Praise Academy
A lot to be thankful for

Northern Virginia
Producing a Harvest

Servant Branch
New Life in Old Convent

Jamaica
Right Place, Right Time
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From left: Levi, Isaac and David, enjoyed harvesting radishes at Praise Harvest farm in Evansville.
A few days before Thanksgiving, the relatives of Praise Academy’s 13 students—mothers, aunts, grandmothers, a great-grandmother, one father and many little brothers and sisters—came to the school for a holiday lunch. They carried in platters of mustard greens, green beans, rolls, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce and stuffing. Once inside, they wrote on cut-out paper leaves what they were thankful for—for Praise Academy, for friendships and family members—then attached them with yarn to the Thankful Tree, a branch set in a vase. They toured the school, admiring the students’ work: tissue paper versions of Monet’s water lilies, a model of the solar system made from Styrofoam balls, quizzes about the planets, and handwriting samples. The students performed a hymn for their relatives, singing, “Here, in the love of Christ, I stand.” Joan Pingel, the principal, led a prayer and announced that the students would serve the meal, and saw how the mothers raised their eyebrows and smiled in a surprised and impressed way. After the meal the students served four pies that they had made (apple, chocolate, lemon and pumpkin). The relatives filed out of the school and the students began clearing away the plates and sweeping the floors.

This was a normal, healthy and happy scene, one that any community member would feel at home in, but I can’t help but see it through the lens of our first years in the neighborhood, back when a few long-haired white kids started going door to door to talk about God’s dreams for Allendale and Lakeside, when we were easily mistaken for burial insurance salesmen or narcs, back when just this sort of scene would have been impossible. Death and decay dominated the area, symbolized by the rotten and collapsing shacks, the pop-pop-pop of gunshots at night, the gang murders making headlines. Yet, even then, the seeds of this scene were buried in our neighbors’ hearts. In those early conversations, neighbors told us again and again that their biggest concern was for the children, that they wanted to protect them from the drugs and violence, to get kids off the street and to secure their futures. Today, Praise Academy has become a beating heart for a younger neighborhood, while the rest of the neighbors are the muscles, tendons, hard bones and leathery skin forming around the heart to shelter and nurture it, to celebrate its growth and ensure that it keeps beating. Each morning and afternoon that forming happens, as many of those same relatives arrive to drop off or pick up their children, some in cars, others on foot. Sometimes the moms linger a while, talking with one another. After school, one of the grandmothers walks three of the children, not her own descendants, back to her house, wishing to help a neighbor family with two working parents.

Word is getting out. Edna Malone, the school secretary, recently got a visit from a mom with two fifth graders. She explained that she had been telling a neighbor how disappointed she was with the school her children were attending. The neighbor, who has three children in Praise Academy, told her about the school, and so the mom wanted to talk with Edna about enrolling her own children.

On a recent afternoon, Nano Farabaugh (South Bend) observed a comical, Norman Rockwellian scene. A dog pulled a boy on a skateboard down Yale Avenue, while his little brother, a kindergarten at Praise Academy, chased the boy and skateboard. Jayden, the younger one, stopped to greet “Miss Nano,” and on down the street the boys and their dog rolled and ran. These streets are now a safer and freer place for boys and dogs to roam. “Before you came here, there was a lot of chaos, a lot of shooting,” our neighbor Angie Scroggins (see page 5), told us; “but since you’ve been here, you don’t hear gunshots no more.”

Another scene: A young, single mother of a Praise Academy student sits on the front porch swing next to Patti Deakin. Patti is a school volunteer whose roles include driving kids to school and church, cleaning the school on Friday nights and, perhaps most importantly, speaking from her own experience, for she too was once a single mom. The younger mom shares about her finances, how she finally has money coming in from a job as a substitute teacher. Patti explains that core concept of budgeting, the difference between wants
and needs, and how to set money aside now for Christmas coming soon. Patti has already talked to her about bedtime routines, and reading the Bible in the home. “She is teachable and wants to learn,” Patti says. “She’s got some lofty goals and she’s come a long way in the last two years.” The young mother herself chooses one word to describe the neighborhood she grew up in, “peaceful.” She adds, “I would say that it’s peaceful because of the people. They’re all about God. They try to lift you up and encourage you.” She shares the desire of her heart. “I have always wanted my daughter to go to a private school,” and now her dream is real.

