



The whole church is donning a new coat of faith

Giving out of Hope.
Living into Wholeness.

The sun has risen on Lindenwood Christian Church. And everything's new and filled with promise.

We hear the voices of children singing with new ears.

We hear laughter in the hallways and Sunday School classes.

A new spirit permeates the church, bringing smiles, warmth, and kindnesses of every sort.

And, of course, we are about to meet the man who may well be our next senior minister, and his family. Rev. Dr. Ron Buck will be at our church to meet as

many people as possible on Saturday, May 23. Then he'll step into the pulpit on Sunday, May 24, to deliver a sermon, and that afternoon the congregation will consider his call to Lindenwood.

Is it any wonder that this spring has brought new hope and wholeness to our church and to our giving spirits?

This is what A New Coat of Faith is all about.

This special edition of our church newsletter has come about because of all these wonderful signs of rebirth and renewal. The glory is God's.

Commitment
Sunday
May 17
Bring your
pledge cards

It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:35

Staying behind in nursery puts family ahead for life

The day Jeff and Angie Brittain visited Lindenwood, Angie remained behind in the nursery.

"I told Jeff, I'll stay and wait for the teacher to show up. Well, they didn't come. Before I left, I had signed up to work the nursery once a month," Angie said.

Once Jeff returned to find his wife and his daughter, Angie confided to him, "We have to join. They need us."

That was almost nine years ago. The Brittain family and their three daughters, Abby, 11, Amelia, 8 and Meredith, 2 ½ have done more than join.

Besides her husband driving the church bus once a month, both Angie and Jeff are Sunday School teachers for Crossover. "The program that is close to my heart is obviously the



children's program," she said. "We are bringing children to learn about God. They are so eager to learn."

At one point, she wondered why more parents weren't involved with family ministries: "I realized some are overwhelmed by life. I give them the ability to go to WOW or go to the Sanctuary. It is as much a ministry for the parents as it is for the children."

Just like that first visit, they have remained committed to the programs and the ministries. "It is important for us to give our time and our finances because we feel like it sets a good example for our children," Angie explained. "Our financial commitment is a part of our faith journey. We are continuing to grow."

At times, giving is a juggle. "We ask ourselves, 'How are we going to do this? We have another child. We're not a dual income family anymore.' And yet, God shows us a way," she said. "We're able to make and fulfill our commitment."

Member profiles by Lela Garlington.



He remembers when ‘God thing’ kicked in



Bill and Ann Morris

Last year, Bill Morris, 76, didn't turn in his pledge card for a simple reason.

He didn't know if he would stay in light of the changes and turmoil at Lindenwood. Even without the pledge card, he said, "It didn't change my giving."

Now that he stayed, he is glad he did: "I feel good helping rekindle the spirit of Lindenwood."

For over 20 years, the former Shelby County mayor and his wife have been giving and tithing to Lindenwood. The church's community outreach drew them here. The Sanctuary service has proven to be a true sanctuary for the couple.

Since he married his wife, Ann, almost 56 years ago, Bill said, "We always found our life has been better by giving. Giving to us is as natural as breathing. We learned early on that giving was a privilege. And we

never, ever suffered by what we gave."

Like a scene from an Indiana Jones movie where Jones steps off into a seemingly bottomless pit and ends up standing on an invisible ledge, Bill has stepped out of his comfort zone of giving.

"As the former chairman of the capital cam-

The one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.. II Cor. 9:6-8

paign, I made a pledge. I had *no* idea where the money was going to come from. I was moved to make a pledge, a significant pledge," he said. That's when the God-thing kicked in.

"Within a week, I got a telephone call," he added. Someone wanted to hire him as a consultant. "The compensation was adequate to make my pledge."

For Bill and Ann, turning in a pledge card may be optional. Giving and tithing are not.

"Everything we have is a gift of God. It's not what we get; it is what we *give* that measures our own continuous growth in faith."

