



"Think about ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds." (Heb. 10:24)

The Encourager

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February 2012

An Inside Look

Building bridges this Easter



When we lived in Tacoma, Wash., our house was less than a mile away from Puget Sound. Puget Sound is the home of the famous bridge affectionately known as "Galloping Gertie."

Pastor Brian

For those who have no idea what I'm talking about, Galloping Gertie was built across Puget Sound in 1940. At the time it was the third-longest suspension bridge in the world and was hailed as a masterpiece of engineering.

However, during a windstorm, only four months after the bridge's grand opening, Gertie earned her name—the gale destroyed the structure and sent it to the bottom of the sound. Today it is broadly recognized as one of the most dramatic failures in bridge-engineering history.

We live in a world with many chasms that need to be spanned. However, just like with Gertie, our bridge-building efforts often end in failure. Of the chasms that need to be spanned, the most are those between God and human beings.

When it comes to the chasm between humans and God, the key to bridging that gap is to recognize that we cannot build the bridge at all. Whatever bridge we try to build between God and ourselves—our own bridge-building efforts—will ultimately end in failure. Instead, we have to walk across the bridge that God has built with the life, death and resurrection of his son, Jesus Christ.

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The boys of Kids Connection

THEY ENERGIZE, THEY CHALLENGE, THEY ARE A BLESSING

BY PAM JESSUP

BOYS! Bullfrogs, Bulldozers and Boisterous. They are amazing!

I am reflective today. My one and only son married his sweetheart last month, and the emotions were high for

"Momma Bear" (the nickname my son so lovingly gave me when I adamantly defended him at about age 8). Everything from joy to outbursts of uncontrollable crying happened all of December.

Cody, in my eyes, was and is the perfect son. As he read his vows he had written to Shelby, I could hardly believe that was the boy who refused to do high school English and passed English by the skin of his teeth.



As he swooped her off her feet to carry her down the aisle after they were pronounced husband and wife, I thought of all the dirty clothes on his bedroom floor that just couldn't be picked up and

put in a hamper.

As he danced with her at the reception, I could hardly wait for my turn as I thought about the first wobbly steps he took all those years ago.

And as he called me from the airport as they were leaving on their honeymoon to ask me to bring him the billfold he forgot in the car, my heart was happy that he still needed momma bear;

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Robin Ediger (left) of the Kids Connection board introduced Pam Jessup as the new permanent director of Kids Connection during a worship service last month.

Search begins for a youth pastor: You can help!

Following the resignation of former HMBC youth pastor Paul Raugust last summer, the Spiritual Life Ministries Board has worked to define the role of the youth pastor position.

"We've had a lot of discussion about how important the youth pastor position can be to the health of a church and what characteristics that person should possess," said SLMB chairperson Glenn Wiebe.

After several months of conversation, SLMB agreed to expand the role of the youth pastor to include more work with families of junior and senior high students. This modification required a new job description and other adjustments in the position.

With these changes in place, SLMB created a search committee to continue the process of finding the right candidate for the empty position.

Committee members include Clyde Jost, Krista Heinrichs, Kathy Klein, Greg Brown, Krista Reimer, Katie Pritchard and Glenn Wiebe.

"We're excited about the person God has in mind for us," Wiebe said. "Our job is to create a process so that God can reveal that person to us."

The search committee is posting the youth pastor opening in traditional settings, but is also asking that the congregation play a part in the search.

"We've always been good at playing the 'Mennonite Game,' connecting with

friends and family around the country. We're asking the congregation to use their personal connections to spread the word about our need for a youth pastor," Wiebe said.

Congregation members can also use their social media and digital connections such as Facebook to let others know about the youth pastor opening. People from the church are encouraged to contact committee members with possible names of candidates.

The congregation can also direct others to the church website at hillsboromb.com and to the search committee e-mail at youthpastor4hmbc@gmail.com.

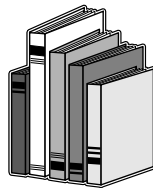
"Most of all we want people to be praying for the process," Wiebe said.