But do not let me mislead or conceal, for hardship lurks a few blocks away. Joan recently got a call from another of the moms, who was at the hospital after delivering her newest child. She was worried that her other children, at home with their uncles, would have no food, since their fridge had given out. After school, Joan went to the store to get some chicken and potatoes and took them over. The house was dark and, once inside, Joan saw the bedroom with linens spread out on the floor, where many of the children sleep, the older ones waking up to care for the younger ones. Joan asked the kids where they eat. On the floor in the living room, they told her. She prepared the plates and cut the chicken for the younger ones, telling the uncles that the children would eat first, and staying until the children had finished the food. One of the uncles must have been impressed by Joan’s stick-to-itiveness, because he later recounted this scene to the mom. She then related in glowing terms what Joan had done, telling David Zimmel, “I love Miss Joan.” She desires a new house for her family, one closer to the school, and David, who knows the rental market well, is helping her to find one.

During the school day, the same children who woke up on that floor are hearing for the first time that the earth goes around the sun, or answering 46 math questions right without making a mistake. (After correct answer number 46, the boy’s tutor, Pat Malone, a usually mild-mannered fellow, reports, “I ran over to the school and got Joan to tell her. We were both so happy we practically danced through the school!”) They are learning that blue crayon with yellow crayon on top makes green, and watching videos about the birth of stars. They know what a glockenspiel is, and that it sounds like Tinker Bell.

Joan recalls how, as a ninth grade student at Trinity School in the 1980s, her teacher, Jeannette DeCelles-Zwerneman, had a hard time getting her to memorize the poem “The Owl and the Pussycat.” Now Joan’s first and second graders are learning it, perfecting their penmanship by copying out the stanzas, and then reciting them together. “Sometimes I have to look at the paper,” Joan admits, “but they remember it just from writing the lines out,” and have three stanzas down pat.

The children don’t want to miss any of this fun, as was borne out on a recent morning. One of the boys, alarmed that his grandmother had overslept, started calling and texting his aunt, trying to rouse her so she could bring him to school. A mother also reports that her son, who is still learning his days of the week, gets upset when he wakes up and learns that it’s Saturday or Sunday. Last year, when he went to a different school, he would kick and scream on weekdays and celebrate on weekends.

Final scene: Each day for recess, the students go out to the playground, new this year, fenced in and built on rolling ground that used to hold a rotting house that looked like a barn. They swing on the swings and climb up the climbing dome. The older ones enjoy running wild, their yelps and squeals carrying down the street. These are some of Joan’s favorite moments. “It moves me a lot to watch them on the playground. In some ways I feel like we are giving them back their childhoods. Sometimes I worry, wondering, are we teaching them enough? Then I think, we’re showing them that there is a Lord who loves them and people out there who love them just because. It’s not abnormal that a student will say to me when I pop my head in the room, ‘I love you, Miss Jones.’ They can be children here. We can laugh with them, and we do. Sometimes they tease me by deliberately trying to form a letter wrong to see how I’ll react!”

It’s a lot to be thankful for.
COOKING UP SMILES
At Praise Academy

BY ELIZABETH GRAMS

Angie Scroggins has a beautiful face, with a strong jaw, sorrowful eyes and a smile that flashes golden teeth. She’s a longtime resident of Allendale, married, with three children, all teenagers. She’s the cook at Praise Academy and, more than that, the school’s top recruiter. Six of the school’s 14 students are her relatives.

“The parents come in, saying, ‘Angie said this was good, so I’m going to bring my kids here,’” explains Joan Pingel, the principal of Praise Academy. “Her family respects and trusts her. That’s why they came.”

“What I love most about Praise Academy,” Angie explains, “is that my nephew learned to write his name. He learned how to read some. He learned how to do math. And the teachers help show the kids how to love one another, how to be there as brothers and sisters.”

Angie feels the value of education in a personal way. She left school after junior high so she could help her mom take care of the family. When she was 19 her mother died, leaving Angie as one of the primary caregivers for her younger siblings. She’s been cooking since the age of seven, when she had to learn to feed the 18 people living in her house. She can remember her stepfather fishing through the dumpsters at McDonalds, looking for discarded burgers so the family could eat.

She knows how to make do. “You just put me inside a kitchen with anything, and I’ll make something out of it.”

