

New Dawn 2007-08 Journal

Date: 9/18/2007

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

9-16-07 Blog

So New Dawn is officially on the road! I can't believe training is over and as of tonight, we've already done 3 worship services and a program, and so far things have gone smoothly. Our first host homes & host families have been amazing, and we figure that if the rest of the year goes like this, we're in for an incredible time.

This morning (after Carly & I slept through our alarm clocks for our first day of ministry – typical style for me!) we started our big day with a delicious breakfast of lasagna & Cram (a Scandinavian treat) to – thank you Joyce! I gave my first sermon at church this morning (yikes!), but it turned out ok – you can now begin calling me Pastor Jenny. J

We are currently in a town called Lodi, WI, and being from the West Coast, its been really fun getting to see the middle of the country – its beautiful here (much to my surprise!) Oh, and my callouses are MEAN from all the guitar playing I've gotten to do – I'm still learning, but I think a year from now, I will be an official chick rocker. Alright, I'm exhausted and ready to crash, more to come soon!

Jenny



Jenny Shaw

Date: 9/18/2007

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Tuesday, September 18, 2007

Our house, drive to Janesville, host homes (Guy and Sandy), Monday's day off

Hello, brothers and sisters in Christ! This is Luke writing for our Team blog. Yesterday, Monday the 17th, was our day off, so I'll begin with the team's exploits of yesterday. We met at First Lutheran in Lodi, Wisconsin at about 10:30 am after a night at our host homes.

We began the day by working with Joshua, our on-the-road support staff to discuss love languages and how we can be in a deliberate, loving community with one another. Three of us use Quality Time as our primary love language, and one uses Acts of Service. So it's probably helpful that we'll be spending a lot of time together and helping one another out a lot! For lunch we went to a local Pizza buffet with the pastor, his wife, and a couple of others from the church. From there we made the drive to Madison, with no set plans once we got there.

One of the first places we saw when we began wandering the city was a small game shop. Since all of our team has a love of card, board, and other fun games, we stopped and spent about an hour and a half trying some, and deciding what to buy! We left with Candamir, in the Settlers of Catan series of building and adventure games; Fluxx, a card game where the rules keep changing; Guillotine, a card game in which the goal is to gain points by taking nobles' cards; and a block of 200 dice (they were only \$12...). After the game store we wandered up and down State Street, stopping in a few stores and making purchases along the way before sitting on the Capital Lawn to play dice. We finished off the night by eating dinner at Maharani Indian restaurant, and what a delicious meal it was! We got the added bonus of a visit from two Camp Wapo friends, Adam and Rachel, while we were there. After the fun day of exploring Madison, we drove back to Lodi to spend the night at our host homes again.

This morning, we made our way to Our House Assisted Living and did a program of mostly hymns for those living there, followed by some time to just sit and chat with them. I met a wonderful pair



Luke Kuenzli

of brothers who had done a bit of traveling in their lives, so we talked for a good while about ministry and Christianity around the world. After saying goodbye to our new friends, we went back to the church and got our call-ins to the YE office done, and had some one-on-one time with Joshua over a lunch of Subway. As it turns out, he is feeling called to join our team. This is a bit ironic, because we have been joking with him about joining us for the past few weeks of training. None of us thought he was actually considering it, but we welcome the possibility!

After finishing with all of our work and lunch, we departed Lodi, headed for Janesville, WI, where we spent the evening with our host homes. That brings us up to date! We're glad that you're keeping up with us through our blog; we could also ALWAYS use your prayers! Thanks, and God bless!

Date: 9/20/2007

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

9-20-07

We already have big news to share with everyone! New Dawn is no longer the smallest team. Joshua Vandercar (Ua) joined our team today. He has been doing on the road training with us this past week and it already felt like he was a part of our team. It's been a weird day because we welcomed him to our team this morning and then we had to say goodbye to him this afternoon. He will be doing on the road training for the Watermark team next week. Ua will be joining back up with us the first week in October. We are all so excited! Welcome to New Dawn, Ua!

We have continued to have wonderful host homes and host families and I am constantly amazed at how gracious people are. They have taken us into their homes and treated us like their own family. It is very humbling to have people share their lives with you even if for such a short time.

Right now we are in Saukville, WI, right by Lake Michigan and are hopefully going to get to see a little bit of the lake tomorrow. It was so foggy tonight that I think the air might have been holding half of Lake Michigan. Tomorrow night we get to do our first lock-in. We are so excited to hang out with some of the kids that we met tonight at the youth and family night.

Carly



Carly Tonkin

Date: 9/22/2007

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

September 22, 2007

Well, I guess that it's my turn to write part of a blog. I haven't actually read the others so I'm not sure if this stuff has already been talked about or not. But I will offer up some of my thoughts and the recent events on team.

Team has been real fun so far. Things are still pretty new so it has kept us on our toes. It is a continually humbling experience as many people have welcomed us into their churches, communities, and homes. For as many bad things that we hear about or read about from our media, it is good to know that people still care and are willing to look past themselves. Maybe not everybody, but we have been around some very hospitable people.

We left Saukville, WI today and traveled all the way down to Manlius, IL. A bit about Saukville...

It is right next to Port Washington, WI which is also right next to Lake Michigan. One of the members of the church, Andy, works with the state park and he let us in for free to Harrington Beach State Park. We walked around the old quarry and spent some time on the beach on Lake Michigan. It was very peaceful and it was nice to be outside. We were witnessed to by Andy simply by his kindness and gentleness. He mentioned to us that he has often been told that he is a good



David Peet

listener. It was evident that without even knowing him that this was true. He was a sincere individual that we could tell cared about people and had a genuine love for them as well.

We met another man from the church and his name was John. He had some recording equipment and he left it for us for the morning and part of the afternoon. We recorded ourselves doing ten songs. It has been useful for us to hear ourselves and evaluate the songs and what we can do to improve the songs.

Earlier tonight, we were to put on a program in Manlius, IL. We were provided with a wonderfully delicious meal of local cheese, homemade onion rings and potato chips, and grilled pork chops. Yum.... We spent time with our contact and his family. When it came time for the program, there wasn't anybody there. It's interesting how these situations work out. I don't think any of us felt too bummed out. Because of the absence of the rest of the people, we were able to spend a lot of time with Scott, Amy, and their two girls and a woman named Kendra. The fellowship was really good and it was nice to spend some time with just a few people. Sometimes when there are so many people around it is hard to give people the attention that you want. This was an opportunity for us to give that attention to the people around us.

We drove right next door to Princeton, IL and that is where we are now. We are all four together in a host home and have watched some college football and played a card game called Guillotine. But now it is time for rest!!! So I'll catch ya on the flip side!!!

Date: 9/24/2007

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Its been a whirlwind of a couple days! We've driven lots of miles in the last few days, as we made our way back from Princeton, Illinois all the way up to Wausau, WI (where we are staying tonight!)

Sunday night, we did our first full-blown program night, and we got to meet with Martha who was on New Dawn several years ago and went to the Philippines and Taiwan. Even though our time with her was brief, it was really fun to hear stories about the places we will be traveling to, and she was really encouraging to speak with.



Jenny Shaw

On Monday morning, we began the long drive up to Irma, WI where we did a program for Lincoln Hills School, a boys' juvenile correctional facility and school. We put on two programs, and we were blown away at how responsive the boys were and how much they enjoyed the singing and especially the puppet show. The coolest part, by far, was seeing that these boys have another chance with the training and schooling they are receiving at Lincoln Hills.

Pastor Mitch at Lincoln Hills has such a huge heart for the kids as well, and knowing that they are all getting the chance to meet Jesus while at school because of God's ministry through him gave us great hope. Even though we recognize that our part in that ministry was really small, it was still really powerful to see the kids connect with us and to see our songs touch them. They especially loved the song we sing "Broken" by Lifehouse, and in fact requested to hear it twice at the second program.

Overall, I think we are ready for our day of rest tomorrow, but our full week was rewarding and we continue to learn a lot as a team!

Date: 9/28/2007

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Tonight we are at Timber Lee Camp in East Troy, WI leading a confirmation retreat for Bethlehem Lutheran Church from St. Charles, IL. We played some games and did a program for them tonight. They seem like a good group of kids and it will be fun to get

to spend more time with them tomorrow. Somehow I feel like we are not going to get much sleep this weekend. :) We have an early morning tomorrow and we are all pretty tired tonight after a long day.

Yesterday and then again this morning, we visited three nursing homes in the area around Jackson, WI. We sang hymns and visited with them for a while. It was hard at times to see some of those people in need of so much attention and not receiving enough of it. It was pretty amazing to see what an impact we had on some of those people. Jenny was talking with a lady who had just found out that her cancer had come back and she had checked into the nursing home the day before. When she got to the nursing home she was struck by the hopelessness that she saw there and she felt so discouraged. She prayed that God would help her to find hope and that she would be able to be a joy to those around her. When she heard us singing down the hall from her room, she came out to listen to us. She said it was like God was reminding her that He was in this place too and it was a huge encouragement to her. Even in some of the rooms where it seemed hopeless, our spirits were lifted by the men and women that would sing along with us. They had these hymns memorized and it meant so much to them. It was special to be able to visit with people there. They all really appreciated us coming out and it seemed like we brightened their day. They all had great stories to tell and we even met a lady named Ruth who is 104 years old!



Carly Tonkin

Date: 9/30/2007

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

September 30

We have just finished up with a confirmation retreat just outside of East Troy, WI. There were about 50-60 seventh and eighth graders and it was pretty crazy!! We were at Camp Timber-lee. It is a fairly massive camp and it's been fun to see some of the other bible camps.



David Peet

The retreat was fun. We weren't sure what to expect as we were thinking somewhere between 25-30 kids. However, as was mentioned above, there were a lot more. It was fun to be around the kids as Jenny and I led two small groups during rotations and Carly and Luke led a station of games.

The closing worship that we did this morning was filled with a bit of excitement. Our power pack for our computer has a really bad connection. We've been able to make it work for the past few days, but the connection has been getting worse and worse. Finally, the connection decided to give out on us and we were left scrambling during the closing worship to make the computer stay alive long enough. It did, which was nice, but then it refused to work for us. So after a trip to Best Buy and a talk with Heather, we decided that there really wasn't anything that we could do. So we are stuck without a power source for our computer for a little while! Quite bearable, but just not as much fun!

After packing up, we traveled towards Chicago and made our way to our next stop, Mundelein, IL. It is a northern suburb of Chicago. We stopped at Applebee's and had some lunch. We then went to the church and did our evening program after some pizza. This was the church of Rachel Selbow who is on one of the Captive Free teams. It was fun to be in another team member's congregation. Her dad was our contact and also the minister of the church. We're looking forward to our day off in Chicago tomorrow!! Peace out!

Date: 10/2/2007

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Mundelein, IL ... Valparaiso, IN ... Harlan, IN

I have recently begun reading *The Lord of the Rings* and I relate well with the songs of Bilbo.

J.R.R. Tolkien

*The road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,
Pursuing it with weary feet,
Until it joins some larger way,
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say.*



Joshua Vandercar

Such is the song I've sung so long. After much waiting and such a long season of silence, our good and gracious God has so persistently and plainly shown me something of tomorrow. The path is truly right beneath our feet. He has called me to a year full of the greater things here as a member of New Dawn.

Yesterday, at the Millennium Park Bean in Chicago, I was (re)united with Dave, Carly, Luke, and Jenny. We enjoyed an afternoon of walking downtown, along Navy Pier, and along the river. Before returning home to Mundelein, we shared an excellent Italian meal and good times with Jenny's friends, Jamie and Matt.

Today, my parents, Aunt Steph, and my cousin, Cori came to Valparaiso in order to meet the team and send us on our way. They were able to also enjoy our short program at Whispering Pines Care Facility. I praise the Lord for the encouragement and support they have offered us as we step forward into this coming year. And the evening has now brought us to Harlan where Dave and I have the great opportunity to stay with a family that has been a long-time supporter of Youth Encounter. Good people and good food!

What joy has come these past days. May the Lord continue to bless us in dawning of each new day. And I sing ...

J.R.R. Tolkien

*The road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,
Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way,
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say.*

Date: 10/4/2007

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

We made it to Michigan today! It's my first time in this state, and so far it's beautiful. We drove in from Harlan, Indiana this afternoon (where we had a lot of fun this morning putting on our Daniel & the Lion's Den puppet show and singing "He's got the whole world" with a bunch of 2 and 3 year-olds – SO CUTE!!).



Jenny Shaw

When we pulled into Leonidas (Michigan) this afternoon, we found ourselves on the beautiful En Gedi Campground River Resort grounds (scheduled to open Spring 2008!) The Grimm family welcomed us heartily, and we even had time to explore the river running through the property, and make ourselves at home in a wonderful little cabin on the water (Dave found out that large spiders like to make themselves at home as well in this cabin, in places like his pillow). Incredible colors of autumn leaves surrounded the river, and the day was incredibly warm so we made the

most of it by skipping rocks in the water and playing Frisbee before dinner – it was a great afternoon!

After settling in, we feasted on pizza and the Grimms started a huge bonfire, and several people from Leonidas came out to the camp so we as a team could lead them in worship & share some stories about how God called us to team and what He is doing in our lives.

It was a wonderful time, complete with marshmallow roasting & great conversations. We even had one couple pray for us before they left, and their warmth and genuine love for us and for God was really encouraging. In fact, that same couple called the Grimms at 3:30 am that night, and indicated that the Lord had directed them to give generously to our ministry – what a humbling thought! It was another reminder that God is with us in what we are doing this year, and He will provide in His good time (even if its in the middle of the night!) The generosity we have experienced overwhelms me, and I am continually humbled that God has chosen to use me in this ministry.

Date: 10/6/2007

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:



Luke Kuenzli

Saturday, October 6, 2007

So this weekend we're helping out at a retreat for Redeemer Lutheran Church in Interlochen, MI. It's kind of cool to be with this group because just last weekend, Crossfire did Sunday morning worship at their church! The location of this retreat is Loon Lake camp in Hale, MI, and it is a beautiful area! We got in last night before the youth group did, so we had dinner at the mess hall with the family that runs the camp, as well as a men's group from a nearby church. What a dinner it was, too! Beef tips au jus with mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans and carrots, dinner rolls, and a choice of pumpkin or apple crisp for dessert. It was a great meal! We got back to the cabin a bit before the youth group of about 12 middle and high-schoolers along with a few adult leaders. We led a short worship before playing some games and heading to bed.

This morning we woke up and started the day with a wake-up song and some scripture before going for breakfast and doing a session of Bible study. After lunch we headed back to the cabin for some work as a team while the kids did a challenge course that was apparently quite fun! Dinner came after another Bible study, and was followed by free time. In our study groups, we also planned out some portions of the evening's worship service, which we did a few songs for. Night came and we played Capture the Flag for a good 2 and a half hours in the dark wearing glow-stick bracelets. We were all a bit exhausted after that, so we played a few games and headed to bed, which brings us up to date!

The Bible study time and the session that the youth leader led were a great spiritual learning and growth experience for the kids, so the weekend was a success, in my opinion. The small group was also very fun to work with! God has blessed that group, and will continue to, just as he has blessed all of us!

God bless!

--Luke

Date: 10/8/2007

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Hale, MI to Saginaw, MI

We spent this past weekend at Loon Lake Retreat Center in Hale, MI doing a retreat for Redeemer Lutheran Church from Interlochen, MI. There were 11 kids at the retreat so it was a little smaller group than our last retreat. It was a lot of fun to get to know the kids a little better. We lead some games and worship on Friday night and split into small groups for some sessions. On Saturday we got to play some volleyball and an amazing game of nighttime Capture the Flag, using glow-sticks! Also on Saturday night, the kids helped lead a worship service. Each small group was in charge of preparing a part of the service: invocation, confession, absolution, and benediction. It was neat to see the ideas that they came up with for those and for them to find their own meaning in them. We played games and hung out with the kids and leaders before bedtime both nights. It was a good weekend full of learning and growth for the kids.



Carly Tonkin

On Sunday we drove to Saginaw, Michigan and did a youth night at Peace Lutheran Church. They have a huge youth center that really seems to draw the kids in. We had pizza with the kids, did a program, and then got to break into small groups with them to discuss the program that we had just done. I was really encouraged by what we heard in these small groups. We saw that these kids and their adult leaders were really getting a lot out of our program. It was cool to see them relate "Bridging the Gap" into their own lives.

Today we spent our day off in Saginaw, MI where all five of us are at one host home. It was a very low key relaxing day. We played some games and went out to dinner with our host family, Keith and Kathy Minda. Tomorrow we are doing a program for preschool-2nd graders at Peace Lutheran School. That should be lots of fun!

Date: 10/10/2007

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

October 10, 2007

Well, here we are, October 10th. The time seems to be going by really quickly. By the end of next week, we will be somewhere around half done with our domestic part of the trip. That's pretty crazy.



David Peet

It looks like this week is going to be a bit more relaxed than the previous weeks. We are currently staying with a family of two pastors, Marty and Angela. They have two children whose names are Seth and Chelsea. Marty and Angela are pastors at separate churches right on the Michigan side of Michigan and Ohio. However, they live in Holland, OH, which is part of the Toledo area. We did a short program at Marty's church in Dundee, MI tonight. We are all staying with them and they are enjoyable to be around. Marty is one of the more progressive thinkers we have come in contact with. It has been fun to get his perspectives on the current issues and to hear his opinions.

Yesterday was really nice. We did not have a program and we stayed in a youth house in Northville, MI. None of our meals were provided for, so we decided to go to the near by grocery store and pick out some food. We decided to pool our meal allotments together so we decided to meet back after a few minutes and see what each person decided to contribute to the meal. Well, I wanted Easy Mac. Turns out that most of us wanted some sort of carbohydrate. But we eventually decided on a nice meal. We ended up having chicken breasts with a red ginger/pepper Thai sauce, coconut rice, grapes, really good cheese and bread, and some Lipton Iced Tea. It was one of the best meals that I have had. So good!

Team has been enjoyable so far. It's nice to find yourself in an intentional community. It's difficult to be so intentional all the time, but it's been really good. Lots of good conversation and accountability have been a nice benefit. At any time, super deep conversations or reflective conversations have a way of popping up. Life's good. We're all healthy and safe! Peace.

Date: 10/12/2007

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

To follow form in the blog style of some, here is a quick list of these past days ...

- host families
- turkish coffee
- conversations to keep you thinking
- good walks in good weather
- losing our host pastor's lead vehicle
- pastor's powerful punch
- reuniting with my training teammate, Kyle Scobie
- worship
- big boy breakfast
- church break-in
- el camino real fajitas
- miniature golf (rock.paper.scissor style)
- wireless presenter
- gummi peach penguins
- fireplaces
- a place to lay my head

The days fill fast. So many memories we make.



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 10/14/2007

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Sunday October 14, 2007

After almost a week in the Toledo, OH area, putting on programs & staying with wonderful host homes, we finally got to spend some time in the inner-city. Saturday night, we pulled up to the beautiful brick-covered Salem Lutheran Church (built in the 1870s) to set-up for the Sunday morning worship service we would be leading. Bars on the lower windows and plastic coverings over the stained glass clued us into some of the neighborhood's character (and its problems), and yet we were overwhelmed by the beauty of the old sanctuary and well-worn wooden pews.

Sunday morning arrived, and we met a great variety of people who attend Salem Lutheran over toast, coffee and donuts (breakfast & lunch are served to anyone who would like to partake before & after services). The warm welcome we received energized me for the upcoming service. All the kids sat right up front for the service, and they enjoyed playing tambourines & hand-drums along with us as we led worship, and their enthusiasm was definitely contagious! Worshiping in a more socio-economically & racially diverse setting really was a taste of heaven, and I greatly enjoyed our time at Salem.



Jenny Shaw

Date: 10/16/2007

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Yesterday's day off was a great time of relaxation for me. We are near Warren, OH, close to the border of Pennsylvania, and Joshua and I are at a host home together this time. Sunday night when we arrived at their house, we discovered that they enjoy games as much as we do! We learned several games, re-learned some old ones, and taught them some games as well. After a restful sleep, Ua and I began the day with some reading, first inside on the couches, then we



Luke Kuenzli

moved outside to sit in the perfect weather. Lunch was hot dogs on the grill and chips, which were just about perfect with the weather. Another session of reading, then we went for a 45-minute bike ride around the area. We returned in time for a delicious meatloaf dinner and a night of more games! Another highlight to the day was that their year-old grandson spent the day with them. Benjamin has the brightest blue eyes I have ever seen, and every time he looked at me, would start to play peek-a-boo.

Today we started early enough to have a lectio divina devotion with the Pastor, then we had to hop in the van and make the drive to Chambersburg, PA for pizza, games, and a short set of songs. All five of us were hosted by the same woman in Chambersburg, and we all got to play with Simba, the 90-pound lab mix puppy who doesn't like new people very much. He hid under the bed for a while, and gradually moved closer as he got accustomed to our presence. It took a while, but by the time we went to bed, Simba and I were good buddies.

Before coming to the host home, we had time to get a one-on-one done, and Ua and I were paired up for this round. We had been playing around with our instruments earlier, so we decided that we would continue that, and maybe try to write a song. We'll see how that progresses! It's fun to work with people who are willing to just sit down and try to make music together. God has blessed me by giving me the BEST teammates possible! We have our moments of disagreement, as any group living and working together does, but we quickly overcome the challenges that arise as a result. The deliberate sense of community that Team gives me is awesome, and is a big part of why I wanted to do team in the first place. I am in awe at God's ability to create diverse people who can still be in community with one another!

