

the prairie edger



January 2012

“A Vision and a Mission for 2012 ... and Beyond!” by Pastor Phil Kok

As some of you may remember, back in 1999 we formed a “ministry focus team,” charged with the task of clarifying the vision and mission that God had given to Prairie Edge Church. In September of 2000 that vision and mission was unveiled, and for five Sundays we studied that vision and mission together. Then, for the next number of years, we took one Sunday a year and reviewed that vision and mission, taking time to re-commit ourselves to it.

Well, it's been a few years since we did anything like that. So, as we enter into a brand new year, I thought this would be a wonderful opportunity to once again review the vision and mission that God has given to us as a community of believers here at Prairie Edge Church, and also a wonderful opportunity to re-commit ourselves to that vision and mission. (Not to mention that Trudy said that we had

plenty of room in this issue of *The Prairie Edger!*)

I want to begin by reminding all of us what vision and mission statements are. A vision statement, in general, is a picture of a preferable future that inspires, motivates, and generates passion. Specifically, a vision statement is a clear and precise expression about what we believe God is calling Prairie Edge Church to become. A mission statement, then, is an expression of what we need to actively engage ourselves in to actually become what God is calling us to become. So, the vision statement is the final product and the mission statement details all of the steps we need to take in order to get to that point.

Okay. Understanding that, I want to review our vision and mission statements. First, the Vision Statement: *We believe that God is calling Prairie Edge*

to become a biblically functioning community of believers that is fully alive and fully passionate for Christ and His redemptive Kingdom purposes. What we're saying here is that we believe that God has set before us the ultimate goal of becoming a prevailing church, like the church we see pictured in Acts 2: 42-47 – a church that was no doubt reaching its redemptive potential: There was inspired teaching, genuine fellowship, meaningful prayer, a sustained sense of awe, wonderful stewardship, intense joy, grateful praise, intentional evangelism, and marked growth; this was a church that was firing on all cylinders! We believe that God is calling us to more and more become that kind of a church. That's what our vision statement is all about.

Now, for our Mission Statement: *Prairie Edge Church exists to celebrate*

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What's Happening:

- Saturday, January 7
8:30 AM Senior Breakfast at Buckey's Café
- Tuesday & Wednesday, January 10-11, Coffee Break Bible Study resumes
- Saturday, January 14
8 AM, Prayer Meeting
- Tuesday, January 24,
Kalamazoo Classis meets at Westwood CRC
- Friday, January 27,
6:30-8:30 PM, JaM babysitting

(cont. from pg. 1) our new life in Christ, to **cultivate** personal growth in Christ, to **communicate** the Good News of Christ to the world, and to **care** for one another in the name of Christ. You'll notice that there are four key words in this mission statement: Celebrate, Cultivate, Communicate, and Care – these are the things that we need to do, in the power of the Spirit, to more and more become the prevailing church that we believe God is calling us to become. And, by God's grace, these things have been happening in the life of this congregation – in times of worship and in times of fellowship, by way of Bible studies and Sunday

school classes, in meals delivered and outreach events sponsored – just to name a few. More and more we are becoming the prevailing church that God is calling us to become! And for that, we need to praise God!

Even so, that doesn't mean that we can "rest on our laurels." We need to press on, in the power of the Spirit! We need to re-commit ourselves to doing the things we need to do to more and more become *fully* alive and *fully* passionate for Christ and His redemptive Kingdom purposes. The question is: What can you do in the life of this congregation to move us more and more toward that ultimate goal that God has given to us?

Where can you participate; where can you plug yourself in; where can you use the gifts and talents that God has blessed you with for the good of His church? Those are things I invite each one of us to think about as we approach this New Year.

Friends, "Another Year Is Dawning." May 2012 be a year for all of us to very intentionally seek out ways to actively engage the mission that God has given to us as the body of believers here at Prairie Edge, so as to more and more become the community of faith that He is calling us to become. And in everything, may God always receive the glory!

Pastor Phil

Coffee Break By Kris Kuiper, *Coffee Break Coordinator*



On December 14 we wrapped up a wonderful Bible study lesson that took us through the end of Genesis. In January we are looking forward to kicking off the new year by using a study from Discover Life called "Women Who Found a Way", learning how women of the Bible dealt with timeless issues including priorities, time commitments, coping with difficult spouses, infertility and much more and through it still honored

God. Upon completion of that study we will spend the last month of Coffee Break diving into the books of Titus & Philemon, reminding us of Christian principles and then how to put those principles into practice, showing us how important it is to share the good news of Jesus and how we need to live faithfully for Christ as people of integrity.

We have been having great attendance in both classes (Tues PM & Wed AM), total of about 25 ladies gathering together to learn more about Jesus, praying together, and fellowshiping

with each other.

Our Little Lambs ministry on Wednesday mornings (children's ages 3 through Kindergarten) is looking for a helper or two (to rotate) in assisting the Leader each week. If you love hanging out with small children this is a place for you. Please see Caiti Woldhuis or Kris Kuiper as soon as possible.

If you were not able to attend this past fall we would love to have you join us this winter. There is always an open seat waiting just for YOU!

Check Us Out!