The community’s relationship with Angie got off to a rocky start. Eight years ago, one of Angie’s children was coming to our summer camp in Allendale. One day, he left camp early by himself and returned home, but Angie wasn’t there. A city marshal stopped by for a routine check of the house, where Angie was running a daycare. When the marshal found the unattended child, Angie had a lot of explaining to do. Upset, she stopped sending her son to camp. But each day camp leader Jeanette Duddy would go to Angie’s house, hoping to reconcile with her and bring her son back to camp. “Jeanette was consistent,” Angie recalls. “I just got tired of her coming, and I said, ‘You know what? Go on and take him.’ I had seen that she really loved him. It was just a mistake. We all make mistakes.”

The next year, in 2009, Patti Deakin brought Angie some soup when she was
Angie prepares lunch for the students daily. Bottom: Praise Academy 2016-17. Faculty include (from top, clockwise) Kevin McShane, Gianna Priolo, Lori Twining, Mary Beckley and principal Joan Pingel.

sick with what looked like pneumonia. After a few visits, Patti noticed that Angie wasn’t getting better, so she took her to the hospital. The doctors found kidney stones and operated on Angie to remove them. “I woke up and saw three ladies,” Angie recalled. “Miss Patti, Jeannette and Laura [Brummer]. I was just grateful for someone being there with me.”

Over the years, Angie’s children became a regular part of our summer camps, and her boys, Shamareio and Demarlo, often brought their bikes to Gerry Deakin’s house for repairs. Her daughter Jabareanna spent so much time with the single women’s household that Angie, wanting her to study harder, used to tell her, “You can’t move in with them unless you graduate from high school!”

When CIM team members first started talking with neighbors about the school in 2011, Angie was excited for her own kids to come, but by the time the school’s doors opened her kids were too old. Angie told Patti she still wanted to help, and Patti suggested that she take on some of the cooking. Angie eventually offered to make lunches for the students each day.

She cherishes the requests that the students make for her green beans or her hamburgers, and laughs when she recalls a day when one of the little girls piped up during lunch, saying, “It’s quiet in here.” “I know,” Angie replied. “It’s cause everybody’s enjoying the meal.”

She makes other contributions besides her cooking. If students are misbehaving, oftentimes a look from Angie is enough to set them back on course.

“Even if I’m having a bad day,” Angie says, “I can make somebody else smile. I give them something to eat, and they smile and be thankful for that—that will make me happy.

“My babies are depending on me.”
In Northern Virginia, Persistence Produces a Harvest

by Chris Meehan

When Nick Holovaty came to northern Virginia in early November to give the men’s retreat, the branch presented him with a load of gardening supplies, already packed in a rental truck and ready for Nick to drive back to Evansville. The load included a freezer, refrigerator, dishwasher, lumber, fencing and rakes, as well as numerous items for the Evansville urban farm (recently named “Praise Harvest”). Nick and fellow missionary Andrew Pingel drove the truck back to Evansville on November 6.

The effort to fill the truck was the brainchild of Bill Sjoberg. For four years running, Bill has organized groups of northern Virginia volunteers to work in the new starts for a few days in February. Hoping to find a way to support the mission work throughout the year, Bill asked Peter Putzier, who is managing the urban farm, to come up with a wish list of items that would benefit the farm. The list included landscaping fabric, a rain gauge, a vacuum sealer and other canning supplies, a flame weeder and supplies for building a chicken coop.

Northern Virginia branch members contributed many of the items, but Bill also approached the managers at three area Home Depot stores. He took along the wish list, a tax-exempt number and a letter he wrote describing the People of Praise and our outreaches.

“The managers were difficult to track down,” he said, but after visiting one of the stores five times he hit the jackpot. The manager offered him a $530 gift card. Emboldened by that success, Bill tried a second store, which had initially offered him a $25 gift card. “When I finally got hold of the manager, he took me up and down the aisles, shopping from my list until I racked up $250 worth of garden supplies.” The manager of the third store wouldn’t get back to Bill, and staff members finally suggested that Bill contact the company’s headquarters instead. But Bill’s doggedness paid off again. When he finally met the manager, he took Bill down the aisles to gather $140 worth of supplies.

“Bill has been amazingly persistent,” said Peter. “It’s been great to work with him and a great blessing to have someone with our needs in mind.”

Praise Harvest just wrapped up its second growing season, which yielded tomatoes, okra, jalapeño peppers, spinach, lettuce, cucumbers, basil, beets, radishes, Swiss chard, corn, beans, peas and, by popular demand of the neighbors, collard greens, mustard greens and turnip greens.

“Please pray for Praise Harvest,” Peter says, “that our farm will become more and more of a connecting place with our neighbors.”

