passionate about—something I never would have imagined on my own!"

She has had the opportunity to work in school classrooms, helping children with complex special needs with their communication and social interaction, and she now manages a group of Speech Pathologists in the community.

Jill was once hungry for true connection and struggling to find where she fit in. TODAY she is involved in a Missional Community and experiencing authentic connection with close friends!

Jill was once afraid of the outside world. TODAY she has trust in the Lord's faithfulness, developed through seeing Him at work when she has stepped out in obedience. "At times, it was terrifying when He would ask me to move out of my comfort zone into something new and unpredictable, but He has always been faithful."

Jill now looks for opportunities to go out and do the very things she once avoided and says, "Instead of fearing new challenges, I feel they are more like an adventure (on the good days)!"

Without a doubt, she has seen God's faithfulness throughout the years. His plan, though different from what Jill originally thought it should look like, has brought fulfillment and joy.

"He has blessed me with new dreams and desires that I never would have imagined. God dreamed bigger dreams for me than I could ever have on my own. When I compare where I am now and where I thought I'd be, I see all I would have missed out on. For God to make me into the person He truly has in mind for me to be, I have had to go through all these experiences. Sometimes you have to be stretched. You have to go through the process. And you can't go back to that person you were before."

"Even though I still don't have it all figured out, and there are dreams that I haven't seen become a reality, God continues to show me that He is trustworthy and that I just need to fix my eyes on Him, remember where He has brought me from and that He DOES have an amazing plan for my future."



Left: The Hilstad family; Above: Jill and her mom; Jill and her brother Clark and sister-in-law, Amanda, skiing at COP

Photos from the Hilstad Family

Arbour Lake Community Group

“God has used our Arbour Lake Community Group to give me a sense of belonging with other believers.

Reaching out to the needy and the unsaved is so much easier and more powerful as we reach out as a group. I highly value the prayer support and care I feel from my group. It feels like a family.

We connect frequently through the use of WhatsApp to encourage, communicate and pray for each other as concerns arise. We have also been open to growing and recently welcomed six new people to our group. I love my community group!” - from Terry Woelke

“We had the idea to invite 100 strangers to our house for a neighbourhood BBQ. The group all took on different tasks and more importantly to me, they were encouraging and supportive through the rather scary evening. I knew we could pull it off because of the support of our group, which is like family to me. The size and outward focus of the group enable us to take on bigger tasks than we would

be able to do ourselves. This is a blessing for those we aim to serve but also for those of us serving.” - from Carol Dizon

“This group hasn’t lost its focus or its passion; in the last couple of years people have even become more committed. It is amazing to see us grow together, as we still welcome others to grow with us.” - from Tammy Acker

“Being part of our group has strengthened my faith and made me more comfortable talking to others. Last June when my mom passed on, while I grieved, I had the support and love of everyone. That’s one way our group has impacted me.” - from Scott Acker

“Our community group goes beyond the weekly Bible study get togethers. We actually do life together. Group members regularly invite the group to join them in what they are doing – eg. NOW services, Concert of Prayer gatherings, Fire Exit Theatre productions, coffee

dates, hockey games, etc. And whoever is able to go, does. The group has prepared and served meals in Bowness, planned a neighbourhood Stampede BBQ, and helped with processing shoeboxes at Samaritan’s Purse together.

As we continue to get to know each other, we are becoming more transparent and open about sharing the deeper things in our lives. We pray regularly for each other, as things come up in our lives.

Recently, as a group, we have been able to come alongside someone in our group who needed a place to live and help provide warm winter clothes for the children. I am personally learning that all I have is God’s and He wants me to give generously of all that He’s given me (time, talent, treasure).

The whole group participates in our Bible studies – we take turns hosting, bringing snacks and leading. So, it’s not just one person/couple doing all the work.”

- from Jodi Woelke



Clockwise from top left - The Arbour Lake Community Group volunteering at Samaritan’s Purse with Operation Christmas Child; Welcoming new Canadians; Enjoying a backyard BBQ; Celebrating a birthday; Lunch together after church. Photos by Jodi Woelke

“Opened my eyes to long forgotten truth, exposed lies, refreshed spirit, exhausted soul.”

“I have been tormented by insecurity and fear. This weekend reminded me of God’s everlasting love for me.”

“This weekend allowed me to take back ground in my life that Satan was trespassing. I have the tools I need to continue winning the battles that come my way. I know it all starts with intimacy with God – knowing Him. My new identity is in Christ – I am a Child of God.”



Painting by Deanna Oelke



ENCOUNTER GOD'S PRESENCE

October 14-16, 2016

For more info email learning@cschurch.ca

“I really got to know Jesus this weekend. I now feel so close to Him. I am no longer alone. I feel provided for and loved.”

“I learned that I am a warrior and fully equipped and protected in my identity. God has lifted a huge burden from me to go back into my life, and all the challenges that it holds with a renewed sense of strength.”



“I have learned how to listen and hear God. I now truly and fully believe God loves me no matter what I have done. He knows my heart and I am worthy.”

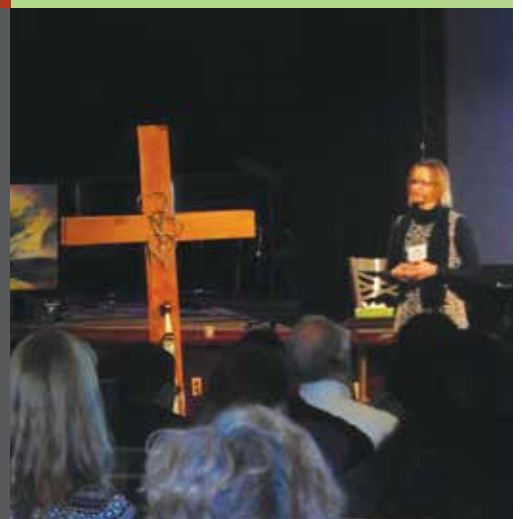


“After four years of secular therapy where I was taught how to identify and cope with sins, this weekend released them and brought healing. I always thought I would have to live with them forever, but through the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ I am able to walk out of this weekend in freedom.”

“I came mentally and emotionally drained and this experience was exactly what I needed.”



“I came fresh off the battlefield, tired, angry, indifferent. My first prayer was for God to knock down the walls, which He did all weekend. As He knocked down the walls, I was given rest.”





PURPOSE:

For all of CSC to gather together under one roof to praise and worship Jesus and celebrate what He is doing among us.

WHAT WE DO:

Lots of worship in song, testimonies, stories, art, the Word being preached and responding in baptisms and declarations of faith.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE COMING:

Approximately 1500 people each month.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT N.O.W.:

"The Night of Worship service at CSC is awesome! A time where everything is set aside and where God is found in the midst"

"My favourite night!"

"The now worship service is my favourite one."

"Awesome night of worship as always."

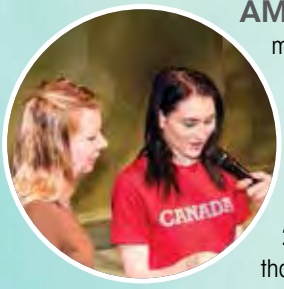
"Have to be there!"



