

The LIGHThouse

The online newsletter of Wildwood Community Church



March/April 2009

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A Journey of Trust—Conversations with the Hayes



The Hayes' family has arrived! Let's learn a little more about their journey, one that is overwhelmingly characterized by God's perfect timing and leading in their lives.

Brian's journey began on a farm north of Enid, Oklahoma, where he grew up. Step by step God led him. Brian was involved in church activities from an early age and trusted Christ for salvation at the age of 8 years old. Brian continued on his path, which eventually led him to Southwest Baptist University in Missouri. While in college, he met and fell in love with Pam, who was from Clinton, Missouri. After graduation, Brian and Pam were wed. As a married couple, Brian

and Pam's paths were now intertwined. God began to lead them together. "Immediately after we were married we moved to Oklahoma and began our life together," comments Pam. "I wasn't thrilled at first, because I had never been very far away from my family. But, it wasn't very long after we moved that I fell in love with Oklahoma and it felt like home." They have now been married for 17 years and have been blessed with three active and energetic children, Logan, Reagan and Alex.

Brian had been working in a successful business career and serving in lay church leadership for about 17 years in their local church when God began to lead the Hayes' family in a different direction...

Here's how Brian describes being drawn to children's ministry: "I first got involved in ministry with kids right after Pam and I got married in 1990. I jumped into youth ministry because I had great youth leaders who made learning about God and the Bible fun. I wanted to recreate the same experiences I had as a youth. Over the course of several years, God reshaped my focus on younger kids. I saw younger kids as impressionable and eager to learn about God. I felt with God's help I could make a difference, but I wasn't sure where to start. After brushing up on some evangelism 101 courses, I began to share my faith in my community. I witnessed God use my limited ability and knowledge to move in the hearts of kids as they trusted Christ. This blew me away. Salvation was 100% God's doing. For years, I had put too much pressure on myself. I felt if I messed up a Gospel presentation, I could actually keep a person out of the Kingdom. This freed me up to share Christ boldly, and it was at that point I knew God had a special mission for me. This led me to pull out of my business and into Dallas Theological Seminary

The Hayes, continued

where I studied Children's Ministry."

The Hayes' journey has indeed been full of change, but God has prepared them for every step of the way. "Thinking about coming to Norman brings about a lot of emotion," says Pam. "God has been preparing our family for this since Brian started seminary, and I am finding it hard to believe that we are really at the end of that journey and ready to start this new one. Our first visits to Wildwood were wonderful. Before we even moved to Norman, Wildwood already felt like home. I am ready to be in our new home again. God has supplied wonderful housing for us since we sold our home in August 2006, but I am anxious to own a home again and hang some pictures and know that they will be there awhile. Ladies, you get what I am saying!"



Now that the Hayes are here, they can begin adjusting to their new home and Brian can jump into the lively and wonderful world of Wildwood's children's ministry. The importance of children's ministry is vital to Brian. "Why is it important to focus on children's ministry?" he asks. "Well, for starters, Jesus valued children and welcomed them in His presence. He set a great example for us in the things He spoke about children. It's through children's ministries that kids learn the truths of Scripture. Often, children begin their relationship with Christ as a youngster and begin their walk of discipleship. And let's remember, this ministry is important because it's our young children who will one day reach the world with the Gospel of Christ."

With any journey and time of transition, it is very important to remember to pray and seek God's wisdom and blessings. As the Hayes continue to transition to life in Norman, here are a few prayer requests from Brian for us to intercede on their behalf:

- Pray for a smooth transition in school and church for Logan, Reagan and Alex.
- Pray for the establishment of relationships within the community for our whole family.
- Pray for Pam as she will carry a huge load in settling in.
- Pray for discernment as I (Brian) begin this new job. Pray that I keep my priorities in check (Love God/Love People).

