

James Spruce
District Superintendent

VOL 65 NUMBER 4

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JANUARY 2012

Making Peace with the Wind

A gentle breeze is welcomed relief when the heat index is around 100. But there are humid days when there is no breeze whatsoever and the air feels like paste. At times it is a chore to steer the car against a strong side wind, and at other times the wind is in your face regardless of direction. The wind follows its own pattern and current. A meteorologist may attempt to predict its arrival and a windmill or turbine may tap into its power. The same wind that fills the sail may also sink the ship. But for all its force to benefit or destroy, we cannot make the wind blow or tell it when to stop.

God is compared to the wind in scripture. He is sovereign and works wherever he pleases, in his own way, at his own pace and in his own time. Jesus told Nicodemus, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going" (Jn. 3:8). In the context of their conversation, Nicodemus was uneasy with Jesus' explanation that a person had to be born again to enter the kingdom of God. It made no sense to Nicodemus to reenter his mother's womb a second time. Jesus had said, "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (v. 6). Jesus' teaching depended upon the fact that the word for *spirit* was also the word for *wind*. In effect Jesus said, "You can see, feel and hear the power of the wind though you do not understand it. Likewise, you do not understand the work of the Holy Spirit but you can certainly see the result."

It was a startling contrast for Nicodemus, a leader among the Pharisees – schooled in the old order of the Law, the monotheistic traditions and history of Israel – to be suddenly given a paradigm shift: that the way to eternal life was not to be found within the certainties of rigid legalism but rather a personal encounter with the man who looked him in the face. Jesus? Was this troublesome nonconformist, this itinerant prophet and synagogue nuisance – was *he* actually the way to the kingdom of God? Would the sovereign God of Israel employ the likes of Jesus who scandalized Jewish decorum by speaking with Samaritans and eating with sinners to be the Messiah? This was too incredible for Jews then and even Gentiles today. For Nicodemus the unsettling wind of John 3:16 was just seconds away.

As wind challenges runners or bikers, so the Spirit employs conviction, fresh insight, memory recall, rebuke or blessing and the awareness of our need for accountability. The wind of the Spirit is rarely designed for our pleasure or comfort but it is given for our good.

We don't know *how* the Spirit works, but we know *when* he does. Preachers routinely wonder why God seems to move so profoundly in one service and not another, or why there are seasons of spiritual dryness or blessing. We speak of altars that are barren or flooded. Whether these metaphors seem archaic or realistic, we know when the Holy Other is in our presence – noiseless as he may seem. As God told Elijah, "...the Lord is about to pass by" (1 Kings 19:11). But the Lord did not come as expected in wind, earthquake or fire. God arrived in "...a still small voice" (v. 12).

The comfort of a formatted, packaged religion is sterile and finally without heart. For Nicodemus and all who live there, Jesus was and is the perfect storm. But the disarming wind of an unpredictable God will take us to our knees in confession of need, grateful that he still listens.

When the wind of God's Spirit is contrary to our liking or even good sense, then what? God, too, is caught in the affect of the wind he permits. When his Son felt abandoned on the cross, how do you suppose the Father felt? While we are sometimes tossed out of our comfort zone by sudden gusts and turbulence, it is reassuring that the Spirit, our comforter and advocate, is not unaware or indifferent to our need. To make peace with God is to ultimately trust a God who knows more than we do.

Yet we are not always ready for the Spirit's wind. These days, in remarkable twists of providence, a layperson is quoting scripture and people can't get to the altar fast enough, pastors are being murdered in Africa on the same day countless physical miracles occur in their parishioners, and churches experiencing the most rapid growth are within the shadow of the world's largest drug cartels.

Wind, earthquake, fire, small voice, whatever: you'll know it when the Lord passes by. — js

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NAZARENE MISSIONS INTERNATIONAL

Bill Brandon, District President
18 Sandstone Ct., Troy, IL. 62294
618-667-0828 E-mail csifsr30@sbcglobal.net
"That the world may know"



Please pray for your District President, as I am scheduled to travel with the Global NMI from March 7, 2012 to March 19, 2012 to Sri Lanka and India to see firsthand how God is moving in that area of the world. There has been many difficulties some of which are financial, secular work schedule, health and family issues which it appears God is working each and every one of them out. He does a much better job than I can. I set back in wonder and amazement as He deals with problems beyond my ability. God is awesome!

