

May 2024

Garden Gleanings

A monthly publication of the Garden Community Church

Garden Kids Wrap-up Another Year

April 24, 2024 was a special night for Garden Kids students, families and guests who came to celebrate another year of Wednesday evening children's ministry. It began with a delicious meal of ham and cheesy potatoes, with all the fixings, prepared by Erin Koehn and her assistants, Eva Flaming and Wilda Becker. Lindley & Kayla Harms brought the youth group to help with the serving of the meal and cleanup, which was a great blessing!



Following the meal, still in the fellowship hall, the pre-K through 2nd grade children shared a few songs they had sung during the year. After that, we all went to the sanctuary where Jenny Loyd was our MC for the evening. She thanked all the staff and helpers who served this year in various ways. Dan and his orangutan puppet, Artie, once again came to help us have fun, but also to consider the theme of "Patience". They illustrated the Bible story of Jacob and Esau in a fun way to help us see that Esau did not have patience when he came in hungry from a day of hunting. Dan then shared the Gospel from John 3:16 and explained what that verse means. Dan let us know that 19 individuals, including some adults, responded to the invitation to trust Christ as their Savior. What a blessing to end our year with a moving of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of these individuals who now have the precious gift of eternal life!



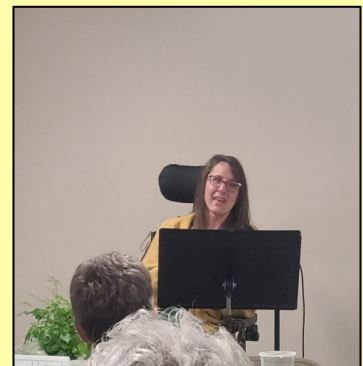
We are grateful to all who assisted in serving this year, whether that was teachers, helpers, game leaders, nursery staff, meals or in other ways. This is truly a team effort and it could not be done without the prayers of those who uphold us each week in that way. God is doing His work in the lives of those who came throughout the year and we pray that the lessons and Bible verses they learned will continue to penetrate their hearts and minds this summer!



Hop into Hope



Debbie Oelke was our guest speaker for our WoMin April 26th event hosted at the church fellowship hall. Debbie is from Hillsboro and has authored two books, *“Still Standing: Hope Beyond Disability”* and a children’s book, *“I Wish I Could Stand Up.”* Our spring theme was “Hop into Hope” with frog decorations and favors as a visual to the hope available to us in Christ as we walk through the trials of life. We were blessed by an evening of Christian fellowship with the thirty-seven ladies in attendance. We began the evening with a pot-luck salad supper followed by Debbie sharing her testimony of her journey with multiple sclerosis and God’s faithfulness through the challenges she faces. Although a platform she would not have wished for, she sees God using her life and disability for good and encouraged us as we faced trials in our lives to lean into the hope found in Christ and open our eyes to the work He is accomplishing through it. We had great additional dialog during the question-and-answer period that followed her presentation, and we were left encouraged, challenged, and better informed on realities of living with a disability.



Senior '24

Macy Wohlgemuth— Hesston High School

Macy plans to attend Hutchinson Community College. She has applied to the Physical Therapist Assistant program and plans to get an associates in Exercise Science.



8th Grade Promotion

Matt Koehn—Moundridge Middle School

College Graduates

Matthew Morrison graduated from Hutchinson Community College with an Associates degree. He will attend KU in the fall.

Kylee Nelson graduated from Hutchinson Community College with an Associates degree.

Chet Albin graduated from Pittsburg State University with a Bachelor degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology with an emphasis in Design and an Associate Degree in Art. In June, Chet will start his career at Viega in McPherson in the plastic engineering department.

Vonnie's Views



On August 11, 1979, we stood in front of a packed church to exchange vows. On that day, we were *declared* married. It was a legal transaction that united us in marriage. From that point on we shared life and promised to do so for as long as we both would live.

Those two young people at the front of the church had *no clue* what marriage would be like. Every day since then, day by day, we have *worked out* our marriage—through hard days, raising two children, navigating quite different ways of doing things, learning to understand each other.

We were still married when we were mad at each other as well as at high points of joy. Through the each of the 16,000+ days that we have been married, we've been “working out our marriage.”

