

Our Mission:

Inviting people to
faith in God,

Equipping people to
follow Jesus,

Serving others
through the power
of the Holy Spirit.

March 2007



Whoever you are and
wherever you are on your
journey of faith, please
know that you are most
welcome here.

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Calendar of Events

Lenten Soup Supper Potluck	March 15 6:00PM The Front Room
Defining Moments CommUnity Groups	8 weeks Continuing through March
Habitat for Humanity Work Day	March 24 sign up by Mar. 10 Day
Threshold Middle School Program	Tuesday Nights 7:00-8:30PM Front Room
High School Drum Circle & Free Pizza	Wednesday Nights 6:00-7:30PM Front Room
Next Generation Music Academy	Weekly Classes Available
Council Meeting	March 15 8:00PM
Good Friday Service	Friday April 6 7:00PM

www.NexGenChurch.com

408.225.3565



I Am a Christian; I AM Born Again

by: Maureen Astillero

Defining moments in our lives are unexpected. Rarely are we prepared for the consequences of these moments; at times we don't even see the moment for what it is until much later. The Next Generation Community is in the midst of a spiritual growth study called *Defining Moments*, and I want to share a recent defining moment in my life.

This moment came during the second session of the small group meetings, and the lesson was from John 3: 3—the part when Jesus tells Nicodemus “no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” Oh no! There's that label that I've turned away from, that I've refused to hang on myself, that turns so many people off from the notion of even stepping into a church. I, myself, have only been on this path for a little over two years now, and I've steadfastly refused to identify myself as a “born again Christian.” I mean, talk about your Jesus freaks! There are so many negative connotations associated with this term. Jesus' own words have been co-opted by a segment of this generation's Christians, and an even smaller segment of people understand what the term really means. I was one of those who lacked understanding, until this particular moment of clarity.

A study question from this session asked, “In what circumstances of your life have you been unwilling to consider something simply because it seems too difficult? And what has been the consequence?” Until this lesson, I had been unwilling to consider the simple truth—to be a Christian (by definition) **is** to be born again. Jesus tells us in John 3:5-6 that “no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.” But for me it had been too difficult to get my limited worldly view around the vastness of God's love. I had only been able to see the negative, society-constructed label of what being a “born again Christian” means—all of the judgment, all of the intolerance, all of the hypocrisy. The consequence of my close-mindedness had been a lengthy, self-imposed estrangement from my Lord and Savior and an almost constant doubting of God's perfect love for **me**. Until now. Now that I actually consider Jesus' words to Nicodemus, it is easy to identify myself as “born again.” I know that as soon as I made that decision to accept Christ in my life that my life started anew. I am so thankful that Jesus made it so easy for us to understand what God did: *“he so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3: 16*

POWER PRAYER ALERT

Is one minute a day, one day a week too much to ask to make a difference, to get involved, to commit to our community?

Next Generation is facing an uncertain time, some might say facing a test of faith. We all have the opportunity to be a part of something powerful.

WEDNESDAYS AT 1:00 PM FOR 1 MINUTE!



Mark your calendar, put a sticky note on your computer, set your PDA's or cell phone alarm, do whatever necessary to remember to pray for Next Generation—that God gives us strength, that He lights our path, that His will and plans for Next Generation come to fruition.

Take a breather in the middle of your hectic day. Try this method out; it's called a "breath prayer." While breathing deeply, paying attention to the inhalation and exhalation of air, try focusing on one of the following simple prayers:

God, you are our rock -- give us your strength

Be still and know -- I am God

Speak Lord -- for your servants hear

Back by Popular Demand: The Potluck Dinner



The masses have spoken, and now is the time to resuscitate a time honored Lutheran tradition—the Potluck. We will begin with a Lenten Soup Supper on **Thursday, March 15** at 6:00 pm in the Front Room. Bring a crock pot (or any pot) full of your favorite soup. Please join us for good soup, good bread, and good friends. Sheila will be making her

famous minestrone soup and Alan, our very own world-class baker, is baking the bread. What else could you want? Look for the sign up sheet at service starting the week of February 25. See Sheila Gibbons if you have any questions.



Making a Difference with Habitat for Humanity

By: Robin Root

More than 300 families in 40 states achieved the dream of home ownership in 2006 thanks to the home-building efforts of thousands of volunteers and financial support through Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and Habitat for Humanity. And those numbers will grow in 2007.

Thrivent Financial became Habitat for Humanity International's largest ally as a result of a four-year, \$105 million commitment to help increase the not-for-profit housing ministry. In addition to a financial commitment, Thrivent Financial has rallied the national network of three million members to volunteer on these building projects.

Next Generation Church has the opportunity to work on another Thrivent funded Habitat home (the first being worked on in November). This work will be done on Saturday, March 24. We will provide manpower on a home that is starting to be framed this month in Santa Clara. The previous six houses sponsored by Thrivent have been completed and handed over to their new owners, who must put 500 hours of sweat-equity into the building of their home. Please consider joining us on the 24th. If you are interested, please contact Robin Root at (408) 234-9383 by March 10. Details will be provided to the final work team in March.

