



MAPLELAWN BAPTIST CHURCH
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Maplelawn Baptist Church
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Biblical Church Government



My family and I continue to thank the Lord for our Christian brothers and sisters at Maplelawn. We are happy as we witness the obvious desire of so many of you to please and praise God. We are especially grateful to all of you for the kindness shown to us in the unordinary circumstances of the last month.

As I mentioned in the letter I wrote several months ago, the deacons and I have been working on an analysis of Maplelawn, in order that we might better understand where we have been in the past, where we are presently, and where we believe God would have us go in the future. We have made every effort to be thorough and united in the process. We are grateful for the patience all of you have exercised during this time. In the next several months we will be doing our best to communicate the results and conclusions of our efforts to the entire congregation.

One priority that has emerged from our study is that of understanding and practicing biblical church government. Many of the challenges we face would be minimized, and some would disappear altogether, if we were to make a serious effort in this regard.

With these concerns in view, we have decided to combine all of the adult classes, as well as the junior high and senior high, starting in early September, in order to teach and study these issues. My sincere hope is that this kind of communication will leave no one out, and that it will result in our moving forward in true unity.

None of this can succeed without a great deal of prayer and so I ask you to begin to pray now. Pray that all of our hearts would be submissive to the Word of God and that our great desire will be to glorify God by our obedience to that Word.

Col. 1:13-19 (*see back cover*)



Church Parking Lot

Long overdue, the church parking lot was ground up, trucked off, reconstituted and laid back down. Would that our aging process, while we still live, could be addressed like that – the cracks and crevices in our faces be made to disappear and the crumbling edges made new again – wishful thinking.

When the asphalt starts being laid, the activity level increases dramatically. The big dump truck feeds the machine that lays the asphalt and the heavy roller compacts it. It's a beehive of activity not to mention all of the noise from the various machines.

Asphalt is a sticky, black and highly viscous liquid or semisolid that is present in most crude petroleum and in some natural deposits sometimes termed asphaltum. Asphalt is used as the glue or binder for the aggregate particles which are typically very small stones.

Asphalt is typically transported at temperatures around 150 degrees and some dump trucks route the hot engine exhaust through pipes in the dump body to keep the material warm until it is laid down. While still warm, a large roller compacts it under its enormous weight thereby compressing the asphalt and aggregate together, further bonding it and giving it a smooth surface.



With all the old asphalt removed, a new base of dirt was laid down, leveled off and then compacted. A solid foundation is the basis for a long-lasting parking lot.



A fresh new parking lot is an inviting sign to attendees and visitors alike. Thanks to Jeff See for taking pictures. ■

Maplelawn Baptist Church

New Church Logo

Our own, very talented, Becky DeYoung has designed an outstanding new logo for our church. We'll use the logo on pre-printed stationary, newsletters, bulletin covers, our web site and various other signage and communications.

Other than identity and immediate recognition a logo typically has no significance in and of itself. The new Maplelawn logo is simplistic, yet recognizable, in that it states the name of the church and incorporates the cross. ■

It Seems Like ...



It seems every time we hear from the Miskimens their plans are revised or they are forecasting that they will change. Literally, they are all packed and ready to go but the paperwork holds them back.

Tim had planned to go to Thailand in July to do the paper work for their work permit. He would need a visa in hand to begin that process. He had hoped to get a visa from another foundation while the school was working on its own foundation status. Now it appears as if Tim may have to wait for his school to get its own foundation status and then to get a visa from the school's own foundation. It could happen as early as the end of August or it might be as late as November. An irony in all this is that they donated nearly all of their winter clothing. Pray that the Lord would open this door soon and open the door to Thailand.

Commissioning Service August 10

Sunday, August 10 is the date that has been picked to have a commissioning service for the Miskimen family here at Maplelawn.

A commissioning service is not unlike a marriage ceremony. Two parties, the missionary and the church, agree to partner with each other to bring honor and glory to God. Our commitment is to be supportive financially and in prayer and the missionary's commitment is to be true to his calling.

It is a partnership effort that outlines our responsibilities to one another before God to create a bond of commitment, unity and confidence between the two parties. Please avail yourself to this special occasion. ■

Six Signs of His Coming



When it comes to determining the end-of-times, it's hard to put our finger on God's timetable. Many generations before us have been sure that the return of Jesus was imminent in their day. Even today we have those that are trying to convince us that 2008 will bring the end to the United States and a final world war as the result of clashing religions – and if it doesn't happen, well, maybe next year. And then there are those that tell us that, according to the Mayan calendar, the world will end in December of 2012.

Will our world really end?

Yes!

When will it end?

Don't know, but there are signs. But then interpreting them correctly can be a shot-in-the-dark.