N.O.W. musicians, speakers and leaders. Photos by various

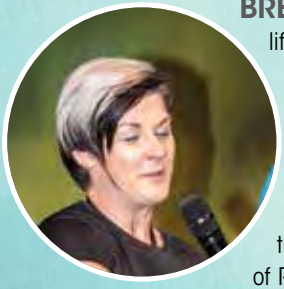


BAPTISM - Central Campus - March 2017



AMANDA HERBERT "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." This verse means so much to me. I am one person doing the job that was meant for two people, and there are many times when I have felt like giving up. However there is a wonderful, kind, understanding and loving person in my life who is always there to lift me up and give me the energy and strength I need to continue. Thankfully Jesus is in my life, I am never alone. I came to know and love Jesus in the Fall of 2012. Now that I have been attending church regularly, I have learned that we all make mistakes and must rely on Jesus. We are to forgive and love no matter what. There are so many people at CSC that have impacted my

life. Pastor Warren, Pastor Randy, and the Pastors who speak each Sunday. My friend Corinne and her family, all the wonderful people who work in the Children's Ministry, my small group just to name a few. My Auntie Esther has been a very strong influence in my life and has been a huge support for me. There are many other wonderful great people who have also been supportive and helpful. For a while, I thought I did not need to be baptized, I do not like being the center of attention like this. However, my daughter Coral, being the inspiration she is to me, brought it to my attention by telling me that she wanted to be baptized. Her fearless faithfulness caused me to learn more about baptism. Being baptized holds me accountable to all my friends and family and everyone who is here. I boldly promise that I choose to walk with Jesus daily.



BRENDA EISBRENNER I grew up in a Christian home and I gave my life to Christ at the age of nine at Elkton Valley Family Camp. For the most part, I lived an average Christian life after that. I married my high school sweetheart, had two wonderful children. God was important to me and at different times throughout the years, He was more important than at other times.

This was until August 25, 2011, when Rob and I were on a motorcycle trip heading toward Kelowna. We had just come down the other side of Rogers Pass, when I blacked out and rode off the highway at probably 115km/hr over a steep embankment. There was a lot of bush and brush down there and I was not easily found. The RCMP and ambulance were called and because of the location they were not expecting me to be found alive. Through Divine intervention, I was alive and without any devastating damage! I had 14 broken bones and a severe concussion! During my time convalescing at home, both of my kids were living away from Calgary. Rob took the first month off to be with me at home and then went back to Fort McMurray, which is where he was working at that time. I had a lot of time to think, pray and ponder life because I really could not do much else. I was on a temporary medical leave from work and life in general. God used this time to speak to me and really make an impact in my life. My relationship with Him just got deeper and deeper. I realized that He used this accident to get my attention and focus back where it belonged.... on Him!

During this time, God spoke to me about my need to be baptized. At that point I made it a goal to be baptized, but like other things in life, it fell to the back burner. Every time I turned around, I was reminded that I needed to be baptized! I could no longer put it off. I am proud to say that this is my visible, public declaration of my inward commitment to Christ that I have made in my heart!



CORAL HERBERT I wanted Jesus in my heart because He helps you let go of fear and forgives you of your sins. I want to be baptized because I feel God and Jesus have told me to get baptized and because it is the right thing to do. I really want to.



HELEN SO KUM CHIU Lord, I am so proud that from now on You are my Holy Father. I praise You and thank You for Your Holy grace. Before I became a Christian, I was a Buddhist, but I could not find what I wanted and expected from there. When I started my relationship with God, I found it right away. I feel so peaceful and joyful because I have given myself to God. No matter good or bad, I know Jesus will lead me in the right path, and I no longer fear because I know Jesus is with me.



LAYLA BRANDT I am eight years old, almost nine. I have been coming to this church with my Auntie Sarah and Uncle Chris since I was three. Now my dad and his girlfriend Pam have started coming too! I love church because it is God's house, my friends are here and I learn about Jesus. I learn about Jesus at my Grammy and Papa's house too. That's where I decided to ask Jesus into my heart when I was just six years old. I want to get baptized because I love Jesus and I want to live the rest of my life for Him!



MAGGIE ZHANG I grew up in a non-Christian family in China and came to Canada in 2013. Since I was a child, I was told that everything is in your own hands, and you cannot rely on someone else. That is impossible, I know now. Darlene invited me to Centre Street Church for Christmas Fest. I was attracted by the atmosphere and enjoyed being here. So I took a learning program of "Why Believe?" I started to open my heart to God. I found out that God is not only powerful, but also kind, patient and generous. God knows what I am thinking and what I need even when I have not spoken out. He sent Rose to teach me Christianity and provided me a way that I can learn more about Him and improve my English at the same time.

Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." I trust You, my Lord, and love You with my body, my mind and my soul. Whatever happens in the future, I will be thankful for Your plans for me.



Sharon Anhorn in Israel. Photo from the Anhorn Family

BY ELSA HENDERSON
Contributing Writer

"My burning desire my whole life has been to follow Christ." So says Sharon Anhorn, a financial services administrator at Centre Street Church.

The youngest of five girls, Sharon grew up in a Christian family on a farm around Golden Prairie, Sask. When she was six, Sharon, with her mother's guidance, knelt beside her bed and prayed to receive Jesus Christ as her personal Saviour and Lord. She was baptized three years later.

After high school Sharon moved to Calgary in 1971. There her path crossed with a former acquaintance, Don Anhorn, who had grown up attending church but had no idea of the significance of Jesus Christ other than that He was God's Son.

When Don started dating Sharon, he quickly learned that "she knew what God's love was about, and practiced it. God came along with the 'Sharon package'." When one-and-a-half years later they decided to get married, the "spiritual gulf" between them became a huge issue.

"Pre-marital counselling was a very scary process," Don remembers. "Our counsellor was Rev. Ed Carlson, the Senior Pastor of the Alliance Church in Medicine Hat. It took him about one minute to find out that I was not a Christian. He made it his personal mission to share the Gospel with me and lead me to Christ. He was my first encounter with a Christian with the gift of one-on-one evangelism, and on the Saturday afternoon of October 20, 1973, about 2:15 pm, I accepted God's free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Then he got on with the process of pre-marital counselling. Two weeks later we were married."

God blessed them with two children, a son Darcy born in 1975 and a daughter Sherilyn born in 1977. (Darcy has since blessed them with four grandchildren.)

"My first two years as a Christian were tumultuous, to say the least," says Don. "I had no idea that there was so much more to the Christian life than the Sinner's Prayer. I know that Sharon prayed a lot, and exercised mountains of patience. She helped me to understand more completely the disciplines of the Christian life."

Meanwhile both Sharon and Don were asking, "What is God's will for us?" It took some time for that question to be answered.

In the spring of 1977, when Sharon was pregnant with their second child, they attended a conference at which a missionary couple who had been held captive by the Viet Cong were speakers. Their story was the catalyst for Don and Sharon to sense that God was calling them into full time Christian

Finding God's Will

ministry. Rev. Ed Carlson was at the same service and confirmed God's call on their lives.

"God planted the seed of full-time ministry in our hearts," Don said later, "but didn't release us to go until six years later."

When their daughter Sherilyn was born in June of 1977, they still felt called to full time Christian ministry, which would require Bible school training. How could they go to Bible school with two small children? It just wasn't practical, or so they thought.

But God used circumstances to direct their steps.

A Life-Changing Break In

While reading *Knowing God's Will*, the Anhorns decided they would individually pray about God's call to them. After two weeks in which they changed their minds numerous times, Don told Sharon, "We can't go anywhere. Look at the security we have built up here. We've got our home, two vehicles and a solid secure income."

That was Sunday, October 3, 1982. They left home that afternoon while it was still light out, had supper with friends, went to church, then out for coffee. When they arrived home after dark, all the lights were on. Something was wrong! They called the police.

As the police were searching the house, one came up from downstairs, and asked, "Would you have left your deep freeze lid standing open?" No, of course not. They both ran downstairs to check. The deep freeze was empty!

When Don and Sharon looked into the empty deep freeze, God spoke to each of them simultaneously. They looked at each other and said, "This is our answer. Our security is not in our things!"

