



Chicago Church 2012

Core Convictions Weekend - Rooted and Growing

January 28 & 29th

Core Convictions

The Chicago Church has launched effectively into the new year. A milestone weekend was celebrated here at the end of January as the entire Church gathered together downtown to be reminded, refreshed, and yes... rooted in our core convictions as disciples of Jesus.

2012 will bring the fruit and victory after many years of intense labor in planning and prayer. It is in this year that we plant the Northwest Indiana, Church of Christ and it is in this year that we will participate with the greater Midwest family of churches to send a team to Des Moines, Iowa. The evangelists and the elders of the Chicago Church also believe that in 2012 we will see more and more people baptized and restored to Christ. The Church is healthy, the disciples are faithful and the harvest is plentiful! With this kind of expansion and growth coming we planned a weekend to both root us in our core convictions and then to send us out to be a light to our great city and beyond.





Saturday Evening – inspired and encouraged

A Life of Faith-

Saturday night presented an incredible moment for the Chicago Church. We were able to hear from our dear brother Jeff Balsom as he addressed what it means to live a *life of faith*. Not only have Jeff and Roberta been disciples for... a long time ... but they have served as such incredible examples of faith in their journey. The Balsoms have served in many capacities in the church. Over the years they have led us in good times and stepped up in challenging times, they have had personal battles with cancer on multiple fronts and remained true to God; most inspiring is that all of their children are disciples of Jesus. Remarkably, 18-year old Alex, the Balsom's adopted son from Russia, was just baptized here in January!

Jeff himself has been battling advanced stage lung cancer for the last year and a half. In this struggle Jeff has continued to model faithfulness and rootedness in his core convictions. Looking back over the years and now looking forward toward the future, Jeff powerfully preached and shared about the things that have come to be foundational for him: Love, Faith, the power of God's Word, and the importance of 'Daily' in our Christian walk. Jeff - Thank you for giving so much of yourself to so many. We are so grateful for the powerful example we have in the Balsom family.

Send Off for Roger and Marcia Lamb

Saturday night also marked a time for the Chicago Church to say 'Good-Bye' to Roger and Marcia Lamb as they make a move to Boston. Roger and Marcia are dearly loved and respected here in Chicago. In recent years, the Lambs have been instrumental in their labor to unify our greater fellowship through the work of Disciples Today. But of course, for the Chicago Church, Roger and Marcia have deep roots in the casting of the original vision for Chicago and the entire Midwest.

At a recent congregational meeting Roger took us through the history of the building of God's churches as he has experienced it from from the 70's forward (the 1970's not the 1870's - Amen!). It was a stirring recounting of our own history as a movement. Many young people in the room were inspired to see Roger's continued passion for God and the Mission. Roger and Marcia - You are dearly loved and will always have a home in Chicago. *Speed His Coming!*

James and Jennifer Becknell

We are excited to announce the appointments of James as a Teacher and his wife Jennifer as a Women's Ministry Leader in the Chicago Church. James is currently pursuing a Master's of Divinity degree at Harding School of Theology. James has demonstrated himself as a man deeply committed to ensuring that the disciples remain rooted to God's Word. Jennifer, for years, has shown herself to be an inspiring and faithful leader among the women's ministry. We are proud to lift up James and Jen for the work they have done and will continue to do in advancing God's Kingdom.

Jeremy Lefler

Jeremy received his M. Div. through Harding in the spring of 2011. He is recognized by Harding as one their top students as he achieved a perfect 4.0 in pursuing this degree. We are proud of Jeremy and his accomplishments and are equally proud to announce his appointment as a Teacher in the Chicago Church. Jeremy along with his wife Mwende serve the ministry in the Metro Region. Jeremy is a great communicator and a teacher who is skilled at making God's word come alive in a practical way. Congratulations to the whole Lefler clan on this recognition before God and his people.

Bill and Kristen Moulden

We were blessed as a Church to add the Mouldens to our staff in the fall of 2011. Bill and Kristen led the work in Albuquerque, New Mexico for many years and are now leading in the Southland Ministry. While Bill and Kristen serve as an evangelist and women's ministry leader we were able to recognize Bill as a teacher before the church. Bill received his M. Div. and Doctorate from Trinity Southwest University. He was appointed as a teacher while serving in the Southwest family of churches and we are grateful to have the Mouldens continuing to serve God here in the Chicago Church.

Aaron and Julie Breford & the Northwest Indiana Planting

Not only did we add three teachers on Sunday but we were able to see Aaron Breford appointed as the lead evangelist of our new church planting to Northwest Indiana. Aaron and Julie have long served the group in Northwest Indiana. They have grown to 35 in number and were sent out as the 17th church in the greater Midwest work. While working a secular job and raising two kids, one with special needs, Aaron and Julie have demonstrated the kind of faith, zeal and courage needed to lead our latest planting. The Chicago Church is inspired by the Brefords and by the disciples of Northwest Indiana as they make this bold step. Congratulations to Aaron on his appointment... Preach the Word brother.



Northwest Indiana Ministry





There's No Indispensable Man

Saxon White Kessinger (1959)

Sometime when you're feeling important;
Sometime when your ego's in bloom
Sometime when you take it for granted
You're the best qualified in the room,

Sometime when you feel that your going
Would leave an unfillable hole,
Just follow these simple instructions
And see how they humble your soul;

Take a bucket and fill it with water,
Put your hand in it up to the wrist,
Pull it out and the hole that's remaining
Is a measure of how you'll be missed.

You can splash all you wish when you enter,
You may stir up the water galore,
But stop and you'll find that in no time
It looks quite the same as before.

The Moral of this quaint example
Is do just the best that you can,
Be proud of yourself but remember,
There's no indispensable man.

— sent out

We Need More God-

Sunday brought a great crescendo to our theme of 'Rooted and Growing'. The focus of the message was "Growing" as we are called not to be stationary in our rooted convictions but moving, expanding and growing. *1 Corinthians 3* reminds us that we can easily fall prey to the satanic scheme of becoming man-centric instead of God focused. We can become enamored with ourselves or others and lose sight of the one who truly enables growth; God. Paul tells us that some plant, some water but it is God who makes is grow. God enables healthy growth in all of the spiritual areas of our lives. If you want to grow in your marriage - More God, if you want to grow in your courage - More God, if you want to grow in your faith - More God! I think you get the pattern here...?

Paul also makes it clear that while we play a role in the missional work of planting and watering, our time comes and goes but God's work continues and increases. In other words, people come and go but God's work continues on. We have such a brief moment within the scope of eternity to participate in this great missional work. Why waste any time on misplaced priorities, worry or fear. All of the great men and women of God throughout the ages had their moment in life and now it is our time to participate and be a light to the world.

We Need More 'Out There'-

Luke 10:1-4 shows us that Jesus sent out the disciples to all the places he would eventually get to. We too must be sent. The disciples of the Chicago Church reside in 175 communities in the Chicagoland metropolitan area. We are 1850 disciples in a population of 9.8 million people. How many of those people need hope? Need the Gospel? Is it 10, 50, 100, 1,000, 10,000 or maybe even 100,000. We have to imagine that all around us are people hurting and looking for anything that can save their marriages, their children, heal their hearts, bring them to truth and bring them true hope.

It won't be easy-We will have to deny ourselves. Jesus said that like sheep among wolves he was sending the 72. Like those disciples, we will face rejection, persecution, trials and even failure at times. But we also will stand in awe of God. We will shed tears at the miraculous ways in which God will move through us. What an incredible adventure and blessing! As Jesus said, "Go..." So let us step over the line and follow this directive with faith and courage. Amen!