

# FRIENDLY VISITOR

The Newsletter of the Warren Park Presbyterian Church ~ February 2012

## *Pastor's Page*

Surprise! I'm still here. With the Session's gracious agreement, I have consented to continue as your pastor for another year. Some good things are happening, and I cannot help but believe we are on the verge of the breakthrough we have been asking the Lord for during these past ten years. It's happening, not like a flood, but in small increments of grace.

Since, however, I am facing the deadline of March 1 for the first volume of my commentary on the Psalms (Psalms 1-72), the Session has also graciously given me some release time (at 50% salary) during January and February. I will be leading the worship on Sunday mornings, and our Student Assistant, Eric Prinkey, from Moody, and Dr. Steven Kellough, the chaplain of Wheaton College, will do the preaching, except for Communion Sundays when I myself will preach and minister at the Lord's Table. Already my work is moving along on schedule, for which I thank the Lord. And thank you too for your prayers.

During the Lenten season, beginning on Feb. 23, I will lead a six-week study on John Bunyan's Christian classic, *Pilgrim's Progress*. Besides the Bible itself, this book has probably been read by more people in the Western world than any other book. Our class will meet each Thursday of Lent from 10:30 to noon in the chapel. I urge you to take advantage of this unique opportunity to study this marvelous work that presents the Christian journey in the powerful images of Scripture and life.

Rhonda and I are attending the Gathering of the Fellowship of Presbyterians in Orlando, FL, on Jan. 18-20, at which time a New Reformed Body will be constituted. More than 2100 people have already registered for this meeting. The sponsoring organization was spawned by the recent change in ordination standards in our denomination. Our Session and Congregation have not discussed our future in this respect, but that conversation must begin soon, as we seek God's guidance into the future. In the meantime, we need to keep standing on God's promises that His Church will withstand this day of testing and trial. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

In the unfailing love of Jesus,  
Hassell Bullock

## Notes from Eric & Hope...

### Looking to the One Who Holds the Keys to Life and Death

*"...a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. 'Lord, have mercy on my son,' he said. 'He has seizures and is suffering greatly.'" (Matthew 17:14-15).*

In life there are problems that only God can handle - problems that cannot be fixed with our knowledge, abilities, power or money. These problems reveal our ever present need to depend on God. Recently, we were awakened to a deeper sense of this dependency. We had many plans for the coming week-classes, homework, work, and meetings - but, they were all revamped when we found out that Hope's mother was in critical condition at a hospital in Ohio. When we arrived, it broke our hearts to see her sedated, on a ventilator and bleeding internally. Though we wanted to fix her condition and make it all better, we couldn't. Even the doctors didn't know how to fix her. We were humbled to our knees again to pray to the only One who has the ability to cure her in this life and the next: God Almighty. In the same way, the man mentioned in the passage above humbled himself and approached Jesus - God incarnate - as he asked for mercy upon his son.

Too often, God is the last stop in our search for help. Let us make an effort to bring before Him all things, big and small. He is all-powerful and promises that "the prayer of the righteous man (or woman) is powerful and effective."

### A Splendid Christmas Celebration

We were greatly blessed by celebrating our Savior's birth this year. Early in December, Warren Park held a special Christmas Neighborhood Movie Night. Besides watching two short Christmas films on the big screen, we played a few games and had some Christmas goodies. The Gospel message went out and we got to know more families at our church and neighborhood. On December 18<sup>th</sup>, we had our first combined Christmas Celebration and outreach with Emmanuel Presbyterian Church (our sister Spanish-speaking church). We had a potluck, caroled in the neighborhood and invited our community to complimentary hot chocolate and dessert. We also lit 50 luminaries and placed them outside of the church. The love of God was richly felt among us this evening and, doubtlessly, the neighborhood noticed.

### A Great Year Ahead in 2012

We will continue hosting Men's Prayer Breakfast every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month. And, the Women's Prayer Group, hosted by Julie, continues to meet on the second Tuesday each month. Our afterschool program, The Good News Club, started up again on January 19<sup>th</sup>. We have been steady with 5-10 children most weeks. *Please pray with us that God will bring in more children from the neighborhood to learn and grow in their faith in Jesus Christ.* Neighborhood Movie Nights will continue every 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month. And, we're working on planning another Family Fun Fair for June or September this year. Additionally, Warren Park is going to be focusing more on small groups this year. These small groups will meet together to study the Bible, pray and grow in Christ. We have experienced firsthand the growth that comes from these kinds of groups. And, we hope you will find the same.

## Missions Report

George Kacena says thanks for our prayer for his grandson Matthew—God heard and he is improving. The Kacenas were finally able to get a visa and planned to leave on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January to visit **Julie and Elias Madeira**. Julie's brother, Jeff and his wife were waiting for Ethan to make his appearance since grandparents George and Linda will watch Jeff's twins for the weekend before flying to Brazil to see the Madeiras. God bless this growing family. Keep praying for Matthew.

