

Coit Connections

Coit Community Christian Reformed Church
600 Lafayette Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Amazing Grace

This summer we had several baptisms — families, children and individuals. We consider it a privilege to participate in God's work. This is what it's all about for the believer — being used by God as instruments of truth and love, and then seeing God step into peoples lives and bring them out of that darkness and into the light. It's that "Amazing Grace" that makes our hearts sing while at the same time tears of Joy and praise stream down our faces. There is nothing more beautiful than seeing God touch a life, remove the veil; But sometimes a person's spiritual awakening doesn't happen as a young person or while they still have life left to live and grow in their faith, and gain deeper understanding of God's Word. Sometimes it's like the thief on the cross. Sometimes it's at the very end of ones life.



Summer
2010

www.coitchurch.org

We exist as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ for the purpose of empowering people toward faithful and responsible living within the Kingdom of God.

Pastor:

Rev. Jerome Burton

Minister of Music

Mrs. Carla Moore

But that grace is just as powerful and awesome as when given to the one that will walk many years with God. This is Dan Bustards' story. Dan has lived in the Coit neighborhood for years. He has heard the Gospel and about Gods love and grace many times from Pastor Jerome and others, but he never showed any interest. Dan's rough living brought hardship on his body and three years ago he was diagnosed with black Lungs, a tumor in his throat, and cancer of the pancreas. Dan's the kind of guy that would help anyone, and in fact did a lot of work at our church with Pastor. He'd even get up early in the winter to make sure our sidewalks were shoveled before anyone got to church, but would never attend a service or Bible study. Dan's body started to deteriorate shortly after the diagnosis, but even though he knew he was dying, and had been in and out of the hospitals with near death experiences, he still didn't show any interest in knowing God, receiving forgiveness or having assurance of his eternal destination.

But on August 3, 2010, the seeds that had been planted and God's perfect timing for Dan to hear Him call came. With urgency in Dan's voice, he called Pastor Jerome wanting to talk to him immediately. When Pastor arrived at Dan's home, Dan wanted to know how to be saved. Jerome answered and asked Dan a few questions and then led him in a prayer of repentance, and confession of his need and desire to know Christ. Dan immediately was filled with joy and tears, and asked if he could be baptized, so the next day Pastor and several other members from Coit Church went to Dan's home, because he is bedridden, and had a church service in his living room. They sang songs, read scriptures, and then baptized Dan right there. This frail man stood to his feet and said with tears in his eyes "I am happy, I am so happy".

As we began embracing Dan he started asking questions like any new believer would, and with every

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AMAZING GRACE

answer his face and his eyes lit up with hope and assurance. His face looked like that of a child after receiving a gift they had always wanted. If he'd had the strength I just know he would have been dancing around. Dan's in the hospital now, and it's only a matter of time before he leaves this world, and though he may not be able to quote scriptures or explain doctrine, he does know that on that day Jesus has said to him, "I tell you the truth, this day you will be with me in paradise".

URBAN YOUTH CONVENTION 2010

COIT YOUTH TEAM



This years Urban Youth Convention was held in Muskegon at Angel CRC/RCA. Over 100 youth came from Los Angeles, Chicago, Grand Rapids and Muskegon. The Theme for this years convention was "Slaying The Giants" The main speaker was, Darnese Olivieri, a dynamic High School teacher from New York. The two day convention offered six workshops that involved discussions about such things as Who's Your Dad, (growing up without a father in the home), Perils of Speed Dating, the Lord's Prayer, and more.



These young people are thinkers, and they had real questions looking for real answers. They were building community, asking deep life questions, and opening their hearts to God's call on their life. Most of these young people come from very difficult circumstances, they don't have to attend, but they come because they are seeking, and God is drawing them unto Himself. Many have been coming to the Urban Convention for several years, and we see evidence of growth and maturity, and that is such a blessing to see. Equipping them with truth and freedom in Christ is what the UYC is all about. These young people are going to do great things for the kingdom of God.



After a powerful message given by Darnese, Pastor Jerome and his wife Kristin observed one of our youth being touched by God. Darnese was praying, and the music was softly playing when they both saw Tee'la starting to weep quietly. It was so obvious that the Holy Spirit was ministering to her. Moments after they saw what was happening to Tee'la they made their way to her so they could pray over her while God was speaking to her, and so when Darnese said, "there's a young lady here that I saw earlier this evening," they knew she was talking about Tee'la, so they lifted their hands and Darnese made her way to them. When she saw Tee'la she said, "yes, it was you." Then she gave words of encouragement and edification. A day after the UYC Tee'la posted the following on her Facebook, " What Giant are you slaying??? I'm so glad that I attended this Urban Youth Conference I think I've found my purpose in life and I am willing to let go of the things and people in my life who are going to hinder me from succeeding... ". Many young people experienced God's presence that weekend, and I believe they will never be the same.



Tee'la

Justice Coordinator for Coit Community Church

Mindy Hamstra has been appointed as the first Justice Coordinator for Coit Church. This volunteer position was established in response to Coit's desire to be more present in the neighborhood surrounding the church, and to be more involved in larger justice issues as well. Mindy is presently getting to know what other agencies and churches are doing in the area of community development and justice and learning about how to coordinate efforts to be most effective in reaching our neighbors.

