

WE ARE

IMAGO

DEF



On a cold, dark February morning just after 6 a.m. I pull my car into an ice-packed parking lot. I'm not the first person to arrive.

Across the parking lot sits the new 15-passenger van that was just donated. Its parking lights are on and I can see its exhaust meeting the cold morning. While I can't tell who is in the van, they flash the lights at me and I wave back.

Inside I make sure the boiler is running, start some coffee for myself and settle in to review my notes for the morning. Through my office walls I begin to hear the sounds of the team arriving to make breakfast for the needy - laughing, joking, working, smiling, even though it's very early and still dark.

In just over an hour, the worship team begins arriving for its morning recital of the liturgy in the prayer chapel. Soon they will begin tuning their instruments and preparing for the morning service as other people start showing up - Genesis volunteers, greeters, and the coffee team.

Within hours the church is a bustle of activity. People arriving, hugging, smiling, greeting each other. Then singing, listening, discussing and giving of their money.

This is my mental picture of church.

We live in a culture that loves to make celebrities out of pastors and worship leaders. Churches get identified as, "so-and-so's church." But we are Imago Dei - all of us equal bearers of the image of God. A motley collection of people, all doing our part. Some of us serve in obvious ways, others in near ignominy, but we stand hand-in-hand, each doing our part to see the "kingdom come."

Thank you for your part. Thank you for investing your time, your energy, your talent, your money and your passion into the work that we are doing.

This report is a celebration of the opportunities that God has presented to us in the past year. You will find information about the things we've done and how we've leveraged our resources. You will also find our hopes and dreams for the coming year as we continue to grow and mature as a church.

As always it's my privilege and pleasure to serve as your pastor. Thank you.

Grace & Peace,



Charlie Dean
Lead Pastor



angie mittchell

We moved to Peoria about ten years ago after college and really struggled for the first few years. We didn't have good friends, and central Illinois was never our dream location. We finally found people we could relate



to and formed a small group. We then got the opportunity to move to Tucson, stayed there for a few years, and then got an opportunity to move to northern France. Each location was a uniquely amazing place to live, but we learned

that what makes a place home has nothing to do with what that location offers.

Our unlikely home is now in Peoria, where those old friends (who have turned into our family) are. The place where we were looking to get away from was the only place we wanted to return. Most of those friends are now a part of Imago Dei, and we didn't even think of going anywhere else. In the few months that we have been back, we not only rediscovered our old friends, but also found a unique community that we had been traveling the world to find. It is such a privilege to serve alongside our friends and be in a place where we can serve God and give that opportunity to others to truly make Peoria their home.

Whether we're aware of it or not, we're all driven by our principles. We have ideas about things and those ideas dictate our behavior. And what's true of individuals is also true of organizations. If you hang around Imago for any amount of time, you'll notice that these directives come out in a variety of ways - through the weekly articles, sermons or the decisions we make.

EVERYTHING

We believe that all of life -food, friends, work, money, pleasure, sleep- is spiritual. We do not fragment our lives; we live with a growing understanding that everything we do relates to God.

MISSION

We believe being formed in the image of God means being a reflection of Jesus (even if imperfectly) to the people around us. We are committed to promoting the values of the kingdom of God: justice, equality, mercy and grace. Furthermore, we honor, respect, and partner with other organizations that may be different than us, in order to serve the community.

PROCESS

We honor everyone's journey of faith. We exist to walk alongside people as they seek to discover deeper levels of faith and intimacy with God wherever they are in the process - whether spiritually seeking or spiritually mature.

COMMUNITY

We believe that spiritual formation happens in the context of intentional relationships that may take many forms.

CHRISTIAN

We are committed to historic, orthodox Christian faith as found in the Apostles Creed. We are committed to a generous orthodoxy under a banner of love and grace. As such, we commit ourselves to faithful reading and study of the Bible, finding new and creative ways to live out what it teaches.





LOOKING BACK

When you're a young church, change is pretty much the status quo, but this year may have held the biggest changes in our short history.



