

Year 7
Issue 1

The CrossRoads Connection



A Youth and Young Adult Ministry of
St. Andrew United Methodist Church

Fresh Starts...

chipping in

I remember when I was a child, I was all for second chances. Now, I have to confess that I certainly did create a ripe climate for opportunities for second chances to be offered! When it came to this, I was generous to a fault – and hoping my parents, teachers, friends and others were as well.

I remember once when my twin brother and I were throwing a ball around just outside the house. My mother was CONSTANTLY telling us to not throw it close to the house – we had all of the great outdoors to throw it, so move away from the house. Not having much money in those days, our only maintenance plan for the house was not to break things. I was certainly on board with this plan, in theory. In practice, well, not so much!

Anyway, on this particular day, my brother, Mike, and I were practicing our pitching/catching – baseball season was only 10 months away (we'd just wrapped

up the season), and we needed to get in some practice. Mike was pitching; I was catching; and the house made a great backstop – my parents were away for the day on some errand or other.

Mike laid on the heat. Unfortunately, the pitch got away from him and went through a 2nd story window! Man, were we in for it! I can assure you that my dad was not a modern-day parent who did not believe in spanking! Man, were we scared! We could already envision the spanking to come; but even worse, a group of local boys, including my twin brother and me were planning on a week-long camp out – and there was no way in the WORLD we were going now.

It seemed unfair – we were getting a double-whammy! A spanking and missing the great camp-out was too much to stand! My older brother came home a bit later, looked at the window and said: “Man, is dad

going to be mad at you guys!” Thanks. We weren’t sure, but that IS helpful. Really!

I think it was the combination of our crying and dreading the inevitable doom that was inevitably ours that brought about what was to come. My older brother said, “Look, boys. If you’ll shut up, I’ll tell mom and dad that I broke the window!” Our savior, our hero! We agreed on the spot and sure enough my dad was furious. My older brother was too old to spank but not too old to get a heaping helping of chores added to our already heaping helping of chores.

Our brother never said a word.

We were free! No thumping, AND we got to go camping, AND we didn’t even have to do extra chores. I mean, the set-up was perfect. Our brother couldn’t complain about the unfairness of it; he



Pat Sleeth is pastor to the CrossRoads community.

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Our MISSION: We seek to encourage youth and young adults to develop a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, encourage them to grow as lifelong disciples, and to equip them to minister to others for the sake of the world.

Pastor Pat's Chipping In

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couldn't even tell on us because he'd lied to my dad – you could do a lot of things that would make my dad angry – and survive. I'm not sure lying was one of those things. He could "... NOT abide a liar..." as he used to say, often. We were golden.

We had a fresh start, a reprieve, and we didn't even have to pay for it – our brother did! Sweet! I was young enough that seemed like a brilliant thing. I even swore (to myself) that I'd be good for a week or so. No need pushing my luck.

Then my older brother went and ruined it all for me. He just took it. I mean, he just took our punishment and never said a word about it. Not to dad or mom. Not to us. He just shouldered those extra chores like it was no big deal – and believe me, it was a big deal. Dad liked his lessons to be meaningful, if you know what I mean.

What a rotten thing for my brother to do. What a jerk! Suffering in silence like that and ruining our free pass – I tell you, it was more than a body could stand. After about 2 days of that, I told my brother I could see no way around it, we'd have to come clean. I couldn't stand another day of our stupid brother acting like that. Mike was NOT in favor of this plan – we'd get TWO thumpings and grounded until, well, probably, we'd still be grounded.

Finally, the strength of my arguments won him over (that, and a punch in the nose); we planned to break the news to the family

that night, right after dinner, figuring maybe mom and dad would be easier on us right after eating. As luck would have it, my grandparents showed up for supper that night, and we were not very pleased. I mean, we loved our grandparents, but we didn't want to come clean in front of them, for Pete's sake: we'd look doubly bad!

Well, to make a long story short, after dinner, the adults were sitting at the table having coffee and talking, the way country folks will do. Mike and I screwed up ALL our courage, walked right in there and told them the whole episode, right down to my telling them, of course, that MIKE had actually thrown the ball and if one of us should die, it was surely him!

Man, did that room get quiet. I mean q-u-i-e-t. You could have heard my heart stop... Dad said, "You mean, you let your brother take your blame?" "Yes, sir" we said in unison. "Do you think that was fair?" "No, sir" we replied. "Well, what do you think we should do about this?" I helpfully reminded my dad that it was my brother, Mike who had actually thrown the ball, but he said it didn't matter – we were both in big trouble.

Then he said, "I wondered how long you were going to make your brother pay for your mistake. The neighbor told us the same evening what had actually happened, and I talked to

your brother, and he said, yes, he didn't want to see you boys get in trouble so he lied. I was beginning to wonder if you were going to let him face the music all by himself."

