



## The Visitor

VOL. 67, NO. 16

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

VINE STREET CHRISTIAN CHURCH • 4101 HARDING ROAD • NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37205 • 615-269-5614 • WWW.VINESTREET.ORG  
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### Congratulations Youth Group Graduates

**Andrew Reed** will graduate from Martin Luther King Magnet High School on May 20. Some of his high school activities included: Wrestling, cross country, track, soccer, and fitness club; Civil Air Patrol; life guarding at the YMCA; orchestra; and mission trips and activities with the youth group. A few of his high school honors were: all honors or AP courses at MLK, ranked by Newsweek as the number one public high school in Tennessee and 23<sup>rd</sup> in the nation; recognized by Who's Who Among American High School Students; the Civil Air Patrol Commanders Commendation for Disaster Relief efforts; earning his private pilot's license in August of 2007; National Honor Roll; and National Honor Society. He is very active in the Youth Group and in the camping program at Bethany Hills. Andrew received a Dean's Scholarship and Army ROTC Scholarship from Embry-Riddell Aeronautical University in Arizona where he will study Aeronautical Science. Andrew hopes to be commissioned as an Army officer in 2012, become an Army helicopter pilot, and eventually fly for Vanderbilt Life Flight.

**Pickles Steeves** will graduate from The Harpeth Hall School on May 26. She is a member of the Knitting club, Real World club, Book club and founding member of the Justice League. She was a member of the track team, Harpeth Hall Orchestra, MBA Orchestra, Blair Youth Rep Orchestra and Williamson County Youth Orchestra. She has also been a guest of the Huntsville Alabama Youth Orchestra. While at Vine Street, Pickles has been part of The Joyful Noise, a jr. deacon, active member of the youth group, a member of TCYF cabinet, a counselor at Bethany Hills, a member of the worship committee, played many solos for church services and a member of the VOX singing group. Bethany Hills is one of her favorite places to go. She loves working with TNT and has helped with the Red Cross Blood drive for the past two years. She was a member of the Mid TN State youth orchestra throughout high school and Tennessee All State Youth Orchestra in her senior year. She was a member of the UT Knoxville Honors Orchestra her sophomore year. She received the Martha Gregory Reading award her freshman and senior year. Pickles will attend Converse College in Spartanburg SC where she plans to major in music performance.

**Ryan Von Dohlen** will graduate from Brentwood Academy on Memorial Day. He was an active member of the Varsity Cross Country team and was a captain of the Soccer team as a senior. During high school he participated in Tennessee Youth in Government and was part of his school's service project committee done in conjunction with Heifer International. Through his middle school and high school years he has been recognized several times by the Tennessee Scholastic Art Awards which included an exhibition at Cheekwood. As a high school student he designed, created and marketed "Humanopoly," a line of t-shirts that are sold in local stores. He has always embraced this church as his home and has enjoyed every minute spent here and on youth group activities. Ryan has decided to pursue a major in Graphic Design at The Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore where he received Academic Honors and Trustee Scholarships.

**Sarahbeth Trull** will graduate from Brentwood High School next week. She has attended Vine Street since she was an infant. Sarahbeth moved to Virginia where she attended and was active at First Christian Church in Hampton, Virginia and has been back at Vine Street since 2004. Sarahbeth is a member of the Youth Group and Youth Choir, and she loves going to camp at Bethany Hills, TNT, mission trips, choir performances, and coffee houses. She has served as a Junior Deacon and as a member of the worship committee. Sarahbeth's Vine Street friends are all highlights of life here. She is a DECA Marketing Club member at school, and a care-giver for the Care Bears Group. Sarahbeth is an avid sports fan and attends every Brentwood Bruins sports event possible! Sarahbeth will attend Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, KY this fall, and she will major in Sociology.

### Additional Graduates

**Molly Biter** graduated from the University of Alabama in December of 2007. She received a BA in Communications with a major in Public Relations. She is currently working in at Continental Property Management with her father, Charlie Biter.

**Caitlin Clare Dixon** graduated from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008. She received a BA in English with a concentration in Creative Writing. She will be returning to Nashville in the fall.

**Cara Doidge** graduated with a Masters of Theological Studies from Vanderbilt Divinity School, concentrating in history. She was awarded the Elliott F. Shepard Prize for accomplishments in church history. She is currently interviewing for teaching positions in a few cities and hopes to teach private high school history or religious studies in the fall.

