

The Well

The Newsletter of the Hyaets Community

The Well

Vision, Dreams, Calling, Community, Compassion, Care... The Well...

The apple does not fall far from the tree
Well, neither does the seed
That's me
The seed that grew
Nourished by the sun, water, air
soil, gardener
Budding and growing
Dying and being pruned

Thank you, plant, for helping to make me
For sprouting me
And then letting me go
So that I could be a flower or a fruit alongside you.

You and I are one, the same
And two, very different
We share things in common
Ground, space, time
We exchange air, food, resources
You with me
I with you
Together we flourish and grow
Budding
Sprouting seeds
Sharing
And letting go.

Recently, the red jeep died. Actually, it still works, but the repair bill for it exceeds its actual value by a factor of five. Below, Helms eulogizes 'Bob the Coche.'

Bob, I will miss you. You carried me to places afar. You kept me warm. You let me sleep in the safety of your

The Update...

By Greg

Greetings from Enderly Park! As I sit writing this on the fourth day of the Christmas season, we have been overwhelmed with the gifts that God has sent us in the past several months. There is indeed much to tell!

We have established a pretty consistent weekly routine in the house, which works like this: On Sunday mornings, we get up and go to church. Recently, we have had several teenagers join us, as they enjoy Joanie's church very much. Helms and I attend a different church, and we are always surprised to hear the sounds of teenage boys ready in time to go to church with Joanie and Jason, while we are just getting up. On Sunday afternoons, we have a meal specifically for the four of us to gather for a time to share and pray. We have also had these same kids joining us for those times, and they participate by helping cook, clean, and joining in our prayer times. The afternoons are for quiet, Sabbath-keeping, and hanging around the neighborhood.

On most Monday evenings, we have a neighborhood potluck. We continue to call it a potluck in hopes that someone else will bring something, but it remains just us preparing a meal for the children of the neighborhood. Christine and Michael often come and bring something to share, and the kids love them and West, too, especially West.

Tuesday evening is another community meal, with time for prayers afterwards. Lately we have reserved this time for just residents of the house, which recently has meant eight instead of four. At the first week of Advent, we had a few teens that had spent the weekend with us. One of them, Jamar, talked to us quietly about his family's situation—they had just been evicted from their house because the city was condemning it. The only option for them was a shelter, a difficult reality for an already fragile family system. We spoke to Jamar's mom that afternoon, and in the evening we had doubled our family! They have been with us for one month, and we anticipate them moving on shortly after the beginning of January. We were all a little nervous about this very big change, but it has gone very well. At times the house is a bit cramped and noisy, but we have gotten along just fine. After several months of letting people know that we have tried to make room for guests, it has been nice to finally have the actual experience of hosting others. That we were able to welcome them at the same time as the beginning of Advent, the season where we invite Jesus to come and be with us, made this opportunity even more significant.

Wednesday is church night, and Thursday is BSU night, so they are less formal. However, the emerging routine seems to be that our group of teens drops by between 8-9 most nights, as the rec center is closing down and they stop by on the way home. During those times, we play some games and talk about what is going on with them in school and around the neighborhood. We talk a lot about fighting (or not fighting), about school-work, and about sex. The latter of those is especially funny and disturbing, but that's what teenage boys talk about!

Our various jobs remain busy, and can be both joyous and trying. Michael stays

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Commentary

by Joanie

One of the things about accepting a call at a new church is that you inherit many familiar traditions. That is, you inherit traditions familiar to the people that have always been at the church. One of the well-loved traditions at our new church is the Children’s Nativity Scene. The pre-school children offered me more to consider about the familiar Christmas story than I have been accustomed to thinking about. The Christmas story was read while the children walked down the aisle when their character was described. I waited at the end of the aisle to instruct the children where to stand on the platform. Mary and Joseph were the first to walk down the aisle. Mary was carefully carrying the baby doll that was Jesus. When they got to the end of the aisle, Mary turned to me with a concerned look on her face. She whispered, “I don’t want to put Jesus in the manger.” With that I whispered, “It’s okay” and she handed me the doll.

I wonder about that. When I consider this innocent depiction of the first Christmas, I cannot get the image of Mary turning to me out of my mind. In a symbolic way, it felt like a honor to be handed responsibility for the baby Jesus. I wonder if we often keep Jesus in the manger. I wonder if we leave the nativity scene as it is and continue our lives without realizing that Jesus did not stay in the manger. As we have begun building relationships with people in our neighborhood and trying to live a life of community, I know that I have forgotten that Jesus left the manger and walks with me. When I consider the instructions to “Do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). I often forget the critical part: that we need to walk with God.