They lost over \$11,000 worth of their secu-

urity in the robbery, which in 1982 was a lot—a microwave, a deep freeze full of food, vacuum cleaner, jewelry, tools, a side of beef, and garden vegetables Sharon's parents had put into the deep freeze that very afternoon.

Off to Bible School

God directed the Anhorns to Briercrest Bible College in Caronport, SK. They wanted to buy their own place there, but their house in Calgary had recently dropped \$10,000 in value.

Again God stepped in. Don got a job on a super-tanker, and made the same amount on his job in eight weeks as they lost on their house. They qualified for the new mortgage in Saskatchewan within \$1, and concluded, "We know God wants us to go."

The Anhorns bought a mobile home in Caronport before their house in Calgary sold. The weekend they were due to move to Caronport, Don was still at sea. Sharon was left to pack up all their belongings and organize their move to Caronport. She called her parents in Medicine Hat.

"They couldn't understand how we could move before selling our home in Calgary," Sharon said, "but we knew this was God's call on our lives, and therefore we were going."

Sharon's dad observed, "It's one thing to have faith. It's quite another to put it into practice."

Saturday Sharon unloaded their belongings in Caronport. Sunday she and their two children went to church. Her parents arrived unexpectedly that afternoon to help with the move.

Monday morning Sharon was told, "Your house in Calgary sold yesterday!" The day after their move to Caronport!

"The realtor knew how we felt about doing business on Sunday," Sharon said, "so she waited



The Anhorn family: L-R: Sherilyn, Don, Sharon and Darcy. Photo from the Anhorn Family



Sharon and Don Anhorn. Photo from the Anhorn Family

until Monday to sign the papers.”

Both Sharon and her parents knew it was God. “He asks us to make the first move before He reveals His will to us,” Don said.

At Briercrest, Don entered a two-year diploma program planning to go into missions and help missionaries wherever help was needed. As God began working in Don’s life, he changed his major twice. Everything finally smoothed out when he enrolled in a pastoral major, after which he got a scholarship. Don’s plan for a two-year diploma was replaced by God’s plan for him to earn a four-year Bachelor’s Degree in Pastoral Ministries. During that time Sharon completed the equivalent of a one-year program so she could be of assistance to her pastor husband.

Don then pastored in churches for six years in Gull Lake, Sask., and Kitimat, B.C., after which the Anhorns returned to Calgary. Here in Calgary God used their daughter Sherilyn to direct them to Centre Street Church. The church the Anhorns were attending had no youth group. But Sherilyn’s friends at Heritage Christian Academy went to CSC, so Sherilyn began attending there too. Her parents soon followed.

“We became a part of the family at Centre Street Church in 1993, and here we are – 24 years later!” says Don. “God has used CSC to bring tremendous healing into our lives, and to grow us personally and spiritually.”

The Anhorns left Calgary briefly in 2000 to help a friend with his ministry in the U.S., based out of Phoenix, travelling internationally holding spiritual freedom conferences. As they helped run spiritual freedom conferences, they witnessed people being healed and delivered. Weekend conferences were held all over North America and even in Africa. During that time, spiritual gifts of evangelism, teaching, mentorship and helps came to the surface and became more prominent and effective.

“It was so fulfilling and rewarding,” the Anhorns say, “to serve the Lord in this capacity and be used to bring healing and deliverance to so many people.”

Then 9-11 happened and ministries in the U.S. were struggling. Nine months later God used their aging parents, who were needing assistance, to bring the Anhorns back to Calgary.

Sharon, a people person, now works at CSC doing payroll and accounts payable. Even there she has a chance to connect with people—hurting people who are going through tough times. Sharon serves them by praying with them and mentoring them, sometimes seeing people commit their lives to Jesus. “It’s very fulfilling,” she says.

Both Sharon and Don have found much satisfaction being involved in the choir for 22 years, and Don finds contentment working with Pastor Kevin in a men’s ministry called Ironman.

Looking back, the Anhorns can see that the Lord honoured their desire to always be in God’s will. They know they can trust Him for their future.

BAPTISM

Central Campus - March 2017



STEPHEN WIPF I grew up in a Christian community. I witnessed my father, mother and both grandparents live out their lives in faith to Christ Jesus. When I moved away from my parents, I started living a very different life, although I knew that God was real, He created me and had a better plan for my life. For many years I lived a very self-centered life and had many sinful habits. My life changed when my first son was born. Loving and caring for others was new to me and there were many challenges and changes I had to make, but God is always faithful when you believe and trust in Him. I started attending church again with my wife and family, and my relationship with God became alive again.

I depended on Him for strength and guidance. My family grew, I now have two sons and a daughter, and I desire to be strong in faith and live well. My faith is strengthened by His word and devoting time to Him in prayer and being obedient to my family. By His grace we live our lives in honor serving Him and others. I have wanted to be baptized for a long time, but was afraid of professing my faith and being baptized in public. Today I am here before you, my witnesses, declaring my faith and being baptized in Jesus name. Through baptism, I will be sanctified by His Spirit, raised up to life with a new heart. I am committed and will live by faith in God, for I believe in His promise and in eternal life.



TRACY HAY I came to know Jesus through life circumstances and other people in my life. I grew up in the Catholic faith but had turned my back on God for most of my adult life until the Fall of 2011. These past six years, I have been given many opportunities to depend on Christ. Divorce, unresolved childhood trauma, and depression are among the circumstances I have faced during this time. I tried to go it alone, but He kept calling me back. I want to be baptized as an act of obedience to our Lord and to show my gratitude for all He has provided. And also to publicly declare that I have heard His call for my life and with the support of our church community, I will continue to listen for more. My friends

Sheri and James Provost introduced me to Centre Street on October 14, 2012. I would like to thank Jenny McDermid, whom I refer to as ‘my Christian mentor’. Jenny is a dear friend who, through prayer and support and a lot of BOOKS, continues to lift me up towards God. Thank you to Melissa, my sister, who has taught me what unconditional love means. I would also like to thank my children for walking beside me in my faith each day. Mitchell, Ava and Reid, I know it is not always easy, but the three of you have provided me with God’s true calling for my life and that is to be your mom. Each of you, like me, are children of God. My hope is that my baptism today will help to remind you of who you are, and that you will never forget your identity in Christ.



HYESSA BADINGA With my mother’s help, I understand that I need to walk with our Lord. I pray to Jesus all of the time and I feel Him in my life. I was born at 28 weeks and God kept His hand on me. My name Hyessa means Mercy of God. I would like to walk with God because I really love Him. Nothing can separate me from the love of God.



EMMA MEHRABANI Before I committed my life to Jesus, I was living without purpose and was lost. I felt like I was losing my mind, hallucinating. Through this battle, I realized that Jesus was always with me and that I went through this experience to become a better person. Fellow Christians have taught me the power of prayer and faith. It is comforting to know that no matter what happens to me, good or bad, it is all in the perfect will of God. To me, baptism is a public declaration of Jesus dying on the cross for my sins, to honour Him.

“ I renounced lies I had been carrying since childhood, got rid of the baggage I was carrying and broke generational ties.”

“I felt very depleted and alone in my life and I had a great time of renewal. I feel I can walk in victory and strength knowing God is fighting my battles.”

“ I dumped a lot of shame and self-condemnation and received Jesus’ full forgiveness for my sins.

I understood and released my distortions about the Father.”



“ I am a new person. I have reconnected with my God, my faith and a new complete understanding of forgiveness . I feel renewed and now I am praying for guidance from God and patience to wait and hear His direction.”

