



This month's *Open Door* features the Guatemalan mission trip. Enjoy the special articles.

The Open Door

May 2011

Love for Truth

Passion for Righteousness

Enthusiasm for Service

*The door is open at
First Congregational Church*

All are Welcome

My petitions



Pastor Jamey Nichols

Unintended Consequences

It happens to all of us at one time or other. Sure, our intentions may be pure, but who could've known given the outcome? Just that sort of thing happened to me last month right here in this newsletter. I was entirely clear in my own mind about what I wanted to communicate. Evidently, I wasn't nearly as clear as I thought. As it turns out, my ultimate objective was still achieved albeit in ways I never would've imagined. Unintended consequences are unpredictable if nothing else.

The style of last month's article was intended to grab the readers' attention by framing truth in a manner that tugged at heart strings. It's a technique that, if it works correctly, drives an important message deep into the heart of the reader and makes the point more memorable. By touching you on an emotional level, I was hoping to instill a deep gratitude both for life's sanctity and its brevity. Once brought back around from my deliberate spin on the truth, I fully expected readers to sigh saying, "Oh, I get it—we're all dying from sin's natural causes. Perhaps I'll begin living my life today as a gift from God, or as though it were my last." Unfortunately, my slight-of-hand was clumsy to the point that by the time the article finally clarified the facts, many of you were too deep into grief and shock.

If you don't know what I'm talking about, you might want to go back and read *Memento Mori* from last month. The bottom line is that I was using my column to emphasize the certainty of two things: 1) All of us are dying; and

2) Life is precious. For those of you who came away with the belief that my "terminal illness" is something more than the human condition—something from which we are a dying!—I am both sorry and pleased. I'm sorry because I may have caused you unnecessary sadness. I'm pleased because so many people were concerned for me. The calls and notes (and even a few tears!) were extremely heartwarming. That certainly was one upside, twisted though it may be.

A second upside came in the form of the lesson itself. I was hoping to keep my readers off balance for only a few paragraphs. However, for some of you that ended up being many days. While I would have never done that on purpose, I think it actually made the value of the lesson more meaningful. Even for those of you who were pretty sure I was trying to make a theological point, it would appear that you, too, benefited more than I'd have guessed. The unexpected loss of someone, as shocking and undesirable as that is, definitely has the potential to enrich our lives. That's why wise King Solomon said, "It's better to go to a house of mourning than to a house of feasting . . ." (Ecclesiastes 7). When we come to terms with our mortality, the quality of our lives becomes that much better.

There's a movement right now in our culture that seeks to improve life by defying aging and death. Although it takes many forms, one of the foremost examples is called cenogenesis. The April 25, 2011, issue of *Time Magazine* features an article about 72-year-old Dr. Jeffrey Life and his Las Vegas center

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The E-100 Challenge continues with the following passages relating to upcoming sermons and the worship schedule during the month of May:

May 1, 2011 - #63 - Healing a Blind Man (John 9:1-41)

Sermon title is: "I See What You Mean"



May 8, 2011 - Mother's Day

May 15, 2011 - #64 - Healing a Demon-Possessed Man (Mark 5:1-20)

Sermon title is: "In the Name of Jesus"

May 22, 2011 - Wedding Faith

May 29, 2011 - #65 - Raising Lazarus from the Dead (John 11:1-57)

Sermon title is: "Dead Man Walking"

Pastor Jamey's column continued ...

for age management, the Cenegenics Medical Institute. Unfortunately, despite anyone's best efforts at reversing the signs and symptoms of aging, every member of the human race is destined for the obituaries. No amount of diet, exercise, or youthful thinking will alter the inevitable. While these things might improve the quality of our living, they cannot abolish the certainty of our dying. Arguably, the very best living happens not when mortality is resisted, but when it is respected. The goal of great living is not our look, it's our outlook.

Are you thankful for the gift of life? Do you celebrate the promise of life eternal beyond the grave? Do you consider and embrace the life and death teachings of the One who teaches us by example how to live and die? Such are the intended consequences of Him who lived flawlessly, died gruesomely, then came back to life that first Easter. My newsletter articles are written not to confuse, but so that you may believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that by believing, your lives might flourish in his name. Please, flourish with me. In the meantime, go ahead and cancel any funeral sprays you had on hold.

—Pastor Jamey

Glimpses from the Guatemalan trip . . .