An open house was held in Mansfield on December 4, 2011 for Marji Lonberger to wish her well as she left December 8, 2011 on a one year assignment to teach English at Korean Nazarene University in South Korea. Please remember to pray for her and for her parents, Rev. Carlos and Becky Lonberger. They are resting comfortably on Jeremiah 29:11 as Marji is so far from them.

**God bless and may you have
a Merry and Holy Christmas,**

Bill

Our Spring Tour with Rev. Steve Heap was well received. I would call it a success. Being District Missionary President does have some perks and one of them was Debbie and I got to host Steve in our home for a few days. I have had the pleasure of working on the field with Steve and Brenda in Brazil with an Illinois District Work & Witness Team and it was good to catch up and get updates on the area where we worked. What an inspiration it was being able to spend one on one time with Steve.

David & Sheila Bailey are hosting their annual **Work & Witness Trip** to the Bradenton, Florida Missionary Village. They will leave Decatur on March 12, 2012 and return to Decatur on March 24, 2012. You can contact David & Sheila at:

11380 Darnell Rd.
Mechanicsburg, IL. 62545-7986
ph: 217-364-9533
Dave's cell: 217-620-3485
Sheila's cell: 217-620-3297

Please contact Dave or Sheila for further information.

**DISTRICT SUNDAY SCHOOL &
DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL**

JIM GERMAN, District Chairman
4672 White Oak Lane, Decatur, IL 62521
217-422-1458 E-mail: jgerman48@yahoo.com



Greetings and Happy New Year to all.

To say the least I am very humbled and honored to be asked to fill the position of district SDMI chairman. It will be a tough job to fill the shoes of the of the last two men who had this job. I am still learning and will learn more as I go along. As I gain more knowledge and understand all I am supposed to be doing I will be saying more about SDMI in our local churches and the district. Until that happens I do have some things on my heart that I want to share with all of you.

At the first meeting I had with my board I told them that our pastors and their families need our prayers and that would be part of my Booster articles. The reason? I look around the district at our Pastors attending to their duties. I see them working very hard at shepherding their flocks; trying to grow their Sunday Schools and congregations all while trying to pay budgets, keep up the church buildings, take care of their families, prepare sermons and maintain their personal relationship with the Lord. Then you toss in the fact that the enemy is doing his best do destroy the families and ministry of these pastors...obviously they need all the prayers and support they can get. If we do not pray for them who will? Having said all that; I give you the following scripture to claim as we pray for our pastors and local churches. Jeremiah 29: 11-13: "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."

So, as we go enter the New Year, let's start with a renewed emphasis on prayer, pa r our Pastors and their families.

