

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL GREAT BANQUET COMMUNITY NEWS



February 2008
B/N Great Banquet Community
P.O. Box 3043
Bloomington, IL 61701



"...Come, for all is now ready."

Luke 14:17

Extending the Invitation ...

As, I have been preparing my *Discovering Priorities* talk I have re-read Luke 14:15-24. The Message Bible puts it this way.

That triggered a response from one of the guests; "How fortunate the one who gets to eat dinner in God's Kingdom!"

Jesus followed up. "Yes. For there was once a man who threw a great dinner party and invited many. When it was time for dinner, he sent out his servant to the invited guests, saying. 'Come on in, the food's on the table.'

"Then they all began to beg off, one after another making excuses. The first said. 'I bought a piece of property and need to look it over. Send my regrets.'

"Another said, 'I just bought five teams of oxen, and I really need to check them out. Send my regrets.'

"And yet another said, 'I just got married and need to get home to my wife.'

"The servant went back and told the master what had happened. He was outraged and told the servant, 'Quickly get out into the city streets and alleys. Collect all who look like they need a square meal, all the misfits and the homeless and wretched you can lay your hands on, and bring them here.'

"The servant reported back, 'Master, I did what you commanded-and there's still room'

"The master said, 'Then go to the country roads. Whoever you find, drag them in. I want my house full Let me tell you, not one of those original invited is going to get so much as a bite at my dinner party.'"

As I re-read this passage, I began thinking of things from the servant's perspective. Here he is seeing first hand the preparation that has going into this great dinner party. He knows that the master is bringing out the best of the best for all to enjoy. I can almost imagine his excitement as he approaches the first guest ... "dinner is ready" ... "come to the feast" ... "my master spared no expense, you are in for a treat" ... and then his disappointment when he is turned down again and again.

I wonder if the servant was a little scared to go back to tell the Master his guests would not be attending. But instead of lashing out at the servant, the master instructs him to go find anyone that will attend to make his dinner party full.

I believe that we as a Great Banquet Community have the same task as the servant. Our job is to continue extending the invitation until our Banquets are full.

Just like the master, our weekend teams have put in a lot of effort. Team members are offering their best and sacrificing their time to insure that guests will feast abundantly at God's table for 3-days.

I know it's hard to keep extending the invitation. I have heard several excuses over the past few months as I have invited many individuals. But aren't all of us thankful that someone kept asking and extended the invitation to us?

My prayer is that our community will continue extending the invitation, that the Banquet tables will be full, and that our heavenly Master will be pleased with our persistence.

Shelly Hanover, Community Lay Director

We Need Weekend Banners ...

It is the tradition of the Great Banquet movement to pass banners along to other communities after a set of weekends. So...get creative, grab your reunion group and start making banners. Intricately sewn, hand crafted, drawn with crayons on poster board ... it doesn't matter. What does matter is that we have fresh banners to share on our weekends.

Please note that you will not be receiving your banners back at the end of the weekends, banners will be sent on to another Great Banquet communities.

Help Wanted...

Name Badges Makers – This fall our name badge makers will be busy celebrating a wedding anniversary which will include some travel. Congratulations! ... After many years of faithful service they are asking for a weekend off. So we are in need of a volunteer to make our name tags. If you are interested, please contact Iris Sonkin 309-661-4630 for more information.

Set-up/Clean Up Workers

We are in need of 3-5 volunteers to help with both the Men's weekend set-up and clean-up and the Women's weekend clean-up. These are often rewarding but under appreciated jobs. The board cannot stress enough that this is an area where **we really, really need help**. Please contact Alan Bruehl at 309-662-1930 or Scott Riddle at 309-962-2447 to volunteer.

Meal Servers

It's called the Great Banquet, and meal times are an important time of casual sharing on the weekends. We need meal servers to set the tables, serve the food, and clean up. Meal servers may also provide agape and simple centerpieces or decorations. Each meal needs 6-8 volunteers for everything to run smoothly. Contact Lynn Fletcher at 309-378-4602 to sign up.

