

Facets *of Fellowship*

MAY 2005



THE NEWSLETTER OF FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor's Perspective — A Story of Love and Forgiveness

A few years ago Julia Roberts starred in a movie titled *Runaway Bride*. Now, thanks to Jennifer Wilbanks of Gwinnett County, GA, we have a real runaway bride.

When I first heard the news of Jennifer's disappearance and presumed abduction, I suspected the worst. Sudden, unexplained disappearances rarely work out well.

As I followed the story throughout the week, I was particularly curious about her fiancé John Mason. I wondered the kind of man he was. I thought about the scrutiny he was under. I was interested to know what Jennifer's family thought of him...and whether those thoughts had changed since her disappearance.

On the eve of Jennifer's reappearance and the discovery of her hoax, I heard an interview of her father, Harris Wilbanks. At the end, unsolicited and unequivocally, he came to John's defense. His manner in the defense as in the rest of the interview suggested to me a grace and confidence that only Christ can give.

If you've followed the news, you know that confidence was not misplaced. You know that Jennifer, though troubled, is alive and well. You also know that the en-

tire immediate family, including John and Jennifer, profess personal faith in Christ as Savior, and that the grace seen in Harris Wilbanks is also in John Mason.

When John was asked what he was going to do now that he knows the circumstances of Jennifer's disappearance, he said without hesitation he's going to do what he would do under any other circumstance—he's going to love her and forgive her and marry her—explaining his answer in terms of God's grace to sinners. (See Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 18:21-35 and Luke 17:1-10 for starters.)

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
Ephesians 4:32

Those who understand God's grace understand that people and relationships are not disposable. They are distinguished not by their words, but by their record of reconciling and restoring broken, troubled and/or tarnished relationships. John and Jennifer need the support of our prayers. Who knows, maybe the made for TV movie (you know one is coming) about this runaway bride will be a story of grace and forgiveness.

...with Your blood You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Revelation 5:9

Leading Internationals to Christ

The Lord has given us another wonderful year of ministry through our Thursday night English classes. There have been many opportunities to share the gospel with students both inside and outside the classroom. At least one student has come to Christ and two have been baptized and joined the church.

Our end-of-year party will be held on Thursday, May 12 from 8:00 to 9:00 PM. This is an opportunity for those who are not able to be involved in this ministry from week to week to demonstrate Christ's love for these students who need to know the Savior. All our encouraged to come and bring a food item to share.

Please pray for our Sunday morning English class as it continues throughout the summer.

Building Lives on the Word of God

Adopt-a-Club Ministry: Each year Fellowship's Awana clubs assist at least one Awana ministry in another country so they will have the resources to conduct clubs of their own. This year we are seeking to raise at least \$180 to help Templo Evangelico Getsemani in Ventanas, Ecuador. This ministry helps our clubbers to appreciate the Lord's faithful provision in their own lives, as well as the need to share the gospel with those who are lost.



Closing Program: The Awana closing program will be held on Sunday evening, May 22. This event is held to recognize the achievement of our clubbers as they have invested much time memorizing and studying God's Word. The closing program also affords the opportunity to express our appreciation to those who have served in this ministry of reaching boys and girls with the gospel of Christ and training them to serve Him. Please plan to attend!

May is "Military Appreciation Month". For more information visit: AmericaSupportsYou.mil

Getting to Know Our Church Family

Nancy Gardner

Nancy was born in a suburb of Denver and grew up in a military family that moved every several years. She is the 4th of 5 children. When Nancy was in 7th grade her family settled in Springfield and she has been here ever since. As a child Nancy's interests included learning how to sew and cook, riding bike and climbing trees. Her family went to a Baptist church regularly but at age 16 Nancy stopped going.

After high school Nancy went to the Northern Virginia Community College where she took a year-long course in Geology and loved it. She then transferred to George Mason University and graduated in 1983.

Nancy volunteered at NVCC helping the science department and then was hired in 1978 by the US Geological Survey's Branch of Coal Geology. During her 17 years at the USGS Nancy studied the geology of coal resources and eventually became an expert in Geographic Information Systems which enabled her to change jobs in 1995. She currently works for the US Army Corps of Engineers' Topographic Engineering Center in Alexandria, VA, where she is in charge of Modeling and Simulation Database production.

Nancy and her husband Bob met in 1981 at George Mason University where he was studying for his Master's in Geography. Neither went to church at that time though they both had as children. Bob and Nancy were married in Arlington in 1985. They purchased a townhouse down the street from Fellowship and watched as the church building was built. They spoke to each

other about attending church but weren't ready to go until their son Nathan was born in 1991. They started attending Fellowship in March 1991, accepted Christ as Savior, and were baptized that next month on Easter Sunday.

Bob and Nancy have two boys. Willem is a sophomore at West Springfield High School, and Nathan is in 7th grade at Washington Irving Middle School.

Currently, the Gardners spend their free time watching Willem and Nathan play sports. Nathan plays on the Fairfax County basketball team and also plays soccer for

SYC. Willem is participating in year-round track at WSHS. This fall Willem and Nathan are going to play football for SYC. It will be the first time that they will be able to play on the same team.

Nancy has been the Cubbies Director of Fellowship's Awana program since it started in 1991. She also helps with Junior Church and teaches the advanced ESL class with Pastor Lindholm on Thursday nights. Bob and Nancy oversee preparation for the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's table. Nancy also worked in the nursery for many years.

Nancy's father and stepmother, Sid and Dee Teaford, are also members of Fellowship. Her mother and stepfather have retired to Boca Raton, FL. Nancy asks prayer for her brother David who was paralyzed after a fall and is on medical disability.

...love one another as
He commanded us.
1 John 3:23

Money Matters

April Giving Per Week (General Fund)	\$4,398
Weekly Need	\$4,691
Year-To-Date Giving (General Fund)	\$80,801
Year-To-Date Need	\$79,747
Year-To-Date 50@1 Giving	\$2,142



Calendar



May 5	National Day of Prayer
May 10	Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM)
May 12	ESL End-of-Year Party (8:00 PM)
May 14	Mother's Day Luncheon (11:30 AM)
May 22	Awana Closing Program (6:00 PM)
May 28	Men's Prayer Breakfast (8:30 AM)
May 30	Memorial Day
June 5	SMAK Begins (6:00 PM)

Mother's Day Luncheon

A Mother's Day luncheon will be held on Saturday, May 14 from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM at the home of Tracy English. All the ladies of the church are invited to attend. You are welcome to bring your mothers and daughters as well. Please sign up in the church foyer by Sunday, May 8 and bring a salad to share.

Teaching Children to Worship

Summer Music Activity for Kids is held on Sunday evenings each summer. This ministry focuses on training children to worship the Lord through music. Weekly activities also include a Bible lesson, crafts and games. This year SMAK will



be directed by Denise Odom, and Kara Benham will be serving in music. An additional worker is needed to teach Bible lessons. Please pray for this ministry as the leadership team prepares for its first meeting on June 5.