In Christ,



JOURNEY
FROM ASH
WEDNESDAY
TO PENTECOST
WITH YOUR
CHURCH

DOWNLOAD A
FREE WEEK HERE

<http://www.ashestofire.com/>

TEAM DAY 2012

**IT IS NO
SECRET...**

Sunday School Report November 2012

Church	Sunday Morning	Sunday School	Church	Sunday Morning	Sunday School
Anna First	143	74	Highland		
Arcola First	48	26	Jerseyville		
Arcola Spanish			Laclede		
Auburn			Lincoln First		
Barry			Mahomet	41	22
Beardstown	83	65	Mansfield Community	30	
Beardstown Liberty Hispanic			Marion First	53	38
Belleville Emmanuel	52	49	Mattoon East Side	90	90
Belleville First			Mattoon Real Life Com.	36	15
Belleville Korean	28	1	Monticello		
Benton First			Mount Carmel	18	9
Bethel Community	54	34	Mount Erie	30	22
Carbondale New Begin. Com.			Mount Sterling	32	19
Carlinville First	36	34	Mount Vernon Faith	31	26
Carmi	51	31	Murphysboro	69	39
Casey	180	94	Nebo	74	36
Centralia	63	60	Oakwood		
Champaign First			Ogden	65	49
Champaign New Day Com.	42	42	Olivet	63	40
Chrisman			Olney	65	50
Clinton First	78	60	Pana First	191	69
Collinsville Good Samaritan	140	69	Paris First		
Decatur First	655	482	Pittsfield	268	165
Decatur Oak Grove	47	22	Quincy Emmanuel	54	
Decatur Parkway	70	60	Rantoul	57	36
Decatur Trinity	47	44	Roxana	156	152
Decatur West Side	78	48	Royalton First	86	84
Du Quoin			Salem Grace	428	242
Dupo Bluffview Christian Cnt.			Shelbyville		
East St. Louis Rush Mem.	4	4	Sherman	81	64
Edgemont Grace			Sparta		
Fairfield Fountain of Life	13	12	Springfield First	238	138
Fairview Heights Parkview	54	44	Springfield Trinity		
Flora	195	134	Taylorville First		
Georgetown	59	49	Tuscola	45	9
Glenview	77	66	Urbana Lighthouse	65	61
Godfrey	45	34	Vandalia		
Granite City CTM			Virden		
Griggsville			West Union	32	29
Harrisburg Oasis Community	58	35	Total	4798	3204



NAZARENE YOUTH INTERNATIONAL

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All Adult Youth Sponsors will now be required to complete a background check in order to participate in any district-wide activity.

http://www.newweb2011.illinoisnaz.org/html/district_screening.html

Thank you!!

UPCOMING DATES:

DISTRICT CELEBRATE LIFE: MARCH 23-24 (ROXANA)

REGIONAL CELEBRATE LIFE: MAY 17-19 (ONU)

CAMP: JUNE 18-22 (CAMP TABLE ROCK)

