



Laura Bowen: Creative Spirit, Generous Heart

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Every member of the Church

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Laura Bowen is a native of Pinckney, raised with seven brothers and sisters west of town on the corner of M-36 and Kelly Rd. "I had a great family and loved growing up in the country," Laura said enthusiastically.

"There was a big mob of us, since we had eight cousins who lived next door, too." Her father was a machine and boiler operator; her mom a homemaker. Laura's parents now reside in Ft. Myers, Fla. whom she is planning to visit over spring break. One brother and one sister still live locally.

"I attended St. Mary's School from 1st through 5th grade. I liked the calm and quiet of parochial school. We wore uniforms and it was very organized and structured. I am organized myself, so I appreciated that. Eventually, St. Mary's closed and I began to attend public school, which was a real shock. There weren't enough classrooms at the time, so kids were split up into half-day sessions. It was unusual and kind of chaotic. In general, though, I always enjoyed school."

Laura always felt connected to art and grew up doing crafts at home, since there was little exposure to art classes in school. "I didn't enjoy sports and there weren't many after school activities, plus we lived quite a distance from school." She learned to knit, crochet, and sew at home and these became her hobbies.

She grew up in the Catholic Church when Mass was spoken in Latin and found that she didn't connect to the services themselves,

since she couldn't understand what was being said. "However, I greatly appreciate the values I learned through the church and catechism classes and feel this built character in myself and the whole family," she said.

After graduation from high school, Laura went to work for Edward Brothers, a book manufacturer in Ann Arbor, doing layouts, and later marrying her husband, David, in 1978. David worked on the line at the GM Willow Run Assembly Plant and when the plant closed, he moved on to residential construction work. After their daughter, Melanie, was born, Laura continued to work at home. Once Melanie was in kindergarten, Laura went to Eastern (EMU) part-time, graduating with her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, with a major in science and a minor in art. "I didn't think art would be marketable, so I put them in that order," she explained. She went on to teach 2nd and 4th grades at a charter school in Westland, but after three years, the commute became too difficult, so she began to substitute teach in Stockbridge. "It's so wonderful there, I love everything about it," she said fondly. At the time, there was no art program at their school. A few weeks after she started subbing, she was approached to consider teaching art classes. After a couple of years, that became reality and she is still there ten years later.

Laura relates how she and Dave have also gone through some tough times together. When their daughter was ten, Dave suffered damage to his spine, causing the need for extensive rehab in learning to walk again. Despite this devastating news, he encouraged



Pastor's Column



Pastor Don Weatherup

I've always loved holidays because they break up the monotony of everyday life. When it comes to holiday buzz in our culture, Easter just doesn't seem to compare to Christmas. After all, a tiny baby wrapped in swaddling clothes surrounded by animals is probably a lot more appealing to the general population than a 30-year old rabbi being executed and coming back to life.

Perhaps it's because I've matured in my faith, or maybe you just get wiser with age, but I'm finding it easy to say that Easter is clearly THE most important holiday. Why? Because according to Christian doctrine, the resurrection of Jesus means my eventual resurrection from the dead! Now that's something to celebrate!

John 3:16 (CEV) says, "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die."

Do you believe it? What's happening to you after you die? Are you going to heaven? Are you sure?

In the book a small group of Arise folks are studying for Lent, "Crazy Love" by Francis Chan, we are reminded that probably not every person who claims the title of "Christian" is going to heaven. In the book, Pastor Chan challenges us to look at the evidence in our life that shows we are a follower of Jesus. Are we following how Jesus wants us to live? The Bible describes that evidence by using the term "fruit." Does our life show fruit, evidence that we are truly a follower of Jesus? The Bible says there should be clear and compelling evidence that we're living differently because of our belief in God than those who don't believe in God. Jesus said, "My sheep know my voice and they follow me."

Matthew 7:21 is a stark reminder. Jesus said, "Not everyone who calls me their Lord will get into the kingdom of heaven. Only the ones who *obey* my Father in heaven will get in." (my emphasis added.) Makes you think, doesn't it?

Earlier in my life, Easter was fun, but it didn't mean as much to me as it does now. There was hollowness to my excitement about Easter Sunday. It was like biting into one of those chocolate bunnies only to discover that it collapses because it's hollow inside. Bite into a solid chocolate bunny sometime and you'll immediately notice the

difference. There is nothing like snapping off the bunny ear of a solid chocolate bunny. But I digress...