Grace to you, and Peace for God our Father,
---Luke

Date: 10/18/2007

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

We have been on the road for 5 weeks on Saturday! It's crazy how fast the time has gone. At dinner tonight we realized that we have been together for 9 weeks. Someone today said that we seem like we have been together a lot longer than that, seeing how we mesh so well together. To us it also seems to us like we have known each other longer. It has been such a blessing that we have worked so well together.



Carly Tonkin

Yesterday we drove from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania to Fort Salonga, New York which is on Long Island. We took a wrong turn ending up in the middle of Manhattan. Dave navigated and Ua drove us through the crazy traffic and it took us an hour to get back on track. It was a long day in the van and quite an adventure but we had fun.

Last night we did a program at Abiding Presence Lutheran Church. We were able to enjoy some great pizza with the confirmation kids and got to talk with them a little bit before the program. It was great to see the program that they have for the youth. Our host, Corlyn is the one who started the youth program and now they have 88 kids in confirmation. It was neat to see how God has been working through her to build their youth program. A lot of the kids brought their friends as well so the leaders were excited to see some new faces in the group.

This afternoon we did a nursing home chapel where Pastor Robert does services. They filled the room from both sides and it was great to have so many people listening and worshipping with us. We got to visit with them for a while after our program and I heard an interesting story from one of the residents. She was embarrassed to tell me this, but she said, "Today we didn't really know what to expect and when you walked in here I thought to myself, 'What a bunch of hippies!' but as soon as you started the first song I knew I was wrong. God is really working through you and it is a blessing to have you here." Through all the people we have met, we have received such a blessing and I feel like it is more than we could ever give. It's neat to see that people can see God working through us even if we may not notice it. It's going to be something that we have to keep focusing on, remembering that we are not doing this for ourselves.

Tonight we had a wonderful dinner with some members of the Abiding Presence. Randy, Lisa, Zack and Sydney invited us into their home and we had a great time. Zack and Sydney are both in

confirmation and were at the program last night. It was fun to be able to get to know them more. Tomorrow Ua gets to have his first round of immunizations for our trip to Taiwan and the Philippines. Should be lots of fun for him!

Date: 10/20/2007

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

Today was a good day. We had some extra time so we went into Manhattan and traveled around. We took the train in, went to central park, walked along 5th avenue, went to Time Square, took the subway to ground zero, walked down to battery park and looked at ellis island and the statue of liberty, and then took the train back out!! Whew! what a day!!



David Peet

Our time on Long Island has been nice. We have been well received and have enjoyed our stay.

Our time is going by quickly. Our programs usually go well and it's always fun to do them. Our team dynamics have been good and we are excited to head south and catch some sun!!!!peace out!

Date: 10/22/2007

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

East Northport, NY ... Conyngham, PA

Oh, I have much I feel I could say ... and yet, now, come end of such a restful day off, I eagerly await bed. And so, once again, let me recall for you happenings of the past days.

Yesterday, we left Long Island. And what a great stay it was ... my first time in and around New York City. I even got to drive in downtown Manhattan, which was wild and so enjoyable (crazy as that may sound). Our morning yesterday was full of services at Christ Lutheran. And in the midst of all, it was a joy to see folks we'd met during our previous two stops on Long Island. After a full-service fill-up in New Jersey, we arrived here in Conyngham for pizza with the puppeteering youth of another Christ Lutheran. Now here, staying with Dave, and an amazing family, we have experienced plenty of Wii fun, a Bears win over the Eagles, Boston's ALCS seventh game win, Frisbee tossing, our van's first oil change and tire rotation of the year, my second laundry load of the year, and an unbelievable dinner of waffles & chicken, gravy, homegrown corn, homemade mashed potatoes, peas, cranberry sauce.

Tomorrow, we are off to Williamsburg, VA. Today, I contacted some folks I stayed with four years ago when Cross Fire visited Williamsburg. It was good to talk and I hope that we might get to see one another during our short stay there.

Hope you are all well. God is faithful. May His peace be ever upon you!



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 10/24/2007

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Williamsburg, Virginia

In many ways, I feel as though we are taking a historical tour of this country this fall – yesterday driving in, we drove past Washington D.C., to get here. When we were on Long Island a few days ago, we saw houses that helped house British soldiers during the Revolutionary war, and we visited Cathedrals in NYC which were established during the



early years of this country and used as refuges during times of war. Incidentally, those same cathedrals also served as a refuge just a few years ago, which we discovered as we visited Ground Zero.

Jenny Shaw

In Pennsylvania, we were near many of the battle sites of the Civil War, just 30 miles from Gettysburg at one point. Now, we find ourselves in Williamsburg, one of the earliest European settlements in North America. This history amazes me, especially being from the Northwest, where the same sort of history is much less present (Lewis & Clark and the Oregon Trail – one of our few claims to fame.)

I find myself torn between fascination by the history and anguish over all the wars that have been fought for the freedoms we enjoy today. In many ways, it is easy to be discouraged by the division we see in our country even today, be it warring political parties, division over immigration laws, arguing over homosexuality, racial separation, or even prejudices against different synods of the same denomination of Christianity. The theme of our year on the road, "Bridge the Gap" based out of Ephesians 2:13-14 seems especially appropriate as we encounter so much dissonance.

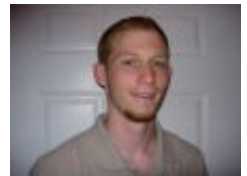
In this intense desire to see unity, in our world, our country, and especially in our Church, we have seen some glimpses of hope in the places we have visited. We have seen churches of different denominations working together in their communities, a church in inner-city Toledo, OH with incredibly diversity amongst its members, and we have met so many people who care more about showing love to people (including us!) than they do about their denomination, outward appearance, political affiliation, or background. It's a huge encouragement to see such love in God's people and it continues to give us hope that our prayers for unity at least amongst God's church are not going unanswered.

Date: 10/26/2007

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Friday, October 26, 2007



Luke Kuenzli

We're in Kure Beach, North Carolina right now, and yesterday was great. We went to the beach and swam in the waves for a couple hours in the 75 degree, humid, cloudy, windy weather. We got back for showers and some time that I used to talk to my mom and sister on the phone before dinner. Dinner was pizza provided by the youth leader at the church, after which we spent some time together as a team watching movies on the ceiling.

We didn't have any program scheduled for today, just dinner with the youth group, then hanging out afterwards. We started the day at about 9:30 with breakfast and rehearsal (a great rehearsal at that!) and then had lunch and another short rehearsal to finish a run-through of all of our program songs and worship songs without music!

We followed that up with 2 sets of one-on-ones (My first was with Jenny, my second was my alone-time with God). Jenny is addicted to coffee, and I like tea, so for our one-on-one we walked to a nearby restaurant for coffee and conversation. For my alone-with-God time, I sat out on the porch and wrote some thoughts out while searching the Word for inspiration. These thoughts are possible additions or ideas for the song that Ua and I are attempting to write, and I got a few good ones today, I think.

We came back inside and I started writing this blog, but was stopped when the youth came over to the parsonage (where we are staying) for din-din. After dinner we told a few jokes before we broke out the bag-o-games and played dice, 5-rocks, Fluxx, and ERS with the kids. A few battle wounds from ERS and rocks later, the kids had to head out for their various homes. We're now preparing to watch another movie before bedtime, so I'll sign out!

God is still doing wonders! I pray that he will bless you with an opportunity to realize this in your own life!

Peace from North Carolina,
---Luke

Date: 10/28/2007

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Today we are in Pooler, Georgia with Abundant Life Community Church where Seth Bridger is the pastor. Seth worked for a while under Luke's dad, who is a pastor in Ohio. It's been fun for all of us to get to know Seth and his wife Shelly, who both seem to have had a big impact on Luke's life. It's been neat for Luke to be able to spend some time with and join in ministry with Seth. Abundant Life is a very young storefront mission church and has only been around for 6 months. Seth is very passionate about the ministry that he is doing there. He led us in a devotion when we got there on Saturday where he asked us about where we saw the Holy Spirit working in our ministry. It was so good to hear all the different things that each of us were seeing. I have seen God working in the generosity that we have received everywhere we go. It is a really humbling experience and so many people have given me an example of how to give. I think that this is something that we should do more often to hear about the different ways that we see God working.

Since Abundant Life is such a young church they are so willing to try new things. They are not set in their Lutheran ways of no change like some churches are. The people are also so excited for the ministry that is going on and the church is growing fast. We got to do an outdoor program at a park pavilion on Saturday night and then a worship service on Sunday morning.

Tonight we got to spend some time at Seth and Shelly's house. We had dinner with them, watched some football, and played with their son, Noah. Noah is 2 years old and is so cute! We all really enjoyed getting to play with him. It was a blessing to be able to spend time with their family.

Jenny and I are staying with a family from Abundant Life, Tamara and her son Geoffrey. Tamara's husband is away on military reserve so we didn't get to meet him. They also recently have an au pair, named Jennifer, staying with them from Sweden. She has only been at their house for a couple of days and it has been really fun hearing about her first experiences in the U.S..

God is good and has been teaching us a lot! Our team is doing well. Hope all is well with everyone!



Carly Tonkin

Date: 10/30/2007

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

Well, we're down south!! Or..were down south! yesterday was a nice day off. Luke spent some time with his host family because he knew them from before so it was a joy for him to catch up with them. The rest of us headed into Savannah and walked around and had a nice meal at night along their historic River Street. Point of interest: Savannah was one of the only towns saved from the burning and pillaging of Sherman during the Revolutionary War because the governor went out to meet him and offer him his mansion; so Sherman decided not to raze Savannah. It was fun to see the really old buildings.

Today was mainly driving. We traveled about sevenish hours or so. Once we got to North Myrtle Beach, we got settled in our host homes and went back to the church to help with the confirmation students' quilts that they will receive on Sunday. Pretty tired from the drive, but it's been nice to avoid the fall chill a bit!! ok, peace out!



David Peet

Date: 11/1/2007

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar
Journal Entry:

North Myrtle Beach, SC ... Lexington Park, MD

We enjoyed our longest drive today ... nearly 9 hours. i began thinking on what i might write here and came again to the realization that my thoughts so often turn to me. What is God doing in my life? In what ways do these moments affect me? i must look and learn to answer better questions. To love God and to love neighbor is to turn our thoughts towards them. Who is God? How is he revealing Himself now? What is the great need all about us? What is the story of my fellow man? May God continue to refocus us on all that is right, true, praiseworthy ... and all that may be hidden just within the common and familiar. May each moment be set apart as sacred.



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 11/3/2007
Submitted by: Jenny Shaw
Journal Entry:

We have been driving a lot lately! Today, we are making our way from Maryland back to Pennsylvania as we slowly work our way back west. Last night, we spent a lovely evening in Lexington Park, where our incredibly generous host Dennis took the whole team to have some Maryland Blue Crab cakes at "Clark's Landing" on the nearby river. The crab cakes were the best I have EVER tasted – whoa! It was an amazing meal, topped off by some delectable local ice cream from Bruister's (I had the pumpkin – delish!).



Jenny Shaw

While we were standing in the chilly fall night waiting to order our ice cream, we happened to meet a pair of teenage girls who were hanging around outside. They looked cold, and they asked us if we could give them a ride up the road. We quickly conferred as a team, and decided we could say yes. After that, it only took the girls about 1 minute to begin sharing with us that they were cousins, who are currently homeless and without a family to return to. The girl who began telling us about their situation also shared that she was a month and a half pregnant, and that they were looking for a place to stay for the night.

We were able to buy them some ice cream, and load them up with food from our van's overflowing food bin, before we had to drop them off and simply tell them to take care of that baby and that we would be praying for them. Leaving them like that was a really tough thing to do, knowing that the nights were only getting colder and the small town of Lexington Park has little to offer in the way of homeless shelters. However, I was also able to recognize and give thanks for how God used us for a brief moment in time, realizing that simply our openness to share our van gave them the courage to share with us their struggle and brokenness. As hard as it is, I hope my heart always breaks for God's children who are in need, and that I will always be open enough to hear their struggles and provide whatever I am able.

Our team often does our daily devotions out of a book called *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers, and yesterday our devotion was on the verse from John 14:15 where Jesus says "If you love me, you will obey what I command." I have often wondered how to obey the first and most important commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength," when God is an invisible, non-tangible God.

One of the lessons I have been learning is that we love God by obedience, and the most simple commandment we can obey is to love our neighbors as ourselves. This basically means, we have to quit loving ourselves so much that it blinds us to the needs and desires of others. More than any other experience, being on Team has really shown me how much I concern myself with my own personal idol – ME. In our experience with the two girls last night, I was reminded of how easy it would have been to say "no" to them when they asked for a ride, because we were tired and needing to get back to our host homes, because we were nervous to allow two strangers in our messy van, etc. How we could have kept our eyes on ourselves, missing an opportunity to obey God, to show our love for God by showing love to His children.

Date: 11/5/2007
Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli
Journal Entry:



Luke Kuenzli

Monday, November 5, 2007

So Saturday night – after an evening with the youth in Lehigh, PA – Dave, Ua and I were put up at a Country Inn and Suites for the night. We watched some football, played some cards, and most importantly, sat in the hot tub for a bit! Well-rested for the morning, we did a portion of Sunday school and a portion of worship as well before heading to Stroudsburg, PA. There we helped with their confirmation program for the evening, part of which was us doing a scripted skit about the legacy that Martin Luther left behind. We were a bit leery of the skit at first glance, but it turned out to be a lot of fun once we actually got down to it! After the evening's events (we only did a couple songs, and hung out with some of the small groups), we went to our various host homes.

Dave and I are staying with a couple who live on the ground floor of a large house. Above them lives one of their sons with his two daughters and his new bride. They had a Halloween wedding! So there are three generations in the same house, and not long ago there were 4, until great-grandma (to the girls) passed away. Dave and I quickly noticed the rather large collection of DVDs that they had, so we made note of a few to watch while we were there.

Our day off was spent rather lazily. Dave and I each watched about 5 movies, I think. We did have our meals with our hosts. The dinner especially was great! Mesquite-marinated chicken with green beans, peas, corn, and fresh homemade bread composed our delicious meal. After dinner we played a few rounds of UNO Attack! with the girls before retiring for the evening. Now here I am, on a squeaky bed, writing the latest journal for you all to read!

Jenny wasn't feeling well yesterday, so hopefully the day off will help her to rest and heal a bit! Joshua will be turning 30 in just 4 days, and we'll be with his family for his birthday, so we are all looking forward to the next week or so! I am missing my family and friends a bit, but I know I'll get to see many of you in the next few weeks as I get home to both Cincinnati and Columbus! I have a flight booked home for the holiday break, so I'm full of anticipation for the remainder of our state-side tour, which is rapidly closing! It has all gone so fast! I realized that I have really only been home a total of 1 week in the past nearly 6 months, between Camp Wapo and Youth Encounter. I'm bad at calling home, so I don't stay very up-to-date with my family and friends. I WILL TRY HARDER!!! So until next I see you or speak to you or post a journal, God bless!

Luke

Date: 11/6/2007
Submitted by: Carly Tonkin
Journal Entry:



Carly Tonkin

Yesterday we arrived in Berlin, Pennsylvania and before heading to the church we did a program at Meadowview Nursing Home. We sang the hymn Amazing Grace and almost all of the residents sang along. It was special to see that some of the residents that had lost so much of their memory still remembered that hymn. We could tell that that song meant a lot to many of them. When we arrived at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church we talked with Pastor John for quite a while and he told us much about the history of the town and the church.

Tonight we had a wonderful dinner with our hosts, Dutchie and Eddy. We have enjoyed getting to know this retired couple in their eighties and staying with them in their farm house has been fun. The land they live on has been in their family since the 1800's! Dutchie and Eddie have been married for 60 years. We got a kick out of their sleeping schedules. Dutchie is a night owl and doesn't go to bed until 2 am. Eddy is a morning person and gets up at 5 am each morning. Dutchie

learned a couple games with us tonight and we played for quite a while but we still all beat her to bed.

This week has been a bit of a low key week for us in terms of programs and I am looking forward to what seems like a busy week next week. We will also get to spend some time with Joshua's family this weekend, which should be a good time.

Date: 11/9/2007

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

Happy Birthday Joshua!!! Today is Joshua's birthday! We got to celebrate it with him by traveling most of the day to his family's house in Lafayette, IN. Once we got there, we spent some time with his family and we also went to the nearby park to take new team pictures for promotional things. It's been really fun to be around the family of one of our team members. They have been really busy because Josh's cousin is getting married tomorrow, but it has still been fun to be around them. It's also real nice that it has worked out that Joshua can be around his family for his birthday and also for the wedding tomorrow. We left Parkersburg, WV this morning around 8. It's funny because once we are done with Joshua's family, we will be heading right back to Parkersburg to work with a Catholic high school.



David Peet

We spent last night at a church in Parkersburg. They took us out to the local pizza place that is called The Pizza Place. It was really good and local pizza is always fun to have. Joshua made up a card game called UI 77. It's been really fun to play and it's different than any other card game that I've played. We spent the night in the church's youth room on couches.

Tomorrow should be relaxing as we do not have a program tomorrow. Ok, write more later!!!

Dave

Date: 11/11/2007

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

What a joy it has been to spend the past couple days in Indiana. Friday, we arrived in Lafayette, and i was able to spend my birthday with family. My sister, Shel, joined us for a photo shoot and fun at Columbia Park. Afterwards, we returned and spent time with my brother Luke and his daughters, Emma and Evia. Yesterday, i was able to attend the wedding of my cousin, Cori, and her man, Ed. Today, we took part in worship at Grace Lutheran, enjoyed lunch with my friend, Pete, and have now arrived Camp Lakeview (where I first began my work in outdoor ministry).



Joshua Vandercar

It has been a long and tiring weekend, as i find little time to rest. i have also spent a good deal of time in reflection ... it seems birthdays, weddings, and time with family do a pretty effective job of leading you into such thoughts.

I still wonder much about life, but am quite content with where the Lord has placed me in these days. May I only find myself ever surrendering. And may His word seed itself deep within and increasingly work toward something new.

Date: 11/13/2007

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Today we left Indiana and made our way to Vienna, West Virginia where Carly and I (very appropriately) are staying with a very gracious Italian host family. We are here for

3 whole days (a LONG time in terms of road life).

Even though we had to wake up EARLY this morning to leave Seymour, Indiana so we could make the 6 ½ hour drive to WV, I definitely feel very rested and rejuvenated after our day off.

We spent our day off at the camp Joshua worked at during his summers off from college (Camp Lakeview), and his brother (who lives right up the road from the camp) was generous enough to let us take over one of the camp's retreat centers. Our day off then was spent enjoying long walks, disc (Frisbee) golf on the camp's 9-hole course, a little bit of football, running (ok, I was the only one who ran, but it was AWESOME with all the fall colors), playing games, and just relaxing by playing guitar, napping, doing laundry, etc. Then, I had my first experience with Venison Stew that Joshua's brother Dave cooked for us from one of the deer he killed during last hunting season – it was SO delicious! We all took turns in Dave & Whitney's hot tub after dinner and ended the day by just relaxing in their home.



Jenny Shaw

It is wonderful to have this kind of down time with our team, to just enjoy one another as well as some time in solitude. I think the time of rest and relaxation definitely rejuvenated us enough for our busy week ahead, and I am once again excited about the ministry opportunities to come!

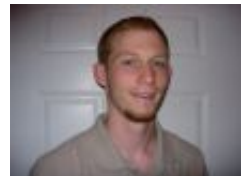
Date: 11/15/2007

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Thursday, November 15, 2007

We're back in Parkersburg, WV, where today and yesterday we hosted a retreat for Parkersburg Catholic High School. Yesterday was 10th grade and today was 9th grade, from 8:30 to 3:00. Both groups were a whole lot of fun, and in different ways. We did the same basic set-up each day for the two groups, which included some sing-a-longs, games, team-builders, Bible study, full program, and fellowship time. It was a blast, but it took a lot of energy as well.



Luke Kuenzli

Joshua and I are with the same family, and have had delicious meals with them! Last night was BW3's and wild sauce pulled pork (yummy), and tonight was steak and potatoes with veggies, and pre-dinner pie. After playing some guitar here, Joshua and I were playing a game of Ui-77, the card game from the mind of our very own Ua Vandercar, and we ended up teaching 3 of our host family and our host sister's boyfriend how to play. We had also previously taught Ua's brothers and sister the game.

Here are the basics: The first club turned up deals out 9-11 cards depending on number of players, then 3 cards are turned in a row, face up. The first card denotes trump. The second card denotes slough suit (any cards of this suit left in your hand after the round can be discarded for no penalty) as well as beginning discard (you may choose to discard up to a certain number of cards at the beginning of the round, determined by the value of the card. A-3=1, 4-6=2, 7-9=3, 10-Q=4, K=0). The third card denotes the target number of tricks that each player is attempting to take (A-2=1, 3-4=2, 5-6=3, 7-8=4, 9-10=5, J-Q=6, K=7). With a hand of 11 cards, the winner of each of the first 2 tricks draws an additional card into his hand, and trump is ineffective for the first 2 tricks. With 5 players (9 cards) there are 4 draw cards, and there is a sliding scale inverse to the number of discards that decides how many tricks must be played before trump become effective. As with most trick-taking games, you must follow suit if possible; in addition, trump cannot be led until it is broken. Points are determined by the number of non-slough cards remaining in each player's hand added to the difference from the target. You play to a multiple of 11, determined before the game begins. The object is to have the lowest score. If you hit the goal multiple of 11 exactly, all other players scores are averaged and that is your new score. Play continues until someone goes over this multiple of 11. Also, offering the cut or accepting the cut gains you a point.