Members of the mission team were asked to share their experiences from the trip. Jan Russell prepared the following for the 20 team members:

“When I was trying to think about what to say in church about the trip, I began thinking about all of the members of our mission team. I came up with one word to describe each team member. Since time was short, I chose not to go through the list during the worship service but was later asked to share these, so here goes:

- ◆ **Coffee**—This is Robbie’s (Robbie Robertson) word. Every morning he was up and had “Guatemalan” coffee brewing for the gang—a special treat for the early birds.
- ◆ **Quiet**—The word that best described Penny (Penny Pardee). She was short on words but great as she interacted with the Guatemalan people and a very hard worker.
- ◆ **Youth**—Zalen (Zalen Vander Schuur/7) was the youngest member of our team and a much needed source of energy. As many of us were dragging our exhausted bodies on a tour of Monte Flor after a day of building, he challenged me to a foot race (uphill) and yes—Zalen won.
- ◆ **Energy**—Robyn (Robyn Lynde) was always ready to go for a walk or jog (except in the early morning) and was very comfortable with a hammer. She always had some extra reserves left to play with the Guatemalan kids.
- ◆ **Emotional**—This has to describe Dawn (Dawn Wilson) who easily made us get that lump in our throats when revealing her experiences of the day.
- ◆ **Softy**—This was a side of Richard (Richard Johnson) that was especially fun to see as he fell “in love” with a little Guatemalan sweetie.
- ◆ **Something**—This is the best word I could come up with to describe Randy (Randy Cook). Always joking and getting the group to laugh—even getting his fingernails painted!
- ◆ **Saint**—Margaret (Margaret Cook) could only be a very special person to put up with Randy. Often seen laughing and shaking her head at Randy.
- ◆ **Toughie**—Millie (Milinda Wilson) has amazing strength and never complained as she climbed mountains and rough terrain to get to the building sites and feeding programs. Always impressive.

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Short and sweet ...

By Dawn Wadle, Moderator

The month of May can be a very busy time of year for everyone. School is close to getting done, and summer is just around the corner. We are gearing up for weddings and graduations and just waiting for the carefree days of warmer weather. There are camping and vacations to plan, summer ball games to attend, and gardens to grow.

Personally, my favorite season is fall, but after these past winter months, I am looking forward to the long, lazy days of summer.

How about you?

Learning to hug like a Guatemalan widow . . .

—Milinda Wilson

Over spring break, 20 members of our church took a mission trip to Guatemala. We spent a week spreading God's love in Chichicastenango, Guatemala. With the help of many generous donations from our church family and friends, we spent the week building five houses for five widows and their children and helped clothe, shoe, feed, and love hundreds of children and their families.

If you were to ask how the trip to Guatemala was, we would probably start out by saying, "Where does one begin?" It's so hard to sum up the trip in a few words (do you have a week to listen?). How does one put into words everything we saw, touched, did, and experienced? For many of us traveling to Guatemala was new experience and stepping so far outside our comfort zones made us a little nervous. How will God use me? Will I be able to rise to the challenge He puts before me and do everything He needs me to do? How will I handle the cultural lifestyle and language differences? Can I really have an impact if I can't speak their language?

For most it wasn't long before we realized we really had nothing to worry about. God brought each one of us on this trip for a reason, and the things we were truly concerned about weren't that big of an issue after all. We all learned that one doesn't have to necessarily speak a person's language to have a conversation, and that love, appreciation, and respect are universal no matter the language spoken. When you hug a Guatemalan, you feel it—there's nothing like a hug from a Guatemalan widow. What those women taught us was more special than anything we could ever give to them. We learned that everything you really need to say can be said with a smile, a hand gesture, or even one big hug.

If you ask any one of the 20 members of our mission team what our trip was like, you will get 20 different answers; however, the one thing I think we can all agree on is: "It was life changing." Not only did we grow as individuals, but we also grew as a family. This trip is something none of us will ever forget. And we couldn't have done any of it without the generous donations and prayers from everyone back home. Thank you for all you had to do with sending us on this mission.

Strangers in the Pew ...



It isn't often that a congregation is fortunate to have the parents of the pastor as regular attendees; however, First Congregational Church has that privilege, and it is with gratitude that we learn a little about these special people.

Jerry and Bev Nichols are sometimes asked about having their son as their pastor. Well, it is a privileged and easy transition. Three other sons (and daughters-in-love) are Ken and Lori in Blissfield, MI, who have four grown sons; Steve and Tricia in Sacramento, CA, who have two daughters; and David and Jennie in Rockford, MI, with one son and one daughter.



Jerry is a member of the FCC Board of Trustees, works part-time for Commercial Bank as a courier, and turns into Santa Claus in December. He retired from the Ohio Air National Guard in 1991, opened J & B Antiques Mall, Blissfield, MI, in the fall of 1991, sold that business in September 2000, and moved to the Stanton area to play grandpa with the grandkids.