The faith I have about my own resurrection from the dead is more solid. I wouldn't say I never have doubts, but generally speaking my feeling about it is pretty solid. Like a solid chocolate bunny, that's a very sweet thought!

Someday I will take my last breath, and my human body will die. But that will not be the end of me. My spirit will be transformed into a new heavenly body.

And at that very moment, I will be in the very presence of the God whom I love, worship and serve. Awesome!



That's why the resurrection of Jesus and His empty tomb means everything to me. Because His resurrection proves to me that He was who he said he was, God in human flesh. But, don't take my word for it. Check out the evidence for yourself.

I often wonder why there are so many people who haven't taken the time to investigate the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus for themselves? Aren't you curious? Don't you REALLY want to be certain that it's true?

Maybe it's just me. I am a skeptic at heart. I wanted to know not just in my heart, I wanted to know in my head, too. So I spent considerable time reading about the evidence. If you're interested in investigating the evidence for yourself, I'd be happy to point you to some good resources to do that.

I don't know how many breaths I have left in me. But if the next one I take is my last, I'll be OK. Because Jesus isn't dead—he's still alive! And because he is, I will be too.

Happy Easter!

Don



The Promise
of Easter

Pray the Devil Back to Hell

by Beth Plachta



On January 31, Tom and Donna Terhune, Diane Gould and I saw the much anticipated documentary film *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, hosted by Chelsea United Methodist Church (UMC). The sanctuary was full, attended by people from various churches in the Ann Arbor District. Thanks to the excellent work of the Liberian Partnership Task Force in keeping the needs of Liberia highlighted, the United Methodist Church in Liberia has been able to thrive. In past years, health, sewing and school kits have been assembled and shipped to Liberia. This year, a collection will be taken among area UM Churches to purchase a much needed Jeep. A few years ago, Liberia's Rev. Nellie Wright stayed in the homes of some Arise families and spoke at Sunday worship. More recently, the Terhunes hosted an evening with Rev. Wright upon her return visit to Michigan. *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* won the award for Best Documentary at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2008 and premiered in America the same year.

It is commonly known that Liberia experienced some of the worst atrocities imaginable during their 14 year long civil war, some of which were mentioned in the film, causing a hush to fall on the crowd. What may not be so well known, and is the subject of the documentary, are the efforts of one woman, social worker Leymah Gbowee, as she rallies Christian and Muslim women to join together in a peace movement called Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace. Large groups of women gathered in public places like fish markets and held non-violent war protests with prayer, singing and demonstrations for peace. They also gathered along roadsides where the president, Charles Taylor, would see them, when his entourage passed by.

In short, these women of different faiths came together with a common goal because they had had enough of their children, their family members and themselves being brutalized and killed in the war. They demonstrated a remarkable tenacity and courage, enduring heat, thirst, hunger and threats from rebel forces until the world took notice of them. They dressed in white to symbolize peace and numbered in the thousands. They forced a meeting with President Taylor, who promised to attend peace talks in Ghana. When peace talks stalled, a delegation of women travelled to Ghana and staged a sit-in, blocking the exits to keep the parties talking until

a peace agreement was reached. This Liberian women's movement led to the 2006 election of Africa's first female president, a United Methodist, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Pray the Devil Back to Hell is an inspiring story of one woman's determination to help other women reclaim their families and their country and a good reminder that one person truly can change the world.

Looking Forward: A Reflection on Arise 2010 Priorities

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. A brief review of 2009 accomplishments was presented in the last issue of connections. Here we identify 2010 plans and priorities.

Following extensive discussion at the Church Growth and Arise Council meetings, it has been decided to continue focus on church growth, with specific emphasis on the following objectives geared toward expanding awareness of Arise within the greater Pinckney/Lakeland/Hamburg communities, broadening use of Arise Acres and servicing members and those in the communities we serve.

The 2010 objectives are:

- Launch and leverage the Dog Park (Matt Plachta)
- Have two children's events plus VBS per year (Jen Wagner & Tina Cary)
- Sponsor some form of running or biking event
- Hold a live Nativity or equivalent at Christmas in the Arise Acres barn (Merilee Zane)
- Purchase a roadside sign with changeable wording to communicate Arise events (Pastor Don)

In addition, work continues on building our church, with plans under investigation to speed up this process.

We continue to welcome your questions, reflections and feedback. Please contact Pastor Don, those leading the objectives above or me.

Thanks to all for everything you do through Arise, for the glory of God.



Building Team News By Jeff Vaden



The Building Team started the new year with a kick-off breakfast on Feb 20th. The volunteers who attended were led by Pastor Don in discussing our building goals and objectives for the upcoming year and just enjoyed each other's company and conversation.