As we have started sharing our vision of Hyaets with local churches and organizations, I have connected with others who want to make sure that Jesus is not left in the manger. Through the Seed Exchange, others committed to Micah’s instructions have reminded me to not take this journey without God. Pastors, chaplains, and others concerned with doing justice have challenged me not to leave Jesus in the manger. Friends that have listened to us and have opened their hearts to us have already exchanged the seeds of compassion and understanding with us. My prayer for 2006 is that we may continue showing each other that Jesus did not stay in the manger.

arms. You let us all scrunch in. You hauled all sorts of things, a chair for a friend, a Christmas tree or two, and many, many boxes. I look at you and think of all sorts of times gone by. Places gone by, too. We found our home together in Raleigh, Boone, Richmond, and now your "eternal home" here in Charlotte. Thank you for taking me with you on this great journey. Thanks for carrying my burdens along for the ride. We've spent over 10 years together, you and me. You've seen me grow and change- loss of braces, pierced ears, boyfriends, high school off campus lunches, romance on the Parkway, fields of cotton in NE NC, speeding tickets on the Powhite parkway, caroling trips, Matthew jumping out to see a neighbor dog, stuffing the Brown family in for a trip to carve pumpkins, and more. I will miss you, Bob. And others will too. You helped me to teach Greg how to drive a stick shift. And you made me call Matt Romeo (that was a big step!) to find out how much you'd cost to get fixed. Lots of memories. I will miss you! Good-bye.

-Helms

A society whose whole idea is to eliminate suffering and bring all its members the greatest amount of comfort and pleasure is doomed to be destroyed.... It is the

very essence of Christianity to face suffering and death not because they are good, not because they have meaning, but because the Resurrection of Jesus has

robbed them of their meaning.

*-Thomas Merton
No Man Is an Island*

Write the Vision...

by Jason

Habakkuk 2:2-3

As I reflect upon the vision of Hyaets, I find that the commitment to the church best articulates an important foundation of Hyaets and the impetus for the branch we call “Seed Exchange.” The community of Hyaets began with an affirmation that we would not be a church. Rather, we would commit to one another as Christians from different congregations called together to work with, in, and through local church congregations and associations. Today, we see our ministry as both pastoral and prophetic in function as we work to be a presence to, a resource for, and to learn from local congregations.

In recent months, one picture of Seed Exchange has been painted as Hyaets has worked to connect Charlotte-area churches with families who have lived through Hurricane Katrina. The location of Hyaets has enabled us to meet neighbors displaced by the hurricane. Through our connections and partnerships with local congregations, we have been able to connect these families to churches who are committed to providing welcome and support to their communities. Through the friendships we were able to encourage and foster, we have seen churches grow as disciples and families find a home in a new place as each was committed to and loved the other.

Passion, Calling, Desires...

by Michael

In seminary, it was easy to be idealistic. We could talk about the woes of the world in the comfortable presence of professors and in the safety of classrooms. We were protected from the ire of those persons in the Church who often say “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” (I would disagree with them that something isn’t broken). A common topic that we often discussed was the woes of the Church. Our Old Testament classes offered us fodder for the discussion. The prophetic books are full of Good News to the people whom society had shunned (the oppressed, the imprisoned, the sick, the lame). These books also delivered divine warnings of “treat my people right or else” to Israel and the surrounding nations. The people who delivered these divine messages were courageous people. We understood the Church to have a similar calling - to bring Good News to the captives and words of indictment to those who captivated them. We often struggled with the Church over her not staying true to what we thought her calling was supposed to be.

The Church, as we understood her, was to be “in the world, not of the world”; yet, we really struggled with some practices of the Church that seemed to say different – “why do we need a new building? Why can’t we use that money to feed the poor? Why do we waste so much paper when an e-mail would be just as effective? Why do we have to lock the Church? Shouldn’t it be open to everybody? etc, etc, etc.”

I no longer sit at the feet of my professors as we ponder the ills of the world and the Church (I do long for those moments at times). Now that I have graduated seminary and have begun to minister with youth and children at Park Road Baptist Church in Charlotte, I find myself fighting the battle between

“theoretical Michael” and “realistic Michael”.