**Lorry Lutz** tells of wanting to make her days count for the Lord. She still has a burden for women around the world who don't have an opportunity to know the love of Jesus nor are able to use the gifts God gave them. The trip to India she took with a mission team of her church was important as is her writing. She has been writing a fictionalized biography of Katherine Bushnell, who was passionate about exposing white slavery in the nineteenth century (we call it trafficking). But Lorry realizes that her highest calling is to pass on a godly heritage to her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She shares David's words in Ps. 71:18 to challenge us "to declare His power to the next generation." She spent time with three of the youngest of her great grandchildren, Maria, two, and her nine-month-old brother, Blaze, and the newest, Joshua Allen Lutz.

A letter from Ann-Britt tells of attending the 50th Anniversary celebration of Karanda Missions Hospital in Zimbabwe. For Ann-Britt it meant going back to the country of her birth and the place where she met her late husband, George Smazik, former Warren Park member and missionary, who worked with **David and Karen Drake**. There were 800 people who came together in celebration to thank God for years of faithfulness to the mission hospital. (Listening to the stories shared at George Smazik's memorial service at WPPC, it was clear to see what deep bonds the hospital workers have with each other.) Ann-Britt mentions traveling with a fellow worker, Lorraine Waite, who was there from the beginning and received a plaque for her years of service. The Drakes are pictured among the guests and David and Dr. Roland Stephens also received plaques for service.

New Year's greetings come from **Wayne and Kitty Gute**. Kitty is currently in the special care center of the Village receiving help to recover from an event of dangerously high blood pressure. Wayne says he has a date with her each morning and afternoon and asks for our prayer for her recovery. They will probably need to move to the assisted living section of the Village this year; pray that this is a smooth transition for them.

**Paul and Ruth Philippi** said “Remember when?” was a favorite opening line when their children were in Antigua together for a family celebration of both Mom and Dad’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays. They took an overnight trip to the north coast town of Livingston by boat on the Rio Dulce. Next they drove to the Mayan Ruins of Tikal. Their guide was Samuel Moreno, who had grown up with the children in Antigua. During the tour he explained that many people fear the end of 2012, but it is just the end of one era of the Mayan calendar and the beginning of another. As Christians we know the words of Jesus in Mark 13:32, “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Pray for the Bible study and for those they meet and witness to.”

In October during a mission trip to a refugee area in Atlanta with the OM mission board, **Misha Zverev** met a Russian-speaking Afghan family who had been in the US for only 3 weeks. They spoke no English at all and were so grateful to meet another Russian speaker who listened and answered all their questions. Misha was happy to help and was able to make some necessary repairs to their apartment. Since then he and **Gina** have been praying for ways to keep reaching out to the family. During a mission trip to Romania Misha was deeply moved by the poverty there. A family of five children came to his attention; the mother had died and out of necessity the father worked at a job far from the youngsters. An elderly grandmother came to their aid, but their home was slowly collapsing for lack of a foundation. Misha has already begun plans to head up a short-term mission trip this summer in an effort to build a new home for these children. God bless these plans.

**Gloria Ginn’s** letter told of the first communion service at the church plant. Her parents arrived in Brno again late last fall to help with the Thanksgiving celebration. Gloria invites the neighborhood to a traditional dinner and celebration. Sudeepth who is from India played an American Indian and her nephew, Justin was a pilgrim. Eva and a group of others prepared goulash for 170 people for Lenka’s wedding also in November. Please pray for Hana who comes to all the activities including the worship services but seems to leave Christ in the shallow area of her thinking. She needs to know that the love she sees is real and can be in her heart and life as well. Gloria feels that God is speaking to Jana too; pray that she clearly hears His call.

**David Frank** had a gall bladder attack last fall at the time of his daughter Tami’s wedding. Pray that the condition improves as he follows the doctor’s suggested treatment.

**Norman and Gwen Bowman** are thankful for the way the Lord is touching and healing people in the small group ministry in Orland Park. In this letter he introduced us to Silvia Nagy, a professional Romanian singer, who is his assistant for vocal training, voice therapy and choral/worship team training. They met four years ago at a class Norman taught in Romania. Since her singing improved she came to Barcelona to study voice with him and get a Master's degree in Voice Therapy. She is a fine Christian artist and a good role model for many to follow. Because of the economic crisis the Spanish government is making it difficult even for legal foreigners to stay. Please pray with Bowmans that a way will be found for Silvia to be able to stay in Barcelona and continue to help with the music and worship ministry. People from Spain have been writing to ask Norm and Gwen to pray with them; they need physical and spiritual strength as they return to Spain at the end of January. Pray for funds to come for translation of resources for furthering the prayer ministry in Spain.

Donna Tulach  
Mission Chairman

*February 2012 at Warren Park*

Sundays	Adult Sunday School Class Meets in the Board room	9:00 am
Wednesdays	Bible Study at the Platt's home Using the book <i>The Essential Commandment</i> By Greg Ogden	7:00 pm
Thursdays	Good News Club Bible stories, songs, snacks, fun Grades K - 5	3:30 to 5:00 pm
Friday, February 3	Neighborhood Movie Night	7:00 pm
Saturday, February 11	Men's Prayer Breakfast Food, friendship and prayer	9:30 am
Tuesday, February 14	Women's Prayer Fellowship Come join us	2:00 to 3:30 pm
Thursday, February 23	Study on John Bunyan's book <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i> Every Thursday during Lent	10:30 am to noon