Learning how to pray for kids

Since I love to pray and I love my children, I think I have nearly all the books on how to pray for my kids. A few months ago I stumbled on a new one that has really kept me hooked and made a difference in how I pray. It is called "How To Be A Praying Mom" by Jeannie St. John Taylor.

This book is different from others in that the first half of the book is stories/experiences that the author had as she was learning how to pray for her children. She includes Scriptures and examples of answered prayers.

One day's teaching that has challenged me, is how she changed the way she



A GOOD READ

Books you should know about

"How to Be a Praying Mom"

BY JEANNIE ST. JOHN TAYLOR

prayed. When her children were born, she began praying for their salvation. After they gave their lives to the Lord at a young age, she continued praying for their protection. Each day she asks God to protect their minds, their bodies, their spirits and attitudes.

Then one day God convicted her to pray aggressively, not just defensively. Now she prays that they will be lights to others around them, that they will step out in faith and share with others. She found that within the week her college

aged son called asking for a resource to share with a friend who was questioning God. Since then all of her children have shared instances where they have been able to chat with friends and share their faith.

The second half of the book has daily prayers to pray for your children. Each corresponds to a day of the month. Things she suggests to pray for are that our children will delight in God, they will ask for forgiveness, they will forgive others, make attending church a priority, have good work habits, have confidence in God, resist the enemy and more.

I am on my second or third time through the book. Each time, I pick up a new, practical nugget to use when I pray for my children. If interested, check at Thee Bookstore. —*Brenda Sechrist*

BUILDING...from Page 1

Jesus is our bridge to God because only God's bridge can withstand the pressures that come against it.

As for the chasms that develop in human relationships, Jesus is the bridge for that, too. The lesson for us is to follow the example of Jesus. In the same way that he chose to use his life to build a bridge between human beings and God, he wants to teach us how to build bridges between one another. Jesus wants us to become relational bridge builders in life.

This Easter, as we come together for a powerful drama and music, as we hear

faith stories about how God has made a difference in people's lives, as we hear a stirring message from God's Word, and as we celebrate the reality that Jesus is alive, we are going to have an opportunity to be transformed by the bridge-building efforts of God through Christ, and also to be inspired and equipped in how to span the chasms that might exist in our relationships.

This primary purpose of our Easter services this year will be to celebrate the reality that Jesus is alive, and to provide a means for outreach that can be used to help us reach our friends, family and acquaintances who have not yet crossed the line of faith in Jesus. We will all be

moved by the bridge-building plan of God through Christ and be encouraged to become bridge builders for God ourselves.

Please be in prayer for our Easter outreach services this year. And, begin thinking now about who you can invite, people who still need to know Jesus. Together we can see the service packed with people who know Jesus as well as those who do not, so we can celebrate and reach people with the good news: the coming, the death and the resurrection of Christ. He is the one bridge that will never fail.

*Building bridges together,
Pastor Brian*

Servants Among Us

'My life is meant to serve...'

I was born in Castro Valley, Calif., March 21, 1990. I was raised by my mom, dad and older brother. My dad taught me everything about being patient and hard-working, while my mom developed my artistic side and the gift of talking with people. In the meantime, my brother and I would play together in the backyard.

I had a good loving, supportive family who did everything together. We went to Disneyland, had family movie night and even walked the dog together. I was baptized and raised in a Catholic home, and we also went to mass together. In school I played the trombone in band and was in multiple clubs.

When I was about 7 years old, my doctor said I was obese, which posed a serious health problem. At the time I wasn't involved in any sports, and I never thought of playing sports. In turn, kids would constantly make fun of me at school, and I had no friends.

We moved in 2010 to Lodi, Calif., and it was a good chance to get a fresh start at school. It was around this time that my uncle, who is also my godfather, had a serious conversation about losing weight. Since he was diabetic and overweight, he shared the same issues I had. He encouraged me to get healthy or face serious consequences.