As I reflect on the Hayes' family and their journey, I am reminded of the story of another family that, under God's leading, made a big move and "career" change. It's the story of Abraham and Sarah. One evening as Abraham (then known as Abram) was gazing up at the star-scattered sky, God spoke to him, asking him to leave everything that was familiar to him, his home and his accustomed way of life. God said to Abraham, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." (Genesis 12:1) However frightening that may have been, Abraham believed God and went. In a similar fashion, Brian and Pam Hayes listened to God's calling, believed Him, and stepped out in faith into a new career and a new home. This encourages me, and hopefully you as well, to trust God wholly, even when He seems to be asking me to do something out of the ordinary or a little scary to me. God has proved Himself to be reliable and faithful time and time again, in the lives of people like Abraham and Sarah, Brian and Pam, and you and me. May we trust Him all the more.

If you would like to contact Brian, feel free to email him at brianhayes@wildwoodchurch.org or call at 329-3939.

A Time For Retreat: Men's and Women's Pine Cove

When you hear the word 'retreat', what do you think of? Some might think of soldiers withdrawing from combat. Others might think of a weekend getaway for study and reflection. Webster's dictionary defines a 'retreat' as a refuge or a place of safety.

Many of you went to the Men's and Women's Pine Cove Retreats looking for some of those things. Maybe you had been in the thick of battle in your life, and you needed to go to a peaceful place where God could bind your wounds with His truth. Or, maybe you wanted to get away for a fun weekend to spend more time in fellowship with others, to study God's word, and to enjoy His handiwork in nature. Perhaps God was leading you to a place of refuge where He could remove you from your life's distractions in order to reveal more of Himself to you.

Men's Pine Cove

"The goal of Pine Cove is for men to get away and focus on their relationship with the Lord in a peaceful setting," said Pastor John Abernethy of the men's retreat. "It's also to deepen their relationships with other men, to have some fun, to eat great food and try *not* to hurt themselves as they play sports that they were good at 20 years ago."

The men spent time together over the weekend of February 6th-8th in praise and worship, listening to Biblical teaching, hanging out together, shooting skeet, laughing and attending breakout sessions on subjects like being a man or fatherhood.



Wildwood men at Pine Cove

Robin Noad, who attended the Pine Cove retreat, enjoyed many things about the weekend. "I enjoyed having some quality time with other guys from Wildwood and getting to know some of them at a deeper level. I enjoyed experiencing the zip line for the first time—great fun. I also enjoyed seeing a falconry demonstration and watching the sun set over the lake."

"Also, God used this time to remind me of some fundamental principles in my daily walk with Him," commented Robin. "He used it to encourage me, even in MY weakness, to reach out to others in His strength to support and encourage others—and in doing so, be encouraged and blessed myself."

Women's Pine Cove

"The Pine Cove women's retreat is always a great adventure for women from Wildwood," said Polly Base, who coordinated the women's Pine Cove retreat held from February 27th-March 1st. "The adventure usually starts with how to pay for it, and how to find childcare. It continues the week before we leave because of all the unknowns that face women."

"For example, this year the following things happened in the two days before we left. One child got bit by a poisonous spider, one child fractured his arm, one child had an upper respiratory infection and one child had the bonified REAL flu! So, to say that it is difficult for women to leave town to commune with God is an understatement. This year we really felt that the enemy was leading the attack to keep us from going, but God prevailed and we took 21 women from Wildwood plus another family group that had both Wildwood women as well as others."

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Pine Cove, continued



Some of the women having fun at Pine Cove

“At Pine Cove, we heard the speaker, Karol Ladd, speak on The Power of the Positive Woman. She encouraged the women to set ourselves apart from the world and remember the truth of Christ and the Word. She reminded each woman that she is a masterpiece of God's creation and took us through a series of lessons teaching how that masterpiece is clothed with God's righteousness. The worship at Pine Cove this year was amazing! There was also a lot of fun things to do like card playing, karaoke, ziplining, horseback riding, walks on the grounds, and cabin time. One of my favorite times and it seems to be a much needed time for women is the fellowship among women during the car and cabin times. Deeper relationships are formed each year at Pine Cove and Wildwood women are terrific at including newcomers right away.”

