

Coming in February:

Well, the business of Christmas is behind us, the January blahs are done, now February is upon us and each day spring is coming a little closer. It would be nice if we could know that spring would arrive on a particular date (I know, I know, March 21st, but I mean spring weather) so that we could count down to that day, but I guess there's something nice about being surprised too.

This month at Sunday Morning Youth we'll be beginning the Lenten Rotation. This is a

program that has been designed by Chalmers and has been very successful in the past. I would really like to encourage everyone to make a commitment to attending as many weeks as possible during Lent. I know that there are times when it is just not possible to be at church Sunday morning because of work schedules or shared custody, etc. but I'd also like to let you know that we miss each and every child when they are not there. In January we saw real extreme with

attendance and had one week with only 11 children and youth (across 4 classes) while the previous week there had been 24. It's obviously a lot more fun for everyone when there are more than just two or three children in a class. So don't feel guilty if you're unable to make it, but let me gently encourage you to make the effort on those cold February Sundays when you wake up and think, "Oh, I just can't be bothered...". Please make the effort for the good of your children and everyone else's too!

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Contact me!

- Ideas, suggestions, comments, new emails? Let me know: lizzt@rogers.com

Let's Paint the Town Red

(and orange and yellow and purple...)

We are very blessed at Chalmers to have lots of space for all of our activities, and there are a lot of nice things about having the John Marshall Hall (upper hall) as our Sunday Morning Youth space. However, it can also feel very big and a little drab sometimes, so... Let's paint!! Mark **Saturday, February 27th** down on your calendars and bring your paint shirts. We'll start at 9:00 am and we would appreciate any time that you can contribute. Come just for an hour or stay to



see the job done. Remember: Many hands make light work!

We've created a design that will avoid having to paint right up to the rafters so there will be NO high ladder work. We will accept all volunteers who are old

enough to be of assistance, regardless of experience. Since this is the Youth Hall that we're painting, why not come along as a family.





From the Editor

I struggled to figure out what to write about this month. The tragedy in Haiti seems to be the obvious topic, but what can I say that hasn't already been said. Well, my friend Barry Slauenwhite (CEO of Compassion Canada, an organisation that helps children around the world) landed at the airport in Port-au-Prince one hour before the earthquake hit. There is nothing that I can write that will compare with the journal that he kept during the first hours and days after this tragic event. It's three pages long (condensed from 9), but well worth the read. Here it is:

Our compassion country director arranged for us to have VIP treatment upon arrival at the Haitian airport. This was a new experience for me and my team. After disembarking from the aircraft we were met by an airport official who was holding a sign with my name on it. While the other passengers were directed toward immigration and then to pick up their suitcases, we were escorted through a private door, up stairs, and into a special lounge reserved for diplomats. We were treated like royalty. The lounge was large with plush leather couches etc.

I must admit that I was getting anxious about how long it was taking us to get on our way. I did not want to be driving through the city after dark with a busload of white tourists...its far too dangerous. I later realized that this delay likely saved our lives. If we had left on time we would have been in the Montana Hotel when it collapsed.

Our staff explained that because it was almost 5 o'clock that the streets would be too congested and it would be difficult to make our way through the city to our hotel so they instructed the bus driver to take a shortcut through a series of back streets. The word "streets" is a bit of an overstatement as they were narrow dirt alleyways filled with people walking, abandoned vehicles, piles of garbage and some pigs enjoying the cuisine.

The streets were barely wide enough for our small bus and as we were slowly moving along we noticed in front of us a lady who was walking and all of a sudden a concrete block wall collapsed and knocked her down right in front of our bus. At the same time we could feel the bus rocking throwing us from side to side. Everything around us was collapsing. A cement block wall on the left side fell down against the bus... houses were collapsing and people were running in a state of panic. Our bus driver frantically tried to reverse and get away from other buildings that were collapsing onto the street that we narrowly escaped. We couldn't go forward because of the debris and we couldn't go backwards because of vehicles that had collided so we were forced to sit tight for what seemed to be an eternity. The quake itself was probably no more than 30 or 40 seconds. As we sat there we watched the part of the city we were in collapsing around us. From our vantage point we could see in the distance that the entire city was filled with dust as buildings collapsed. We heard that the earthquake had been significant on the Richter scale... we later learned it had been a powerful number seven earthquake.

