



RELIGION

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Former ministers to speak at event

Easton Heights Baptist Church will celebrate its 60th anniversary with a variety of events during 10:50 a.m. Sunday services in April.

The church at 2901 W. Easton St. was founded in 1948 as a mission church of Nogales Avenue Baptist Church.

On Sunday, the Day of Anticipation, the Rev. Billy Green, now retired, will speak. Green became a Christian, and later was ordained at Easton Heights more than 50 years ago.

On April 13, the Day of Acknowledgment, former pastor Jim McColloch will speak, and former minister of music Clay Killion will sing.

On April 20, the Day of Awakening, Fred Williams, a retired former pastor, will speak, and Bill Schaus, former minister of music, will sing.

On April 27, Day of Abundance, the Rev. Perry Cox will speak.

Each service will be followed by a reception in the foyer.

this week

LEARNING

Celebration of Orthodoxy 2008 with Matthew Gallatin, author of "Thirsting for God in a Land of Shallow Wells." Noon Saturday, **Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church**, 1222 S. Guthrie Ave.

Sixth annual Celebration of Faith with Dale Bruner speaking on "Jesus: The Heart of the Gospel." 5:30 p.m. dinner, 6:30 p.m. talk, Saturday and Sunday, Bernsen Center, 700 S. Boston Ave. Bruner also will speak at 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m. Sunday at **First Presbyterian Church**, 709 S. Boston Ave.

A travelogue of pictures and commentary on the Holy Land, "Journey to Jerusalem," by Ed and Gloria Helmutz. 6:30 p.m. Sunday, **University United Methodist Church**, 2915 E. Fifth St.

FELLOWSHIP

Bowling. Singles Fellowship of **Christ United Methodist Church**. 6 p.m. Saturday, Sheridan Lanes, 3121 S. Sheridan Road.

Car wash and bake sale to benefit missions and youth events. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, **Community of Hope, United Church of Christ**, 2545 S. Yale Ave.

Bean dinner. 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Saturday, **United Methodist Church of the Shepherd**, 2140 S. 67th East Ave.

"What Not to Wear When" with fashion consultant Kristi Aldridge. 7 p.m. Tuesday, **The Assembly**, South Campus, 3500 W. New Orleans, Broken Arrow.

MUSIC

Blackwood Brothers Quartet in concert. 6 p.m. Sunday, **Sheridan Christian Center**, 205 S. Sheridan Road.

Choral Evensong by the Trinity Choir, 5 p.m. Sunday; Cherie Wescott, organist, Oklahoma City, in concert, 12:05 p.m. Tuesday; Thomas Matthews Memorial Concert featuring Clive Driskill-Smith, Oxford, England, 7:30 p.m. Thursday, **Trinity Episcopal Church**, 501 S. Cincinnati Ave.

OTHER

New Messianic/Hebrew Roots fellowship praise and worship and Bible study led by ministers Jim and Connie King. 2 p.m. Saturdays, **Halleluyah Ministries**, 223 E. 117th St., Jenks. Halleluyahministries.net.

This Week offers churches and other groups an opportunity to publicize news items and upcoming events that may be of interest to people outside their organization. Continuing events may be published once when they begin. All articles are subject to editing and will be printed on a space-available basis. Items must be received in writing by 5 p.m. Wednesday for Saturday publication. Mail to Bill Sherman, religion writer, P.O. Box 1770, Tulsa, OK 74102; e-mail to bill.sherman@tulsaworld.com; or fax to (918) 581-8353.

Steps to freedom



Celebrate Recovery expands into prisons

By BILL SHERMAN
World Religion Writer

TAFT — The mood was jubilant Monday night as 111 inmates met in the crowded chapel of the Jess Dunn Correctional Center for a Celebrate Recovery Inside yard rally and graduation.

CR Inside is a rapidly growing prison ministry that takes inmates through a Christ-centered 12-step program designed to free them from the "hurts, habits and hangups" that landed them behind bars.

It is an extension of the Celebrate Recovery program found in many Oklahoma churches. Church Celebrate Recovery volunteers are taking the program into prisons.

Unlike most prison ministries, CR Inside trains inmates who have completed the program to be the peer mentors and facilitators for others.

"This is something that is theirs, something they are doing themselves," said James Remer, chaplain who initiated Celebrate Recovery at Jess Dunn two years ago.

"I'm 100 percent sold on this program."

He said Celebrate Recovery goes beyond drug and alcohol problems.

"These guys are dealing with a lot of things. I want to offer them something that will really impact them, settle the issues they're dealing with."