This Fall she will begin a yearlong training program with the Grand Rapids Initiative for Leadership (GRIL) and will also study the curriculum "Just Faith" with a group from LaGrave Ave CRC which is one of our partner churches. Having attended the annual convention of the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) with another of our partner churches, Madison Square CRC, Mindy hopes to use what she learned there to do an asset based assessment of the neighborhood and to make plans with the Coit Church Council as to appropriate programs that Coit could initiate in the community.

Mindy is also working closely with MOP (Michigan Organizing Project) to enable Coit Church to work toward justice where it is needed in our city and with the CRC office of Social Justice to help us get involved in global justice issues as well.



SEEKING JUSTICE FOR UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS

At Coit Community CRC we strongly believe that, even though we have many challenges within our own church and neighborhood, it is important for us to be involved in ministry outside of ourselves. This is part of our worship of God who is Lord of all the earth and who cares for all peoples. One way in which we have become involved outside ourselves is to be active in the promotion for immigration reform in the USA.

The position for immigration reform which we take at Coit is the same as the one taken by the CRC denomination as a whole. We want to see a comprehensive reform of our current immigration/ labor system that: protects all workers from being exploited by employers, gives people seeking immigration a reasonable legal process to follow, does not unnecessarily separate families, and which responsibly allows for the legal procurement of laborers needed by the American economy.

Some of us have gotten to know people in Grand Rapids who are stuck in the inconsistencies of our immigration system and whose families are greatly disadvantaged because of this situation. Some of the activities we have been involved with lately include:

1. On June 7th eleven of us went to the Nehemiah Assembly, sponsored by the Michigan Organizing Project (MOP), in Kalamazoo where over 1000 Christians met with government officials to share our concerns.
2. Pastor Jerome and Rev. Albert meet with other pastors the third Thursday of every month to pray and share our hopes for immigration reform. Many of these pastors have church members who are personally affected by this problem.
3. Pastor Jerome and Rev. Albert also meet with pastors for prayer for justice for in our

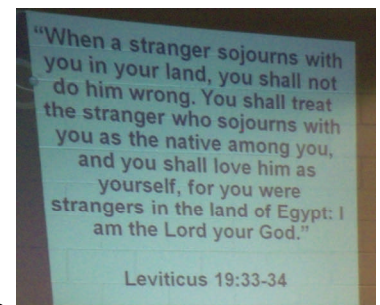


communities at the Nueva Esperanza United Methodist Church every Thursday morning.

On July 28 three Coit members were part of the prayer vigil for immigration reform at the Ah Nab Awen Park in Grand Rapids.

Perhaps the most important thing we are doing is praying for all those who are being hurt by our current immigration system. Pastor Jerome regularly includes this matter in our prayers during worship and other gatherings.

As a multi-racial CRC we believe we are especially called and qualified to speak to the issue of people being unfairly disadvantaged by laws and policies which actually work against the best interests of everyone. Seeking the welfare of others is part of doing God's work. It is our privilege to be able to play this small role to advocate for peace and justice in His name and to stand alongside our brothers and sisters in their time of need.



15th ANNUAL GOSPEL FEST

Over 250 men women and children from the Belknap community came out on Saturday, July 24 for Coit Church's annual Gospel Fest. This is a time to enjoy food, song, dance, games and messages of Jesus Christ. As always there was such a sense of community with people from the neighborhood. Many showing up early and staying late just because they wanted to help set up and clean up. The message of Christ was powerful and clear as a team of men from Teen Challenge and a team of men from The Conquerors used their gifts and talents of music, and strength to proclaim Gods Love and salvation to all those that would respond to His call. Many raised their hands as Mike of the Conquerors, asked if anyone wanted to surrender their lives to Christ Jesus. It was a beautiful site to see young and old alike pray the simple prayer of repentance and confession of their need of salvation through Jesus. New believers were also given an opportunity to meet with the Conquers in order to receive Biblical material that would assist them in their journey with Christ.

Many others that came out to minister at the event such as a women's worship team (WOW) from Kentwood Community Church, a husband/wife team called Spiritual Paramedics, Darryl Gates—a Christian magician, Mary Dailey—a Gospel singer and songwriter, and several of Coit church's own singers and dancers including Chanae Jackson— singer and songwriter with her daughter Shandraya, Jamillya Smith who performed a powerful mime expressional dance, and Brittany Moore who performed an elegant worship dance. We were so blessed with such powerful messages through each one.

There was also just a whole lot of fun going on. Face painting, bounce house with slide, a dunk tank, and the Grand Rapids Fire Dept. came out and hosed down all those that wanted to cool off. The kids loved that! There was carnival games with prizes and Raffles give-a-ways every hour. This year all those that wanted to participate in the Raffle give-a-ways or eat our delicious food gave us their name and address and how many children are in the home. This information will serve as an excellent source for follow up visits and to know where to find children for our youth group, Cadets and GEMS clubs.

This was a day of community, a time to serve, and love and connect with the people that live around Coit Church. Our church may be small, but we are mighty in service and overflowing in love and acceptance. We have seen some of the fruits of Gospel Fest on Sunday mornings, but reaching out and into the lives of the people in our community doesn't stop at the Gospel Fest, or food trucks. No! Our goal is to touch at least one life everyday with the love of Christ and to share the good news of the Gospel.