Eventually our bus driver found a way through the rubble of collapsed walls and buildings and we began to go forward making our way to the main street. We would go a few meters and then be forced to stop either by debris or the intense crowds of people escaping the buildings or by the congestion of vehicles in the streets. Everyone was in a state of panic -- people were screaming. Some people were running while others were just standing in the street jumping up and down in a state of frenzy. It was a sight right out of a disaster movie and very surreal.

As we inched along the crowded streets we got our first glimpse of the magnitude of the disaster. Buildings all around us completely collapsed including a school and a hospital and many businesses. Cement block walls that lined the streets providing protection for the residents and businesses had collapsed onto the streets crushing passers by, parked vehicles, and local vendors who had set up their stalls on the sidewalks.

By about 6:00 (an hour after we began our journey from the airport) we were still inching our way through the back streets and darkness had fallen on the city. The entire electrical infrastructure of the city had collapsed and there were no lights. It was very eerie. We could see people digging through rubble looking for survivors with only a single flashlight. We could see bodies lying on the street or in crushed vehicles that were parked too close to buildings.

Eventually we made our way out onto the main street called Delmas. This is the street that our Compassion office is on and is a four lane street that leads up the side of the mountain to the Montana hotel. We were hoping to be able to get to the Compassion office and from there try and determine what to do. It took us about an hour to go one kilometer -- the streets were jammed with vehicles and people. Everyone was in the streets too afraid of being in buildings. Some were injured, others in a state of panic...some walking as if they were in a trance. One of our group commented that it seemed weird that with such a massive disaster there were no signs of emergency vehicles -- no sirens. This was indicative of the lack of infrastructure here.

As we processed what was happening around us our thoughts went back to our families and how they would react if this hit the news. We assumed that since it was Haiti the news media may not even mention it. We were frantically trying to use our cell phones but nothing was working. Frustration overtook our fear. Finally one of our team

received a text message from home saying that they saw the news on CNN and wanted to know if we were safe. For some reason his was the only cell phone that worked...and only for text – no voice. Knowing that news of the quake hit the media back home really made us afraid of what our families are thinking. “Oh God, please give them peace.”

By 8 o'clock (Three hours after leaving the airport on what should have been a 15 minute drive) we arrived at the Compassion office. We were not sure if the office building was damaged so we parked the bus on the street and the staff members went to check the building. It had been damaged but seemed relatively intact. Most of our group needed to use the bathrooms so we did allow them to make quick use of the facilities fearing an aftershock.

We heard through the grapevine that the Montana Hotel had been flattened so we knew our options were becoming limited. My plan was to find some place safe to park the bus and we would sleep on the bus. At that time I noticed the Canadian Embassy just down the street so I took one of our Haitian staff and set out on foot to the embassy.

Many people were crowded around the gates and the guards were not allowing them entrance. I held up my Canadian passport and yelled to the guard; “I am a Canadian citizen and I need to speak to an embassy staff member right away. One of the guards left his post and went behind the embassy building...within minutes one of the Canadian staff came to the gate. I explained that I have a group of Canadian citizens in the bus parked just up the street and we have no place to go...we need to take shelter at the embassy. He immediately opened the gate and invited me in. I gave him more details of our situation and he gave me permission to bring the bus into the compound. What a relief. We all felt like we were home.

The embassy building itself is very large...a two story complex of about 80,000 sq. feet. It is well barricaded by walls and barbed wire with armed guards. Behind the building is a large parking lot, tennis court, swimming pool and patio area. We unloaded our suitcases and took up residence under a tarpaulin on the patio. There were a few other Canadians there seeking shelter. The building was damaged so we were not allowed in the building. Everyone, including staff, was forced to stay outside.

I slept off and on being awakened four times by strong aftershocks. You could hear screaming off in the distance. The night was eerie. During the night more people arrived at the embassy seeking shelter. By morning our numbers doubled and by noon doubled again. We ended up with around 100 people seeking refuge.

One man was staying with a group of American doctors at a nearby guest house. The house collapsed but they escaped. They dug through the rubble to retrieve bed sheets which they cut up into bandages. They set up a makeshift clinic using the engine bonnets of cars as their treatment tables. They attended to over 300 people before all their supplies ran out.