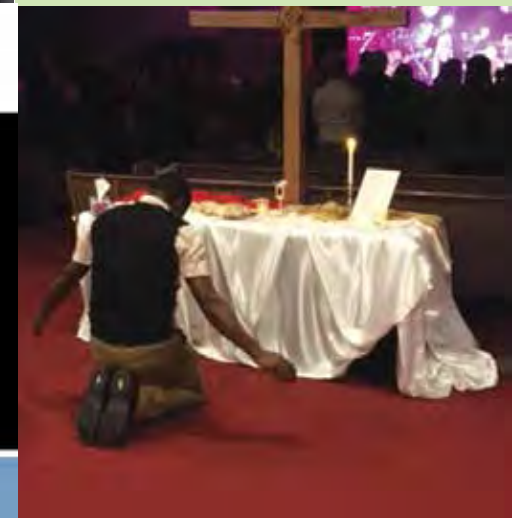


Painting by Deanna Oelke



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GOD'S
PRESENCE

For more info email learning@cschurch.ca



“Brought me closer to God. I learned He was proud of me and that I am worthy and loved. He watches over me and protects me from so much. I am so significant and important to Him.”



“I did not know what to expect, but was blown away by the love of God. I was able to heal, let go of hurts, lies and unhealthy emotions. I am so grateful for coming, I feel well armed with the Lord’s truth. The EGPW Team is wonderful and teaches you tools to use in everyday life to connect with God and stay in His presence and how to combat the enemy.”

“It has made me become fully aware that I do not have to be held back by anything. EGPW has helped me break everything that held me back. Now, I am free to live for Him and serve Him without fear and confidently. EGPW has also taught me how to be still in His Presence and listen to Him, hear Him and walk in obedience to Him, doing things His way, and allowing Him to do all He wants to do in me.”



os family life

Birth Announcements

NAME	DATE	PARENTS
Sophia Dawn Brooks	February 15, 2017	Ryan & Brittney Brooks
Lila Rae Gaytan	March 6, 2017	Ryan & Rebecca Gaytan
Julia Eleanor Cole	March 23, 2017	Curtis & Allison Cole

Dedications

Mariah Felize Tomas Guyong	January 21, 2017
Carter Zacharias	February 19, 2017
Myles Newman Danso	February 25, 2017
Anna Christine Monson	February 25, 2017
Araiah Mejos Dow	April 8, 2017
Evelyn Faith McLean	April 8, 2017
Hudson Douglas Carman Pierce	April 8, 2017
Julian Austin Magcalas Roxas	April 8, 2017
Paris Idra dela Rosa Rivera	April 8, 2017
Isla Jane Ericson	April 23, 2017
Malakai Arthur Thomas Wenngatz	April 30, 2017

Baptisms

Elisabeth Cristea**	Hyessa Badinga*
Ethan Bowors*	Tracy Hay
Patricia McAlister	Emma Mehrabani
Tanya Jorgensen-Bell	Stephen Wipf
Alithea Davis	Amanda Herbert
Colin David	Coral Herbert*
Joe Gerregodts	Brenda Eisbrenner
Janet Gordon	Maggie Zhang
Anna Rathgeber	Helen So Kum Chiu
Louise Li	Vanessa Bell
Emmanuel Der	Dakota Thornton
Rachelle Ward**	Giovanni Vargas
Grace Turqueza	Paola Pardo
Rebecca Chen**	Pearl Thompson*
Misti Atkinson	Daniel Thompson*
Layla Brandt*	Bonnie Peck

*child **youth

Weddings

Bobby Ikpefua and Oldelia Letsya	March 25, 2017
Devin Korbage and Christi Ripper	April 8, 2017
Herinus Hogewoning and Sharon Kan	April 29, 2017
Anthony Taiwo and Tineh Aliu	April 29, 2017

In Remembrance

Bryan Kiama	January 4, 2017
Erna Stepper	January 5, 2017
Bryan Goldsworthy	January 17, 2017
Genny Nash	February 5, 2017
Paul Mitton	February 17, 2017
George Starozik	February 21, 2017
Bernice Dunsmore	February 21, 2017
Richard Patzer	February 24, 2017
Margaret Loepky	February 24, 2017
Ken Palmer	February 28, 2017
Thelma Gwynn	March 4, 2017
Andrea McNaughton	March 11, 2017
Jack Pitre	March 22, 2017
Helmut Boettcher	March 23, 2017
Michael Markowski	March 23, 2017
Emma Slattery	April 1, 2017
Juan Milia Bosch	April 3, 2017
Graham Hindle	April 6, 2017
Chantele Martens	April 8, 2017

New Members

Helen Agbakwu	Roy Haddad	Ayo Adediran	Scott Smith	Lana Klassen
Eloho Eloho	Dennis Ham	Banke Adediran	Levi Smoker	Gwen Uittenbosch
Joanne Eloho	Xochitl Hernandez Lopez	Bota Davletova	Wilma Smoker	Marcel Uittenbosch
Glen Grisdale	Wale Johnson	Jennifer Holmes	Harold Tansley	Martin Voss
Amy Haddad	Ruvimbo Zhuwaki	Vivien Yin Ping Lok	Lea Tansley	Selamawit Voss
		Amber McInenly	Sean "Jay" Vedoya	
		Kimberly Smith	Roxanne Elenko	

The 4th Musketeer

The 4th Musketeer (4M) is a men's movement that seeks to inspire hearts and create worldwide waves of justice. Started in the Netherlands in 2008, 4M is spreading worldwide, with bases currently in 12 countries and over 12,000 Musketeers.

Xtreme Character Challenge

Seventy-two hours of adventure, challenge and inspiration, in which teams of eight to ten men embark on a life-changing journey, surrounded by stunning scenery, seeking the boundaries of their abilities and trying to overcome the deep abyss between head and heart.

Men turn over their watches, phones, wallets and car keys. Only the items on the packing list provided are allowed. Teams journey together on one route, walking considerable distances with backpacks of equipment. Along the route, the spiritual leaders of 4M speak short messages, followed by practical assignments to build on the Biblical lesson. The men receive twenty 10-minute talks that center around a Biblical character, such as Moses, Joshua, David, and, of course—Jesus. The aim of the XCC is to lead men to the foot of cross, in a way they have never experienced before.

Fatigue, cold, hunger, thirst and physical exhaustion are emotions that the men can expect, but behind every challenge lies a certain purpose for character-building and for an incarnation of Biblical truth. Men emerge three days later as brothers with a singular purpose—to serve the King. All for one and one for all!

4th Musketeer - Participant Comments

“It's not easy for me to say how God has affected me since my first outing with 4th Musketeer except to say..... BELIEF. Belief in the knowledge I now hold that God has a purpose and a solid direction for me to follow. A belief that even when I have doubts and fears in how I live and interact with those around me, He has no doubts.” - By Mike Cochrane

“I heard about the Xtreme Character Challenge and it sounded exciting from the start. But could a retired guy do something like that? After I had seen some of the pictures of the men who had completed Challenges in other parts of the world, I was sure that I could do it. It was a fantastic weekend and I would recommend it to all men.” - By Rex Watson

“I have been serving on Kevin Trick's men's leadership team for three years and part of men's ministry for about seven years. I have learned that all men battle with the same things, but God has designed a man to remember His Lord above all things, testify of His greatness and lead courageously. A Musketeer can be described as: passionately alive in Christ, boldly courageous, travels light, makes hard decisions fast, and moves with his brothers towards

72 HOURS OF
**ADVENTURE
CHALLENGE
INSPIRATION**

XTREME CHARACTER CHALLENGE

"I spent 20 years in the Marines, but I have never felt an accomplishment like I did this weekend. I feel a pull towards the cross. I will cherish it until I die... I want the 4th Musketeer and my Marine brothers to be at my funeral to bury me when I die."

