

Living Waters Via de Cristo Newsletter

November December 2011 Issue 159

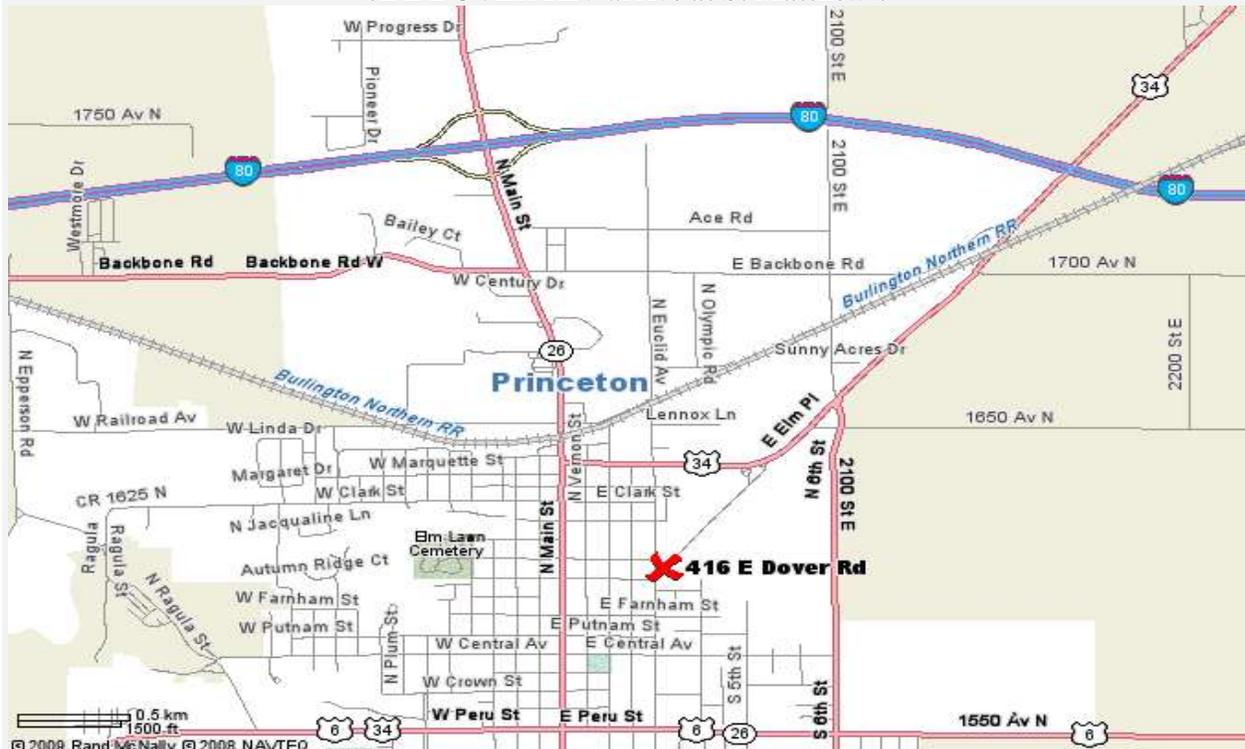
The November 5th Ultreya

Will be hosted by:

ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
416 E. Dover Road
Princeton Illinois 61356
815-879-6491

I-80 & N MAIN ST in PRINCETON going toward ACE RD - go 1.1 mi

Turn Left on E ELM PL (US-34) - go 0.3 mi. Turn Right on N EUCLID AVE – go 0.4 mi. Turn Left on E DOVER RD. arrive at St Matthew's



Potlucks begins at 5:30 with services to follow
Bring a dish to share and your own table service
Nursery is provided for children up to age 5.

!!! DECEMBER ULTREYA!!!

Will be hosted by:

Messiah Lutheran Church
509 NE 2nd St, Aledo, IL 61231
(309) 582-5261

From Interstate I-280 take the Milan
Exit and take Route 67 South to Viola
Turn right at Rte 17 and follow it to Aledo
In Aledo turn right onto SE 5th Ave.
Turn right onto NE 2nd St.



FROM THE LAY DIRECTORS . . .

I was talking with my two new coworkers recently when we discovered that we belong to a rather exclusive “club”: We had all lost the tip of a digit in a freak accident. What are the odds? After all, we’re office workers, not members of a sawmill crew.

You know, I had never realized how much I use my hands until the middle finger of my right hand was immobilized in a thick, gauze cocoon. I couldn’t lift anything heavy, couldn’t grasp a coffee mug, couldn’t type much at all, had trouble turning a door handle . . . One little hurt finger on one little hand sure did cause me considerable consternation. And I’m even left-handed!

All of that set me to thinking about how important hands are to our Lord. My small concordance lists dozens of references for “hand(s)” in the Bible. In Isaiah, God declares: “My own hand laid the foundations of the earth . . .” The Israelites acknowledge their Creator by stating, “We are all the work of your hands.” Jesus, the Good Shepherd, promises that “no one can snatch (my sheep) out of my Father’s hand.” We “hold out our hands” to accept God’s lavish blessings, and there are numerous references to “the laying on of hands” to heal. Finally, with outstretched hands nailed to the cross, Jesus gives up his life with the words “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. “

Hands are vital to our Christian mission, for we are called to be the “hands and feet of Christ” here on earth. For the new Pilgrims, no doubt you were surprised at the number of hands joyously serving you on your weekend – bringing beverages, dishing up lunch, strumming guitars, patting a shoulder, folding in prayer, preparing palanca trinkets, writing “love” notes, even polishing the potties. Yes, it takes many hands to put on a Via de Cristo retreat—those on team and those from the VdC community working behind-the-scenes.