What's New in the Church Library:

Books for Adults:

- Every Day is Saturday: A Christian Guide to a Fantastic Retirement* by L. James and Jackie Harvey (donated by Lorraine Kuiper)
- Code of Justice* by Liz Johnson
- The Way Home* by Irene Hannon

The Doctor's Perfect Match by Irene Hannon

His Saving Grace by Lyn Cote

Books for Kids:

Heaven is for Real for Kids by Colton Burpo



DEACON'S CORNER

November Financial Information:

General Fund	<u>Y-T-D Budget</u>
	\$435,313.22
	<u>Y-T-D Actual</u>
	\$417,376.33
	<u>Variance</u>
	(\$17,936.89)

Outreach Opportunities:

Food Pantry Stats & News:

November food offerings are as follows:

Donated Fruit Items: 531 Miscellaneous Food Items: 134 Additional Purchased Fruit: 514

Thank you for once again helping to supply the Romence food pantry with canned fruit. Thank you also for your monetary gifts to the Food Pantry to help us purchase additional cans of fruit each month. If you want to give money to this cause, you may designate "Food Pantry" on your offering envelope. Again, we want to thank Linda Ryder and Kathleen Izenbaard who faithfully keep our food delivered and the fruit shelves full.

Christmas Tea Outreach Event by Trudy Eshuis



The Women's Christmas Tea was a lovely night of fellowship, fun and worship! Once again, we had open seating at this event, and we brought in one of our best crowds to celebrate our 15th year! We had about 160 women in attendance from age 12 to 95! What a blessing to share the joys of the Christmas season with our friends, neighbors and sisters in the Lord. If you did not come to the tea this year, please think about joining us next year! Many thanks go to those who assisted us by baking their wonderful treats and desserts, as well as all the guys who served and cleaned up the kitchen! You all helped to make this event a big success. *Special thanks go to the committee members: Barbara, Deb, Jill and Kris!!*

Habitat for Humanity work days



Last spring we were able to join in two different work days through Habitat for Humanity, right here in Kalamazoo. We hope to be able to do this again soon. If you are interested in joining a work team on a Saturday, please sign the sheet on the Information Table

s o m e t i m e soon. This is not a commitment at this point, but a sign of interest, so we know how many work days we can handle as a church. If you have questions about this, please talk to Trudy Eshuis or Rich DeVries. More details will follow when we have a better idea of when this will occur. Thanks!

Adopt-a-Family

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Adopt-a-Family Outreach this past December! We were able to distribute 130 gift tags, including meals, Christian materials, household goods, and more! Many of you also shared in delivering the gifts, and the Deacons and the Outreach



committee thank you for partnering with us in this special way. Ten families were blessed with our gifts and items, and we pray that they may feel the love of Jesus through us. *A special thanks goes to Caiti Woldhuis for all she did to help coordinate this program.*

Wild Game Dinner

Save the date of **Thursday, April 26, 2012** for the Annual **Men's Wild Game Dinner!** We have invited speaker, Russ Gabel to share his stories with us about his Outdoor Experiences. You can check out his website at www.freewaterexperience.com. If anyone is interested in joining the planning committee for this event, talk to Trudy Eshuis, asap.



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a place to belong

“Pa Sold the Farm?”

by Trudy Eshuis

All families have them. Those private jokes that only “insiders” would get. Funny, quirky one liners that remind us of silly things that once happened, and somehow get passed down through the years, becoming legends and having lives of their own.

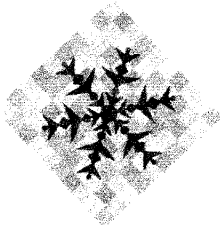
The newer generations may not even know the original story, but they know the phrase that speaks volumes in just a few words. Knowing looks and smiles remind us that you have to have been in this weird, crazy family for a while, to get the joke.

One that my family grew up hearing was the phrase, “*Pa sold the farm?*” The story originated with my uncle who grew up in a large family in northern Michigan. Legend has it that one of the kids ran into the house yelling “Fred broke his arm!” But “Ma” in the kitchen, heard instead, “Pa sold the farm!” Two very different messages there.

After that, any time somebody got mixed up in hearing something with a VERY different meaning than what was intended, they were greeted with the words: “Pa sold the farm??” In other words, “Are you paying attention? Did you hear what was really said, or did you just jump to conclusions?” For some reason, this phrase got passed down from my uncle’s family to mine, and it has become part of the fabric of memories and conversations for several generations.

Families are like that. They experience so many things together, that they remember and repeat stories and jokes and lessons learned until only a very few words need to be spoken to convey a meaningful message.

Church families have stories and jokes and lessons that get passed down and shared from generation to generation too, don’t they? I remember hearing a story about a Volkswagon in the pond, even though I wasn’t here when it happened. I’ve heard stories about the Barney bus, and famous bike trips. I remember having canoe races amid spouting water fountains! And a more current story for the church family history book just might be about a Children’s message with blue food coloring! ☺



Family Quotes:

“To us, family means putting your arms around each other and being there.”
~Barbara Bush~

“Family life is a bit like a runny peach pie—not perfect, but who’s complaining?”
~Robert Brault~

“Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.”
~Jane Howard~

“You don’t choose your family. They are God’s gift to you, as



I have learned lessons here at Prairie Edge that others have shared with me, and passed along some that I’ve learned along the way. Lessons of God’s faithfulness in times of waiting and wondering about His plans for us. Lessons of grace and peace. Lessons about God’s gifts that shine out in the lives of my brothers and sisters in Christ. Watching young people grow up into young adults, and then mature adults who are taking over the care and keeping of the church. It is a blessing to be part of such a family, and it is so important to examine these blessings for what they are, Gifts from God!

I believe that a new year is a great time to look back at the lessons and gifts and blessings from a God who never fails to keep His promises. It is a great time to remind ourselves of all that we have been given as members of God’s family. It is a time to renew our commitment to the family and to follow the familiar, well-known words laid out for us in Paul’s letter to the Colossians:

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col. 3: 12-17)

These familiar words gently remind us who we belong to and how we should treat each other. If we can look ahead to a year filled with unity, peace and thankfulness, we can also expect the family to grow both in size and in love. As we enter this new year, let’s join our hearts and hands as children of the heavenly Father, and let’s make Dad proud of us!