BUDGET REPORT NOVEMBER 30, 2011

Church Name	District	Olivet	NMI	SDMI	NYI	WEF	P & B
Anna First	\$5,416.97	\$2,395.95	\$482.54	\$244.82	\$315.22	\$5,417.06	\$2,286.57
Arcola First	\$1,349.94	\$500.87	\$120.25	\$61.00	\$78.55	\$1,503.39	\$556.09
Arcola Spanish	\$514.29	\$143.50	\$45.80	\$23.24	\$29.92	\$889.50	\$178.00
Auburn	\$1,635.26	\$550.00	\$145.67	\$73.91	\$95.16	\$1,895.00	\$700.00
Barry	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Beardstown	\$4,976.66	\$1,463.08	\$443.31	\$224.95	\$289.60	\$6,232.26	\$2,058.75
Beardstown Liberty Hispanic	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Belleville Emmanuel	\$343.92	\$192.23	\$30.64	\$15.55	\$20.02	\$832.71	\$321.31
Belleville First	\$3,540.37	\$1,886.80	\$315.36	\$160.00	\$206.01	\$1,000.00	\$1,509.44
Belleville Korean	\$2,310.34	\$200.00	\$205.81	\$104.42	\$134.43	\$650.00	\$600.00
Benton	\$580.56	\$306.08	\$51.71	\$26.24	\$33.78	\$898.92	\$249.72
Bethel	\$2,784.15	\$1,027.00	\$248.00	\$125.83	\$162.02	\$3,281.00	\$1,123.00
Bluff View Christian Center	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Carbondale New Beginnings	\$497.83	\$0.00	\$44.35	\$22.50	\$28.97	\$1,014.64	\$377.70
Carlinville First	\$1,246.27	\$429.38	\$111.01	\$56.33	\$72.53	\$840.67	\$432.24
Carmi	\$686.82	\$514.00	\$61.17	\$31.04	\$39.97	\$1,805.00	\$638.00
Casey	\$7,016.24	\$3,143.77	\$624.97	\$317.09	\$408.30	\$13,921.00	\$3,109.12
Centralia	\$1,982.96	\$754.00	\$176.63	\$89.62	\$115.40	\$2,302.00	\$844.00
Champaign First	\$3,410.49	\$1,517.01	\$303.80	\$154.13	\$198.47	\$3,954.69	\$1,438.09
Champaign New Day	\$58.69	\$37.00	\$5.23	\$2.66	\$3.42	\$0.00	\$0.00
Chrisman	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Clinton First	\$4,612.30	\$1,850.00	\$410.85	\$208.45	\$268.40	\$5,850.00	\$2,100.00
Collinsville Good Samaritan	\$1,336.29	\$361.16	\$119.03	\$60.40	\$77.76	\$1,792.91	\$564.06
Decatur First	\$19,372.57	\$9,659.45	\$1,725.66	\$875.52	\$1,127.33	\$28,071.48	\$7,215.35
Decatur Oak Grove	\$1,047.90	\$445.00	\$93.35	\$47.36	\$60.99	\$1,393.00	\$508.00
Decatur Parkway	\$4,846.95	\$2,012.18	\$431.75	\$219.03	\$282.07	\$5,598.19	\$2,044.81
Decatur Trinity	\$1,906.19	\$855.24	\$169.81	\$86.15	\$110.93	\$2,500.39	\$909.23
Decatur West Side	\$3,499.12	\$1,223.71	\$311.70	\$158.14	\$203.63	\$4,621.93	\$1,691.33
Du Quoin	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
East St. Louis Rush Mem.	\$264.17	\$98.00	\$23.55	\$11.95	\$15.38	\$258.00	\$94.00
Edgemont Grace	\$1,072.68	\$0.00	\$95.56	\$48.47	\$62.42	\$615.60	\$233.58
Fairfield Fountain of Life	\$335.44	\$0.00	\$29.88	\$15.16	\$19.52	\$1,078.12	\$664.76
Fairview Heights Parkview	\$2,394.28	\$879.73	\$213.27	\$108.19	\$139.31	\$2,483.00	\$1,123.91
Flora	\$4,479.58	\$1,835.50	\$399.03	\$202.46	\$260.68	\$6,284.67	\$1,775.64
Georgetown	\$5,341.86	\$1,000.00	\$475.84	\$241.42	\$310.86	\$3,000.00	\$2,141.69
Glenview	\$3,143.71	\$1,270.30	\$280.03	\$142.08	\$182.93	\$4,070.00	\$1,236.78
Godfrey	\$757.90	\$160.41	\$67.52	\$34.26	\$44.10	\$502.37	\$323.76
Granite City CTM	\$45.46	\$25.00	\$4.05	\$2.05	\$2.64	\$52.14	\$20.00
Griggsville	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$0.00
Harrisburg Oasis Community	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Highland	\$154.40	\$0.00	\$13.76	\$6.99	\$8.99	\$0.00	\$0.00
Jerseyville	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$230.66	\$0.00
Laclede	\$471.48	\$216.02	\$41.99	\$21.32	\$27.43	\$559.02	\$204.93
Lincoln	\$1,568.18	\$725.00	\$139.68	\$70.88	\$91.26	\$1,830.00	\$670.00
Mahomet	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mansfield Community	\$2,052.05	\$1,080.00	\$182.79	\$92.74	\$119.42	\$2,331.00	\$864.00
Marion First	\$508.17	\$300.00	\$45.28	\$22.98	\$29.57	\$560.00	\$350.00
Marshall	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mattoon East Side	\$3,387.88	\$1,236.02	\$301.78	\$153.11	\$197.14	\$5,088.39	\$1,379.24
Mattoon Real Life Community	\$2,027.70	\$791.00	\$180.62	\$91.64	\$117.99	\$2,474.90	\$861.88
Monticello	\$1,595.01	\$574.00	\$142.08	\$72.08	\$92.82	\$2,157.00	\$402.00
Mount Carmel	\$1,078.05	\$0.00	\$96.03	\$48.73	\$62.72	\$534.74	\$462.73
Mount Erie	\$1,327.42	\$429.08	\$118.24	\$59.99	\$77.25	\$1,390.37	\$508.38
Mount Sterling	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mount Vernon	\$103.99	\$50.00	\$9.26	\$4.70	\$6.05	\$120.00	\$300.00
Murphysboro	\$2,528.69	\$0.00	\$225.28	\$114.31	\$147.16	\$0.00	\$1,214.86
Nebo	\$1,796.05	\$462.53	\$159.99	\$81.17	\$104.51	\$2,077.96	\$762.24
Oakwood	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10.00	\$0.00
Ogden	\$2,663.11	\$1,277.39	\$237.22	\$120.35	\$154.97	\$3,699.77	\$1,356.10
Olivet	\$2,699.45	\$379.00	\$240.46	\$122.00	\$157.09	\$0.00	\$835.00
Olney	\$2,431.35	\$918.26	\$216.57	\$109.87	\$141.47	\$2,229.37	\$1,026.29
Pana First	\$1,179.80	\$1,108.31	\$105.09	\$53.32	\$68.65	\$2,499.22	\$908.83
Paris First	\$1,759.39	\$649.93	\$156.73	\$79.52	\$102.38	\$3,754.47	\$862.98
Pittsfield	\$9,433.16	\$4,254.58	\$840.29	\$426.34	\$548.95	\$10,935.00	\$3,982.16
Quincy Emmanuel	\$1,840.75	\$110.93	\$163.97	\$83.19	\$107.12	\$2,742.55	\$771.35
Rantoul	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$20.00	\$222.23
Roxana	\$9,482.61	\$4,095.83	\$844.69	\$428.57	\$551.81	\$13,158.62	\$4,297.95
Royalton First	\$2,498.18	\$454.00	\$222.53	\$112.91	\$145.38	\$0.00	\$718.00
Salem Grace	\$14,007.54	\$5,696.68	\$1,247.73	\$633.08	\$815.13	\$16,992.18	\$6,193.62
Shelbyville	\$7,092.97	\$2,915.75	\$631.82	\$320.57	\$412.76	\$7,684.44	\$2,821.03
Sherman	\$3,459.43	\$1,369.26	\$308.16	\$156.36	\$201.30	\$4,246.30	\$1,527.92
Sparta	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Springfield First	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,897.00	\$3,822.01
Springfield Trinity	\$1,389.29	\$1,025.12	\$123.76	\$62.79	\$80.84	\$2,822.00	\$1,400.27
Taylorville First	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Tuscola	\$1,492.37	\$0.00	\$132.95	\$67.44	\$86.84	\$2,655.00	\$500.00
Urbana Lighthouse	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$265.41	\$98.64
Vandalia	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Virden	\$350.26	\$44.43	\$31.20	\$15.83	\$20.38	\$372.75	\$44.43
West Union	\$592.05	\$0.00	\$52.74	\$26.76	\$34.45	\$0.00	\$0.00
	\$173,778.94	\$65,999.47	\$15,479.82	\$7,853.96	\$10,112.55	\$213,447.76	\$78,438.00