In the game Ua and I played with our host dad and brother, the target of 33 points was hit 7 times, which had not happened in our team play before. Ua ended up winning with 31, but it was an

exciting end! It was fun to teach them an original Ua creation, and they really enjoyed the game! It has quickly become the most-played game on New Dawn...

If I will be coming through your area any time soon, ask me to teach you and I will! We're hopefully going to post the full description and rules online sometime soon. My next journal entry will be after Thanksgiving, so I pray that all who read this have a wonderful Turkey Day, and remember to thank our Creator in heaven for the wonderful gifts He has given us!
---Luke

Date: 11/17/2007

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Today we are in Kingsport, Tennessee, at Concordia Lutheran Church. Tonight we went to a Thrivent dinner at Faith Lutheran Church in Bristol, Tennessee, and got to sing a couple songs for them after having a delicious meal. I have been amazed at how many connections we have made to people that we have met along the way that know someone we know or something like that. Joshua was at Faith Lutheran Church on his Cross Fire team and actually stayed with Pastor Tom. It was neat to go back there.



Carly Tonkin

Yesterday we did a program in Inez, Kentucky, for juniors and seniors of a local public high school at a community center. It was a neat experience for us, and the kids seemed to enjoy our program, especially the puppet show. I was surprised at how welcomed we were, seeing as this was a public school. Last night we stayed in Hagerhill, Kentucky, at the Christian Appalachian Project's Johnson House. The Johnson House houses 14 volunteers that work for the Christian Appalachian Project in Johnson County in one of four areas: Child Development Center, Elderly Housing Cleaning, Housing Repair, and Elderly Care and Visits. During the week, they have dinner all together like a family, and we were able to join them in this. There were 20 of us all together around a table eating dinner together. After dinner, they have a time of devotions which we got to participate in, as well. It was neat to be in such an intentional community of people that are serving the people around them every day. We get to go back to the Christian Appalachian Project next week and work alongside them for a day. I am really looking forward to getting to spend some more time with these people and to find out more about their ministry.

Date: 11/19/2007

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

We are in Tennessee, the hometown of the atomic bomb. I think that we're all a little paranoid about the leftover radiation, but it's probably nothing. It's been fun down here in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. We arrived here yesterday afternoon after doing a church service and opening for Sunday School in Kingsport, Tennessee. We were sent off from Kingsport after a scrumdiliumptious lunch of soups and subs--homemade soups, that is! =Paula, our contact at the church in Oak Ridge, met us when we got here and helped us get settled in. We had a nice supper of lasagna and had a fun evening program. Ua was feeling a bit under the weather, and I decided to start to join him in this wonderful feeling on Monday. For our day off, Joshua and I were staying with a nuclear engineer and his wife. They were very hospitable and enjoyable. We laid low on our day off to rest and recoup. Joshua picked out a wonderful movie for us entitled "The Prophecy." It was a mid 90s movie about the second war in Heaven. It was not good. But it was a restful day! We are looking forward to getting together with Luke's family later this week for Thanksgiving!! Peace out!



David Peet

Date: 11/21/2007

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

These past few days have taken me to the past. We visited a church south of Bristol, Tennessee that I had previously been to while on Cross Fire. We also partnered with Christian Appalachian Project (CAP) where I was surprised to meet two girls who I had met while on Cross Fire. I had stayed at one of their homes when in Wisconsin, and her friend was visiting that night. For the past few months, they have been volunteering with CAP. Jenny, Carly, and I spent some of today at the day care they help run. This brought me back to my time spent working day care in Kendallville, Indiana, several years ago. Luke and Dave visited a few of the elderly in the surrounding community and helped with odd jobs they needed done.



It is so wild, the ways in which God works. We never know when a day gone by might come back to meet us again. In many ways, this year is taking me back to days gone by, even forcing me to face memories I might just rather push to the past. This is good. God is good. May I only open my eyes enough to see the way in which He shall teach me.

Joshua Vandercar

Date: 11/23/2007

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Thanksgiving!! We arrived at Luke's family's house late Wednesday night in Ohio, after driving in the rain from Kentucky, and they immediately made us feel at home and treated us with incredible hospitality. We awoke slowly Thursday morning, and I even had the opportunity to sit in the quiet with my Bible and enjoy Thanksgiving morning with a cup of hot coffee. As I read and prayed, I decided to commit to spending the day being intentional about thankfulness. Each time I stopped to pray, I decided to solely thank God for His goodness to me, and each time I remembered my family and was tempted to miss them, I decided instead to thank God for giving me such an incredible family to miss. Each person I talked to on the phone that day, I tried to express my thankfulness for them.



Jenny Shaw

The incredible thing about trying this "thankful attitude" thing was that it was hard, especially in my prayers. I was frequently tempted to move right into requesting God to do things from the "thanking him" part. Focusing on myself and on what God can do for me (or even for the people around me) has become such a habit over the course of my life. It was crazy how intentional I had to be to begin to break that habit, and it really taught me that I cannot be lazy or just expect to change without that intentionality in my everyday life.

Okay, before closing this journal, I HAVE to talk about the food! Luke's family sure can cook! On Thanksgiving day, we actually ate grilled steaks and shrimps, grilled garlic veggies, twice-baked potatoes, and garlic bread--it was so delicious! Then on Friday, we had our traditional Thanksgiving meal with all the fixings (the stuffing and cinnamon apples probably top my list of favorites!). We topped off both meals with pies and cookies, and we definitely spent almost the entire weekend stuffed. It was wonderful.

Date: 11/25/2007

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

The last few days we have been with my family in Columbus, OH! It has been great to see a bunch of familiar faces and to have the team meet my family! Last night, we did a family night at Epiphany, the church where my dad is the pastor. Included in the family night were a potluck dinner (amazing!!!) and a Christian magician, John Louis. It was a lot of fun to watch another ministry in action, but I may have yelled a bit too much during his act. We had opened with



Luke Kuenzli

a few songs, and we also closed the night with a few songs. Our first song of the closing set is one where I sing the lead, and it is a bit high for me to begin with. After shouting too loudly during the magic act, I may have sounded horrible on that song...

This morning the team participated in all three worship services at Epiphany. At the first service, we sang for offering and communion. At the second service, we did a prelude, confession and absolution, offering and communion. At the third service, we did all but the sermon. It was awesome for me to hear my dad preach again; I really have missed his messages! After church, we headed back to the house for a soup lunch and naps/football and packing up. My dad was leaving on a golf trip with a bunch of clergy buddies, which they do every year, and we left about the same time.

Our destination was about half an hour away, at THE Ohio State University's Lutheran Campus Ministry, Jacob's Porch. A friend from Camp Wapo is the president of Jacob's Porch, and the single-person Mosaic OSU team lives there, so I got to see some friends there as well. I also was surprised to see a fellow Capital graduate and former teamer working part time there, so that was cool too! We did several songs during their evening worship, which included a meal. I really liked that idea. A meal in the midst of worship, not before or after (there was also communion) really promotes community within the organization, I think. I had good conversation and prayer with a couple of new friends during their prayer time, as well.

We have done A LOT of singing these last two days, so I am really looking forward to tomorrow's day off for us. I'm planning on getting to Capital, my alma mater across town to visit some friends and fraternity brothers if at all possible. I have really enjoyed the last week with family and friends, and on Tuesday, we travel to my home congregation in Cincinnati, so I get another boost of people I know!

Hope all is well in the non-team world! God bless!
---Luke

Date: 11/27/2007
Submitted by: Carly Tonkin
Journal Entry:

Right now I am sitting at Jacob's Porch at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. On Sunday morning we were at Epiphany Lutheran Church in Pickerington, OH, where Luke's dad is the pastor. We did a few songs at the 8:15 and 9:30 services and then led most of the music and a puppet show for the 11:00 service. It was wonderful to be with Luke's family for Thanksgiving. They made us feel so at home, and his family is a lot of fun. We played some games, watched a lot of football, and even had our own game of two hand touch football in the backyard.



Carly Tonkin

On Sunday night we got to join worship, singing some songs and sharing our stories, at Jacob's Porch, which is a campus ministry organization at Ohio State. They have a neat ministry going here. During their Sunday night worship every week, they have communion, music, and a message. One thing that they do that I really liked was having a meal together in the middle of the worship. It was a really good time of fellowship with some prayer time after. We got to spend some time with Kristen, who is the Ohio State Mosaic Youth Encounter Team. We really enjoyed this time to get to know her better and to see what she has been doing this fall. We also got to spend some time with Eric, who Dave, Luke, and I have worked with at Camp Wapo. He works at Jacob's Porch as well, and it was fun to see the work that he and Pastor Jay have been doing. Their ministry has grown so much in the past couple years, and it was fun to hear some about it. Today, we travel to Trinity Lutheran Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, which is the church where Luke grew up. We are all healthy and had a wonderful day off yesterday and are looking forward to this coming week.

Date: 12/1/2007
Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Cape Girardeau, MO

Simple and beautiful story today. We had the opportunity to visit and play at the VA Hospital in town. Before beginning our set, I conversed briefly with Charlie, an elderly gentleman who is blind. Later, as we began singing "How Great Thou Art," we heard a harmonica join us in song. Charlie played for a short while and then placed his harmonica back in his front pocket. Thanks for bringing us the joy of music.



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 12/3/2007

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

We made it to another new state yesterday! Before heading back north to the Twin Cities for our Mid-winter training, we traveled across the Mississippi river into Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Our first hours in the state were spent in the Missouri Veterans' Home, singing hymns with the residents there. We greatly enjoyed the fellowship with the men and women there, most of whom had experienced a lot in life and had some great stories to tell. Several of the residents sang along with us on "Amazing Grace," "How Great Thou Art," and other hymns, and I find it so encouraging to see them singing! We even had a nurse at the home hand us an envelope with a thank you card and money to support our ministry (which came so unexpectedly—God continues to humble me as we receive such open and freely given generosity in so many places).



Jenny Shaw

After the nursing home, we made our way to St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, who was kind enough to house us for two nights and for our day off. Marty, our contact, met us at the church doors, and we quickly found his hospitality and openness would greatly bless us during our stay. Last night, he shared much of his testimony with us, and it was powerful to see him so changed by the Spirit's work in his life.

Our day off was spent playing lots of games, taking walks, coffee shops, and a delicious meal with Marty at a restaurant called Cheddar's. Ua even came up with *another* card game for us to play, which we call Cribbonimoes (because it's sort of a cross between Cribbage and Dominoes), and we played it for three hours tonight. We greatly enjoyed the down-time and are looking forward to our last week on the road for our fall tour as we head back towards Minnesota!

Date: 1/9/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Today is a day of many travels. For some reason, we had all decided that it would be a good idea to stay awake all night before our 4:15 a.m. meeting at the office and early flight from the airport. So, beginning just before 4:00, we left Carly's home and set out on the long journey overseas. After completing a few last minute things at the office, Heather and Amber took us to the airport, where Carly's dad and sister joined them in seeing us on our way. We all succumbed to sleep on our flight to Denver, and most of us did the same from Denver to San Francisco. And now on to Hong Kong. The sun rose as we left St. Paul and has been chasing us since...a perpetual new dawn for our journey. And this day must be cut short as we cross the international date line and outrun the day. We hope you are well, and we look forward to all that the coming days shall bring. Rejoice in the Lord! And remember something good today.



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 1/11/2008

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

The Friday in Hong Kong...

Well, they sure have kept us busy here. It's times like these that I don't think staying up all night the night before we left was such a good idea. But it's been a blast. We got up this morning and traveled by bus down to where the camp this summer may be. It was fun to see the grounds and to get an idea of what it might look like this summer. The camp is divided into three different levels as it is built on a hill. There looks to be plenty of space to do things. The only thing is that there isn't a super large open field to play games, but considering that Hong Kong is not known for its space, the camp has a good sized area to play. Not to mention that it is on the beach of the South China Sea!!

After we visited the camp, we had some lunch after a walk on the beach of the South China Sea. It is fun to try new foods, and we are at the mercy of our hosts because we are not very good at speaking Cantonese! They have been such gracious hosts to us! It's been fun to see them in their own culture and to watch them do their thing! I got to talk to Pauline on the phone today, and that was fun, as she worked at camp with me a few summers ago. Hopefully, we will be able to meet up with the rest of the Hong Kong staff from the summer of '05!!

After lunch, we took the ferry to Hong Kong Island, which is full of tall buildings and lots of people. After that, Lydia Liu took us up to the Peak, where we got a view of the city from the top. The ride up to the Peak was fun, as we got to see glimpses of the city from above. There were a lot of things that were built on top of the buildings. After the Peak, Lydia took us down, and we went across the way by ferry and walked on the Hong Kong Avenue of Stars. After that, Carly, Ua, and I had our first sushi experience. It was pretty good, and it was fun to be eating it in Hong Kong. All the food went by on a conveyor belt, and we got to choose if we wanted it or not. Depending on what plate it was or what color the plate was, that was the cost of the dish. You could also order, but once again, we didn't really know what we were doing.

That was our day! It was very fun and it was great to see Hong Kong, be with the girls, and to experience another culture. We will be planning out the camp and meeting to try to figure some things out tomorrow! We are staying at Chim's house. She worked at WAPO back in 2000. It is amazing that we don't even know her very well, but she has been such a gracious host and has shared her home with us! Ok, peace out!



David Peet

Date: 1/13/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

A Weekend in Hong Kong

It has been such a whirlwind of new experiences--new sights, sounds, tastes, smells, even a new climate. I was at a loss as to what to write about in all that we did over the weekend while in Hong Kong as I read back through my journal of these two days, until I alighted on the part I wrote about our stays in host homes Saturday night. Each one of the five of us went to stay with a separate family, and I stayed with Lydia Lui (one of the girls who visited Camp Wapo during the summer of 2006).

Lydia brought me to her family Saturday evening, and I discovered they were waiting for us at a traditional Beijing-style Chinese restaurant. They ordered in Cantonese several dishes (I can speak approximately five words in Cantonese, which has made every meal so far a delightful surprise when the food arrives). Delicious bread, a whole cooked chicken, ebu (a sweet, purple vegetable), lettuce wraps, and several other dishes appeared on the table, and I successfully ate all of it (with my chopsticks, albeit with a little help from Lydia's family).

During the meal, Lydia and her family instructed me that most all tables in China are round as a



Jenny Shaw

result of the significant importance placed upon family and eating together. One never orders an individual meal for themselves (thank the Lord, since I could never have ordered for myself anyway), but all food is shared "family style" as we call it in the United States. I also learned that one does not pour tea for oneself until they have ensured all their neighbors at the table have a full cup. In fact, in their culture, one's family name comes before one's individual name, as the family is more important than the individual. These simple cultural differences taught me much about God's commandment to love one another as ourselves, and I was frequently humbled during my stay in Hong Kong as our team's hosts opened their homes, kitchens, churches, and lives to us in ways I had never before experienced.

On Sunday morning, we woke up and I attended Lydia's church with her family and had the opportunity to worship in a Cantonese youth service with her and her sister Karen. Karen kindly translated most of the service for me under her breath, but I was mesmerized by the way I could understand their hearts in worship and participate silently in praising God. The entire time I was with the Lui family, I was the only Caucasian in sight (at church, at the restaurants, at the market place, in the park we visited, etc.). It was pretty incredible to experience this type of minority and to have people stare at me as I walked past. However, at Lydia's church, the church family made me feel at home and prayed for me and my team and our journey this year. I cannot describe what it is to be prayed for in another language, except to say that tears would come to my eyes and I would be overcome by the power of joining together vastly different languages, cultures, and races of people under the name of Jesus Christ and finding unity in that. If this is what my first Sunday worshipping overseas held, I can only imagine the blessings to come.

Date: 1/14/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

We're finally here!!

It is difficult to believe we are finally, actually here in the Philippines, even though the warm sunshine, waving palm trees, and intense humidity, the noise from the busy street below us, and the frequent visits from the Filipino staff at the compound we are staying in all remind me that I am really and truly here.

Yesterday, we awoke very early and traveled an hour and a half by bus to the airport in Hong Kong from our host Chim's home (in Yuen Long). Our friends Esther and Lydia Fong saw us off (all the way to the security gate) and goodbyes were tearful and hard. Before getting on the plane, the team found a candy store in the airport. Dave and I both splurged on various foreign candies and chocolates for the team, which were a lot of fun to try!

On the plane, we flew over the Northern part of Luzon, the island Manila is on. It is SO beautiful! We then walked off the plane, and the heat made it immediately evident that we were finally here. After making it through customs and getting our baggage, we met Jigs and Delaney from the LCMS office in the Philippines, and experienced a harrowing ride to Santa Mesa, a neighborhood of Manila where we are staying for the next three days before flying to Mindanao on Thursday. I have never experienced anything like that hour drive. I saw skyscrapers and squatters' villages side-by-side, and the streets covered with Jeepneys, motorbikes, and SO many people. Families darted in front of our van on six-lane highways, and I found that one's horn is not used to signify impatience but as a means of communication. It can mean "Go ahead," or "Watch out, I'm right here," or "Move aside." Also, traffic lanes are not particularly important, and stop signs are virtually nonexistent, which makes every ride in the car a big adventure!

It is incredible to be here, and I cannot wait for the new sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and experiences ahead.



Jenny Shaw

Date: 1/15/2008

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Tonight is our second night in the Philippines. We have really enjoyed our time to rest here. We had a low key morning resting, reading, and journaling. This afternoon two of the guys here at the compound accompanied us to a mall. We had our first experience riding in a Jeepney, which is the cheapest mode of transportation here. It is a long Jeep-like vehicle that can hold many people. The one that we were in had 19 people in it. You can see them driving all over around here and they are all decorated with many colors and decorations. Some of them have fun sounding horns too. People use their horns all the time when driving. It's almost like it is a language of its own. Honking your horn can mean many things from, "Don't merge, I'm right behind you," to "Thank you." After our Jeepney ride, we took the light rail to the mall. For our team outing for the month we got massages here. The New Dawn team before us told us that there were really good, cheap massages so we decided to give it a try. It was wonderful! So relaxing! At the mall we also went looking for some lightweight cooler clothes. Yesterday I think all of us were a little overwhelmed by the heat, realizing that it is only going to get hotter. We are slowly beginning to get used to it. On the way back from the mall the guys had us walk from the light rail station so that we could know where we are a little better. I enjoyed walking down the street back to the compound. There were so many people on the sides of the roads with little shops selling pretty much everything.



Carly Tonkin

For dinner tonight we walked over to the convenience store across the street. This was the first time that we have been unaccompanied in the Philippines. We got noodles and made spaghetti for dinner tonight. It has been nice having a kitchen where we are staying. The building we are in is very nice. There is a sitting room with a couch and comfy chairs and we have bunk beds in our rooms. Tomorrow we will get some practicing done and I think we get to play basketball with the kids here at Gloria Dei School. That should be fun!

Date: 1/16/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Hello from Manila, Philippines! i do have much to say, but little time to say it. i am currently sitting in a small internet cafe just outside of the Gloria Dei compound at which we have spent the past couple nights. Our time here has been wonderful thus far. Strange that i can find such comfort and in some ways feel so 'at home' in a culture so different from that which we have in the States. i find joy each day in the newness and in the familiarity with such things as i have experienced in Ghana, Nigeria, and India. My prayer and hope is that i might continue to embrace each moment as it is given us. i have awoke early these past to days to the noises of Manila streets ... horns, engines, music, yelling, whistles, chatter, and such things. And i've awoke refreshed each day. Yesterday, i had opportunity to speak at some length with Levi (pronounced 'laybee'), 'bishop' of the South Luzon District - Lutheran Church of the Philippines 1 (LCP1). You may or may not know that the LCP split about 15 years ago and has just recently begun taking steps towards reconciliation and reunification of the church. These are the things about which we talked. They are now in the midst of great challenges and have begun even now to rejoice at great steps that have been taken towards such an awesome goal. i hope to share more about this situation and the stories of reconciliation when we send out our first newsletter. So await it with anticipation. Tomorrow, we leave for Mindanao, will meet Irene, and begin a beautiful journey throughout the south of the Philippines. We pray you are well. Please, continue your prayers for us, the work we have been given here in the Philippines, and for all those whom we will meet throughout our travels. Today, live in love.



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 1/17/2008

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Manila to Davao



We left Gloria Dei this morning at about 6:40 and got to the airport by 7:20 and through check-in, security, and the terminal fee line before 8, just in time to wait for our 10:15 flight... Oh well, at least we didn't have to rush! So we played some ongoing 5-person Ui-77 in the terminal and had an uneventful 90-minute flight to Davao City, Mindanao. Pastor Sonny Mercado and Ray, one of the congregation members picked us up at the airport and brought us to Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church. After dropping our bags off, we went to the local SM (a big mall) for lunch. While at the mall, we picked up a small map of the Philippines to add to the culture bin, and we walked around while Pastor Sonny did some grocery shopping. Back at COSLC, we had some time to rest, so I took what was intended to be a short nap, and ended up being 3 hours! I woke to the sounds and smells of dinner being cooked and the conversation of my teammates with Alan, the principal of a school we will do a program at tomorrow. Pork and rice for dinner, then we taught Pastor Sonny Uno (with regular cards) and all had a San Mig together. I look forward to our program tomorrow. So far it seems that Davao might be much less noisy than Manila was, so that will be nice! I'll let you know later if that is true! Grace and Peace!

---Luke

Luke Kuenzli

Date: 1/18/2008
Submitted by: David Peet
Journal Entry:



David Peet

First Friday in the Philippines! 1/18/08

Today is our first program!! More about that in a little bit.