Bev is a homemaker, loves being a mom and grandma, and recently experienced being part of the mission team to Guatemala. The invitation is open to visit them at 8151 S. Derby Road, providing you wish to take up the challenge of the dust or mud on the road. Their home is located between Sheridan and Greenville, where you may also visit Bev's mom, Kay Jones.

The FCC Garden Club is having a plant sale on May 15. Any donated perennials would be appreciated. Contact Shelley Belt or Pat Miller for more information.



2006

Our Church at Work ...

Diaconate Notes/April 2011 meeting

- Plans are underway for Mother's Day and Father's Day recognition.
- Tentative date of July 31 has been set for annual church picnic.

Trustee Notes/April 2011 meeting

- Waiting for bids on the north ramp repair.
- Accounting ideas were discussed.

FINANCIAL NOTES	
Income/March 2011	\$ 12,192
Expenses/March 2011	\$ 13,918
Parking lot update as of 04.26.11:	
\$44,226.80	

WE'RE STILL WAITING ...

In spite of our best efforts, we have not received the pictorial directory. As of this date, we are still hopeful, but at this point, it is out of our hands.

Message from the Diaconate ...

—Pat Miller, Diaconate Chair

The Lenten season is over, and life goes on. Thanks to Jesus Christ who came to earth and died for our sins. He did not leave us empty handed. He left us with the Holy Spirit and the promise to return. God, in his love for us, had it all planned.

We have a wonderful church and members who enjoy each other. Our Lenten suppers were a success with Pastor Jamey and Adam Wills helping us to understand Paul Miller's book, *A Praying Life*. It was a fine book on prayer that actually made one want to pray. The soup supper was well attended. A communion service followed in the sanctuary.

A sunrise service was held at the cemetery with breakfast following at the church. Several selections from The Christian Thomas Lee Collection of Fine Art were displayed and included in the sermon during morning worship. The photos were acquired directly by artist Ken Duncan from the movie set of "The Passion of Christ."

A special thanks to the Diaconate members who so willingly helped with the Lenten activities.

On Sunday, May 22, our service will focus on "Wedding Faith." An invitation is given for married couples to renew their marriage vows during the service. Contact Pastor Jamey or the church office if you are interested.



Pat Miller

Glimpses of Guatemala continued . . .

- ◆ ***Cheerleader***—I was instantly inspired by Jody’s (Jody Hedrick) enthusiasm for the trip when she sent out the getting-to-know-you e-mail. (Even more impressive because this cheerleader turned 50 on the trip.)
- ◆ ***Leader***—Pastor Jamey (Jamey Nichols) naturally took on this role for the group, but it was even more important one early morning as our short job took about 20 minutes of unexpected turns (all uphill) as we tried to find our way back to the mission house in Chichi. Thanks for getting me home!
- ◆ ***Enthusiastic***—Anyone who can get Guatemalan women so excited they jump up and down without speaking their language is just plain fun. Loie (Loie Simpson) radiated the excitement of a child as she rode in the back of an open-air pick-up singing and bouncing around like a rag doll.
- ◆ ***Tolerance***—Marva (Marva Brummeler) was my bunk mate and very tolerant of early morning climbs down from above. She also probably was the one who suffered most from “Montezuma’s Revenge” and survived.
- ◆ ***Gifted***—Dave’s (Dave Vander Schuur) comfort with people and his ability to translate is something that he has worked hard to learn/teach but was so entertaining to watch as the Guatemalan children crowded around to listen and converse.
- ◆ ***Klutzy***—Bev (Bev Nichols) had the most mishaps of the trip but didn’t complain and even saw a purpose for her twisted ankle as she looked up to see an amazing view of city and realized one of her purposes for going on the mission trip.
- ◆ ***Teaser***—Liz (Liz Thornburg) could often be heard joking and teasing with the kids and adults she came into contact with. She may be the reason Randy had his fingernails painted???
- ◆ ***Awakened***—Sydney (Sydney Hedrick) is a great girl whose eyes seemed to get bigger after each encounter. She had an experience few teens will ever have a chance to participate in.
- ◆ ***Venturesome***—Barb (Barb Helms) was living way outside of “her box” on this trip, and as a result, experienced many wonderful moments she will always remember.
- ◆ ***Comfortable***—Jennifer (Jennifer Vander Schuur) was a member of the group who was very fun, pleasant, helpful, and very hardworking. She seemed to be a “natural” in the role of a missionary.

These are just the impressions I had of the people on the team. I think you all are amazing! I truly enjoyed this experience and this group. You are probably wondering what my word is? ***BLESSED!***

—Jan Russell

(Note: Many words were suggested for Jan after the team viewed this list. My choice was **HEALER** because of the special role she played in caring for the health of the team members. —Pastor Jamey)

Women's Fellowship ...