It was only six days later that he died of diabetes. I was motivated to lose weight, so I joined the local youth football team,



Jordan Castro has been using his musical gifts to play bass in the worship band on Sunday mornings. "I choose to attend HMB because the music department needed a bass player," he says. "My life is meant to serve, and this is the only way I know how to get involved.

which had a weight limit, and I was still overweight, but I went to practice every day knowing that I wouldn't be able to play in the games. It wasn't until high school that I got to play sports. I was a four-year athlete in football, basketball, baseball and track.

It was also in high school that I found a church to attend. It all started when I was extremely bored one Sunday morning,

The Oakland Raiders were losing (I'm not sure who they were playing, but we can omit the Chiefs), and I wanted to get out of the house. I walked to Vinewood Community Church, the local MB church, and went to the service. I really enjoyed the music and the message there, and every Sunday I went. It was only two years later I was baptized as an adult and gave my life to Christ.

I have been playing music for about five years now. I started out playing drums at my youth football coaches' church but then transitioned over to bass.

I got to Tabor College through some of the members of Vinewood Church. They asked me if I was going anywhere for college after community college, and what I was going to do with my life. Recommendations came in every year. One year it was Fresno Pacific, another year South Western, but this last year was Tabor College.

I prayed about it, and I asked for this: "God send me five people to tell me to go and I will go." And God, being the really great and funny God he is, sent me five people.

I choose to attend HMB because the worship team needed a bass player. My life is meant to serve, and this is the only way I know how to get involved.

I am studying to become a physical education/strength and conditioning coach with a minor in music. I play football at Tabor and help in the catering department. I also play in SP&D on Wednesday night in the Historic Church.

I want to do something to help people. It doesn't matter what it is; I just want to be able serve people. It can be coaching athletes, training people to become fit, or playing music for others' enjoyment. I just want to serve people. —Jordan Castro

THE BOYS...from Page 1

My "job" was to raise Cody to be a godly man, and with the love of many wonderful people to help me fulfill that responsibility, the assignment was successful.

At Kids Connection we are helpers to the parents in raising their children. We get to help with the "job." We take that responsibility extremely seriously and work hard every day to help raise these little children. The boys are my buds!

Boys keep me on my toes. I am drawn to these little guys. Their boisterous attitudes bring out the tomboy in me. They energize me. They challenge me. They

make me a little more adventurous. They wiggle into my heart.

Boys find buddies and together they become brave and bold. They try to act burly, big, and brave together. Their boldness breaks through and they bond. They are unstoppable on a road to believing that they are rough and tough.

They will be grown before we know it. So, for the short time we have them here and we have the opportunity to assist in helping the parents, all of us here at Kids Connection promise to work diligently and lovingly in taking care of them and to be their prayer warrior so that they may choose the right road to believing.

Silent auction to raise funds for church plant

A Hispanic meal, a missions video and a silent auction will highlight this year's Mission Dinner following the Feb. 26 worship service at HMB.

For the silent auction, the HMB Mission Board is asking for items such as souvenirs from international travel, homemade crafts and home-made gifts. Interested donors can contact Gayla Ratzlaff at 947-3583.

All proceeds from the meal will go to The Micah Project, a Mennonite Brethren church-planting effort in Denver, Colo., led by Vaughn Jost.

Faces in Our Places

Faith as a loving relationship

Andrea Batista was born and raised in Dexter, N.M. She was raised in a devout Catholic family with two brothers and a sister.

When she was a sophomore in high school, her mom was diagnosed with cancer. Andrea started to think about things in a new way and ask more questions. Her brother started taking her to a non-denominational Protestant church. Feeling that it was more about a relationship than religion, Andrea gave her life to Jesus Christ when she was 18 years old.

Andrea graduated from small Dexter High School in 2005 and, after being recruited through an online scouting site,



Andrea Batista with her pet snake, Blue, who lives in the science building at Tabor College.

she attended Tabor College. During her freshman year at Tabor, she recognized that a personal relationship with God was still lacking in her life. She gave her whole life to God at that point, and continues to pursue that relationship every day.

