



# AC3

ALLEN CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH

Bi-Monthly  
Newsletter

**Community  
& Connection  
Services COMBINE  
during December**



**Read God Rest Ye  
on page 2 and find  
out why...**

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**Kneepads, Pogo Sticks and Worship Spaces ~ By Rick Thiessen**

This week, I was trying to do some journaling when some music wafted from Dan’s office over to mine. This happens a lot, and is more or less distracting depending on A) the decibel level and B) the number of repetitions during ‘song under construction’ time. Fortunately in this case, the song melded nicely with my time of devotion and created a bit of an epiphany.

I don’t remember the words of the song actually, so the epiphany wasn’t about that. It was everything else. It was the effort being put forward in anticipation of the “great assembly” as Dan worked on a worship set, it was the anticipation in my own mind looking forward to when it would be sung by all of us, and it was the expansiveness of the music itself, the depth of it – it had a ‘big’ sound for our big God.

Like a flash, 3 mental tributaries that had been floating in my mind distilled into one river:

- 1) our building program that’s in a bit of crisis,
- 2) our current Community Series on Worship,
- 3) the amazingly old and historic houses of Christian worship I saw in my recent trip to Israel.

What do these things have to do with each other? If you’ve ever seen a very big, very old worship building like I’ve seen both in Rome & Israel, you’re usually struck by two thoughts simultaneously. First, that this is amazing architecture! Incredible effort, expense & human brilliance went into this masterpiece of art. This long lasting impressive monument, all this display, was for God – to express his Worth. But a common second thought is “this is kind of gaudy.” It’s big, showy and it seems the resources could have gone somewhere more useful for kingdom purposes.

Then I thought about our building. The process is stuck. We’re still seeing if we can reduce our costs (with our builder and with the city) so we

can be sure that we won’t run out of money half way through the renovation. If not, we’ll have to sell the warehouse we bought last year. In short, our new “cathedral” is in jeopardy. Our “cathedral” is not looking very majestic just yet and even when it does pan out, it will never be an ostentatious or showy place of questionable resource allocation.

But in our October Community service series on worship, we’re learning that our hearts of worship to our amazing God can reflect better than any song, or building, Christ’s worth, Christ’s radiance, Christ’s wonder.

And thus, my epiphany: *worship IS our cathedral.* That’s it. Worship is our cathedral. Worship... it’s the place we commit to put great effort, expense, human giftedness and excellence into a masterpiece of art; an offering for our worthy God. It’s so extravagant in effort and excellence that it may even appear a bit showy at times, but unlike a building or other Christian monument, it’s reproducible every week, it doesn’t get old or broken, it can’t be stopped by a lack of money, it’s no waste of resources, and it doesn’t drain a church to offer it up because the higher and better the offering, the more God fills that tabernacle with Himself and the more there is to offer.

Some would put great stock in leaving behind some glorious human architectural project as a monument to God that will impress future generations. It’s not completely without merit – I’d like us to have a worship space that’s supremely functional for our mission in this world. But I’m much more impressed with our main building project, AC3, to which we commit great resources: the worship and fame of the Living God. It’s a monument that leaves behind, not brick and stone, but changed lives – and that’s something that lives on in eternity, if not in the skyline just yet. Pastor Rick

## Community & Connection Services COMBINE during December

### Service Times:

★ Saturdays 7 pm  
(light dinner - 6:30 pm)

★ Sundays 10:30 am  
(donuts/coffee 10 am)

★ Dec. 28—ONE service only, Sunday 10:30 am

### What's Happening:

Dec. 6-7 and Dec. 13-14  
God Rest Ye - Advent

Dec. 20-21  
A Christmas Rewind

Dec. 21, Sun. 7 pm  
Candlelight Service

**Why the schedule change? Read...**



**God Rest Ye**  
Come and hang out early each week as the espresso cart will be open before and after services INSIDE the lobby!

Be ready to spread some Christmas cheer by saying 'hi' to someone you don't know at AC3 this holiday season.