Mike McKenrick is the statewide director of CR Inside.

"I started it in 2003 out of the back of an \$800 van with one person to help me," he said. "It's just unbelievable where it's at."

The program is in 21 locations in the state, including four county jails and 17 state correctional institutions.

About 180 male and female inmates have gone through the 12-step program, called step studies, a process that takes about a year.

McKenrick said Jess Dunn was the first prison in the state to establish inmate Celebrate Recovery facilitators.

"It teaches them accountability and leadership," he said.

About 130 volunteers with Department of Corrections badges coordinate the program inside the prisons. All have completed the step studies themselves.

Volunteer Jeff Coleman went through the 12-step program at First Baptist Church in Inola and now goes to Jess Dunn about twice a month.

"The inmates are actually running it. We're just there for support, which is a wonderful thing," he said.

Coleman said he had had a lot of "clean time" from cocaine addiction over the past 20 years, but never really had full recovery until he went through Celebrate Recovery.

"Addictions are a symptom of a deeper problem," he said. "My compulsive behavior stemmed from an anxiety issue I had always covered up."

Monday's meeting was run by Bryan Ashworth, who has been incarcerated for six years in Oklahoma.



Photos by CORY YOUNG / Tulsa World

Inmates, including Jody Jones (above), lift their hands in praise during a chapel service at the Jess Dunn Correctional Center in Taft.

He handed out diplomas to more than a dozen inmates who had completed their step studies.

The meeting was a mix of personal testimonies and exuberant worship with a live band from Family Church of Tulsa.

"In my life there were hidden issues I didn't want to talk about," Ashworth told his fellow inmates.

"I was a rage-aholic. CR gave me the opportunity to slow down enough to deal with the real issues."

Transparency is the key to healing, he said. "Your issues are only hidden if you refuse to deal with them."

A similar graduation ceremony will be held in two weeks at Mabel Bassett Correctional Center, a women's prison with the state's only faith-based character pod, a living area for women who all have volunteered to pursue healing through spiritual means.

CR Inside's work does not stop at the prison walls.

McKenrick said CR Inside works with the Department of Corrections to help inmates adjust to life after prison.

Part of that adjustment is developing relationships with inmates inside of prison that continue after their release.

One former inmate now is the leader of a Cele-

brate Recovery chapter in a Tulsa church, he said.

McKenrick, a Celebrate Recovery volunteer who paints houses for a living, is on several state boards that deal with prison issues, including the 10-member Reentry Policy Council, a panel created in 2007 by the Oklahoma Legislature to oversee DOC re-entry policies and programs.

Prisoners who make a successful re-entry to society have a positive effect on society, instead of a negative effect, and save millions of dollars by cutting recidivism, McKenrick said.

Jan Thomas, national director of CR Inside, said the program started in 2003 after he incorporated Celebrate Recovery material into his prison ministry at Southern New Mexico Correctional Facility in Las Cruces, N.M.

Since then, CR Inside has grown to hundreds of jails and prisons in 45 states and eight foreign countries, he said.

Thomas is a retired prison warden living in Las Cruces.

Celebrate Recovery was developed in 1991 at Rick Warren's Saddleback Church, a megachurch in Southern California.

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Program helps inmates find road to hope

► Jess Dunn inmates discuss how they overcame "hurts, habits and hangups."

By BILL SHERMAN
World Religion Writer

TAFT — Several inmates at Jess Dunn Correctional Center talked about their lives Monday night at a Celebrate Recovery Inside meeting in the prison chapel.

Dean Newton said he had struggled with many addictions, depression and denial.

"Sex, drugs and alcohol was what I used to cover up my hurts, habits and hangups," he said, "and that just left me with more hurts, habits and hangups."

"In doing this (Celebrate Recovery), I've found hope for my life.



Mike McKenrick (left) hugs recovery graduate Preston Dubina during a chapel service Monday at the Jess Dunn Correctional Center.

"I'm not claiming to be perfect. I'm just a work in progress that God believes is worth it," he said.

Preston Dubina said he started in Celebrate Recovery two years ago. "I couldn't forgive anyone," he

said. "It was always their fault, not mine."

Dubina said he came from a dysfunctional background, but that did not excuse his bad behavior.

"I have learned how to face the facts. I have learned how to forgive people, and how to love people, because I'm a new creation in Christ," he said.

Stanley Gates said the program made him think about his hangups, and helped him make amends where he had hurt others.

"I realized it's not all about me. It's really set me free," he said.

"I've got more joy and peace now than I ever had on the outside."

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