
AA UPDATES

STORIES OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES – STUDENT WEEK OF PRAYER

One of the highlights of Spring semester is Student Week of Prayer, April 19 – 23, 2010. Each year the academy has two weeks of spiritual emphasis. There is one that takes place in the fall of the year just about six or seven weeks after school begins. Then the other week of prayer takes place in the spring of the year. During the first week the academy seeks the service of some adult or adults to come and deliver a program that has both morning and evening meetings. Then during the spring, the students, under the leadership of one of the religion teachers, put the program together around some theme. This particular year the theme related to child-like faith. If we would become as little children, then we would enter the kingdom of heaven. All of the deliveries were done by students who served as pastors of various organizations on campus.

On Sunday, the 18th of April, students and their sponsor Pastor Alvin Glassford were busy preparing the stage for the week of prayer. The walls were papered with black paper to imitate the night sky and then stars were placed all over the black paper. On one side of the stage was a tree house which was constructed as a show and tell for the delivery that occurred on Monday. There was a great deal of effort that went into preparing the stage and the display case in the commons. The display case has Matthew 18:3 as the center piece with all types of things that children have been heard to say. It is with thankfulness to each student and Pastor Glassford who spent so much time and effort on this week to make it important for us. It helped us to better concentrate on the message of Week of prayer and to remind us of that experience after its conclusion.



On Monday, there were a group of musicians who sang with the rest of the students such songs as *I know who I am*; *Flag Flying High*; *Great is Thy Faithfulness*; *I could sing of your Love Forever*; and *Draw me close to You*. The students who led out in the music were Elaine Kamvazaana, Simone Weithers, Molly Thompson, Kristin Edwards, Julian Prosper, Paola Caceres, Regi Desrosiers, and Joelle McIntyre. Several students accompanied the group with Joelle McIntyre at the keyboard, Jeff Emile at the Jimbay, Michael Thompson and Constanza Munoz playing the guitars and Cliff Allen on the saxophone. These same students were the musicians who performed each day of the week.



Prior to the group singing, the students in the Ruth Murdoch Elementary School Kindergarten came over and sang two songs. The first was *I have got a river of Life*; and the second was *Father I adore you*. Then after the musicians had completed the group sing, Skyler Long read the scripture for the day from Matthew 18:3 where it says “Unless you become as little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”.

After scripture reading, Cody Wales sat on the stage and made two points: (1) It is not about being on stage, it is about praising and connecting with God; and (2) Cody challenged us to find one thing this week that will change you. Find one thing that will generate that child-like faith that is so vital to eternal life.

Livvy Knott delivered the message for the morning. She spoke about her experience at flag camp last summer. She mentioned how she had this one little girl who was 7 or 8 years of age that was so beautiful, but at the same time rather disobedient. She went on to tell how little girls do tend to fight with each other and so Livvy and her companion worker, Chelsey, had their hands full at times trying to referee various situations. It seemed to Livvy and Chelsey that when they asked her to do one particular task, she would desire to do just the opposite. However, having said all of that, there was a genuineness that was so transparent coming from a little child.

Livvy went on to say how she had wanted a tree house when she was little and how that when she and her mother had gone off to camp meeting one summer, her father had taken the time to construct one for her. That was a real surprise to her upon her return. "If you, then ...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him" as found in Matthew 7:11. Livvy challenged us to study and pray so that we understand that Jesus is real and we need Him in our everyday lives.



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To conclude the service on Monday, the musicians came back up and sang *How great thou Art*. While all were singing, balloons were passed out to the students. Then they blew up their balloons and Molly asked them to think of something they were happy about as they brought them up and placed them on the stage. The service closed with prayer and we were off to classes for the day.



Joining the musicians on Tuesday were Jasmine St. Hillaire and Karla Mulzac. There were a number of songs that were sung that day including *shout to the north*,; *Breathe*; *Mighty to Save*; *Shine your Light*; and *Your Grace is Enough*. Christina Perez had the scripture reading from Isaiah 40: 29–31 where it says: “He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” Michael Robinson reminding us that this was week of prayer, had us kneel as we prayed that morning.



Elaine Kamvazaana was the speaker that morning. She was filling in for another student who could not be there because of illness. She said that when she really liked kids. It would never fail that she would get sucked into baby sitting. Elaine says that she has a hard time saying no even when she has other things that she needs to do. On one occasion, she was baby sitting two children who were playing around the house when she heard breaking of glass.

That was not good and when things began to quiet down, everyone realized that they had just broken a vase. Because all of this happened while Elaine's mother was fast asleep, the children were so embarrassed, frightened, and concerned that a decision was made that they would clean all of the dishes, clean up the living room and even prepare food for a meal so that when the mother awakened, she would concentrate more on what they had done positively than on the broken vase.