The biggest change, and the one that has driven many others, has been our move to our current location, the former Arcadia Presbyterian Church. It's a beautiful old building with all

ARCADIA

kinds of character that has given us new tools, new space, new neighborhood and new responsibilities. Of course, an old building that sat empty for the better part of the last decade isn't exactly "move-in-ready." Much of October was spent cleaning, painting, pulling weeds, moving and organizing to get into our space in a short period of time - and many people gave hours of time to see it all come together.

A new worship space with beautiful painted glass windows and pews has led to a new feel in regards to how we worship. Our band now spends more time practicing than setting up and tearing down, which has opened space for creativity and resulted in their first original song, "The Doubter's Prayer". Our Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday & Good Friday services also allowed us to experience the beauty of the Sanctuary.

WORSHIP

During Lent we did our best to leverage our new space by having a community meal every Wednesday night before an evening service where we prayed through the liturgy from the Common Prayer book.

HONDURAS

In November 2010, we took a step toward deepening our relationship with the Honduran people. Our second team went to Honduras where we poured a cement floor, built a roof on a house, played with children and did various tasks around the mission.

A change in the way we go about the mission of the church came with our move into the Heart of Peoria Neighborhood. In October, we moved the Sunday morning breakfast from our cramped office on Main Street to Fernandes Hall. At the same time, a 15-passenger van was generously

In July of 2010 we held VBS for RiverWest kids in Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park on what turned out to be the hottest week of the summer. Despite the sweltering heat and humidity, dozens of kids participated. Throughout the year we continued our Thursday night tutoring program and again did our best to bless the community at Christmastime. In light of the opportunities in our new neighborhood, this Spring we concluded our partnership with South Side Mission in RiverWest.

CHANGING MINISTRIES

donated. We are now able to pick people up from shelters in the area and bring them here. We also have a full kitchen and plenty of space to seat everyone at once, which allowed us to host our 2nd annual Christmas dinner on-site.

DAVID'S STORY

by Justin Ganschow

It's Easter Sunday.

I was the "security" guy for the morning church service. As the second song began, I noticed a man dressed in black jeans, a black t-shirt, a black coat and a White Sox hat. He was chatting with one of the ushers outside the doors to the sanctuary. I came over to see what he wanted. We often have people come in off the streets to ask for money or bus tickets, but this man's story was different.

I instantly noticed the tension in his face, the clenching of his fists, the intensity in his eyes and the precision of his speech. He uttered phrases like, "I don't know what else to do," "I'm going to explode," and "I just need someone to talk to." His pain was emanating.

His name was David. He was an obviously intelligent 30-year old with a wife and two kids living in the Taft Homes. This Easter morning he left the house at 4:30 with the thought that today someone's life may end - either his enemy's or his own.

He'd recently lost his mother, a pain he said remained excruciating. She had done her best to raise him as a single mother. His father, he

stated, wasn't man enough to stay, and his only male influences had been street hustlers, drug dealers, and pimps. She passed away in Las Vegas, and he desperately needed to be there for her funeral. After being laid off from his job which he had worked four years, he and his family lost their home and were forced to move to government housing. He couldn't afford a plane ticket to say goodbye to his mother, so his wife's best friend gave him \$70. It "was a blessing". When David returned home, however, the friend's boyfriend approached him and said, "You got my \$70?" Apparently, the friend had taken it from her man without asking. This escalated to

verbal threats and altercations between the two men. David tried to smooth things over, even offering his only thing of value - his gold watch. But things only got worse.

After being laid off, David took it as an opportunity to go to college. He's earning his degree as an HVAC technician and is in his final semester at ICC. He said it took him 16 years to realize it, but he's learned that education is empowerment, not a life on the streets. He talked about the teacher who is a technician and about the opportunities to build a better future for his family. David's eyes lit up. He sees the finish line and a way out of

his current situation. David also hopes to be an example for other kids in the Taft Homes, that they can see education as a way out.