**Todd Edwards** received his PhD in Human Genetics from Vanderbilt University last week.

**Robyn Michelle Fickes** graduated from Vanderbilt Divinity School with a Masters of Divinity. She received honors on her senior project. She was also a recipient of the Carpenter certificate in gender, sexuality, and religion. Robyn is currently in the search and call process seeking a position in ministry. Her ordination is scheduled for August 31st, and will take place in her home congregation, FCC Grand Island NE.

Please come  
to our  
*Open House*  
Celebrating  
*Sarahbeth's Graduation*  
From Brentwood Highschool  
Sunday, May 25, 2008  
5-7 pm  
Thomas & Nancy Kleinert  
913 Steeplechase Drive  
Brentwood, Tennessee 37027  
RSVP: 376-5141

At the Journey workshop on Saturday, May 17, George Bullard reported the findings of our first Journey weekend (April 4-7), the *Congregational Assessment and Learning Experience*.

The following is based on his written report, but has been edited for length. You may [read or download the full report online](#) or call the church office, and we'll be happy to mail it to you.

The purpose of the *Congregational Assessment and Learning Experience* [CALE] was to provide a general assessment and learning experience for the congregation to use to launch a spiritual strategic journey seeking to help it move in the direction of its full kingdom potential.

**Congregational Issues for a Spiritual Strategic Journey:** The leadership participating in the Friday evening dialogue indicated a readiness or vitality score in the high 50's out of a possible 100, which affirms good readiness for transition and change. This vitality score is typical of a congregation with a strong sense of readiness to move forward in discovery of a new sense of direction. The score in the high 50's would indicate that only mild resistance should be encountered to the journey.

The ten congregational issues were introduced and explained, and it should be noted that the strongest affirmation was given for the people of pastoral leadership, passion, and position among the ten issues. Least affirmation was given for contextual relevance, growth of the church, and the presence of visionary leadership. The strong affirmation of people and leaders is a great foundation for moving forward to a new, partial life cycle for the congregation.

**Life Cycle:** The leadership participating in the Friday evening dialogue saw the congregation as being in the Maturity, Empty Nest or Retirement stage with the strongest affirmation—yet not a majority affirmation—for the Empty Nest stage. I suspect the congregation was in the Retirement stage several years ago and is already in the process of moving forward to a new partial life cycle. You have been engaging in some appropriate and effective activities of renewal of relationships with God, one another, and the context it which you serve. Perceptions about leadership persons in the congregation—clergy and laity—are high and show good trust.

**Affirmations:** The following are the selected affirmations for the life and ministry of the congregation that were heard during the weekend or recorded on feedback forms, and judged by George Bullard to be of greatest significance. They are presented in random order.

- Children: the increased involvement, value shown to, music program, and children's sermon.
- Facilities: identification of critical issues, and the addressing of the roof situation.
- Finances: being fiscally responsible, meeting our financial obligations, and paying off our roof debt early.
- Missions involvements: especially our trips to New Orleans.
- Volunteers: the increase in numbers, more young adult leaders, and the involvement in work days.
- Worship: the creativity and flexibility, and then special days such as Good Friday and Easter.
- Community outreach: the increased activity in this area including Room in the Inn, Mission Trip to Nashville, Week of Compassion activities, and Crop Walk.
- Leadership: more members taking leadership roles, more leadership energy being expressed, and people willing to serve.
- Small Groups: an increase in the number and variety of small groups within the congregation, such as dinner for 8, men's group, etc.
- Youth: increase in number, their involvement in worship, and their involvement in missions trips.
- Thomas Kleinert: his sermons, prayers, communion meditations, and his overall leadership of the church.
- Visitors/Guests: an increase in the number, and more of the visitors/guests who are continuing to attend after an initial visit.
- Change: our awareness that we need change, our willingness to try new things, and this Spiritual Strategic Journey process itself.
- Sunday School: changes in focus, new classes, and especially "Room 8"
- Music: the quality of our music, the presentation of different forms of music, and a wide variety of personal music talents being utilized.
- Students: increase in the number of visitors and persons involved from universities.
- Baptisms: especially of children.
- Fellowship: the closeness of our fellowship, the positive attitudes, and the Sunday coffee time.
- Staff: excellent, dedicated staff.
- Young Adults: the growing number and involvement of young adults.

**Challenges:** The following are the selected challenges for the life and ministry of the congregation that were heard during the weekend or recorded on feedback forms, and judged by George Bullard to be of greatest significance. They are presented in random order.