Another man arrived Wednesday morning after escaping the Montana Hotel. He had arrived on our flight with one of his employees. They were checking in at the front desk (where we would have been if we had not been delayed at the airport by the hospitality of the diplomatic staff). After getting his room key he went down to the pool area to get a drink...his employee went to his room to change. The quake hit and flattened the hotel killing his employee – a 32 year old father of a new-born baby from Montreal.

We ate rations for breakfast Wednesday morning consisting of granola bars we had brought with us and some dried soup found in the embassy. The staff made coffee and although it was weak it was much appreciated. For lunch they scrounged up some soup and we rationed it out using coffee mugs. For dinner they made spaghetti with a smudging of meat sauce. No one complained and all were grateful for the endless supply of snacks our Compassion group had. We had the use of two single washrooms but we were advised to ration the water as the embassy had a limited supply in a storage tank. Those who needed to shower were told to use the pool.

The embassy staff, including the Ambassador, worked non-stop with no sleep. The ambassador spent most of his time on the satellite phone with Ottawa. From time to time he would call us together for a briefing to share any new information he had. Other staff worked in the kitchen preparing food...others were registering people as they arrived getting their personal information and relaying that to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ottawa. There was never a lull in the activity.

By noon we were told that a Canadian Hercules aircraft would be arriving later in the day and the plan was that after unloading their cargo they would take as many of us back home as they could fit into the plane. The embassy staff set out to organize us into groups prioritizing those who were wounded...then families with small children...then the elderly...then everyone else. I was secretly praying that our group would be among the first to go.

Those who had escaped without their passports were asked to fill out forms and the embassy issued temporary passports for them. I soon came to realize that my two most valuable possessions when travelling are my passport and my wallet. Several people escaped with neither and it was a real hassle for them.

We were also told that we could not take our suitcases (we understood later why) so we had to only take our most

valuable possessions in a small bag. I managed to squeeze an awful lot into that bag including my laptop. I stuffed other things into my sports jacket pockets including two large bags of peanuts which later became our airline snack. After a false start (we were told the plane had arrived but there were technical problems and we may have to stay another night) we finally were given the all clear. The RCMP team arrived along with UN military and they formed a 10-vehicle convey. They warned us that it would be dangerous to travel the streets after dark so we had to have lots of protection. The convoy consisted of UN 4X4's and a mini bus.

There were over a hundred citizens but they could only accommodate 91 in the plane...and only 70 in the convoy. The remaining people would have to wait until the convoy returned for them. After over an hour delay we headed off out the embassy gate and down the street toward the airport. Although it was dark we could easily see the extent of the devastation. Building after building flattened. Others badly damaged. People were living on the street afraid of being inside buildings. Dead bodies were visible everywhere. Some still laying in the streets from the day before. Others were wrapped in bedclothes and stacked alongside the streets. There were too many to count.

It only took us 20 minutes to get to the airport – a journey that the day before took three hours. Upon arriving at the airport we could tell it had become a secure military site. UN tanks guarded the entrance and soldiers were everywhere. Initially we pulled up in front of the departure area but it was easy to see the building was severely damaged. We could see through the broken windows that the ceiling had fallen. There were no lights functioning. After waiting about 20 minutes we were taken down the road to a back service gate and out onto the tarmac to the plane.

The tarmac was filled with military aircraft from around the world. It seemed that there was no more space to park planes yet they were arriving every few minutes. From Brazil, Peru, Iceland, USA, and some we couldn't recognize the markings. Men in orange search & rescue jump suits were unloading equipment. Trucks were being loaded with supplies. It was one of those moments when you felt a strong emotional gratefulness for generosity and kindness. Our convoy wove through the maze of aircraft to the Canadian Hercules that was parked at the far end of the tarmac. It was a welcome sight to say the least.

Some of us imagined that the plane would have regular seats – but we were wrong. It was a military cargo plane... the seats were bench style in long rows. The only entrance was a hydraulic ramp at the back of the plane. The crew was unloading huge pallets of boxes of bottled water and food and medical supplies for the team of army medics who came on the flight. However, we were taken aback when we saw the medics assembling automatic weapons and carrying them over their shoulders. It was explained to us that in these desperate situations people can get aggressive and even harm the very people who came to help them. A show of weapons would serve to protect the medics as they helped the injured.