- Kirk, OK



4

THE4THMUSKETEER.CA

God's mission in all areas of their lives. Men, this is my challenge to you: Reject Passivity. Lead Courageously. Accept Responsibility. Expect God's reward.🔥 - By Gil Molina

“The XCC was an extremely life-enhancing experience. I highly recommend it for any man to take this Extreme Character Challenge. My wife Carla could see a change right away in the caring selflessness and change in attitude, and she too recommends others to go on this trip.” - By Tibor 'Tibi' Ribí

“The whole experience made me realize the love God has for me, His calling for me to be a servant of the King, and a conviction to support my wife and family in 100% effort! I would highly recommend the XCC to any man looking for a greater sense of spiritual awareness and meaning.” - By Chris Meloche

“The XCC is designed to challenge men physically, emotionally, and most of all spiritually. It pushes the men to come to the end of themselves to surrender their lives to our King Lord Jesus. Men are challenged to be 100 % in to all aspects of their lives. One of the themes is “no man left behind” that we come together as brothers in Christ. The weekend was a significant spiritual marker in my life.” - By Don Kaiser

“A weekend that I thought would be a backpacking/camping trip turned quickly into a journey of discovery and deeper relationship with Jesus. I spent a lot of time over that weekend in conversation with God. He revealed to me my strengths and weaknesses. He brought the message of leadership right before my eyes and heart. I am a changed man due to the support of our Men's Ministry, The 4th Musketeer,

and the men of our church that I have built relationships with. My wife and I are growing closer together in our relationship. XCC will bring a man face to face with the call Christ has on his life. It's a beautiful adventure!🔥 - By Tim Adshade

“The XCC was a very significant time to answer the question we all have as men: “Do I have what it takes?” Taking us out of our “normal” everyday elements of distractions was an eye opener showing the dependencies that we have grown to expect, appreciate and ultimately control us. We experienced God move through a concentrated dependence on Him and gained new understanding of what we truly need, and what really matters. I would highly recommend this experience for any man that wants to experience God in a fresh and challenging way.” - By Larry de Kluyver

“The weekend was a clear reminder that as men we need to stand tall, lead our families, and stand up against injustice wherever it exists. I do know that 4M changed my life; and since we have completed our first two XCC weekends last year, I also know that the effect on men has been amazing, and that God is at work in a big way.” - By Jerry Diener

“Character challenge it was. I somehow missed the word extreme! The experience took me beyond what I thought was my limit and left me feeling exhilarated in facing challenges and overcoming. Overcoming is not easy, particularly a grumbling attitude. I came away having seen God in the midst of adversity and am stronger because of it!🔥 - By Pastor Kervin Raugust



Various photos of participants and activities with The 4th Musketeer. From prayer, hiking, lifting, wrestling and endurance; every activity builds biblical character.

Photos from The 4th Musketeer participants.

...more photos on page 14



4 REGISTER AT THE4THMUSKETEER.CA

*"The 4M Extreme Character Challenge reset my husband's life; from being someone who knew what he believed, to becoming a man who pursues and courageously lives out his faith on a daily basis. Our marriage has been wonderfully impacted as we pursue the leading of God together."
Reneyah, Calgary*

*"The 4M XCC put my physical, mental, and spiritual life to the test. It was a life changer. My faith has never been stronger. I am excited to be part of the first XCC Canada!"
Tim, Calgary*

INSPIRING MEN THROUGH AN EXPERIENCE OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ENDURANCE
 June 9-12, 2016 | Continental Divide
 \$ 300 CAD | Max Participants: 100
 Register by April 30 at the4thmusketeer.ca

Within God's Story

BY KAREN DOERKSEN,
Contributing Writer

The lightning speed at which God has lifted me out of my comfort zone and placed me onto a new path renders me awestruck. I've done nothing to deserve this blessing, aside from inviting Jesus to lead my heart. The journey to the foot of the cross saw many versions of myself emerge, and God continues His work, shaping and infusing my heart with His wisdom and love. I no longer cling to familiarity, my new normal is spontaneous and filled with anticipation. Had I been told even a decade ago how my future would look, I would have incredulously dismissed it as ridiculous, specifically the part where my entire hope is in Jesus. Nothing is perfect. Darkness still creeps in, however, within it I understand that God is pruning, His light prevails, and I trust Him implicitly. My life has been adventurous, but nothing compares to the one led by Jesus. Relinquishing control to Him has given me the freedom to embrace each unfolding day without worrying about the outcome, without fearing change. I have never felt so alive, which only seems surreal when I stop to examine the road behind me.

As I revisit the journey, a photo of my untainted four-year-old self, standing in my Little Bo Peep private school uniform, peering shyly at the camera, captures my attention. This tiny girl moves me to smile while stirring deep sadness. She will face loss of innocence, dignity, self-respect, relationships, hope, and identity. The writing on the slate of who she would become was near, and three and a half decades would pass before she walks on the road to redemption and finds purpose through it all. I long to reach into this photo to hug her, and to ease the pain ahead of her by telling her she

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Karen sees a lot of the world on two wheels. Photo from Karen Doerksen

is precious, unique, loved, smart, competent, worthy, valuable and treasured. Our beginnings shape our worldview, and God uses our experiences to equip us for living out our story. He chooses us. I love my story within God's story. I love that I can write a new ending with His hand wrapped around mine.

A beautiful mess emotionally and psychologically, I had little prospect of walking a long journey, let alone having a purpose beyond basic survival. My upbringing was untraditional, unstable, and chaotic. It came with many challenges that hindered my ability to make good decisions, and this eventually led to a very high risk lifestyle. I dodged more bullets than I could possibly list. I viewed them as coincidences, while others would comment on how 'lucky' I was, but no one is that lucky that many times in one lifetime. That was intervention. God had plans that did not include a premature exit.

As I look through the Viewmaster of those chapters, I grin in admiration at His divine hand in each slide, shaping my journey, moulding my purpose and preparing my calling. I visualize Him moving ahead, breathing a way open here, a way closed there, and situating His people along my path like action figures. The masterpiece of His perfect timing is evident in each slide.

The first whisper into my purpose came at age fifteen. Already immersed in drugs and alcohol, I accepted an invitation to become a peer counsellor for a pilot program in my high school. I received training, an office, and authority to sign students out of class who were struggling socially or academically. God was writing on my heart, preparing it not just for my vocation, but for the downward spiral that was fast approaching into a world I never would have imagined or chosen intentionally. My developing young mind was polluted by chemical abuses, yet I could still identify through these students a human need to belong, and could sense brokenness within the social structure around me. God was not part of my community, but empathy and connectedness were fused into the DNA of my character. Helping students feel cared for gave me peace.

The years that followed were riddled in compounding trauma and violations. I was a homeless, single teenage mother ill-equipped to handle my life or care for an infant. While I managed to secure subsidized housing and work, I was meshed in a violent lifestyle, drawn to abusive rela-

tionships, and nurtured my drugs rather than my child. Getting myself out of this was not on my radar. It was my normal, and it carried little regard for human life, which was evident in the number of "friends" I lost to this world.

My self-loathing came with a coat of shame so thick that it eventually became impossible to identify a true person underneath. Guilt prevented me from feeling value or purpose, and I compensated for this by meeting other's needs through sharing our home, food or offering my last dollar. I saw real people and their intrinsic value where the rest of the world saw derelicts. God held me in His hand to allow this capacity for compassion, while staying a few frames ahead to open doors and place people on my path. I desperately sought value and dignity, had a sense of something intangible, but could not find a way open amongst the dead ends I would hit, such as my lifestyle, world influences, and lacking a sense of personal worth.