Yesterday, he scraped what money he had together to buy some plastic eggs and candy for his kids and hid them in the vacant lot across from the street. But as the family was walking back into Taft, a group of 15 and 16-year-olds approached them, pulling up their shirts to flash the guns in their waistbands at David and his kids, asking where the \$70 was. They had been recruited by the boyfriend. David said he had called the police about the situation several times, asking them to do something about the threats. He said he's even called a city councilman, but they told him they could not do anything unless a crime had taken place. David said, "It's like they want us to kill each other off." These displays in front of his children had driven him to the breaking point when he woke up this morning. A line had been crossed. And it was all over \$70, something so "petty".

David said he thought of taking them all out. After all, the aggressors were just kids. It would have been easy. He could have done it with his belt. But then he thought of their mothers, standing at a funeral for a kid that never had a chance at a better life. Then, he thought of his wife, daughter and son and that he wouldn't want them raised by anyone other than himself. He didn't want them to be another set of kids growing up without a father. David had been there; he had made the wrong choices. He'd been to prison and lost precious years of his life. It was no "badge of honor", as kids on the streets believe. He had "touched the hot stove" and learned his lesson. But, he was at the end of his rope. His "back was against the wall", and he felt he had no other choice. He thought about what he'd say to the police when they showed up at Taft and found the boyfriend sprawled out on the sidewalk. He'd explain that it was self-defense and that he had told them about the threats several times.

Then, he thought again about his wife, and his children, and how the story would end; not just his, but theirs.

So, he was out walking the streets this morning, thinking about ending a life, on Easter Sunday.

Then, he heard music. He walked through the doors of Imago Dei. He didn't even know there was a church in the neighborhood. He found himself here when he didn't know what else to do, and there was nowhere else to turn. He just needed someone to talk to, and so...

we talked. We shared the pain that is the reality of life in a fallen world, and then we shared hope. *We* gave him the \$70 - a small, simple gift.

As we dropped David off at his home, he poured out his thanks. That face that had held such pain and anguish only an hour before was now beaming. To him, it was a "change in his story". He said it was like

He was out walking the streets, thinking about ending a life, on Easter Sunday.

we were "blocking for him all the way down the field", and he was "running it in for the touchdown". He sees the bigger picture. There is more than the here and now, than just the pain and sorrow in this moment. There is an end to the story that leads to life.

David left me a voicemail an hour or so later. He had just made the exchange. His voice was calm, almost reverent, as he explained that the two men had a conversation. Each shared their situation, and at the end, they shook hands. He explained that while they didn't leave as friends, they are no longer enemies. Whatever division had been between them was vanquished. What could have ended in blood, ended in a handshake. It is finished.

For David, I pray Easter has a new meaning. I thank Jesus that today is one that I surely will never forget. And I pray that Imago Dei may be used to write many more stories like David's for the children of our streets.



jeff and joan keach

todd hohulin

My family and I started attending Imago just five or six months ago. We were members of a very large church in the area for the last fifteen years. We liked the church, but it felt really “corporate” and we felt like we wanted to be in an environment that was more relationship centered and less about a service production styled church. We visited some area



churches and stumbled onto Imago. We fell in love the first Sunday we attended. We noticed a sense of community the first day we came. Our hope is to develop some good friendships and become a small part

of a larger family at Imago. We are not under the false misconception of being in a perfect church – if there was such a thing we would be thrown out – but we feel that there is an air of openness and transparency at Imago and people are free to be themselves, regardless of their imperfections. It’s a safe house, a place to learn, heal, forgive and be forgiven. We know that we all do those things imperfectly, but it is good to feel recognized as a fellow sinner striving to evolve into more Christ-like individuals. It is nice to be in a place that recognizes that we don’t have all the “right answers”, but we can learn together and struggle and share in the good and bad things of day-to-day life. We haven’t gotten to know many people at Imago, but Sundays really are the highlight of our week and we are looking forward to being active servants at Imago in the years to come.

