

Connections

Arise-a United Methodist Church



December 2008



The Gannons: A Story of Faith and Family

Ministers

*Every member
of the Church*

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The Gannon family is known for their way of being where they are needed. Be it taking meals to people, working at the Barn Sale, raking leaves on Work Day or folding Sunday bulletins every week, you will see them doing what they do best—living out their faith in quiet and supportive ways.

Jim grew up in Grosse Isle, but had ties to Pinckney. His uncle, Frances Shehan, was the Hamburg Township Supervisor for 20 years (Shehan Rd. is named for him!). Jim and his older brother and sister enjoyed visiting their grandfather's home on Highland Lake. His love of water sports continues, as he enjoys these activities with his own family now. Jim says he always enjoyed exercise, going to the gym long before it was popular. Jim was raised Presbyterian, recalling, "My favorite memory about Sundays growing up was my dad cooking breakfast when we got home from church."



Left to right: Chris, Jim, Carly and Mary

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The Stories of Those Who Serve: Trevor McCabe

Trevor McCabe, a nephew of Jen and Rob Wagner, is stationed at an airbase about 40 miles west of Baghdad called Al Taqaddum. Trevor is a Corporal in the U.S. Marines. Before his deployment to Iraq last January, he was stationed at Camp Pendleton near San Diego. His wife Jocelyn is still living there, as Trevor will return to Pendleton when his tour in Iraq is over. Coincidentally, he has a stepson who shares the name Trevor, as well.

His unit works 12-hour days in temperatures ranging from 100 to 140 degrees. Sometimes they work at night to avoid the heat of the day. Trevor's military occupational specialty (MOS) is fuel handling. As a civilian he worked in building restoration and construction.

When he arrived in Iraq they needed the skills from his civilian profession more than they needed fuel handlers. He and his compatriots are building infrastructure for the Iraqis to use when the region is turned over to them.



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CHRISTMAS

Pastor's Column



Pastor Don Weatherup

You've no doubt noticed that for weeks now analysts are predicting a doomsday Christmas, at least for retailers. Predictions have been made that due to the economy, consumers will dramatically cut back on their spending. This comes to us on top of all of the other bad news, with the domestic auto industry and financial firms struggling, plus rising unemployment. It

seems that when it comes to Christmas, this is the year of the Grinch. I am, of course, referring to the Dr. Seuss classic story, "How The Grinch Stole Christmas."

Before you allow this wave of bad news to drag you down and make you feel grinchy this Christmas, I'd like to remind you of the story of the original Christmas Grinch. No, not the green guy of Dr. Seuss fame, but the very first Christmas Grinch. The Bible documents his story. His name was King Herod.

One of the things that Herod and the Grinch had in common was that they both tried to stop Christmas from coming. Herod tried it by attempting to get the Wise Men to tell him where the Christ child was so that he could kill him. The Grinch did it by stealing everything remotely related to Christmas in Who-ville.

So what motivated these two—the Grinch and Herod? It was mostly power and greed, particularly for Herod because he was the ruling King of Palestine, the official representative of the Roman Government. And, at the time that Jesus was born, the residents of the region were required to swear their allegiance not to any God, but only to the Roman Government. And therefore, if Herod was the King, there couldn't possibly be another King. So when Herod heard about the birth of a King—this Messiah, the King of the Jews, it was in his best political interests to have the child killed. Why was Herod so concerned about a little child? A lot of it has to do with the kind of Messiah the Jews were expecting. They were expecting a great political ruler. So Herod was going to make sure he took care of things before this Messiah had any power. Just like the Grinch, Herod was trying to make a pre-emptive strike.

But God's plan was bigger than King Herod. And God intervened.

In the 2nd chapter of Matthew, we find three different references to the Prophets of the Old Testament. Prophets

were people chosen by God to reveal messages for God. Some of these messages were easy to understand; others were a little more difficult. In some cases, these messages were in the form of predictions of things to come.

Micah 5:2-5

The birthplace of Christ will be in Bethlehem.

Hosea 11:1

As a child The Messiah will return to Israel from Egypt.

Jeremiah 31:15

The death of the sons of the Israelites in Bethlehem.

Take some time this Advent Season to read this wonderful story of the birth narrative and everything that led up to it. Because what you will discover is that the Grinch doesn't win. God does! God sends three messages in the form of dreams. The first dream tells the Wise Men not to tell Herod where they found the Christ child. The second one tells Joseph to flee Bethlehem and go to Egypt, and the third dream tells Joseph when to return with Jesus to Nazareth.

Because **God is bigger** than any Grinch, **nothing** can stop the real joy of Christmas.

This is such an important point! If you're a person who is surrounded by a lot of Grinches this year, no matter how negative people are around you, no matter how much bad news you hear about Christmas this year, the Grinches won't win!

Just stay focused on the real meaning of Christmas—the birth of Jesus Christ, the day God came down to earth to be just like one of us. Think about all that God promises for your life. Think about how much bigger God is compared to the news from the Grinches. If you do, your Christmas will be overflowing with joy!