One of the things that I have enjoyed the most is breakfast! I had one of the greater food experiences of my life. Pastor Sonny Mercado cooked us breakfast and he cooked us rice that was prepared in butter, garlic, and onions. It is amazing. I am hoping to attempt to replicate the recipe in some sort of capacity when I get home.

Our first program was at an elementary school. The principle, Alan, is a member of the church we are staying at. There were about 500 kids that we sang for and some people that would come in off the street. It was pretty crazy!!! Things went well as we did mostly sing a long songs and tried to do a puppet show. The puppet show could have gone better but we did a skit called the tree skit. It has no words and just some music in the background as two girls play around a tree that one of the girl has planted, one girl gets mad at the other girl, the tree gets sad, but than things are better after they make up and play again. It sounds simple, but the music adds and it is a simple skit that talks about forgiveness. It's fun to see what translates across cultural lines and what things do not work at all. After the program, we were invited by the staff and had fried yams and bananas! They were so good!! They were on a stick and they were fried and then covered with sugar. It was simply amazing. I learned the phrase "The monkey stole my fruit!" in Cebuano. The language is hard because there are so many different dialects. But we are slowly picking up on things! After being at the school, we came back here and rested and played a version of UNO using a regular deck: Kings are wild, 2's are draw 2, 5's are skips, and 8's are reverse. We played with Pastor Sonny. It has been a blessing to be here in their home and to be taken care of by them. Sonny and his wife Chai are recently married as of three months ago. She is a nurse and has recently gotten transferred from a family practice type to an OB/GYN ward. It was good to get the first program done and I look forward to more musical opportunities! Prayers for a friend of my family Sharon Johnsrud back home as she has been diagnosed with French Polio. That's no fun and prayers of healing and strength would be much appreciated! Ok, will write more later!! Peace.

davepeet

Date: 1/20/2008
Submitted by: Carly Tonkin
Journal Entry:

Carly -Weekend Journal – January 19 and 20th

It is now Sunday evening and we are all sitting around resting after a good day. Yesterday, in the morning we led a worship workshop for some members of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church (where we are staying). There were about 15 people including kids there. We were told it would start at 9 am but also knew that it may not start until later. At 9 am there were only four kids all under the age of seven there. We enjoyed it though because we got to teach them the song "Deep and Wide" and they also sang two songs for us. They were so cute! My new friend, Katarine (age seven) says that "all the kids love singing for Jesus!" After a while more people started trickling in and by a little after 10 we started the workshop. I guess that shows you one of the differences between the United States culture and the culture here in the Philippines. I like that they have an attitude of 'things start when people get here.' In the workshop we worshiped with them and also showed them an example of how NOT to lead a song, which was fun. We also talked a lot about how the most important thing about worship is that you are sincere. It's about the attitude that you come into worship with and knowing that it's not about us. After the workshop they sang two songs in Cebuano for us. Katarine asked me to play hide and seek with her and her brother and two others. That was a lot of fun, and it eventually turned into a tag game, running around the yard. In the heat, that wore me out quickly and I was very happy when some of the adults called us over to try 'buto' (fresh, young coconut). It sure was fresh! One of the guys climbed up the tree and threw two coconuts down to us. We each had a glass of the juice and then got to spoon some of the white part out too. We have really enjoyed spending time with the families and children that live here. Katrine and Luther are always looking for someone to play "Rock, Paper, Scissors" with or one of their new favorites: Frisbee!



Carly Tonkin

On Saturday afternoon we went to a school for the blind and did a half an hour program there. They seemed to enjoy listening to the music and afterward they sang a song for us ("Your Hands"). It was beautiful! They can really sing! I enjoyed talking with some of them after and got to sing "Lord I Lift Your Name On High" sitting with some of the girls. It's been great to have songs in common like that, showing that even though we are so different and come from such different places, we all serve the same Lord.

This morning we attended worship at Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church, where our contact and host, Rev. Sonny Mercado is the pastor. We sang "He Will Carry You" during communion and we also got to hear the little kids sing again. Many of the members of the congregation were excited to hear that their service was much like the ones at my church back home in Minnesota. After worship we had a potluck lunch and fellowship time. It was fun getting to spend some more time getting to know the members of the congregation and I think it's great that they spend this time in fellowship as a congregation once a month. After lunch we did an hour program for the congregation. We focused a lot on being peacemakers and doing that through being servants. Joshua broke two guitar strings, but other than that it went well! Pastor Sonny was inspired by the music we did and decided to write a song about being peacemakers! We will all learn it in English and Cebuano.

Tomorrow we leave for Banga. I am sad that we are leaving Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church but I am excited to meet Rev. Villos and also Pastor Sonny gets to accompany us for a while. We are all doing well and are enjoying every moment we are blessed with here.

Date: 1/21/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Banga, Mindanao Island – Philippines

Travel Day! We woke up and at breakfast with our wonderful host Pastor Sonny, and finally met Pastor Villos, who will be with us for the remainder of our month on this island of Mindanao. He seems such a big-hearted, jovial pastor, that we are very excited to have him join us!



Jenny Shaw

We spent our morning packing, and after lunch, Sonny & Pastor Villos caught us all a Jeepney (an extended jeep type vehicle which seats anywhere from 10 people to 20 people, depending on the amount of 'wiggle space' you need) to ride to the bus transfer station in Davao City. We then climbed aboard an "air-con" bus (which means it has air conditioning, a very good

thing for this climate!), which would take us 4 hours south to Banga. The bus ride was a lot of fun, and we even got an unexpected rest stop about half-way through (which was very welcome for some of us who were starting to wonder if we would have to somehow ask the bus driver to pull over near some bushes). Paying the 2 pesos to use the rest-stop "CR" (comfort room) was nothing by comparison!

The rest stop also brought us our first experience of Babinka, a small, hot coconut cake served at many road-side stands. It was quickly determined to be a new favorite snack food! We finally arrived in a town nearby our destination, and we piled off the bus into one of the Banga church members' Jeep Wrangler. Before I knew it, 10 of us along with all of our instruments and luggage piled in – it was quite a feat!! We traveled the remaining 20 minutes in the warm night air to our host home, where we were greeted by a beautiful house and grounds one of the church families had offered us. We continue to be amazed by how generous the people here are to complete strangers. Myra and her family welcomed us into their home, and served us a delicious meal (we ate part of a very large tuna jawbone – very good!)

I ended the night with Ua, Pastor Sonny & Pastor Villos on the open porch to the house, drinking hot cocoa (even though it was still about 80 degrees F outside), and watching the evening rain soak the ground around us, reminding us of why this beautiful island remains so green.

Date: 1/22/2008

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Carly – Journal Entry – Tuesday January 22, 2008

This morning one of our host's, Myra, brought us all around their neighborhood in Banga. We stopped in shops and offices to say hi, meet people, and invite them to our program tonight. She told everyone we saw, "Come see these young people from the U.S. doing a concert at the gym. Seven o'clock tonight. Christian music. Free admission!" It was fun to get to see more of Banga and we walked over the gym where we were going to be doing our program. We also drove over to the high school to invite all the students to come to the program. They were so excited to see us, which was fun but also a little weird to be treated like celebrities. Kids asked us for autographs and took pictures of us as we walked by. It was fun though, to see some of those kids at the program later that night and to get a chance to talk with them. It's good to be able to meet them and for them to see that we are just regular people like them.

We had a program tonight at the municipal gym in Banga, South Cotabato. It was a big building so we had to use microphones, which we are not used to, but I think it worked out okay. Besides a microphone getting knocked over and two big screeches in the sounds system, the mics worked well. We sang "Ako Anak Sa Dios" which is a song from the Philippines that we sang as one of our cultural songs during our tour of the United States. People in the United States enjoyed this song, but when we got here the people were SO excited to join us in singing this song! Many of them already knew the song and sang along enthusiastically right away. It is in the language of Cebuano, which is spoken here, so even if they didn't know it, they seemed to feel connected to it and caught on quick. The words to the song mean "I am a child of God, you are a child of God, we are all children of God. And so we dance, we wave our hands, we shake our hips and we turn around." I think it has such a great message that we are all children of God, even if we speak different languages or come from different places. It also has some fun actions that we all enjoy.

People tell us that they are so blessed by us being here, but I feel like we are blessed by them just as much, if not more. The people along the way have been such a witness to us and I know that it has caused all of us to grow.

They are taking wonderful care of us in Banga and we are staying in a beautiful house with wonderful people. We have enjoyed fellowship with them through meals, and just spending time together.



Carly Tonkin

Date: 1/23/2008
Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar
Journal Entry:



Joshua Vandercar

Banga, Philippines to San Roque, Philippines

Today began well. But sometimes the weather turns. We had a great ride from Banga to San Roque. A van took us the majority of the way until we then loaded up seven of us, three drivers and our day-packed luggage onto three motorcycles and rode 20 minutes or so into the mountains. And the mountains are beautiful. Had a taste of coconut wine ... very similar taste to pito, which was a drink offered us in northern Ghana. My Cross Fire teammates would be happy to hear that the tree skit is still speaking well to many. We've had many comments on the effectiveness of its message. I've broken five strings in three programs ... may soon move to those mediums. And somewhere in the midst of all this, my mood took a dive. And at days end, I find myself silenced by something I can't explain ... an old haunt. Carry me through, Jesus. Let me reclaim the joy ... and may the joy be fully yours!

Date: 1/24/2008
Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli
Journal Entry:



Luke Kuenzli

San Roque to Davao

Today we awoke to the sounds of roosters crowing, and promptly fell back to sleep. After several bouts of crowing and dozing, we eventually did get out of bed, eat breakfast, and prepare ourselves for a morning program with members of Faith Lutheran Church, a part of the Tagakaulo Lutheran Church (not LCP). The program was a lot of fun, and there were somewhere around 35 people in attendance. The really cool thing was that one local pastor walked 50 kilometers (31 miles) to get there for our program, from another of the mountains. Wow! 31 miles, just to see us! After lunch, we loaded our bags and ourselves onto motorcycles to head back to the bus station (a 15-20 minute ride on bike), where we would catch a ride back to Davao. The motorcycle I was riding had 5 (yes, 5) people on it!!! Ua, myself, one of the pastors, our contact, and our contact's sister were all lined up in the motorcycle, along with 6 bags. I was in the middle, and I had a really tough time keeping my feet from dragging along the dirt and gravel road as we rode. Thank goodness for close-toed Keens! The generosity of the people in San Roque was amazing! From meals, to places to sleep, to the rides to and from the village, and even a cross bracelet from our contact's sister... but the coolest thing that they gave was a look at the face of Jesus! The little kids gave us big hugs when we were leaving, even the ones I didn't play with or get to know... and we were only there for a day. Everyone keeps telling us we are so guapo and guapa (handsome and beautiful), but I think that it is only because we look different! Dave, Carly, and Jenny's motorcycle blew a tire on the way down, so Pastor Sonny, Pastor Villos, and Marlon got off of their motorcycle when they caught up and sent my teammates on ahead. They hitched a ride with a passing young motorcyclist to catch up with us, and we all got on the bus on time. Back in quiet Davao, we had dinner with Ray's family again, this time at his house. Great food, good fellowship, and lots of love were shared through this day! Tomorrow is a rest day for us, and I am looking forward to it! I'm not used to all this traveling anymore!!! God bless!

---Luke

Date: 1/25/2008
Submitted by: David Peet
Journal Entry:

January 25, 2008

We are back in Davao with Sonny and his family. It was fun to be up in the mountains

and as we came back to Davao it felt like we were coming back home! I let out a sigh of content as we crossed the threshold back into Sonny's home.

We arrived last night and have been relaxing today. The highlight of the day was that we were able to cook a meal for Sonny, Chai, Saeede, and Pastor Villos. We went to the mall and Luke, Jenny, and Carly each purchased some clothes or sandals. We then proceeded to an internet café and checked our email and stuff like that. After that we went to the supermarket to begin our search for food to prepare for our hosts! We settled on chicken tacos with garlic mashed potatoes! Now, we know that potatoes and tacos do not usually go together, but we thought that we needed to cook at least some sort of potato for them! It was fun to cook and treat them to a meal. Saeede was not too keen on not having rice but he seemed to enjoy the chicken! We cooked the chicken in some oil, onions, garlic, and lemon juice. We sautéed some onions and garlic to add on top of the tacos and we had fresh tomatoes, lettuce, and cheese for the tacos. We also had some taco sauce to add to the shells. We had hard shells to eat instead of soft shells. We peeled and diced up the potatoes and boiled them until they were soft. After that we melted a stick of butter in a pan and added a bunch of minced garlic to flavor the butter. After a while we added the butter garlic to the potatoes and enjoyed! All in all, we cooked with about 12 cloves of garlic. It was glorious! As a side note, it's been very fun to eat a lot of the foods as I enjoy garlic, mangoes, and coconut. It seems that most things involve one of those foods here! We topped off the meal with some ice cream.

After the meal, we relaxed as Marlon and Ilene came over and chatted for a bit! They brought us ice cream so we had seconds on ice cream and good conversations!!

It was a nice day o relaxing as we get ready to leave for Butuan City tomorrow!! Peace!



David Peet

Date: 1/27/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Davao to Butuan

Yesterday, we bid farewell to the Mercado family and the beautiful people of Davao. Our time there was such a blessing. After a six or so hour trip, we arrived in Butuan and had dinner and fellowship with the members of Faith Lutheran. We then today joined with them for Bible study, worship, a workshop on worship, an evening program and a swim at a nearby resort (under the stars, as the lights would not work). All is well and we continue to share the amazing message of the peace of the Lord. What a blessing that we have been given the task of sharing a message of which we are so passionate.



Joshua Vandercar

His purpose was to make the two groups of people become one new people in Him and in this way make peace. It was also Christ's purpose to end the hatred between the two groups, to make them into one body, and to bring them back to God. Christ did all this with his death on the cross. Christ came and preached peace to you who were far away from God, and to those who were near to God. Yes, it is through Christ we all have the right to come to the Father in one Spirit. -Ephesians 2:15-18

May this peace be yours and may you take it to the world.

Date: 1/28/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Today was another travel day – we said tearful goodbyes to our friends at Faith Lutheran in Butuan (still on the island of Mindanao), and began the 6 hour trek to Iligan. Today was a day that I really began to realize how much I love it here. We built pretty amazing relationships with the people in Butuan (even though we were only there for 2 days). Saying goodbye, it dawned on me how the dear friend I have met here I may not see until we get to Heaven, and that is both exciting and sad. We keep preaching our message of unity & being one body in Christ all over the world, and I do



believe each one of us on team really believes in that message, and is passionate to share it. However, I don't know that I fully understand what we preach.

Jenny Shaw

The fact that even though I may meet these brothers and sisters in Christ here in the Philippines for only a day or two in this lifetime sometimes begins to depress me, or make me reluctant to continue making the effort to build those "short-term" relationships. I frequently forget my own message, that we are part of the same family, and we are only building the beginnings of relationships that we will get to cultivate and grow forever. While that doesn't make saying goodbye easy, it certainly helps me to have a right perspective each time we pull up to a new church, or a new group of kids.

Date: 1/29/2008

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Carly's Journal – Tuesday, January 29, 2008

Today was a busy day. This morning we went with some of the youth from Redeemer Lutheran Church to Maria Christina Falls. Pastor Villos told us that the hydroelectric plants on these falls and seven others produce about 65% of the electricity on the island on Mindanao. We took lots of pictures with the youth at the falls. We have found that Filipinos love taking pictures! Then we went to another waterfall where we took lots more pictures and walked up beside of the waterfall. It was so beautiful! We climbed from rock to rock, all the way back down to where we had started. I think this is my new favorite activity! After our adventure on the rocks we went to Maze Park Resort where the youth were waiting and had prepared lunch for us. We enjoyed lunch with the youth and then went swimming. We played Frisbee with the youth and had a good time swimming around and going down the waterslides with them. The boys enjoyed diving into the pool for the Frisbee with our guys.

We are staying in the Redeemer Lutheran dormitories which are connected to Redeemer Lutheran Church. It has been fun to play cards and talk with the college student residents. They were shy at first when we got here but have warmed up to us. We have played two new card games with them that we learned here in the Philippines and it seems like they have enjoyed practicing their English with us.

We did a program tonight at Redeemer Lutheran Church. (RLC – the same initials as my church at home! J) Pastor Villos told us that this congregation was hit really hard by the split in the Lutheran Church of the Philippines and that our message of unity really hit home tonight. After the program some of the youth asked Joshua to teach them the song "Unify Us" so that they can continue singing it in their church. Not only did they learn how to sing and play it on guitar but they also translated the chorus and the bridge into Cebuano for us! I feel like when we sing that with the congregations here it really will unify us to be singing together in their language.



Carly Tonkin

Date: 1/30/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Linamon, Philippines

*Hiusaha, ug putlia
Aron ma-usab ang kalibutan
Aron ma-usab ang kalibutan*

*Gikinahanglan ka namo, o Dios
Gikinahanglan ka namo, o Dios
Gikinahanglan ka namo, o Dios
Dungga kami*



Joshua Vandercar

This has quickly become what we might consider an anthem for our travels here in the Philippines.

Above is the chorus and bridge of *Unify Us*, translated to Cebuano. Last night, the youth of Redeemer Lutheran Dormitory and Mr. Ludlud translated for us and tonight, here in Linamon, we were able to join the congregation of Holy Trinity Lutheran Catholic Church lifting up this fervant prayer to God.

*Unify us, purify us
So that we will change the world
So that we will change the world*

*We need You, Lord
We need You, Lord
We need You, Lord
Hear our cry*

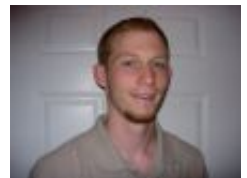
P.S. One song, 30 seconds, 3 broken strings ... medium strings ... G ... D ... A. That now makes 9!

Date: 1/31/2008

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Thursday, 31 January, 2008



Luke Kuenzli

What a day! We awoke for an 8:30 breakfast and got ready for a day at Tinago Falls. (Tinago means "hidden") We piled into trucks with a big group of youth and made the short trip to the parking area for the Falls. From there, we proceeded to walk down the 441 steps to the lagoon into which the Falls spill. The first view of Tinago Falls was worshipful. What a beautiful sight of God's creation! It seemed at first unspoiled and wild (until we could see past the trees to the picnic areas, cement waterway, and garbage strewn in the stream – but that first view...) There was lush greenery, dazzling blue water; it was like a postcard. The Falls are a decent height, but what is incredible is the lagoon. The pool beneath the waterfall empties only into a small stream, which does not account for all the water entering the pool. People have been curious about where the water goes, so a scuba diver dove down to see if there was another outlet. He didn't see the bottom! The lagoon is at least 7 times as deep as the falls is tall!

We had a great time of fellowship with the youth (all of whom are related, it turns out) swimming, jumping off of rocks into the lagoon, floating, eating lunch, jumping off of the bamboo raft, and letting the water shower down on us from above. Ua and I also played some cards with our escorts from the mayor's office. As we played, one of us asked if he could keep the cards to remember the day better (so I said yes).

About 1:30, we began the journey back to the top... whew! Those 441 steps are pretty steep! After some rest back at the Venus house, we did a program in town at the Freedom Stage for a big crowd of people. It was a lot of fun, and we did several Cebuano songs which everyone seemed to enjoy. After our program was dinner, then we hung out with some of the youth and played Ligretto before bedtime. All in all, it was a terrific day, but I look forward to my sleep!

~Luke

Date: 2/1/2008

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

February 1, 2008

Today was another day in transition. We traveled from Linamon to Cagayan de Oro. It was a nice day to travel. Joshua and I sat in the back of the truck in the truck bed with all the bags. The breeze was nice and we started late enough so the heat did not get to be too much. However, I think that I may be getting a bit sick. We are staying in the homes of some of the members of Pastor Villos' congregation. It is nice to be at his place as he has been with us and coordinating us this whole time.

The guys are staying in the home of Janet and her two sons Carlton and Jeff. Their



David Peet

father/husband is a musician on a cruise ship and he is currently out. It sounds like we will be with them for a couple of days so it is exciting to be able to foster those relationships. It is always fun to stay in the homes of people and to get to know them better.

Before we traveled we were able to call home and catch up on some correspondences with home. It is crazy to think how fast the time is going by. Soon our time in Mindinao will end and that will signify that the first third of our time in the Philippines has ended! Better make the most of it! Time to rest! Catch ya on the flip side!

Davepeet

Date: 2/3/2008

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Sunday, 3 February, 2008.

I get to do this weekend, so I'll start with Saturday! Carly and Dave are both a bit under the weather today, so that has been a bit rough. We went to the SM so we could get our tickets to Cebu and Leyte, and I picked up a new deck of cards while there. While at the mall, the bug really hit Carly, and Dave started to feel ill soon after we got back. We did an afternoon workshop at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, where Pastor Villos presides, and then a program following. Carly rested for the workshop, and then came back with a vengeance to play bass for our program. The youth there also sang in a few songs, including "Who Am I?" Back at the host home, I stayed up with one of our host brothers to watch "Sweeney Todd", but it was worth it... Good show!

Today we awoke to discover that what we thought would be a 4:30pm program had been changed to a 10:30am program at Christ Lutheran Church, so... with a sick Carly and Dave. We got ourselves ready and got there just in time to sing with no warm-up. It went surprisingly well, despite a mix-up by me in the order of a couple songs. It was ok though, because the flow still worked well, so maybe I'll use that order in the future! Nothing else for today but rest, which is good, having a couple sickbodies.