In recent years we were both sensing in our hearts a desire to seek Jesus in greater depth and serve in new ways. We felt called to leave behind our striving to have a safe, predictable spiritual journey. Though we were attending a good church, we decided to take a month away to help us think it through in fresh surroundings, visiting a different church each of the four weeks. Because we had heard about Imago Dei from our daughter Elizabeth, we visited here on the third week. Then the fourth. In less than a month we considered Imago Dei our home church.

We are thankful God led us to Imago Dei. On our first visit, the spontaneous yet steady approach to worship and teaching won our hearts. The sermon series was a very applicable “discussion” about the seven deadly sins. The ministries we heard about, such as feeding the homeless every Sunday morning and helping disadvantaged children with their homework each week, blessed us. And, we saw a gathering full of people of all ages (the majority younger than

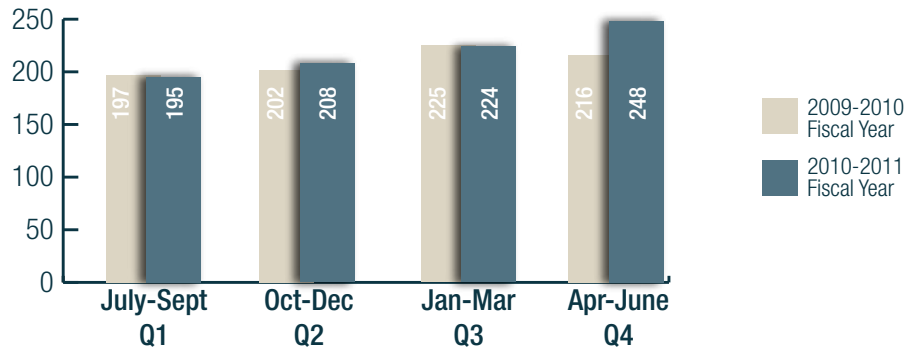
us) who clearly wanted to be there and were eager to come back next week.

Now after attending for over a year, we still find ourselves challenged by what we see here at Imago Dei and look



forward to more challenges ahead. We are excited and humbled by our involvement with the Morton House Church, the Sunday morning homeless breakfast / Christmas dinner, the Resource Team and the Front Porch ministry. But perhaps the greatest challenge is our life long journey to find out what it means to be “Imago Dei” as it is described in Genesis 1:27 and how to live it in our daily lives. We think this community named Imago Dei is a wonderful place to continue our journey.

Average Attendance

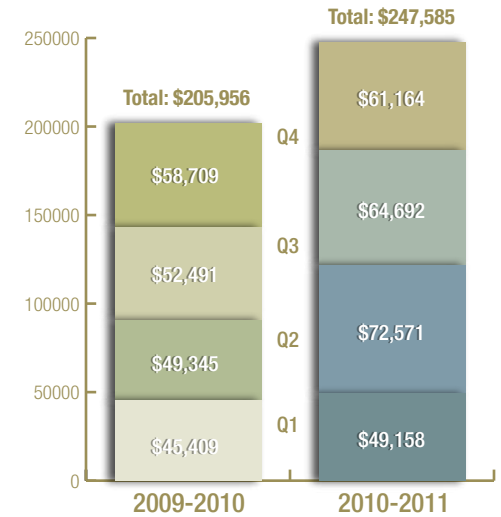


Attendance was relatively flat over the past year, which is probably to be expected as we moved locations and settled in, but giving has been strong, enabling us to move ahead.

In addition to the regular giving that sustains the church, we also saw massive responses to the Honduras Trip, the Arcadia move-in costs and to the Living Waters Well Project that we've done the last two years in conjunction with Advent.

To those who persevere in sacrificial, cheerful and regular giving - thank you for your good stewardship in Jesus' name.

Total Giving



Number of Families Who Gave

2010: 114 2011: 149

Cash on Hand

\$43,744

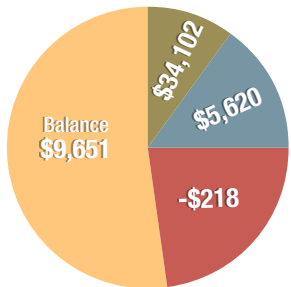
The NUMBERS

Numbers aren't the only indicator of the health of a church, but they aren't unimportant either. We believe that how much people give and how we as a church spend are important reflections of what we believe about God and ministry.