With you on the journey,

Pastor Don





the Gannon's... *continued from pg. 1*

Graduating from Western Michigan University (WMU) with a degree in Business Administration, Jim moved to California, where he worked for a printing company. Upon returning to Pinckney, he and Mary met due to their parents becoming acquaintances. The couple then realized they had both been students at WMU at the same time, living in adjacent dorms. They married at Shalom Lutheran Church in 1992. Jim continues in the printing business and works for the U of M in the Print Copy Mail Dept. He was appointed to the Putnam Township Planning Commission and has served for four years.

Jim served on the Arise Moving Team for 9 years, never missing a Sunday, and now serves on the SPRC. The Gannons came to an Arise Christmas service at Jane Tasch Theatre and started attending soon after that. "Arise isn't a judgmental type of church. They don't tell you what to think or who to vote for. Pastor Don does a really good job—he's so non-judgmental—I really appreciate him."

Jim's wife, Mary Read, was born in Ann Arbor and raised in Pinckney. When she was three years old, Mary's father was killed in an auto accident and she was raised by her mother, along with her older sister and brother. "Single parent families weren't common then and I always felt a bit out of it," she remembers. "In addition, I was painfully shy. I developed a deep faith because I needed to." She was baptized Methodist, attending Community Congregational Church as a child, but "my mother would take us once a month to visit all kinds of churches, so that was a nice thing. I was exposed to a variety of traditions early on.

Mary graduated from WMU with a Communications degree, wanting a job as a workplace mediator, but jobs were scarce, due to a recession. Eventually, she returned to Ann Arbor to work in the offices of the U-M Recreational Sports Dept. "I knew I couldn't do that work long-term and that's when I thought about doing chiropractic work," she says. She returned to school and graduated from Sherman Chiropractic College, completing the course in three years. Her first office was in Ann Arbor, then in Pinckney, working both locations until she settled solely in the Pinckney location.

Mary is a breast cancer survivor and has been active in the Arise Cancer Support Group, Co-chair for the Relay for Life for seven years and on the Finance Committee for five

years. She and Jim are ushers, helped with the Fall Festival and other events. "Arise has done a lot for us...it was our first family church...we hadn't attended church with our children until then. My cancer was discovered four months after I started attending. It was a rough start. Diane Gould (herself a cancer survivor) noticed my lack of hair, asked Pastor Doug about me and that's how we made contact. It is so comfortable at Arise, people really care...the special feeling we have for Arise has sustained itself regardless of people coming and going. I pray for good things to happen at Arise...the people there deserve it."

Reflections on her cancer reveal a poignant story. "I wish I'd never had it and yet I'm glad I did. I wouldn't wish it on anyone, but it did something special in my life. I look at life differently now. I don't sweat the small stuff as much. My grandmother had breast cancer in her 40's. It skipped my mother, but I got it. It gives me hope that my grandmother lived to be 84 and that was back in the days before treatments were sophisticated. It makes me feel that this disease is indeed survivable."

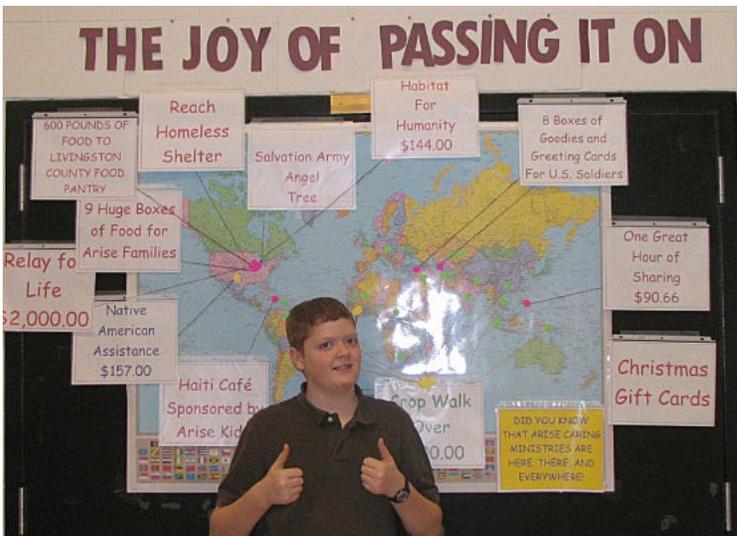
"It's hard that I've met so many people that are gone now. But having cancer is just another bump in the road. You have to just get up and keep going—I hope my kids learn that. That's where faith comes in. I have to believe that what happens, happens and that we're here for a reason. I was so ill and my treatments so complicated, that all I could pray was to please let me live to raise my kids. They were four and six years old when I was diagnosed, similar to the ages my sister and I were when my father died. I couldn't accept that it was God's will to have that tragedy repeated. I had lived without one of my parents and knew what my kids would go through. Thankfully, God has given me that time with my kids and husband."