~Luke



Luke Kuenzli

Date: 2/4/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

February 4, 2008 – Jenny's Journal

I'm sick!! So, I definitely began our trip overseas with the cocky attitude that I have a stomach of steel, and no foreign foods or even accidental foreign water intake could affect me. After eating pig's skin & chicken feet in Hong Kong, python in Banga & raw fish ("Kinilaw") several times, all without any problems, I would have sworn I could eat anything.

Turns out, it's the good, plain rice (which we eat with breakfast, lunch and dinner, at a minimum) that seems to affect me the most – tonight I became pretty severely ill after an inability to excrete the bad stuff in my body for several days (in layman's terms, I've been constipated).

The thing is, you would think that being overseas it would be pretty difficult to be sick and you would only want to be home in your own bed. However, my host family (the Gatelas, in Cagayan de Oro) is taking SUCH good care of me. They saw to my every need, made me "rice porridge" which would be easy on my fairly nauseous stomach and bought me Gatorade, and even stayed awake late into the night checking on me (I think I used the bathroom approximately 9 times during the night!) Their incredible care and concern for me truly made me think through the way I care for



Jenny Shaw

those around me (or more specifically, the ways I don't). Most of the people here in the Philippines could teach us a lot about servant-hearted love. I am so grateful for them, and for the love they have shown us – they truly treat us as family!

Oh, and don't worry – I know the solution to the little rice problem, at least according to our Filipino friends – eat more mangos and jackfruit. So, life is tough, but I'm just going to have to eat mangos everyday. J

Date: 2/5/2008

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Tuesday, February 5, 2008
Cagayan de Oro to Cebu

Dave and I were sick the last couple of days and are feeling better now, but last night Jenny got sick with stomach problems. After sleeping most of morning and into the afternoon she felt a lot better. Our host family, the Gatella's, have taken such good care of us here. They have been so concerned about us when we have been sick and made us rice porridge for our upset stomachs. They have made us feel so comfortable and have really treated us like family. We have stayed with them for five nights and we have really enjoyed getting to know them. It was hard to say goodbye to them this afternoon and I don't think we could ever thank them enough. This was the first host home that wasn't a pastor's home and where we were not staying as a team. We will always remember them and the time that we shared.

Tonight is my first boat ride on a big ship. We are on the Princess of the South ship traveling from Cagayan de Oro to Cebu. We are so excited to have Pastor Villos, his wife Honey, and Arwin, Eileen, and Kaye along with us. We have really enjoyed spending time with them and they have been so gracious to us. They also took care of us when we were sick which made it at least a little better. Being away from home while sick is never fun but they made us feel at home.

It is crazy that we are already wrapping up our time on the island of Mindanao. The time went so fast. I know that there were many people that were worried about us going to Mindanao because of some of the civil unrest going on in some of the areas, but I am so glad that we got to be there. The people we met there have been amazing and have been such a witness to us.



Carly Tonkin

Date: 2/6/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Cebu City, Cebu Island to Albuera, Leyte Island

Another day and we keep moving on. We spent last night on a boat from Cagayan de Oro bound for Cebu. I didn't sleep all too well as a wall light shone on me all night. Rising before the sun, Jenny and I caught the sunrise with Pastor Villos, Mr. Ludlud and their families. We enjoyed a breakfast in the boat terminal and then took a SuperCat to Leyte, where we were to be housed in a home owned by Mr. Ludlud's family. After walking to the seashore, we enjoyed young coconut milk and the meat. We then swam in the ocean as the sun set into the distant waters.

We will be here just a few days before returning to Cebu for a flight back to Manila. And we keep moving.



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 2/7/2008

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli
Journal Entry:



Luke Kuenzli

Thursday, 7 February, 2008

We got up for breakfast and then walked to the beach where we swam last night. We were going to go out pretty early in banca (motorized boats), but we ended up waiting for quite a while before going out. While waiting, Dave and I shot some hoops with some guys near the beach. We did get out into the water eventually, and it was amazingly clear! We floated around, used some makeshift goggles to see the cool fishies eating the algae around the buoy line. We boated back in, and I swam some more in the shallows, using the goggles to spy fish in the rocks. I also found a sea urchin, which we got some pictures of. We had lunch at the church, then we went back to Arwin's for some rest. We walked to the local school for an afternoon program, but as we started "Majestic", it began to rain... lightly at first, so we thought it might pass. It turns out that it is still raining as I write this at 9:30pm. So we sat in the school and waited for a bit of a break in the rain to walk back. We'll do our program tomorrow morning instead. After dinner, I played and learned some games with Honey, Eileen, and Arwin. The team also did a devo and 1on1 before we headed to bed for the night.

~Luke

Date: 2/8/2008
Submitted by: David Peet
Journal Entry:



David Peet

February 8, 2008

Whew, busy day today!! We had a program that was supposed to be yesterday afternoon, but it got rained out. So we decided to do it this morning at 7:30 to make sure that the kids would be able to still see. So we had a program this morning, came back to the Ladlad family home for breakfast and then we got to witness a baptism. Not only witness, but we were all asked to be Godparents to the child! So we are now all Godparents!!! It was actually pretty amazing to be there. Though we did not know the child at all, it was very symbolic to be part of the ceremony and sponsorship. The questions they ask the congregation and sponsors about raising the child and things like that, they take on a whole new meaning!! Of course we will not be there to raise the child, but we can continue to keep the child in our prayers. His name is Justin Valarez. So it's exciting to be a part of Justin's life, though from a distance.

After the baptism, we sang a couple of songs for the people there and then we went back to the house. We rested for the afternoon and got ready for our evening program in a nearby town. We sang on a public stage for the people. It was a good program. The youth sang a few songs before hand. I think one of my favorite parts to our programs is when the youth will get up and sing some of their songs they have been working on. It is great to see voices being lifted up from various parts of the world on the same evening. We have learned a song in their vernacular called Ibayaw. It was special tonight because at the end of our program, the youth got up and sang it with us. This also concluded our programs for our first leg of the journey. Mixed emotions, but no bad emotions. Just lots of different ones as we continue on our ministry journey. I'll write more about things because this weekend is my weekend for journaling as well. So I'll see you all at the end of the weekend!! Ok, peace!

davepeet

Date: 2/9/2008
Submitted by: David Peet
Journal Entry:

February 9-10, 2008

Correction of previous journal. Our new godson's new last name is Valasco.

It has been a whirlwind of activity these last couple of days. We are now back up in Manila staying at Gloria Dei. And this is how we got there!

We left Leyte Saturday afternoon. We took the same type of boat over that we took there. However, this ride was a bit different. The weather was a bit more rough. The consensus is that the waves were at about 5 foot swells. So it was a bit of a bumpy ride! I think at one point, the whole boat was out of the water! So it was fairly exciting. I was ok with the up and down forward motion, but when the boat started going side to side a bit, that was when I started to get a bit nervous. But after the initial excitement, you could see how the driver of the boat was driving and keeping us safe. So that was good to calm us down, and I took some Dramamine, so that helped too. We also remembered that they make this trip multiple times every day, so they were very experienced. We made it safely to Cebu and we spent the night in a hotel there as we waited for our early morning flight the next day. We had our first experience of Jollibee, which is the Filipino equivalent of McDonalds. It was actually pretty good!

We got on our flight Sunday morning and flew back to Manila. We were met at the airport by Phil who brought us to Pastor Cholo's church. Pastor Cholo is the cousin of Honey Mae, Pastor Villos' wife. We were a bit tired, but the program went well. We made our way back to Santa Mesa where we will be for the rest of the week.

It was a bit sad leaving Mindanao and Pastor Villos and all the other people that we met there. However, we realize that our ministry continues and it is exciting to wonder what adventures may lay ahead! Peace out!

davepeet



David Peet

Date: 2/11/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Four hundred children from Vox Dei School in south Metro-Manila packed into a space not much larger than my family's kitchen & dining room, doing the motions to "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High" could bring joy to anyway, even me on a pretty tough day.

The crazy thing is, only a few hours earlier, I had spent our 2 hour van ride to the school thoroughly distracted by my own agendas, insecurities, and fears. I found myself dwelling on the 'what-ifs' of the future, I began reading into a teammate's subtle actions & analyzing and re-analyzing their meaning, worry filled my heart and it became very hard to hear the voice of my Father trying to speak peace to me.

Thankfully, when He couldn't get through to my heart, He tried using the smiling, loving faces of the wonderful Filipino children waiting for us when we clamored out of the van. He used their boisterous and exuberant praise as they belted out "Unify Us, Purify Us, So that we will change the world" from our last song, and their shy yet hopeful faces as they ran up to us afterwards wanting messages and pictures from us to remember us by. You would think that this would be enough for me to see that the love of my Father surpasses and obliterates any fears I could have for this world.

But when even those amazing children couldn't completely erase the voice in my head trying to convince me of my "unloved" status, my Father used our contact Ed to take our team up to a mountain top, an hour out of our way, to feel the cool wind on our faces and to absorb the beauty of His creation which He made for us, for me. When that still didn't quite convince me, He used a gentle check-in from a friend & a long van-ride back with some Jeremy Camp on my ipod reminding me to "Empty Me" of myself. By the time we had arrived back to Santa Mesa where we are staying, His message had finally gotten through.

I am loved, more than I will ever begin to imagine, and the grace I have received is more than



Jenny Shaw

enough for me. Having learned this lesson for today, I go to sleep tonight prayerful that tomorrow, I will allow the Father to teach me this truth again, perhaps a little earlier in the day.

Date: 2/12/2008

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

Sta. Mesa, Manila – Gloria Dei Lutheran Church and School

We didn't have any programming scheduled for today so we made it a team day, to get some stuff done for the office, post online journals, rehearse, repair puppets, and to check up on how each of us are doing. We had a team meeting this morning that I think went really well. We are not very good at looking back and evaluating how things have gone, so it was good to do a little of that and address the fact that we should be doing that more. It's always good to check in with each other and to know where each of us is at, so that was good too.

We got to have lunch and dinner today with some of the pastors from the Lutheran Church of the Philippines that were at Gloria Dei for a seminar on accounting and finances in the church. They also had us sing a few songs for them after lunch. It was fun to get to meet some of the pastors, whose congregations we will be visiting in the next few weeks. It was also neat to be able to share our message of unity within the body of Christ as they continue with reconciliation talks within the LCP.

At two o'clock today we played volleyball against the teachers of Gloria Dei School. It was a lot of fun! Many of the students stuck around after school to watch and cheer and one of the kids was the referee. The teachers decided that they want a rematch tomorrow. The students at the school were a lot of fun to spend time with. They have taught us many Tagalog words and then will quiz us on what we have learned! They love giving hugs and even though it was so hot out, I enjoyed every one of them. I see so much joy in the kids here and they always brighten my day.



Carly Tonkin

Date: 2/13/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Santa Mesa, Manila, Philippines

Today ... day off. It is good. Although our schedule to this point has not been all too demanding, we do continue to travel much and meet many people, which, in itself, can wear on us. Today has been filled with card playing, a trip to the internet cafe with Luke and Jenny, and dinner at a nearby restaurant, EJ Sizzlers. If only we had discovered the place earlier ... we each ate a really good meal with a drink for less than US\$1. We also spent some time for more volleyball with the teachers and students at Gloria Dei. It has been good to have more activity than just the climbing in and out of vehicles and the funny little dances i do as i play guitar during programs. The broken string count continues to climb. Hope you are well!



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 2/14/2008

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Hello, and Happy Valentine's Day! Today was a nice, relaxing day. We spent the first few hours, from 9-12, working with the children at Concordia Children's Services in Santa Mesa, Manila, Philippines. I helped out in the 6-12 month old room with Samuel, Timothy, Andrew, Nathaniel, Jason, and (the only girl) Jamaica Fe. Mostly I tried to stop their crying by taking wet babies for changing, and holding the needy ones, and adjusting bottles. It is amazing



Luke Kuenzli

how quickly you can fall in love with little babies, even when they aren't yours - especially when they don't have parents... It makes me seriously consider adoption as an option in the future, once I have found a wife and job and house, and all those other neat things. Andrew was my buddy (good name, too - my middle name) - I held him for quite a while, and any time I put him down he would start crying and wake those that were napping.

We had our first McDonald's lunch, courtesy of CCS, of Big Mac and Fries. After lunch we bid farewell to the workers and babies and headed back to Gloria Dei for some rest and cards. I also played frisbee and volleyball with some of the students after they got out of school. More rest after that, then groceries for our dinner of spaghetti and garlic bread. I learned a few chords on guitar, too, which was fun and slightly painful. Again, Happy Valentine's Day! God loves you, and so do I!

---Luke

Date: 2/15/2008

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

February 15, 2008

Today is our last day in Santa Mesa. We will be waking up to start traveling to Batangas at 6 tomorrow morning. Pastor Albert from Lemery will be coming to take us back to his congregation.



David Peet

Today was almost a busy day. We thought that we were going to be going with the teachers from the school next door to go to some hot springs, but then it turned out that it was going to take too much time, so we were going to go visit the largest mall in Asia, but then we didn't do that either. It turned out to be a fairly relaxing day. We had our program for the school kids this morning. These are the kids that we have spent some of the afternoons playing with and getting to know. However, the program was a bit flat. I'm not sure if we were just assuming because we played with them and got to know them that it was going to be really great, or maybe our focus wasn't there, but it was a flat program. But we will just try to make the next one better.

We had lunch at the nearby mall with Pastor Chris at a restaurant called Kenny Roger's Fried Chicken. Yes, it is the country singer Kenny Rogers. It was actually really good! This afternoon, Jenny and Luke went to a mall to exchange cash and traveler's checks. They were gone a while, but they made it back in one piece, though a little tired of malls at that point.

After that, Luke and I went and played basketball with Pastor James, Pastor Chris, Phil, and one of the security guards of the compound. It was really fun and we both enjoyed the exercise and play time.

We proceeded to have EJ Sizzler's after that and we are turning in early so that we can be rested for our next part of the journey! Ok, catch ya on the flip side!

davepeet

Date: 2/17/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Weekend Journal – February 16-17, 2008 by Jenny

Batangas – South Luzon, Philippines

Wow, so I'm the lucky one to try and capture this crazy (and very long!) weekend in a journal. Rather than recap the entire two days (both of which began well before six



a.m.), I'll try and give you a picture of what made the biggest impact on me.

Jenny Shaw

Despite sleeping on a cement church floor under mosquito nets Saturday night, and awaking at 5:30 am to eat breakfast with Pastor Albert before squeezing all of us and all our bags into a Jeepney for the 20-minute ride to St. John's Lutheran Church, Sunday turned out to be a very enjoyable day!

We worshiped at St. John's at a service that was largely in Tagalog, and although I could not understand, it was really neat to see a service (including hymns & liturgy) in the congregation's first language. At the end of the service, we sang "Gonna Dance" for the church, and the energy level emanating from everyone during that song seemed to stick with the youth of the church for the rest of the day. They spent nearly the whole day with us, took us to the beach to play 'net-less' volleyball, and fed us "mariendas" all day long (sticky rice, Jollibee chicken & spaghetti, etc.) Some of the girls and I really connected, and they taught me songs in Tagalog and had me sing for them in English. I truly find it to be a little like Heaven (or like I picture it) when I hear the Filipino youth singing & praising God.

Side note: music is huge here – singing & playing music are really important in this culture, and you can see "Videoke" bars & restaurants everywhere (Videoke is Karaoke with videos playing in the background). Most of the youth in the churches we have visited congregate around music, and most of them are in charge of the praise music on Sunday mornings. When we sing songs, they ask for the chords & lyrics almost everywhere we've been, and their enthusiasm is contagious. I had no idea music would be so important here.

Sorry, back to Sunday. Our 7 p.m. program (which actually began around 8 p.m., which was when people showed up) was lively & people from the neighborhood heard us and began poking their heads in the door until the church was fairly well packed. Everyone danced, clapped and sang with us, and we didn't leave the church til after 10 that night (despite our 5 am departure time tomorrow). I will always remember St. John's and the love shown to us. We were the first New Dawn group to visit their congregation, and I only pray that we encouraged and edified their church in a way that will leave a lasting impact.

Date: 2/18/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Malubon – Manila, Philippines
February 18, 2008

It's one of those days where morning feels like a really long time ago. I am currently lying on top of several blankets provided by Immanuel Lutheran School, or ILS, (to cushion the very hard stone floor of the class.) Today, we awoke at 5 am to pack our things and eat breakfast by six (although, as has become routine for us, our contact was an hour late in arriving to pick us up, so we spent a lot of time waiting in a half-stupor).

We rode a Jeepney to the bus terminal in Batangas then hopped on a bus for a 5 hour ride back to Manila. We debarked at the light rail station, where we took the Light Rail (with all of our bags & instruments) another 20 minutes toward our venue for the afternoon program. To complete our travel to ILS, we hopped into "tricycles" (motorcycles with a side-car attached to a third wheel) and crammed ourselves & our stuff into them for a 15-minute jaunt to the school itself.

By the time we arrived it was 1 pm and the school staff had Chowking waiting for us (we were very hungry after our long morning), and then we were hurried into the chapel filled with 250 waiting students. As soon as we entered we were greeted with welcome songs from the kids, and it was challenging (but entertaining) to try and set-up while listening to them serenade us.

After our program, we took a few minutes rest (and by rest, I mean we signed kids papers – I swear 200 of them wanted our signatures), and then caught taxis to ILS, our home for the next several



Jenny Shaw

days.

Here at Immanuel, the school welcomed us and the principal (Annabelle) made a very nice dinner for us (Stuffed milkfish, chicken porridge, rice & mangos – masarap!) I am starting to LOVE mangos! We enjoyed our meal and found that once again our hosts (who have never met a New Dawn team before) are bending over backwards for total strangers out of hospitality and kindness.

Our team was left to ourselves for the night and we played Ui-77 (a card game Ua made up) and talked about theology. The split in the LCP (Lutheran Church in the Philippines) came up, which we have discovered more about everywhere we have gone here. It has been difficult to realize how much work in the reconciliation process is still needed. However, their willingness to work toward unity has been a great testament to us.

Date: 2/19/2008

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Tuesday, February 19, 2008

– Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, Malabon City, Philippines

We are currently staying at Immanuel Lutheran School. We arrived yesterday and will be here until Friday. Today we have the day to get some stuff done as a team. We planned out our puppet workshop that we will be leading tomorrow for the school teachers and Sunday School teachers. It's on how to use puppets in ministry as well as how to make puppets. None of us have ever made puppets before so we will see how that goes. I am looking forward to it though. We also went through all of our pictures to pick ones to send in to the office. I enjoyed looking through them, remembering all the places we have been and the wonderful people we have met.

We also had a couple one-on-ones today. I am realizing more and more the importance of sharing things with my teammates and learning to be vulnerable with them. That is not easy for me but I am working on it.

Tonight Annabelle, the principal of Immanuel Lutheran School, and her husband Roger took us out to see the night life of Manila. We drove around to different areas and enjoyed some good conversation with them. They have been so great to us, making sure that we have everything that we need.

So far we have not had much contact with the kids of Immanuel Lutheran School, other than seeing them in passing as they go to classes. They yell, "Good morning!" and "Good afternoon!" whenever they see us. I look forward to doing a program for them later this week and getting a chance to spend more time with them.



Carly Tonkin

Date: 2/20/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Malabon City, Philippines

Today, I would like to give many thanks to the puppets of New Dawn ... JB, Margarite, Clyde, Mgoy, and the odd looking serpent we made this morning. The puppets definitely played a big part of our ministry today. We were asked to lead a 3 hour puppet-making workshop. So, this morning was spent in preparation ... revising the puppet pattern we have, preparing copies of the pattern, of instructions, and of the workshop outline, and the great task of making our own puppet. The workshop was attended by about 25 teachers and staff of Immanuel Lutheran Church and School. Working in pairs, they did an amazing job of creating many diverse puppets. All in all a wonderful day!



Joshua Vandercar

I realize that my journals here have, to a great degree been brief and not much in the style of what I may normally write. I do hope that I can change that, because I do like to share with you more than the happenings of our day, but of the happenings of my heart and of active word of our Lord. This is my resolve for the remainder of our travels. May you be blessed each new day!

Date: 2/21/2008

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Whew! Today was a long day! We got up for the elementary school chapel here at Immanuel Lutheran School and sang "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High" and "Gonna Dance", which were enjoyed by all. We left shortly after for the high school, where we did two one-hour sets. The first was for the 1st and 2nd year students, the second was for the 3rd and 4th years. We did the same thing for each, and they all seemed to enjoy the action songs. More importantly, I think that our words and the songs' lyrics got a message across to them of Unity and Peace in our world and in our Church. We had lunch afterwards, then some of the students performed songs and dances for us, which was pretty cool. We headed back to the school to rest for a while, then we had a time of fellowship with the youth from 6-8, where they taught us songs and games and we sang a couple songs, and then dinner with some of the church members. We were also each given an ILS polo shirt (the school uniform) and a bracelet to remember them. It has been great to stay in one place for a few days and get to know some of the people pretty well. But... it has been a long, busy day, so I'll be heading to sleep! God bless!

---Luke



Luke Kuenzli

Date: 2/22/2008

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

Friday 22, 2008

We are still at ILS/ILC. It has been a good week here and it has been nice to be in one place for a while. This morning, we went to the family day program at the school where all the kids had been taught dances by their advisors and then they danced them for their parents. It was fun to see the different dances and to watch the kids do their dances. After that, we recorded some sing a long songs for the school to keep and teach their students.

There was a mix up in communication as to where we would stay the night and who and where we would get picked up to head to North Luzon. But we got it figured out and we retrieved the rest of our stuff from Santa Mesa. We will be picked up tomorrow morning here at ILS by two pastors from the north, Pastor Joel, and Pastor Rolly. That is about all we know for the future.