God seeks willing hands. He takes all kinds – the weathered, the calloused, the arthritic, the large and the dainty. The only stipulation is that they are connected to a servant heart. What marvelous things He can accomplish with those hands!

So, don’t sit on them—*use* them. This very day, take a moment to consider what you can do to show God’s love and grace to another person. Then stop twiddling your thumbs and do it! And, in the event you are asked to serve on a future team, we pray that you will get those hands out of your pockets and get to work. On each VdC cross is the phrase, “Christ is counting on you.” There is much to do, and much at stake. So gladly lend a hand for a holy cause. And when each task is complete, I urge you to take time to remember the hands that have given us our all, and raise yours in praise to the living, loving God!

God loves you and so do we!

Your Lay Directors, Barb and Joe Geerts, #16

FROM THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR...

Thanksgiving

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Revelation 7:9-12 NRSV

The months of November and December are a time of thanksgiving. It is true that at this time of the year we celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year, but it also involves much of what it means to be human. November is the time of the harvest, when those who work with the earth reap its produce. It's no wonder that the Pilgrims offered thanks to God for the food they raised, for they understood it as a gift from God. This is also the time of year we gather with others during the holidays, and realize what it means to be part of a family. In December we thank God for coming to us in the form of a baby. God decided to share in our humanity by sending us Jesus, who is the greatest gift of all.

Thanksgiving and praise are the sentiments expressed in the reading above from Revelation. It is a description of what is like in heaven; people of every race and ethnic background joining together to give thanks to God. When I read this passage, I can't help but feel we get a vision of this whenever we serve on a weekend. I thought is especially descriptive of Living Water 44 that we just concluded. Here we are, a team of many different denominations and backgrounds, coming together to worship and praise God by sharing God's grace with others. We actually become more than a team - we become the body of Christ, sons and daughters of God who have Jesus as our brother. And together, we give thanks and praise our Lord for all he has done by showing God's love through the weekend.

Yet I often feel I do not give enough thanks for Living Water and all that it means to me. It was on my weekend that I truly experienced and understood the gift of God's grace. And yet, I usually don't get the chance to write a palanca letter to the teams I have served on, even though they do such magnificent work for our Lord. So I want to take this chance to give my thanks for all who worked on weekend 44, and for those who have worked for Living Water in any way. You are a blessing to me and those candidates you serve. I feel renewed every time I work on a weekend. So I give thanks to God and offer my prayers for all who help Via de Cristo continue in the work of spiritual renewal and transformation. May you all have a blessed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years! Thanks be to God!

- Pastor Randy

POST-WEEKEND CHAIR...

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 15:17

2012 is coming to an end. Weekends #43 and # 44 are behind us and we give thanks to our gracious Father in Heaven for our successful Spring and Fall Weekends!

To all of our new via de Cristo members....WELCOME.... and I sincerely hope you all will consider serving on team soon. It is one of the most rewarding experiences in your walk of faith that you will make. We hope to see you at one of the upcoming Ultreya's which are announced on the first two pages of this newsletter.

If any current or new members have updates for their Reunion Groups, please feel free to forward your group information to me for inclusion in our reunion group listings that are provided to new candidates at our weekends.

Diana Wallace VdC #42
Post-Weekend Chair

PALANCA...

Thank you to all who signed up for the prayer vigil. It is a blessing when the prayer vigil is complete a few days ahead of the weekend. The fewer times we need to roll the scroll, the better, as anyone who has had the task will attest.

Requests went out on Sunday asking the community to logon and fill the empty spaces, and the next time we accessed our email, notifications were pouring in and by Monday morning all times were filled. For that we thank you.

I hope when you signed up on the prayer scroll you took notice of the location of those who volunteered to pray for our team and the candidates. This time, besides people from Illinois, there were people from Alabama, California, Texas, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Colorado, and Mexico.

You can sign up throughout the year for other communities' prayer vigils, especially in times when they are sleeping, but we are not due to time zone differences.

Again, a big thank you!
God loves you and so do we,
Jim and Patty Turner
Palanca Chairs

FROM THE LEADERS CHAIR...

Leader's School (AKA Continuing Education)

Would you like to learn more about the history and the dynamics of a Via de Cristo weekend? New Pilgrims, we invite you to consider serving on an upcoming weekend team. Attending Leader's School is required to serve on a team.

Old hands come and refresh your understanding of traditions and practices that are part of the weekend experience. A Leader School will be held from 3:30 to 5:30 immediately before the November Ultreya, at St Matthews Lutheran Church in Princeton. Follow the directions for the Ultreya, and join us. No reservations, only a servant's heart required.

Clark Stojan
Leaders Chair

COMMUNICATIONS...

E-mails for prayer requests, joys and thanksgivings to be shared with the community can be emailed to either: prayers@livingwaterviadecristo.org or qcharts@sbcglobal.net

Or call: 309-792-9030

Check out our website: www.livingwaterviadecristo.org

In His service,

Cindy Hart

Communications Chair

Illowa Lutheran Coalition
Augustana College
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Rock Island, IL 61201

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Return Service Requested

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