



Looking Back: A Reflection on Arise 2008 Accomplishments

By April Flanagan, Council Chair

Note: The New Year is an important time to review the past year, reflect, learn and plan for the future. This article will focus on a review of 2008 Arise Objectives. The next issue will feature plans and priorities for Arise in 2009.

On November 12, 2005, a group of 20 Arise members met to begin a 1.5 year visioning and strategic planning process that began with Pastor Doug and finished with Pastor Don, and eventually included 40 people creating strategic priorities that were shared and agreed with the Arise community. We started by asking the question, "What would we LOVE to create at Arise, 3 years from now?" In December, 2009 we will be at that 3 year time frame. So let's look back and see how far we've come.

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Focus on the Military: Kevin Atkerson



Kevin Atkerson is no stranger to Arise. His family is Steve and Cheryl Bollinger, along with brothers C.J. and Austin. Kevin grew up at Arise, so he is a familiar face. He was on leave from the Air Force in November and

was able to visit Arise while he was home.

Kevin completed basic training at Lackland Air Force Base (AFB) in San Antonio, Texas, the largest Air Force training base in the country. Afterwards, he spent six weeks at Sheppard AFB in Wichita, Texas, training for his current work – repairing and transporting aerospace ground equipment. He is now stationed at Hill AFB in Layton, Utah. "We have about 300 pieces of equipment to pick up, fix or maintain and deliver. We work on everything from diesel engines, heaters, air conditioning units...any number of things," Kevin says. He drives the trucks, as well as working on equipment. When asked if he

enjoys his work, he answers with an enthusiastic, "I love it!" He chose this specific type of work to do in the military. Coincidentally, his Uncle Joe, Steve's brother, was in the Air Force as a young man and did the same kind of work. "I didn't know that when I chose it," Kevin shares, "but he has advised me about different aspects of the work and things."

Kevin is an Airman, E2. There is potential to move up in the ranks and after reaching E4, he will begin to take tests that lead to promotions. "The money isn't the greatest, but I get a good feeling from serving my country. I have a chance to see the world that I might never have seen. I'd never been to Utah. There's always someone going somewhere, so it's easy to find people to travel with. I've been to southern Utah already and seen the National Parks like Zion, Arches, Bryce and more." Other recreational opportunities, when he's not doing his Monday through Friday, 7 am – 4 pm job, is snowboarding in the Wasatch Mountains and playing basket

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Winter

Pastor's Column



Pastor Don Weatherup

The Church Council has determined that the 2009 focus for Arise Church will be on church growth. We, as an entire congregation, will be asked to evaluate our activities and ministries and focus on growing the church. Does that mean everything we do will be church growth related? No. But it does mean that when we have choices to make, we will choose options that will best

reach our goal of growing the church. Like any organization, we have limited resources. So it's important that we focus and are all on the same page in terms of direction.

I think it's important to ask the question – BUT WHY? Why should we grow the church? Some might quickly suggest to improve our financial situation or to get additional bodies involved in ministry to help spread the work load, and although those reasons may be true, there is a far more important issue at hand.

We are to grow the church because Christ commands us to do so. In Matthew 28:18-20 we find these words, "Jesus came to them and said: I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you."

Notice the word GO! Christ shares a specific strategy. He does not say "to bring people into a closer relationship with God, sit in the temple and hope people wander in and then share your story." No. He says, "Go to the people." That's good news. There are people all around you. Co-workers, neighbors, relatives, friends, the waitress you often see at your favorite restaurant, the teller you talk to at the bank. They all represent opportunities. And once we get to those people, what are we supposed to do? Simple. As Jesus said, "Teach them everything I told you." In other words, we are to share the message of Christ.

Some might argue, "I can't delve into a theological conversation like that!" That's too complex.

Here's the thing. More often than not, you don't have to. Keep in mind that we live in a rough world. A world that is full of negative thinking, a world that gravitates toward selfishness, a world of greed. Recent research

affirms that people, right now, are HUNGRY for positive relationships, they're hungry for being connected with something good in the world, and they're hungry to belong. If they can see those positive things in you, they will get a glimpse of Arise Church being that kind of place. Then all they need is an invitation.