*"If we lose sight of the fact that AC3 is a safe place where broken, confused, skeptical people who don't have their junk together can come and encounter Jesus Christ, we have lost AC3."*

## God Rest Ye - A Unique and Special Christmas Season at AC3

In the craziness that always seems to surround the holiday season, the Creative Planning Team was looking for something different for our services, something that would stand out and be meaningful, something that would be more than just noise to add to the confusion. With that in mind, we've made some significant changes to our December schedule that we wanted to let you know about. For December only, we've decided to combine the Community and Connection services into one service each day at the normal Connection service times (7:00 pm on Saturday and 10:30 am on Sunday). We will still be having our light dinner each Saturday at 6:30 pm and donuts and coffee will be out at 10 am on Sunday mornings. Our purpose is to slow things down, let everyone catch their breath and really enjoy the season. We have designed services that are intended to give us all a moment to experience the Peace, Hope, Joy and Love that should be the center of our Christmas celebration.

The weekends of **Dec 6-7 & Dec 13-14** we will be in a short series called **God Rest Ye**, a look at the message of Christmas through the Advent calendar in a contemplative, restful environment. Our hope is that you can leave your cares at the door as you enter and experience the good news. **Dec 20-21** is our big

holiday service weekend. We'll be doing **A Christmas Rewind**, a funny walk through the Christmas story that also includes some touching moments; a great service for you to invite family and friends. That Sunday night (**12/21**) we will add a special **Candlelight service at 7 pm**. The following weekend is another small break from our regular schedule. We'll only have **ONE Sunday 10:30 am service on the Dec. 28th** weekend to give everyone a chance to be together in the same room, so rare these days with so many services and all our busy schedules.

I hope you plan now to include these services into your December. Christmas has to be about more than over-scheduling, over-spending and over-eating. We want to give you a place where you can come to get away from it all, even if it's just for 1 hour a week. We guarantee the chaos will be waiting for us when we head back out the doors again, but maybe having spent a quiet moment with God, we'll all be better equipped to thrive during this December instead of just surviving it. That's our prayer for you and we look forward to spending this holiday season with you.



Johnna Thiessen & Creative Planning Team

## Brokenness ~ By Dan Hazen

I read the following quote in a book by Shane Claiborne called *Irresistible Revolution*, "...community can be built around a common self-righteousness or around common brokenness."

I love that quote. I hate most of the rest of the book...but I love that quote.

Claiborne's book is a call to revolution inside the church. He calls readers to abandon old, outdated ways of thinking and behaving, and to pull on the light, shiny, new cloak of social change and justice; living for others and not for self; to put off the stodgy, doctrinal wool coat of the modern church, and embrace a new kind of tolerance focused on eliminating suffering. Here's a another quote:

"We have always called ourselves a tax-exempt, 501c3 ANTI-profit organization. We wrestle to free ourselves from macro-charity and distant acts of charity that serve to legitimize apathetic lifestyles of good intentions but rob us of the gift of community. We visit rich people and have them visit us. We preach, prophesy and dream together about how to awaken the church from her violent slumber. Sometimes we speak to change the world. Sometimes we speak to keep the world from changing us. We are about ending poverty, not simply managing it. We give people fish. We teach them to fish. We tear down the walls that have been built up around the fish pond. And we figure out who polluted it." Now, here's my question, Do these sound more like words from a community built around a common brokenness, or a community built on self-righteousness?

*(continued on page 3)*

## Brokenness

(continued from page 2)

I don't mean to suggest that Claiborne and his group are the ONLY self-righteous Christian community out there. By no means. I use them to illustrate the point that simply calling for revolution only creates a new institution. Can you hear the seeds of intolerance and exclusivity in these words? It's pretty clear to me what "kind" of people would not feel welcome in this community.

As we move forward with our 5 year Strategic plan, we must be aware that creating change for the sole purpose of "fixing" something we feel is broken (even something as apparently noble as "eliminating" poverty), excludes our central binding value of shared brokenness.

This can happen on a personal level when we stop looking at the plank in our own eye as we focus on the speck in our neighbor's (Matthew 7:1-5) But it can happen on a corporate level too. If we lose sight of the fact that AC3 is a safe place where broken, confused, skeptical people who don't have their junk together (people like me!) can come and encounter Jesus Christ, we have lost AC3.

