

2007 Annual Report



Vineyard Community Church of Iowa City, PO Box 186, Iowa City, IA 52244 319.351.6725

A Note from our Pastor...

By Adey Wassink

There were so many good moments last year, but my favorite was Easter. Ok, so I love our worship and the teaching was great, and of course it doesn't get better than saying, "He has risen! He has risen indeed!" But it was the in-between part that got to me. Easter fell on the day before my 50th birthday. I was horribly embarrassed when Tom called me up and said, "Happy Birthday!" in front of all of you. Let's face it, that's an awkward moment. Worse, he gave me a present from my family like it was this public event. I was surprised and deeply touched that my family gave me linens to be given to the Domestic Violence Shelter.

I was however, in no way prepared for what happened next. All of you, honoring me, honoring those in need in our community, honoring Jesus



by bringing up box after box of supplies for the Homeless Shelter, for the Domestic Violence Shelter, and for the Crisis Center. All I could think was, "This is the best community in the world!" I am forever grateful to be a part of your lives as we together, as individuals and as a community, embark on our calling: bringing the world around us to life!

Here's to another year!

Environmental Ministry

By Erika Lauer

Over the past year, the environmental ministry has been busy with educational activities. We celebrated Earth Day with gifts of compact fluorescent light bulbs for all members and information about the impact of our food choices and the benefits of local foods. We saw many take the message to heart and frequently bumped into each other at the farmer's market over the summer! Last spring, we hosted a special Wildfire activity. At beautiful Kent State park we learned about Iowa's abundant natural resource, water, and how to protect it, followed by games and a scavenger hunt. At the women's retreat, a

workshop on voluntary simplicity helped people to look more closely at their relationship with their material possessions and daily choices. We are looking forward to implementing the Cool congregations program offered through Iowa Interfaith Power and Light (IIPL). IIPL's goal is to help people of faith to work together to halt global warming and reduce the impacts of global climate change. In a three part series of house groups, we will view movies that educate about the environment and the challenges we face, calculate our carbon footprints, and figure out ways to reduce our use over the next year.

Oakdale Prison Ministry

By Nichole Slabach

On Friday nights, women from VCCIC go to the Oakdale Classification Prison in Coralville to help the chaplain provide a church service for female inmates. The female prisoners are at Oakdale for medical, psychological and educational testing before being placed for their long-term prison sentence in the Mitchelville Women's Prison.

Unfortunately, while at Oakdale, the women must spend 23 hours in their prison cells daily. So for many of the women the Friday evening service is refreshing to their thirsty souls. We have had the opportunity to share God's love through words of encouragement, devotional sharing, prayer and many hugs. After spending

"After spending an evening with the women living in the prison we have often said we had gained so much more from their willingness to share and be vulnerable than we could ever have given them."

-Nichole Slabach, Prison Outreach

an evening with the women living in the prison, we have often said we had gained so much more from their willingness to share and be vulnerable than we could ever have given them. You could say that being part of the prison ministry is also refreshing to *our* thirsty souls.

Women's Ministry

By Rachelle McCoy and Janel Carpenter

The women's retreat in 2007, contained several new and experimental elements, which are always fun. We did not have a guest speaker and relied on our own talent. It was wonderful to hear from so many of our women.

A big thrust was getting women to interact and come to know each other better, so we did lots of fun stuff related to that over lunch, during the evening, at Bible study, etc. That was a highlight. As leaders of the event, one of our favorite parts was seeing the women newer to our community hanging out with those who've been here for a while.

In October, a group of women got together at Janel Carpenter's home to pray for the community and one another. It was a sweet time of corporate intercession.

Welcoming Ministry

By Po Li Ooi

The newcomers' party happens every quarter, is hosted in turn by different small groups, and continues to be an easy place for people to meet regular attenders. The Hansen's small group took a chance in doing a full-scale party in Kalona, replete with haystack ride and hotdog roast in the forest. They did a spectacular job, and provided a great time for all those who came. The newcomers' pizza party held this January just missed being included in our 2007 ministry report - but it was a huge success, and we look forward to many others!