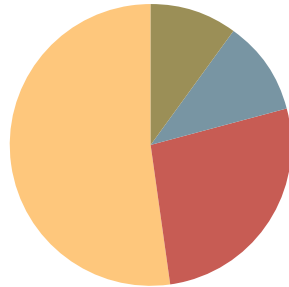
Quarterly, our resource team evaluates what percentage of total giving will be allocated to each bucket and makes a recommendation to the leadership team. At the close of the 2010-2011 fiscal year on June 30, some changes were made, as you can see below.

The Buckets

As of June 30, 2011



Beginning July 1, 2011



- 10% First Fruits
- 23% Facilities
- 15% Ministry
- 52% Staff

- 10% First Fruits
- 27% Facilities
- 11% Ministry
- 52% Staff

FirstFruits Spending

[to bless others]

\$31,647

Advent Well Project

\$7,652

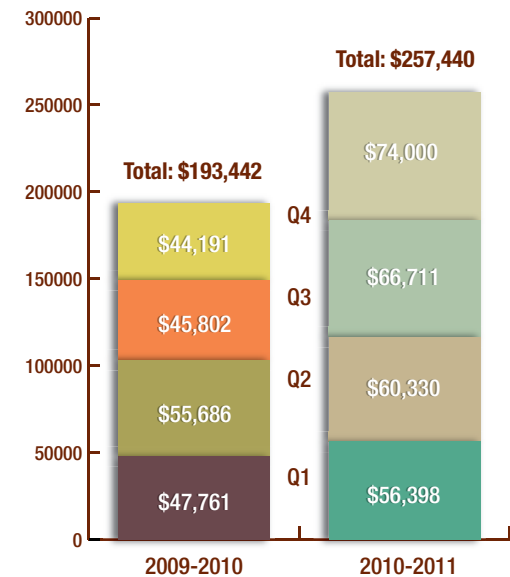
Honduras

\$29,337

Arcadia Designations

\$28,164

Total Expenses



LEADERSHIP

When we started the church we began with a launch team of ten men and women who committed themselves to getting our fledgling church off the ground. We knew that in time the team would no longer be able to lead effectively. In this past year it became increasingly apparent that it was time to make changes, so in January we restructured and recruited new team members. The leadership team now consists of three distinct groups with distinct roles and responsibilities.

Ministry Directors

The ministry directors are the “in the trenches” people who lead teams of volunteers to accomplish the mission of the church. In many ways, they function as a “think tank,” dreaming up new ministries and new ways to do ministry, as well as equipping our church to do effective ministry in our city.



Charlie Dean
*Team Leader,
Lead Pastor*



Dave Crow
*Music, Community
Outreach,
Communications*



Beth Bernard
Children



Zach Pflederer
Local Missions



Elise Pflederer
Local Missions



Mary Morris
Children

Formation Team

The formation team exists to discern the spiritual health of the congregation and to lead us into the next steps of being formed in the image of God. They are responsible for what is taught throughout the church, the spiritual health of the other leaders in the church and discerning what God is doing in our midst.



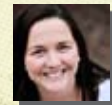
Vicky Brown
Team Leader



Lucas Allen



John Bussone



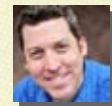
Summer Sletten



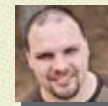
Steve Harris

Resource Team

The resource team is responsible for all the material resources of the church. They are tasked with stewarding our resources in a wise, responsible and effective manner. As such, they also see to the benevolence needs that arise in our body.



