

Reaching **UP** in our **LOVE** for God!  
Reaching **IN** in our **LOVE** for one another!  
Reaching **OUT** in our **LOVE** for the world!



*Come enjoy the sounds of Christmas with our church family beginning at 5:00 pm on Christmas Eve!*

### **AWANA CHRISTMAS STORE** **Help Fill the Shelves & Staff the Store**

One unique aspect of GEFC's AWANA program is the AWANA Christmas Store. The boys and girls in AWANA have been working each week to earn points by memorizing Bible verses and bringing friends to AWANA. The AWANA children use their hard-earned points to "buy" Christmas gifts from the AWANA Christmas Store for their parents and siblings, not for themselves.

In support of the AWANA Christmas Store, we need:

- new and **gently** used items for all ages and genders to fill the AWANA Christmas Store shelves (The items can be anything from toys, puzzles, stuffed animals, CD's, videos, books, candles, and perfume to tools.);
- boxes, wrapping paper, bows, and tape for wrapping the gifts; and
- extra helpers on Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup> to help wrap gifts and staff the AWANA Christmas Store.

Set an example for the AWANA children by giving items/supplies and/or your time to the AWANA Christmas Store.

Please place your donations in the box labeled "AWANA Christmas" under the table in the foyer. Please call or e-mail Dave Rose (945-9494 / [ddrose@mchsi.com](mailto:ddrose@mchsi.com)), if you are willing to help on December 9<sup>th</sup>. The AWANA children really enjoy the AWANA Christmas Store and appreciate your enabling them to give.

### **'TIME-OUT'** *Making a Wreath To Eat!*



Ladies, would you like to take some 'time-out' and welcome in the holiday season with a Christmas baking demonstration? Join us Thursday, December 3 @ 6:30 pm, Debra Jones will be our hostess on **Making a Wreath To Eat!: Yeast Breads** She will be instructing us on how to make yeast breads for the holidays. Please join in the fun at Debra Jones, 21794 E. 1320th St., Geneseo. Invite a friend! No reservations needed. Directions available at the Information Center in the foyer. Call 944-6574 if you get lost.



## Challenge 2010

### by Pastor Michael Mauriello

#### What is Challenge?

Challenge is a growth level event for EFCA students. It is a conference that uses high energy worship, powerful and challenging speakers, training and ministry outreach to help students redefine what it means to love God and love others as seen through the lens of the Beatitudes.

#### When & where is Challenge?

Challenge '10 will be June 28-July 3, 2010 in Columbus, Ohio. Our entire conference will be held at the Columbus City Convention Center in Columbus, OH.

#### Why Columbus?

Columbus is a new site for Challenge. It offers great facilities for our needs and outstanding opportunities for ministry. The facilities are air-conditioned, the Convention Center can hold 6,500 participants, the hotels are very safe, and they come as an affordable package. Columbus is also very familiar with hosting students in their city and they are excited for us to come. We also try to alternate between a western and eastern location for Challenge.

#### Who may come?

Challenge '10 is designed primarily for Christians, as opposed to being an outreach to non Christians. Our church is opening the trip up to rising 9<sup>th</sup>- high school graduates of the class of 2010.

#### What is the expected attendance?

We are praying for and anticipating 6,000 to 7,000 attendees in Columbus.



#### How much does it cost to register?

Registration for the conference is \$275.00 a person, plus hotel and travel expenses. Challenge provides 11 meals through the week beginning with breakfast on Tuesday morning, programming – the gatherings – speakers, musicians, worship, ministry, training and recreation options.

Our church is planning on fund raising a good portion of the cost for the trip. AJ and I are already working on a Valentine's Day dinner as a primary fundraiser. We will ask that students pay \$100.00 of the cost out of their personal funds, and we will also ask that families be willing to contribute an appropriate amount to the trip based on their financial situation. The rest will be fund raised.

#### What is the required adult to student ratio?

We ask for a minimum of one male adult for every 10 male students and one female adult for every ten female students or any number under 10. Your students must be under the supervision of someone of the same sex.

#### When can I sign myself / my child up?

We will register students up through the end of March. However, you cannot take advantage of monies earned from fundraisers prior to your sign-up, so do go ahead and commit early.

We have a few family information nights planned; one in December on the 13<sup>th</sup> (5:30 PM), and another in January on the 10<sup>th</sup> (5:30 PM).