Top, from left: Bill Brophy, Andrew Pingel and Pete Schunk finished loading the truck for Nick Holovaty and Andrew to drive back to Evansville. Middle: Evansville folks unloaded the truck of farming supplies donated by members of the northern Virginia branch. Bottom, from left: John Earhart, Abby Earhart, Chris Vieck and Mary Timler prepared kale for sale.
Sixteen Servant Branch members have taken up residence on the second and third floors of an old convent in the West Side neighborhood of St. Paul, an ethnically and economically diverse area of the city where the branch also has an outreach. The group living in the convent includes two campus households (one for men, the other for women), one family (Bob and Christine Brickweg and their son John) and a single woman, Kati Ritchie. The convent is located on the grounds of St. Matthew Parish and had been vacant for several years, since its previous tenants, the Sisters of Notre Dame, had moved out.

Their motivations for making the move vary.

For the campus households, which had been living in Minneapolis near the University of Minnesota, the new location in St. Paul offered several practical advantages. The West Side is more central to all the colleges and universities the students are attending—not only the University of Minnesota, but also the University of St. Thomas, Inver Hills Community College, St. Paul College and Metropolitan State University. The new location cuts down on the commute time for some. The students also wanted to live in a neighborhood where other community members are living, and five other community households live within walking distance of the convent. Lastly, they were intrigued by the branch’s outreach on the West Side, and some of them hoped that their presence in the neighborhood would allow them to participate in outreach activities in the future.

Bob and Christine simply felt what Bob called “a stirring in our hearts” to move to the West Side, and they’re keeping an open mind about what the Lord has for them in their new location. John, 18, had dreamed of spending his senior year living with the men’s campus household, so when his parents proposed the idea of living across the hall from them, he was thrilled. Kati says she has had a heart for the West Side neighborhood for more than 30 years, especially for its many Spanish-speaking residents.

Pat Murphy, who first found out about the convent and leads the branch’s outreach on the West Side, sees living in the convent this year as the first step in a longer-term vision. “We’ve been talking for many years as a branch about how to care for our elderly members, and we also have a growing outreach on the West Side. We think that this convent could be a place where elderly branch members could live in the future and be part of the outreach. This year, we want to test out the space by having some brothers and sisters live there and seeing how well it works for community life.”

Each floor has one five-bedroom apartment and one three-bedroom apartment. The Brickwegs have the smaller apartment on the second floor, across from the single men’s household, and Kati and the single women’s household take up the third floor. Though the households have made no formal agreements, the close quarters provide many natural occasions for sharing their lives.
For the women, the bathroom is a major point of interaction. Each floor of the convent has a single bathroom—a huge room with three entrances, two shower stalls, four bathtubs, four stalls for toilets, two sinks and a laundry area. Christine walks upstairs to use the bathroom on the third floor, sharing it with Kati and the campus women. “I love the exercise and I love the fact that I see the other women throughout the day,” she said. “We’re always interacting and passing one another.”

The Brickwegs and the single men leave the front doors to their apartments open most of the time. “If they’re open, it’s like an invitation: ‘y’all feel free to come in, hang out, just talk,’” explained Isaac Willard, the head of the men’s household. “We’ll hear one another praying or singing, or someone just breaks out the guitar and starts singing, and people show up.”

John, a senior at Trinity School at River Ridge, says he can hear when the college men are having their evening prayer and can pop across the hall to join them.

The men’s household helped Kati move in upstairs. “When I had a whole bunch of moving boxes that had to go, the guys took them out for me. And when one of my chairs fell apart, they came and fixed that, too.”

Celina Tragesser, one of the college students, spotted Kati outside the building collecting leaves for an art project, so she got to talk with her about her art. Celina says that living with other community members helps her keep a good perspective on her schoolwork—one bad exam isn’t the end of the world. “There’s a lot more life to live, a much bigger picture” beyond the stresses of college.

Many in the group are forging new connections: with their West Side neighbors, with longtime parishioners at St. Matthew’s and the parish staff, with local business owners, etc.

Pat adds that all of this fits in with the ultimate goal of the West Side outreach: “We want our life to shine out into the neighborhood and be a witness to all who are there.”

Two squatter families share this isolated shack on the edge of a swamp in Portmore, Jamaica.

**Fire Man**

by Chris Meehan

“Deh house a-bun down!”

Andre Johnstone (Kingston) was bringing a monthly supply of food to a shack occupied by two families of squatters when he spotted a small boy of about six and his smaller brother walking by the road. The smaller child had tears in his eyes. When Andre stopped the car, the larger boy explained that their house was burning.