The Example of Christ

Do you remember what Jesus did in Mark 6:30-32? His disciples had just returned from being sent out on a mission two by two; they had visited towns and villages, healing the sick and casting out demons by the authority of Christ. They returned in Mark 6:30 and told Jesus all their stories. As the crowds of people became thicker around them, Jesus said, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” Jesus knew that His followers needed a refuge, a retreat. Jesus Himself often retreated to quiet places to pray and be with God (Matthew 14:13, Luke 5:16).

Maybe Jesus knew that we can all benefit from having a time of retreat, of refuge and of refreshing. In the middle of our busy lives, it is easy to become side-tracked, burnt-out and beaten-down. But when we quiet down and step away from it all, we make ourselves more sensitive to God's voice. He truly is the One who gives us rest.

“Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

Good Friday Service

April 10th—7-8pm

Join us for a time of reflection on the cross of Christ, celebrating communion, and preparing our hearts for the joy of Easter morning.



What I Love About Wildwood

Eric and Anna Miller



My husband and I are already growing accustomed to church shopping. Being a new military couple, we have the honor of moving every couple of years due to Eric's career as an Air Battle Manager. Therefore, "church shopping" comes with the territory. And we both hate it. There is nothing easy or delightful about trying to analyze a church to see if it is a good fit for you and if you're a good fit for it. There's a mental check list that runs through your head as you walk in, "Are people warm and welcoming?" "How was the worship?" "Did the pastor use the Scripture to interpret Scripture or what he just spouting off his opinion or experience?" The list can go on and on and be extremely draining, and the whole while you're just wanting to feel at home someplace in the body of Christ.

Eric and I joined Wildwood Church during the late summer of 2007. We had just arrived from Florida, a previous station and we were tired. We knew no one, had no family within 2,000 miles and wanted to make Oklahoma our home as fast as possible. The second Sunday we came back to Wildwood, we went to the

Young Couples class. Fortunately for us, there was an evening of grilling and games planned for the class that very night and so Eric and I decided, that of course, we should go! What you should know about this little get together is that it was a going away party for a couple in the class, who of course, we didn't know at all and had only just met that morning. But, it just made sense to us, that you can't get involved unless you shove yourself out there. We arrived at the picnic ready to make friends, which is exactly what we did. We now have quite a few laughs with the couples who were there that evening, in the pure desperation we were feeling to go to the good-bye party of a couple we had never met. No one made us feel silly, no one questioned if we knew the couple who was moving, we were simply accepted as the new couple and people began to invite us to join their lives. That, was a very, very good first impression of the body at Wildwood.

I have tears in my eyes thinking about that night, because having been at Wildwood for 1 1/2 years now, I can't imagine having any other church as my home. The way people love at Wildwood is tangible, real and authentic. We are so honored to serve and be apart of this body of Christ. We thank God for the time He allows us to be here and will use Wildwood as a memorial in our lives that the Lord will provide fellowship, community and accountability, no matter where He leads us in the future.

More Than We Imagined: Better Together



When the leadership at Wildwood began dreaming and planning the Better Together Marriage Seminar, they probably had no idea what God would end up doing in the hearts and lives of the people who attended. In every detail, from the small to the big, God's hand was evident. At the outset of planning and praying, the goal was to have 80 non-Wildwood couples attend the seminar. God moved and brought an overwhelming 195 non-Wildwood couples to Better Together! With an additional 108 Wildwood couples, the total number of couples attending was 303! This number far surpassed our original hopes, and we praise God for the chance to share wise marital counsel with so many people.

But that's not all...from the response cards filled out at the end of the seminar, 52 people indicated that they had made a decision to trust in Christ as their Savior for the first time that weekend! Again, God brought about this miracle, and we are simply blessed to be a part of the process. Follow-up has already begun with these individuals, and a new class has even started at Wildwood called "Foundations". This class is for new believers who want to learn what it truly means to follow Christ. Hopefully God will use this class to deepen the fresh faith of those who have recently trusted Him.

