December 2019 eNewsletter 11/27/19 8:45 PM

**Around the Bend**

**Men's Bonfire Breakfast** - *December 7, 8-9 am at 2027 Duke Drive*

Enjoy a hot breakfast outdoors next to a lake with other great men from the church. There's a fire pit, but dress warmly. Stick around afterwards and play hockey. Contact Steve Gordon at 441-4572 for details.

**Wendler Christmas Gifts Due** - *December 12 (Thursday) & 15 (Sunday)*

We will bless 15 Wendler families who are in need this season. This is Clear Water's 6th year to provide Wendler families Christmas gifts. Cards stating the age and gender will be available at church services. Return new items in a gift bag with a personalized card by December 12 or 15th. For more information contact Ali Gutacker via text or phone at 302-0096 or alisongutacker@gmail.com.

**Solstice Tree Tour - *December 15, 4:30pm at Kincaid Park***

Clear Water will be participating for the second year in this event. Park. Plan to come out and walk through the park, hear caroling, sip some hot cider, and enjoy the wintery evening. Want to help. Contact James Embree at 315-3803 or at james.embree@clearwater.church.

***Visitors from Christmas Past* - Puppet Show - *December 22***

Preschool and Elementary aged kids! Join us on Sunday December 22nd for the debut of Visitors from Christmas Past! Performed by Steve Gordon’s puppet crew and written by Jessica Vetsch. The show will take place during our regularly scheduled kids church.
PS: There will be chances for prizes at the end!

**Christmas Eve Service** *- Tuesday, December 24, 5:30pm*

Invite your friends and neighbors and plan on a beautiful Christmas Eve worship service at Wendler with traditional carols punch, photo booths, and a reminder of the meaning of Jesus' birth. Our youth jazz ensemble will perform early in the service and the children have made a Christmas story video.

**Pancake Breakfast/Worship/Praying for the New Year** - *December 29, 10:00 am (no Children's Sunday School)*

**Youth Jazz Ensemble**

The Youth Jazz Ensemble has been practicing over the last two months and will be performing during the Christmas Eve service. David Burgess is the director of the Youth Ensemble.

Rehearsals will be Noon to 2pm on Sundays, December 1, 8, & 15, and on December 22 from 4 to 5pm; and then a sound check will happen on Tuesday, Dec 24 at 4:30pm.

**Club68 *-*** *Every Tuesday, 6-8pm at Lake Otis Elementary Gym*

It’s a night of games, friends, and Bible study for students in 6th through 8th grades. Invite your friends. Brian Whitson, Kevin Glynn, Hannah Paulson and Keari Swan are leading this group. Contact Brian by phone or text 907.268.8659 or brian.whitson@clearwater.church.

No Club68 Christmas week.

**High School Youth Group *-*** *Every Wednesday, 6:30-8:30pm*

The High School Ministry is open to any high schooler. Contact Becky Butler at 244-2984 or  akd\_o\_glover@yahoo.com for location.

No High School Youth Group during Christmas week.

**Young adults (as defined by you) *-*** *Every Thursday, 8:30-10:30pm at the Merriner's*

No Young Adults during Christmas week.

**PRAYER GROUP** *- Every Sunday, 9am at Wendler Middle School in room 132*

Join others in prayer before Sunday's worship service. The group is led by Phil Dean, 240-8262.

**Church Directory is now available**

The church directory is now available to all who are listed in the directory. One per family. Copies are available at church.

**Recent Ministry Report**

**Young Adult Pumpkin Carving Contest** *- October 31*

What a great time the young adults had in fellowship and carving pumpkins.

**Wendler Thanksgiving Dinners** *- November 21 and 24*

Thank you for everyone who brought in food items to fill 15 Thanksgiving meals for Wendler families. There was turkey, potatoes, sweet potatoes, stuffing, beans, rolls, butter, and pumpkin pie. Thank you, Collette Bassler, for leading this outreach. Families picked up the meals on November 25th.

