

# HERSHEY FREE PRESS

NEWSLETTER OF THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF HERSHEY

JUNE / JULY 2011

## Welcome Back Pastor Kevin as Executive Pastor

*Served as our pastor for small  
groups from 1994 to 1999*

© By Julian Richter

For Pastor Kevin Dixon, stepping into the newly created role of executive pastor will be a homecoming. Pastor Kevin was originally called to serve as the Hershey Free Church's pastor for small groups in the fall of 1994. His primary responsibility in the 1990s was to develop small groups for discipleship and community. Now he will be coaching the staff as they help members of our congregation discover their strengths and their fit for achieving our mission of "Connect, Grow, Serve."

"My philosophy is that ministry springs from relationships," Pastor Kevin explains. "We are to love God and love one another. One way to achieve this is to have small groups where people find encouragement, discipleship and care. These groups become an example of Christ in the community surrounding them. That's where outreach takes place."

In the 1990s, however, his philosophy for taking small groups to a higher level was not where the Hershey Free Church was going. He began searching for a ministry position that matched his philosophy. That turned out to be leading a church plant. "There was a group of people in the Hershey Free Church exploring starting a church in either Middletown or Harrisburg. I became part of that group [and its senior pastor] and we started the Community Evangelical Free Church in Harrisburg in 1999," he said. "Having minis-



Pastor Kevin Dixon (right) with (from left) his wife, Lori, son, Zachary, and daughter, Alyssa.

try develop out of small groups has been the direction of this church since its beginning."

When Pastor George Davis was discussing with people in our church his vision of ministry developing from small groups and the theme of relationships and community, Pastor Kevin's name kept coming up based on his previous tenure here.

"I wanted to talk with him about his experience in small-group ministry," Pastor George said. "As I got to understand his philosophy of ministry I saw that we had a strong connection with what we want to see take place in the life of a church. I realized that his gifting would complement my gifting for ministry."

Pastor Kevin also saw synergy in joining together for ministry. "When Pastor George began talking to me about small-group ministry in the Hershey Free Church we just clicked. We have the same philosophy but we have different gifting. We complement each other."

Pastor Kevin will be the first executive pastor for our church. "An executive pastor is a common staff position in churches of over 1,000 attendance," Pastor George explained. "He serves as an executive-level partner with the senior pastor and focuses on coaching staff and overseeing various ministry

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By Pastor George Davis  
senior pastor

# Reflections Bejections

## Watch Your Step –There’s Work in Progress

At some point in the next couple of weeks, I hope you take time to notice the work going on in the auditorium and overflow areas. Thanks to a donor’s generosity, we were able to move forward with this project this summer.

Throughout the history of our church, this space has been a vital part of our facility, so it’s great to see it being updated for the next chapter in the life of our church.

Of course, as the summer progresses, this area will be in various states of updating. So, thanks for your patience and flexibility while this work is being done. For me, this project is reminiscent of an experience I had as a young adult.

When I was a college student, living at home, my parents decided to remodel our house. What was

originally scheduled to be a six-week project turned into a three-month ordeal. There’s nothing quite like having your house totally redone while you are living there. I still remember surviving several weeks on microwave food because the kitchen had been gutted, and the microwave was the only cooking option that we had.

There’s no question that I don’t want to go through that type of experience again; nonetheless, the end result was an updated house that was more comfortable, more livable and more usable for our family.

### *Organizational Changes*

In a similar way, even as we are making changes to our facility, we are also going through a season of organizational change. Earlier this year, we began focusing on the themes of connecting, growing, and serving as we seek to be a community where people are taking next steps in following Christ. As we clarify what this direction involves, we are also seeking to align our staffing and resources around this focus.

So, when you drop by the auditorium during the summer and see the work in progress, remind yourself that this is representative of where we are at as a church. Change is underway because we are seeking to be a community that, in new and vibrant ways, is living out the gospel.

As Paul writes the Colossian church, he states that all of his efforts and hard work are directed toward a singular goal – to present people mature in Christ (Col. 1:28). In working through different changes, it’s my prayer that these efforts will move us in that same direction.