Crop Walk– Walk Out Hunger, One Step at a Time



Save the date, and get out your walking shoes!

**Sunday April 29
1:00 at Lincoln High**

Join us following service on April 1, 15 & 22 at the park where we will have a picnic together and then go for a walk to get ready! Our goal as a CommUnity is to raise \$1,000 and have 10 families representing Next Generation at the walk– won't you please be one of them?



Mission Partner's Page

Paid in Full

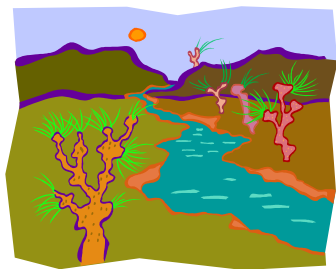
By: Leo Astillero



A long time ago, I volunteered to help out some friends, as they were youth counselors for a junior high group for Saratoga Federated Church. The time was before Easter, and the kids were given an assignment to bring in something from home that signified what Easter meant to them. At the next meeting kids brought in such things as Easter eggs, a cross, and other less-than-memorable personal belongings. Everyone took turns presenting and describing what he or she brought and its meaning. I, along with other kids, brought a plastic Easter egg. I shared with the group that this, to me, signified some sort of re-birth of Jesus, which was what Easter was all about.

When it came to our leader's turn, she brought out and unfolded a white piece of paper, which looked like some type of business form. It was a receipt for her cat, Dusty, who had recently been taken to the veterinarian. She unfolded the bill, and stamped across the front were the words "paid in full". She described that, for her, this was what redemption was, and how our sins were paid in full. She also described how Dusty did not do anything to deserve such love and caring. Dusty was just a cat, no more, no less, and no less deserving for his bill to be paid in full. He was redeemed by his caretaker, just as God redeemed us, not for what we have accomplished in our lives but just for being who we are and having a loving caretaker.

So, every Easter from then on, I always remembered that receipt—the proof that we are cared for by a loving parent and that we are His children, deserving of His love. Our sins have been paid for by Jesus dying on the cross. All we have to do is accept Him.



The Living Word

The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.. Isaiah 58: 11

YOUTH & FAMILY NEWS

Health: Body, Soul, & Spirit

By: Erin Pearson

Often times, we perceive health as an end goal, something to be conquered or achieved. Health is sometimes seen as a victory to be won over the ruthless opponents of time, money, and laziness. It is with this same view of health that we usually fall short of our goals and give up.

This year I have been challenged to think of health differently.

Health, just like our faith in God, is not an end in itself, but rather a process or a state of mind that takes constant attention and unceasing discipline.

During the months of March and April, the family programs at Next Generation Church are going to focus on building families that practice health: by taking care of the body through proper diet and exercise, by taking care of the soul by learning to understand emotional health, and by taking care of the spirit through daily prayer and bible reading.

But you don't have to wait for us! You can implement steps to healthful living in your family today. Here are some things to try:

- Body—start walking with your family after dinner
- Soul—face your own unresolved conflict and deal with your emotions
- Spirit—pray and do a morning devotion or bible reading (check out the daily devotions on the youth website)

We are better together, and, in fact, some things we just can't do alone. Healthy living is one of these things. We must practice health as a community and prioritize it in our families each and every day. Let us encourage one another in the practice of health over the next few months and see how God can transform our families just by doing the little things with consistency.



THIS JUST IN—YOUTH NEWS

We need you because you can make a difference.

- Sign up to be a prayer partner with one of the kids in the church; we already have 10+ adult sponsors, but still need more!
- Threshold needs one adult volunteer to come to the office every week—youth group isn't safe unless we have at least two adults present every Tuesday night.
- Dust off your walking shoes and start training for San Jose's Annual CROP Walk for Hunger, April 29th. It is never too early to begin your training and start raising money for this hunger organization.
- Remember to check out the youth website and our Daily Bread Youth Devotions. Click on the youth link once you open the church's main page at www.nexgenchurch.com.
- We still need teachers for the Sunday morning "kids in a tent" program. These are simple lessons and require a limited commitment, but the effort is so appreciated by our youth. Submit your youth devotions to be included on the website. Contact Erin at (408) 225-3565 for more information about any of the above.



Weekly Events

- Middle School Group—Tuesday Nights, 7:00-8:30
- High School Drum Circle—Wednesday Nights, 6:00-7:30 FREE PIZZA—Co-sponsored by Next Generation Youth & Next Generation Music Academy

All events take place @ The Front Room, 5754-A Santa Teresa Blvd.

Next Generation Church
Administrative Offices/The Front Room
5754-A Santa Teresa Blvd
San Jose, CA 95123



March 11,
spring forward!!

Sunday Worship
10:15am

5754-A Santa Teresa Blvd.
The Front Room



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