**A Taste of Bolivia** *- November 17*

The Bolivia Mission team with Chef Steve Gordon provided a taste of Bolivia to the congregation. Delicious dishes. A collection was made to raise $1000 for the Bolivia Widows' Fund. We actually collected $2000. This amount will underwrite the ministry for two years. Thank you for contributing!

**Bolivia 2019 Mission Trip** Reported by Brian Whitson

This past October 25th began what was to become the 1st International, church sponsored mission trip for Clearwater Church. The team prepared and worked hard to earn finances, spiritual prayer partners, and learning a new language. Spending 8 days in Bolivia with 2 days of travel on each end would ultimately end up changing our lives forever. The team comprised of James Embree, Steve Gordon, Liz Paulston, Tracie Berkland, Karen Adams, Jessica Hope Adams, Jim Young, James Collins, Everett Whitson, and me. For a lot of the team this was their first mission trip or first overseas Mission trip. The idea of taking a team to Cochabamba, Bolivia serving at a remote Christian Camp began in November of 2018. By July 2019 our team had been set by God. We collectively agreed that a last week of October would be ok for travel. Again, God has His hand in all this due to the lack of civil unrest that is now occurring in this beautiful country. Had we waiting just 3 days longer, we quite possibly could still be there now!

We arrived in Cochabamba on Saturday morning about 7am after an all-night flight from Miami. Our host family, Eric and Emily Lizarazu, live in Sacaba, a suburb of Cochabamba and work at Camp Kewina. Eric has a degree in Forestry Engineering and is currently working on purchasing a sawmill. Eric serves as the site coordinator and coordinates/ maintains the land and the buildings at camp.  He also facilitates camps of all sorts.  Emily helps by packing up the family and running here and there.  She holds a bachelor’s degree in education and homeschools Lydia, Ellie, Julia and Andrew.

The first two days were spent getting accustomed to the altitude of Cochabamba (8400 ft. in elevation) and performing our shadow puppet skit of several of the local churches.  Prior to the shows, we were able to go shopping with Emily and it was quite the adventure. In Bolivia, there is no such thing as, “clean-up on isle 7!” Shopping included walking through an open-air market and negotiating for the best prices whether it was for potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, or meats. This was a very new thing for some of the team members, especially the 2 youths. After getting what was needed for camp, we headed back to our “hotel” and rested for a little bit before our first performance that night. The “hotel” was a vacant apartment type building with two floors and 2 bathrooms. There were no furnishings, so we slept on mattresses on the floor. The shower was heated electrically, and we were warned not to touch the shower head as we could get electrocuted! That brought a whole new dynamic taking a shower.

On Sunday, we got the privilege of attending church and learning about some of their culture. It was interesting to see how new guest were welcomed to the church. Each guest was asked to come to the front of the church while the pastor talked to them and asked questions. For our team, we were all asked to make our way to the front of the church, and we were all asked who we were and why we came to Bolivia. I was extremely proud of our team’s answers. While in our prep time back home in Alaska was good, it was a question I don’t think we ever asked one another. While I can’t remember all the different answers, I do remember Rhett Whitson’s: “I just want to tell people about Jesus!” (insert proud Dad moment) To which the auditorium erupted with applause.

That afternoon, we drove about 2.5 hours, up the mountain to the camp. Camp Kewina is owned by SIM (Serving in Missions) and has been active for over 50 years.  It sits at about 11,000ft in elevation so the work that needed to get done brought on a whole new set of challenges. Several times I had to take a seat to keep from passing out due to oxygen deprivation or dehydration. We as a team would take periodic “breathing breaks” to make sure that no one was getting altitude sickness. The ground water is not treated and is not safe for drinking. We had filtered water that we drank or sodas. The sodas are VERY different from the sodas in the states; not necessarily bad, just different.

Our first workday at the camp included a tour of the facility followed by the vision Eric had for the work we would be doing; adding bath houses on to existing cabins. Before we arrived, the site had been excavated and the plumbing lines laid. Our first job was to fill in the holes, remove the rocks that were bigger than a baseball and begin prepping the foundation. There were A LOT of rocks!!! While some of us were rock hounds, some of the team had the task to cut down some trees for milling. That night, we ALL slept very well.