# Chief of Staff Position Discontinued

Dave Sheppard, who has served our church in the position of chief of staff for the past nine years, has ended his employment with us. The chief of staff position has been replaced with the position of executive pastor. *(See the story about Pastor Kevin Dixon taking on the executive pastor role.)*



Dave Sheppard

Dave was hired after our former senior pastor, Dave Martin, had a heart attack in 2002. Pastor Dave told the elder board that he felt he needed someone with the gift of administration to come alongside him and allow him to spend more time in prayer, study, vision casting and mentoring. Pastor Dave asked Dave Sheppard, who was chairman of the Elder Board and had extensive management experience, if he would take the newly created position that included

oversight of the staff, the budget and the capital campaign for the South Campus. Over the years, Dave picked up oversight of Adult Education Fellowships and other areas of ministry.

Dave said that during the search process for our new senior pastor he had a conversation with Steve Musser, superintendent of the EFCA's Eastern District, in which Steve told him that because of his close working relationship with Pastor Dave, a resignation may be expected. One of the reasons Steve cited was the "fit" between the new senior pastor and the existing staff; the new pastor may require a different set of skills to support the direction he will take the church and way he will organize the staff.

"That is the case in my situation," Dave said.

"I believe God spoke to me and gave me a broader perspective through three encounters I had with other men immediately after George shared his plans with me," he continued

"I met with a former colleague and friend who lost his job without severance pay and could not collect unemployment compensation. He had no income, no health insurance, a child in college, one still high school, a mortgage and car payments. Yet here I was with a generous severance, my children all out of the house and we're debt free. It was like God was saying, 'Look how I have blessed you.'"

"About a week later I received a call from a past president of the Builders' Association whom I had maintained contact with over the years. He is a Christian, and he had an amazing story to tell. He had been divorced from his wife for over 20 years, neither had remarried during that time and now they were back together and had just remarried. God was telling me, 'I can do anything'."

Dave also talked to Paul Dronsfield, a career-transition consultant, who really ministered to him and gave him strategies for this next phase in his life.

"I am struck by a passage I read in Tim Kellers' book 'Counterfeit Gods,'" Dave said:

Here, then, is the practical answer to our own idolatries, to the 'Isaacs' in our lives, which are not spiritually safe to have and hold. We need to offer them up. We need to find a way to keep from clutching them too tightly, of being enslaved to them. We will never do so by mouthing abstractions about how great God is. We have to know, to be assured, that God so loves, cherishes, and delights in us that we can rest our hearts in him for our significance and security and handle anything that happens in life.

"Especially poignant to me are the last two sentences." Dave said. "It is easy in these difficult times to spout platitudes. What I want to learn in my current situation is the last sentence, paraphrasing that I can rest my heart in him for my significance and security, enabling me to handle anything that happens in my life."

Dave and his wife, Karen, plan to continue to be part of our church family.

## Welcome Back Pastor Kevin Dixon

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initiatives. As I networked with senior pastors of other large Evangelical Free churches I saw how they operated with an executive pastor and I appreciated the value of this position."

Specifically, Pastor Kevin will be helping the staff apply intentional discipleship within their ministries, creating an atmosphere for building relationships, discipling followers of Jesus and multiplying ministry leaders.

"What's important is teamwork," he said. "Much of the ministry at the Hershey Free Church has been taking place in 'silos' defined by age, gender, marital status or special needs. Everyone understands that this should change, but when you've been doing it for so many years it's hard to change.

My job is to help people break out of their silos. I believe that once we begin working together to support and encourage one another in ministry the church will be better."

Pastor Kevin related a story to illustrate the need for teamwork: "I grew up in northern Minnesota where they have dog sled races. Every dog on the team participates. It's not acceptable for a dog not to participate. Some of the funniest moments in dog sled racing happen when you have a team where one or two dogs just lie down, or try to run in the opposite direction from the rest of the team. It doesn't work. The team has to pull together in one direction. My job is to coach the members of our church so we are all pulling together in one direction."

# Student Ministries Seeks Disciple Makers

© By Kelly Fedeli

Do you have a passion to bring young people to Christ? Has God blessed you with the knowledge and the spirit to take the hands of a small group of young believers and lead them as they grow daily in their walk with Him?

If you feel a tugging at your heart after reading these two sentences, then you may want to reach out to our new pastor for student ministries, David Boerma. Pastor David is looking for not just a few, but many good men and women who feel called to enter into the lives of students and work intentionally to encourage and guide their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

“As we interact with students the key question we must ask continually is ‘How do we make disciples like Jesus made disciples?’” Pastor David said. “We need to get to the point of having real relationships with kids – not just engaging in activities that are program driven.”