- Annual Sr. High New Years Overnight at Pastor Mike's house (624 W. Wells St!) Please come about 10:00 PM through 7:30 AM!
- Christmas Party for Sr. High: 6:30 PM on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Details forthcoming
- Christmas Party for Jr. High: 6:30 PM on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Details forthcoming
- Jr. High will help at the AWANA store on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December

## Love God

by Pastor Greg Chenoweth

### The Greatest Sin

A young whipper snapper once tried to stump Jesus with a deep theological question, "What is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus had over 600 commands in the Law from which to choose. But without missing a beat, He quoted Deuteronomy 6:5, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." Before the wise-cracker could take a breath to respond, Jesus added, "And the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18). On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Now if the Greatest Commandment is to love God and one another, then the Greatest Sin is **not** to love God and one another. The Apostle Paul put it this way in 1 Corinthians 16:14, 22, "Let all that you do be done in love...If anyone does not love God, let him be accursed." (i.e. condemned). Whoa!

What does it mean to love God? And why are the consequences so severe?

"To love" expresses affection and allegiance to someone with whom you have a close relationship. Affection toward the Lord implies being *attracted* to His beauty, majesty, holiness. Affection suggests *desiring* Him and being *satisfied* with His perfections. Having God as our highest affection means that we *prize* Him above all else.

Allegiance implies being *loyal* to the Lord above all others. It means being *devoted* and being *committed* to Him and to His ways. To pledge allegiance to the Lord means that He is our highest *priority*.

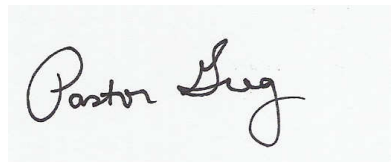
Why are the consequences so severe for not loving God? Not loving God implies that something else has captured our attraction, our desires and our satisfaction. Something other than the Lord is more attractive, desirable and satisfying to us. Hmmm! The glorious, holy, perfect, all-sufficient Creator, the One for whom we were created isn't attractive, desirable, or satisfying? Do you know what the Bible calls being satisfied in something other than the Lord? Immorality! That's an ugly word with severe consequences!

Not loving God also implies that something else has won our loyalty, devotion and commitment. Something is more worthy of our loyalty, devotion and commitment than the Lord. Hmmm! The Almighty, Wise, Sovereign King of the universe isn't worthy of my allegiance? The Bible calls this idolatry. That's another ugly word with severe consequences!

What distracts your affections from prizing the Lord above all else? What distracts your allegiance from prioritizing Him above all else?

My prayer for you and me this Christmas season is that our love for the Lord would abound still more and more in intimate knowledge of Him and that you and I will approve of what is most excellent – our great God and Savior – the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:9-10)

For the Love of God!



## Border crossers

A retired minister often relaxed by sitting on his deck and letting his mind roam while he fed peanuts to squirrels. He named one particular squirrel Squeak because it often squeaked as if to say, "Bring out the nuts!"

Although there were many squirrels that came for the picnic, Squeak was the only one courageous enough to reach out for a nut held between the man's fingers. The pastor realized that it took bravery for Squeak to cross the unseen border between the yard and the hand holding the nut. Squeak was

willing to do what other squirrels would not — take a risk to gain a reward. Squeak was a brave border crosser.

The preacher thought, "Shouldn't



Christians be daring border crossers as well?"

He thought about the Christians throughout history who had put their lives on the line for the cause of Christ: the apostles — most of whom were martyred; the countless missionaries who established churches, schools and hospitals in lands where the name of Christ was unknown. Church history is full of stories about Christians who crossed borders to tell the "old, old story of Jesus and his love."

Are you willing to be a border crosser for Christ's sake.

## A Gift Worth Sharing

by Jim Bos, Elder

This is the time of year that we are preparing to celebrate the greatest gift that anyone could ever receive which is the birth of God's Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus, born of a virgin, grew up as a carpenter's son, taught the disciples, died on a cross to save us from our sins, then rose from the dead to prove himself to be Lord and Savior and is God's gift to us.

All we are asked to do is to accept Jesus as our Savior and we receive the gift of eternal life with Him. To receive Jesus we need to trust Him, follow Him, and believe that He died for us, and that eternal life comes through Him alone. Read and recite John 3:16. If you have already accepted Jesus, great! If you haven't please do so before it's too late. Our pastors, elders, or our Sunday School and Adult Bible Fellowship staff would be more than happy to help you with your decision and to pray with you, asking Jesus to forgive you and to be Lord and Savior of your life.