Kevin Sletten
*Team Leader, Tax,
Payroll*



Cory Brown
At-Large



Josh Graber
*Benevolence &
Missions*



Ryan Hite
*Insurance,
Accounts Payable,
Snow Removal*



Jeff Keach
*Landlord
Relations*



Kevin Staubus
Building Manager



Kyle Rose
Accounting



SERVING IN HONDURAS

kimberly watson

I've been attending services here since our first Easter, after knowing Charlie through Northwoods Community Church. The biggest thing I like about Imago is community, within the church and our involvement in the surrounding area. We don't just keep to ourselves, congregating every Sunday morning

or just need a little extra help. One ministry that is particularly important to me is our "Main Street Ministry", or Sunday morning breakfast. I'm not a morning person, so waking up at 4:30 in the morning on the weekend is not my idea of fun. But I know that what we do and who we serve are so much more significant than being bright-eyed and bushy-tailed during service. Each week, 60-70 patrons come to fill their bellies and pick up a few necessities. Imago makes a difference to them, and I am blessed with the opportunity to be a part of it. Each week, at the breakfast and at the service, I'm reminded that we are a part of something much bigger than our small lives. God loves us in that smallness, but we are created to be a part of His kingdom and share his love with others.



and retreating back to our separate lives. Our church reaches out to impact the lives of others, from the neighborhoods of Peoria all the way to Honduras. We also lift up those within our walls who are struggling

As representatives of Imago Dei, Steve and Leslie Harris served in Honduras for three months, working with Mercy International. Their focus was primarily on the building of concrete block homes for the destitute. They were involved in the construction of two houses, start to finish, completed a house a previous team had begun, poured a concrete floor for a family who lived on the dirt, and began a house by pouring a concrete floor. They also participated in hosting a local medical clinic, as well as three medical clinics up in the mountains on behalf of those removed

from access to medical care. An emphasis of Mercy International is the cultivating of relationships; they spent considerable time interacting with the local women who were learning an income-producing skill to support their families. While there, they also sponsored an adolescent girl who now has the means of education to break out of her family's cycle of poverty. They consider it a privilege to have served in this capacity and for being graciously welcomed into the homes and lives of these humble Honduran people.



LOOKING FORWARD

We're a bit skeptical of five year plans. How do you plan five years out when you're only three years old? However, we do our best to discern where God is leading us and these are the things we're looking forward to in the coming year.

SHIFT

Last fall as we were moving in, we hosted a Halloween party in our parking lot. But that was only the beginning of our efforts to bless the Heart of Peoria Neighborhood. We've begun reaching out by installing basketball hoops, running VBS & playing games with neighborhood kids. We plan to provide free tutoring during the school year, and we'll continue to look for creative ways to bring the Kingdom of God to our part of the city.

HOME

In many ways, this old building fits us well. There's plenty of room to run our ministries, it's in a neighborhood where we can live out our mission, and it has an aesthetic that just "fits." But there are challenges too. For example, if you've attended a service in the winter or summer, you know that the heating and cooling systems are problematic. Since we currently lease this building, long-term decisions will need to be made. This fall we will be calling the church to focused prayer about our future on Arcadia Avenue.

FORMATION

Spiritual formation in one's family is simple. You know your spouse; you know your kids. You know their struggles and what they need. But when you expand that kind of intimacy beyond 6 or 8 people, it becomes more difficult. At the forefront of discussions among our formation team are questions about individual and corporate spiritual formation. How do we get more people in intentional relationships? How do we assist people in being conformed to the image of Christ? How do we help people become the church? We'll take the first step this fall when we will be offering classes that will foster discussion and help people in their process of becoming more like Jesus.

MISSION

As we've traveled to Honduras over the last couple of years we've been building a strategic alliance with Mercy International and their ministry in Yamaranguila. In addition to sending more groups, we are brainstorming other ways to assist in the ministry to the poor in and around La Esperanza and to the Lenca Indians in the Opalaca Mountains of south central Honduras. If all goes as planned, sometime in the next year, we will begin partnering with local coffee shops to roast, sell and serve Honduran coffee that is bought from Mercy International and their partnering farmers.



IMAGODEI CHURCH

imagodeichurch.org | info@imagodeichurch.org
210 W Arcadia Ave, Peoria IL 61604 | 309.863.5127



CHARLIE DEAN
lead pastor

DAVE CROW
associate pastor

BETH BERNARD
children's ministry

EMILY AMBROSO
admin assistant