With those core thoughts in mind, Pastor David asked all student ministries volunteers to step back and prayerfully consider a new role. He asked the volunteers to take time to reflect on what they’ve known student leadership to be in the Hershey Free Church in the past and the role the leaders of students need to assume moving forward. He also accepted the resignation of Cindy Lear, coordinator for female staff and students, in order to direct staff resources toward middle school ministry.

“During this time of reflection and rebuilding, it’s been my privilege to work with Cindy Lear, who has dedicated a significant portion of her life to this ministry,” Pastor David said. “I’ve appreciated Cindy’s willingness to serve with me and her ability to be open-minded about her position and recognize what is best for student ministries moving forward.

She has been a constant source of spiritual support.”

In articulating the church’s vision for the future of student ministries and the critical need for evolution, Pastor David stressed that middle school is the big bridge between elementary school and high school. “This is the time in the young person’s life when the church, acting in sheer love, needs to get it right. When youth programming is basically the same from sixth through twelfth grade, students grow weary and are ready to walk out the door after they graduate. To be frank, we as a church cannot complain about students walking out a door that we are holding open for them,” he said. “There is just too much at stake spiritually to play games and hang out during seven critical years of the student’s life.”

These concerns are the basis for the church’s decision to shift resources and combine salaries to pursue a full-time middle school leader. This individual will give his full attention to the middle

school ministry. Because of relationships and history, Pastor David said decisions like these are always difficult. He believes, however, that this shift is critical to the church’s future impact on the lives of middle and high school students. He further stressed that staffing changes were not performance based but driven by what the church needs during this new season of student ministry.

The church is looking for a group of core leaders to shepherd and disciple small groups of students. If God is calling you to use your life to help others walk with Jesus and you believe you can reproduce what has been done spiritually in you for a young person, please pick up a leadership application

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Photos by Anita Karwowski



Core student ministries Jell-O night included creating Jell-O art (left), sucking Jell-O through a straw and other slimy, sticky activities.

# 'Core' Is New Name for Student Ministries

Student Ministries has embraced a brand new name and logo. The new name is Core.

"As we work with students our aim is to get to the core of who a person really is," Pastor David Boerema said. "God looks at the heart of man, not from the outside, but from the inside out. That is what we want to model in our time together with students."

"Just as the overall church is striving to form deeper connections with each other and larger communities," he continued, "we want to encourage the students in Core to connect in community, serve each other and those with whom we come in contact, and ultimately to take the next steps with Christ to deepen our relationship with him."

Pastor David said he hopes students and parents will identify with the name, use it in everyday conversation, and continually be reminded of the goals of student ministry.



Noelle Shellenberger (left) and Bethany Johnson show off the middle school version of the Core T-shirt. The high school version is gray.

## Seeking Disciple Makers

*(Continued from page 4)*

packet from Pastor David or download it from the Youth page at HersheyFree.com. The information in the packet outlines the process by which leaders will be interviewed and selected.

The aim is to conduct interviews in July, make selections in August, and conduct training for leaders in early September.

There are also opportunities for people who may not feel called to be a small-group leader but would like to support student ministries by being involved in activities such as helping out in the café, leading group activities and games and being a part of the welcome team.

"By no means are we dispensing with many of the 'fun' aspects of youth group," Pastor David noted. "Our focus will be a little different, but we'll still have a good time in fellowship with one another."

If you feel called to help create a loving, nurturing environment for students by playing one of these special supporting roles, please talk with Pastor David.

## Auditorium Gets Makeover

With the aim of creating a space the entire church can be proud of and comfortable within, Pastor David Boerema is leading efforts to renovate the church auditorium and overflow. The vision is to create an attractive area that supports multiple activities including worship, banquets and weddings, and various group activities.

Pastor David said plans are to transform the overflow area in the rear of the auditorium into a "connecting space" that will feature a café and comfortable furniture. A generous donor provided funds for the materials.

Dan Hahn, director for facilities, gave a timeline for work in the auditorium and overflow. The drywall should be finished and new electric lines installed by July 1. Painting will begin July 5. Carpet will be installed beginning August 1. New chairs will be delivered August 7. New covers will be installed on the radiators, but the date for this is not known.

Work will be put on hold during Vacation Bible School, July 17 to 21, so the space can be used.



## Free Press Archives

### June/July 1991

Evangelism Explosion. a program for sharing the gospel, was initiated by Pastor Jim Erb. After 16 hours of training, those involved in EE went to the homes of people who visited our church and explained the gospel to them.

