



# Bright Horizons

Rev. Bruce Hitchcock, Executive Director    Angie Brown, Newsletter Editor

## All are Precious in His Sight

Unity in Christ; unity in faith; unity in mission! The Lord moves us to wonder at how many people can pray and work together for the good people around the world. In the early church, the Asian and Greek congregations gathered money to relieve the suffering and poverty of the Christians in Jerusalem. Those folks had every reason to distrust the others. They were first and foremost strangers to one another. Those that they were familiar with were the warriors of armies who came to conquer and kill, to steal and destroy.

Yet, here these people were sharing and giving to one another in a most generous manner. What changed the hearts and minds of these folk? The grace and mercy of God experienced in Jesus Christ transformed them into a common fellowship of joy. This experience is played out over and over in the lives of Christians everywhere. Christ is greater than all the things that divide us and cause us to harm one another. So many people are bound up with fear, the desire for riches, a longing for security, and pain from betrayal and loss, that we tend to act in violent, defensive and small ways toward one another.

Christ moves us to act in love, generosity, peace and gracious healing toward one another. The transformation is startling, profound and impossible to sustain without close association with Christ and the Church. Our society is a blend of people from different cultures, different socio-economic backgrounds, different politics and different ways of thinking. It is easy for us to get caught up in the fear of someone different. Close association with Christ helps us to greet one another in grace and peace.

One Christmas, I took my three kids shopping. They were young. We entered the mall at the back entrance because parking places were closer to the doors. A security light was out. As we walked the darkened way toward the door, three young African American men came out dressed in gang colors. The light from the door behind illuminated them less and less as the two parties approached one another. Even though there was fear in my heart, I did not want to teach my children fear. I said, "Merry Christmas gentlemen!" They ignored me until Mary, my daughter said, "Hi!" One of the fine young men said, "Hi, and Merry Christmas to you too!"

People are never as frightening as situations and rumor make them when you greet them in Christ. The people of the Urban Mission are no different than you are. They need the grace of God as you do. They have the same hopes, dreams, sorrows and pain as you do. They need a community of God's love the same way you do. Come and meet the folk who live and work in your community. You will be blessed by grace, love and acceptance for who you are. Jesus has a way of touching all of us at the core of who we are. All things melt away at the touch of Jesus and we find ourselves equal in a fellowship of love.

-Love, Pastor Bruce

*April 2007*

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***April is Minority Health Month!***

**Kick-off Event:  
April 5, 2007  
12:00 P.M.**

Agape Apostolic Church  
535 Slack Street  
Steubenville, OH 43952

*Join us as we kick-off the months activities aimed at encouraging healthy lifestyles and raising awareness of health issues facing the minority community.*



*Listening With Compassion;  
Serving With Love*

## Annual Volunteer Luncheon



*Priceless Treasurers*

### “Volunteers: Priceless Treasurers”

**Friday, April 20, 2007**

**12:00 PM - 2:00 PM**

**Wintersville UMC**

**702 Main Street**

**Wintersville, OH 43953**

Please RSVP by **Friday, April 13, 2007** to **740-282-2911**.

In 2006, many groups, churches and individuals combined their efforts and gave **47,310 hours of volunteer service** at Urban Mission. It would be impossible to thank each volunteer individually for all of their hard work. Therefore, we will be thanking everyone collectively with a special luncheon!

If you, your friends or anyone you know volunteered at Urban Mission during 2006, please share the news of this luncheon with them. Invite them to share in the celebration. Transportation will be available from Urban Mission beginning at 11 AM. Please be sure to RSVP. *See you there!*

### Award Winners Named



Each year hundreds of individuals, businesses and churches donate their time and funds to benefit Urban Mission and our community. **The 2006 volunteer award winners have been named as follows:**

**Volunteers of the Year:** *Charlie Wilson and Jeannie Dimmit*

**Quiet Servant Award:** *Barbara Cameron*

**Church of the Year:** *Starkdale Presbyterian Church*

**Business of the Year:** *Dollar General #9110 and #9314*

**Executive Directors Award:** *Judy Manfred of Manfred's Catering*

The awards will be presented at the Annual Volunteer Luncheon on Friday, April 20, 2007. Congratulations to these award winners and a special thank you to all those who donate of their times, talents and resources to make this community the best it can be!

### April is Minority Health Month

“**Connect to Health**” is the theme for Minority Health Month. Special events will be held throughout the state to provide health education and raise the awareness of the health issues of Minorities and promote healthy lifestyle changes. Please see the enclosed calendar of events.



Tell your family and friends about the activities. All events are open to the public and some events target specific groups. For information about any event, please call 740-282-8010. **Connect to Health: Be Active, Be Healthy, Be Connected!**

*-Sharon Kirtdoll, Community Developer*

### Scholarship Dinner Successful

Praise God for a successful Annual Celebration and Scholarship Dinner! Even though the weather was icy and cold, the people were warmed by a fellowship of love and the Holy Spirit. We met our goal of \$12,000 of which will be matched with a gift of \$12,000 from a generous donor. The monies will be used to fund scholarships for area high school students and support the ongoing ministries of the Urban Mission.

The dinner brings together many different churches, businesses, individuals and schools. We are united by the love Jesus Christ has for us, and the opportunity to share that love with one another and those in need. Hearts were warmed by sharing the stories of faith and miracles. Not one person was left unmoved after hearing the many ways God acted to help someone at just the right time with the right gift. Again and again we pronounced God is Good! All the time! Evenings dedicated to God are indeed holy and blessed.



