

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL GREAT BANQUET COMMUNITY NEWS



November 2009
B/N Great Banquet Community
P.O. Box 3043
Bloomington, IL 61702-3043



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

Luke 14:17



- A word about costs...**
- Meet our Fall 2009 Guests...**
- "How Great Banquet Saved Our Marriage..."**

Great Banquet Board Member Changes

The next time you see Cindy Hertel, Jim Pitzer, Phil Reginelli, Scott Riddle and Iris Sonkin, please extend to them a HUGE thank you. They are completing terms on the board. Their hard work, dedication and love for our community has shown in everything they have done over that past few years!

We are pleased to announce that we have new board members beginning in January:

Kevin Daugherty, Gina Dew, Randy Harmon, Jill McNiff, Nick O'Neall, Marita Taylor, Bruce Tompkins, and as Assistant Community Spiritual Director, Mel Devall. Welcome aboard!





Great Banquet



Sharing the Light

Shelly Hanover, Community Lay Director

Recently I heard a message about lampstands. Some of you may know that the parent organization of Great Banquet is called Lampstand Ministries. During his presentation the speaker shared the important work of the lampstand...lifting up the light. This made me think about our Great Banquet community, as we are called many times to be the lampstand ... lifting up the light of Christ to those who attend our weekends.

However, I believe God calls each of us to be more than a lampstand. I believe He calls us to *be the light*. The light of the world in fact.

Mathew 5:14-16 states "*You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*"

Each of you has been the light of Christ during our weekends as you have served meals, participated in the 72 hour prayer vigil, provided agape, attended candlelight, helped with set-up and clean-up or sponsored someone to experience all of this for the first time.

And, if I'm honest, there have been times when your lights have been the re-fueling I've needed to keep my light shining. Whether it has been an encouraging word or someone willing to work beside me, my light has been strengthened by the service of others. Maybe some of you have experienced this as well.

My prayer is that each of you will not only be the lampstand, but that you will continue to be the light of the world in all the places you go.

Save the Date ...

LAMPSTAND MINISTRIES NATIONAL GREAT BANQUET & AWAKENING CONFERENCE

**SEPTEMBER 16-18, 2010
DECATUR, IL**

Look for more information in future editions of this newsletter or visit:

www.lampstand.net

Our thoughts and prayers... are with the families of Eldon Haab and Greg Webb, on the passing of their mothers.

January Gathering

**Saturday, Jan. 9 — 7:00 p.m.
Calvary United Methodist Church,
Normal**

Opportunities to serve in Logan and Lincoln:

Over 150 guests (residents) attended our Logan and Lincoln Banquet weekends in 2009, which is more than attended our East Bay weekends! Many thanks to all of you, who sent agape, attended candlelight and closing, served on teams and participated in the 3rd Saturday Reunions. The full impact of your ministry efforts may never be known, but be assured the work you do has an eternal impact!

This past year, as in the past, we encountered challenges and changes with the way the facilities handle clearance of volunteers. Currently temporary volunteers—those of us that just attend only candlelight and closing—may only visit **one facility per year**. Meaning, if you get clearance for Logan in the spring you CANNOT attend Lincoln in the fall. As you can imagine, this new policy has diminished the amount of community support, especially for the women's weekend. Only about 10 or 15 people attended the candlelight and fewer attended the closing.

As the board discussed these new challenges we came to a few conclusions:

1. We NEED our community to be physically present at Logan and Lincoln for candlelight and closing (sharing your light of Christ with others)
2. Folks in our community WANT to support the Logan and Lincoln weekends
3. The new clearance guidelines and "hoops to jump through" make it difficult for the people to participate.

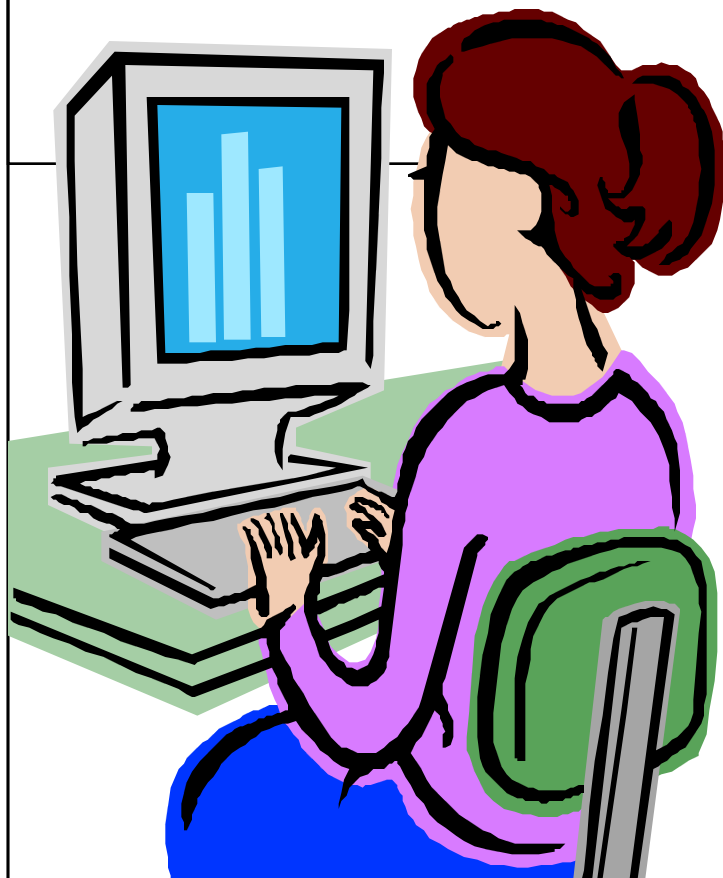
With these thoughts in mind ...starting in January the board will begin collecting names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of people interested in physically supporting the Logan and Lincoln weekends. Once you are on these lists, you will be contacted by the weekend Board Advisor when it is time to fill out the proper paperwork for clearance at each institution.