Jim and Mary have two children. Chris, 14, who is a freshman at Pinckney High School. Carly, 13, is in 8th grade at Pathfinder Middle School. Both of them lead busy and interesting lives. Their stories will be featured in the next issue in a new column that will profile the youth of our congregation.

Gannon family, thank you for sharing your special story of faith and family. We are fortunate to have you among us at Arise.

The Joy of Passing it On: Consecration Sunday, November 9th

With special thanks to Steve Cary, Chairman, Stewardship Team, Rich Sliter and the Arise musicians, and the Eastern Michigan University horn quintet!



CONSECRATION SUNDAY



Vicki Dawson and "her kids" celebrate a successful month for the Deer project, while also welcoming Kevin Atkerson, big brother to C.J. and Austin Bollinger, home on leave before heading to Utah for the rest of his military service. They presented Kevin with a Faith Diary.



Wednesday Night Bible Mission: Some Assembly Required

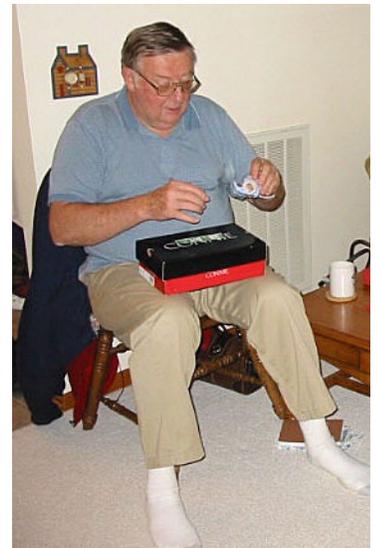
By Laura Bowen, *Arise Missions*

What Ron and Gayle Fike started as a Wednesday night Bible study group has become a **serious** mission team. After Ron's Emmaus Walk, Gayle says, "He came home and told me we were starting a Bible study group." And boy did they! The "Wednesday Nighters" have been meeting at the Fike home regularly ever since. The members have changed over the years, but not the Bible-centered focus. That focus has now led to action; reaching out to others in various mission works.

In November the Wednesday Nighters assembled a whopping **120 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes** to send overseas. The project began when the last box was sealed last fall, setting aside leftover stuffed

toys for the 2008 season. Ron has also reached the hearts of his "angels" at his place of work, Ervin Leasing, who donate money, boxes and toys for the project. In addition, the donations from the November 2nd Communion offering yielded over \$500 for shipping the boxes...only \$380 to go to reach goal.

The Bible study group will now set its sights on spring, when they put together health kits for Haiti. A mission team with hearts as big as this can only mean more projects to follow. If you would like to help with your time, talents or finances for this growing mission team, or contribute remaining Operation Christmas Child postage money, please see Ron or Gayle.



DECEMBER 2008 CALENDAR

December



Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful.

= NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

WEEKLY EVENTS

(All services at Arise Acres)

Sunday _____

Worship Service at Country Elementary

9:00 am – Traditional Worship

9:45 am – Children's Sunday School

10:30 am – Contemporary Praise and Worship

Monday _____

7:00 pm
Divorce Recovery

Tuesday _____

7:00 pm
Praise Singers Rehearsal

Thursday _____

7:00 pm
Men's Huddle

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
November 30 Worship at Country Elementary	December 1	2 7 pm Church Council	3	4	5 10 am TGIF Sisters	6
7 Worship at Country Elementary Holy Communion	8 7 pm Threads of Faith	9 6:45 pm SPRC 7:30 pm Church Conference	10	11	12	13 10 am God Squad "Deer Project"
14 Worship at Country Elementary 5 pm Arise Christmas Party	15	16	17	18	19 10 am TGIF Sisters	20
21 Worship at Country Elementary First Day of Winter	22	23 7 pm Trustees	24 5 pm & 7 pm Christmas Eve Services	25 Christmas Day	26	27
28 Worship at Country Elementary	29	30	31	January 1	2	3



Trevor McCabe... *continued from pg. 1*

Trevor is pursuing his associate's degree in business via access to computer and web-based courses and expects to have his degree by the time he returns in January 2009.

His wife, as well as his dad, Jerry, and his mom, Pam, all appreciate the ability to talk to Trevor on the phone regularly to stay in touch. They are also grateful to people for praying for him, too.

According to his dad, Trevor believes that war itself is intrinsically wrong unless what you are fighting to preserve is irrefutably right. In phone conversations with his father, Trevor

has shared his belief that America will ride out this storm and continue to be one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all who seek it.

Trevor's e-mail address is tmccabe81@yahoo.com and his postal address is:

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To every person in the home of:

If you wish to be removed from our newsletter mailing list, please return this mailing panel to us. Thank you.



December Anniversaries

12/23 Tim & Jan Richards **Happy 15th!**

December Birthdays

12/4 Laurie Glover	12/11 Rich Guyon
12/6 Diane Gould	12/23 Casey Tankka
12/7 Michael Sanborn	12/28 Ross Richards
12/8 Ron Fike Kim Sherry	

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*Thanks to all who contribute;
please contact us with your
feedback and suggestions!*