Responding to Growth in the Kid's Ministry

By Beth Faga

This last year has seen many changes in the Vineyard's Sunday Morning Children Ministries. After many hours of dreaming together and prayer, Dani Watson, Kate Dreyer and I worked to make changes in our Sunday morning classrooms that would offer many exciting new additions. We would add a classroom, expand our Kid's Church program and incorporate safety measures to help improve the care that our children receive.

One of the biggest changes was moving to a Sunday school program that took place during the entire church service, giving the youngsters worship that was designed just for them! What this meant was that each Sunday, Kid's Church and the 4's and 5's class teamed up for worship led by the Kid's Church team. We had hoped the kids would feel free to dance, yell and sing in worship to God as only kids can do. The reality was that our older kids missed worship downstairs and we all missed being able to worship as one body with the entire community. So beginning, June 1, 2008, we will return to having Kid's Church and 4's and 5's back in worship with our community.

If you have a toddler, you're obviously aware of a new classroom on Sunday mornings, the Toddler Room – a space for those little ones who are proficient walkers and who like to romp around with their friends. (Ok, so maybe the addition of this classroom was actually borne out of a desire to provide a little more peace and



We are delighted to be busting at the seams with young ones!

protection for the tiniest ones in our nursery – we admit it.) Play on, toddlers!

Another change we are excited about is the addition of a Registration Table. Children now enter their appropriate classroom prior to the beginning of the church service after being checked in at this table by their parents. It is staffed throughout the service, to help ensure that the area upstairs remains safe and secure while the kids are there. It's also just plain nice to have a welcoming face greeting each child with a, "Good morning" as they enter our ministry area.

Once again, we look back on another year and feel incredibly privileged to be serving these awesome kids. We are also blessed with an amazing pool of volunteer teachers and caregivers. Their creativity and commitment to the kids is inspiring. We are so very grateful for each of you.

Vacation Bible School was a Celebration!

By Beth Faga

The hot week of August 6–10, 2007, saw about 15 children and 8–10 adult volunteers gathered each weekday morning to worship God in song, play games, create wonderful crafts and learn about Jesus through bible stories at vacation bible school. The theme of our week was "Fiesta" and Lydia Mueller, a missionary from Mazatlan, Mexico, stopped by and shared stories of some of her friends in Mexico. She answered questions from the kids and then we



watched a slide show from Mazatlan. After hearing from her, the kids decided to donate money to a scholarship fund Lydia had talked about that allows young children to attend school in Mazatlan. At the end of the week, the kids had raised and donated \$101.00!

All-Church Retreat

By Nichole Slabach

The All Church Retreat was again filled with testimonies, baptism, camp fire laughter and food. It is clear that we are a church that enjoys one another's company. Whether it is celebrating with those who dedicated their lives to Jesus through baptism, or those who share their life's journey with us through an evening of testimonies, or laughing and inhaling S'mores around the warm glow of the late night camp fire, enjoying one another's company and celebrating Jesus together in the woods always makes for a delightful weekend away!



Prayer Groups

By Rachelle McCoy and Janel Carpenter

Prayer groups seem to be a hit in our church.

These groups are a place for deeper sharing, prayer and accountability. Each group has its own unique make-up. Some meet early in the morning for one hour, in and out, very efficient. Others linger, chat, and have added a social component to their groups. Most all attract folks in similar seasons of life.

Those who participate in prayer groups generally find them to be a safe place for growth and healing. Prayer groups are something that we, as a church, encourage and believe to be very beneficial.



Memorable moments at the All-Church Retreat: swimming, baptism and just having fun with a friend.

Men's Retreat Highlights

By Jeremy Negus

Last fall we had our annual men's retreat. Highlights for guys were the testimonies from two men in our community, prayer ministry groups afterwards, the huge bonfire and seminars on Saturday. People came ready to share vulnerably and the prayer ministry time was a testament to that. The ministry time went way later than expected, and guys came away personally transformed and knowing each other better.



Playing hard at the annual men's retreat.