Missing Vests ...

Do you have vests from past weekends? Barb Bills is in the process of collecting them. Barb may be contacted at 663-6601.

Stay Informed ... B/N Great Banquet Website:
bngreatbanquet.org

MEN'S GREAT BANQUET #82 MARCH 13-16TH

Leadership

Lay Director Bob Hauskins (*Staying Power*)
Assistant Lay Directors Richard Miller
Ralph Smith (*Discovering Priorities*)

Spiritual Director Rev. Jack Pitzer (*Sacramental Grace*)

Asst. Spiritual Directors Rev. Steve Barrow (*Our Response to Grace*)
Jim Pitzer (*A Life of Grace*)
Rev. Phil Rodrick (*God's Gift of Grace*)
Rev. Mark Wallace (*Obstacles to Grace*)

Musician Steve Weber

Frontlines

Speakers Ron Aupperle (*The Body of Christ*)
Alan Bruehl (*The Truth Through Study*)
Rick Dancey (*Establishing Priorities*)
Steve Gilliam (*The Way of Relationships*)
Dave Haycraft (*Disciples*)
Jerry Klym (*The Life of Christian Action*)
Matt Stambaugh (*Ministry of All Believers*)
Kent Snyder (*Changing Our Environment*)

Table Leaders Paul Brown, George Burns, Rich Irwin,
Aaron Shane

Support

Agape Chapel Head Rob Wall
Chapel Assistants Dan Goller, Mike Kreun, Dave O'Neill,
Jamie Spence

Anointing/Dedication Service Sunday, March 9 – 6:00 PM Calvary UMC, Normal

The Great Banquet tradition is to host a Dedication service, which is similar to our old Anointing service. Community members, family and special friends are all welcome to attend this worship service. Due to a very busy spring calendar both the men's and the women's teams will be dedicated on the same evening. There will be a team meeting with a talk preview following the dedication service.

Please note: We understand that Sunday March 9th is the closing for the Chrysalis weekend; again due to a busy spring calendar this conflict could not be avoided. Thank you for your understanding.

**WOMEN'S GREAT BANQUET #83
MARCH 27-30TH**

Leadership

Lay Director Donna Whitsett (*Staying Power*)
Assistant Lay Directors Carolyn Oliver
 Shelly Hanover (*Discovering Priorities*)
Spiritual Director Rev. Jack Pitzer (*Sacramental Grace*)
Asst. Spiritual Directors Denise Spence (*Our Response to Grace*)
 Lori Bultemeier (*A Life of Grace*)
 Jan Proeber (*God's Gift of Grace*)
 Berta Pitzer (*Obstacles to Grace*)
Musician Nelda Sumner

Frontlines

Speakers Barb Bills (*The Body of Christ*)
 Cindy Hertel (*The Truth Through Study*)
 Beverly Rawlins (*Establishing Priorities*)
 Carol Smithson (*The Way of Relationships*)
 Gina Fitzgerald (*Disciples*)
 Tammy Burns (*The Life of Christian Action*)
 T/B/A (*Ministry of All Believers*)
 Lisa Anderson (*Changing Our Environment*)
Table Leaders Karla Lohnes, Vicki Bradley, Estelle Brown,
 Vickie Butler

Support

Agape Chapel Head Gudrun Dunt
Chapel Assistants Kim Robinson, Sue Edie, Beth Wall,
 Rosemary Falk



Be a part of the support team for the weekend!