1. FALSE PROPHETS and CHRISTS

Matthew 24:5 *For many will come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and will mislead many.*

Matthew 24:11 *And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many.*

Many have claimed to be the Messiah. These false prophets are a prelude to the ultimate false christ, the anti-christ.

2. WARS

Matthew 24:6 *And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.*

Rumors of wars in all areas of the world now occur frequently thanks to instant media coverage and the availability of a multitude of 24-hour news sources.

3. FAMINES

Matthew 24:7 *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.*

A large portion of the world's 6 billion people suffer from a shortage of food.

4. EARTHQUAKES

The number and intensity of earthquakes this century is at a level higher than any other time in history. A stagger-

ing number of seismic events occur around the world daily. By contrast, in the years from 1890 to 1900 there was only one major earthquake in the world.

5. TRIBULATIONS

Matthew 24:8-9 *But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of my name.*

Christians are under attack throughout the world today. In the United States Christians still enjoy freedom to worship God. However in many other countries such as China, Sudan, Africa, Saudi Arabia, Korea, Russia, and many Muslim nations, Christians suffer much greater persecution and often times death for their faith. During the tribulation this suffering will be worldwide and will continue even to the point of martyrdom. These first 5 signs will increase in intensity and severity as the tribulation approaches.

6. THE GOSPEL WILL BE PREACHED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Matthew 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.*

This prophecy is being fulfilled through television, radio, missionaries, the translation of the Bible into many languages, and the internet. People all over the world now hear the message of Christ from missionaries who have the means to travel the globe, and via technology that allows us to communicate with people on the other side of the world right from our own homes, churches and offices.

SUPPOSITION

Reviewing these six signs can sometimes raise our anxiety level a notch or two as we consider what lies ahead. But, take heart, God is in control. This is His plan and we have nothing to fear from it. ■

Thanks from Pastor and Becky

“Thank you so much for all of the donated items for Rebekah's graduation open house and our extended family gathering.



Many thanks also to the ladies who prepared and served the food, and to those who gave money toward the event.

Our hearts are overwhelmed by your kindness and generosity. What a wonderful and memorable event you helped to create!” ■

China and the Samaritan Project



Earthquakes and torrential rains have devastated parts of China. The pain of losing loved ones and property is great. Myron Youngman shares these thoughts about the country God has chosen for him to serve.

“My heart is full, and there is much I want to share about how your prayers have been answered, and your gifts have been used....

Today I wanted to update you on the Samaritan Project, which is our channeling of resources to the coordinated effort by the house church to provide comfort and healing to the earthquake ravaged regions of Sichuan Province. It doesn't flow in English as well as it does in Chinese, but



the literal translation of the name of the organization set up by this group of house church leaders is ‘China Christians' Love Action’.

Years ago one of my Bible teachers said to me in a one on one discussion, "sometimes we forget how evil, evil is". That is one of those things that has stuck with me through the years. While today we are not talking about evil but of devastation, it has struck me of how easy it is to forget how devastating, devastation is.

Kaifa is so grateful for those who have partnered with us to empower this group of house church believers, as they:

1. provide healing and comfort to those struck by the earthquake; and
2. as this coordinated house church effort sets a precedent for the church in China by corporately being salt and light in response to a disaster.



The initial response of the coordinated house church relief effort was to provide immediate, short-term housing, food, and providing some sense of normalcy by opening tent schools, etc.

The new ministry priorities for China Christians' Love Action in the days ahead will be the rebuilding of communities, Biblical counseling and psychological intervention, childhood education, and the settlement of orphans.”

Pray that God will provide wisdom, direction, and power to this young church effort. ■

Hey Mom, What's for Dinner?

Boys, and some would argue men as well, tend to be idiosyncratic (strange). I would argue that these things that



boys and men do come quite naturally and to them, they don't seem strange at all. Left to their own devices boys

can become quite insufferable and then they grow up to become men.

Research shows that we do not pay enough attention to the particularities, needs, strengths and vulnerabilities of today's boys. If we don't make an effort to understand them and steer them through God's Word, we will reap a whirlwind of trouble in American families, schools and juvenile courts. The nexus is a moral struggle against desires, impulses and the needs and rights of others.

I've met parents who struggle to find the strength and stamina to correct and teach their children. These parents find it hard to overcome all of the influences of TV, media and the child's peers. They tend to allow their children to steer their own course through life.

