



2009 Global Impact Celebration



St. John's held its second Global Impact Celebration (GIC) January 21-25. The annual event brings together local, regional and international missionaries to celebrate our existing outreach ministries as well as raise awareness for new mission opportunities. This year's theme was taken from Isaiah 6:8:

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Lee and Rene Boylston, serving in their second year as GIC Coordinators, did an outstanding job of organizing the many resources at St. John's. The goals were basically the same as the first GIC: for 1) God to be glorified 2) our vision to be enlarged 3) hearts to be touched 4) finances to be committed and 5) lives to be surrendered. The momentum from the first GIC carried throughout the year in 2008. Just a few examples are:

- Strengthened relationships with local/regional missionaries
- Increased and focused prayer support of ministries
- Substantially increased funding support of ministries
- Partnered with new missionaries from around the world
- Started Grace Kitchen, our own food ministry
- Increased participation in local ministries such as Kairos

Measuring the Results

- ▶ (207) Prayer Commitment cards have been collected with intentions of praying regularly for our missionaries. Many of these have joined prayer teams so they can learn about and pray for specific needs with our mission partners.
- ▶ Despite severe fluctuations and downturns in the economy late last year, St. John's members turned in \$173,000 in Faith Promise offerings during the 2009 GIC. To put this in perspective, the missions budget for 2007 was right at \$50,000.
- ▶ (60) Life Commitment cards have been turned in, almost all expressing desire to serve in multiple capacities. The number of volunteers by region is as follows: a) Jerusalem (87) b) Judea (30) and Ends of the Earth (15).

Going Forward

As we have seen, St. John's is on the move with missions. Global Outreach Leadership Team (GOLT) Chair **Michael Norton** talks about where we are going as a church: "As we learn more about the unfinished task of reaching the world for Christ, we realize that every one of us has a vital role to play. We are challenged to give more of our time, talents and resources so that we will be able to make a greater impact in God's plan." Going forward, if each of us is willing to listen for God's call, we will more likely answer, "Here am I. Send me."



Pastor George Howle speaks to the congregation at the Wednesday evening service

Youth Spend the Day at Christ Central

St. John's youth spent all day Saturday, January 24, working at Christ Central's facility on Richland Avenue as part of the GIC's activities. Jobs included painting as well as building a storage shed. Thanks to everyone who helped out that day!



Lauren Norton and Debbie Rodgers paint at Christ Central

OARS Classes Brighten GIC

As part of the GIC celebration, the OARS Sunday school classes created works of art to coincide with this year's theme. One design, created jointly by 8-year olds Connor Buchanan and Ford Vaughters, was selected to be produced as a T-shirt. The other designs were made into posters and displayed throughout St. John's. When asked why he chose to portray Jesus on the cross, Ford answered, "Because He died to save us from our sins and we did not want people to forget that!"



Ford Vaughters and Connor Buchanan proudly display their winning OARS T-Shirt Design

Likewise, Connor said he added the clouds and grass because "God created heaven and earth, so I tried to draw them." Congratulations to all the children who helped make the GIC more personal by contributing unique and colorful works of art!

Return to Kenya



John Osteen attracts a crowd while videotaping at the Bible camp in Kenya

John and Frances Osteen traveled to Kenya in December to work with children from **Michael Agwanda's** "Life for Children Ministry". LCM is one of St. John's international mission partners, committed to providing food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, education and spiritual nourishment to HIV/AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children in Kenya. This trip was the result of an earlier fact finding mission that Frances made in April of 2008 to determine how St. John's might best be able to support LCM.

Upon arriving in Kisumu, the Osteens were able to attend Michael's wedding to his bride Lola. Afterward, the mission was to conduct a three-day Christian camp in Kisumu. The camp focused on the nativity and was attended by several hundred Kenyan youngsters. A medical team from Dalton, GA had also traveled to Kenya and set up clinics in Kisumu and Wachara. John helped them examine each of the LCM children prior to start of the camp.

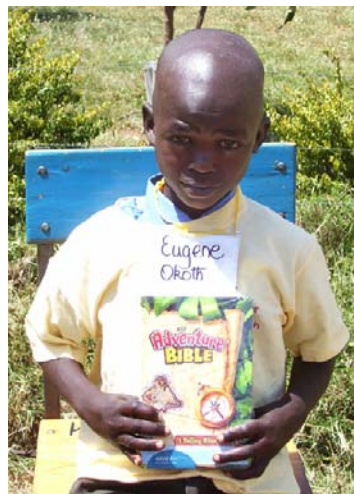


Frances Osteen helps out at the crafts table

During Day 1 of the camp, the children were shown "The Jesus Film", a film of Jesus' life and ministry translated into Luo, their heart language. The children's excitement in seeing the film in their native language surprised even the Kenyan camp leaders. Throughout the three-day event, the children were fed

three meals a day, with lunch and dinner including meat. The children normally eat once a day or less and having meat is rare. Despite the luxury of additional meals, the children did not have sheets, pillows, or towels during this camp.