There will always be good things that if left to grow larger than our brokenness, will compete with it and eventually turn us into a group with a common self-righteousness: **Excellence, Charity, Relevance, Doctrine**, to name a few. It's not that these things don't belong, but that they must always flow FROM our brokenness. Our brokenness is what keeps us in touch with Jesus Christ (Matthew 9:12-13), and allows HIS power to flow through us SO

THAT we can be excellent, extend charity, maintain our relevance and LIVE OUT sound doctrine rather than simply spout it. In Luke 18:10-14 Jesus tells this story:

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Friends...it doesn't matter if you're a so called "conservative-family values-Bible teaching-old-time-gospel-preaching-wear your Sunday go to meet'n best" kind of self righteous, or you're a so called "revolutionary-social justice-emergent-egalitarian-wholegrain-barefoot-solar powered-follower of the Way" kind of self-righteous. You're still self-righteous. As AC3 takes steps even further into her future, and no matter what that future holds, let us NEVER forget our place. Dan Hazen

## Success Secrets Revealed in Connection Services

Does this describe you...You know when and how to seek further wisdom; you accept responsibility for your actions, feelings and attitudes without the need to cast blame; you stay motivated and action-oriented, surrounding yourself with good people and setting God-centered goals; you consistently make solid decisions that reflect God's purpose and goodness; and you always find your way back to happiness, no matter what the circumstances? If so, congratulations! You've got it all together!

For the rest of us stumbling souls, well...we need some help. November's Connection topic, a 5 week series entitled King Solomon's Mind, uses the book of Proverbs as a guide to escaping victimhood and self-defeating habits, replacing them with responsibility, wisdom, passion, joy, action and, yes, success. How does God define success, anyway? Has he given us a map to reaching it? Please join us this November as we explore secrets from the world's most successful man—it may change your life!! Do your family and friends a favor...invite them!

## Upcoming Connection Service Topics

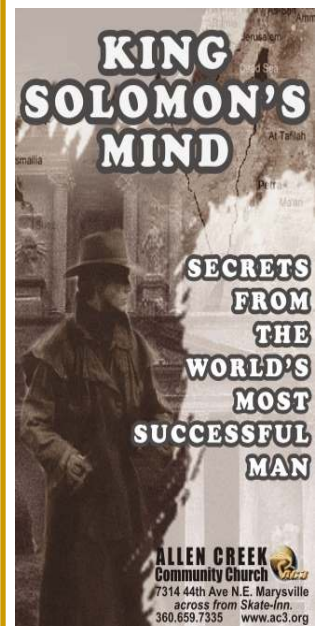
Plan ahead to invite your friends to the following upcoming Connection Services!

☞ Nov—King Solomon's Mind: Success Secrets

☞ Dec—God Rest Ye, an Advent series

☞ Christmas Rewind, a fun and touching drama presentation. Consider now which friends and family you'll be inviting this year! 12/20 & 21

☞ Jan—Fakespeare, The Bard on Love and Marriage



Did you know you can order a tee, polo or hoody with the NEW AC3 logo?



Ask how at Info Desk!

Marriage Forum  
7 pm @ AC3



Four Tuesdays

Nov. 4th  
The Equation

Nov. 11th  
Love Potion #5

Nov. 18th  
Uncommon  
Denominators

Nov. 25th  
What's Love Got to  
do with It?

Childcare Available!

Marriage Retreat  
Dec. 5/6th

Contact James Brooke  
360-631-4498



# NE XtGEN

Connecting the Next Generation to Christ

## Monkey Business in Kreek Kids

Ever since Aaron Marts and Brandon Crain heard the call to join the Kreek Kids volunteer staff, there's been a lot of 'Monkey Business' going on.

These young adult volunteers serve just once-a-month during our 9 AM Sunday service and are able to balance fun and safety in our preschool room.

During first services (Sat/Sun) in our preschool departments, we offer supervised play. During second services, we s-t-r-e-t-c-h our kids learning experience by incorporating simple and fun Bible learning activities.

Dee Braaten joined Trina's Saturday night Preschool Team as a lead teacher while Kris Whited, Becky Epperson and Norma Cervantes-Osotio joined the Sunday morning Preschool Team as lead quarterly teachers for 2008/09.

Wonder if you have hidden teacher talents? Join Iris McFarland (a retired school teacher) in our preschool classroom for five Sundays of



'Hands-On & In-Classroom' teacher training. Check out one Sunday or all five. Contact Twila 360-659-7335 to jump in.

For more Quick Bytes of Kreek Kids ministry updates, check out their Virtual Bulletin Board for monthly updates! <http://www.ac3.org/kknews.htm>.

**Nursery Openings:** We have a couple once-a-month openings for helpers and adult substitute volunteers in our nursery. Contact Jessieanna 425-501-5555.