The Christian church didn't start with a group of highly skilled scholars of the Torah – the Christian church started with fishermen. Average everyday people like you and me. But they were different, clearly different. In a Roman culture of oppression and greed, the disciples spent three years learning about love and compassion from Jesus. They learned about forgiveness and what it means to have a servant's heart. And they believed everything they were taught because Jesus put an "exclamation point" on his authority when he rose from the dead. The disciples were 100% convinced that the lifestyle Jesus taught was the

one they must live for themselves, but they also were 100% convinced that it would help other people, too.

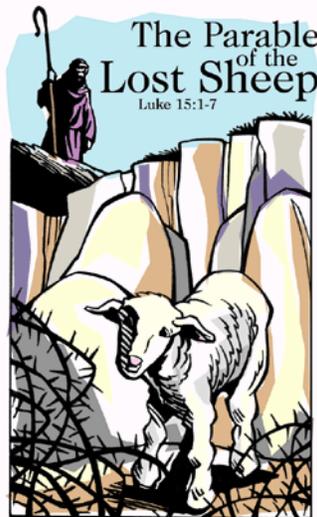
The disciples were effective in growing the Christian church because being around them was infectious. Read the first few chapters of the book of Acts in the Bible and you'll see why they were effective in growing the church. Through the disciples, people saw hope. They created an atmosphere that was energetic, happy, and loving.

So let me ask. How positive are you when talking about Arise Church? Do you reflect an atmosphere of hope and joy? Why is that important? Another thing research repeatedly affirms is that newcomers to a church can

instinctively feel frustration or negativity. When someone is new, the first six months, they're looking for signs of conflict. If there is a negative atmosphere, they won't be around long. But the opposite of a negative atmosphere will attract people like a magnet. William Treadwell said, "If we can convince people that we are onto something that's full of joy, they'll stampede one another to follow us."

In Luke 15:4-7, Jesus gives a metaphorical story of why the church must grow.

"Tax collectors and sinners were all crowding around to listen to Jesus. So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses started grumbling, "This man is friendly with sinners. He even eats with them." Then Jesus told them this story: If any of you has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, what will you do? Won't you leave



the ninety-nine in the field and go look for the lost sheep until you find it? And when you find it, you will be so glad that you will put it on your shoulder and carry it home. Then you will call in your friends and neighbors and say, "Let's celebrate! I've found my lost sheep."

Jesus said, "In the same way there is more happiness in heaven because of one sinner who turns to God than over ninety-nine good people who don't need to."

I want to close with one more set of statistics that I am completely convinced explains what will determine the success of the growth of Arise Church. The Institute for American Church Growth has researched for years how people first came into church membership. They asked 10,000 people about their pilgrimage to church. They asked, what led you into church? The answers are:

Visitation	1%
Special need	1%
Programming	2%
Walk-in	2%
Sunday school	4%
Evangelistic crusade	4%
Pastor	5%
Friend/relative	79%

Who will determine the church growth success of the Arise Church? Certainly God will. But who will God be using? That's right...you and me!

With you on the journey,

Don



Saturday Sisters LIFE Team Kicks Off

by Merilee Zane



On Saturday, January 24th, a second Sister's group, Saturday Sisters, began at the home of Merilee Zane. The purpose is to provide a space for caring, connection and Christian service to the community, for women who cannot attend the TGIF Sisters' group on Fridays.

Merilee said, "personally, despite the friendships I have at Arise, I find the busier I get the less time I have to spend in small groups, getting to know other women in our church. And I miss it." She spoke about the huge responsibilities women have for their families and themselves, and the power women experience when they come together to connect and support each others' needs and growth. This has certainly been the experience of the TGIF Sisters, led by Sherry Graham. A second group has been under discussion for awhile, with Sherry and others offering their support to the new group, if needed.

The frequency, time and location of sessions are under discussion. Come whenever you can, and enjoy the Saturday Sisters! For more information contact Merilee Zane at (734) 268-6184 or Zaneme@northville.k12.mi.us.

New LIFE Team Celebrates "The One"

The Bollinger's and the Wagner's invite you to join them in a new LIFE team, which will meet in one of their homes each month. It's easy to remember: The 1st Sunday of the month at 1:00 for 1 hour of lunch and 1 hour of spiritual growth, beginning on February 1st at the Wagner's. Bring the family and a dish to pass. All are welcome, and there is no obligation to attend every month. Come when you can. Experience the many opportunities a LIFE team offers for spiritual growth and community connectedness. What a great way to begin the New Year with Cheryl, Steve, Jen and Rob and their kids, celebrating "The One!"