While Andrea was recruited for track and field, she doubled up to play volleyball all four years. She pursued a dual major in biology and secondary education. After trying other churches, she decided to try HMB during her junior year. She liked it and wanted connections, so started attending regularly.

Andrea graduated in 2010 and because her younger brother heard her talk about having such a great experience, he might be attending Tabor as well.

Today Andrea keeps busy as the half-time volleyball coach at Tabor and half-time as academic support staff. She stays involved in HMB by attending the Searchers class on Sundays mornings. She chose the class because the topic interested her. Now she appreciates the timeless wisdom shared by the women in the class.

On Wednesday nights, she participates in Rita Bartel's Bible study. She is really enjoying both gatherings.

Glad to have you part of HMB, Andrea!

—Emily Sechrist

Gift of Grandparenting

Nurturing the new generation

EDITOR: Being a grandparent certainly is worth celebrating during the "Love Month" of February. We asked several of our grandparents to reflect on their experiences in this wonderful arena.

■ **CHARLENE DRIGGERS:** Our first grandchild, Josiah, was adopted. We immediately wanted to see him and hold him, just as we have the five non-adopted grandchildren that have followed him. We love him and have bonded with him just as strongly as the other grandchildren and don't think of him any differently.

The only difference is that you can't attribute personality quirks and physical appearance to heredity.

Our family is now trying to wait patiently for our next adopted grandchild. She is 6 years old and will soon join the family of Brent and Jamie Driggers. I have only seen pictures of her but already love her and am waiting with anticipation for her to join the family.

One of the blessings of having adopted grandchildren is that they have helped me to understand better God's love for us. An

adopted child is chosen by the parents. Ephesians 1:4 talks about how God "chose us in him before the creation of the world." Verse 5 says we are "adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ."

What a gift to be included in the family of God! I consider each of our grandchildren as "gifts" that we can love and nurture alongside their parents.

■ **JACK BRAUN:** As grandparents we are blessed with 12 grandchildren, six that are adopted.

The six adopted are part of Jon and Christi Braun's family (living near Justin, Texas) who have a total of seven children. Four of the adopted children, all siblings, are from Ethiopia (Blaize, Brodie, Ava, Brennan ages 12, 9, 7 and 5) and two from the U.S. (Aliyah, Anna ages 11, 9). These in addition to Brayden, age 4, makes life interesting and busy for them.

For us as grandparents it has been an incredible experience to see how all the adopted children have immediately been accepted and become part of our family.

One of the ways it has changed our lives is that our daily prayers have become longer as we pray for all of our grandchildren and their individual needs. This is a privilege!

A special blessing for us is to know the five oldest of the adopted children have accepted Jesus as their personal savior and been baptized. To witness Blaize,

Brodie and Ava's baptism this past summer was a special experience and a joy for us. All of our grandchildren are special to us and we love them all.

■ **GARY & KAREN WIENS:** Children and grandchildren are a blessing from the Lord, and that is the same whether they are biological, adopted or step. It has been our unique experience to have grandchildren who have come in all three ways.

Dylan joined our family through adoption and it is special because his grandpa was also adopted. Just like his grandpa, he is being raised in a Christian home where he is taught about Jesus. We are blest to have him as part of our family.

■ **GLADYS FUNK:** Being the grandparents of an adopted child is really not much different than having biological grandchildren. Both need to be loved and both belong to our family.

Wenxi came from China, thus we had to learn to communicate. He uses a wheelchair, thus we had to make adjustments in our home to prepare for his coming. He came as a result of many people's prayers. God preserved him for a reason. He has blessed our lives in so many ways. We laugh more, play more, we eat differently. We learn and study again.

Our retirement has changed a bit, but life would not be the same without him. We have become a family, all of us working together.

Appreciation

Thanks, Bruce!

Over the course of the year, we have been offering opportunities for our church family to express appreciation for members of our leadership staff. This month we're featuring our worship and choir leader, Bruce Heyen. Following are testimonies from the people with whom he works.