## AC3 Five Year Plan Update – Where to look for info

The 5-year plan process reached the next milestone: All survey, interview and focus group data is available for review at [www.ac3.org](http://www.ac3.org); click the link "AC3 State of the Community Report" This is the same info. used by AC3 leaders to develop a 5 year Strategic Plan. Having every AC3'r familiar with the facts that support whatever plan is developed will be critical to maintaining a sense of unity and alignment as we move forward, so please, take a few minutes and check out the report!

The "Summary" provides a brief overview, including raw un-interpreted data (in case you want to do your own analysis). Files includes 1) N. Sno. County and 2) "Inside" AC3 data.

The Direction Team and the Elders are reviewing this information and prayerfully beginning the planning process. Your honest input has been CRITICAL to establishing the foundation for the 5-year plan. Thank you! We hope to share the outline and plan by early next year, so stay tuned! More input is always welcome. Just contact Executive Pastor Dan Hazen and your thoughts, concerns or ideas will be transmitted to the Direction Team. Since 1995, AC3 has been focused like a laser-beam on God's call to create a SAFE place for every seeker to become a fully devoted follower of Christ. In 2009, we will be equipped with new tools, a new outlook and fresh insights as we continue our mission!

Input? Contact Dan at [danh@ac3.org](mailto:danh@ac3.org) or call him at the church office (360) 659-7335.

## Prophet and Loss—Growing Closer to God in Community

What an amazing path we've been walking in our Community services, have you noticed? In the recent 'Who Is I Am' series, we discussed God's true nature and essence. We then moved from this expansive and awe-inspiring topic to 'Kneepads and Pogo Sticks' which challenged our self-imposed limitations and mistaken definitions about worshipping God.

In the upcoming November series, Prophet and Loss, we'll find new ways to learn and grow even closer to God through examination of Jeremiah's mission and message. With rich biographical data available to us about Jeremiah, we'll be able to learn from his example what it was like to stand pat against a corrupt culture seeking to firmly deny God's truth. We can connect with his very human fears and self-doubts as he wrestles with his own calling while facing seemingly unending resistance and persecution from his enemies. As we move into Jeremiah's prophecies about Christ's coming, we will be heading into the holiday season with a renewed appreciation of our Lord. Please join us throughout these special months as we continue to grow our amazing walk with God.

## Purple Monkey ~ By Lori Caperoon

"Yes, I'm calling because we are using your product, and while it's got some cute features, the purple monkey character is causing some problems on our screens."

I was brand new to tech support. In fact, I hadn't really even seen the product at all. I was one of a handful of customer services reps that was being eliminated or allowed to train into technical support. Their philosophy was to have us jump right in and take a support call. So there I was on the phone, and to tell you the truth, I didn't even know we had a purple monkey.

Just like a lot of times in my life, I panicked and felt I was in the wrong place doing the wrong thing, and somebody was going to find out I was a fraud. I seem to have lived a lot of my life like that. Like a person who has somehow slipped in the door behind everyone else that is going through it, only I'm not really supposed to be there. I stand around and try to look like I'm comfortable, like I do this all the time. Secretly I am always ready to run should someone point at me and shriek.

When I was younger, I was always trying to be older and cooler. This, unfortunately, led to some behavior which got me into a lot of trouble. Frankly, I'm lucky to be alive. Later on, I found myself going back to church and trying to fit in there. I was 21 years old with two children, and trying so, so desperately to fit in and be a church lady. As everyone knows, I'm not

churchy and I'm not ladylike. But there I was, trying to figure out how to make casseroles for potlucks and going to women's Bible studies. I felt like we all knew I didn't belong, but maybe I had found a place where they were too nice to say anything. So nice that they would play along.

And the thing is, I thought I'd grow out of this feeling. Sometimes I have, but still it lingers there underneath at times. What this did to me spiritually was to cause me to put on a whole bunch of clothes that didn't fit. I pretended they did, and figured the parts that caused me trouble were because I wasn't the right size. I hoped nobody noticed.

Some of the fashion statements I put on were things like pretension, disliking anyone liberal, bringing up the topic of God with unbelievers whenever I felt like I needed some brownie points in heaven, most of the time not doing God any favors. Of course I never really felt loved by the church back then. It's no wonder really. People can only love, accept, dislike or deny who you bring to them. If you bring your false self, that is who they react to. How can they ever choose to love you if they never meet you?