On Day 2, the children were given a toiletry bag (laundry soap, toilet paper, bath soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste) provided by members of First Presbyterian Church in Aiken. Many of the girls used this opportunity to wash their clothes while most of the boys opted for learning to throw an American football.



Day 3 was spent in play and craft activities. Individual photos had been taken of each child with his/her LCM T-shirt and Bible. The campers decorated the foam frame around the photos with stickers and ribbon. They also made a bookmark and a nativity picture.

Camper Eugene Okoth displays his new Bible and "Life for Children" T-shirt

John and Frances feel the children received a great benefit from the Christian Camp. "Many of the children had never participated in a camp before and were reticent and unsure of the situation in the beginning," Frances observed. "The change in the children by the end of the third day was amazing. They became children – smiling, playful, and mischievous." The Osteens also believe the adults from both Kenya and the U.S. were equally blessed by the experience. They recommend that the Christian Camp become an annual event for the children, incorporating Bible study, socialization, cultural expansion and life skills counseling. (www.Lifeforchildrenministry.org/) ■

Reaching the Unreached in Ethiopia

Dave Williams, our missionary in Ethiopia, visited St. John's on March 15 to preach and discuss his ministry to the unreached Harari Muslims of Ethiopia. Speaking to an audience of nearly 100 members in Ward Hall, Mr. Williams explained that although living side-by-side with Christians for centuries, cultural barriers have prevented the Harari Muslims from coming to know Christ. There have also been very few missionaries willing to accept this challenge.

Mr. Williams stated that the Harari Muslims are not receptive to direct evangelizing but are passionate about business. He therefore uses business opportunities to build trust and relationships with them in the hopes of finding a "Paul", a disciple with the faith and desire of the famous apostle to help spread the Gospel among his fellow Harari Muslims. He explains, "They need to hear the Gospel in their own language from one of their peers. This is the way the message will take root and spread." (www.uscwm.org/)

Short Takes

Michael Norton traveled to the Ukraine in March with **Charlie Chastain**, our missionary in Russia, to attend a conference on ministering to orphans and street children. They discussed the benefits of a Tri-Development type of program versus traditional institutionalized care. (*see p.4*)

Michael Agwanda, our missionary in Kenya, visited St. John's in March to discuss a U.S.-based satellite team concept designed to work with the "Life for Children Ministry" board to help support and grow the ministry.

Dr. Randy Shelley traveled to Honduras in March with a medical team to provide much needed dental care for the children in Quimistan.

Sandy Miller taught Helping Hands youth to bake cookies and conducted a tour of Christ Central all in March.

Nancy Fairgrieve, Mick Ferrell, Charlotte & Jim Holly, Beth & Dave Kelly, Sylvia Kennerly, Ray Ward, and Pam & Tom McCollum volunteered for Kairos #31, held the last weekend in March at the McCormick Correctional Institute in McCormick, SC.

Maureen Bernard organized a crew of volunteers that included **Lisa Peck, Bruce & Barbara Burns, Roger & Mary Ward, and John & Frances Osteen** to join over 100 other workers at Epworth Children's Home Campus Cleanup on March 21. In addition to painting and grounds keeping, the group presented President **John Holler** with a check from 2009 Faith Promise funds. (*also see p. 4*) □

Partner Profile

The **Aiken Community Outreach Ministry (ACOM)** is a Christ-Centered, non-denominational ministry dedicated to reaching men and women whose lives have been impacted by crime. Its goal is to transform ex-offenders into law-abiding, productive citizens by providing Christian mentoring, housing, transportation, job placement and alcohol/drug abuse counseling. ACOM is supported by the City of Aiken along with 18 local churches. St. John's has been actively involved with ACOM since 2006, as a result of KAIROS prison ministry.

ACOM aims to curb the alarming rise in the number of repeat offenders in the criminal justice system. South Carolina has the 7th worst recidivism rate in the country and paroles approximately 12,200 prisoners each year. Without some type of support system, close to 75% of previous offenders will be back in prison within two years. Statistics show that faith-based programs greatly reduce the recidivism rate among participants by collaborating with the prison industry.

ACOM relies primarily on volunteers to accomplish its goals. Opportunities include: missionary donations, monthly pledges, adopting a resident or home, becoming a mentor, providing transportation and donating clothing, food or other essentials.