Andre drove quickly to the shack, a wide structure built from plywood scraps and faded wooden signs for a beauty salon. He recognized it as the house where he was supposed to be delivering the food.

“I could see flames in the roof,” he recalled. The roof was a mixture of corrugated zinc panels and cardboard, with the pieces held in place by large rocks.

“I got out of the car and my daughter said, ‘Where are you going, Daddy? Be careful!’”

Inside the dark shack, Andre found the place where the ceiling was burning and saw a piece of cardboard hanging down, also in flames. An electrical wire dangled from the ceiling, charred and blackened.

He grabbed a bedsheet and began waving it, but fanning only made the fire grow stronger, so he pulled down the piece of cardboard and flung it outside. There, one of the children told him to look for a water bottle on a table—the shack had no running water.

“Where are you going, Daddy? Be careful!”

Back inside, Andre felt around for the bottle, grabbed it and used it to extinguish the flames in a roof beam along with the embers that had fallen onto the floor.

“There was just enough water to put out the fire,” he said.

With the fire quenched, Andre took the children to their mother, who was in a nearby bar. She said she had left them with an uncle, but he was nowhere to be found.

“I praise God that I got there at that time,” he said. “The fire department would never have arrived in time and the whole structure could have burnt.”
The Power of Special K Bars

by Sean Connolly

Most evenings a group of men are sitting, listening to music, playing cards and drinking beer underneath a scrubby pine tree in a dirt front yard on Dove Street in Allendale.

Missionary David Zimmel used to walk by often. Sometimes he’d be carrying a plate of food—his contribution to a common meal at the Bowars or the Reinhardts, who live next door to where the men gather.

“Where you goin’ so fast?” one of the men would call out, if he saw the food.

David would stop, show him the salad or bread he was carrying, offer the man some, and then the man would refuse. This friendly verbal dance continued each time David went by with food, with call, response, offer and refusal, until one day last spring when David was carrying a pan of Special K bars. (They are normally made with Special K cereal, peanut butter and corn syrup, with melted chocolate and butterscotch chips, but this time David had substituted bran flakes for the Special K.)

The man said he’d like to try them, so after dinner David brought him the leftover bars.

A few months later, David was walking by again when he heard a familiar voice.

“Hey, man, when are you gonna bring me some more of those bars?”

“When do you want them?” David asked.

“Tomorrow?” the man suggested.

David was reluctant, explaining that he’d have to go to the store to get the ingredients, and that the bars could be kind of expensive to make.

“How much we talking?”

“Five or ten bucks.”

“That’s it? That’s nothing,” the man said. Then he walked to his car, brought out a crumpled $5 bill and gave it to David.

Several days later, David returned with a full pan of the bars. The man appeared to have forgotten about his request, but his face lit up when he saw them. He and the other men ate them eagerly.

That day the group included a neighbor from across the street, Oscar. He’s a strong man, a landscaper by trade, with a huge voice and a history of being unfriendly to the mission team. Nathan Barrett recalls when Oscar cursed him out in that booming voice, as he and some other team members were helping someone move out of a nearby house. “You’d wave at Oscar and he’d look the other way,” recalled Gerry Deakin.

When Oscar found out David had made the bars, he couldn’t believe it. He told David he’d like to hire him to make some for a family reunion he would be hosting at his house.

“What if I teach you to make them?” David asked.

The next day, David brought another set of the ingredients over to Oscar’s house. He had never been inside before, in spite of many years of attempting to befriend Oscar, including numerous offers to have Action volunteers work at his house. Oscar had always refused.

David joined Oscar and his wife Vanessa in the kitchen, and they made the bars—a simple job that took about 20 minutes. Oscar also showed David his new refrigerator and asked if he knew how to hook it up to the water line.

The next weekend, David and Joe Bulger spent the day connecting the refrigerator, laughing with Oscar as they made trip after trip to the hardware store, trying to find the proper pipe fitting. Oscar told David that the Special K bars had been a hit with his family and that everyone wanted them at their next gathering.

David soon left town for two weeks, but while he was gone Oscar walked across the street to where the Bowars and Reinhardts live. Both families have young babies less than a year old. Oscar saw Ben and Kathleen Reinhardt and stuffed a $10 bill in Ben’s hand, telling them he wanted them to buy a toy for their son, Luke. Then he told them he wanted to have them and the Bowars over to his house for a barbecue.