Back at the embassy we had been told we would be going to Trenton Air Base but because of the many delays the military commander told us we would only be going to the Dominican Republic where we would stay overnight and then leave for Canada the next day. The reason for the last minute change of plans was because the crew had been working 16 hours already that day and they were not allowed to fly if they reached their maximum of 18 hours. That did not leave enough time to travel to Canada.

We arrived at the Santo Domingo airport after a 40 minute, very uncomfortable and noisy flight. We were all given ear plugs but the noise of the 4 prop engines was so loud it was deafening. Upon arrival we were met on the tarmac by Canadian embassy staff stationed in the DR. They had an ambulance and paramedics were able to immediately treat the injured. Two large buses were brought out to the plane and we boarded them after showing our passports and verifying that we were on the list of qualified travelers.

We were taken to the terminal building (that was now closed) and escorted to a special processing room. There the Canadian embassy staff had prepared cold drinks for us complete with a Canadian flag proudly hanging from the ceiling. We were quickly processed through DR immigration getting our passports stamped. The Canadian ambassador working in the DR embassy came and addressed us offering his welcome and joy that we had safely been evacuated – and his condolences to those who left loved ones behind. Finally by 1:00am we were assigned a hotel and taken by bus into the city. Now that our cell phones were working I made my first call to my wife to assure her that I was safe and well. It was a most welcomed conversation and brought immediate tranquility to my soul.

By 2:00pm Thursday afternoon the embassy staff came to the hotel to collect us and we took the busses back to the airport and to the waiting Hercules plane. We boarded the plane at 6:00pm and lifted off around 6:30 en route to Montreal. We arrived in Montreal after midnight. After being processed by immigration then the Red Cross...we finally got to bed at 4:00 am. At 6:00am my cell phone started ringing with media interviews and went non-stop until I got on the plane for London.

I arrived at the London airport at 5:30 and was greeted by my family, many of our staff and the media.

Chalmers' Youth Presents



April 2-3 from 6pm ~ 8am

Good Friday

Grades 9 and up

NO NAPPING!

Jesus' disciples couldn't stay awake; can you?

Join us for supper, games, missions, dancing, movies,
snacks, and **LOTS** of fun!

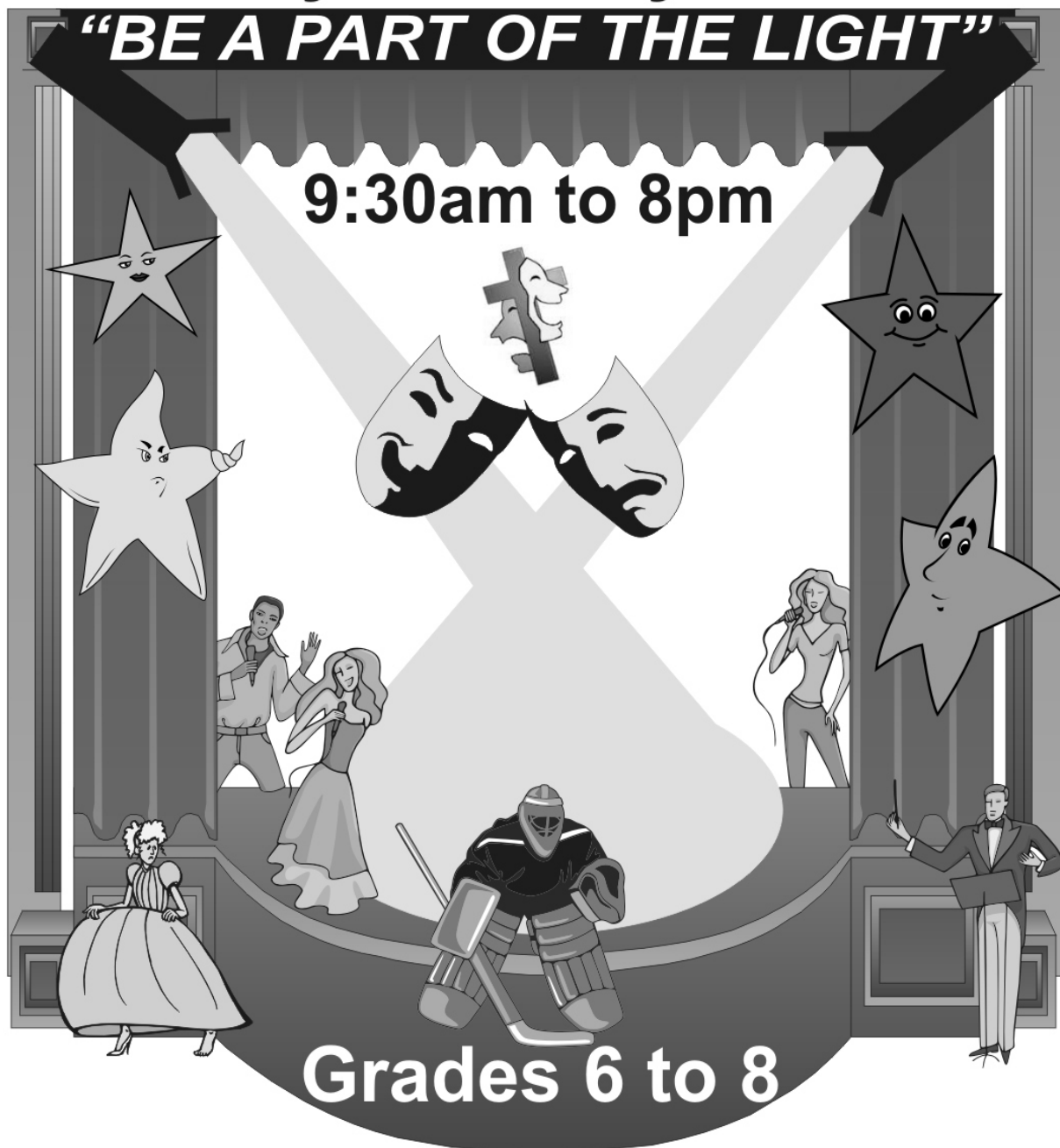
Bring \$10 and don't forget to bring your friends!