The remainder of the days were, more or less, the same as the first, site work and tree trimming. Although on day 2, the camp received its shipment of bricks, which had to be unloaded by hand. 8000 brinks were taken off the truck and passed down a human conveyor belt and restacked again, neatly. Otherwise the bricks would break. It was hard work, but we were able to work side by side with the Bolivian team that was there to help us. This was an amazing group of young people that captured our hearts. One of the young men, Jhonny, was very special to us all. He spoke English very well and was able to joke around with us. His ability to communicate with us was not what made him so special, it was his character, love of the Lord, his love for people and his love for life in general. He also had probably the best Dachshund in S. America- Jocko! I believe we could all see how God is moving him into a ministerial role for his people.

We also met a fellow named Uriel, a quiet guy with communication struggles, we were told this by some of his co-workers. Even though I have the Spanish speaking ability of the Taco Bell Chihuahua, we seemed to just click. We would use Google Translate to communicate but I could see the hurt in his eyes. I don’t know where the hurt as from, but I was able to tell him how much God loved him and wanted to a part of his life (via google). When he read what I wrote his eyes swelled up with tears and he gave me a big hug. I told him I would pray for him every day. He replied, “*Mucho gracious*.” I really don’t think I’ll ever forget him.

Day 3 proved to be especially challenging because some of the team was beginning to fight off some medical issues, which we have affectionately renamed “Bolivian Bowel Blessings.” For me, it was God reintroducing me to a handheld dirt packer. Once I started packing down the dirt in preparation for the concrete, I remember how I have always believed that foundation work was a “young man’s job.” Just in case you were wondering, I am no longer that “young man.” My heart keeps telling my body, “I’m 26” and my body just laughs!

After we leveled and packed the dirt, the time came to lay down the rebar. Not a bad job, but cumbersome. It’s the necessary evil to setting the good foundation. This work brings to mind 1 Corinthians 3:10 when it says “By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds. For no one can lay a foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Paul refers to himself as a “skilled master builder.” The Greek word that it translates “skilled” is *sophos*, “wise.” “Wisdom” looms large over the first few chapters of 1 Corinthians. God’s wisdom contrasts sharply with the wisdom of the world, disappointing and subverting the wisdom of the Greeks. It is the mystery that is only known by the Spirit. And, most important of all, Christ himself is God’s wisdom.

As a “wise” master builder, Paul builds with what he has been given: Christ himself. Christ, more specifically Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection, is the foundation of the church. This is the message that Paul proclaimed, the only starting point for Christian life in God. The question Paul is holding up to the Corinthians from various angles is, “How will you continue to build?” If they continue to build wisely then they will build with and as Christ. But this means, paradoxically, that the foolishness of the cross, and the way of the cross for God’s people, must continue to be the means and materials.

So, after several days of picking up rocks, packing dirt, laying the rebar, the day came to start mixing and pouring the concrete. Keep in mind, there are no cement trucks where we were working. We had to pour an estimated 125 cubic yards of concrete per site. (With a full load, an average cement truck carries 100 yds3 ) It was mixed with a small, towable concrete mixer. Each load of concrete mixed could be poured into 4 average wheelbarrows, thus taking about 125 wheelbarrow loads to complete 1 site. That day, we were racing against an ominous rain cloud and by God’s grace, we got it poured and was allowed to set before the bottom dropped out of the cloud.

On Friday at lunchtime, we got the privilege of eating with the widow’s group. They meet ever Friday at the church for fellowship and a meal. Some of these ladies were hunched over from the signs of aging, some were bright eyed, but the one thing they all had in common was the love in their eyes. Every single lady shows us love and appreciation for being there. I was a bit taken back when we, the guest, the “youngsters” were served first. I asked Emily if we could serve them first and she replied, “It would be an insult to because you (the group) are the guest of honor.” That touched me to my very core. These widow ladies, who basically have nothing are showing us how Jesus always serves other first. After we were served, we as a team asked to serve them, which we were granted. As we handed bowls of soup and fried bread to each lady, they were, again, so appreciative. Some of the ladies extended families came along. On such family member was about 2 years of age. Of course, you know me, I had to talk with the little one. She immediately looked up and me and asked, in Spanish, “who cut your hair?” There was a loud roar of laughter and me, not having a clue what she said, look oddly at her. Jhonny, who was about to cry from laughing so hard, translated and I began to laugh with them. Once I started playing games with her, she asked if she could rub my head! I wonder if she thought she’d have good luck afterwards?