Oscar also visited the Bowars, giving them $10 for their twins and inviting them to the barbecue.

John Bowar says he has observed this friendliness growing in Oscar. It appears to stem from little gestures: from the Special K bars, from the caramel rolls the Bowars delivered at Easter time, and from Oscar seeing John and the twins taking a walk.

One day Oscar took out the Bowars’ trash. Another evening he offered to stand watch while Colleen Bowar brought in some groceries from the car, wanting her to know she was safe.

Nowadays, Oscar doesn’t look away when a mission team member greets him, but points out John to the other men when John is going by, saying, “Hey, that’s my neighbor.”

For his part, calls him “Uncle Oscar,” wanting his kids, even at their young age, to see their neighbor as part of the family.

“When I called him Uncle Oscar, he just got this huge grin on his face,” John said.

Most recently, Oscar gave the Bowars another gift for the twins, $20 this time. “I’m gonna be their godfather,” he told Colleen. “And I’m gonna be a really good godfather!”

Special K Bars

- Microwave 1 cup sugar and 1 cup corn syrup in 30-second intervals until sugar dissolves.
- Mix in 1 cup peanut butter.
- Mix in 6 cups Special K or other crispy cereal.
- Press into greased 9x13 pan, and put pan into fridge or freezer to chill.
- Microwave 1 to 2 cups each of chocolate and butterscotch chips in 30-second intervals until melted. Stir and spread over bars.
- Refrigerate to allow topping to set before serving.
The idea first came to Peggy Go when she read in the local Catholic newspaper about a retreat for young people of different ages and abilities that had taken place in another corner of the diocese. Why not have an event closer to South Bend?, she wondered.

When she called the diocesan Ministry for Persons with Disabilities, she learned that their role is simply advisory. They don’t organize retreats themselves. Peggy figured that this let her off the hook, but the Holy Spirit kept nudging her. She thought about Julie Walters’s book God Is Like, and it occurred to her that it might provide the framework for a retreat. Then she enlisted not only Julie but also Pam Peterson, Ruth Sanford and me. Some of us have experience parenting or teaching youth with different abilities. Some have written curricula for our churches and People of Praise youth ministry. As we began to brainstorm, we discovered a delightful complementarity in our gifts, concerns and expertise. Then we discovered an online commentator who calls herself “Jenny the Jewel.” She explains how performing acts of service taught her that God had a purpose for her life. They helped her no longer to question whether God had made a mistake when he created her with Down syndrome.

We held our retreat at the branch’s community center from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m on Saturday, September 17. After an introductory session about Jenny, we projected each section of Julie’s book (“The Rock”; “A Spark of Light”; “A Breath of Wind”) and explored it with activities, crafts, conversation and songs.

Ten days before the retreat, Veronica Go was the only one signed up, but we wound up with nine participants of varying ages and abilities. We had a lot of fun with them, and we’ve also heard very positive feedback about their experiences on the retreat.

“The retreat was really fun,” Veronica said. “I made new friends and learned about how God always helps us.”

“I learned about God that he is our light and our rock. About myself, I learned that God made me,” said Elizabeth, another participant.

A third participant named Susan added, “When’s the next one?”

“A couple of girls told us that they knew they weren’t mistakes, and that Jesus loved them,” Peggy said. “For me that was a confirmation that the retreat was the right thing to do. A lot of the attendees don’t normally talk about God with anyone.”

“I’ve found that people with disabilities are there to pull out the love in us, if we let ourselves get close to them,” she added.
In the U.S., king cakes are baked during the period from Epiphany to Ash Wednesday. The tradition celebrates the coming of the Three Kings to worship Christ.
The cakes are decorated with purple, green and gold sugar, which represent justice, faith and power. There is also a tradition of hiding a tiny figurine of the Christ child in the cake. Whoever finds the baby Jesus in their piece of cake has to make the next cake!

This recipe comes from our covenanted sister Debbie Vaughan, who died in 2011. Debbie’s daughters and Shreveport branch members still use her recipe. Julia (Vaughan) Hendrix remembers her mom making this king cake every week between Epiphany and Mardi Gras. “We all love it!” Julia says.

The Vaughans sometimes divide the dough in half to make two smaller cakes with different fillings. Another favorite filling option, instead of raspberry cream, is to sprinkle sugar, brown sugar and cinnamon over the dough before rolling it into a wreath.

