



Winter 2008
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IN THE SPIRIT!

Vision Statement: *In the Spirit Christian Church* is a diverse community that empowers individuals and families by restoring and fulfilling lives through spiritual transformation.

This holiday season, Oklahoma Disciples Foundation is celebrating a newly-chartered Disciples congregation in Tulsa — *In the Spirit Christian Church (ITSCC)*. In September 2008, ITSCC began holding services at 409 South Pittsburg, property donated to the Foundation in 2007, and formerly owned by Rogers Heights Christian Church.

On Sunday, November 2, ITSCC held a special service attended by past members of RHCC. The service included special candle-lighting to recognize the numerous deceased "saints"/members of RHCC. The Rogers Heights congregation was remembered and honored for the vision, labor and dedication that now provides a home for ITSCC.

Pastor Sharyn Cosby-Willis' message, "Cloud of Witnesses" attested to how the ministry of *In the Spirit* moves forward with not only the witnesses of the saints of old, but



standing on the stewardship of the saints of Rogers Heights. "Their presence and blessing," said Pastor Cosby-Willis, "is what will carry, push and propel ITSCC forward in purpose."

And what a purpose! Even before moving into the facilities at 4th & Pittsburg, a capital improvement campaign was begun, and an ITSCC contingent canvassed the area,

inviting neighbors to Sunday worship services. Ongoing programs at the church include a daycare center and computer lab. Future plans include outreach to neighboring Will Rogers High School.

The weekly church bulletin lists prisoners — and where they are incarcerated — whom the members of the



congregation are to pray for and visit. Worship services frequently include testimony to transformations which inspire others to focus on commitment to their community of faith.



Pastor Cosby-Willis extends an invitation to all who would worship at *In the Spirit* and share the passion of their growing endeavor.

Kyle Maxwell
Executive Director

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In all issues of the 2008 newsletter, we are sharing letters of appreciation from Phillips Theological Seminary scholarship recipients, expressing their thoughts on what gifts to that endowment fund have meant for their lives and their ministries.

In This Issue

- ◆ **In The Spirit!**
- ◆ PTS scholarship recipient letter
- ◆ Disciples Couple Blesses Friendship Camp

Geoff describes learning to inspire "a faith journey that is, by the grace of God, personal, deep, transforming, and lifelong."

"Thankful. Grateful. Blessed. Humbled. Loved. A few words I share with you to try and express what your gift means to me..... The reality of my situation is that seminary would not be a possibility without the scholarship assistance I receive each semester.

My passion and calling is youth ministry, and I have been living out this calling for the past ten years. Journeying with young people as they grow, question, and discover for themselves the reality of God in their midst is where I feel most fully alive in ministry. I began my seminary experience two years ago, after realizing my need for a deeper understanding of God's presence among us, and a firmer theological foundation for the ministry to which God is calling me. Most of the resources published for youth ministry are poorly written, prioritizing simplicity of teaching and application over sound theology and transformation. Through my experience at Phillips, I am receiving the knowledge and understanding needed to develop a youth ministry experience that is forming within young people a desire for a faith journey that is, by the grace of God, personal, deep, transforming, and lifelong.

...It is my hope after I graduate to begin writing curriculum and books for children and youth ministry that will offer teachers and students opportunities to think critically about their faith, the Bible and the world in ways that transforms them into passionate Disciples of Christ."

Geoffrey Brewster

Phillips Theological Seminary Student

Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries, Southern Hills Christian Church, Edmond

Disciples Couple Blesses Friendship Camp

Rev. John Regan recounts his experience from a couple of years ago:

"A dear friend asked me to volunteer as a counselor at Friendship Camp. I asked myself, 'I have been to lots of camps, why bother with this one?' However, my friend was very persistent. Once I learned more about the camp, I invited two teenagers from our church (Western Oaks Christian Church) to volunteer as well. Robert Early, Shelby Honeysuckle and I were transformed by our experience. We befriended great Disciple folks from around the region. We placed ourselves in a challenging role of working with children who were aching for attention. The week at Friendship camp was exhilarating, difficult, surprising, and satisfying. You cannot really put Friendship Camp into words, you simply must experience it."

Fast forward to 2008. As John and his bride-to-be, Shelley Ryan, made preparations for their October wedding, they decided they had more than enough stuff. So they "registered" Friendship Camp: they requested that friends who wished to celebrate their vows make gifts to the Friendship Camp endowment fund of Oklahoma Disciples Foundation in lieu of purchasing a traditional gift.

John explains, "We are thankful to our dear friends and family who gave so generously to this wonderful camping adventure. We hope you and your congregation will know the joy of supporting and participating in Friendship Camp."

As many of our readers already know, Shelley Regan is Communications & Support Staff Coordinator at First Christian Church in Edmond and John Regan is Senior Minister at Western Oaks Christian Church in Oklahoma City.



Shelley & John Regan