Interesting enough, we had some chicken and some pasta shells that we could cook tonight. However, none of us felt like cooking and we were all a little low energy, so we decided to go out to Jollibee. It was good, but it was interesting as we talked about it afterwards about how selfish we become when we get tired or run down. It was a good talk that we had over devotions.

Well, we are getting picked up at 5:30 tomorrow morning, so I think that I'm going to bed. So, cya later!

davepeet



David Peet

Date: 2/24/2008

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Weekend Journal – Saturday, February 23, 2008 and Sunday, February 24, 2008

This morning we left Immanuel Lutheran School and got in the van/jEEPney with Pastor Joel and Pastor Rolly, not even knowing where we were going, or anything about our schedule for the rest of our trip. We met Pastor Roa when we arrived at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Urdaneta, and learned that we would be doing a program right after a “marienda” (snack). We have been getting so many mariendas lately. I feel like we are constantly eating; seems like 6 meals a day! We did a program with the congregation members of Our Savior Lutheran Church. We were all a bit tired after an early morning and a long drive but the program went pretty well. My favorite part was when we sang Ako Anak Sa Dios, which is Cebuano for I am a child of God, in Tagalog (Ako ay Masaya). We had just translated it and it was fun that they all knew it and sang along with us.



Carly Tonkin

In the afternoon we went to the mission station that Pastor Roa works with in Urdaneta, where they have Saturday School for the kids and Bible Study for the adults every week. We got to listen to the kids sing many songs that I remember from my Sunday School days, many of which I haven’t heard since then. We attended the adult Bible Study and then did a program for the kids and the adults. We had much more energy for this program. We were at a house that they used for the mission station in the middle of rice fields, with mountains in the background. After being in crowded Manila it was so refreshing to be in such a beautiful open space with fresh air!

On Saturday night we stayed in Binalonan with one of the members of Pastor Hope’s church, Annie and her daughter Crislyn. They were so good to us, providing a place to stay and meals. We wished we could have spent more time with them during our time there.

On Sunday morning we worshiped at Redeemer Lutheran Church where Pastor Hope is the pastor. After worship we had a program and then enjoyed some fellowship with some of the member over lunch.

Sunday evening we had a program at Christ Lutheran Church at 7:30pm. There were lots of youth there and they sang a song for us during our program. It’s great to see so many youth involved in that church. It was also fun to see the little kids running around. It was obvious how much they looked up to the older youth.

It seems as though whenever we start learning some of a language here we move to another area. We have learned phrases in Cebuano, Tagakaoulo, Tagalog, and now we have moved on to Ilokano. There are so many dialects here!

These last few days we have been low on energy and tired. We have not gotten much sleep in the last week and a half, getting up very early all week. It has also been very busy without time to get things done for our team (journals, one-on-ones, job stuff, and devos) or to rest. It has also been frustrating not knowing much about our schedule. But even in the midst of the all that I know that we will get through it. Things are still going very well, and after a little rest we will be ready to go!

Date: 2/25/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Quezon, Isabela, North Luzon, Philippines
February 25, 2008

Over six weeks in, and we are finally in the Northern part of Luzon, touring the lowlands on a winding journey to Baguio City (where we will commence the last leg of our time here, visiting the “highlands”). While I am exhausted from lots of early mornings, a schedule that has started to incorporate 2 programs a day, and long days of travel, I am also thankful to be here in this part of this country.



Jenny Shaw

Our drive this morning began at 4 am and though I couldn’t sleep, I enjoyed the makeshift bed we made in our “Jeepney van” because it allowed me to watch as the stars & moon lit our path. We slowly wound our way north today, with Pastor Rolly driving, and we got to see the sun rise over the mountains. This is a country that is greener than I can describe, and passing Caribaw (water buffalo), cows, and horse-drawn carriages covered with woven baskets made it impossible to close my eyes. We stopped by the side of the road for Buko juice & Buko pie (Buko is coconut), a delicious

marienda (snack), and finally pulled into Ilagan around lunch-time (a 7 ½ hour trip).

After lunch, we drove into a very rural farming “Barangay” for our program. This village was full of people who were very excited to have us, and several members of the Ilagan congregation squished into a Jeepney and followed us up to the village to watch. I continue to be amazed at the passion these people have to sing & dance, and they all welcome us as family even upon first meeting us. We sang in the open air on a patio in front of one of the villager’s houses, and afterward, one of the youth picked up my guitar and immediately began to play “Pagkaisahin” (‘Unify Us’ in Tagalog). He had us write out the chords & lyrics, and it was pretty exciting to know that he will be playing that song with the youth here for potentially years to come.

When we left we were surrounded by the people, begging us to stay, to leave remembrances, to prolong our time with them. It made me sad to have to be moving so often from place to place, and I was even more strongly reminded of the way a family member would be bade goodbye in their hugs & parting words. What a wonderful picture of the Family we have in our Savior. My rest tonight will be sweet, after a long but rewarding day.

Date: 2/26/2008

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Quezon City, Isabella in the northern part of Luzon, Philippines

Today we learned our closing song, “Unify Us” in Ilokano, the dialect spoken here. That makes the fourth dialect that we have translated it into (including English). We spent most of the day today resting and getting caught up on team responsibilities. Our team was in need of some rest and it was really good to be re-energized.

We had a program at the Barangay Hall tonight. It was raining but we were all under a shelter. Because of the weather I was surprised by how many people were there; lots and lots of kids. I have enjoyed seeing how close-knit some of the Barangay’s (like a neighborhood) have been. They have a Barangay captain in charge of organizing things. Some of the barangays have seemed like a big extended family. They have all been so welcoming to us.

It has been nice having Pastor Rolly and Vicar Eric traveling with and guiding us. They seem to really have a heart for the ministry and have been so helpful. It has been interesting talking with pastors from both sides of the Lutheran Church of the Philippines split. We now have friends on both sides, and it has been good to see where they are both coming from. It has also been very frustrating though. It’s so hard to see the church divided and not treating each other with respect. I have also seen a lot of hope in many of the congregation members and pastors. We continue looking to that hope that we have in the unity of Christ and keep trying to spread that message. We ask that you would all be praying for the LCP and the reconciliation talks that continue.



Carly Tonkin

Date: 2/27/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Ballesteros, Philippines

We awoke quite early again this morning to leave at 4am. In the light of coming dawn, we kept on down another road. Luke, Dave, and Carly did their best to squeeze in a bit more sleep while Jenny and I enjoyed a world that, under overcast skies, slowly faded from dark to less dark. The music of various YE teams played over the radio, and I retreated for a while to the comforts of the music I brought. As an ever wandering one, I have often felt the following Bebo Norman song sing deep to my heart. Some days this year, it has sung stronger.



Joshua Vandercar

Bebo Norman, *Where the Trees Stand Still*

Everyone it seems is looking for the grass that's greener here
And through my window pane the scenery flies by and disappears
So tell to me the secret that won't let the memories fade away
Until I am home again where the trees stand still

Yesterday it seems I traveled in a younger man's clothes
Living out this dream and wandering through fields of touch and go
Moving on forever watching the distance fade away
But now I just want to land where the trees stand still

Just a few days ago, we spent some hours at a house that stood tall in the midst of the surrounding rice paddies. As we sat in on Bible study, led in the language of Ilicano, I looked out the windows to watch the wind set the rice to dancing and I was reminded of the fields of home. We are never very far from home. Even in a strange and foreign land, if only we open our eyes, glimpses of home shall surround us. If only we open our eyes, the glory of the Keeper of our heavenly home shall be seen in the great and the small of each moment. Creation sings aloud. Should we desire to join the song, we must silence ourselves to listen.

Proverbs 25:25

Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.

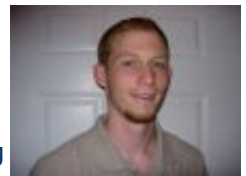
Date: 2/28/2008

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Today was a pretty good day. We got to sleep until 7:00, which feels like a late morning now... After breakfast we made the 1-hour trip to Cagayan and we rested at our host home, also visiting some other homes. After lunch, we went to the other local church and spent some time in fellowship with the members eating buko and drinking the fresh coconut juice. We also sang a few songs for them. We got back to our host home and practiced some new ideas for programming, and then had dinner. A Program at the Barangay Stage for the community and church members, then rest and sleep! We'll probably have to work on our new ideas a bit more to implement them fully, but it was good to try tonight and give it a test run. We're trying to start with "Unify Us" and go into "Broken" with a scripture reading in between. I'll try to post a bit more later!

Peace,
Luke



Luke Kuenzli

Date: 2/29/2008

Submitted by: David Peet

Journal Entry:

February 29, 2008

Happy Leap year! Our team had a fun discussion as to what we would do if our birthday happened to fall on February 29. Would we celebrate it on February 28 or on March 1? There was argument for the 28 because it is still in the same month and there was argument for the 1 because that is the day that the 29th would have been. It was unresolved. And then... we met a woman whose birthday was February 29! So we asked her the question...and she joked about it and said somewhere between the 28th and the 1st. We never did get a straight answer out of her. Disappointing.

We are in Sanchez Mira. It is on the island of Luzon and it is about as far north as you can get! We are not far from Taiwan. There have been many good jokes about us taking a boat to get there or



David Peet

swimming from here.

Most of the day today was spent resting. It has been nice to have some rest during the day. It seems to be that we will get up early and then we will rest at a place during the day and do a program that night. We haven't had an actual day off for a while, but this has worked out well and I think we are still getting our rest.

We had a fellowship tonight. We thought that meant that we would just hang out with the kids and get to know them. So Jenny and Ua were learning a new game that is similar to five rocks, but it is called Jack Stones. It involves a bouncy ball and some stones. It looks pretty fun. So I thought that our fellowship was off to a good start! Except that the pastor came and told us that we should start the fellowship soon. And we were a bit confused because we thought we were fellowshiping already! It turns out that they were anticipating a bit more structured program from us! So we whipped up a fellowship time. It turned out to be lots of fun. We played some games and sang some songs and had a good time. It was fun as our companion Vicar Eric helped out and it was fun to see him interact with the youth. He is going to be a big help. It was a good night. Ok, we'll see ya later!

Date: 3/2/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Taboc & Apayaw, Philippines

Truly, we can pass through this world in such simplicity. When all is stripped away ... we are born, we live, we die. When all is stripped away ... we have God, we have one another, and we have the rest of His creation. Can we strip it all away in order to see this truth? Greater yet, can we strip it all away in order to live in this truth?



Joshua Vandercar

Spending time with the people of Taboc and Apayaw has given me a fresh glimpse at the simplicity of life. These days brought moments of clarity as we walked amid the rice paddies and in the mountains. Sharing in the dance and song of a traditional call to gather the community. Seeing a father, mother, and child walking the mountain road home from church. What a wonderful gift we have been given in the living of life. May you be blessed with even the subtlest glimpses of simplicity and take on the work of wresting away all else.

Date: 3/3/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Travel Day! Today, we had to leave the Apayao village where we spent our night last night, and I found it once again tough to say goodbye. Last night, our program was SO fun! The rain held off (it has been raining for days on end it seems – reminds me of home in Portland!) for us, and we were able to sing outside the church on the front lawn under the inky sky, with one light hanging overhead. When we taught them "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High," including the sign-language motions, I was overcome with the sense that the Kingdom of Heaven was touching our humble Earth as the entire crowd stood up (over 100 people), and whole-heartedly lifted our Lord's name with their voices and hands.



Jenny Shaw

Sidenote: we've sung this song at dozens of programs overseas, it's the first song I learned on guitar, AND it's the song I submitted as my "guitar song" in my audition tape for YE back in May '07 – I never thought I'd actually be playing it in the Philippines and I never thought this song would come to life again as it has for me here.

Ok, back to Monday – today was our first day without a program in a long time. We traveled 5 or so hours by van with Pastor Luis back to Tubok, and braved the muddy roads through a drizzly rain once again. Luckily we made it without any serious problems, and our night was relaxing and restful! I think I may have a new appreciation for paved, two-lane, marked roads, although there is little that beats traveling through highland villages past banana trees, carabao, dogs & goats, rice patties, mountain streams, women carrying grain or rice on their heads, corn fields growing out hillsides, and flowers in every color. I know we have a month left, but I already miss it here.

Date: 3/4/2008

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Ilocos, northern Luzon – highlands, Philippines

We had an early morning this morning and left Tabuk for our longest van trip so far. We said goodbye to Pastor Luis, but maybe we will see him again sometime soon. It has been fun getting to know him the past few days. Pastor Luis' daughter lives in St. Paul, MN about ten minutes from my home and he visits there there often. It was fun to hear about his experiences around my hometown and to have that in common. His granddaughter takes swimming lessons at Como Park Pool, where I took swimming lessons when I was little! I never would have thought that I would meet someone in the Philippines that even knew what Como Park Pool was!



Carly Tonkin

It was a beautiful drive today, winding around the mountains and along the coast. I slept a lot on the ride, as my stomach has not been feeling too good the last few days. It has been frustrating being sick, needing rest and not being able to do all that I want to. We are in places for such a short time, so it's hard not having energy. I feel like I have not been able to get to know people as well as I could have. I do know though that I have to rest in order to get better.

We arrived in Ilocos after about a twelve hour trip. It was dark out when we got there and when we asked our hosts how far the ocean was from here, they laughed and said "about 10 steps!" We walked down to the beach with some of the youth from the church and it really was that close! We ran around the beach finding crabs and chasing them into the water.

Date: 3/5/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Ilocos, Luzon, Philippines

Days do still come when i feel as if God is fiercely conditioning me for the life of a loner. Today, we ate a new type of snail, saw the live octopus we've been eating at meals, played with tops, swam in the ocean, and gave a program. However, through it all, my spirit has been burdened. Most moments couldn't have found me less content. In this ministry and in a culture where we have encountered such shyness, one must be the first to step forward. As i've retreated to my troubles today, i have been seperated ... which only feeds the restlessness. May i continue to come to the Lord, to His goodness, to His grace, to His love, and to His faitfulness ... and there, may i find joy for the journey. May He teach me day be day to walk aright.



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 3/6/2008

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli
Journal Entry:

Thursday, 6 March, 2008

Today was fairly uneventful. We drove 5 hours, plus a couple of hours for stops and food (about 7.5 hours total). The view from the van was beautiful – mountains always amaze me! Our destination was Baay, La Union, which is where Pastor Rolly's congregation is. We played for a while with some of the children – throwing tops and chasing them. In the evening we had fellowship with the youth. We played games and sang some songs with them, and they also sang for us. It is fun to see how Pastor Rolly relates to his congregants – they seem to have a very respectful friendship with one another. We are here for several days, so it will be good to have a bit of rest. We have also been asked to sing a song at a wedding on Saturday, so we decided on "Hearts of Servants".

Time for some sleep! I'll write again this weekend!
Peace and Prayer,
Luke



Luke Kuenzli

Date: 3/7/2008
Submitted by: David Peet
Journal Entry:

March 7, 2008

It has been fun to be with Pastor Rolly and his home congregation. Another funny story and insight into our team is that we thought after ILS we would not actually lead another workshop that involved the construction of puppets. However, we were wrong! Pastor Rolly asked us to lead a workshop with some of his youth to make puppets! So we've done it again! I have found that I am utterly useless in constructing puppets. But it went really well and the youth seemed to enjoy it. They didn't finish them today, but they are supposed to come back this weekend and show them to us once they finish.

We had our program tonight as well. It's been really nice as Pastor Rolly is able to come up and talk about the skits and the puppet show and sum things up. He is even now doing our intro to the puppet show. It has been fun to see him become part of the program and also to see him interact with the congregations.

It is very peaceful up in the mountains. We are away from all the lights, sounds, and music of the cities. It has been great because when the sun goes down, it is dark and things quiet down. The atmosphere and the feel of the people is very relaxed and sincere. I think that we could all agree to spend more time here and we are excited about our time to come in the highlands!! Alright, I'll catch ya later!!

davepeet



David Peet

Date: 3/9/2008
Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli
Journal Entry:

The weekend was fairly busy, yet also relaxing. I'll highlight the busy parts:

Saturday we attended the wedding of Jasmin and Angelo in the afternoon prepared to sing "Hearts of Servants" after the sermon, which we did. As we were waiting for the ceremony to begin, we were asked to also sing during the processional. We asked what they wanted us to sing, and they said any Christian song... We ended up, because weddings are celebrations and glad occasions, singing "This is the Day" and "Rejoice in the Lord Always" while the wedding party made



Luke Kuenzli

its way to the front. The wedding followed pretty much the same format as we were used to, so it wasn't too hard to follow, but there were some differences. Another surprise was that after the wedding, there were 2 baptisms! After the baptisms, we were asked to sing again for the recessional. We sang "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing", with some of the lyrics written down for those who didn't know them. Unfortunately, there are 2 versions of the first verse, and I know the one that was not written down, so verse one I got lost. Mid-way through verse 2 the lyrics ran out, so we lost two voices, and finished the song with three of us singing. But it worked, and we were glad to have been able to be a part of the wedding! We were invited to the reception for dinner, then we returned to Pastor Rolly's for some flash games on the computer before going to bed.

Sunday early morning, the music from the reception was still playing... at 6:30. It wasn't too loud, but it was weird to wake up occasionally and hear the same bass beat from midnight to 6:00... Bible study started at 10-ish, and as we sat in the back, Ua and Jenny were pulled away to teach a song or two to the kid's Sunday School class. After about 1.5 hours of Bible Study, worship started with us singing the prelude "Majestic". We then sang "Come and Listen" for 3 more baptisms! (that makes 6 baptisms and 1 wedding). After worship, we sang "Instruments of Peace". We were then asked to sing one more for those who were not able to be at our program Friday night, so we did "Gonna Dance" for them. It is always fun to see the older members start with an incredulous look on their faces, then they all end up dancing and smiling too... After a quick lunch and packing, we departed Baay and made the trip to Baguio. I smell pines and the air is cool! It seems weird here in the Philippines...

Date: 3/10/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Baguio City, North Luzon, Philippines (Monday)

We have arrived in the city we've heard so much about! In nearly every place we've been here in the Philippines, we have heard people tell us how beautiful and "cold" Baguio will be. As it is the home of the Lutheran seminary in the country, and center of the largest Lutheran district in the Philippines (the North Luzon Highlands, with over 52 congregations), we knew we would eventually wind up here during our travels. However, we began to wonder if our expectations of this city would be fulfilled after such anticipation!



Jenny Shaw

Having spent our first day off in a few weeks here today, I think we are all very happy to say Baguio IS beautiful, the weather is cool and refreshing, and the seminary where we are staying is a wonderful resting place. There are pine trees everywhere, reminding us all of home, and gentle white doves grace the very clear blue skies we see in the mornings. There are delicious coffee shops within walking distance (which is perhaps one of my favorite features – my first latte in months tasted so good!), and we actually get to wear fleeces & hats at night to stay warm (although cold for us now means sub-80 degree weather after our time in the Southern part of the country!)

Despite the beauty around us, the excitement of another new part of the Philippines, and the comfort of a real day off, I found today to be one of my harder days overseas (not sure why these tend to fall on journal days – I really have been having one of the best times of my life, but today was just difficult!) Perhaps it was the familiarity of pine trees and coffee shops, or the e-mail from home notifying me of the death of an elderly great aunt, or just the realization of the fact that we've been overseas for 2 months now. Whatever it was, I was overcome with a sincere homesickness. For the first time, I began to really see the sacrifice made in coming so far from home to do ministry, and of joining a traveling team for a full year.

In the midst of a tough day, I can still say that these moments of longing truly are rare, and I am thankful to have them because I know they mean I have a dear community of friends and family who love me and are praying for me. I will bear these days of homesickness with joy and thanksgiving, because I know how blessed I am by the relationships I so miss.

Date: 3/11/2008
Submitted by: Carly Tonkin
Journal Entry:

Tuesday, March 11, 2008 – Baguio City, Luzon, Philippines – Lutheran Theological Seminary

This morning Pastor Rolly and Vicar Eric brought us around Baguio to see some different things in the city. We went to the garden in the sky where we got to walk around and see some beautiful artwork and Kalinga huts. We went up to peak over looking the city and then the Philippines Military Academy. We also passed by a country club that used to be the US military base. Tomorrow night we will be doing a program at La Trinidad Lutheran Church so we went there to see the church today. Pastor Rolly maneuvered the seminary van through the vegetable dealers to the church, which was built in 2003.

We had dinner tonight at Pastor Felipe's parsonage at St. Steven's Lutheran Church. Pastor Felipe is in charge of our schedule while we are in Baguio and it was fun to get to know him a little better. Tomorrow we will have to say goodbye to Pastor Rolly. We have really enjoyed his friendship and company. He has helped us so much in translating our programs and has been a good guide. He has driven us all over northern Luzon in the seminary van and we have really appreciated everything that he has done for us. It seems like as soon as we really start to get to know the pastors that we travel with, we have to say goodbye to them. As much as you might think that our ministry impacts the people of the congregations we visit, I think it has the biggest impact on the pastors. That is really neat to see and I hope that never changes in the ministry of the New Dawn teams.



Carly Tonkin

Date: 3/11/2008
Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli
Journal Entry:

Message from the Youth Encounter office (this is not Luke).

The International Teams Fall Tour Newsletter is now available for download.

[Download Now.](#) (You will need Adobe Reader 6.0 to view this file)



Luke Kuenzli

Date: 3/12/2008
Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar
Journal Entry:

Baguio, Luzon, Philippines

Pastor Rolly left us today. He has been with us for the past few weeks. We have made many memories with him and shall not forget him. It was a joy to see him with his congregation in Baay this past weekend. They truly appreciate the man that he is and the work that God has given him to do. May this work be blessed and may he be blessed wonderfully.