CHURCH NEWS

Thank You

Thank you so much for the beautiful plant you sent in honor of my mother.

Our loss is heaven's gain.

During a time like this we realize how much our friends and relatives really mean to us...

Your expression of sympathy will always be remembered.

Robbie Casten & the Joe Hinkle Family

Dr. & Mrs. Spruce & Illinois District Family

Thank you so much for your concern & support during the loss of Jim.

Thanks for your kind expression of sympathy.

God's best to you and yours, Louise Runyan & Family

Vandalia Pastor's Report

Hello again to you all brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you so much for your support, we are truly blessed! We have moved our meeting times and are having some different people coming to our gatherings. We are moving out more and more as a group, different meetings and studies are forming. Let me share with you all that God has blessed us with.

In October we started meeting on Wednesdays instead of Sundays, this was going well but changing work schedules and lack of outsider interest has forced us to change once again. We are now meeting on Fridays and having a lot more fun, we've done a game night that included an honest conversation, including believers and the lost, about the difference between following Jesus and 'being a good person.' We had two new comers even though a few of our normal people were absent; we've been on hiatus for the Holiday and the birth of our new little boy.

Melissa and I are starting to meet with some lost people doing the seven signs in John study. One will start in December, the other as soon as she decides a time that she's comfortable with. We hope both of these people will become believers through this study of the miracles and nature of Jesus.

Melissa has given birth to a beautiful little boy Ezra Wyant Briggs, 8lbs 6oz 20.5in Nov. 16. I am attaching a photo to this report when I e-mail it out I hope all of you will see it and rejoice with us in this new gift from God. I hope to talk with you all soon, may God bless you in this season of new life, hope, and joy!