Register with Joanne at jdickert@bellnet.ca (519-681-7242)



ONE DAY WONDER

Saturday February 20th 2010



New St. James Presbyterian Church
280 Oxford Street East, London, ON
(please enter from the Oxford street parking lot entrance)

Please register for this event by contacting Rev. Mavis Currie at 472-3443 or mcurrie@execulink.com with your name, age and any health issues by February 14th, 2010. Completed Registration forms can be handed in on the day of the event (you can ask your minister or youth leader for one of these – or print one off from the presbytery website at www.presbylondon.ca)

Grab a Book!

Who Made the Wild Woods? - by Scarlotte Rich..... ages under 4

What a lovely book to read to your little one - and a nice message too.. As you take a walk through the forest, you meet all kinds of God's creatures - and learn that they were all made by our wonderful God. The pages are repetitive - something children love and build on what they have learned on previous pages. You will find this book on the reading table for a couple of weeks. Take this book home, snuggle up on the sofa with your little one, and enjoy this lovely story.



The Great Galaxy Goof – by Robert Elmer.....Ages 7 – 10 years

This is book I of a series called AstroKids .

New to the space station (Cleo-7) orbiting the moon, Lamar “Buzz” Bright can't worry about making friends, because he and the other AstroKids are so busy trying to find out who's behind a rash of out-of-control drones. The drones are flying in every direction, not taking instruction from anyone and are a danger to anyone in their way. Buzz and his friends need to find out who in making these drones act so crazy. Then Buzz goes off on an adventure – without really meaning to.

When you finish reading the story – you can figure out the secret message on page 100 – but DON'T WRITE it in the book – grab a piece of paper and write on that – then the next reader can enjoy figuring out the message too.

Cry of the Tiger - by Angela Little..... ages 14+

Well, let me give you a little advice. Don't look like you are enjoying this book too much, practice that “bored” “whatever” look ---- so that your parents don't realize what a good book this is – or you might find you have to hide it from them!!!! I read this book in two days – it was that good – I couldn't put it down (and I am a few years past the recommended teenage years for reading it!!!)