Knowing Christ isn't the end of the story. It is customary to give gifts at

Christmas. Considering that God's gift to us was Jesus, what could we possibly give back to God since He already owns everything? How about our love, our allegiance, our finances, our time, or how about using the gifts {talents} God has given us to further His Kingdom?



### I GIVE HIM?

Our church body has a place for you to use your gifts (Isn't it funny that talents in the Bible are called gifts?). Wouldn't it be a gift to the body and ultimately to the Lord Himself if you were to exercise your gifts. Read Matthew 25:14-30 a



Gary Joyner as he mourns the loss of his sister who went to be with her Savior on October 29, 2009

parable about talents (the financial kind). Let's substitute our own talents or gifts in place of these financial talents. The Lord not only wants us to use our gifts, He expects us to use them. Don't wait to be asked to do something in or for the body, offer to be used by God with what He has gifted you with.

Enjoy the gift God has given us through His Son this Christmas and let others enjoy the gift you can give by offering yourself to be used for them and for Him.



### Our February 5, 2010 Father-Daughter Dance is in need of a photographer!

Do you have a good digital camera or access to one and can take a decent picture, maybe you can be of service at our "father-daughter" dance the evening of February 5? We would appreciate you volunteering your skills in this area and so would each father and daughter as we give them a photo in a frame that commemorates their special time together! Our committee would help you set up a "practice session" to confirm that the lighting and back-drop is what you want.

Please contact Christy Sancken at [csancken@dist228.org](mailto:csancken@dist228.org) if interested and available.

## Commissioned to Go

by Teri Walters, Missions Team member

The mission of every believer in Jesus Christ is to communicate to the world (our local world and beyond) who Jesus is and to extend to all His offer of salvation.

Jesus has commissioned all believers to go to the “uttermost parts of the earth”, as well as to those living next door, to reach the lost with the gospel message of redemption and reconciliation. God could have sent angels or any number of beings to accomplish His purpose – but He chose to send us, the people He created and redeemed. We are missionaries. We are given the

opportunity of making the Savior known -

- through the spoken word (Romans 10:14, 15)
- through good works (James 2:14-17)
- through the example of a new character (Matt. 5:16)

We should be ready at all times to speak Jesus Christ’s name, tell of His marvelous works, give a defense of the reason for our hope, and tell others about His sacrifice and the abundant life He provides

now and for all eternity. 1 Peter 3:15 (amplified) says “But in your hearts set Christ apart as holy and acknowledge Him as Lord. Always be ready to give a logical defense to any one who asks you to account for the hope that is in you, but do it courteously and respectfully.” I have miserably failed many times to fulfill the responsibility and privilege God has given me, and maybe you have too. Let’s commit to pray for one another that we will faithfully spread the message every time God prepares a person and then gives us the opportunity to open our mouths and hearts for Him.

## Did you fill out your Connection Card?

by Catherine Sommers, church staff informant

We all got a chuckle as Pastor Cliff would ask people to fill out their green connection card each week because there were angels in heaven keeping track. Although he made light of it he focused on the little card because he understood and appreciated the importance of the card.

The connection card (formerly known as the welcome card) is the tool used at Geneseo Evangelical Free Church to help us keep connected, you to the church and the church to you. It provides a place for you to share your personal prayer requests and concerns that you have .

The card provides a convenient way for you to inquire about ministry opportunities and to make requests for additional information.

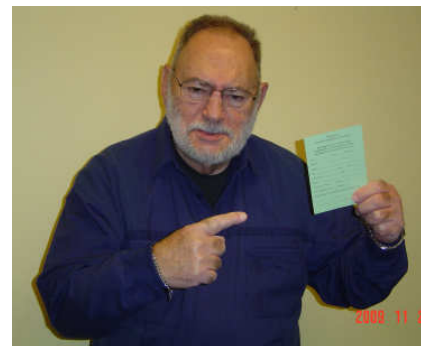
The precious little jewel of a card even makes registering for events extremely easy for you and your family. There is no need for you to stand in a line someplace to sign up or make a phone call during the week. The card is usually able to

do it all for you.