Outreach & Housing Ministry

By Geoff Lauer

In 2007, the members of the Outreach and Housing Ministry collaborated with a number of community organizations to extend their services and supports to community members whose housing was at risk or who were homeless. Specifically the team deployed work groups, house groups and individuals to:

- Prepare and serve meals at the Iowa City Shelter House.
- Prepare and serve meals at the Iowa City Free Lunch Program.
- Staff and support the wintertime Iowa City Shelter House overflow sites.
- Volunteer at the Iowa City Crisis Center Food Bank
- Attend training to learn about affordable housing programs that might be applicable in our community.
- Assist with Habitat for Humanity building projects.

Our outreach continues to grow and touch the community around us. We are thrilled to be part of the opportunities that have arisen this year to serve our community.

Medical Missions

By Bill and Katie Iverson

We have had a very successful year serving the poor in Mazatlan. We feel as if we are doing what God has called us to do and we are seeing the fruits of our labor. We are serving more patients with chronic conditions and supplying month's worth of medication for many people. We are seeing many familiar faces when we go to Mazatlan and it is feeling more like home. We continue to run clinics three times a year. We have focused our attention on six specific colonias, which we visit twice a year: Dona Chonita, Universo, Madero, Urias, Villa Union and Valles. We continue to build a meaningful partnership with the staff at the Mazatlan Vineyard. Our medical database also continues to grow. We received a donation of a new computer to be used solely for this purpose, which is a blessing. We have received numerous monetary and supply donations over the course of the year, which have been answered to prayer.

This year, one of our goals is to employ more help from the church in Iowa City, to help us with preparation and to delegate more things which can be done by others to reduce some of the stressors that come along as we plan our trips. We head back on June 4th and will go again in the middle of September.

Wildfire Youth Ministry

By Larry Meyer

Wildfire, our youth ministry for kids 5th through 12th grade is now in its second year of existence. It has been exciting year to see the youth who come regularly become more and more Jesus-centered. They probe with deep questions concerning faith, challenge our thinking with their own thoughts, and pray together openly and honestly. We've watched as the kids have truly become disciples – serving the homeless, helping to feed the hungry, and being evangelists to their friends and family. The majority of the kids who attend Wildfire regularly do not belong to the Vineyard Church and it's been great to have a mix of backgrounds and experiences.

Last spring, Jason McCoy auditioned kids and started the Wildfire Band. The band practices twice a month and consists of two guitarists, two lead vocalists, and two percussionist. They lead worship each time we gather for our meetings and also played at the church's fundraising dinner this winter. They rock!

Wildfire also participated in the North Liberty Fun Days Parade in June, riding on a float they had built and passing out brochures along the parade route. It was a lot of fun and a great way to catch the interest of other local youth. Another successful outreach was an overnight



"We've watched as the kids have become disciples – serving the homeless, helping to feed the hungry and being evangelists to their friends and family."

–Larry Meyer, Wildfire Leader

retreat we held in March. We were thrilled to have about 25 kids participate.

We are also excited to have teamed up with youth groups from two other local churches, First Methodist Church and Zion Lutheran Church. Together, we held a roller skating party this past fall. We also worked alongside youth and adults from these churches to participate in Kids Against Hunger, a project that involved making and packaging hundreds of meals that were sent to a village in South America. We have already begun planning for additional combined outreaches for 2008.



*Above: Rollerskating party at the rec center.
Left: Our annual Halloween party.*

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Adey and Tom Wassink

*"Bringing the World
Around Us to Life"*



Financial Report 2007

By Tom Wassink

We want to deeply thank those of you who have supported the church financially over the past year. For 2007, excluding the building fund, we ended the year with a net gain of about \$6,484. Our general tithes and donations for 2007 was \$157,548 compared to the \$142,139 given in 2006.

In addition, \$77,454 was contributed to our building fund. We spent \$33,430 and had \$44,024 in this fund at the end of the year. At year's end, we had cash assets totaling \$117,255.69, up from \$65,438 at the end of 2006. Our total expenses for 2007, were \$152,713, compared to our expenses for 2006 of \$175,181.

Thanks again to all of you for your ongoing support of God's work in this church, and please do not hesitate to talk to any member of the Financial Board if you have questions. The following tables display the breakdown in percentages of our operating income and expenses for 2007.