I feel like this is how we Christians are too often in the world now. People can only react to what we show them. We show them judgment and hate and condescension. Of course they don't like it. We say we want them to meet Jesus, but

*(Continued on page 6)*

**TIME OUT for  
Christmas!  
December 12th  
Friday 5-9 PM**



**TIME OUT** for parents  
to go shopping,  
**TIME OUT** for kids  
to have fun,  
**TIME OUT** to celebrate  
Christmas...the best gift  
of Jesus, God's Son!

Enjoy **3+ hours of  
FREE time** as a parent  
to Christmas shop or visit  
with friends while your kids  
enjoy fun Christmas games  
and activities designed just  
for them!

During the last 30 minutes  
of the evening, families  
return to enjoy a **LIVE  
stage show** where  
their children will become  
the 'STARS' in our Instant  
Christmas Pageant! Contact  
Twila Crain 360-659-7335,  
twila.allencreek@verizon.net  
to register! Invites for your  
neighbors and friends can  
be downloaded @  
[www.ac3.org/kknews.htm](http://www.ac3.org/kknews.htm)  
and found in the lobby!

## AC3 Calendar

### AC3 Classes and Special Activities:

Investigation: Oct. 26 (5 weeks on Sun.)

Life On Purpose: Nov. 12th

AC3 Mission: Dec. 8th

TIME OUT for Christmas: Dec. 12th

Sole Sisters Toy Run/Walk: Dec. 13th

Living Waters Food Drive: Nov-Dec.

### RYM 6th-12th Grades:

Meet @ AC3, Sundays 6:07 pm

### 2008/09 Forums and Retreats:

Marriage Forum: Nov. 4, 11, 18 & 25

Marriage Retreat: Dec. 5 & 6

Men's Forum: Jan. 27, Feb 3, 10 & 17

Men's Retreat: Feb. 27 through Mar. 1

Women's Forum: Apr. 13, 20, 27 & May 4

Women's Retreat: May 15-17

AC3 VisionCast Retreat: Aug. 28-30, 2009

Contact: James Brooke 360-631-4498

### Weekend Service Times:

Connection: Sat. 7 pm, Sun. 10:30 am

Community: Sat. 5:30 pm, Sun. 9:00 am

Find event details @ AC3's calendar online @ <http://www.ac3.org>. Follow the 'When & Where' link to 'Calendar' link.



AC3 Office

360-659-7335

**New AC3 WEBSITE  
Coming soon...**



## AC3 Answer Man

**Q.** *AC3 is known as a non-denominational church. What does that mean, exactly?*

**A:** Simply put, a denomination is a class or set of things grouped together and distinguished from other things based on certain characteristics. In the case of churches, Christians have grouped together based on shared values, practices and doctrines that distinguish them from other Christians. When these groups become too numerous (or too large and so split into smaller groups), they will often create a bond amongst the groups, based on their shared, distinguishing characteristics. The name for this "grouping of groups" is a denomination and there are over 38,000 Christian denominations today!

At its inception, the founders AC3 chose not to affiliate with any existing denomination, not necessarily because of particular disagreements, but simply because of a "cost/benefit analysis". While there would be some **benefit** to joining a denomination (financial clout, leadership support, missions network, etc.) it was felt that the **costs** of denominational membership were higher. For example, many denominations require financial support from local congregations, many *appoint* leaders to local churches rather than let the congregation *choose* them, etc.

This doesn't mean that other churches or other denominations are "competition" or are our "opponents". Quite the contrary! AC3 embraces all denominational (or non-denominational) Christian churches that LOVE God, LOVE the church and LOVE outsiders in the name of Jesus. In fact we consider them part of us; a part of the "body of Christ" (1Corinthians 12:27). AC3 regularly partners with other churches in events like *The Summer Jubilee*, *Serve Marysville*, and numerous foreign and local mission efforts.

## Purple Monkey

*(continued from page 5)*

they never get to see him. Just the robes of antiquity and judgmentalism. It's sad, really.

Well, anyway, I found out some stuff. I found out our software product was never designed with a purple monkey. It was another product that launched when our product launched. I should have known this all along, something that important. But I didn't. And with God and the church, I should always have known that the hate and judgment and disgust are not what God wanted us to be to the rest of his creation. I put on those clothes to belong, but they never did fit right. And now I see how silly they look on others. Sometimes I look sloppy and careless to those who continue to dress that way, but I don't really care anymore. I just say what I said to that tech support call years ago, "Sir, that's not our purple monkey." Lori Caperoon