It is important to nurture them in our faith. To teach and remind them what is right and what is wrong. If it's hard to find the motivation remember, your child will choose your nursing home someday. ■



Jr. Hi Mission Trip - Andrea Johnson

Members of Maplelawn's Junior High group, innerchange, recently went on a mission trip to Indiana. Group members were Jamie Cross, Dillon Miklusicak, Aaron Nutt, Dave and Andrea Johnson, and Andy and Jenelle Jonkman. Three church plants from Midwest Church Extension Mission rented the group camp of a State Park to provide a less expensive option for kids to go to a week of Christ-centered camp. The group from innerchange volunteered to help in the kitchen and do grounds up-keep. Their original plan was to serve at Potawatami Bible Camp for 3 days. However, God had different plans.

Once the pastors from the three churches arrived, they were told there was a slight bat problem at the camp grounds. Monday night proved that it was a major bat problem, with cabins having 10-15 bats in them. The pastors tried to correct the problem Tuesday night to no avail, and made a difficult decision on Wednesday morning to close the camp down after supper that night, fearing a health issue could easily arise from the exposure.



This left our mission team with 2 days left that they had been planning to work. Dan Nave, Pastor of Heritage Bible Church in Remington Indiana, told the group to come back with him and he would find work. Thursday and Friday the group was connected with a single mother who was moving back into her home after experiencing major flood damage in January. She had planned to move back in, but didn't have much help. So, the group removed the seats from the van and made trips bringing her things to her from different storage areas around the town. This was a great opportunity to show the love of Christ, and speak with her about God's plans. Members of Heritage Bible Church have been witnessing to her, and this provided another way to minister to her and her family.

The week ended with a day at Indiana Beach to rest and have a good time. Thank you so much for your financial and prayer support for this mission team. ■

Super Summer Spectacular

12:00 – 2 PM

Maplelawn Parking Lot

We will be meeting and greeting our neighbors on this day with inflatable activities, games, food, prizes, drawings and much more. We are also in the process of collecting cans of pop to quench the thirst of our neighborhood guests and church family. Donated cans of pop may be placed on the round table in the mailbox hallway.

The building of Maplelawn Baptist Church sits in the middle of a mission field. We are surrounded by people that don't know Jesus, yet we don't invite them to church, or share His Word with them. Many of them don't even know what we believe. We have an opportunity to meet our neighbors, invite them to church, and begin to show them the love of Christ.

This is a great opportunity to invite our neighbors, and your neighbors, family and friends to our church for a time of fellowship and fun.

Included in our day will be:

- Carnival Games
- Inflatable activities
- Food
- Child Finger Print Kits
- Activity Centers

- Prizes for everyone
- Handouts inviting visitors to our services and programs
- Friendly greetings from **YOU**

This isn't just a picnic. This is our opportunity to introduce ourselves to our community, and invite them to come see why we love Jesus and worship with us. Please be in prayer that many would attend, and we will be able to minister to our community.

Please consider volunteering to work at a game or activity station, serve food, or help with set-up and tear-down. Please see Andrea Johnson with any questions.

Pray about ways that you can be involved in follow-up with our guests, and ask God for strength in inviting those you know that don't know Christ. ■

Sunday, August 24,
ALL CHURCH PICNIC
11 AM – 4 PM!



Come to our All-Church Picnic on Sunday August 24th from 11am-4pm. We will be heading to Veteran's Memorial Park (355 48th Street, Kentwood) after the morning service for song and testimony time, followed by eating, and then games for the kids AND adults.

Please plan on joining us. Chicken and drinks will be provided. Please bring a side dish and dessert for our potluck. The park has a splash-pad for the kids (and courageous adults), playground, volleyball court, basketball court and baseball field.

Don't miss this chance for great fellowship! ■

Suffering and the GOD OF LOVE

We are reminded, nearly each time we meet together to pray, that life can come at you hard. One minute you have a handle on things, you have a job, your health, your marriage, your children and then, in what seems like the next minute, things fall apart. You lose your income, your marriage, children go through difficult times, your health changes ... you get the picture. Sometimes you can see it coming and other times, you can't.

Some people hate God for their anguish – how foolish – and others put their trust and faith in God to help them through it – how wise. Many of you will remember Scott and Brenda Steiner who faithfully served at Maplelawn for years. Scott shares this with us:

“In the course of two years we have learned that our son-in-law has cancer; I have lost my health, my job, and the ministries that mean so much to me. But what I have gained is so much more! I have experienced God in His fullness, peace that passes understanding, God's provision of ‘daily bread,’ and a freedom to each morning get up and ask my Father what He wants me to do today! Isn't that really how God wants us to live; daily depending on Him for nourishment, provision for our needs, direction and strength to accomplish what He asks from us? I could go on”

To be sure, the Steiner family struggles through these difficult times but their faith grows stronger as does their understanding of why God allows suffering in our lives. God reveals many reasons why he allows suffering to come into our lives and sometimes it's hard for us to put a finger on the reason, but all we need to know is that God is in control – He is with us every step of the way!