We do ask that once you have filled out paperwork you **make attending the weekend events a priority** on your calendar. The Logan and Lincoln staffs spend extra time and energy gaining special clearance for our weekend participation. Plus, our heavenly Father is counting on you to share Christ's love with these special guests.

If you have any questions, please contact

Shelly Hanover at 309-724-8800 or shanover@normal.org or Marty Thornton at 662-4600 or marty.thornton@verizon.net

Stay up-to-the-minute with the latest news in your Great Banquet Community. Check out the Web site and find archived newsletters and information about our Facebook group!
bngreatbanquet.org



Weekend Cost\$...

Thank you to all who responded to our plea for financial support this fall. We have come through all 3 fall weekends with all bills paid. Praise God! This community is blessed by the generosity of its people.

Many have asked recently how much it costs to host a banquet weekend. And that is a very good question! Here are the *per person* expenses:

- East Bay Lodging and Meals—\$145
 - Great Banquet Supplies (cross, worship books)—\$10
 - Other Supplies (notebooks, markets, poster board, pens, etc.)—\$10
 - Pizza Party—\$5
-

TOTAL — \$170.00

For example, a weekend with 55 participants adds up to approximately \$8,500.00 Of course prison weekends have similar expenses and supplies (in addition to hotel stays for team members)...however these guests typically don't send a check to the community after the weekend.

It has always been the spirit of our Bloomington/Normal Great Banquet Community that **money never be an obstacle** for someone to attend as a guest or team member.

Thank you for keeping that spirit alive through your generosity. As many of you make plans for your end of the year gifts, please keep Great Banquet in mind.

B/N Great Banquet
P.O. Box 3043
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Meet our newest Guests!!

- Yinka Adetola
- Anita Allen
- Alex Anton
- Melissa Anton
- Brent Beyer
- Donna Beyer
- Brad Budyach
- Jarrett Cox
- Lyndsay Cox
- Liz Dulaney-Jones
- Dave Garrison
- Ginnie Hilt
- Louise Jiles
- Matt Kreun
- Linda Ladage
- Matt Lange
- Bob Lebre
- Lori Lebre
- Tanja Mahner
- Marty Mann
- Carroll Mettrick
- Steve Meyers
- Bruce Noden
- Myra Noden
- Tim Owens
- Laura Pahuski
- Louise Rose
- Doug Schnell
- Tonya Scott
- Adam Steinke
- Denny Strauss
- Vicky Strauss
- Dan Withey

SonRise Chrysalis

For more information on SonRise Chrysalis, visit their website at:
www.SonRiseChrysalis.org



“...Come, for all is now ready.”

Luke 14:17

**A MESSAGE
FROM
OUR
COMMUNITY
SPIRITUAL
DIRECTOR ...**

"Pay It Forward"

One could do an extensive bible study on the word “before.” So many times we read how God loves us first, calls us before we are born; and Christ was slain before the creation of the world.

Someone in our community loved you before you ever attended a Walk or Banquet. Someone loved you enough to invite you to a weekend. And, someone — you may not ever know whom — paid your way. Great Banquet and Walk to Emmaus have a history of “paying it forward.” On Sunday afternoon, we explain to new guests that our community supports itself. Those who have gone to weekends before them pay the expenses for upcoming weekends. They are encouraged to give to the next weekend. And on and on and on...

I love that someone invited me to a weekend twenty-five years ago, and I love that many prayed for me, and paid for me!

I hope that we will all consider praying and paying it forward for future weekends. We follow Christ’s example when we love first.

Pray about it now...”before” you forget.

Serving at His table with you,
Rev. Lori Bultemeier

A GREAT BANQUET LOVE STORY....