- 72 hour prayer Vigil** The backbone of the weekend! Contact Iris Sonkin at 309-661-4630 to participant in this meaningful experience.
- Set-up/Clean Up** People, this is where we need the most help from our community! Contact Alan Bruehl at 309-662-1930 or Scott Riddle at 309-962-2447
- Agape letters** There is nothing better than receiving a personal handwritten letter. General conference room letters are wonderful too!
- Candlelight Worship** 8:30 PM, Saturday night. You know... pray, sing, message, communion & fellowship. Contact Jim Pitzer 309-725-3363 to help with setting up chairs & luminaries or passing out & collecting the flashlight candles.
- Closing** 5:00 PM, Sunday afternoon. Hear and see how God has changed lives in 72 hours!
- Banners** In the Great Banquet community, banners are a big deal! We are expected to send our banners on to other communities after every set of weekends; in return new banners will be sent us. This is a great project for reunion groups!
- Weekend Snack Table** Community, let's shower our weekends with great homemade snacks. It's time to give the team a break! Look for the sign up sheet at up coming events.
- Agape Gifts** All those little gifts can make a big difference.
- Sponsorship** It is a true joy to share a weekend with someone else. Contact Carol Smithson, Community Registrar at 309-663-4870 for information.
- Meal Servers** Contact Lynn Fletcher at 309-378-4602

Prison Ministry Testimony By Cindy Hertel

It all started shortly after our original Emmaus walks. Someone approached my husband Doug and myself to be a part of the prison ministry that takes place twice a year. The men's weekend in the Spring and the women's weekend in the Fall. Would we be interested in serving sometime? Well, Doug said, "No, I don't think so" and I said, "No!" In my mind I'm thinking, not in a million years. Does this person know what sort of people are in prison? Criminals! No, never, not a chance, it's just not going to happen. I will never, ever, do that, EVER. Then, Doug said "yes" to serving on a weekend at Logan Correctional Center. Did he pray about it first, I wondered. Being the "good wife", I had to go support him at the prison and hold a candle on that Saturday evening. It changed my way of thinking and, changed me. As we walked around the circle of men in that semi-darkened gym, I shook the hand of a young African-American man that not only grabbed my hand but grabbed my heart. His dark cheeks glistened from tears that streamed down his face. On the outside of those walls I'm sure this young man would have intimidated me. But here, in this place, he was a lost young man that needed a Savior. He needed to know he was loved. Agape love, up close and personal. I started to understand what Jesus said in Matthew 25:36. "I was in prison and you came to visit me."

Well, that's how it started and I have had the privilege and opportunity to serve on several weekends at Lincoln Women's Correctional Center. This past October I served as the Lay Director for Lincoln Walk #8 and was awed by what God did through the team that served on the weekend and through the community. Let's do some remembrance of a few of God's mighty works from that weekend. Bondages were broken and the ladies were encouraged and loved. During Henry Johnson's Preventive Grace talk, 11 women gave their hearts to Jesus ... how wonderful is that!?! Several letters were sent to the community by the ladies of Lincoln Correctional Center who wanted to tell of the impact from that weekend and I want to share excerpts of those letters with you.

Deborah writes, "It is very hard to find the most accurate words to say. 1 Peter 4:8-10 (Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.) God has the appropriate words. You truly have been a blessing to me and everyone else. She finishes with this, "I want everyone to know how the radiance of God's love shown forth through each and everyone. The individuals that were present in body and through spirit and prayer."

Linda shared this, "THANK YOU for one of the most spiritual times of my life that you shared with me in October. I will always be deeply grateful to you and yours." It wasn't just the team that served within the razor-barbed wire that took Jesus and His love to those women. It was this community that was involved in the various aspects of service. We needed each of you to do your part to help accomplish the work God planned for that weekend. As it is for every weekend, we need each other. God plans that each of us will do just what 1 Peter says. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others ... Deborah was right. As we begin this new year, in this new direction that God is taking us as the Great Banquet, please pray about your place of service. It might be serving a meal, making agape, holding a candle, helping set-up, praying. Who knows, it might even be serving inside prison walls. But whatever position He calls you to, my prayer for each of us is to have the courage to be like Isaiah and say, "Here I am Lord, send me!"