There are some misconceptions about suffering, such as that if we suffer; it means we are doing something wrong. Could be, but "it ain't necessarily so." For instance this verse, found in John 9:2 (NKJV) *And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.*

The reason for suffering seems to be a paradox ... God loves you. It's a perplexing rationale for suffering but God has his reasons and they are revealed to us in the Bible. Trust Him and he will see you through the difficult times.

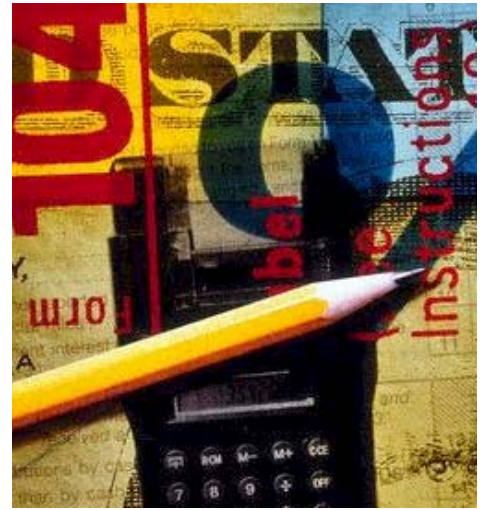
If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it.

A Taxing Effort by Dave Johnson

For Jackie Brown, tax season never ends. As the coordinator of the tax preparation site at Maplelawn, Jackie once again made our site a well-oiled machine. From motivating volunteers and scheduling training to checking returns and making sure they were all filed,

Jackie was the main reason we were able to prepare 97 returns for a total of \$127,000. This is money that is returned to the pockets of the people to whom it belongs!

Jackie humbly gives the credit to all of the volunteers, and expresses special appreciation for all of the help from Melissa Narutsch. Jackie, Melissa, all of the other volunteers and businesses that donated funds and resources, enabled us to better the result of last year by 7 returns and \$21,000! If you get a chance, thank a volunteer and stop by to thank the following businesses for their help: Boba Latte, Hobart Sales, Eclectic Eatery, and Auto Finance, Inc. We also received a donation from The City of Wyoming.



Most importantly, we were able to encourage the folks for who we prepared taxes – and invite them to services. As a follow up program, we ran a financial training class – in partnership with Byron Bank. This helped us maintain contact with a few of these folks and help give them hints as to how to make their money go further.

The classes concluded in late June and were deemed a success. Please pray that we will have wisdom in how to maintain contact with these folks and further encourage them. Please also pray for wisdom as we explore the possibility of more financial training classes and begin preparations for next year's tax season. ■

Stimulus Payments Go Unclaimed In Wyoming – MBC Can Help!

By Dave Johnson



The IRS has identified Kentwood and Wyoming as local areas with a high number of people that qualified for stimulus payments but did not receive them. The main reason for this is that

some people who are not required to file their taxes are eligible for payments. The problem is that if an individual doesn't file tax paperwork, they do not get the payment. The good news is that the paperwork is simple and there is still time! The Kent County Tax Credit Coalition will have a booth at the upcoming Summer Spectacular in the Maplelawn Parking Lot on August 9th. Please invite anyone whom you know might be able to qualify but did not file! ■

Commissioning Service for Meulendyks

Look for a commissioning service for Ryan and Sandy this Fall as they leave for Latin America to minister under HCJB in Ecuador. It's been four long years and they are praising God that the time is drawing near.



Radio Station HCJB

The call letters "HCJB" stand for "Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings". HCJB was founded by Clarence Jones in 1927 to broadcast the good news of Jesus Christ.



HCJB "The Voice of the Andes" provides not only English and Spanish broadcasts but other languages as well, such as Arabic, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Yiddish, Portuguese and Japanese. The radio station has spawned evangelistic rallies and a medical ministry as well.

You can email Ryan and Sandy at RMeulendyk@hcjb.org. ■

Michael & Monica Pasquale



Dr. Michael Pasquale and wife Monica work in the field of ESL (English as Second Language). Dr. Pasquale confessed that Maplelawn was their proof-of-concept as they worked through various aspects of developing an ESL class. This gave them a program that they could share with other churches that wanted to reach out to people with a ministry that would teach English.

He comments: "I think churches are seeing that no matter where you go, there's diversity. And English is kind of a common interest around the world. People want to learn English, so churches are kind of matching a need that they see and the desire to reach out to their community. And this has been a great tool." ■

Colossians 1:13-19

[13] Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

[14] In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

[15] Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

[16] For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

[17] And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

[18] And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

[19] For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;