For those anxious to serve in ministry especially in the area of children and youth it is imperative that the card is filled out **REGULARLY**. Our CAP (Child Abuse Prevention) policy as well as other areas of ministry rightfully require that you regularly attend church services. The only way we have to assure your regular attendance is the connection card. Failure to regularly fill out the card impedes your opportunity to be blessed by serving and robs others the opportunity to be blessed by your service.

Last but not least the card gives you an easy way to let us know how to get in touch with you by phone, mail and email. It’s hard to include you in the happenings of the church when we don’t know how to find you. Now, please understand that you need not fill out all the information each week unless of course the information changes but do mark your names, date and the service you attend each week. We are so grateful for

those who faithfully do this each week. You are a blessing! For those who may not have understood the purpose behind the card in the past we hope this helps you to understand the importance of the card. Please consider that Pastor Cliff could be right about telling us that there would be extra rewards for us in heaven if we fill out the card . All kidding aside, our goal is not to invade your privacy or to be big brother. We seek only to function as efficiently and accurately as possible.



Pastor Cliff came in to **happily** remind us about the importance of the Connection Card!

# KIDS PAGE

## STAINED-GLASS STAR COOKIES


These star cookies will remind you of the star that led the Magi, or wise men, to our Lord Jesus. Enjoy these treats for yourself or give them as gifts.

### What you need:

- An adult to help
- 3 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup (2 sticks) margarine or butter, softened
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- Plastic wrap
- Hard candy such as Life Savers in assorted colors
- Zippered baggies
- Rolling pin
- 2 star cookie cutters, one much smaller than the other
- Aluminum foil

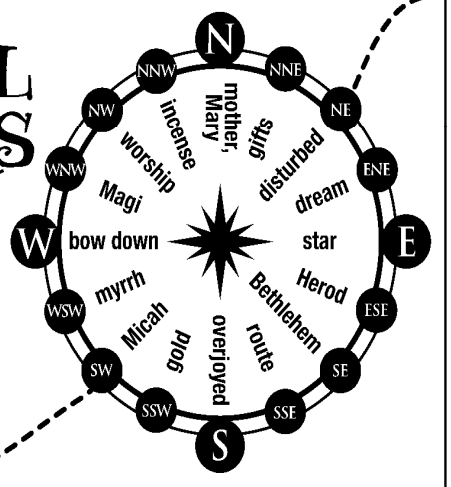
### What you do:

1. Mix the flour, baking powder and salt together.
2. Cream the sugar and butter. Add the eggs and vanilla.
3. Add the flour mixture and beat until well blended.
4. Divide the dough into four equal pieces. Wrap each piece in plastic wrap and refrigerate for about 30 minutes.
5. Separate candies by color and place each color in a sealed, zippered baggie. With a rolling pin, crush candy into small pieces (not a fine powder).
6. One at a time, roll out each chilled dough piece on a well-floured surface.
7. Use the large cookie cutter to make stars, and then place them on a foil-lined cookie sheet. Then press the small star cookie cutter into each large star and remove the small piece of star-shaped dough.
8. Place some crushed candy in each star-shaped hole.
9. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. (The candy will melt and be translucent when cooled, like a stained-glass window.)



## SPECIAL VISITORS

Matthew 2 tells of visitors who traveled to worship Jesus. Read that story, or see if you can answer the questions below from memory. Use the compass guide to fill in the correct answers.



1. Who was king during the time of Jesus' birth? \_\_\_\_\_ (ESE)
2. Who came from the East to worship the one born king of the Jews? \_\_\_\_\_ (WNW)
3. How was King Herod feeling about Jesus' birth? \_\_\_\_\_ (NE)
4. Which prophet did the chief priests and teachers of the law quote when King Herod asked where the Christ would be born? \_\_\_\_\_ (SW)
5. In what city would Christ be born? \_\_\_\_\_ (SE)
6. King Herod lied to the wise men and told them to search and report back so he, too, could do what to Christ? \_\_\_\_\_ (NW)
7. What did the Magi see in the east and follow to find Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_ (E)
8. When the star stopped, how did the Magi feel? \_\_\_\_\_ (S)
9. Who else did the Magi see with Jesus? His \_\_\_\_\_ (N)
10. What did the Magi do first before they worshiped the child? \_\_\_\_\_ (W)
11. Name the three treasures the Magi brought for Jesus. \_\_\_\_\_ (SSW)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (NNW) \_\_\_\_\_ (WSW)
12. These three treasures were all brought for Jesus as ... \_\_\_\_\_ (NNE)
13. What warned the Magi not to return to Herod? A \_\_\_\_\_ (ENE)
14. The Magi had to return to their country by another \_\_\_\_\_ (SSE)