This is really a biography on the life of Tony Anthony who was taken from his parents when he was 4 years old, sent to live with his grandfather in China and be trained in the Martial Arts. Tony started out hating being taken away from his home, his parents and everything he knew, hating his grandfather who taught him with severe physical punishment, but loving his grandmother who would not defy her husband, but showed a lot of kindness to this sad little boy. But Tony learns his lessons well and becomes a master of kung fu at a very early age. He suffers a lot in his life, he doesn't feel loved by anyone (except his grandmother), and has a hard time forming any lasting relationships..... But he is sought after for his fighting abilities. He is totally unbeaten in all the competitions he enters. Then he loses a very dear friend and the anger in him takes over. He forgets the “discipline” that must go along with his mastery of the martial arts. Is there any redemption for him? Will he ever become one of the “good guys” again?

I hope I have got your interested piqued – because this is a great book, a good story and well worth taking the time to get to know Tony a little better.

Reviewed by Christine Hunter

Chili Night!

January Chili Night was a lot of fun. Bob Wright was “crowned” Chili Champ 2010. With 12 different types of chilli to choose from, there was something for everyone's taste. Some like it hot, some not so much! And of course, who doesn't like dessert?!?

Photos: (left) Christian & Torry, (middle) Isla with Jackie & Tom in the background. (right) Bob Wright sporting his “crown” and his grand prize.



Happy to See You

A few slow weeks in January as people recovered from Christmas holidays or travelled south to escape the winter chills (Barbados was lovely!).

Our preschool class:

Naomi	Julie
Isla	Marissa
Lily	Sarah



Our Primary Class:

Torry	Morgan
Rieley	Haillee
Josiah	Taylor

Alyson B.



Lily and Naomi in the Preschool class.

Have a Laugh

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible class. As she ran she prayed, 'Dear LORD, please don't let me be late! Dear LORD, please don't let me be late!' While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her

clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off and started running again! As she ran she again began to pray, 'Dear LORD, please don't let me be late.....but please don't shove me either!'



Our Junior Class:

Colin	Crissy
Reece	Sarah
Tyler	Yunika
Jacqueline	Joycelina
Cameron T.	

Our Senior Class:

Tom	Jackie
Amber	Sydney
Abby M.	Yunesta
Charleen	Skye ♥
Allyson S.	Leora

What a Quote!

- "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land." Song of Solomon 2:11-12



Coming up:

Barb Summers will be our guest speaker on Sunday, February 21st. She will be bringing a dynamic multi-media presentation from Presbyterian World Service & Development. We are inviting all children & youth over age 4 to join us for her presentation.

- ♥ The annual congregational meeting will also be held on Sunday, February 21st. An annual meeting never sounds exciting but push your impressions aside and join us. There is a special program for children provided by the youth. Come learn what the committees are doing.
- ♥ The search committee is again looking for a new youth leader. The position was offered to a candidate in the fall, but the situation fell through and the search is restarting. Please keep this committee in your prayers.
- ♥ There's another Souper Sunday coming on Sunday, March 7th after the service.
- ♥ Camp Kintail offers 3 incredible month long Leader in Training (LIT) programs. Applications will be received until March 1st, 2010. More information and applications available at www.campkintail.ca. LITs must be turning 16 or older in 2010.

Children & Youth Ministries at Chalmers

February 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Happy 12 th birthday Crissy!	3	4	5	6 1:30 pm Kintail Camper reunion at Innerkip Presbyterian
7 10:30am SMY Communion 7pm Contemporary Service Communion	8	9	10 7:30 pm Reach Out rehearsal	11 6:15 pm Children's Choir	12	13 Happy 5 th birthday Josiah!
14 Happy Valentine's Day 10:30am SMY Transfiguration Sunday Noon - Spaghetti Lunch Fundraiser (Katrina Mission)	15 Family Day Happy 8 th Birthday Hunter!	16 Shrove Tuesday	17 Ash Wednesday 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service 8:00 pm Reach Out rehearsal	18 6:15 pm Children's Choir	19	20 Junior Youth One Day Wonder @ New St. James 9:30 am - 8 pm Happy 4 th birthday Naomi!
21 Happy 19 th Birthday Robert S. 10:30am SMY Barb Summers 1 st Sunday of Lent Noon - Annual Congregational Meeting 7pm Contemporary Service	22	23	24 Happy 4 th Birthday Julie V.	25 6:15 pm Children's Choir	26	27 Happy 9 th Birthday Colin! 9:00 am Paint the John Marshall Hall
28 10:30am SMY						

For a calendar of all Chalmers activities, go to
www.chalmerslondon.com/year_calendar.htm