LOGAN CORRECTIONAL CENTER GREAT BANQUET #43 APRIL 11-13, 2008

Leadership

Lay Director Marty Thornton (*Staying Power*)
Assistant Lay Directors Willis Kern & Brian Finch
Board Advisor: Chuck Hepner
Spiritual Director Steve Ward (*Sacramental Grace*)

Asst. Spiritual Directors Joe Culpepper (*Our Response to Grace*)
Josh Carter (*A Life of Grace*)
John Brown (*God's Gift of Grace*)
Shirley Ryan (*Obstacles to Grace*)

Musician Dave Jacobs

Frontlines

Speakers Joe Kreiter (*Discovering Priorities*)
Ben Walters (*Ministry of Believers*)
Norman Brown (*Way of Relationships*)
Matt Schaber (*The Truth Through Study*)
Dave Hoepfer (*Life of Christian Action*)
Rusty Bledsoe (*Disciples*)
Roberto Pagan (*Changing Our Environment*)
Doug Grovesteen (*Body of Christ*)
Kevin Cook (*Establishing Priorities*)

Table Leaders Larry Alvey, Paul Crownhart, Ron Dozier, Barry Fletcher, Bob Garrelts, Jeff Hinthorne, Rick Lohnes, Bill Morse, Scott Riddle, Dick Runner, Jim Smith, Mike Swartz, Jeff Williamson (Table Leader Alternate)

Support

Agape Chapel Head Scott Dunt
Chapel Assistants Doug Hertel, Rod Smithson, Dale Layten, Keith Blankenship, Jim Houk, Larry Milby

Logan Correctional Center
Great Banquet #43
Team Dedication
Sunday, April 6, 2008
6 pm
Calvary United Methodist Church
Normal, IL



"...Come, for all is now ready."

Luke 14:17

Save on Postage! Get Our Newsletter Quicker!

Save our community money on postage while getting our newsletters quicker by joining our Yahoo newsletter group. By joining the group, you will receive email every time a new newsletter is available on our website.

To subscribe to our online newsletter Yahoo group, send a blank email to: BN-GreatBANquetNewsLetterssubscribe@yahoogroups.com Later, you will receive a subscription confirmation message. Just reply to the message and your subscription is done. It's that easy!

Then, save the community postage by sending an email with your name and address to bngb@stribmail.com and ask to be removed from the newsletter mailing list. This will NOT remove you from the community's database or team opportunity lists but it will help us save on postage. Remember signing up for the Yahoo newsletter group will not remove you from the newsletter mailing list. You must send an email to do that.

Visit our website at www.bngreatbanquet.org/newsletters.html to read the current newsletter or review prior newsletters.

Newsletter postage is one of our community's largest administrative expense. "He who tends the gift tree will eat its fruit" (Proverbs 27:18a) Help our community be the best stewards of our blessings so we can bear fruit for Christ. Join the Yahoo group and send an email to be removed from the mailing list today!

GREAT BANQUET NAME BADGES

Any member of the Community who would like to receive a Great Banquet name badge should contact Iris Sonkin (661-4630) to place your request. The badges will be available for you to pick up at community events. If you are a member of a Spring Great Banquet team, your badge has already been ordered for you.

*“... Come, for all is now ready.”
Luke 14:17*

UPCOMING BANQUETS ...

Men's Great Banquet #82	March 13-16, 2008	East Bay Camp
Women's Great Banquet #83	March 27-30, 2008	East Bay Camp
Logan Correctional Center	April 11-13, 2008	
Lincoln Correctional Center	October 17-19, 2008	



“... Come, for all is now ready.”

Bloomington/Normal Great Banquet Community † PO Box 3043 † Bloomington, IL 61702-3043

GUEST: Please print & complete all blanks, then return to your sponsor. All information is necessary for your proper placement for the weekend.