Answers: 1. Herod, 2. Magi, 3. disturbed, 4. Micah, 5. Bethlehem, 6. worship, 7. star, 8. overjoyed, 9. mother, Mary, 10. bow down, 11. gold, incense, myrrh, 12. gifts, 13. dream, 14. route



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>* HSG = Homeschool Group                      ** PIP = Partners in Prayer                      *** FPU = Financial Peace University</p>		<p>1 Women's Book Club 10 am                      *** FPU 6 pm</p>	<p>2 Awana 6:25 pm                      Jr. High 6:30 pm</p>	<p>3 "Time-Out" @ Debra Jones' 6:30 pm</p>	4	5
<p>6 **PIP 7:45 am                      Communion                      Sr. High Youth Group 6:30 pm</p>	<p>7 Missions Team meeting 7 pm</p>	<p>8 ***FPU 6pm                      Elders Meeting 7 pm</p>	<p>9 MOPS 9 am                      Awana 6:25 pm                      Jr. High 6:30 pm</p>	<p>10 Deadline for JANUARY Free News Submission</p>	<p>11 Connected Together @ Svendsen's 7 pm</p>	<p>12 Date Night 4 pm                      Geneseo Christmas Walk</p>
<p>13 ** PIP 7:45 am                      Challenge info. mtg. 5:30 pm                      Sr. High Youth Group 6:30 pm</p>	14	<p>15 Nursery Steering Team Mtg. 9 am                      *** FPU 6 pm</p>	<p>16 Prayer Shawl Ministry 1:30 pm                      Awana 6:25 pm                      Jr. High 6:30 pm</p>	<p>17 Crafting 6 pm</p>	18	19
<p>20 ** PIP 7:45 am</p>	<p>21 Administrative Council Meeting 7 pm</p>	<p>22 Elders Meeting 7 pm</p>	<p>23 No Awana or Youth Group</p>	<p>24 Christmas Eve Service 5:00 pm</p>	<p><b>OFFICE CLOSED</b></p>	26
<p>27 ** PIP 7:45 am</p>	28	29	<p>30 No Awana or Youth Group</p>	<p>31 Wedding rehearsal &amp; decorating</p>		

## Reaching UP Reaching IN Reaching OUT

### Free News

DECEMBER 2009 Volume 14, Issue 11

#### THE BELL

##### I KNOW WHO I AM

I am God's child (John 1:12 )  
I am Christ's friend (John 15:15 )  
I am united with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17)  
I am bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19-20)  
I am a saint (set apart for God). (Eph. 1:1)  
I am a personal witness of Christ. (Acts 1:8)  
I am the salt & light of the earth (Matt. 5:13 -14)  
I am a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27)  
I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8:1-2)  
I am a citizen of Heaven. I am significant (Phil. 3:20)  
I am free from any charge against me (Rom. 8:31-34)  
I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Cor 5:17 -21)  
I have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18 )  
I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6)  
I cannot be separated from the love of God (Rom. 8:35 -39)  
I am established, anointed, sealed by God (2 Cor. 1:21 -22)  
I am assured all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28)  
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16)  
I may approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph. 3:12)  
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)  
I am the branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (John 15: 1-5)  
I am God's temple (1 Cor. 3: 16). I am complete in Christ (Col. 2: 10)  
I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). I have been justified (Romans 5:1)  
I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1). I am God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10)  
I am confident that the good works God has begun in me will be perfected. (Phil. 1:5)  
I have been redeemed and forgiven (Col. 1:14 ). I have been adopted as God's child (Eph. 1:5)

**I belong to God  
Do you know  
Who you are?**

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E-mail: gefc@gefc.org

#### Sunday Worship Services

- Conventional Service -  
8:15 am
- Contemporary Service -  
10:45 am

**Education** - 9:30-10:30 am

Senior Pastor - Greg Chenoweth  
Student Pastor - Michael Mauriello  
Worship Director - AJ Reynolds

#### The FREE NEWS

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