Pastor John Abernethy said, "Our goal was to reach out to couples in the area with practical, relational-altering information about their marriage and how it works and to also share the Gospel during the weekend. God worked in an amazing way, not only in doubling the amount of people that we prayed would attend, but also by the positive response that people had to the messages and the Gospel! It was truly a life changing weekend."

One person who was highly involved in all the behind-the-scenes work for Better Together was Rebekah Key. She was an eye-witness of God's direction and provision for the weekend. "As I think back on Better Together," remarked Rebekah, "I saw how God was guiding the team answering our prayers. Everyone had such wonderful God-given talents, and God blessed us with extra time and energy to pull this seminar off."

Rebekah continued recounting God's provision for the weekend, "God's hand was clearly over the hotel. There were plenty of rooms available for the couples that wanted to stay overnight. When we saw the registration numbers climbing, we knew that we would soon need a larger seminar room. By God's grace Embassy Suites switched Better Together to the large ballroom with only a few days to spare. We were so thankful we didn't have to turn anyone away."

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Better Together, continued

“On the Tuesday before the seminar, Bruce felt a little under the weather. The seminar was only 3 days away! We really wanted Bruce to speak, and God answered our prayers!”

In spite of the potential setbacks, whether it be illness or growing numbers, the seminar was still a success! While couples enjoyed the informative sessions at the hotel, their children played and learned at Wildwood. Free childcare was offered at the seminar, and Becky Lucas planned and staffed the childcare portion of the weekend for about 75 kids. Becky had about 40 workers over the course of the weekend. This was no ordinary childcare, though. Becky organized a fun atmosphere for the kids to rotate between games in the gym, story-time and interactive songs, crafts, free play, a sensory table, Wii in the youth room, movies, tons of food, play-dough and bubbles!

“Everyone was so willing to help,” said Becky. “God definitely brought plenty of help to carry out all our plans. He really brought the EXACT right people for each age group. We heard lots of stories from parents about how great the weekend was and how thankful they were for free childcare so that they could go to the seminar. We heard several parents say that their children couldn’t wait to come back. Everything from activities to food to drop off and pick up went seamlessly. That was God all the way!! In these kinds of situations so much could have happened, but God really wanted this weekend to work and helped with every detail.”



After hearing these positive responses, we can only stop and say, thank You God for working above and beyond what we could have hoped for.

“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:20-21



Don't forget to visit the Pass it On blog online at:

<http://passitonupdate.wordpress.com/>

Read detailed updates of Pass it On progress and the latest news!

Insight from 2 Timothy: Spiritual Champions

As the apostle Paul sat in prison in Rome near the end of his life, he penned a letter to his faithful companion and co-worker, Timothy. This letter, now known to us as 2 Timothy, encouraged Timothy to stand strong even in the midst of persecution, hardship, and other obstacles that threatened his faith. Although written so long ago, this letter still has many things to say to believers in Jesus today. If you would like to study 2 Timothy more in depth, take a look at the newest Wildwood Bible study entitled “Roots: Anchoring Your Soul in Turbulent Times.” It is now available online, written by Pastor Mark Robinson. Here is an excerpt from the study:

Spiritual Champions

With eager anticipation, a sweaty (and smelly) collection of eighth graders placed their hands in a pile and shouted aloud, “Take State in ‘92!” We ended every basketball practice this way my eighth grade year. On and off the court, we looked like anything but champions that year. We were a collection of awkward adolescents with new found hair on our legs and faces. When we talked, we sounded a lot like Peter Brady in the classic “Time to Change” episode of The Brady Bunch. On the court, we finished a very average 9-8 that year. Somehow, though, through it all our coach saw something better in us. He saw more than just our present; he saw our future. Five years later in the Mabee Center in Tulsa, OK, we would cut down the nets as the back-to-back 5A State Champions.

Looking back on that experience, I find myself being so thankful for that vision of our future that Coach Dale Dishman placed inside my mind. Practices for any sport can grow hard and tiring over time. In the huddle that day were 25 eighth graders on the team. By the time we were seniors, only two of us were left to realize that dream. Everyone else had grown weary and quit along the way or decided to pursue other pursuits. The idea of one day being a champion, however, for me kept me going until the very end. Sometimes we need someone outside of our situation to see beyond our present circumstances to the future reward and call us to endure toward that grand vision.

As Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:11-13, I believe he is encouraging Timothy to endure into eternity as a champion for Christ because a great reward was waiting for those who persevered. At the time Timothy received this letter, he did not look like a spiritual champion. Due to the intense persecution and discouragement of his day, Timothy was tempted to turn passive and shy away from his heavenly calling. Timothy’s life was hard, the bad guys seemed to be winning (his friend Paul was already in prison), and the early church seemed like anything but an eternal kingdom. Seeing Timothy contemplating these thoughts, Paul grabs his coach’s whistle and shares with Timothy encouragement concerning the future. A paraphrase of 2:11-13 might go like this, “We will live with Him. We will reign with Him. Stay the course and He will stick with you and He will never let you go!” Paul wanted Timothy to see beyond His present to the future reality of His life and use that as motivation to persevere to the very end.

What is going on in your life right now? Are you experiencing any persecution because of your faith in Christ? Are you experiencing hard times right now that are causing you to question your faith in Christ, or your place in His plans? Do you feel more like a spiritual eighth grader than an eternal champion? If so, place your hand on the pile and listen to the words of Paul describing our future. We will live with Him. We will reign with Him. Stay the course! See beyond your present to your future. Today’s perseverance equals tomorrow’s champion.

The study is available online at <http://www.wildwoodchurch.org/Bible-Studies/Roots-Study>, internet version.pdf

Wildwood Events and Activities Calendar

Major Upcoming Events

4/10	Good Friday Service
4/17-19	College Life Camping Trip
4/25	Go Wild!
5/15	Father/Daughter Campout

During the week at Wildwood...

WEDNESDAY	
5:30	WildLife (6th-8th grade)
6:00	AWANA
7:00	Open Prayer Meeting
7:45	Break-Away (9th-12th grade)
THURSDAY	
9:30	Women's Bible Studies
SUNDAY	
9:00 & 10:40 am	Worship Services and AFGs

Sunday Morning Adult Fellowship Groups

Meet at 9:00 am

Meet at 10:40 am

Family Fellowship

Fellowship Center East (downstairs)

Leaders: John and Lori Abernethy
Travis and Melanie Thomas

Truth Seekers

Fellowship Center West (downstairs)

Leaders: Jeff and Joyce Harwell
Julius Harrell

Wildlife (Grades 6th-8th)

Youth Room (downstairs)

Leader: Dave Robbins

Lifeshade (Special Needs Young Adults)

Room 227 (upstairs)

Leaders: Luke and Abby Brown

Breakaway (Grades 9th-12th)

Youth Room (downstairs)

Leader: Dave Robbins

Koinonia

Fellowship Center West (downstairs)

Leaders: Frank and Tammy Wesnidge
Mike Strauss

Ladies Fellowship

Room 227 (upstairs)

Leader: Kathy Cardott

Homebuilders (Young Couples & Families)

Fellowship Center East (downstairs)

Leaders: Stan and Cheryl Schuermann
Tim and Ann Riley
Adam and Virginia Guerink

Men's Fellowship

Staff Office (upstairs)

Leaders: Bill Fix & Garry Krueger

Connections (Singles & Married, 20's & 30's)

Gathering Hall Coffee Bar (upstairs)

Leaders: Mark and Kimberly Robinson

The Heart Behind the LIGHThouse Newsletter...

Wildwood exists as a church to glorify God by shining as LIGHT in our homes, our community, and the world. LIGHT is an acronym that stands for the following:

- L**iving out God's truth
- I**nvest in reaching others
- G**iving of ourselves through service
- H**onoring God through worship
- T**eam together in relationships

To add events to the calendar or suggest a story for the LIGHThouse, email Jina Schrader at jinaschrader@wildwoodchurch.org. For information about any Wildwood calendar event, contact Becky Clark in the church office.

For more information about any of these groups, please inquire at the Information center up-stairs.



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