“Theoretical Michael” may think some program is a poor use of our resources; yet, “Realistic Michael” has to understand that we as the Church are journeying and learning together about what it means to respond to the invitation of Jesus – “come and follow me”. I have a voice, yet it’s not the only voice.

While I struggle, and will continue to struggle, with the Church and some of her practices, I feel I have been called to minister in the Church. While I want to be a change agent in the Church, I realize that folks have been the Church for close to 2000 years and what they’ve done has some weight to it. I am happy and excited about the opportunities in which Hyaets and the local Church are working together “to bring Good News to the poor...to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4.18-19).

A Poem for Epiphany (which begins Jan 5)

“The Magi” - by George Garrett

Now that was a long time ago.

And now I know them for what they were,
Moving across vague spaces on their camels,
Visionaries, madmen, creatures possessed
by some slight deviation of the stars.

I know their gifts were shabby and symbolic.
Their wisdom was a thing of waking dreams.
Their robes were dirty and their breath was bad.

Still, I would dream them back.

Let them be wooden and absurd again
in all the painted glory that a child
Loved. Let me be one of them.

Let me step forward once more awkwardly
And stammer and choke on my prepared speech.
I will bring gold again and kneel
Foolish and adoring in the dungy straw.

Info....

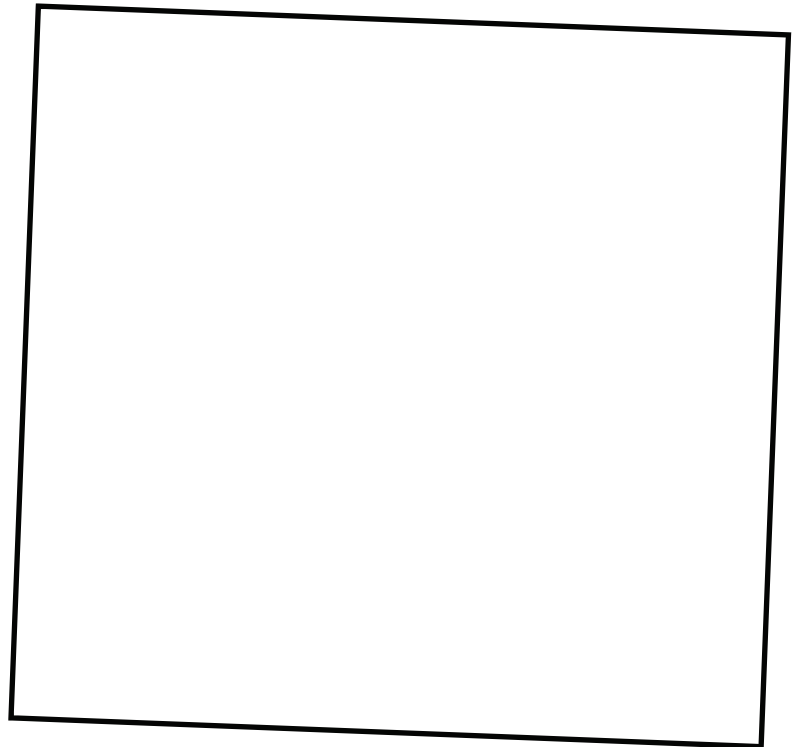
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We’re looking forward to facilitating a retreat in the spring. We have hopes of providing this retreat opportunity in a location that will be accessible to our Richmond, Charlotte, and home friends. This retreat will be open to families, singles, and others who would like to join us. Please stay tuned for more information coming soon!

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Hyaets: An Overview

(Continued from page 1)

too busy at church, Jason has been nearly overwhelmed with band, and Christine has the joy of full-time mothering. Helms continues to do well at the BSU, Joanie's church job is a rewarding challenge, and I continue to learn how best to motivate my after-school kids, plus I am picking up some musical work in the evenings. We have finally become incorporated, and are now working on the IRS requirements for 501(c)3 status. We will let you all know once that is accomplished. We thank you for your continued prayers, and hope to hear from you soon!

Phrases and such that have gotten me thinking recently...

“Sound the Call”
“A place called ‘suddenly’”
“Come, Lord Jesus”
Emmanuel
“If I were a rich man....”
Home
Homeless
What does it mean to be “blessed”?
Thank you
~Helms