Family puts tithing to test

They used to be givers.

"It was the way we were raised. It was what you did. Then it becomes more than that," Lynn Harmon explained. Now, they are tithers – setting aside 10 percent of their income and giving it to Lindenwood.

For Harmon, 42, and Michelle Labedis, 45, taking that next leap to tithing started in Dallas as an experiment.

"I truly believe God will provide," Michelle explained. "We decided let's put tithing to the test. Either we believe God will provide, or we don't."

The "experiment" tested their faith and their pocketbooks. When they started tithing, Lynn said "It was like Satan was saying, 'Hey, I'm not giving you up so easily.'"

A job transfer squeezed their budget to the breaking point. "I'm thinking, 'Man that money sure could go to cover these other expenses.' But we stuck to it," Lynn said.

When they moved to Memphis and started attending Lindenwood in 2001, they sampled all three services.

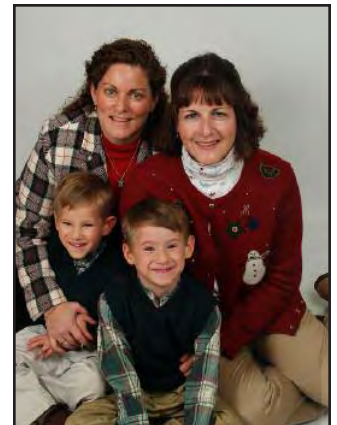
As early-risers, the warm and intimate chapel felt like the traditional services they had attended as children. They joined the church in July 2004. They live

in Fox Meadows with their two five-year-old fraternal sons, Dimitre and Denis.

Lynn describes herself as a "lazy giver" because she set up her tithing through the church's automatic withdrawal program. Her tithe comes out of her paycheck and goes directly to Lindenwood.

Even with the tithing now, Lynn said, "Somehow at the end of the month, the bills are getting paid."

While the couple tithes, Michelle added, "I don't think money makes a church. What really makes Lindenwood special is the volunteerism. They don't try to cookie-cutter the giving. That is really a testimony to me. It's not just being the hand. You can be the foot. You can be the toe. You can even be the toe nail, and you're still important."



Michelle Labedis, Lynn Harmon, Dimitre and Denis



For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Luke 12:32-34



Service day in June puts ‘coat of faith’ into action

A group of Lindenwood volunteers will put their hands to work on Pilgrim’s Rest in June.

The mission into the community will be called A New Coat of Service Day, connecting it to the church’s ongoing stewardship campaign, A New Coat of Faith.

The facility on Court Avenue in the Medical District houses people with mental illnesses who have experienced homelessness. It is operated by Door of Hope, the Midtown nonprofit agency for the homeless supported since its founding by Lindenwood Christian Church.



The sycamore tree had to come down.

The agency took steps to acquire the building this spring when another organization which had operated the home was forced to close, a victim of the downturn in the economy. The facility presently provides permanent housing to 9 people but can house up to 16.

Calling the project “a day of service,” Beth Bartholomew said the work consisting of cleaning and possibly painting is scheduled for June 20. She said that will just be the beginning, because the Outreach Ministry considers Door of Hope an ongoing project.

“There are 21 rooms in the building and we are going to ask Sunday School groups and small groups to adopt a room and help fix it up (painting, etc.). They will also have the opportunity to do landscaping and bring meals,” she said.

Other Lindenwood members have been cooking and providing meals for Door of Hope guests at the main house at 245 North Bellevue for months. June Averyt, the agency’s executive director, said all the Lindenwood help – including a recent \$1,000 monetary outreach gift – is coming at a vital time when the organization is expanding its operations.

“A massive volunteer clean-up and fix-up of our newest facility will make it so much easier to recruit more people to fill our rooms,” said Dr. June Averyt, executive director. “We so appreciate everything Lindenwood and other area churches have done for us.”