- Vision: developing a consensus around the perceived vision of God for the congregation is the more significant challenge facing the congregation. At the same time, it is not the immediate next agenda to address.
- Communication: it is difficult to fully communicate within the congregation, and to know the right combination of oral, written, and digital communication to utilize so everyone who wants to know what is going on feels like they are in the communication loop.
- Facilities: the aging facilities are a tremendous challenge that could take all the time, energy, and resources of the congregation without looking at various choices and innovations in how to handle the facilities.
- Leadership: it is important not to burn out the staff and lay leadership, and to know how to replace the wonderful leadership of the past to present church with a new generation of leadership for the future.

- **Finances:** in spite of recent successes with finances, this will be an ongoing challenge for the congregation as it seeks to address its high priority programs, ministries, and activities, provide the staff it perceives it needs, and maintain its facilities.
- **Community Connection:** finding the right combination of actions to connect the congregation deeply with its community should be a high priority, but will be an ongoing challenge.
- **Welcoming:** continual intentional efforts must be made to increase the welcoming nature and actions of the congregation toward visitors/guests. Some sacrifices surrounding existing patterns of relating to

visitors/guests and programs may need to be made so there is a clear and high priority welcoming/hospitality ministry to visitors/guests.

- **Branding and Marketing:** efforts must be made to re-brand and market the congregation effectively to its community context.
- **Retaining Visitors and Guests:** it is perceived Vine Street not retaining a high enough percentage of visitors and guests. This needs to be studied more to see what the exact situation might be.
- **Size:** to do what this congregation seems to want to do will take a weekly worship attendance of 300-500.

**Recommendations:** Vine Street needs to clarify its contextual focus. If it is the West End of Nashville, how large an area is that? It probably needs to give primary focus on the area within three miles of the current facilities. It could give secondary focus to the area within five miles of the current facilities. In doing this it probably needs to re-brand itself, develop a new identity that seeks to connect at a deeper level with the context it is serving.

**Retirement Renewal:** Vine Street should seek to continue moving forward on the congregational life cycle using the *Retirement Renewal* approach. This approach involves the following steps, several of which take place concurrently:

- **Diminish the controlling aspects of management.**

- The goal is to right-size the management systems of the congregation so that the maximum amount of time resources can be invested in ministry.
- Diminish the number of decision-making individuals and groups within the congregation.
- Diminish the number of steps it takes to make decisions within the congregation.
- Redirect the energies of people who would seek to use management positions or processes to control the congregation rather than empower the future of the congregation.

- **Renewal of relationships with God, within the congregation, and with the context it is seeking to serve.**

- The relationship barometer in the congregation is already indicating a healthy dimension of relationship within the congregation.
- The 100 Days of Discernment involving share and prayer triplets from approximately Memorial Day to Labor Day is intended to deepen the relationship of the core congregation to God, to one another, and to a passion to serve the context in which it is situated.
- It is also intended to help prepare the congregation for changes in its focus and direction it chooses to embrace as it seeks to live into its future story of ministry that will be crafted during the fall of 2008.

- **Initiate new or renewed programs, ministries, and activities.**

- Start first with small, obvious things where the congregation can have early successes.
- Focus on programs, ministries, and activities that would move the congregation in what appears to

be the direction where God might be calling it, and then refocus these efforts as the call of God on the congregation is clarified.

- Be sure to realize that new or renewed programs, ministries, and activities are not intended to be layered on top of what the congregation is already doing, but are intended primarily to replace programs, ministries, and activities that have outlived their effectiveness.

- **Casting of new vision and becoming captivated by that vision.**

- Out of the 100 Days of Discernment it is possible that glimpses of the vision God has for the congregation will begin to emerge.
- While vision is the most important thing that can captivate the imagination of a congregation, during *Retirement Renewal* it often is not evident in the early stages.
- Actions that appear to be in the direction of a current understanding of God's vision should be the focus of the congregation, until such time as that direction is affirmed by the discernment activities of the congregation.

- **Reengineer management systems to empower that vision.**

- Once vision begins to become clear within the congregation, it is important to reengineer the now diminished management systems to empower that vision.
- The goal should be to make the management system as "lean and mean" as possible so as not to move it into a position that might control the future of the congregation rather than empower it.

**Scenarios and Future Story:** Coming out of the 100 Days of Discernment should be work on three scenarios for the future of the congregation. One should be based on making incremental transition and change, one on significant transition and change, and one on radical transition and change. All should be leading towards continual transformation of the congregation focused on the perceived spiritual and strategic direction God has for the congregation.