I, James , take you, Jill,
to be my lawfully wedded wife,
to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, or for worse,
for richer, or for poorer,
in sickness, and in health,
to love and to honor
and to cherish unconditionally.
Forsaking all others, I will be faithful to you.
And with this ring, I thee wed.

I, Jill, take you, James,
to be my lawfully wedded husband,
to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, or for worse,
for richer, or for poorer,
in sickness, and in health,
to love and to honor
and to cherish unconditionally.
Forsaking all others, I will be faithful to you.
And with this ring, I thee wed.

What comes next? Happily ever after right? Not so fast.

These vows were spoken June 3rd of 2000 in Negril, Jamaica by a young couple in love and eager to start a new life together. The marriage I speak of is my own. I had finally found the girl of my dreams and nothing was going to get in the way of that happiness or so I thought. Boy was I wrong.

Soon after the honeymoon ended Jill was in college, pregnant with our first child, and working full time. I just out of college took on a second shift position. A year after we spoke our vows our beautiful daughter Lydia was born, she was and still is amazing. A few months later we purchased our first home and I spent the a lot of time working to get it into move in condition. Long story short, Jill and I were two ships passing in the night. This coupled with a lack of communication, unresolved personal issues, selfish motivations, an inability to forgive, stubbornness, and a general lack of any type of personal relationship with Christ soon opened the door for trouble to enter the marriage. Our priorities were not at all in line with God's plan. We were growing apart when we desperately needed to be coming together.

Four years passed before we were blessed with the birth of our second child, a son named Gavin. More responsibility, more stress, more distance grew between Jill and I. Jill made me feel alive, I loved her with all my heart, she gave me purpose and determination, so why did I have this growing resentment towards her? Simply put we just did not know how love each other unconditionally and the emotional walls we had put up left us in dire need of help. Seven years into the marriage and two innocent children later, Jill and I were seeing divorce as the only option. We needed help. I remember my wife saying to me "it will take a miracle to save this marriage".

In a final effort to save our family, Jill and I started going to a Christian based marriage counselor. Our counselor talked to us about a Cursillo she had attended and inquired if we would be willing to give it a try. We agreed to do it. I began searching the internet for a local Walk to Emmaus weekend and this is when I stumbled on the website for the Bloomington/Normal Great Banquet. Sponsors were found, forms were filled out and Jill and I were on our way in search of that miracle. Let me tell you folks we found it, or should I say had our eyes opened to it through Gods grace and the loving disciples within this community. The Great Banquet showed us what unconditional love looks like. That mirade we were in search of was God's grace through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Funny thing is, His grace had been all around us even when we were struggling yet we did not know it or could not recognize it for what it was. (Continued next page)



“... Come, for all is now ready.”

Prior to the Great Banquet, I was in control of my own life not God, and I am happy to say this is no longer the case. God is in control of my life now and he is doing a much better job than I ever could have imagined. One of the things that helped me recognize the need to hand over this control was the fact that I did not know what it meant to truly forgive or how to truly accept forgiveness from others. Sin is a fact of our mortal existence and without the ability to repent and hand over your troubles to Him the world can become a very dark place. Jill and I both had a lot of baggage we were holding onto, creating personal pain and marital strife. We both came to the lake with a trunk load of luggage and left with a cross. God is good. We give thanks to God for saving our marriage but we also recognize the role our Great Banquet weekends had in our personal awakening. This community has been an incredible blessing to our family.

God Bless each and every one of you!

De Colores,
James McNiff (Great Banquet #82, table of Andrew), loving husband of Jill McNiff (Great Banquet #83, table of Zipporah)



Your Great Banquet Board of Directors

CeAnn Kreun (Gatherings/Secretary)	662-4197
Alan Bruehl (Weekend Set Up/Clean Up)	662-1930
Estelle Brown (Agape Correspondence)	—
Willis Kern (Newsletter)	828-4447
Marty Thornton (Logan Prison)	662-4600
Shelly Hanover (Community Lay Dir.)	724-8800
Karla Lohnes (Community Musician)	962-2232
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
Rob Wall (Registrar)	663-7630
Lori Bultemeier (Com. Spiritual Director)	830-3078

Important 2010 Dates for Your Calendar ...

Winter/Spring...

Potluck Gathering: Jan. 9—Calvary United Methodist Church, 7:00 p.m.

Men's Great Banquet #90: March 4-7 — East Bay Camp

Women's Great Banquet #91: March 18-21—East Bay Camp

Logan Correctional Center GB #45: April 23-25

Summer/Fall....

Brown Picnic: August (Dates TBD)

Men's Great Banquet #92: Sep. 9-12 — East Bay Camp

National Gathering: Sep. 17-19—Decatur, IL

Women's Great Banquet #93: Sep. 23-26—East Bay Camp

Lincoln Correctional Center GB #11: Oct. (Dates TBD)



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Inside ...

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- ◆ New prison info...
- ◆ Let your Light shine...