Determination to protect my daughter gave me courage to sever ties to that lifestyle, but it was painful. Not yet accepted by the 'worthy' class and no longer fitting in with the derelicts and outcasts, I was cast into relational purgatory. Who am I now? Years spent in counselling, reading self-help books, and support groups provided enough sobriety and temporary relief to masquerade as one of the normal humans. Now married, I chose work to define my value, suspecting a career would restore dignity and provide purpose. I had failed as a human thus far. Re-selling my soul to corporate America would surely redeem this failure, but unhealed wounds unwittingly kept me operating as a sober addict.

I landed on a career in technology after realizing that excelling at analyzing and problem solving paid well. This made me feel valuable, smart and special, value that I desperately craved. I followed what the moral compass of the world said about success, and my identity became wrapped around my technical savvy and carefully crafted pseudo contentment. We had a nice home, traveled, entertained, accumulated nice things, and I provided my daughter with options that I was not given. I was so self-absorbed, focused on filling my emptiness and becoming somebody, that consequently, I didn't foresee the next fall coming.

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Karen and her husband, Brent have visited many different places including (clockwise from top) Cuba, Rome, Moldova and Italy; Karen & Brent on their wedding day. Photos from Karen Doerksen

My spouse walked out after ten years together, leaving me under heaps of debt and devastation. Two weeks later, my daughter followed, and the unravelling of the illusion began. The concessions I had taken, the ugliness of my truth, and the chasing of worldly idols were all Jenga blocks systematically being removed, until the tower fell fast and furious, scattering hundreds of pieces. I could not move to catch even one of them, but God could. He had been watching and waiting.

I lost everything, my unhealed wounds imploded. The way open to my life with God as He had intended it to be was near. Two years later, God orchestrated the healing of my daughter after a horrific car accident, and that was the catalyst. The dark seed fell to the ground and died, and the ascension out of my own cesspool into God's kingdom began. The revelation of a God who created me, adores me, pursued and protected me, depositing my suffering onto His own body in exchange for my salvation, changed everything. This was by no means about to simplify my world. Not yet.

I was blessed with a new husband, new hope, and a new way of life, but was naively unaware of the wrath of an enemy who seeks to twist truth and destroy light. God brought me to Centre Street Church where I spent six years on staff. Transitioning from a secular world to a Christian environment came with new insecurities. I had outgrown my passion for technology, but still relied on my skills to define my worth, afraid that without it I had nothing to offer. In His infinite wisdom, God used the very skills that once fed my ego and defined my importance to lure me to a safe place where He could unravel my false identity. It is here that my dependence on people to affirm me became glaringly obvious.

Then came Freedom Session, and a deep understanding of my true self started to emerge. I was not very fond of her yet, I did not understand how to follow Christ, and once again I was in relational purgatory despite the deep healing and discipleship I was receiving. I felt isolated and confused. God met me there, and claimed me all for Himself, while I was at rock bottom, knowing I couldn't fight Him from the floor. The depth of loneliness was excruciating but made way to feel the depth of joy in His redemption on that same level. Perhaps this is why He allowed Paul to stay blind for a few days, to feel the depth of joy in receiving sight.

Still on staff, I began volunteering as a Freedom Session facilitator, and traveled to Mol-

dova where I saw first-hand the impact of a country ravaged by poverty and the highest rate of human trafficking in all of Europe. God was showing me the world through His own eyes, and I came home broken and restless. The years of leading in Freedom Session had me revisiting parts of my journey as a marginalized derelict, and my techie compass was going haywire. I needed to do something different.

My discontentment was overshadowing my fear of taking risks, and I realized that God had given me a purpose much deeper than fixing broken computers. He was showing me a broken world with broken people. Searching for value outside of God was absurd. I was still trying to fit into what the world said I should be even within the walls of the church, fighting against the intense feeling that God wants me ministering to His broken people using my own brokenness. The God seed was starting to grow.

This incredible, complex journey feels surreal when I stare at my four-year-old little self in my Little Bo Peep uniform. How fitting that my first school was named after a shepherd-ess! God had already labeled my purpose! John 21:17 ends with "Lord, you know everything; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

I am imperfect, but I know my identity. I am loved, cherished and redeemed. My name is not, nor ever has been, derelict, addict, criminal, victim, street trash. It is Karen, daughter of the King, a new creation in His image. He has provided me with endless resources to be a voice for the voiceless whose hope, dignity and identity has been stripped away from them and classified as disposable. The path to freedom can only be shown if I am willing to bring that light into dark places. I am willing. He will provide a way open to create a legacy that will outlast my human presence. Today, I feel privileged to be directing Freedom Session and studying Ministry and Counselling through Alberta Bible College. God wins.

My dream, together with my husband, is to create a haven where lost sheep can find refuge, nurturing, healing and allow Jesus to restore their value and identity. Maybe teach them to fix computers, fish or ride a motorcycle! If we can send even one person into the world equipped to find their place, to rewrite the ending to their own story within God's story, my heart is full. When they examine their story as I just have, I pray to be one of the action figures God places on their path.



Antonio Fernandez sitting on the Trans-Canada Highway during a traffic jam. Photo from the Fernandez Family

Changing Lives for God

BY JANICE RICHARDSON,
Contributing Writer

Confident and wise beyond his years, Antonio has ventured off into a new chapter of his life. Having graduated from high school in June 2016, he traveled to Spain in January taking a 10-week Bible study course. Since his family is from Spain, he is stayed with relatives. He then has ambitious plans to go to university, taking political science and then law.

Antonio grew up in a Christian home and is the oldest of four siblings. He loves the outdoors and many activities that take him there—including hiking, cycling and soccer. He also loves travelling and already has been to many countries. This perhaps has been passed down by his mom, who was a missionary.

Antonio has not always been this confident and clear on his future path. In fact, while in high school, he struggled at first, letting the influence of other kids pull him away from God. A strong youth group and three mission trips helped change that for him.

The first trip was in the summer of 2012 to Vancouver. He went with a group from CSC and worked in a variety of ministries. Antonio feels that he "lucked out" because he got to spend a lot of time visiting with seniors and listening to their stories. He feels that we can learn a lot from their wisdom and experience. What he got out of this mission trip was the opposite of what he anticipated. He thought he was going to help others (which he did), but he said the biggest impact was the fellowship he experienced with the other youth and people on the trip. He gained a group of Christian friends with whom he

was better able to connect.

In 2014 he went to San Diego. This mission trip taught him a lot about the importance of a Christian community surrounding an individual. It was a really great opportunity to learn to work with people of different personalities and different conditions.

Antonio changed his friend group to people who have a positive impact on him. He attends the Youth group from the NW Campus on a regular basis. The leadership is great, and the group has been quite impactful to him.

His third mission trip was to Trinidad in 2015 and had an even bigger impact on him, but not in the way he expected. A lot of his friends went on this trip. They did a variety of things: painted a house, led Vacation Bible School to a variety of groups, and handed out shoeboxes with Samaritan's Purse. He loved the more laid-back culture. Throughout the trip, Antonio could see some of his friends experiencing surreal spiritual moments—moments that Antonio did not. This hit him hard and broke his heart. It made him realize that he was really missing out and that he was not putting in the effort to have a relationship with God like he should be. Seeing what others experienced motivated him to grow closer to God.

Antonio started getting into scripture and praying on a daily basis. He tries to journal as much as he can. He has come to enjoy this time with God so much that he feels something is missing in the day if he does not do it.

"It is almost like someone who is addicted to caffeine going without their coffee in the morning. You feel like you really need it."

Antonio feels that his improved relationship with God has helped give him confidence and be more self-assured.