Joshua Vandercar

Vicar Erik has also been traveling with us for a few weeks now and will be leaving us tomorrow. Tonight we were able to visit his home church of La Trinidad Lutheran. And what a blessed time it was. Having had no programs for the past several days, it was a joy for us to be again playing, singing, and sharing the great message of the peace of Christ. Jenny often says in our program that we have been welcomed again and again as family by those we encounter here in the Philippines. This was so truly evident this night. God is good to us. We thank Him for the opportunities He has given us and the people He has brought our way. May His name be glorified in all we do. And may He bless you today with good things.

Date: 3/13/2008
Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli
Journal Entry:



Luke Kuenzli

Today we awaited word about when we would be leaving Baguio - after lunch, or tomorrow morning. While we waited, we slept! Dave got the text at 9 am that informed us that we would not be leaving until tomorrow, so... I continued to sleep! Lunch was at the local 50's diner, where we had the "Men on the Hood" combo meal - alot of food in the "American" style. Greasy, but good. We spent the afternoon with Vicar Erick and his girlfriend Flor at Burnham Park, where we threw the frisbee around for a while. We bid farewell to Erick there. It was such a pleasure to meet him and to travel with him - he showed us such a great example of serving others. He will make a wonderful Pastor when he finishes Seminary! The rest of the day was spent lazing around and making sure we were ready to go for a morning departure, bound for Sinipsip.

Date: 3/16/2008
Submitted by: David Peet
Journal Entry:



David Peet

March 16, 2008

Well it has been an eventful weekend!!! We left the seminary in Baguio Friday morning to start our time in the highlands. Our contact, Pastor Luis, is with us now and he will be taking care of us and helping us out for the next couple of weeks. We arrived Friday at Sinipsip. Carly wasn't feeling too well and it was cold, much colder than our other places we have been.

The program went well that evening and we stayed in a family home that evening. We woke up to one of the more incredible views that I have seen in my life. We were able to see the different places in the mountains that we would be traveling to the rest of our time there.

On Saturday, we got up and traveled to Guinzadan with Pastor Luis. The roads were rough and dusty, but it was good. We stayed in the home of Pastor Aldin and his family. His daughter Alarene took care of us and was our main contact in Guinzadan. We were lucky enough to catch the last day of their town festival. It was called a Bugnas. We actually ended up singing five songs at the festival and participating in various events. Carly and Jenny participated in the cultural dances and Carly actually got engaged during one of the dances. But don't worry everyone, the man is already married, so it's not for real. But if it had been, she would be engaged right now! Haha! Luke got to participate in the catching of the pigs. He got to wear some traditional dress and then they tried to catch greased up native pigs. He was close, but it didn't quite work out. If you want to see pictures, you'll have to ask Luke. I highly recommend that you ask him to see them. They're pretty good!! That night we played cards and taught some members of the church and their youth the game as well.

On Sunday, we attended service at St. Paul Lutheran Church. However, Bible study was not well attended due to the huge boxing match between two Filipinos. That afternoon we did our program in an open gym. It was fun as there were many people there, probably over 300. In the middle of our program, it started to downpour. We had to stop the program because we couldn't even hear ourselves with a microphone over the rain on the tin roof. But it was good. Most people waited around so we finished our program. After the program we went back to the Pastor's house and had some fellowship with the youth. They shared songs with us and we talked and chatted until we were ready to rest.

So that's the weekend. It was a good weekend and we are enjoying the nice temperature decline as summer seems to be approaching quickly. Alright, that's all I have to say, so I'm going to go!!

Peace!

Date: 3/17/2008
Submitted by: Jenny Shaw
Journal Entry:

Catlubong, Benguet, Luzon, Philippines

Just another day in the life of New Dawn...

We traveled from Guinzadan today via bus, van & truck, and waited over an hour for the bus to come (because the first two buses to show up were so full they wouldn't allow us to get on, partially because they didn't want to force Americanos to stand.) Finally, the 3rd bus to come along allowed us to get on, and several men jumped on top to strap our bags & instruments on. We then crammed into the aisle ways to stand until enough people exited and we could find seats to settle in for a long ride. The crazy thing was, even though there were people who'd been standing much longer than us, they all offered us seats first – its like we are visitors in their country and so even strangers treat us as though we were honored guests in their homes!

After a bumpy bus ride, we got off and walked a little ways to wait for the "ELF" truck. After waiting 30 minutes, our contact decided we couldn't wait any longer and convinced a van to drive us until we met up with the ELF. It was only about 20 minutes before we found the truck, and transferred all of our luggage to this new vehicle. While Carly & I were offered the front of the truck (because we are girls), the boys all rode in the back of this large flat bed truck, standing & hanging onto ropes strung through the middle as a handle. We were actually a little jealous of their adventuresome experience, although we still enjoyed the journey, passing lots of trucks carrying everything from cabbages to chicken dung and milkfish to the remote towns & villages here in the Highlands. The road mostly looked like a dried up, rocky creek bed, and I had to work to relax my body so that I would not be too bruised from the bouncing ride. As we drove, we continued to be amazed by the many, many mountains surrounding us, and the terraced, patterned beauty that marks their cultivated slopes.

We arrived and found a very excited, nervous group of people awaiting our arrival, and we soon discovered that this town had never before seen a New Dawn team and there even seemed to be many children who had never before seen a person of white skin. We hiked to the church (built up on the top of a very high hill), and hungrily ate a delicious lunch of Pork Adobo & saba (bananas). The congregation made sure we got some rest in the afternoon after our long day of travel and all of us ended up sleeping over 2 hours, apparently more worn out than we thought), and we were all refreshed for our 5:30 pm program!

For once, the church was almost full by 5:30 "American time" (meaning on-time) and you could feel how excited the people were! We began our program in the semi-darkness (the electricity here does not kick in until 6 pm in the evenings), and by the time the lights came on, the church was packed with nearly 200 people and more were visible just outside, craning to listen. At the end of the program, the congregation sang the song "I love you with the love of the Lord" and every single attendee came forward to shake each of our hands and thank us for coming. It was a pretty amazing experience – everyone seemed so thankful! We were thanked over and over again in broken English. I met an especially memorable woman named Angie who told me about her adopting a 2 year old "dumped" baby (now 9 years old) and how she hopes one day he will grow just like my teammate Dave (also adopted). It touched my heart to see how much love she seemed to show.

To end the day, the congregation generously fed us a wonderful dinner of boiled cabbage, milkfish & rice, and we made our way back to the host home to pump our Nalgene bottles full of filtered water, burn CD's for the congregation of our program (which we recorded), and rest for another full day tomorrow!



Jenny Shaw

Date: 3/18/2008
Submitted by: Carly Tonkin
Journal Entry:



Carly Tonkin

Tuesday, March 18, 2008 – Wangwang, Ifugao, Luzon, Philippines

Today we got to see both a pig and a chicken killed and butchered. This was the first time I had seen an animal being butchered so it was pretty interesting. It's quite a process. We rode on a bus through the mountains today from Catlubong to Wangwang. There were many times that we were very close to the edge of huge cliffs. Our bus driver was the first person to take a bus up on these rough mountain roads. That was in 2006, so it's comforting to know that he's experienced but 2 years still isn't that long! It was a very bumpy but beautiful ride.

When we arrived in Wangwang we had a 25 minute hike down mud stairs, a down-sloped road, and many stairs, that made our hike down to Tinago Falls seem like nothing! When we reached Grace Lutheran Church, at the bottom of our hike, we met Uncle Julian, the oldest man in Wangwang. He used to be a Pagan priest but converted to Christianity when he was in his 60's. He is very friendly, welcoming us over and over, and he was very good at speaking English.

We did a program tonight at Grace Lutheran and it was packed. There were people crowded at the windows to watch the program, since there was no more room inside. Some of the people walked for hours to see our program and would have to walk back the same distance after the program in the dark. Pastor Luis and Pastor Jerry helped translate the program and explain the skits and puppet show. That is so helpful when the people don't understand English very well. Tonight we sang "Unify Us" in the dialect of Kalanguya for the first time, which Vicar Eric translated for us a couple weeks ago. We continue to enjoy being able to sing that song with congregations in their native dialect (we have had help to translate it into 5 dialects).

It is so beautiful here in the mountains and some of the views nearly take my breath away. I am amazed at God's creation every time I go outside. The CR (comfort room....aka restroom) here in Wangwang is on the side of the mountain with not much of a door, so as you are using it you are looking out over the mountains. It is such a beautiful view. I can definitely say that I have never experienced anything like that before.

The people of the highlands are wonderful, continuing to welcome us as the family of God. They have taken care of us, with whatever we need from transportation, to food, to places to sleep, and time to rest. We are enjoying learning more about the highland cultures. It is definitely a different life style up here and I love experiencing the new things. Tonight we got to try dog meat for the first time.

Date: 3/19/2008
Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar
Journal Entry:



Wangwang to Tinoc, Luzon, Philippines

We climbed the mountain in Wangwang this morning ... and climbed ... and climbed. Winding along the road suspended in the sky, the bus took us back to Tinoc. And here we rested.

i never imagined a bus could take such a road. Maybe soon i'll write a song about the journey. i wrote these lines on a dust covered guitar as we took a similar trip through the mountains in the back of a jeepney ...

The clouds about these mountain peaks

*Trees and terraces rise from the deep
The sunshine visits the valley below
As waters fall from heights unknown*

The roads are narrow, the cliffs fall steep, and beauty is all about. The driver who brought us to Wangwang was the one who pioneered the road three years ago, but the driver who returned us here to Tinoc was young - training, without a license, and good. Travel is tough and trying at times, but we are enjoying the journey.

May all your travels give you a glimpse of the good things and the better land that we walk on into day by day.

Date: 3/20/2008
Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli
Journal Entry:



Luke Kuenzli

Today we awoke at around 9:30 for breakfast and a short hike to Bethlehem Lutheran Church (Also in Tinoc). On the way, we stopped at the home of a member of St. John's to sing for their 14-year old bedridden son, Agido. After some prayer and a snack, we continued on to Bethlehem Lutheran and had lunch and rest before our 3:30 program. People were ready to go earlier than 3:30! Last time New Dawn was in the area, they were booked, but because of illness and fatigue, did not make it up to Bethlehem, so they had been waiting for three years for us! We had a good two-hour program there and then headed back down the hill to the house in which we are staying. Some of the young men from Bethlehem carried our instruments there and back for us, while we carried nothing on our backs. It is hard for me to accept sometimes when others take my burdens for me. I often feel that I am not doing my own part - I would rather share the burden then give all of it over. But it is a good lesson for me. Part of serving others is allowing them to serve you. So I am humbled and grateful. I hope every one keeps this lesson in mind tomorrow - Good Friday, when Jesus took ALL of our burdens on himself.

Happy Maundy Thursday!

Date: 3/21/2008
Submitted by: David Peet
Journal Entry:



David Peet

March 21, 2008

Happy Good Friday! Or maybe Sad Good Friday? We are in Tinoc, Ifugao. It is one of Pastor Jerry's congregations. We attended the Good Friday service and then we proceeded to have a two hour program afterwards. It was a bit different doing things on Good Friday, but we found that we didn't have to tweak the message too much. We just didn't talk on the resurrection, but we were still able to focus on his death and sacrifice and what that means for us and how we are brought back to God through that.

It is always good to remember his crucifixion and what that meant. It was fun to hear our favorite individual memories from the Easter weekends of our past.

After the program we came back to the house. They do not have very good electricity here, so once it gets dark, things really settle down. I'm not sure if it is a battery or a generator, but they use it to generate some light, but it still calms down. So we looked through some pictures with the borders at the house and then we went to bed.

Life is good in the mountains and highlands. It is very peaceful, quiet, and the people are very selfless and caring. It is a great reminder and humble example for us to see and experience.

Peace!

Date: 3/22/2008
Submitted by: Jenny Shaw
Journal Entry:



Jenny Shaw

Easter Weekend! March 22-23, 2008

Tawangan, Ifugao, Luzon, Philippines

I have been looking forward to spending Easter in the Philippines for quite some time, though it is very hard to believe it is already here and we've been in the country for 10 weeks now! Saturday morning, after a Good Friday service in Tinoc with Pastor Jerry (one of our traveling guides), we packed up our bags & handed them off to the youth of the church in Tawangan (who rose at sunrise to hike to Tinoc in order to carry our bags for us – the hospitality here is at times alarming!). Then we set out to walk 2 hours or so to the village of Tawangan (to which there is no good road), where we would be spending the Easter holiday.

As we walked among the beautiful mountains, past small waterfalls and through life-giving streams, my heart was full of the beauty of this country & the rugged countryside we have had the privilege of seeing. I also thought of Easter the next day, and of how many hundreds (thousands?) of miles Jesus and his followers must have walked, carrying news of the Kingdom. I was a little bit in awe of the fellowship I shared with them today in walking through the steep terrain to bring a message of peace and love to a remote place in a foreign land, dependent upon the hospitality of strangers to get me through and provide for my basic needs. It was fun to know that I'm going to spend Easter with brothers and sisters I've never met before.

After an afternoon of rest following our long walk, we spent the evening as a team, huddled in the boy's quarters (where the only light in the upstairs of the house resided, run on the power generated from a mini-hydro power source which operates for the town from 6 pm to 6 am.) We played cards, read, and journaled, enjoying one another's company. I find that my love for these 4 other people grows deeper all the time, and I am already dreading the goodbyes that will come at the end of our time together in August.

Easter Sunday! We awoke to a breakfast waiting for us of sweet cake, sweet potatoes, sweet buns (notice the trend?), cinnamon rolls, and fried eggs (one of our only rice-less meals!) It was fun to notice the special foods and appreciate the effort that went into them, and it gave us the energy to climb the hill to the church where we gathered for a 3 hour worship service to celebrate the day. While I missed hearing "He is Risen!" and responding with "He is Risen Indeed!" and singing "Christ the Lord is Risen Today," I found it was very good to see and experience the simple celebration of Christ's resurrection in this small mountain village. While there was not a whole lot that seemed out of the ordinary in the service, the joyful atmosphere emanating from the people around us was unmistakable. I even wept during communion as I stood side-by-side with my teammates at the Lord's table, celebrating the terrible and wonderful sacrifice He gives us in His body & blood while the youth of the church behind us belted out "And I Will Raise Him Up...on the Last Day" over and over again. Tears of bittersweet joy streamed down my face as I reflected on my own frailty & brokenness, and God's incredible goodness that extends beyond national borders.

After a quick lunch (as all the people in the church were waiting for us to return for an afternoon program!), we returned to find the church much fuller than before (over 300 people filled the sanctuary!) As a team, we had a lot of fun incorporating Easter into our program & celebrating with so many the joy we have in the resurrection. It was a joyous & precious Easter that I will never forget.

Date: 3/24/2008
Submitted by: Jenny Shaw
Journal Entry:

Balay, Benguet, Luzon, Philippines

Another big travel day! We started out in a dump truck (boys standing in the back, girls in the front), braving the very rough road ahead from Tawangan to Balay. We finally met up with a Jeepney which was coming from Balay, and transferred our things to the Jeepney.

When we arrived in Balay, we found another group of people very excited to have us. The last time they'd seen a New Dawn team was in 1995, and yet they still remembered the team members they'd met and the songs they'd sung. The impact prior teams have made on the people we meet continues to amaze and humble us.



Jenny Shaw

Continuing in the vein of incredible hospitality we've been shown, the church in Balay first offered us a "marienda" (snack) of native-grown coffee and sweet bread, before showing us to the upstairs Sunday school rooms where we'd be sleeping. They encouraged us to rest before our program in the evening, which we gratefully agreed to do.

We were soon awakened by the noisy sanctuary filling below us, still nearly an hour before our program was scheduled to start ("Philippino" time has certainly been difficult to figure out!) Our program began as soon as we'd finished setting up, and it seemed more people showed up with every song we sang. Some fun notes from it: Luke's puppet Belvil accidentally flew over the puppet curtain today and I about peed my pants while trying to wrap up the puppet show because I could see our contacts (Pastor Luis & Pastor Jerry) cracking up behind the pulpit directly in my line of sight!) Also, I broke another guitar string tonight, which makes 6 for me (and 45 for Joshua!), but I'm still proud of six.

To close this journal, I will simply describe that after 2 ½ months here in the country, and especially as we've been spending time here in the rugged mountain Highlands, I find I'm finally adapting to the culture & the environment to where many things seem normal. For instance, I have gotten used to (and even begun to enjoy) not having electricity available, squatting to pee, cold nights without heat, hiking sometimes several miles before reaching a remotely located church, eating with my hands or with just a spoon, kissing women on the cheek to say goodbye, pumping all of our drinking water through a filter, taking cold bucket showers, hand washing my clothes, wearing the same 3-4 sets of clothes all the time, washing my hair once a week, having most little kids run away when I smile at them, and generally living in a much simpler (yet strangely more enjoyable) fashion. There are so few things I have back home that I really need, and there are many luxuries which are perhaps distracting me from my life rather than adding to it. For me, the challenge now lies not in adapting to this culture, but adapting the person I have become in this culture to the person I will be when I return to my own.

Date: 3/25/2008

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Tuesday, March 25, 2008 Babalak, municipality of Kabayan, province of Benguet, highlands of the island of Luzon, Philippines

Last night was really cold. We are up in the highlands and last night I wore all four of my long sleeved shirts and my fleece inside my sleeping bag. I never would have thought that I would have used all of my warm clothes at once here, on the same island where it's 90-something degrees in Manila.



Carly Tonkin

This afternoon we did a program at Ambangeg Elementary School in Bukod. There was a little girl in the front during the program that smiled at me the whole program as she did the actions to the songs along with us. I would smile back at her, which would make her grin even bigger. After the program I got to meet her. She told me that her name is JoAnn and that she is in grade 1. We had to leave pretty quickly after our program so that the students could get back to class. When we left JoAnn waved to me until we were out of sight. Even though we did not share in a long

conversation or spend lots of time together, the brief interaction between JoAnn and me had an impact on both of us, even if just for a short time. It is these little moments that make me so excited about going to a new place, meeting new people.

We are going to bed early tonight and waking up at 2:30 am to climb the second highest mountain in the Philippines, Mount Pulag. It's an 8km hike and we are hoping to make it to the summit by sunrise. During our time here in the highlands we have been going to churches surrounding Mount Pulag, seemingly running circles around it. As Pastor Luis put it, "We've been going around this mountain enough! It's time to climb it!"

Date: 3/26/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Mt. Pulag, Luzon, Philippines

i am sick ... and i climbed a mountain today. We awoke at 2:30 this morning and began the 2hour 45minute hike to the top of Mount Pulag. During the ascent my mind was just as clouded as the rolling grassland summit that seemed to stretch on and on and on into oblivion. Eventually, minutes after the sun rose and set the clouds to dancing about the nearby peaks, we reached the peak. In the cold, cold heights we enjoyed a breakfast of hot dogs and rice. Such a simple breakfast had never tasted so good. After an hour or so atop the mountain we began the trek down. i was reminded of Christian's passage through the Valley of the Shadow [*Pilgrim's Progress*] and how, in the light of day, he looked back upon the path and saw all through which he had gone. We, too, had unknowingly walked a narrow path, from which, in places, one step would have sent us tumbling down the steepes. We had passed through the mossy forest - a place of fairy tales and children's stories. All that seemed strangely familiar on the sunlit path was the rise and fall of the land and the rocks which guided our every step through the dark morning.

We are often given the opportunity to look, with open eyes, upon the past. Illumined with the light of experience, humility, and the grace of God, we are able to see the joy in the sorrow, the peace in the suffering, and the fullness of the story in which we live. i have also been reminded of such things as we stand before congregation after congregation and as others stand about in the dark to catch a glimpse of this Good News. Tears are held by Pastor Luis tonight, as we join together in our final program together, and he sees Mt. Pulag Lutheran Church filled for the first time in years. I think back to the many people i have encountered over the past several years. Face after face of brothers and sisters of the great family of God ... from Ghana to Nigeria, from India to Indiana, from the Philippines to many a city of the States. What a wondrous world of living and active people of God. May you be granted a fuller awareness of the greatness of the family of followers of the Way!



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 3/27/2008

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Today was a purely travel day from Mt. Pulag to Baguio. The bus we rode had to stop twice - once for brakes and once because someone had siphoned a good amount of gas out of the tank, so we ran out. But we did make it back to Baguio, albeit 2 and a half hours later than expected. Pastor Luis and Vicar Matthew will be departing tomorrow, so we will once again say goodbye to friends we have travelled with. We hope to see them again on April 4 for Pastor Jerry's wedding, but we may have a booking on that day. Whatever God wills. For dinner, we did the unthinkable. We ate Pizza Hut at the mall. I know, I know... We asked if there was another pizza place and were told there was not, but our informant was apparently misinformed. We found out after we ate that there were in fact two other pizza places - a local place and a Shakey's, which is a US chain, but I think it might be a southern states chain, because I have not had it before, to my knowledge. Tomorrow we will celebrate Carly's birthday!



Luke Kuenzli

Date: 3/28/2008
Submitted by: David Peet
Journal Entry:



David Peet

March 28, 2008

Well, it is Carly's birthday today!! Happy Birthday to Her! It has been a whirlwind of activity the last couple of weeks. Today is our first day of rest after doing 11 programs in 12 days. Most of the day was spent at the local mall as we were able to get on the internet and re-establish contact with our families and friends. We took our lunch at the mall and hung out there for awhile. We went out for dinner with Pastor Phillip and the council president of his congregation. It was probably one of the larger meals that we have eaten. After that, we came back to the seminary apartment and relaxed and played some cards.

