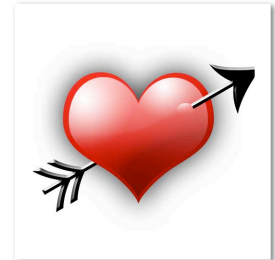


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# Fountain of Life Fellowship Monthly Newsletter

February 2009



## Council Members

### Elders:

Matt Ford  
Scott Clair  
Ed Mirth

### Deacons:

Irmgard Bishop  
Jerry Schoenenberger  
Don Woodhead  
Vince Cabral  
Rachel Stewart

*Grounded in the Gospel,  
we Gather to Grow in the Gospel  
and Scatter to Spread the Gospel  
for the Glory of God.*

## Pastor's Note by Matt Ford

### Testing Your Heart For The Church

As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, "O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you... *Nehemiah 1.4-6*

For some reason, February is the month for love. There's red and pink, hearts and chocolate wherever you look. So, to sort of deconstruct the moment, I thought I'd ask: How's your heart towards the church?

Nehemiah was a cup-bearer for the king in the capital city of Suza somewhere around 450 BC. He was a God-loving Jew whose family had been most likely stolen away from Israel during its decimation and following exile. All things considered for the time, his life was probably pretty sweet. He had provision and protection and a good relationship with the most powerful man in the world.

And yet, his concern is elsewhere. His passion is the health of God's people and when, upon investigation, he hears the report about the pitiful shape of God's people, he is deeply moved. This begins a transformation of his life wherein he devotes himself to the rebuilding of Jerusalem against all odds and at great risk to himself.

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And so we see the first test. Are you concerned for the health of the church – over and above your own personal situation? This could be applied in many areas – the persecuted church, the church in America, or the church in Haiti, for instance. (p.s. check out the efforts of [churcheshelpingchurches.com](http://churcheshelpingchurches.com)) Most appropriately, however, would be to apply the question to your heart for your local church.

Nehemiah never asks, “What did Israel ever do for me?” He could have answered that question by saying, “My forefathers disobeyed over and over and over again. They’re the reason we’re in this mess.” And he would’ve been correct. But his concern is not himself. It is God and His glory - and therefore the blessing of God’s people.

Nehemiah’s prayer (chapter 1.4-11) is worth deep and repeated consideration.

He begins (verse 5) by remembering just who God is. That’s the basis for our love for the church and any hope for the church. Our great God keeps His promises! We bear His Name.

Second, Nehemiah confesses his sin (verses 6-7). This is fascinating as Nehemiah confesses on two levels. He confesses sin both collectively and individually. Yes, Israel has sinned – generation after generation – and each generation’s iniquity has brought consequences to those who follow. That’s worth confessing.

But he also confesses individually. He says, “Even I and my father’s house have sinned.” The mess of “the church” isn’t just out there. It’s in here. It’s in me. It’s in you. Nehemiah knows that he isn’t a free agent or a lone ranger. He belongs to God and therefore he belongs to the people of God, for better and for worse.

Nehemiah then pleads to the Word of God (verses 7-9). Our sin is that we (collectively and individually) have not believed or obeyed the Word of God. And our hope is that God will still keep His Word. It is a good hope.

Finally, Nehemiah prays for the action he will soon take. He will risk all to ask the King to support out of his own coffers the sending and enabling of Nehemiah to rebuild the city. Nehemiah will risk and give and work for the blessing of God’s people.

Do you love the church? She’s flawed, dirty, and broken down, it’s true. But she’s still the very Bride of Christ. And as Derek Webb’s song so aptly puts it, Jesus seems to say, “If you me you will love the church.”

So test your heart. Does the health of God’s collective people matter to you? Does it cause you to celebrate or mourn as the case may be? Is it even on your mind?

## Special Thanks!

**I want to thank Matt, Ed, Isaac, Wesley, and Don for helping me**

**move this last month. It’s this type of service that continues to remind me of how amazing our church is.**  
**-Scott Clair**



Do you love the God of the church who keeps His covenant with His church? Will you plead with Him in worship, in repentance, and in accordance to His Word for the health of His people?

And finally, will you prayerfully do your part?

Chapter 3 of Nehemiah has one of those lists that is rough on devotional reading. It's a bunch of people you've never heard of working hard on parts of the city you've never heard of. But the benefit of this chapter is that it records the glorious hard work that normal people did doing normal things for the building up of God's people.

You don't have to be the cup-bearer to the King to have a place in the work. Praying, nursery work, children's worship work, giving, evangelizing, listening, serving, organizing, mentoring, welcoming, and scads of other things all make the difference.

Because we love God, let's love His church.