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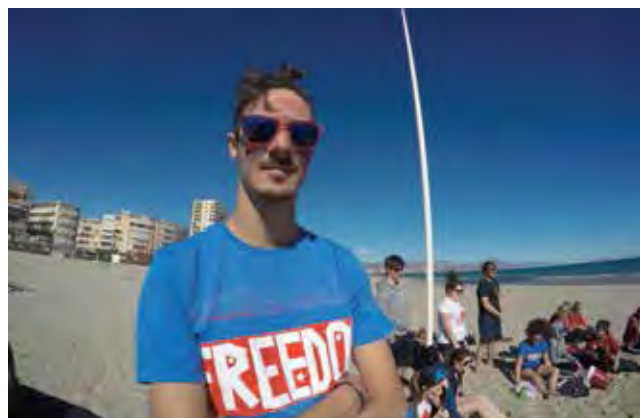
He says that the teenage years are a time of trying to find out who you are and what you believe. Many teenagers are very focused on themselves in their pursuit to discover who they are. His relationship with God has helped him to concentrate on helping others instead of focusing on himself.

"Following God could be one of the most important decisions a person can make. Life can still be tough, but it is a life to embrace; and once you commit to following God, it is worth it."

Antonio believes that everyone should go on a mission trip. He recommends that they jump in and not have specific expectations of what they would like to get out of the trip.

"Be open to whatever God may have for you. Many people go thinking they will be helping others, but a big part of it changes you."

Going forward, Antonio hopes to be a leader. He feels that this is a gift that comes to him naturally. With the goal of obtaining a degree in Political Science and Law, he would love to become a world leader some day and have an impact on others' lives. His ultimate goal is to change people's lives for God.

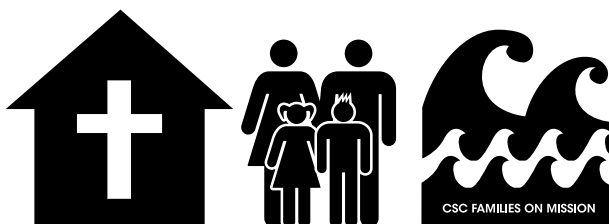


Antonio Fernandez during Bible College days; at a wedding with parents Joseph & Melody, brother Elias, sisters Natalya and Eliana.

Photos from the Fernandez Family



Some parachute fun in the park. Photo by Chloe Pilon



F.O.M. (Family On Mission) Vancouver July 16-23, 2016

BY SHARI SCOTT, Contributing Writer

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me.'" Matthew 25:40 NIV

Downtown East Hastings (DTEH), Vancouver. Once a thriving centre of commerce, arts and eateries, the area now plays host to a smattering of society that somehow seems to have missed a step and lost its way. Additions, homelessness, strife and a sense of hopelessness bruise the spirit of humanity here in this disproportionately densely populated area of the City. The close proximity of Coal Harbour and a majestic mountain view create a preposterous paradox to the filth and despair of the streets.

Last July, Executive Pastor Wayne Smele led twelve families, comprised of fifty-five people, to Vancouver to serve the people of this area through various forms of ministry. They headquartered at Richmond Faith Fellowship where they ran a Vacation Bible School for local children, not just teaching them about the love of Christ, but actually demonstrating it. Service projects—rebuilding steps, painting parking lot signs and sprucing up window casings—were carried out at both the church and the rental home that once served as a manse. Repairs and fresh paint were also bestowed upon Ward Memorial, the home of G & I Shining Stars Ministry.

During our weeklong stay, families of the Vancouver Family on Mission team were given extensive tours of United Gospel Mission (UGM), Quest and the city blocks around these facilities, complete with a history expository, giving context and illustration to the area's downward spiral and moral decline.

Early each morning, a segment of the team would depart for UGM, an organization that offers nourishment for mind, body and soul.

The main building houses men, providing them with meals and a meeting place. Here each day the Gospel is presented, and God is promoted and glorified through song and word. Here people are given a second chance, should they be seeking such. Here a detox centre, followed by rehabilitation and job coaching, affords residents the opportunity to be reintegrated into society with grace, faith and dignity. It is here that families take turns giving their testimony, which builds hope in the clients who frequent UGM. Here those clients come to understand that people from all walks of life fall short and face difficulties in life. Here they come to understand that we are truly more alike than we are different.

For women and children UGM offers temporary shelter as well as affordable housing, a thrift store and community gardening as part of its healing and helping resources. CSC is honoured to work alongside such a stellar organization as part of our Family on Mission experience.

The CSC families were also given the opportunity to serve at Quest Food Exchange, a non-profit enterprise which allows the working poor access to food while maintaining dignity. Quest has several suppliers who donate large quantities of foodstuffs, which are then portioned into smaller servings and sold at a greatly reduced cost to those who qualify to shop there. Quest also offers Community Kitchens, where patrons are taught safe food handling as well as basic cooking skills and nutritional meal preparation. Our families volunteer in the area of re-portioning and re-packaging foods for the store's stock.

Nestled in this East Hastings region is Oppenheimer Park, a local place of refuge for many ...continued on page 18



Painting fences; a party in the park; painting speedbumps; prepping food. Photos by Chloe Pilon

of the area's homeless. For the third year in a row, more than five hundred burgers were served by our families, in addition to hot dogs, pop and on a different day, ice cream cones. As part of their training, our families learned the fine art of balloon animal creation; and CSC Grade School Pastor, Randy Burtis, led the team designing these inflated toys and offering them to the children at the park. Those in attendance were treated to a magic show, face painting, soccer, parachute games, and plain old-fashioned fun and camaraderie.

Somehow, in the midst of all of this, when we reach out to our fellow man, God blesses us – more than we could ever imagine. In a boomerang effect that only He could orchestrate, we find ourselves completely immersed and lavished in His love – feeling blessed beyond measure. The team becomes a family, rejoicing in each other's victories and sharing in both the tears and the laughter. There were team members who chose to be baptized as testimonies were shared at Jericho Beach. What follows are some reflections of this team at the conclusion of their trip:

Does this experience make you think more about long-time mission?

"Yes – as in making it a part of our lives and how we live."

What was the most meaningful thing about your experience?

"Living as a group of families and growing closer together. Great group support."

"How my Heavenly Father used so many activities, people and ministry opportunities to stretch and challenge me so much."

How do you see this trip impacting your Christian walk?

"It's a wake-up call that we need to be more intentional with our relationship with God and to continually work on it."

"We decided as a family to spend time sharing our prayer requests with each other and praying for each other a few

times a week. We are also doing a study on Right Now Media together as a family. It is encouraging and growing our Christian walk as a family together."

"It has enhanced my Christian walk to grow deeper with Christ, to dig deeper into the Word of God during my own personal devotion time with Him, as well as praying/talking with God more intentionally. Our family is doing devotions and praying together daily. Our communication with each other has been enhanced as we all strive to grow in Christ."

What has God revealed to you as you reflect on this experience?

"The importance of being intentional with our time and taking time to plan out ways to serve as a family."

"I am not my mistakes and people will not judge me by that. I am more than that, and God knows it too."



"I love the games and the slides!"



"This is a great opportunity for my kids to invite their friends from school....to be in a church....have fun!"



"I like the Mini Golf and Foosball."