It's weird because it seems to take at least a couple of days to decompress after going for so long. So it didn't quite seem like a day off yet, but hopefully tomorrow will be more relaxed. Tomorrow is Luke's birthday so the celebration continues!

Date: 3/28/2008
Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli
Journal Entry:



Luke Kuenzli

Message from Youth Encounter Staff (this is not Luke)

The [New Dawn Overseas Newsletter](#) is now available for download.

Date: 3/29/2008
Submitted by: Carly Tonkin
Journal Entry:



Carly Tonkin

Weekend journal – March 29-30; Lutheran Theological Seminary. Baguio City, province of Benguet, Philippines

Happy Birthday Luke! Saturday was Luke's 23rd birthday and Friday was my 21st birthday. It's been fun to celebrate our birthdays together overseas. For dinner on Saturday we went to Shakey's Pizza and it was so tasty! When we first arrived in the Philippines, we all wanted nothing to do with food that we could get in the U.S. We wanted to have Filipino food. Now that we have been here for a few months, we welcomed the familiar taste of pizza. It's not that we don't like the Filipino food, we actually love it, it was just a comforting taste of home.

Celebrating my birthday overseas was fun, but it also made me miss home more than I have before. Not being with my family and friends and doing things the way we normally do them on my birthday was different.

On Sunday we attended Bible Study and worship at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. This was the first Bible Study and worship in English that we have been to in a long time. Here in Baguio City there are people from all over speaking so many different dialects, that it would be hard to choose one dialect for worship, so the common ground is English. We sang a couple songs during the worship service and then did our program after worship. There were a lot of people that we had met along the way at our program. Baguio is called the "Summer Capital of the Philippines" as many people come here for vacation during summertime, because it's so much cooler than most other places. So it was really fun to see so many familiar faces and to have people remember some of the words and actions to the songs we sing.

After our program we walked over to the Baguio Mandarin Restaurant with Pastor Felipe and the church council president, Sam. We shared a good meal and the five of us attempted to use chop sticks. We better start preparing for Taiwan!

Back at the seminary, where we are staying, we had dinner with some of the seminarians, Sam, Pastor Felipe, and Pastor Luis. It's been fun being able to spend time sitting and talking with them. It has also been nice staying in one place for a while. The seminary has kind of become our home base. We have our own apartment and it is a very nice place to stay. We have also enjoyed getting to know a couple of the Korean students that are studying at the international school here. Our team is doing well, aside from fighting off some colds. We are getting some much needed rest here at the seminary in Baguio.

Date: 3/31/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Monday, March 31, 2008

Baguio City, Benguet, Philippines

The importance of games to our team dynamics cannot be fully described in words, but suffice it to say that without them, I have no idea how we would function as a group. All of us love games, and today, a day off for us in Baguio, we enjoyed our fill.



Jenny Shaw

From "Text Twist" on the computer, to any and every card game we can think of (and mostly, we create the games rather than borrow other people's ideas), to throwing a Frisbee, basketball, football, or volleyball around, every one of the 5 of us loves a good game. Today, we set out for the park in the early afternoon (still cool outside, thanks to the mountain air), with a Frisbee and some water, and walked about 1 ½ kilometers to Burnham Park, the largest park in the city, right in the center of town.

When we arrived, we spread out into a very large pentagon shape and began to stretch our arms by hocking the Frisbee as far as it would go and making one another run to catch it. The large open space was freeing, even though people surrounded us on every side, as there are few open fields (that aren't used to grow food) to be found in the Philippines. It was only a few minutes before we heard the youth behind Dave and me calling to us to let them try and catch the disc. After a few minutes of their persistent yet tentative calling, Dave threw it to them and they laughed in merriment at being included in this foreign game, and then gave their best attempt at tossing it back. Before we knew it, over 25 boys had joined the game and our "pentagon" had become a very large circle. While we got much less exercise due to the fact that now 30 people were playing with one Frisbee, our joy at seeing so many strangers willingly and enthusiastically join our game more than made up for it. The camaraderie and fun that the boys who joined us experienced with our team, through participating in a simple throw and catch game, is hard to replicate in any other way. It crossed potential cultural, socio-economic, racial, and language barriers so quickly that all of us were surprised. Even though the 2 hours of playing went by fast and we will likely never see those boys again, we will always remember Frisbee in the park with our eager friends.

Date: 4/2/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Baguio, Philippines

Some days we just don't do a whole lot ... and rest is good. We have one week left here in the highlands and it will pass us quick. Our time has been good and God has been good to us in it. May you each be blessed in all that you do, wherever you may

be.

Date: 4/3/2008

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Today we left Baguio bound for Tinoc and the celebration of Pastor Jerry's wedding with Meriam! We rode a bus that was entirely filled with people going to the wedding! When we arrived, we found out that maybe 3,000 people would be attending (mostly people from Pastor Jerry's 11 congregations in the mountains)! There were 3 big old pigs boiled for the dinner tonight, and there will be 10 more tomorrow! It was neat to watch the process as our food went from pig form to meat and sausage form. We are here with most of the Pastors we have met in Luzon - Pastors Rolly, Luis, Jerry, Aldin, James, Chris, Felipe - and Vicar Matthew, as well as a new friend, Pastor Jimmy, who now lives in Arizona and actually went to Fountain of Life Lutheran Church for a year where I know someone in Tucson! Small world! The fellowship with Pastors reminded me of my dad and his friends a lot, so it was fun to hang out and talk with all. We did a devo and played some cards before bedtime too.

Peace - Luke



Luke Kuenzli



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 4/6/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Tinoc to Baguio, Philippines

It seems we are to begin our farewell to the Philippines.

Yesterday, we bid farewell to the newly-wed Pastor Jerry and Meriam, and began the journey back to Baguio. Carly, Dave, Jenny, Pastor Roly, Pastor Luis, and I were able to ride atop the bus for much of the return trip... roads we'd traveled before. What a blessing to cling to the luggage rack and about the spare tire and to have between us and the beauty of the mountains nothing but the joy of the seeing. We shared stories and jokes and we dodged the occasional water pipe, power line, and tree branch.

This morning then found us back at St. Stephen's Lutheran in Baguio. As most all churches have used the liturgy of The Lutheran Hymnal, with which I grew up, it has been a comfort to worship here in the Philippines. Though often in some local language, the familiar chant welcomes me to worship. We contributed one song during offering and after the service bid farewell to more friends.

From time to time, moments do still come when my thoughts just don't seem quite right ... when all seems less than I may have never hoped for. But may I let the truth reign ... the joy of the journey is ever increasingly present ... the sweet Lord is good to His fellow sojourners ... God is love ... God is good ... all the time. And for those of you who may also find yourselves in such a state at times ... hold to the truth ... climb atop the bus and look about with new eyes. The joy may be just within the seeing.



Joshua Vandercar

Date: 4/7/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Kayapa, Nueva Viscaya, Luzon, Philippines

Monday, April 7, 2008

Today was our last full day of programming in the Philippines, as our last 6 days in the country will be spent recording our songs for the church here, traveling back to Manila, and preparing to go to Taiwan. It was one of our longer days of ministry, as we began at 5 am, with Pastors Rolly and Luis accompanying us. The 3 ½ hour drive to Kayapa in the Lutheran Seminary van was beautiful as we watched the sun coming up over the hills of Baguio, and enjoyed seeing the mountain scenery one last time passing by on every side. It was fitting to have these two pastors along, as they had both traveled with us for several weeks during our time on Luzon Island, and their presence is always so comforting and fun. We will miss our pastor guides perhaps most of all as we leave the country.



Jenny Shaw

We had two programs today – one in the early afternoon that was mostly sing-a-longs and one in the evening for the adults and youth (and local basketball players who'd just finished their tournament next door to the open gym we were in). I grew very sad at the end of our 2nd program, during our singing of "Unify Us" for the last time in Kalanguya ("Panhakhakeymo" - the local dialect of many of the highland villages), while watching both my teammates and the crowd gathered nearly shouting out the words to such a powerful song, which everyone present understood.

It was a wonderful yet bittersweet moment and I realized how precious and familiar this beautiful country has become to me. I will miss the amazing, servant-hearted hospitality, the generous smiles and easy laughs of the Filipino people, the very real and passionate, fun-loving Lutheran pastors we've met and traveled with, the rice and eating with a spoon and fork (or just my hands), squat toilets (and I thought I'd never say that), banana and coconut trees everywhere, all the green hills and rice patties and ingenious terraces, banana cue and lumpia, panic, 5-in-1 instant coffee (actually – coffee 4 times a day), rice wine, "just jokes", "compress!", "picture-taking", "switch positions!", wrinkled faces of very wise elderly folks, ALL the children who are so fascinated and frightened simultaneously by me and my wide eyes, Jeepneys and their colorful names and artwork, mountains in every direction, hiking to get to communities inaccessible by road, learning new versions of "Unify Us", the incredible enthusiasm and thirst in the church to hear the word of God during a program, hundreds of Filipinos in front of me simultaneously raising their hands during "lord, I Lift Your Name on High", entire worship services in Ilokana, Cebuano, Kalanguya, Kankaney, Tagalog or even "Filipino English", the beautiful voices lifted in praise of the Sunday morning youth choirs, being considered a "youth" even though I'm 25 – just because I'm single, Mango shakes, Jollibee, Dave laughing out loud every time he successfully makes a joke with our contacts or hosts, Luke wearing a G-string (a cultural garb which covers very little), Carly getting fired up about not getting to do all the things the boys get to here because of their notions of women's fragility, Joshua getting excited over roasting native coffee beans himself, Sky Flakes, Jack fruit (ok, actually all the fruit), fried Camote (sweet potato), all the fresh veggies, rain storms that thunder on tin roofs, a lifestyle that is simple in its hard work and faith yet fulfilling and people centered, "Filipino-time", "American time" when its really "Filipino", not wearing make-up for 3 months and rarely looking in a mirror, "slippers" being appropriate any-occasion wear, and all the amazing genuine smiles.

Date: 4/8/2008

Submitted by: Carly Tonkin

Journal Entry:

Tuesday, April 8, 2008 Lutheran Theological Seminary, Baguio City, province of Benguet, Philippines

This morning Sam, the council president of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, went with us to the Baguio market. We wanted to buy some gifts for family and friends back home and also to buy some cultural clothing. Sam showed us exactly where to go, weaving his way through the market, and also helped us barter for the best prices. We were so glad that he was with us. He is a good companion and friend and without him we would have taken at least twice as long and paid twice as much. Jenny and I each bought a traditional woven skirt and the boys bought barongs (cultural dress shirt here in the Philippines). After getting everything we needed to, and knowing that our bags were going to be much heavier, we headed out of the market. A boy was following Dave and reached his hand into his pocket to take our team cell phone. Thankfully Sam



Carly Tonkin

turned around at the right moment, saw what was happening and yelled at the boy. The boy looked very scared, shoved the phone back at Dave and ran away. We were all pretty stunned, and Dave didn't even feel a thing when the boy tried to pick-pocket him. Not only was Sam a good companion and guide, but he was also our bodyguard.

When we got back to the seminary, we took pictures in our cultural clothing to send back to the office. It felt oddly like walking around Luther Dell, this past August, looking for a place to take our team pictures. The only thing missing was our photographer, Jenn Albert. We did have a trusty photographer though. Vicar Eric, who traveled with us and took pictures for us all during that time was back at the seminary and took the pictures for us.

For dinner tonight we went out to eat with Pastor Felipe, Sam, and Sam's daughter. It was a good way to spend our last night in Baguio, with people that have taken such good care of us. When we got back to the seminary we said our goodbyes, and the Pastor Rolly and Vicar Eric came up to our apartment. We looked at pictures on our computers, reminiscing about our time in the Philippines. I can not believe that we leave Baguio tomorrow, and that not too long after that, on Sunday we will be leaving the Philippines.

Date: 4/9/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Baguio to Manila, Philippines

It seems I am always put off the writing to our parting. Today we left the highlands, we left the cooler weather, we left what has been our home... and in leaving, we left many friends. Today we said farewell to Pastor Luis, Pastor Roly, Vicar Erik, and so many others with whom we have lived these past several weeks. This is truly one of the greatest challenges I have encountered while serving in such a ministry as we have with Youth Encounter. There is always the moving on and the leaving behind. For me, this moving and leaving has, over the past several years, been slowly, surely, shaping my life. As we traveled in our air-con bus from Baguio to Manila, I listened. I listened to AP and to other artists who have often spoke to the depths of my heart and to the longings of my life, but I also listened to the memories of the days gone, I listened to the love of today, and I listened for the dawning of a new day.



Joshua Vandercar

Andrew Peterson, *Haven's Grey*

Even though you know your heart is breaking
For a little longer still you must be whole
To love the life that's given for the taking
And to give the love the living is given for
And let it lead you to those shores
When you sail from Haven's Grey
Caught up on the wind and blown away
You'll bid goodbye to all your friends
And close your eyes on the shadowlands
I know you will open them again in the endless day
Of a love that dawns beyond the havens grey

The parting is the price, it is the price that I must pay
To harbor far beyond the Haven's Grey

May we ever find life in the living. May we ever find life in the leaving.

Date: 4/10/2008

Submitted by: Luke Kuenzli

Journal Entry:

Today was a pretty low-key day in Manila. We arrived back at Gloria Dei around midnight and promptly went to sleep. Really all we accomplished today was some practice and review of songs in Cebuano that we learned in Mindanao, and a one-on-one. It is so much hotter here in Manila than in Baguio! The natural air-con of the mountains has given way to the need for electric fans and a new appreciation of sweat! We're drinking a lot of water today so we are hydrated for our recording session tomorrow!



Luke Kuenzli

Date: 4/14/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Monday

Chiayi, Taiwan

First full day in Taiwan, and we have already done 7 programs here! Ok, they have been mini-programs (about 45 minutes each), as we are at the Concordia Middle School (which actually has K-12th grade) here in Chiayi, doing programs for individual classes.



Jenny Shaw

Today, we enjoyed the classrooms, the teachers' enthusiasm for our ministry and programs, the vigorous clapping of all the kids after they hear one of our songs in Mandarin Chinese, the dumplings with soy sauce we ate for lunch (lots of them!), the large bottles of flavored tea that came with lunch, tossing a Frisbee and a *football* in the open field here at the school, and I even got to enjoy a hot shower this afternoon!

After our last program ended around 5 pm, we headed to the school's chapel for an evening Easter program by the Elementary school kids. They re-told the story of Jesus (beginning with Genesis & Creation, to Moses, Jesus' birth, life, and death, and finally, the resurrection.) It was fun hearing ALL the Taiwanese kids do their best with their English to re-tell the story to their parents and family members (many of whom my not have heard the full story ever before.) By the end of the program, all of us were pretty tired and very ready for something to eat.

Some of the teachers from the school who are hosting us (also from the States), told us we'd bike to dinner, so I geared up for another harrowing scooter ride when I saw them all pulling out mountain bikes from a row of about 15 here at the house we are staying at (fondly referred to as the "Practice hotel".) Excitedly, I hopped on a bike and carefully followed our guide Mark through traffic of motorbikes and cars, buses, and taxis to a restaurant where the tables and chairs are all set in an outdoor covered garden with bamboo fencing. I was enthralled with the beautiful atmosphere, and when my salmon fried rice arrived, I fell in love. We sat and talked for a few hours, talking more about the different Asian cultures we've all experienced, the hard things about missionary work, and just sharing random fun stories between our team and the foreign teachers.

It was a great first full day in Taiwan, and even though it looks like we will be very busy here, we are all passionate about being here and the work that lies before us.

Date: 4/16/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Chiayi, Taiwan

Our days here have been full. Today was our first to visit Chiayi Girls' National High School. We will return here several times throughout this week and next and will visit the music classes taught by Yiwen. Her girls are a joy to be with. Their enthusiasm for songs and sharing has given us renewed energy for the long days we have been experiencing here in Chiayi. Following lunch today, one of the classes sacrificed their rest period in order to buy us tea drinks from the school store and tour us about their



Joshua Vandercar

campus. This afternoon Yiwen helped us begin the translation of *Unify Us* into Chinese. After school, we walked just across the street from the school and visited the downtown branch of the Concordia English Language Academy (CELA).

It is good to be here in Taiwan. Such a change from all we encountered in the Philippines. It is so soon that we will return to the States. May we embrace these final days here and may you embrace them wherever you may be.

Date: 4/21/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Chiayi, Taiwan

Monday

Another day at the Chiayi Girl's National High School in Taiwan, and it was FULL! We led six classes of about 40 girls each, many of whom have never heard much of anything about Christianity or Christ before. In approximately forty-five minutes, it is our privilege (and challenge!) to share with them who Jesus was, what we believe about him, and what that means to them. Rather than talking at them for the whole time, we try to use music, skits, puppetry, and short testimonies to explain (to girls who know very little English) the most important thing in each of our lives: our faith.

Some of you may be wondering why I just recapped our simple goal here during our year of ministry with New Dawn. "Of course that is what you do," you may be thinking. However, for me, amidst the many other concerns of language barriers, set lists, hoarse voices, fatigue, church rifts, kids who don't pay attention, team dynamics, and the tedium from doing the same stuff hundreds of times within a few months, I had (until recently) - lost sight of our main and simple purpose. Finding out that our forty-five minutes with these school girls may be the only time they ever hear the amazing news that they are LOVED by a God who created them, who died for them, who wants to dwell with them forever (starting now) quickly made me realize I needed to re-focus on the simple purpose.

After talking as a team about re-focusing our programs on the simple message we have to share, we now end all our programs (after singing "Unify Us" in Chinese) by telling the kids that we are not here in front of them trying to tell them what they should believe. Rather, we are encouraging them to keep seeking! In the Bible, God says, "If you seek me, you will find me, if you seek me with all your heart." I know full well that if I had grown up in Taiwan, I would likely have adopted my parents' religion (the most common being a mix of Buddhism, Taoism, and ancient folk beliefs surrounding ancestor worship), and also that I'd likely be reluctant to sway from that. Chiayi is only 0.4% Christian, and we are under no illusions that the majority of the students who grow up here are going to hear the gospel and immediately believe it to be true. Rather, we pray for them at the end of every class that the Lord will reveal Himself to them as they continue to seek, and we challenge them to not to settle for anything less than the truth.

Our schedule here in Taiwan has been a bit grueling, and our fatigue often threatens to overwhelm us, as we are growing weary of the constant travel and new cultures and languages. However, watching the girls at CGNHS drink in our words like life-giving water and hearing their barrage of questions regarding our faith and our testimonies after each program has given us new strength today. We hold on to the promise that even though we have such a short time with them, our part in their journey of faith is but a road-sign. The Holy Spirit goes with them, drawing them nearer to the truth than we ever could hope to, and our role is but to pray earnestly for their path - that it would lead them to experience a deeper and more real Love than anything else could ever provide.



Jenny Shaw

Date: 4/23/2008

Submitted by: Joshua Vandercar

Journal Entry:

Chiayi, Taiwan

Program after program after program. They come and go so quick. Another many classroom visits today. That filled the day.

The evening, however, brought us something fresh. We had the pleasure of joining our contact, Matt, and his family for dinner at their home. Matt is amazingly quite fluent in English, Spanish, and Chinese. His daughters are being raised to learn all three languages. Our time with them was such a blessing. We enjoyed an Indian meal, complete with lassis (rose and mango). They asked us many good questions about our experiences in the Philippines that helped us begin to process what the past **Joshua Vandercar** three months have meant for us. Praise the Lord for the work of this family here in Chiayi!



Date: 4/27/2008

Submitted by: Jenny Shaw

Journal Entry:

Tainan, Taiwan

Saturday/Sunday

Although we have only experienced two weekends so far here in Taiwan, they are fast becoming a favorite part of the week (for many reasons!) One, these are the times we get to spend the most time with people who are actually from the country, and therefore learn more of the language and culture surrounding us. Our weekdays are filled with quick programs and moving from class to class without much time for conversation, and our evenings are spent with the foreign (U.S.) teachers at the school at which we are staying. However, these last two weekends we have traveled via train about an hour south to Tainan, to visit different churches in the area.



Jenny Shaw

This weekend, we had the great fortune to visit Esther Chen, a friend of Dave's from several summers ago at Camp Wapo. She and her family's hospitality was incredible, and we greatly enjoyed our programs at their church, and our time visiting with them. On Sunday, after we had participated in worship with their small, store-front church congregation, enjoying the flow of the lively Chinese praise music and the passionate sermon from the pastor, Esther and her brother Enoch graciously treated us to a delicious Taiwanese meal! The food was SO good (and we masterfully ate it all with our chopsticks, well – almost masterfully), and we tried every dish Esther ordered! One of our favorite things about being here in Taiwan is that when we go out to eat, we cannot read one word of the menus (which are all in Chinese characters), so we must rely on our hosts or guides to order for us, the food that appears is always a welcome and fun surprise. Our extravagant meal (greatly enjoyed by all of us!) was one more example of our new friend Yiwen's statement that, "In Taiwan, food is how we show love." I know I hope to return to the U.S. with some new methods of showing people how loved they are.

Now that we have been two weeks in Taiwan, I find myself finally beginning to stop trying to compare it to the Philippines quite so much. The culture here is one that in many ways is more foreign than that of the Philippines, yet in others seems much more familiar. My thoughts are more steadily turning toward home and the next steps as we face our last week here in Taiwan, yet I find a profound sadness overtaking me at the thought of leaving Asia with no return assured to me in my lifetime. These next days will be bittersweet as each of us tries to say goodbye to this culture, with which we feel we were just getting acquainted.