This illustrates what it means to be “in Christ.” There was a day when I recognized my sinfulness before a Holy God and understood the Gospel (I Corinthians 15:3-8). It was on that day that I passed from death into life because I believed God and it was counted to me for righteousness (Genesis 5:15 & Romans 4:3). On that day I was *declared* justified and was adopted into the family of God.

All these years later, I'd say that I had *no clue* what the journey of being “in Christ” would be like. But every day since that day, day by day, I've been *working out* my salvation. Through hard days, rebellious days when I tenaciously clung to my ‘pet sins,’ days of spiritual highs and spiritual lows. On each of those days, I was still “in Christ.” I was “working out my salvation” as I lived life as a child of God.

Just like I could not *work out* my marriage if I weren't married, so I could not *work out* my salvation if I were not saved! Why? Because being married is a *transaction* but it is also a *relationship*. If marriage were only transactional, it would be drudgery. But marriage is *relational*—it involves a person, another individual who I love and who loves me. Our lives are more richly entwined than we ever could have imagined 45 years ago.

Salvation is the same. Being justified and adopted into God's family is a *legal declaration*. But it is also *relational*. I have a relationship with God! Learning to know the God who is both transcendent (over and above creation) and immanent (present in his world and with his creation).* This absolutely blows my mind. The eternal God willed a relationship with me—his creation who was a rebel. It was enormously costly for God to make it possible for me to be “in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The day I married, I changed my last name and became a wife. The day I believed; I became a Christian and a child of God. In both cases *I* didn't fundamentally change—I was (and still am) a unique individual. But in both my marriage and my salvation, the legal change of my identity from single to married; from a child of wrath to a child of God, initiated deep and visible life change. A changed identity led to me *working out* my new identity.

I am still changing *because of* my changed identity! In marriage we change as we navigate life together—jobs, raising a family, aging. As a new creation in Christ, I am changing as I grow into the likeness of Christ (Colossians 3:1-17). Ralph Cunnington (*Perfect Unity*, p. 110) says, “Our identity with Christ is something to be discovered and explored as we enjoy the fruits of our union with Christ day by day. This gives believers the sort of confidence and security that our society craves and should spur us on to share Christ with our friends, family, and colleagues.”

* I'm grateful to Ralph Cunnington, (*Perfect Unity*, chapter 8) for this way of explaining God's transcendence & immanence.





Prayer Calendar and Memory Verse

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<p>I Thessalonians 5:21-22—Prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from all appearance of evil.</p>						<p>1 Pray our church would be characterized by unity and love.</p>
2 Pray for Elwyn & Linda to have times of refreshing & pure joy.	3 Pray parents have wisdom in teaching their kids God's truth.	4 Pray other churches would be led to unite in prayer regularly.	5 Pray for Ivan & Mary to have the energy to keep up with the kids.	6 Pray for Hope Shelter & Union Rescue Mission.	7 Pray our hearts are clean & pure, that nothing would stand between us and God.	8 Pray only God's truth would be proclaimed among us.
9 Pray those who can't take care of themselves have the help they need.	10 Pray James & Angela have wisdom in setting goals & priorities.	11 Pray lost people would be drawn to Christians who can tell them of Jesus.	12 Pray the truths taught Wed. night would come to the mind of the kids.	13 Pray for open doors for Joe & Denise to build relationships.	14 Pray for Harvest Radio & All Nations Radio - clear, strong broadcasts.	15 Pray for hearts open and sensitive to the Holy Spirit.
16 Pray Josh & Camila protect their personal time with God.	17 Pray for Christians in politics to have wisdom, courage & God's leading.	18 Pray for those in their 20's making life-impacting decisions to seek God first.	19 Pray Peter & Rachel have God's peace in every situation.	20 Pray for wisdom in knowing how to help others & point them to Christ.	21 Pray Chuck & Connie are able to comfort those suffering around them.	22 Pray we would be more concerned about God's glory than ourselves.
23 Pray we each finish well - never knowing when we will finish.	24 Pray Tim Zook is able to keep up with technology.	25 Pray those in bondage to an addiction would find forgiveness & deliverance in Jesus.	26 Pray for wisdom to know how to apply truths learned.	27 Pray for God's light to shine through the darkness & souls to be saved.	28 Pray for open doors to share the gospel - for us & for the missionaries.	29 Pray for an opportunity to encourage someone in the Lord.
30 Pray your life exalts the name of God.						