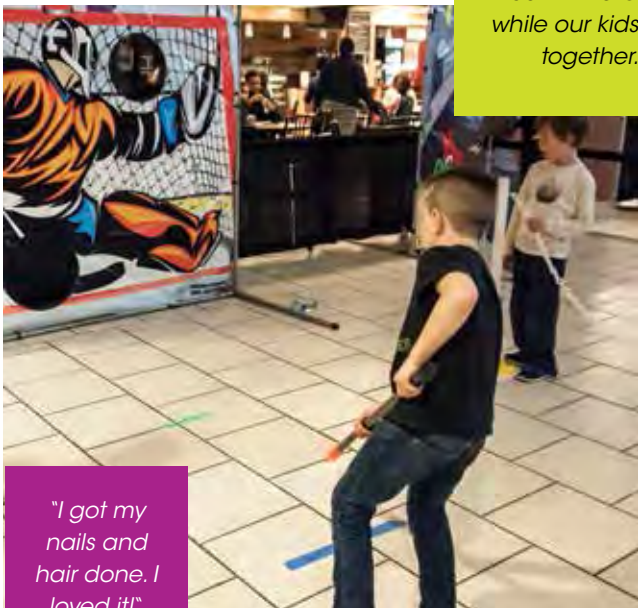
FAMILY FEST



"It is so fun coming as an extended family and hanging out in the Café while our kids play together."



"My daughters have been looking forward to coming for weeks!"



"I got my nails and hair done. I loved it!"

Family Fest is a great outreach event organized by the Children's Ministries team at Centre Street Church. Each year, children are encouraged to bring friends to this free event.

This year, nearly 1800 people attended the event with over half of them being visitors. For many of them, it was the first time they had ever been in a church. The kids played mini-golf, laser tag, and fun carnival games with bounce houses! "It's a great way to spend a Friday," one mom said. She had never been to church before, but was amazed by how welcoming CSC was.

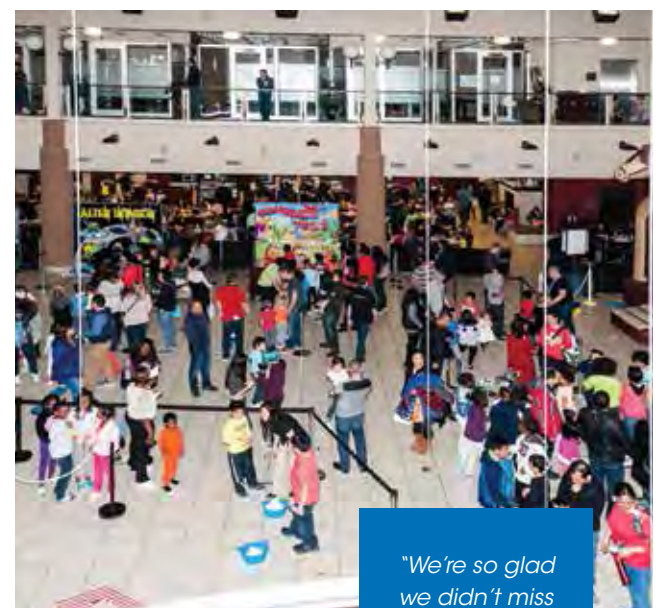
Many families came from the nearby neighbourhood school, Buchanan Elementary, where many strong connections have been made between CSC staff and the children. Children were excited to see Pastor Wes Gorman, whom they recognized as a science fair judge from earlier in the year, and they were thrilled to hear that Pastor Randy, the illusionist from past school assemblies, was putting on a show!

Kids were not the only ones inviting friends. Parents also reached out to family and friends encouraging them to come. They were amazed by the friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

Our Special Needs ministry partnered with Children's Ministries for the event by providing snacks, pizza and drinks for sale. Money from the sales went to support upcoming ministry events for persons with special needs. The café was full of families connecting with each other while enjoying some great food!

At Family Fest, there was a table covered with Bibles that were given away to any child or family who did not have a Bible of their own. By the end of the night, over 80 Bibles were given away! We are praying God will use these Bibles to make an impact in the lives of those who read them.

The event was made possible by the generous volunteers who came to set up and run the event. Over 120 volunteers were part of Family Fest, including: youth super groups, missional communities, community groups, and Children's Ministries leaders. It was a great evening of multiple ministry areas working together as a big CSC family to bless kids and families in the name of Jesus! We look forward to what God is going to do with the seeds planted during Family Fest 2017.



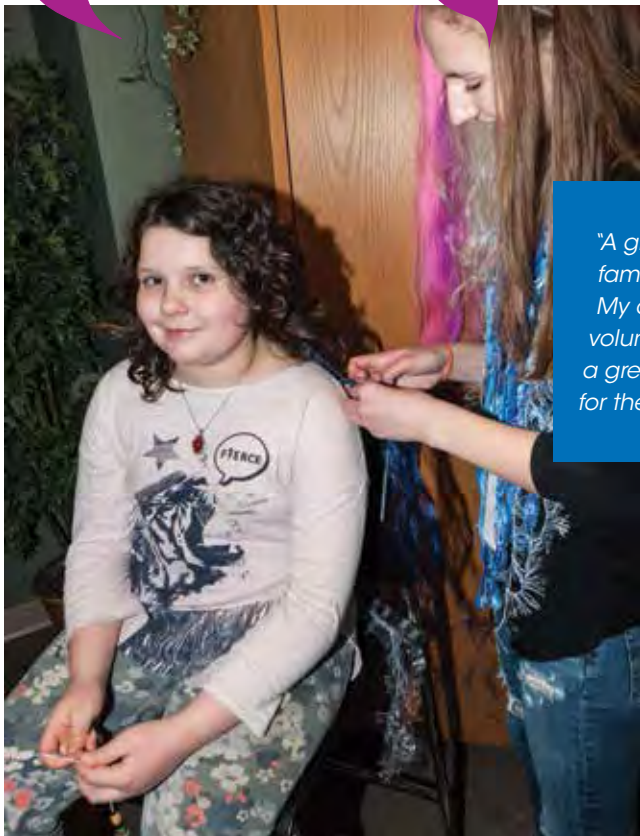
"We're so glad we didn't miss the Magic Show. It was so awesome!"

# Bibles Given Out:	
Preschool Bibles: (Board books)	15
Big Picture Bibles: (age 5-7)	13
Adventure Bibles (for early Readers): (age 6-8)	12



Family Fest was a huge success this year. Bouncy Houses, games, hair and nails, prizes, fun food and more. Our many volunteers made it happen and their time and efforts are such a blessing to our children and families. Photos by Colin Brown.

Family Fest 2017



"A great place for families to come. My older kids are volunteering. What a great opportunity for them to minister!"



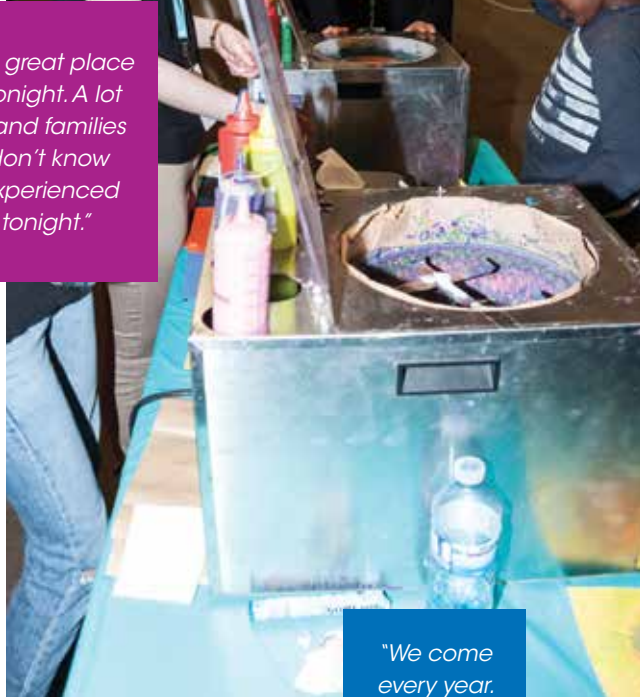
"What a great place to be tonight. A lot of kids and families who don't know God experienced Him tonight."



"We invited some friends who don't normally come to church."



"I came last year and I brought a friend with me this time!"



"We come every year. Our kids love it!"