We were all so tired that we were happy to eat and go to bed. The next morning, we slept in a bit and went to Eric and Emily’s home for breakfast and some fellowship time with some of the locals. One of the locals is the sister to my sister-in-law in Maine, Kimber. Talk about divine appointments! While our time was short due to the looming protest and blockades, it was enjoyable.

Our flight that night was at 7pm local time so we had to leave for the airport around 1pm to make sure we could actually get there. With the current president trying to remain in power, there were many road closures and blockades that could have prevented us from getting to the airport. By God’s grace, Eric was born and raised in Cochabamba and knew all the back roads. From the time we left until even today, the now deposed president, is still ordering those loyal to him to destroy places on Bolivia. Thus, massive riots, looting and death have come because of this. Please join me in praying for this beautiful country. We arrived at the airport about 3pm and had some downtime there. Our first flight to Santa Cruz was only about 50 minutes but as we were landing and taking off from there, we could see massive fires within the city due to protestors. We Praise God for His Faithful protection!

You can keep up with the Lizarazu’s at <http://www.bolivianmissions.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/eric.lizarazu?fref=ts>

**CARE CONCERNS**

**Prayers and Speedy Recovery**

Jacquie Boone

Fely Shaffer

**Condolences**

Tara Lofquist and John Lofquist on the loss of their father.

**ON MISSION**

**FREE BURMA RANGERS - Jungle School of Medicine**

Bob Arnold is heading back to Burma November 26-December 8th to connect with Nay Hser (eye surgeon in Burma) and provide another remote cataract clinic. He will be accompanied by Vanya Butler. They will also be celebrating FBR’s 60 years of ministry at the Jungle School of Medicine and ending their trip at Allen Eubank's home (Dave's dad) in Chiang Mai for Allen’s 90th birthday. May the Lord grant Bob and Vanya stamina, protection, and health, and Bob precision in the surgeries.

**The BIGGER Memory Verse Challenge**

We are in the third month of the BIGGER Memory Verse Challenge. The BIGGER Memory Verse Challenge goes through April 2020. There is still plenty of time to get involved.

Rules for the BIGGER challenge:

· Enter the monthly challenge at least five different months from September through April 2020.

· You must truly know at least five of the monthly verses and enter your name each of those months.

· Whether or not your name gets drawn for the monthly prize, you will be entered in the grand prize drawing in early May.

· The monthly drawing has two age categories: 13 and up and 12 and under.

· The BIGGER drawing in May will combine these two age categories into one for the grand prize drawing of either a $500 airline voucher, iPad, or $500 Amazon gift card. The grand prize drawing will take place via Facebook live in early May.

Research shows that Bible engagement is the most effective way to grow spiritually. Let’s have some fun increasing the competition for the memory verse challenge each month.

**Congratulations to November's Memory Verse Challenge Winners**

Evelyn Whitson and Everett Whitson

**December's Memory Verse** is [Galatians 4:4-5](https://www.clearwater.church/mv)

The next Memory Verse Challenge will be held

Sunday, December 29 and Thursday, January 2

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

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Get the Clear Water Church App for Apple and Android devices. Search for “**clear water church ak**” in the Apple and Google store. It’s free. Have easy access to sermons, the memory verse, online giving, church events, the Bible, a daily Bible reading plan and more.

**Give Us Your Feedback** - What do you think about Currents, Clear Water Church’s newsletter? What would you like added? Click here and let us know. We welcome your input.

**The due date for submissions to the next edition of Currents is December 19th.**

Send articles and photos to admin@clearwater.church