Looking Back... *continued from pg. 1*

These are the *Purpose, Vision & Mission* and *Strategic Initiatives* that were framed by that group at the end of 2006, and that we have been working against since that time:

Purpose: To live a Christian faith that is exciting, practical and relevant every day.

Vision & Mission: Growing in God's love and passing it on.

Strategic Initiatives:

Growing Spiritually

1. Offer short-term special topic studies to be held at various times.
2. Grow new Life Teams.
3. Discover Spiritual gifts and match them with the needs of the church.



Meaningful Missions

1. Participate in hands-on missionary work.
2. Pay Conference Apportionments at 100%.



Experiencing Worship

1. Maintain highly skilled and consistent musicians.
2. Encourage high energy and participation.
3. Welcome visitors and make a plan to orient them to membership.



Caring Community

1. Plan and implement events for fun and fellowship.
2. Offer events and experiences that deepen Christian relationships.
3. Develop intentional programs and ministries to help people in our congregation struggling with challenging and potentially stressful life issues such as divorce, job loss, addictions, new baby, illnesses, etc.



Last year Council reviewed those initiatives and set two 2008 annual priorities: Excellence in the Overall Worship Experience and Increased Visibility for Arise in the Community. Based on the 2008 Arise calendar, here is what we have accomplished against those priorities:

1. Excellence in Overall Worship Experience
 - Worship Survey & Follow up
 - Continued focus on high-quality sermons
 - Music Program Reorganization & Improvements with transition from Kevin to Rich
 - Drama Team
 - God's Kids
 - Adult Choir
 - Sunday School Improvements
2. Increased visibility for Arise in the Community(ies)
 - Divorce Care (beginning 1/28)
 - Homeless Shelter (2/17)
 - Women's Retreat, with Community Congregational (3/8)
 - Relay for Life (5/16 – 17)
 - Mission Day Camp (7/21 – 25)
 - VBS (8/11 – 15)
 - 5th Quarter (beginning 9/5)
 - God Squad Deer Project (beginning 11/8)
 - Community Thanksgiving Service (11/25)
 - Christmas caroling

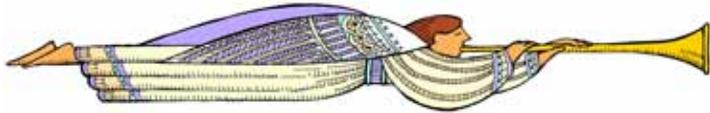
In addition, of course, there were many other accomplishments by the Arise community, committees and LIFE Teams, including numerous mission projects that have been covered separately in Connections.

I think it is fair to say that these are impressive accomplishments, especially for a small church with limited resources. Thanks to all who have made them happen!

Please take a few minutes to review this list, reflect on how we are doing and offer any feedback to Pastor Don, me and other Council members. We are currently engaged in planning for 2009, and will be communicating that progress in multiple ways as we move forward. Your comments, questions and concerns are vital to the success of this process.



CHRISTMAS AT ARISE



Christmas

Spotlight on Youth: Chris and Carly Gannon

(This is a new monthly series, focusing on Arise youth and helping us get to know them a little better.)

Jim and Mary Gannon were featured in the December 2008 issue of Connections. Their children, Chris and Carly, lead very busy and interesting lives, too.

Chris, 14, is in 9th grade at Pinckney High. A member of the marching and symphonic bands, as well as attending band camp, he plays the trumpet. He said he may be good enough now to play for the Arise Orchestra. He's been playing for about 4 years now. Sports-wise, he's a tennis player and plays for the fun of it, usually singles, since it's hard to find enough people to play doubles. His other hobby is aviation. He was invited to an Open House at Oakland Southwest Airport, where his name was entered in a raffle and he won a 30 minute ride in the cockpit with a pilot, where he was allowed to take the controls for a brief period. After that, he was hooked. With an uncle as an airline pilot, this may be no coincidence! Chris loves to fly. He completed ground school for 9 weeks and has put in 6 of his 60 required hours toward his private pilot license. "I could get a lot more hours in, but it's often cancelled lately, due to weather," he states. Asked about Arise, Chris says that he enjoys the Youth Mission Day Camp and the music program the best. "I like that it's still a small church and personal. You can talk to people and they know who you are."