More than 120 people were commissioned for short-term mission trips this year. Betty Shaffer, missions coordinator, wrote a summary of short-term missions starting with the first trips in 1974.

### June/July 1996

The Lebanon Area Evangelical Free Church was commissioned. The core group of members had been meeting as an Adult Education Fellowship since January 1995. They continued to hold worship services for a while in the Hershey Free Church until they found a building in Lebanon.

### June/July 2001

Vitaly Petrov began a pastoral internship in our church. He is now director of Trinity Video Seminary in Kursk, Russia, and receives missionary support from us.

The duties of the deacon committee were highlighted. They ranged from directing traffic on Sundays to stocking and operating the food bank.

# We Are God's Hands Serving Others

© By Gini Ten Eyck

A couple of weeks ago my husband, Chris, and I took a Sunday walk in Mount Gretna near the Governor Dick tower. His bifocals somehow got lost on the trail. He has been unemployed and I had just become unemployed that week, so we had no income or insurance benefits. Chris cannot see properly to drive or read without his glasses, so we had to find them.

As we took separate paths to hunt for his bifocals, I met a couple of young men, one of whom was Nate Phillips, who goes to the Hershey Free Church [and attends the 4twelve]. I told Nate and his friend about the glasses and he said he would keep an eye out. A few moments later he and his friend both turned around and asked if they could pray with me! Absolutely!

After the prayer I sensed the presence of Jesus warmly walking with me and felt like I just needed to trust him with whatever happened. It was so strong in me that I shared this with my husband, even though we never found the glasses. We had been talking a lot lately about spiritual things.

The next day I received a phone call from Nate. I told him that, no, we did not find the glasses. He told me that he felt impressed to do something to follow up, and told me call a



local optometrist, whom he knew from church. I said OK and made an appointment for my husband.

Chris is the recipient of a new pair of bifocals, and they look great on him! There was no charge. God truly answered that prayer, but not without the eyes, ears, hands and hearts of several people who attend your church.

My husband and I are ever so grateful, and are looking for ways to pass on the blessing as we are able. We just had to share this news with you, it is so awesome. It is so exciting to see people, especially young people, be sensitive to the leading of God's Spirit.

## Freely We Received, Freely We Give

© By Sarah Cope

Member of 4twelve

On the sun-kissed morning of Saturday, June 4, thanks to the desire, initiative and organization God laid on Kyle Hoff-smith's heart, several members and adult helpers of 4twelve young adult community gathered off Route 22 to offer a "God Gives Free, So Do We" car wash for any random passersby.

The purpose was to not only "scrubba-dub-dub" the dirty vehicles, but also to show God's love in a caring and practical way.

A shouted question from a man stopped at the traffic light – "Why would you give a car wash for free?" – was the exact reaction we prayed for. God used our actions as an opening to share the words of his gospel that day.

Additionally, God demonstrated the unity in the body of Christ as a female truck driver called a 4twelver to her rig, handed a bulk package of Snickers bars to her and said, "I love God, too! Hand these out to your customers today, honey!"

The adage of "there ain't no such thing as a free lunch" does not apply to the message of Christ. He freely gives his love, mercy and grace every day. Our hope is to share the free gifts of hope and joy that we feel. God gives freely and so do we!

### South Campus Turning Lane Update

Bids have been received for the left-turn lane on Route 743 at the South Campus. They will be opened June 24. Construction is expected to be completed by mid-September.



(Left to right) Sarita and Anai Walters, Liana Roy and Elya Zipprick promote 4twelve's free car wash on Route 22.

Photo by Julie Walters

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# Pastor Kirk Leads our 'Daughter' Church in Mount Joy

© By Julian Richter

*Looking back over 14 years of ministry at the Hershey Free Church, Pastor Kirk Belmont sees the step-by-step leading of the Lord to his new role as senior lead pastor of Hope Community Church. Hope is an Evangelical Free Church near Mount Joy that our congregation started as a church plant in 1994.*

**Pastor Kirk at his installation service at Hope on June 12.**

As the Hershey Free Church's pastor for next generation ministries, Kirk's work with young adults gave him opportunities to disciple new Christians, mentor upcoming leaders and work with a team to develop the Sunday evening worship service, where he preached most weeks, and then transition that into our 9:15 a.m. Encounter service. He had oversight of student ministries while a search went on for our new pastor for student ministries. Most recently, he supervised KidzWorld while the search for a new pastor for children's ministries was conducted.