Straight from the Heart

I am often asked this question in public spaces by friends and acquaintances: “Are you full?” There are big Homeless organizations that feed that type of thinking. When you read materials from their organizations, they are reporting statistics constantly about Hots and Cots. These are the number of hot meals we served, and here are the number of people we provided a bed to for an overnight stay.

One huge Homeless facility in St. Louis used to house 100 poor families on the floor in one room in their facility. They were on mats, family by family, right next to each other. They brought in their camera crews, interviewed the needy families, and appealed for funds. That is an extreme example of the philosophy I described in the previous paragraph. I can assure you that we will not go in that direction as an organization.

We want to deal with Homeless Men, Women, and Families on an individual and personal basis. We want to know their names and bring Hope to them, one person at a time whether they stay with us for three days or three months. We appreciate your regular support and we are engaged in that endeavor every day.

It’s still fine for you to ask, “Are you full?” because, in fact, you care.

We Love You, Brian Bisbee

A Middle School Student and a Bethel College Student—What do they have in common?

The Santa Fe Middle School student gathered food for our Food Pantry and our lunches, paper goods, and personal care items. She did it by herself and arranged the transportation of it through one of her parents.

The Bethel College student played a game on campus that offered cash prizes for different places. The stipulation was that the prize had to be given to a charity. He chose New Hope Shelter.

Thanks to both of these students who sacrificed their time and effort to help us.

Panhandler Alert

I have dealt with panhandlers for over 20 years. I have seen all kinds of signs. I have dealt with over one hundred and have determined based on my unscientific studies that this is the best sign for getting the most money "Homeless Veteran Will Work for Food. God Bless." Before you think that my cynicism has taken over, know that I have offered assistance to all of the panhandlers. I have offered food, shelter, and more. Five have accepted help. The others have replied with responses like, "I'm good", "I've got food", "I have a place." etc. Draw your own conclusions. I would advise you not to give these people money. Most are using the money you give them for purposes you would not be happy with. Feel free to pick up some of our cards and distribute them to panhandlers in the Four County area.

Our Unsung Heroes

Every night like clockwork a delicious meal appears at the New Hope Shelter. It is prepared by our Meal Team volunteers from one of our supporting churches. Volunteers come in to serve the meal and encourage our residents. We want to say a Big Thanks to you if you are involved in any way in that process. You are the best!

If you would like to be a volunteer on one of these teams, please call Marilyn at 316-283-7711.

Recently we helped an 86 year old man and his 83 year old wife. There are a whole lot of people facing a whole lot of challenges out there. Are there five of you, starting this month, who would step up to make a monthly commitment of \$15 to sustain the very important work of the New Hope? Thanks for your prayerful consideration.

*Current
Needs
List*



8 ½ x 11 Copy Paper
Sliced meat for Workers' lunches
Toilet paper
Paper towel
Sandwich bags
Lunch bags

Napkins
Coffee
Sugar
Creamer
Floor cleaner
Laundry pods

Our mission at New Hope Shelter, Inc. is to provide a sanctuary for those experiencing homelessness in Harvey, Marion, McPherson and Butler counties by uniting the local church into a nurturing community which restores hope through a growing relationship with Christ.

It is through the love of Christ we share with those in need of hope.

Executive Director - Brian Bisbee
brian@newhope-shelter.org
316-283-7711



ONE | COLLECTIVE

We have big news to share with you...

We have been praying and discerning what God has for our family in these recent months. We have peace that our time in Ecuador is coming to an end. We are so thankful for all of you who have walked with us these past 8 years in Ecuador. We went as newlyweds and this summer we will celebrate our 9th wedding anniversary! And we now we have an almost 4-year-old son, Dakota, and an almost 2-year-old daughter, Riley. God has been so faithful to us all of these years, and we know that he will continue to be faithful as we move into a new season. As one chapter ends, we are looking forward to what God has for us in the future. We are sure you have many questions about this transition. We hope to answer many of them through this email, but please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions you may have.



Who will take over for Hannah as Director of End Slavery Ecuador?