Though it may appear the building activity has slowed down of late, nothing could be further from the truth. Last summer and fall the excavation work to cover the septic field, line and tanks were completed, as well as the remaining rough heating and cooling system work. Both of these efforts were large and fairly costly projects. And the best part is they are both paid for!

So, for the first few Saturdays in March, the Building Team has been tying up loose ends in preparation for our final rough inspection. This inspection confirms that all the work inside the walls is complete and ready to be covered. With any luck we should be approved to continue by the end of March.

The first major item on our to-do list this year is to finish the insulation. With the insulation work on the classroom side already complete, only the worship side remains. Don't get me wrong, this is a big effort and will require many hours to complete. The great news is between our continued and generous donations to the building fund, the amazing gift of money and time from our friends at Brighton First UMC, and Bob Whalen's 'piggy bank' efforts, the insulation phase of our project is already paid for! Great job everyone!

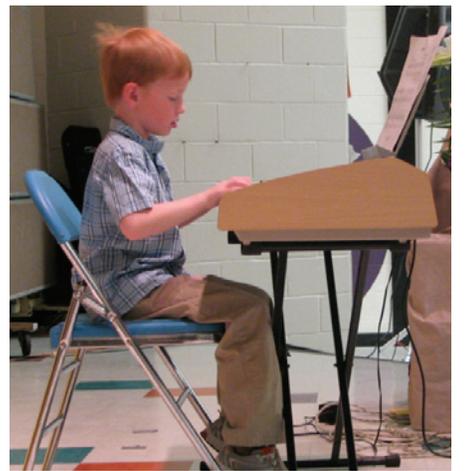
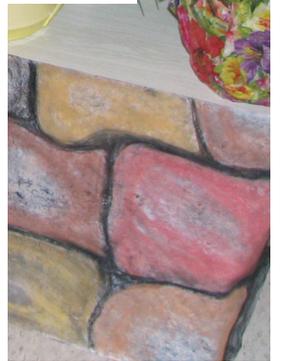
So how are we going to get all this insulation installed? The plan is to have a good old fashioned barnraising-style event. Though the date and details are still being worked out, we're looking to have a great day, sometime in April, of meeting and greeting our friends from Brighton First UMC, a potluck lunch, a little spring cleaning around the grounds, maybe we can get Rich to play a tune or two. Even the dog park will be available. So stayed tuned, we'll let everyone know when a date is settled on.

We will continue to ask for volunteers every week the team plans to work. Some weeks we may be on ladders and scaffolding, other weeks we may be moving materials or painting. In any case, we'll make sure it's clear what type of work is being planned and what's involved to help you decided whether you are capable of volunteering that week. So keep volunteering and donating what you can and before we know it, we'll be home.



Pastor Don gives a "thumbs up" after recognizing Arise congregation members at the Spiritual Olympics and potluck celebration, on February 28th.

EASTER AT ARISE



Laura Bowen... *continued from pg. 1*

her to finish college. There have continued to be challenges along the way. "Dave keeps me focused on the good stuff in our lives. He's got a very positive spirit," she affirms. "He is the most important person in my life."

As an adult, Laura's artistic niches have been quilting and ceramics. She and Dave became first time grandparents on Valentine's Day with the birth of their grandson, Damien, who lives in Washington, D.C. Laura created a quilt that will no doubt be a family heirloom, made from Melanie's childhood clothes she had saved all these years. A few years back, she tried a hand-built ceramics class at EMU and found that she loved it. Gradually, she purchased the necessary equipment and "began messing around with clay – mainly sculpting useable pieces with 'creatures' on them. The summer craft circuit became too much like work, so it'll be a hobby for now. I'll return to craft shows after retirement."

Laura says she looked for a church that didn't have as much ritual, something more concrete, where she was in charge of her own faith. She also sought a denomination where there was female leadership. She started attending Arise about 4 years ago. "I clearly remember my first Sunday at Arise," she said, chuckling. "I was a little concerned about what I should wear, so I bought a new sweater. I sat in the back row. Chris Seering was very sweet and she sat down next to me. Everyone was very friendly and the music had a lot of energy and spirit. The sermon was good and the message really spoke to me." I thought it went really well. When I got home, I realized I hadn't removed a sticky label that ran down the length of the side of my new sweater with the size on it. I was so embarrassed. I'm not sure if anyone noticed or if they were too polite to mention it. I don't remember if I was brave enough to come back the next week."