**KING CAKE**

**Raspberry Cream Filling**

*Ingredients*

- 8 ounces softened cream cheese
- 4 tablespoons soft butter
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 8 ounces raspberry preserves

Cream together cream cheese, butter and powdered sugar. Set aside preserves.

**Powdered Sugar Frosting**

*Ingredients*

- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Combine ingredients and mix until smooth.

**Colored Sugar**

*Ingredients*

- 3/4 cup white sugar, divided into three parts
- 4 drops each of yellow, green and purple liquid food coloring

Place sugar into three jars with tight-fitting lids. For each jar, drip the food coloring onto the sugar, close the lid, and shake vigorously for about one minute. Adjust color with additional food coloring and repeat if the color is too light.

**Cake**

*Ingredients*

- 1 ¾ cups warm water (120 to 130°)
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons active dry yeast
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups white flour

*Directions*

1. Combine water and sugar and add yeast. Stir gently. Let sit for five to ten minutes, until mixture begins to bubble. Then stir in oil and salt. Add flour one cup at a time, until it forms a ball. Knead the dough on a floured surface until it is soft and smooth; add more flour if dough is too sticky. Place the dough in a large bowl that is greased with oil. Roll the dough in the bowl to coat it with the oil. Cover the bowl with a damp cloth and place to rise in a warm place for about 1 ½ hours or until the dough is double in size.

2. Punch the dough down. Then roll it flat on a floured surface to make a long narrow rectangle, approximately 30 by 10 inches. Leaving the edges bare, spread the cream cheese filling, followed by raspberry preserves, lengthwise down the center of the dough. Place the king doll on one of the long edges. Then roll up the dough lengthwise, with the doll rolled into the center, to make a long tube shape. With wet fingertips, pinch together the lengthwise seam and the ends. Carefully place the dough on a greased cookie sheet, shaping it into a wreath. Let rise for 30 minutes to an hour. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until golden.

3. Allow the cake to cool slightly for three minutes, then transfer it to a serving platter and spread on the powdered sugar frosting. Decorate with bands of purple, yellow and green sugar.

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**Smith Wigglesworth: ONLY JESUS**

**BY GEORGE STORMONT**

Smith Wigglesworth was born to a poor English family in 1859. Trained as a plumber, he became a Pentecostal preacher and evangelist, working at different times with the Salvation Army and the Assemblies of God. Wigglesworth had a large international healing ministry in the early to mid-1900s and is reported to have raised several people from the dead, including his wife, Polly. He was known for hitting and punching people in the affected spot when he prayed with them for their healing. Wigglesworth did not learn to read until he was an adult, and said that the only book he ever read was the Bible. He died in 1947. This excerpt comes from the biography *Smith Wigglesworth: A Man Who Walked With God* by George Stormont.

When Smith Wigglesworth stayed in our home once, he came down early one morning and told me, “God spoke to me on your bed.”

“What did he say?” I asked.

“He said, ‘Wigglesworth, I am going to burn you all up, until there is no more Wigglesworth, only Jesus.’”

Standing at the foot of our stairs, he raised his hands to heaven, and with tears running down his cheeks, he cried, “O, God, come and do it! I don’t want them to see me anymore—only Jesus!”

If I had to sum up the man Smith Wigglesworth as I knew him, that one statement would be it. He lived so that people would only see Jesus.

New and used copies of *Smith Wigglesworth: A Man Who Walked With God* are available for purchase from many online retailers, including Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Abebooks.
Nothing half-hearted about John. Nurtured by a loving family, in his youth he became a Life Scout and a serious athlete, in college he joined several faith-related groups, double-majored in English and science engineering and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Later he started his own company without relying on debt. He always got things done, and done in a masterly way.

John loved thinking, and he did a lot of it. He loved action and accomplishing things. God and his kingdom were the bedrock of John’s life. In a way, he was a theologian with muscles as well as thoughts and words, devoted to God with tireless hands and heart, with sweat and uncountable hours.

His masterpiece was our youth group for boys, where he led them to become better young men in faith and in action. For three decades he was its selfless architect, as the boys built campsites and motors, grew vegetables, cooked over campfires, made cider, repaired bicycles, learned orienteering and competed in their annual Pinewood Derby (with John roaring out, “Gentlemen, start your engines!”). He began all these adventures with sharings based on Bible stories or lessons (using props, like the wig he wore for the Samson story). He got the fathers involved too, so they could build brotherhood with their sons.

Whether bushwhacking on Pikes Peak or hunkering down at the branch center past midnight preparing the next day’s new adventure for the boys, our good brother John lived humbly and was always rock-solid.