As most of you know, in 2020 I (Hannah) transitioned from being the social worker for the ministry to taking on the role of director. This has included taking care of my team of 10 staff, leading team meetings, strategic planning for our ministry, fundraising, managing the finances, fostering strategic international partnerships, other administrative tasks, and more.

My job is being split into two roles, a full-time, in-country director and a part-time fundraiser based in the USA. These two roles require very different skill sets and even locations. The director will be in charge of everything in Ecuador, being able to focus on the team and the women we serve, as well as all of the admin that it takes locally to keep the organization going. The fundraiser will be in charge of connecting with donors, writing grants, and overall maintaining the funding we need to continue as a ministry.

My heart has desired that a local leader would be able to take over for me whenever I were to step out of my leadership role. The splitting of these functions allows for the new director to be an Ecuadorian who has so many gifts and talents that allow them to do this role super well, however, is not fluent in English to do the fundraising. I believe wholeheartedly that it is sustainable and beautiful for local leadership to lead the ministry. I have continued to love empowering local leaders, and this is another step in that.

Have the new director and fundraiser been hired?

Yes!! We are so excited to announce that Patty Lugo will be the new Director of ESE and Jake Savage will be the new fundraiser for ESE. I am training both of them currently to take over the different parts of my job.

Patty Lugo has been on the ESE team for almost 9 years. She has held various roles on the team including academic coordinator, emergency coordinator, volunteer coordinator, financial assistant, and more. As I have started training her, it has not been difficult as she has so much context for the team, the women, and even the administrative tasks behind the scenes because she has already been helping me with those recently. She has been involved with outreach since its start and has gotten to know so many women and their kids throughout the years. She has a beautiful heart to serve and represent Jesus every day. She is excited for the opportunity to continue to serve the women and the team in this new role. Patty and her husband Washington have two daughters, Emilia (age 11) and Hannah (age 5).



Jake Savage worked with me on a fundraising project a few years ago. At the time, he was doing fundraising consulting full-time. Now, he works in the grant space at Congressional Partners in Washington DC. He has experience writing grants, nonprofit fundraising, and sales. He has a passion for anti-trafficking efforts since he learned about sex trafficking as a young adult on a mission trip to Eastern Europe. He is excited to use his skills, experience and knowledge to contribute to the economic sustainability of the ministry. Jake and his wife Alexa have two children, a daughter named Sloane (age 4), and a son named Van (age 2).

Hannah & Patty are pictured together above. Jake and his family are pictured below on the left and Patty and her family are pictured below on the right.



What is next for the Zook family?

We are still figuring out all of the pieces of what is next for us. We are so glad that God has given us immense peace about leaving Ecuador, and we know that he will continue to lead and guide us along each step. What we know is we have tickets for July 1st to leave Ecuador. We will land in Minnesota and shortly after be with Josh's family in Wisconsin over the July 4th weekend for a family reunion. During July, we plan to see as many of you as we can, traveling around the Midwest to thank the churches and individuals who have made it possible for us to live and serve in Ecuador all these years. Hannah will still be working remotely, supporting Patty and Jake, for a few months after we arrive back in the USA. We are still figuring out when she will officially fully transfer out and no longer be part of the ministry from afar, probably sometime this fall.

Hannah's sister, Sarah, has offered Hannah a job at Bundle Birth in Los Angeles. The timing is still being nailed down but we hope to make our way to Los Angeles and settle down there for the next season. Please pray for us as we solidify all of these details.

What can you do to support us through this transition?

We are so thankful for all of your love and support through these years. We ask for your prayers for us. This is not easy to leave a place that we know and love. Please pray for healthy closure here with our community. Pray for our kids as this is a big change for them, especially Dakota who understands what is going on a lot more. Pray for us as we say goodbye to people and places we love, that we will be able to be grateful, to grieve, and to give ourselves grace in the process. Pray for Hannah as she trains Patty and Jake, that all of that will go smoothly. Pray that the plan for after this would come together and the timing of it all would work out well. Pray for our relationships as a family, for our marriage and parenting, that God would give us an extra measure of patience, love, and understanding through a lot of change.

Please continue to give financially if you are doing so until we let you know when we will officially transition out and no longer be involved in the ministry in Ecuador. If everyone were to stop giving, this would be difficult for us at the end to sustain our family financially until we are freed up for new work endeavors.