Work to begin this should take place over the summer through dialogue with the pastor, staff, and lay leaders helping to coordinate this process. Work to bring this into full form will be the focus of the September 12-14 engagement between Vine Street and George Bullard.

This report has been edited for length. You may [read or download the full report online](#) or call the church office, and we will be happy to mail it to you.

Dated Church Material  
Please deliver by May 21



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**Allison Lanza** graduated from Vanderbilt Divinity School with a Masters of Divinity. She graduated receiving honors on her senior project as well as in Field Education. She will be ordained into ministry on June 21st in Fort Worth, TX. In late July she will begin as an associate minister at St. Andrews Christian Church in Olathe Kansas as a part of the Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt's Transition into Ministry Pastoral Residency which is sponsored by the Lily Foundation.

**John Marshall** graduated on Friday with his PhD in Healthcare Administration from Warren National University. John is the CEO of Horizon Medical Center.

**Tallu Scott Schuyler**, received a Master's of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Her concentration has been in Ritual and Worship and Theology and the Arts. She plans on making art and doing theology at the Nitty Gritty Dirt Farm in Minnesota, where she will be moving this June after co-directing CYF Conference at Bethany Hills.

**Matt Scott** will be graduating from Middle Tennessee State University in August with a Master's Degree in Education with a concentration in English as a Second Language. He plans on obtaining another ESL elementary position wherever Robyn is called to ministry.

**Erin Sullivant** graduated on May 10th with an Associate of Science degree in Nursing (ASN) from Aquinas College. She has been offered a position in the Nurse Residency program at Vanderbilt Medical Center, which will begin on June 23rd.

**Emily Welton** graduated from Aquinas College with a Nursing degree. She is currently working in the Neonatal Intensive Care At Vanderbilt Children's Hospital and is preparing to begin as a Family Nurse Practitioner student at Vanderbilt University in August.

## MISSION POSSIBLE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Monday, June 2 to Friday, June 6

It's time for Mission Possible, a day camp at VSCC for 3rd-6th graders. Our young people are ready to for this annual mission experience that includes Bible Study, community service, recreation, and lots and lots of relationship building. We welcome everyone to be part of the adventure!

Can a 10-year old make a difference in our community? Does an 11-year old really have important gifts to share? Come find out the answers to these important questions. This year we will be learning about poverty and poverty relief in Nashville. Our faith calls us to be good neighbors and to make a difference.

**Mornings include:** recreation, Bible study, community awareness, and supporting our adopted firefighter buddies from Station 17. (9 to noon)

**Afternoons include:** sack lunch, one day of mission work to each of the following places: Magdalene House, Edgefield Manor, Safe Haven, Campus for Human Development, and the Edgehill Community Garden. (Noon to 4 pm)

**We need adults to help us learn, have fun, and get around.** Could you signup for a one of our morning or afternoon time-slots?

If you can help or have questions please email: [Lanza.Allison@gmail.com](mailto:Lanza.Allison@gmail.com)

## Along Vine Street

We celebrate with our **graduates** and their families and friends!

Congratulations to **Sheila Saad!** Sheila's wedding was on May 10.

We pray for the families in **Myanmar** (aka Burma) who are mourning the death of loved ones in the aftermath of cyclone Nargis.

We pray for the families in **Sichuan province** (China) who have lost loved ones, homes, and more than we can imagine in the recent earthquake.

## This Week at Vine Street

### Sunday—May 25

- 8:30 a.m. Worship in the Chapel
- 9:15 a.m. Coffee Hour in the Reception Area
- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:45 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

### Monday—May 26 - Office Closed

### Wednesday—May 28

- 5:30 p.m. Vespers
- 6:00 p.m. Joyful Noise

### Thursday—May 29—MBA Graduation

- 5:00 p.m. Weight Watchers
- 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir at Julia's

### Friday—May 30

- 5:30 p.m. Wedding Rehearsal in Sanctuary
- 7:00 p.m. Fair Trade Coffee House

### Saturday—May 31

- 5:30 p.m. Wedding in the Sanctuary

### Sunday—June 1

- CYF Conference Begins
- 8:30 a.m. Worship in the Chapel
- 9:15 a.m. Coffee Hour in the Reception Area
- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:45 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

### Monday—June 2

- Mission Possible
- 6:00 p.m. Vine Street Men's Group at Bosco's