Women's Fellowship met at the church for their April 7 meeting.

Plans to have a dessert auction at the annual church picnic were begun.

Patterns for making crocheted animals for the Operation Christmas Child boxes are available. See the display on the table in Fellowship Hall.

The next meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. at the church on May 5.

Contact persons for Women's Fellowship are:
Janet Brundage, coordinator (989.831.4405)
Pam Russell, treasurer (989.831.0867)
Martha Turnbull, secretary (989.831.4217)

Thursday, May 5, is the National Day of Prayer. Our community will meet around the flag pole at the administration building (former court house) at 12 noon.

Morning Fellowship time ...

Our morning fellowship (a.k.a. Sunday School) will come to a close for the summer on Sunday, May 22. It was a great 2010-2011 season at FCC with the largest participation taking place over the past several years.

We are looking forward to many improvements being planned and implemented over the summer break, which will make for an even greater 2011-2012 year.

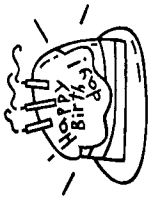
God bless you all and many thanks to those teachers and everyone who contributed to the program this year.

—Bob Brundage
Christian Education Director

Our summer worship hours begin on May 29 . . .

Which means our choir will begin their summer hiatus, and we will be looking for people to share their talents with us for special music. Please contact Kathy Jeppesen or Loie Simpson if you are willing to provide special music during our worship service. And many thanks to the choir for their faithfulness during the past year. Loie and the FCC congregation thank you!!!

Note this: Morning worship begins at 10 a.m. on Sunday, May 29!



- 02 John Bussell
- 02 Beverly Stowell
- 03 Laura Jo Simon
- 04 Chad Barber
- 07 Brianna Miller
- 08 Cy Hansen
- 08 Terry Thompson
- 08 Dianne Weger
- 10 Jim Whisman
- 12 Jordan Scofield
- 13 William Plavan
- 14 Deanna Whisman
- 16 Ed McDonald
- 16 Bill Simpson, Jr.
- 18 Tanabeth Miller
- 18 Jeff Smith
- 19 Rick Zimbelman
- 20 Alan Myers
- 21 Judy Johnston
- 21 Carrie Smalley
- 22 Michelle Nichols
- 23 Simon Baldwin
- 29 Mary Jo Hansen
- 29 Bernie Williams
- 31 William Simpson, Sr.

Anniversaries

- 05 Randy/Susan Karr
- 08 Dani/Karen Dodds
- 09 Dale/Michelle Miller
- 15 Richard/Joyce Johnson
- 15 Chelsea/Jordan Schmidt
- 19 Terry/Gwen Anderson
- 22 Randy/Margaret Cook
- 24 Gale/Marilyn Parr
- 26 Bill/Phyllis Lacy
- 28 Al/Pat Buchholz
- 30 Nathan/Tonia Reinke



May 2011

First Congregational Church of Stanton
 Worship Service: 11 a.m. — May 1-22/10 a.m. — May 29
 Phone: 989.831.5240
 Email address: beverlyb@fccstanton.org
 Website: www.fccstanton.org

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 11 am - Morning Worship 9:30 am - Adult Choir 9:45 am - Morning Fellowship 5 pm - J-Walkers	2	3 12 noon Two-By-Two	4 8 am - 4 p.m. Life Line Screening	5 NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER 9:30 am Women's Fellowship 12 n Rotary	6	7
8 MOTHER'S DAY 11 am - Morning Worship 9:30 am - Adult Choir 9:45 am - Morning Fellowship 5 pm - J-Walkers	9	10	11 6 pm Diaconate Board	12 12 n Rotary	13	14
15 11 am - Morning Worship 9:30 am - Adult Choir 9:45 am - Morning Fellowship 12:15 pm - Board of Trustees 5 pm - J-Walkers	16	17 12 noon Two-By-Two	18	19 12 n Rotary 6:30 - 9 pm MAARC	20	21
22 11 am - Morning Worship 9:30 am - Adult Choir 9:45 am - Morning Fellowship 5 pm - J-Walkers	23 OPEN DOOR DEADLINE 7 pm - OFD Committee	24	25	26 12 n Rotary	27	28
29 NOISY CHANGE SUNDAY 10 am - Morning Worship	30 MEMORIAL DAY 	31	<p><i>"For her little ones, Mom walks in front to give guidance; for her teens, she waits behind in case they fall; For the grown, she marches proudly beside in comfort and friendship." —Anonymous</i></p>			