Name: _____ Name on Name Tag: _____

Address: _____ City-State-Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Weekend Dates: _____

Gender: Male Female Age: _____ Marital Status: Sng. Mar. Wid. Div. Sep.

Occupation: _____ Spouse's Name: _____

Your Sponsor's Name & Phone: _____ (____) _____ - _____

Your Church & Its Address: _____

Denomination: _____ Pastor's Name: _____

In what religious or community organizations are you active? _____

Has Great Banquet been explained to you? Yes No Has the follow-up program been explained? Yes No

State briefly why you wish to attend and what you expect from it: _____

SPECIAL NEEDS

Medication: _____

Diet modifications: _____

Health issues: _____

Other needs: _____

In an emergency, how best can we help you? _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____



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SPONSOR: Please print & complete all blanks, then return to the registrar. All information is necessary for proper placement in the weekend.

Guest Name: _____ Weekend Dates: _____

If married, name of your Guest's Spouse: _____

If married, have you discussed the Great Banquet with your Guest's Spouse? Yes No

Will your Guest's Spouse be attending a weekend? Yes No Spouse Weekend Dates: _____

Sponsor's Name: _____ (_____) - _____

Sponsor's Address / City / State / Zip: _____

Sponsor's Phone: (_____) _____ - _____ Sponsor's Cell / Other Phone: (_____) _____ - _____

Sponsor's original 4th weekend type (Great Banquet, Emmaus, Cursillo, etc.): _____

Where? _____ When & Number? _____

State briefly why you believe your Guest should attend a Great Banquet: _____

Describe any special health, diet, sleeping, or other needs of your Guest: _____

Emergency contact name, phone and relationship to your Guest: _____

Sponsor, are you praying for your Guest? Yes No Bringing your Guest to East Bay? Yes No

Are you planning to attend Sponsor's Hour? Yes No Candlelight? Yes No Closing? Yes No

Are you caring for your Guest's home needs during the weekend, including support of their immediate family? Yes No

Have you explained the post-weekend meeting? Yes No

Will you help your Guest get established in a Reunion Group? Yes No

**Mail Complete Application and \$25 Registration Fee to: Carol Smithson—Community Registrar
53 Brookshire Green
Bloomington, IL 61704**

Your Great Banquet Board of Directors

Barb Bills (Gatherings/Secretary)	663-6601
Alan Bruehl (Weekend Set Up/Clean Up)	662-1930
Estelle Brown (Agape Correspondence)	—
Gudrun Dunt (Newsletter)	530-6121
Bob Garrelts (Logan Prison)	828-9001
Shelly Hanover (Community Lay Dir.)	724-8800
Chuck Hepner (Community Musician)	365-2106
Cindy Hertel (Weekend Agape)	452-4080
Rich Irwin (Community Data)	662-5896
Jim Pitzer (Weekend Events)	725-3363
John Plattner (Treasurer)	828-1684
Phil Reginelli (4th Day/Reunion Groups)	663-3008
Scott Riddle (Weekend Set Up/Clean Up)	962-2447
Ralph Smith (Team Selection)	829-2004
Iris Sonkin (Prayer Vigil/Special Projects)	661-4630
Carol Smithson (Registrar)	663-4870
Mark Wallace (Com. Spiritual Director)	829-0194

Important Dates for Your Calendar ...

Team Dedication Service for Great Banquets #82 & 83:
Sunday, March 9th—6 pm Calvary United Methodist
(Note this is for both weekends)

Great Banquet #82—March 13-16—East Bay Camp

Women's Great Banquet #83—March 27-30—East Bay Camp

Fourth Day Meeting—April 3rd—7 pm
Resurrection Lutheran Church

Logan Correctional Center Team Dedication Service
Sunday, April 6th—6 pm Calvary United Methodist

Logan Correctional Center Great Banquet #43—April 11-13



“...Come, for all is now ready.”

Luke 14:17

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Inside ...
Upcoming Great Banquet
Weekends!