■ **CRAIG ROBLE:** I have been singing in choir and praise team since Bruce started leading these groups. His dedication to sharing about who God is through singing is unwavering. I appreciate God's gift to Bruce for his talents in performing as well as leading praise and worship. Bruce always has a very positive and encouraging attitude while guiding others in singing. I am very thankful for Bruce's leadership, guiding and challenging each



of us to be a part of our church's worship through these many years. May God continue to bless Bruce and our church through His use of this servant's talents.

Thank you, Bruce!

■ **JAN TERMAN:** When I think of Bruce, I am aware of his many talents. He excels in so many areas. When introducing him to some of my visiting family while taking a tour of the science building, I referred to him as the music director at our church, and forgot to mention that he was a chemist at the college.

I appreciate so much the warmth he shows as he directs our choir. He makes our practices very enjoyable. His love for music, the church, his family, and the Lord shows in his commitment to the work at the church. I appreciate all the time he spent working with the children in preparing and performing musicals. Thanks, Bruce, for your contribution to

our music ministry.

■ **KRISTA REIMER:** I really enjoy working with Bruce for worship team. He spends so much time preparing and getting everything ready for Sunday morning. I can really see God's light shining through him, while he's leading worship or just helping somebody fix a problem at practice. He is a great example for many to follow. Thanks for everything you do!

■ **PASTOR BRIAN:** I have really enjoyed serving along side Bruce and getting to know him and his family. I don't think I've ever met anyone who exhibits God's peace more than Bruce. Nothing seems to rattle him. He is also someone that I've found to be very talented and yet equally humble, which is another example of God's presence in his life. Also, it's obvious that Bruce and Janelle are awesome parents that love their children very much and who provide through their family a shining example for Jesus.

Bruce, thanks for who you are and all you do to serve our church family!

Community Impact

Support for young mothers

The former Hillsboro MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) organization sponsored a delightful evening in fellowship hall Jan. 14. Tables were beautifully decorated and desserts and drinks were served to the guests.

Ginger Millermon, a renowned singer from Hutchinson, shared not only her voice but more importantly, her heart.

Ginger speaks at many women's groups. She is an inspirational songwriter and recording artist. In addition to her meetings in churches, she speaks at pro-life events. Her desire is to bring hope and encouragement especially to people who are in difficult situations physically, emotionally or spiritually.

She is also devoted to caring for the basic needs of children in crises in third world countries through her work and partnership with World Vision.

To end the evening there was a drawing for gifts provided by businesses in downtown Hillsboro.

Valentines Banquet open to everybody

Once again the Men's Ministry team is making final plans and preparations for the annual Valentines Banquet, which is open to all singles and couples wanting to share an evening of great food, great entertainment, in a great environment.

Mark the date, Saturday, Feb. 11, with the doors opening at 5:30 p.m. to choose your seats. The banquet starts at 6 p.m.

Back by popular demand from the very first banquet are Melanie Ryan and Nina Jerke, two accomplished singers who are

bound to provide a program worth bringing a special guest to, as well as a great outreach opportunity for friends and neighbors not familiar with HMBC.

Child care will be provided, so don't let that stop you from attending. Tickets can be purchased for \$15 per person each Sunday morning prior to the event in the gathering space. If money is an obstacle, see Ron Duerksen for a little assistance. We don't want that to keep you from enjoying a great evening with us. —Glenn Thiessen

Men's Ministries' Valentine Banquet

Sat., February 11
6:00 p.m.

Doors open at 5:30

Hillsboro M.B. Church
Fellowship Hall

\$15 per ticket
Available from Men's Ministries in gathering area

Each by popular demand---

Melanie Ryan & Nina Jerke

Child care available for the evening

HMB blessed with sizeable groups of great kids

CE
CLIPS

“What a great group of kids we have!” That’s just one thought that comes to my mind as I think about our children’s ministry here at Hillsboro MB. Each Wednesday night I am amazed at the 75-plus children, sixth grade and under, who come into our classrooms with smiles, enthusiasm and love for Jesus.