**Don't Forget!**

We still need your donations of Jelly-beans for our Easter treat bags. Please have them to the Mission by April 13.

## Matching Funds Hunger Drive

There is still time to contribute to the Feinstein Matching Funds pledge by Rhode Island Philanthropist Alan Shawn Feinstein. He has pledged to proportionately match donations of funds marked for hunger from **March 1 thru April 30, 2007**. A private donor has also agreed to match **every dollar donated for hunger up to \$7,000**. Praise God for this wonderful opportunity!



If you haven't sent in a donation yet, please consider doing so that we may take full advantage of this program. If a monetary donation is too difficult at this time, please consider non-perishable food items. Each food item collected during the same time period will count as \$1 toward the cash match.

Please help us End Hunger in the Valley by sending in your contribution today. Please be sure to mark "*Hunger*" in the memo if donating by check. Thank you for thinking of your neighbors in need.

## Good Friday Mission Rejoice



On **Friday, April 6, 2007** there will be a special **Easter Mission Rejoice Service** at 6:00 PM.

Join us for a special evening of worship and inspiration as we celebrate our risen Lord! Dinner will be served following service. **Please note there will not be Mission Rejoice on Saturday, April 7.**

Did you know that the **Bright Horizons newsletter is available online?** Just visit us on the web at **www.urbanmission.org** and click on the "news and reports" page. You can also receive it via email. Just send us a message to [abrown@urbanmission.org](mailto:abrown@urbanmission.org).



## Parish Nurse News: April is Autism Awareness Month



What do you know about autism? Let's look at facts about this condition.

The condition known as autism was identified only 50 years ago. At

that time, the term was used to identify children who were characterized as self-absorbed and had severe social, communication and behavioral problems. Persons with autism have been portrayed in several movies, including the character Raymond, who was portrayed by Dustin Hoffman in the movie "Rain Man". As we look at some of the characteristics of persons with autism, we will relate those characteristics to Raymond.

The incidence of autism in the U.S. and England is 4.5 per 10,000 live births. The rate of male to female children with autism is 3 males for every 1 female. Some children with autism develop normally for a while and then regress in their development. Other children with autism have developmental delays from the beginning. Children with autism may attend school, but they are classified as persons with a disability and will receive special education. Children with autism may also have an impairment in one or more of their senses, such as vision or hearing. Some children with autism have difficulty with the transition to puberty and some have no problem. Only persons with severe autism are institutionalized. Living arrangements for persons who do not have severe autism range from independent living to

living with others. One common characteristic of persons with autism is an insistence on sameness or persistent behavior. The character Raymond insisted upon watching certain TV shows every day at the same time and eating certain foods at the same meal. About 10% of persons with autism have savant skills (abilities considered to be remarkable by most standards). Raymond had unusual mathematical skills.

There are many theories about the cause(s) of autism. Some autism cases have a genetic link, while some cases have been linked to viruses or possibly pollution. Treatments are available for many of the symptoms of autism. Children who are suspected to have autism should have a complete medical work-up prior to the initiation of treatments.

If you are an adult leader in a group of children that contains a child with autism, the following information can assist you to work with this child. Children with autism like a structured environment, so have a very specific schedule to follow. Children with autism succeed if information is repeated and they engage in repetitive activities, so make sure that you repeat instructions to these children so that they understand. This will allow these children to thrive in the environment.

Additional information about autism can be found at the website for the Autism Society of American [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org) and the website for the Center for the Study of Autism [www.autism.org](http://www.autism.org).

*Michalene A. King, PhD, RN*

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## April 2007

### Upcoming Events in April 2007

2, 16, 23, 30	Parish Nurse (Monday's)	11:00 AM
3	God's Pantry Hunger Committee Meeting	10:00 AM
4	Program/Evaluation Committee Meeting	2:00 PM
6	Good Friday Service (See page 3)	6:00 PM
6-9	Offices Closed for Easter Holiday. No Mission Rejoice Service on Saturday, April 7, 2007.	Offices Closed
10	Finance Committee Meeting	6:00 PM
12	Family Affair (See MHM Calendar of Events insert)	6:00 PM
14, 21, 28	Mission Rejoice Service	6-8 PM
16	Health Screenings-Lupus Education & Support (see insert)	6:00 PM
17	Packing for Food Distribution	9:00 AM
19	God's Pantry Food Distribution	9-12; 1-3
20	Annual Volunteer Luncheon (See page 2)	12:00 PM
21	Men's Health Breakfast (See MHM Calendar of Events)	9:00 AM
24	CSFP Senior Food Distribution Prostate Cancer Screening (See MHM Calendar of Events)	1:00 PM 4:30 PM
26	Newsletter Folding Board of Directors Meeting	9:00 AM 4:30 PM

**The Hutton House Homeless Shelter is in need of:**

- Pots and Pans
- Bake ware
- Throw Rugs
- Stoves
- Refrigerators
- Washer and Dryers
- Can Openers
- Alarm Clocks

If you would like to donate any of these items, please contact Debbie at 282-8903.



**Plastic grocery bags are needed at the Warehouse.** If you have any clean and good donation grocery bags, please save them for the Mission. Bags can be delivered to the Warehouse at 311 N. 6th Street.