Dad was disappointed in us for letting our brother take blame he didn't deserve, so while he was proud of us that we'd FINALLY come clean, we had to now do our chores, plus our brother's chores PLUS the punishment chores he'd been given – and we didn't make that camping trip. Small price to pay.

I've never forgotten that lesson. Some fresh starts just aren't worth it, are they? Even way back then, I knew letting someone else pay what I owe wasn't fair. How we handle that kind of thing says a lot about us, doesn't it? I was young back then, and, for a short time, thinking we had gotten away with something made me feel pretty good. I was not in trouble! But the longer I thought about it, well, I guess it didn't feel good after all. I felt bad for my brother, and I felt bad that he had taken on our punishment. Some fresh start.

Ah, but it was! Even though I was pretty young, I think I grew up a bit that day. I knew my brother's sacrifice, while brave and well-intentioned, wasn't his to pay and I felt bad for him paying it. So, I 'fessed up.

I don't know why, but I always think of this story right after Christmas each year. Maybe it's because

Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive!

Remember, you can always access the CR calendar on the Web at thecrossroads-umc.org



See YOU at the CrossRoads

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Pastor Pat's Chipping In

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I know what lies ahead for Jesus as I look down the road towards



Easter – still some months away.

Maybe it helps me to remember what price the newborn

baby Jesus had yet to pay – for me. A debt I can't ever pay. But, it seems disrespectful of me to not think about it or to casually dismiss it out of hand like it's no big deal. It is a big deal.

Some second chances are pretty expensive; seems to me that we need to be sure we do something with it, learn from it, grow from it, offer second chances to others. Something. I try to remember that when I think about all the "unworthy" people out there who are asking for second chances.

Maybe I did learn something from that broken window – and the Cross. Christians understand the need for and the gift of second chances. God bless those who offer them.

Pastor Pat

NOT YOUR REGULAR SUNDAY SERVICE

Are you looking for a mid-week worship experience? Well you can find it every Wednesday night at 7p in the Intersection at the Fusion. Join us in January as we take a look at New Year's Resolutions and how we can take care of ourselves and others in the coming year. This service is open to EVERYONE, and we would LOVE to have you join our discussion.

Coming up next month:

What if God was one of us?



**SUPERBOWL SUNDAY
IS FEBRUARY 1, 2009**

The CrossRoads Cares ministry is trying something new this year for our annual fundraiser. Instead of selling sub sandwiches, Tom Paczolt has agreed to smoke some pork for us. We will be offering the smoked pulled pork in quart size packages (approximately 2 lbs. of meat) and sauce (on the side) for \$15. If you've ever had Tom's barbeque pork, you know what a treat it is! All profits go toward CrossRoads Cares mission experiences for our youth and young adults. Watch the Sunday bulletins and the next newsletter for more information. We will start taking orders on January 18th. Thank you for supporting CrossRoads Cares.

Junior High Update

Teens on a Mission

By Dana Kirkwood

For many years, we've developed the junior high youth group to incorporate a sense of responsibility to our church and our community. I'm always impressed with the willingness of these kids to step up to the plate and help out. In December, when Pastor Tim requested help with luminaries, the group and mostly the kids spent that night making luminaries for Christmas Eve.

As with any project involving pre-teens and teenagers, there were many "GROSS!" and "You've got to be kidding" as we suggested they re-cut or possibly wash out the milk jugs. However, just about the time I was ready to be "finished" with this project, a couple of them stumbled across another bag of milk jugs. Surprising, without asking, the entire group got busy finishing those luminaries too!

Coming up, the junior high kids will be stepping up again to help with SouperBowl Sunday. This is a nationwide event that was started in 1990 with a simple prayer. Our children have been collecting food as well as funds for the United Church Women food drive. This year, our goal is to raise \$400 and collect 50 cans. In addition, you should see our Junior High kids actively participating in different events within the church. Afterwards, we will finish the day off with a Super Bowl party at our home.

If you happen to know of a junior high youth that would enjoy spending some time with their peers, laughing, learning, and having a good time... please send them our way. Teens On A Mission (T.O.M.) meets on Sunday evenings from 6pm – 7:30pm in the Intersection. We'd love to have them!



www.souperbowl.org

1-800-358-SOUP

January / February Junior High Events

A calendar of future events to clip and place on your refrigerator

January 11

10a Sunday School

6p T.O.M., The Intersection

6p Parent meeting for

7th/8th grade students interested in confirmation

January 18

10a Sunday School

6p T.O.M., The Intersection

January 25

10a Sunday School

6p T.O.M., The Intersection

February 1

SouperBowl Collections during 1st and 2nd services

10a Sunday School

5:45p Super Bowl Party at Jeff and Dana's house (party ends at half time)

February 6

7p Set Up for Scrapbooking (this is an excellent way to help earn your way on the mission trip!)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

April 18 (week-end after Easter)

Junior High Mission Indy trip (details to be announced)

THE JOY OF FRIENDSHIP,
THE FUN OF FELLOWSHIP