Love In Christ

-Nick Briggs



WHAT GOD CAN DO! MISSION: IS POSSIBLE! TEAM DAY 2012

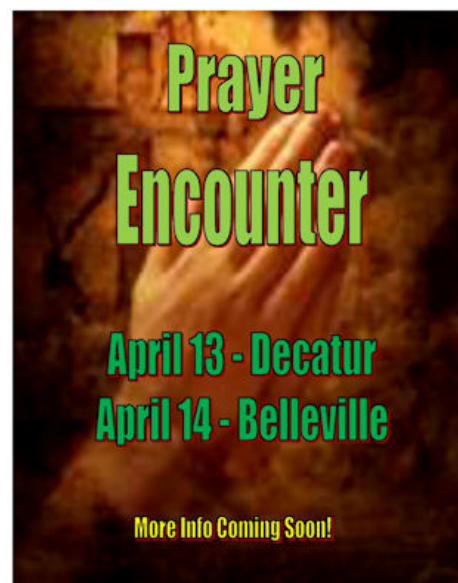
Over 30 Practical Workshops
To Help Your Church Succeed
In Accomplishing Your Mission
(should you choose to accept it)

SPECIAL GUESTS:
Darrell McLearn, USA/Canada
ONU Faculty Members

Saturday, February 18th (9am-3pm)
Sherman Church of the Nazarene

Saturday, March 17th (9am-3pm)
Salem Grace Church of the Nazarene

Look for Registration Information coming January 2012





Missional Strategy
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Here Waits the Bride

"Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." – Revelation 21:9



I performed a wedding recently for a young couple. Even after twenty years of ministry, doing weddings makes me more nervous than anything I do. I mean, after all, if you mess up someone's wedding, they'll never forget you. I've made a couple gaffes before – handing the groom his own ring to put on his bride, forgetting to tell the congregation that they could sit down once the service began, and once, I introduced the couple by the wrong name (oops!).

I made it through this most recent wedding however without any blunders. But still, I will never forget it. One special moment was especially memorable for me. The service began with me leading the procession of men – the groom, the best man, and his buds – out into the sanctuary. The groomsmen took their place on the platform, while the groom and I stood front and center on the floor. The bridesmaids were next; all dressed beautifully, hair fixed perfectly, and nervously smiling. My daughter, the last in the procession, especially made me smile. They also found their way to the platform.

It was what happened next that astonished me. The bride had not chosen the traditional wedding march. Instead, she chose a recording of Pachelbel's Canon in D, which begins slowly with the

deep strains of a bass, followed later by the other instruments of the string section. The bride had instructed us at rehearsal that she would not begin walking down the aisle until the music had reached its fullness. At rehearsal, it seemed a reasonable amount of time, thirty seconds or so. But, on that Saturday afternoon, as the music began and I gave the congregation the instruction to stand, we all turned to find ourselves staring at a closed double door for what seemed like forever

It wasn't just the waiting, however. It was the anticipation. We knew that on the other side of that door was the bride in all her beauty. No one but her family and bridesmaids had ever seen her like this before, dressed in a dress purchased months ago, fitted for her alone, and kept spotless and new for this day.

As we waited in almost unbearable anticipation, I had this moment of revelation. Literally. Revelation 19:7 to be exact: "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready." I thought of the Church and how Jesus, the Lamb of God, has called us to be his bride and how, one day, there will be a celebration.

The scriptures tell us that Christ "...gave himself up for her to make her holy ... to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." (Ephesians 5:25-28) Our destiny, as his beloved bride, is to appear before him in the greatest wedding celebration of all eternity. What an appearance that will be!

But, for now, we wait, everyone waits for the bride. In fact, all creation is waiting "...in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed." (Romans 8:19) The mountains and hills and rocks and trees are groaning to see the bride revealed. The birds of the air and the flowers of the field and the fish of the sea are waiting as well. The angels of heaven, the elders around the throne, and the saints who have gone before – all are waiting in anticipation. All to see the bride, dressed in pure white, escorted by the Father, and glowing in all her glory.

And, though every eye is fixed upon her appearance, none is longing so much as the Bridegroom himself. It will be his glory we share. We should ready ourselves for that day. "Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure." (1 John 3:3)

In Jesus,