Ted Willard loved people, and walked among the privileged as easily as among the poor. My dad introduced me to two US vice-presidents, eight senators and a famous chemical engineer. He also sponsored refugees, sheltered homeless people, fed the poor and visited prisoners.

Dad joined the Navy expecting to give his life in the invasion of Japan. After WWII he studied engineering, married my mom, had two children and held three jobs. They had six more children while Dad worked in the Apollo Space Program, developing the ring laser gyroscope—the same guidance technology used today in air and space vehicles. Along the way he went to night school, and was an elected city councilman. In 1971 he founded and directed Local Government Information Systems, which today provides software development and data processing for Minnesota cities.

Dad loved to play guitar and sing, leading church prayer groups and men’s groups in praising God. He was passionate about helping people, and did missionary work in El Paso after retirement. While there, my parents were arrested while praying in front of an abortion facility. Dad spent three days in jail, befriending fellow inmates, telling them about Jesus.

He knew he had Alzheimer’s, so he participated in a scientific study of the disease for 25 years, leaving his brain for humanity in death, just as he had given his all in life.
Covenant:
Congratulations to these brothers and sisters who recently made the covenant of the People of Praise:

Indianapolis, October 9:
Peter Coleman
Jared Gonzalez
Anne Raway
Rebecca Sklorenko

South Bend, October 16:
Orest Holovaty
Susan Holovaty

Vancouver-Portland, October 23:
Emily Hagens
Suad Sbait
Dan Schwab

Shreveport, November 12:
Jody Tucker
Susan Lea

Births and Adoption:
Welcome to our youngest brothers and sisters in the community:
Marjorie Leilani, born October 7 to Pete and Maile Schunk (northern Virginia).
Michael Levi, born November 8 to Collin and Margaret Anderson (South Bend).

Congratulations to John and Kristen Slattery (South Bend) and welcome to their 16-year-old daughter, Kittii, who was adopted on October 20.

Weddings and Anniversaries:
Congratulations to Sean Couch and Hannah Caniff (both South Bend), who were married at Holy Cross Catholic Church in South Bend on October 15, 2016.

Congratulations to these brothers and sisters on the occasion of their anniversaries:
Jane (Appleton) and Stephen Buch, 25 years on October 12.
Brian and Mary Lynn Gaffney (Servant Branch), 35 years on October 17.

Correction: In our last issue we misstated the anniversary dates of both Louis and Nancy Grams (45 years) and Mick and Kathy Coleman (40 years). Both anniversaries are September 10, not September 11. We apologize for the error.

Work and Achievements:
Congratulations to Kate Smith (Servant Branch), who recently retired after more than 12 years as the office receptionist at Servant Branch’s community center.
David Mattingly (South Bend) has a new position as resource development coordinator for Corvilla, Inc., a nonprofit organization providing services for people with disabilities.

Hats off to Jim Winner (northern Virginia), chief legal officer, general counsel and secretary at GardaWorld Federal Services, who was chosen as an Outstanding Chief Legal Officer for 2016 by the Association of Corporate Counsel—National Capital Region, which has more than 2,000 members from over 800 private-sector organizations.

Norman Okimoto, president of the Hawaii Society of Certified Public Accountants, devoted his column in the September issue of Kala, the organization’s monthly magazine, to honoring Ron Gouveia (Oahu) for his longtime example of “servant leadership” in his relations with his co-workers, clients and other accountants in his field.

Deaths:
We’ve received word of the deaths of these members of the People of Praise. We pray for their family and friends in this time of loss. Tribute articles will follow in an upcoming issue.
Kathy Rice (Yakima) died October 12, 2016.
May Mutidjo (Tampa) died October 21, 2016.
Elaine Braham (Buffalo) died November 2, 2016.

Correction: In our last issue we incorrectly reported the date of Roman’s Schmitt’s death. He died September 29, 2016, not September 30.

Executive Office Announcements:
Buffalo:
Tom Shriver has been appointed to a third six-year term as principal branch coordinator, effective November 9, 2016.

South Bend:
Lori Massa was released from the covenant of the People of Praise on November 1, 2016.
Eileen Cramer was released from the covenant of the People of Praise on November 10, 2016.

This season is not about potpourri,
Nor partridge at home in a pear tree.
Instead, we the crew
Are all wishing you
A Christ-centered Christmas from V&B!
“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light” (Is. 9:2).