Carly just turned 13 recently and is in 8th grade at Pathfinder Middle School. Her passion is for the theater—drama, singing and dance, which includes jazz and ballet, having started the latter when she was 7 years old. She has been acting for awhile already and appeared



in the Pinckney Players production of the Orphan Train this fall, playing the part of an angel. When she was asked if this was type-casting for her, she just laughed. She may audition for a role in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat next. As far as sports go, her favorite is volleyball and she's been on the school team for two years. Like the rest of her family, she enjoys music—playing the violin in the orchestra and attending the Blue Lake Music Camp for 2 weeks in the summer. Her favorite Arise activity is the Mission Day Camp and working at the Howell Nature Center, taking care of the deer. She says she really likes it when the Arise Youth have special meetings and activities to attend.

Thanks, Chris and Carly! We're glad you're here with us at Arise!

Kevin Atkerson... *continued from pg. 1*

ball. "We still do physical training three days a week on base, too," he adds.

Kevin confirms that the hardest part of being in the military is being separated from his family. "I miss seeing my parents and grandparents and the boys' sports and recitals. I lived away from home after high school, but this is different, being so far away." When asked about how his faith has influenced him now that he's in the Air Force, he shares his thoughts. "Basic training brought me a lot closer to God. I think it did for a lot of other guys, too. I served as a Chaplain's Assistant at the previous base in a place where guys could come and relax, hang out and play video games and stuff. They also held nice worship services once a week. It was called the White Rope Program and I was a volunteer."

Kevin will be deployed to Iraq in September 2009 and return to the U.S. in January 2010. "I'll be doing the same type of work I'm doing now and will be away from home over the holidays," he explains. His mom will provide his overseas address to Arise before he leaves, so his church family can stay in touch while he's away. He enjoys getting e-mails and mail from home now, too.

His e-mail address is: kevin.atkerson@hill.af.mil

His postal address is:

AMN Kevin Atkerson
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Thanks, Kevin, for your service to our country! We're keeping you in our thoughts and prayers.

FEBRUARY 2009 CALENDAR

A NEW YEAR & NEW OPPORTUNITIES

WEEKLY EVENTS

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

Tuesday _____
 7:00 pm
 Praise Singers Rehearsal

Thursday _____
 7:00 pm
 Men’s Huddle

May what you see in the mirror delight you, and what others see in you delight them. May someone love you enough to forgive your faults, be blind to your blemishes, and tell the world about your virtues.

– Happy New Year from the Connections Team!

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 Worship at Country Elementary Holy Communion	2	3 7 pm Church Council	4	5	6	7
8 Worship at Country Elementary 4 pm God Squad	9 7 pm Threads of Faith	10	11	12 REACH Program for the homeless	13 10 am TGIF Sisters	14 10 am “Deer Project” 
15 Worship at Country Elementary	16 	17 7 pm Trustees	18	19 Meat & Greet	20	21 REACH Program for the homeless
22 Worship at Country Elementary 4 pm God Squad	23	24	25 	26	27 10 am TGIF Sisters	28



Deer Project: Arise God Squad Members Pose with a Four-Legged Friend





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January/February Anniversaries

- 1/5 Vlad & Norine Bibicoff
- 1/18 Jim & Gail Osborne
- 2/3 E. J. & Kim Sherry

January/February Birthdays

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1/2 Wesley Richards | 1/23 Ellen Russell | 2/12 Natalie Sherry |
| 1/4 Carolyn Stafford | 1/24 Jewell Smith | Shelley Weatherup |
| 1/6 Judy Miller | 1/25 Jeremy Bartel | 2/19 Laurie Russell |
| 1/10 Max Yamakado | 1/26 E. J. Sherry | Myles Wagner |
| 1/12 Katherine Guyon | Gene Smith | |
| Norma Topp | 2/1 Tony Whalen | |
| 1/22 Jerry Dawson | 2/7 Gayle Fike | |
| | Noah Sherry | |

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