Lindenwood member Beth Bartholomew contacted Averyt and soon after member Joe Williams met with her to tour the building and find out what work could be accomplished by a volunteer crew. While there Joe spied a large dead sycamore tree in front of the building and helped plan its immediate removal. Ironically, a monetary gift recently from Lindenwood was able to cover the cost.

The building is a former medical fraternity house built in the 1950s. It has 16 separate living spaces, a large kitchen and common rooms for leisure and rest. Women are housed on the second floor and men on the first floor. When Door of Hope took over operating the facility, the agency decided to name the building Pilgrim’s Rest in honor of Mark Pilgrim, a Door of Hope guest and board member who was the victim of a homicide in 2008.

Two Lindenwood members, Jerry Stauffer and David Wayne Brown, serve on the Door of Hope board.

The W.O.W. advertised on a sign turns into a ‘wow’ in her heart

Each day, Paula Polite drove down Union Avenue from her home to her city job downtown. Each day, a new sign erected outside of Lindenwood momentarily puzzled her.



“I wonder what a WOW is,” she asked herself.

She soon found out. Rocking her then tiny daughter, Adira, Polite swayed with the music from the WOW band. Paula Polite From the music to the message and the people she met, she recalled, “It just felt right.”

As a single mom, Polite budgets her financial gifts to Lindenwood as she does any of her other expenses. Polite, who joined Lindenwood in August 2002, admits that sometimes giving is hard. But she quickly adds, “I don’t feel that I’m doing without. It’s surely a sacrifice, but we’re not going to be destitute. You have your priorities, and to me, it’s a priority.”

She sees both the reality and the rewards of her financial gifts. “Realistically, the church is a company. It’s a business. It has to operate,” she said, adding that the rewards come from helping others like filling grocery bags full of food for MIFA or assisting with the Angel Food ministry.

“Personally,” she said, “Lindenwood has been a huge part in my spiritual journey.” Like that time she attended her first WOW service, she said, “It’s just a good fit.”



Give, and it will be given to you ... for the measure you give will be the measure you get back. Luke 6:39



They felt a 'sense of belonging'

As youngsters, they had grown up in the church.

As adults, they had grown away from it. It took their oldest daughter, a summer camp and a contemporary service to bring them back.

"Rachel was 14. She had gone to Lindenwood's camp. She said, 'I think you guys might like this WOW service,'" her mother, Barbara Williams recalled.

"We felt a sense of belonging," she said. "We loved the energy and the openness. We took Classes 101 and 201 right away."

Barbara and Kyle Williams of Germantown have been givers ever since. Currently, Barbara serves on the pulpit committee while her husband is on the church's board of directors.

They and their three daughters, Rachel, Kathleen and Caroline joined Lindenwood on Mother's Day 2002. They give both of their time and their money for several reasons. "First of all, we



love our church. That's No. 1. A church doesn't run by itself. It has bills to pay to keep the doors open and the heat and air on."

Secondly, she added, "We are instructed by Jesus to support it. Thirdly, I would hate to see any of our outside ministries cut because of budget constraints."

When asked if she has any regrets about giving to the church, Barbara said no. She then paused. "There is one," she admitted. "That we can't give more than we do."

'Everyone should pledge'

At times Jody Gouge feels like he's "stretched two inches from the limits."

Like others in this topsy-turvy economic downturn, Jody, 30, of Bartlett lost his job as an aircraft mechanic in late January. His wife, Kathie, still has a job to help support their children, Katlyn, 13, Kelsey, 9, and Dale 4-1/2 .

Since then, he's worked as an auto mechanic and even took a contract job in New Mexico to make ends meet. "These past two weeks, I've been able to put something in the offering – it's made me feel better," he said. "The past couple of months, I couldn't because I didn't know what was coming from day to day."

So what keeps him going?

"I have faith. Everything happens for a reason," he said. "The Big Man upstairs has bigger plans for me and that is why I am on the journey I am on right now."

Whether it is a lot or a little, Jody said, "I think everyone should pledge."