Dave Kelly stresses two vital areas of need. First is prayer. According to Dave, "Without prayer ACOM would have never gotten off the ground." Please contact **Renee Reid** (642-8951) to find out more about joining St. John's prayer team for ACOM. The second critical need is for mentors. Each ACOM resident meets with 1-3 mentors on a weekly basis. The major areas of focus during these meetings are a) securing and maintaining a job b) budgeting and finances c) building and establishing good support groups and c) developing positive ways to spend free time. Additional counseling deals with Christian discipleship and encourages residents to become involved in church. For more information, feel free to contact Dave Kelly (649-3591) or visit their web site (*acomaiken.com*).

Upcoming Events

Jerusalem (Local):

▶ **ACTS Monthly Collections:** April: canned fruit; May: one lb bags of rice and/or beans; June: canned tuna and/or salmon

▶ **Aiken Pregnancy Care Center Spring Banquet:** The banquet will be held April 30 at St. Mary's from 7:00-9:00. If you are interested in hosting a table or simply attending, please contact APCC (642-3949).

▶ **St. John's Movie Night:** "The Jesus Film", a powerful resource used in missions worldwide, will be shown Friday, May 15 at 6:30 in the gym. Bring a friend and some Raisinets.

▶ **A tour of ACTS** will be held April 6 at 10:00 AM. Please contact Barbara Zirps (649-3281) if you would like to join.

Judea (Regional):

▶ **Mission trip to New Orleans (April 4-9):** St. John's youth and adults will join with TigersGo to repair homes in New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina victims.

▶ **A tour of Epworth Children's Home** will be held on May 3. Please contact Maureen Bernard (221-9635) for more details.

▶ **Salkehatchie camps (Summer):** Multiple opportunities are available for this summer. Contact Bobby Coker (649-1511)

Ends of the Earth (International):

▶ **Karen Ujereh Visit:** Our GBGM missionary from Senegal will visit on April 26.

▶ **Short-term trip to Russia:** A trip to work with Charlie and Miki Chastain is set for June 7-17. The focus will be to work with at risk children and has four volunteers so far.

▶ **Honduras Mission trip:** A trip focusing on construction is set for June 10-20. Five members have signed up so far.

▶ **Whitney Simons Visit:** Our missionary in Puebla, Mexico will visit on June 21 to share her experiences working with "Athletes in Action" ministry.

▶ **Short-term trip to Kenya:** A trip to hold a Christian Camp for the "Life for Children" orphans is set for August 6-18. Nine people have signed up so far, including two from St. John's.

*Note: Please contact **Frances Osteen** (648-2548) for more information on any of the above short-term mission trips.*

Epworth Children's Home Campus Cleanup a Success



Maureen Bernard believes we serve others as an expression of our love for God. Describing her recent experience at Epworth's Campus Cleanup, Maureen explains, "Our group spent the day painting, made new friends, took a walking tour (on the way to our jobs) and learned more about the history and current operations at Epworth. Our gracious hosts gave our group a special treat at lunch--the famous Epworth peanut butter ice cream! We were tired but grateful for the help we could give. We hope more members from St. John's will join the Campus Work Day this fall!"

The **Reverend John Holler** was appreciative of everyone's hard work and willingness to help.

Maureen Bernard helps with the painting at Epworth's Campus Cleanup in March

Ukraine Conference to Aid Children



Charlie Chastain and Michael Norton at the Sea of Azov in the Ukraine

Charlie Chastain and **Michael Norton** spent March 17-19 in Donetsk, Ukraine at a conference sponsored by The CoMission for Children at Risk. Michael explains their mission, "Charlie and I led a session related to ministering to disabled individuals. We discussed the current situation in Eastern Europe (institutional care) and presented Aiken's Tri-Development Center as an example of what can be accomplished. We talked about ways that the local church can help these institutions and initiate programs to assist the residents. We also discussed how ACTS and Helping Hands are ministries started by a small group of churches working together to solve a problem. Our goal was to encourage the church representatives to initiate programs of their own related to disabled children and adults."

PRAYER REQUEST BOARD

"Feed my sheep." John 21:17

Through prayer we can feed His sheep throughout the world. Please pray for the following:

- ▶ **Praise God that the Chastain's move to Russia has finally been approved for May 12**
- ▶ **During these cold, difficult times, may those who come to ACTS and Christ Central feel God's warmth and love**
- ▶ **For Whitney Simons in Puebla, Mexico, may she stay strong in your Word**
- ▶ **For guidance to the Salkehatchie camp leaders as they begin to search for families to help**
- ▶ **For God to provide partners to Life for Children so they may grow to support over 200 children**

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 15:5-6)

GOLT Contact Information

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For an online version of this newsletter and links to our mission partners' web sites, visit: **www.stjohns-umc.org** and click on "**Missions**" then select "**Global Outreach**".