Matt

## Andrizomai Update

**Andrizomai is greek for "act like men" (find it in 1 Corinthians 16.13), and is the name for the Men's Ministry at FOLF. We know that we need one another to be the kind of men God wants us to be ([Proverbs 27.17](#))**

**Join us Saturday morning, February 13<sup>th</sup> at Carrows (Magnolia, between Heil and Warner) at 7 a.m. to enjoy one another's company and have breakfast together. During breakfast, part of our discussion will be led by Pastor Matt in study of the Gospel of Mark. In this way we'll fellowship together as we consider Mark's account of the Son of God. The text for this meeting will be Mark 1.12-45.**

## Daughters of the King Update

**Come celebrate the love of friends on Sunday Feb 14! We will meet at our regularly scheduled time of 5 PM. Our study time will move to the New Testament where we will be studying Elizabeth. Check out Luke chapter 1 for a preview. We also will have our regular game time, singing, and an interview with one of our members—and will preview our upcoming retreat. If you want to bring a festive treat to share, feel free!**

**Daughters of the King is a fellowship of women from 18 to 102+ who meet to study God's word, play together and learn about each other. Visitors are always welcome! Feel free to bring a friend as we kick off another year!**

## Council Update

*contributed by Rachel Stewart*

The council met on January 5th. The first part of the evening was spent in prayer.

- Praise- we are doing well on our pledges and have seen drastic differences in the inflow/ outflow for the past two months.
- Vince will be working with Anne to prepare the budget for the next year.
- Rachel will be putting together a sexual misconduct prevention program for all volunteers.
- Coordinated special offerings for the upcoming year.
  - **February's Cause of the Month will be split between Living Well and Horizon Pregnancy Center which are both crisis pregnancy centers. These ministries are local, well-established organizations and have helped women through their pregnancies for years. You can visit them at <http://www.living-well.org> and <http://www.horizonpc.org>**
- Looking into possible advertising options for Matt's sermons and other events that occur at the church.
- Matt, Ed and Scott attended a Classis meeting on January 19th.

## Tech Service Day, Part 2



**Our first efforts were so well-received that we've decided to give it another shot in February. Our goal is to serve 30 folks on Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. We will need volunteers for hosting (donuts, coffee, materials, conversation), working the computers, and spreading the word. If you're interested in joining the effort, please speak with Vincent Cabral. This is a great way to served the community and open doors for the Gospel!**

## Ignition Update

*contributed by Rachel Stewart*

After the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, it was nice to come back into our routine of meeting weekly and going through a series together. At the beginning of the month, we dove right into our study of James. The theme of this book that resounds throughout the verses is this: "Do not just be **hearers** of the Word--be **doers** of the Word." We have gone through James 1 and 2 and have already been reminded of so many of God's promises and seen practical ways to apply the Word to our lives--to be "doers" of the Word. We've learned that we are called to find joy in trials because it enables us to develop a more steadfast faith. We have also seen the importance of not judging others because of how they look or how they dress or what society says about them, but loving them because they are made in the image of Christ. It has been an awesome month for the youth group and we are excited to see what else the Lord has in store for us during our times together.

### THANK YOU!

**Ignition would like to thank the Atkins family for letting us invade their home for a movie/dinner night. It was a huge success! Not only did they provide a space, but also made the spaghetti. Thank you for your generosity and for your priceless gift of constant support for this group!**

#### Purpose:

We exist to glorify God by having and spreading a passion for the **supremacy of God** in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

#### Ignitions Mission:

To live a lifestyle of worship by **Growing** in Christ, **Building** meaningful relationships with other believers, **Serving** those who are in need, and **Reaching** those who do not know Christ within our community.

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## 2:42 Update

*contributed by Scott Clair*

Our highlight for this last month was when we took a week off from our regular study through John and spent the entire night praying and reflecting upon the holiness of God. During the night we confessed sin, sought reconciliation, thanked God for his many blessings, and made supplications for others and ourselves. The night brought refreshment to our souls and served as a reminder of how glorious our God is. Over this next month we will be studying in John 11, in where Jesus resurrects Lazarus from the dead. Also, on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> we will be having our first ever "Dinner and Theology Night". On that night, we will eat together and enjoy each other's company, while watching a sermon from one of my favorite preachers.

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Acts 2:42 (ESV)

# Out of the Salt Shaker

Contributed by Julia Bailey

## Here Comes the Groom!

As many of you know, I'm in the midst of helping my daughter and her fiancé plan a June wedding. As you browse wedding magazines, web sites and the direct mail that mysteriously starts to arrive despite organization's pledge that they don't "sell" your name, the focus is almost universally on the bride. Even The Men's Wearhouse, which is selling to men, discusses the fact that all eyes will be on the bride except hers, which, fortunately, will be on you. So it struck a bell with me (no pun intended) when I read John the Baptist's comments, referring to himself as a friend of the bridegroom: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

Reflecting further on that statement, I thought about the difference between the culture of Jesus' time and our current Western tradition. In Jesus' day, it was much more about the bridegroom. The bridegroom threw the feast, sent out the invitations, and had the procession. While the bridegroom paid honor to the bride, the celebration was about the bridegroom and his acquisition of the bride.