Luckily for Arise, she did return. Pastor Doug invited her to lead the Missions Committee after the topic of missions kept coming up in her Spiritual Gifts class. She continues to chair that group, leading our church in many mission-related efforts. In addition, she has helped with Relay for Life, the CROP Walk and was a member of the Wednesday Nighters Bible Study Group. She enjoys using her creative talents with VBS and last year made the fabulous butterflies that decorated the sanctuary. "One thing that I won't do is sing. I'm just saying...", she quipped. Otherwise, as all who know her are aware, her gifts are many, as is her quiet, faithful spirit of servanthood.

We are very glad to have you here at Arise, Laura. God bless you and your work among us!

Upcoming Activities

by Jen Wagner



Relay for Life—May 21 & 22

Arise will once again participate in Relay for Life at the Brighton High School track on May 21 and 22. Relay is a meaningful way to celebrate the lives of people who have battled cancer, remember the loved ones lost, and fight back against the disease. Plus, it is a fun-filled event for the entire family. Survivors can also enjoy a free dinner in the Brighton High School cafeteria on Friday evening, whether they are walking in the event or not.

Barb and Duane Haines have once again given us their fifth wheel camper for the weekend. Now we just need to fill it with people. I invite you to go online at www.relayforlife.org/brightonmi to register under the Arise team as a participant. There are collection envelopes and brochures on the information table at Country Elementary each Sunday. Feel free to contact Jen Wagner for more information 734-878-5260.

Save the Date!

VBS 2010 July 19–23

Are you ready to have a Galactic Blast at Vacation Bible School? Mission control has set lift off for July 19 from the Arise Acres launch pad (barn). You may have guessed by now that this year's curriculum for VBS has a space theme. We will have our first official planning meeting in April at Jen Wagner's home. Check your printed programs for meeting dates. Let's make this a cosmic adventure for the praise of God!





Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

— John 11:25–26 NIV

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday _____

Worship Service at Country Elementary
 9:00 am – Traditional Worship
 10:30 am – Sunday School
 10:30 am – Contemporary Worship
 8:00 pm – Small Group Study—Crazy Love

Monday _____

7:00 pm – Divorce Care

Wednesday _____

7:00 pm – Wednesday Nighters
 7:00 pm – Small Group Study—Crazy Love



Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
28 Worship at Country Elementary	29	30 7 pm Dog Park Task Force	31	1	2 Good Friday 7 pm worship	3
4 Easter Sunday Holy Communion Worship at Country Elementary	5	6 7 pm Council	7	8	9	10
11 Worship at Country Elementary 4 pm Youth Group	12	13 7 pm Dog Park Task Force	14	15 6 pm Meat & Greet	16	17
18 Worship at Country Elementary	18	20	21	22	23	24
25 Worship at Country Elementary 4 pm Youth Group	26	27 7 pm Dog Park Task Force	28	29	30	1

Arise Church Community Dog Park Grand Opening

by Matt Plachta

The Arise Church Community Dog Park is slated to open to the public on Saturday, May 15. Arise folks have already been enjoying the park with their dogs. The original plan was to have a large community-wide grand opening that day, but due to work being done by people to investigate possible funding for the new worship center, it was decided to postpone these efforts. Flyers will still be distributed to area dog-related businesses to alert people in the area that the park will be ready for use on May 15. Updates will be

announced when a grand opening date has been confirmed. In the meantime, feel free to spread the word that the dog park is available for public use as of May 15.





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April/May Anniversaries

4/11	Jim & Mary Gannon	5/5	Bob & Joyce Barnard
4/13	Mike & Carol Sanborn	5/12	Mark & Barbara Wood — Happy 20th !!
4/21	Jack & Penny Dunlap	5/21	Ron & Gayle Fike
4/30	Tom & Debbie Short		

April/May Birthdays

4/2	Beverly Selvig	5/10	Dorothy Winslow
4/3	Daphney Weatherup	5/13	Lindsey Selvig
4/4	Mary Read Gannon	5/14	Chris Young
4/6	Cheryl Bollinger	5/15	Pat Sliter
4/10	Don Fuller	5/17	Ben Germain Bob Zane
4/15	Barb Haines	5/18	Jon Gebarowski Rob Wagner
4/20	Dan Guyon	5/20	Dave Russell
4/29	Kevin Germain Tom Terhune	5/26	C. J. Bollinger
5/3	Leah Sherry		
5/5	Nicole Watson		

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

- Arise *Connections* is available online and in color at www.arisechurch.org
 Check out the Missions link on the website!