In another example, Elaine told of her fear of spiders and how she was with a group of pathfinders when a spider was seen. She did not want the children to know of her fear, yet she really was not brave enough to get rid of the spider. She did finally convince Joses Ngugi to help rid the environment of the spider so that life could go on. It is good to have friends that we can count on in the time of necessity and need. One time she did ask one kid whom she was baby sitting where all of his energy came from. The kid replied that it came from Jesus. The kid went on to say that God gives him the energy so that I can give energy to the world for Him. So then he asked Elaine "Do you love Jesus? He will give you energy to share with the world." We need to be able to have the energy to run the race just like the children have so that we can share God's love with the whole world.

Then on Wednesday, Mrs. Chris Schwer brought over her 1st graders and they sang *I've got peace like a river* and *Praise ye the Lord*. After Amante Gonzales had the scripture reading, Vanna Giddings had the opening prayer.



Then Dillon Zimmerman had the message for the day. He told of how he had enjoyed the merry-go-round when he was a small child. As he grew, it was just a novelty until band tour and they found another one outside of the school beside the Joliet church where the band performed. He said that he had eaten his fill at the Old Country Buffett the night before, filled to the brim at the hotel breakfast before the performance and then could not resist the wonderful potluck that had been prepared by the Joliet Church members. Unfortunately when he began riding the merry-go-round outside of the school gymnasium in the afternoon after all of those meals, his stomach was unable to cooperate and all of his food came up.



Dillon went on to say that as we grow up we become less transparent. We tend to put on a mask so that no one knows who we really are. We need to be honest with God. There are times that we want to hide everything just like all of the food was hidden prior to the merry-go-round.

But that has its limits and in the end, everything will come out. Dillon gave three reasons to be honest and transparent: (1) In the long run it is practical—people accept who we really are; (2) It is much better than putting on our mask and attempting to fake it; and (3) It really is the only way for truth and healing to occur. It allows for us to be justified with God. When people do not see our faults, then they applaud us. We enjoy it and when the truth comes out we are no longer miserable. His challenge to us was that we need to be emotionally honest with ourselves and with each other.

There was no meeting on Monday evening. Evening meetings did occur on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, with the same person who presented the morning meeting that day. On Tuesday evening there were about 30 students in all and each of the next two evenings had about the same number of students. However on Friday evening the Pioneer Memorial Church youth ministries department gave the Satellite program.

On Thursday, the 2nd graders shared with the academy students as they sang two songs with us: *Lord, I lift your name on High*, and *Seek ye First*. Then the academy musicians had four or five additional songs including *Jesus Loves Me*. To open our time in the word, Joyce Yoon had the scripture reading from I Timothy 1: 3-4.



be practical to get to know God since we will be spending an eternity with Him and if you are going to spend a very long time with someone, it is best to know them prior to that investment of time. He concluded his talk by challenging us to become like little children and have faith and belief in the one who came to save us for eternity. To end the program the musicians sang "I love you Lord".



Zeth Caldwell, pastor of the senior class gave a very short practical talk regarding our relationship to God. He queried the students to determine who had asked a question. All in attendance admitted to asking a question before. He then wanted to know how many had asked God a question. Once again nearly all had asked God some question. Many of us do not know nor understand the power of God and so we may hesitate to ask. But as we mature and begin to know the power of the one that we serve, we are reminded of the role that He would like to play in our lives if we only will choose that to happen. Zeth went on to say that it would just

On Friday, Kyle Collaz started the program by doing a social experiment. He “played the piano” and had the audience make the sound as he played. Everyone was attentive and involved in this fun and simple exercise... he then encouraged each to be attentive and involved for the more meaningful service to follow. Students then led with song service, followed by scripture reading by Matthew Schwe. Rachel Bantley & Ji Yeon Lee presented a beautiful special music.



Paola Caceres, pastor of the National Honor Society, told the story of the prodigal son. It was not important that the son came to the father in his best clothes. What was important was that he would come at all. But while the prodigal was away, the father was

preparing the biggest, the greatest party of all time. No one wanted the prodigal son to succeed more than his father. Every blessing that he had came from his father. And so it is with us, we need to come to our Heavenly father on bended knee just as we are. We do not have to be in the very best clothes, we just need to come. But, while we are not at home with the father, he is preparing the very best, the very biggest of all parties. It is so great and grand that we cannot even fathom what he has in store for us. God is so big and wonderful that even if He never did another thing for us, He has already done enough. Paola challenged us to commit or recommit our lives to Christ because of His love for us. To end the service and to conclude our Week of Prayer, the musicians had one last song *I am a friend of God*.

Special thanks goes to each participant who made the Week of Prayer such a powerful instrument. All were blessed by the chosen theme and many of us came away from that experience with a desire to have the faith of a little child. Once again, special thanks goes to pastor Glassford for the hard work that he has done in coordinating the program with the myriad of different pieces that had to work together to in order to provide the blessing that comes from a week of that type.