And, just to give you a picture of how our Sunday mornings start, imagine 45 children plus teachers marching around the room together singing, “...Since we live by the Spirit let us keep in step with the Spirit!” (Gal. 5:25). These G5Kids! are eager to start their worship time singing and praising God together.

■ **God is moving** and stirring in the hearts of our children. Just recently, two of our children accepted Jesus as their personal savior; another student shared with their mom about how they “really felt that Jesus was speaking to them about the direction to go in their life in an area of ministry,” and yet another child expressed the desire to be able to “serve” in some area in our church.

One of our children in our Kids Connection childcare center was overheard saying to another student, “You really need to come to our church!”

■ **I am so thankful** for how our children are opening their hearts to Jesus and how He is speaking to them. I also have incredible gratitude for all of the volunteers on our children’s ministry team. We have great teachers that are



Prayer Pals Trace Jost and Gordon Hiebert: Mutual gratitude for their five-year relationship.

sharing Jesus’ love with our children each week. They are committed to these children and are igniting a passion within them—they’re fanning the flame!

■ **Vacation Bible school** is closer than you think, and the VBS team is being formed to begin preparation for that great time in July. If you would like to be involved in this special outreach ministry to children and families, simply make note of that on your communication card or contact Rachel Hein or Bev Vogel.

■ **As you remember** our children and

children’s ministry team volunteers, I encourage you to keep them in your prayers.

J. Hudson once said: “The prayer power has never been tried to its full capacity. If we want to see mighty wonders of divine power and grace wrought in the place of weakness, failure and disappointment, let us answer God’s standing challenge, ‘Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knoweth not!’” (Jer. 33:3)

■ **Prayer Pals** continues to be an important ministry to the children and youth here at Hillsboro MB. Gordon Hiebert and Trace Jost have been Prayer Pals for about five years. Asked how this ministry has been a part of their life, here’s what they said....

Gordon: When Jesus was on earth it was obvious how precious children were to Him. Children are a gift that we have a responsibility to care for and teach. I’m not able to do many activities with Trace, but I can and do pray for him every day. I’m thankful to have Trace as my Prayer Pal.

Trace: When my mom first told me I was going to have a Prayer Pal, I was very nervous for I didn’t know what to expect. Then God gave me Gordon. Gordon’s the best! He sends me cards and calls to check on me too—sometimes just out of the blue, which is really cool. I know Gordon is always praying for me as I am for him. I am truly blessed to have Gordon as my Prayer Pal.”

—Bev Vogel
Children and family ministry

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LEADERSHIP STAFF

Brian Allen, lead pastor
Loyal Martin & Wally Kroeker, senior care
Bev Vogel, children & family pastor
Bruce Heyen, worship music & choir director

THE ENCOURAGER TEAM

Brenda Sechrist, Sara Hill, Erin Wiebe,
Marilyn Hiebert, Alysia Yoder
LeOra Grunau, Tawnya Siebert, Don Ratzlaff

Women hear of Middle East ministry

The January 2012 Breakfast Circle had the privilege of having Jeannie Larson* speak about her ministry in the Middle East. Jeannie is the daughter of Loyal and Rosella Martin.

Jeannie and husband Wayne have lived in a city in the Arabian peninsula for five years where he is involved in the production of Christian DVDs to be used in outreach in this restricted country. He also has training workshops for other companies interested in reaching out to Gulf locals through media productions.

Jeannie is involved in work with a children’s choir, teaches piano and strings, and plays cello in a chamber string group and also plays in a symphony. Her desire is to establish relationships with people in the

community.

While in the U.S. for the past several months, Jeannie has been visiting and reporting on their work in churches that support them with prayer and finances.

By the time this is printed, Jeannie will be back home with her husband.

* *Names have been changed to protect their identity in an anti-Christian environment.*

HMBC FAMILY NEWS

New members

Matt and Francine Hiebert
Mary Dudley