Pastor Kirk explained that his journey to becoming senior lead pastor at Hope began in 2007 when our former senior pastor, Dave Martin, announced he would be stepping aside. "I was sensing God calling me to a senior pastor position, but I said 'no' to this opening," he said. When the elders looked at a second round of candidates Pastor Kirk put his name forward. He was not selected.

"I wondered what God was doing," he recalled, "because I was still sensing that he was leading me to a senior pastor position." To further prepare himself for that, he earned a doctor of ministry degree from Biblical Theological Seminary.

Last November he told Pastor George that he would be moving on and began looking at senior pastor openings in churches in Pennsylvania and several other states. One of those churches was Hope. "They asked me to fill the pulpit a few times, and in December we began talking about what they were looking for in a senior pastor and how I could meet their needs," he explained.

"They were looking for someone to fill a position they call 'senior lead pastor' who will give overall leadership and direction to articulate and implement the mission of the church. They want a visionary leader who can develop the staff and lay leadership," he continued. "This pastor is responsible for teaching but is not the sole preacher on Sundays."

The Belmont family is excited about Pastor Kirk's new job and their new church. "We don't have to pack and sell the house. It's a change, but we're not moving, so we can maintain some relationships," he said.

As he begins leading the congregation at Hope, Pastor Kirk expressed his gratitude to the congregation and leadership of Hershey Free Church for the opportunities to let God develop his ministry skills while serving here.



# Her Story Embraces Compassion for Women at Risk

© By Brenda Hollenbach

Every person has a life story. God has been writing each of ours, even before we were born, creating us with certain bents and strengths that unfold into passions and dreams. There is continuity and flow in our stories as God brings about circumstances and events in line with the desires and giftedness he has given us. The key is to keep looking to him for our story and not try to write our own.

For as long as I can remember I have supported the underdog, sticking up for the oppressed, wanting to help in some way, but feeling powerless. Having the opportunity to live in some third world countries has heightened this desire and the frustration as the needs I have seen are so much greater than my abilities and resources.

It seems that God has especially burdened me for women and children who are exploited in any way. My heart has hurt many times with the desire to do *something* to help; but what?

This past October, our church held an event called “Caring for Our Sisters, Caring for Ourselves.” Deciding to go at the last minute, I had no idea that this was part of God writing the next chapter in my life story. Becky McDonald, founder of WAR International (Women at Risk) shared not only the plight of women around the world, but also the truth that God sees and cares, as well as specific ways that we here in America can help!

I went home and told my husband, John, that I didn’t know exactly what I was to do with all the information I received that day, but I knew I would never be the same. Since that day, I have seen God’s writing in my life in new ways as he is bringing about opportunities to do tangible things that will enable women around the world to live



Brenda displays some “fair trade” craft items made by women in Third World countries.

lives of dignity, such as selling jewelry that they make. I am trying to follow his step by step, not run ahead or lag behind, but simply obey the next step he shows me.

There are the seasons in our lives when God opens our eyes to see the truth of Ephesians 2:10, “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” I feel like I am in one of those seasons. My prayer is that you too will be intentionally seeking to know God more deeply and to discern what story he has been and is writing in your life.

## Task Force Promotes Value of Family Ministry

© By Steve Hoke

Family Ministry Task Force Leader

The Family Ministry Task Force was established in 2010 by a group of lay leaders and staff to ensure that the Hershey Free Church continues to value families and provide the appropriate programs and support for them. As the church has grown and we are embracing many organizational and staffing changes, the group has taken a look at what the church is doing well and what areas may need improvement regarding ministry to families.

The biblical basis for our efforts is captured in Deut. 6:5-9: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children, talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

We strongly agree that the primary responsibility for teaching and training the next generation rests with the parents. We also believe, however, that the local church needs to support this effort by providing parenting training, family-friendly worship services, educational programs and events where children and their parents can be together to communicate and model God’s truths to our children.

To this end, we are promoting the value of family-oriented ministry and encouraging the whole church to be aligned with this. We recently conducted a survey to identify what’s working for families in our church and where we can improve. We also hope to more clearly communicate what activities are geared towards families and identify educational tools for parents.

Any questions or comments can be addressed to members of the task force: Steve and Sheri Hoke, Steve and Ginger Wayde, Rosie Wright, Ken and Nancy Miller, and Pastor Omar Zook.