As you know, the church is referred to as the Bride of Christ. And perhaps our Western thinking (as well as our own self-centered proclivities) distorts our view of what that means. And that can be to the detriment of God's glory.

It should be our goal to serve and honor God faithfully, so that honor and glory is brought to his name. But how quickly our motives become more self-serving. We seek to live a good, moral, righteous life, but before we know it (be honest, now) our goal becomes that others might see how good and righteous

WE are ("and glorify God in it", we quickly murmur.) If our hearts were right, we wouldn't care what people thought of us, only what God thought of us. Our goal should not be to draw attention to ourselves, but to draw attention to our Lord. Our testimonies too readily focus on what God has done in MY life, rather than simply on what God has done.

In my experience, one of the best ways to minimize the "me" focus is to make sure that my inner focus is rightly centered on my Lord. The only way to do that is to spend time in his presence. I love the first question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, but I also deeply appreciate the first question and answer to the Westminster confession, which asks "What is the chief end (purpose) of man?" The answer: "To glorify God and fully enjoy him forever."

Whatever it is that you do for God—whether it be raising children, preaching, teaching, serving others, working in society—if you are too busy "doing" to take time to "enjoy him, you have missed God's calling in your life and have created on of your own. ("Who will do it if I don't" is a subtle, insidious form of idolatry. Do you think God really can't manage without you?) You have become, as Oswald Chambers described it, an "amateur providence of God" using God's own weapons against him (ouch!)

I'm not going to try to get Andrea and David to change the focus of their wedding. But I am going to seek in my own relationship to the Bridegroom, to decrease that he may increase, and to focus on getting to know him so that when we meet face to face, I'll be ready to enjoy him—fully—forever.

## Prayer Guide for February

February 7-13: Genesis 17; Pray that we will understand the beauty of God's eternal covenant with His people and resolve to be faithful to that covenant.

February 14-20: Genesis 18-19; Pray that we will be humbled by God's righteous wrath and amazed by His mercy.

February 21-27: Genesis 20; Pray that we will be amazed by God's faithfulness in keeping His people. And pray that such knowledge will stir us to seek Him, not take Him for granted.

February 28-March 6: Genesis 21; Pray that our faith will be strengthened with the truth that God always keeps His promises. Pray that we would see it and believe it in our personal lives.

## February Dates to Remember

- \* February 13th - Andrizomai (7 am)
- \* February 14th- Daughters of the King (5 pm)
- \* February 20th- Tech Day
- \* February 28th- 2:42 Dinner & Theology Night



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Ignition's Summer Trip will be on July 12th-18th this year. You won't want to miss it!

## Care for our Shut-Ins

Below is a list of friends & family of FOLF that would appreciate a call, a card, a visit, and prayer.

Please contact Rachel ([Rachel@folfrc.com](mailto:Rachel@folfrc.com)) for phone numbers and addresses of those we care for.

**Joe Bakkelo** has moved back into his home in Victorville. He would appreciate calls and cards.

**Hetty De Jonge** is still recovering. We give thanks to God for healing! Hetty still loves to have visitors and cards, and enjoys fresh flowers from your garden.

**Russ Hanff** is in an assisted living home in Whittier. Russ suffers from Alzheimer's; while forgetful, he really enjoys visits and cards (he has no phone). He LOVES to talk about the Angels, and his years of coaching Little League and softball. He recently was able to take a trip to Alaska.

**Martin and June Verhoeven** live at the Artesia Christian Home in Artesia. June cannot walk due to a stroke that she suffered a few months ago. Martin has trouble hearing but still likes to talk about fishing. They would love to receive cards and visits. They also enjoy home-cooked food and fresh fruit. T

**Brian McGuire** is a former member of our church. He lives in Fullerton with his son, Kyle. Brian suffers from advanced effects of diabetes. He would love a call or a card from FOLF friends.

**Genevieve would like to sincerely thank everyone who prayed for her, visited, and assisted her while she was in recovery. What a gift it is to have a church family that is always there!**

## February Celebrations

### Birthdays

**2.12**            Jacky S,  
                       Jerry S,  
**2.15**            Mira D,  
**2.19**            Neil M,  
**2.22**            Desiree R,



### Anniversaries

**2.25**            Jerry and Diane S,

## Ministry Schedule

	February 7th	February 14th	February 21st	February 28th
<b>Nursery</b>	Tracey Mira Samantha	Irene Sally Audrey	Marcia F. Marshia L. Niel	Irmgard Natasha Elizabeth
<b>Children's Worship</b>	Cinti Jacky	Cinti Denise	Cinti Ann S.	Cinti Heather L.
<b>Hospitality (Coffee)</b>	Jannie and Ronell			
<b>Greeters</b>	Jacky and John			
<b>Scripture Reading</b>	Ed	Heather L.	Don	Cinti
<b>Prayer</b>	Vera	John	Ed	Todd
<b>Communion Elements</b>	Sally			