

Church Office

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Meeting location

Marshall Middle School  
25 S. Pontiac, Janesville

Pastor:

John Swanson

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*Declaring the greatness of God and serving  
others for joy and His honor (II Cor. 4:5)*

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February 27, 2001

Dear

Shortly after my conversion in 1974 I told my new Christian friends, "I'm happy to know Jesus but there is no way that I'm ever going to tell anyone else." I was not going to become one of the "Jesus freaks" that populated university campuses in the late 60's and early 70's. Less than two weeks later I was in a training session for my job. We were paired up and told to talk about the worse thing that ever happened to us. My partner went first and told me a story of falling off a cliff while rock climbing. She then asked me, "What's the best thing that ever happened to you?" She caught me completely off guard. Without thinking I told her that I had recently placed my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. Her mouth dropped open and so did mine. She then began to ask me lots of questions. I told her everything I knew in about 10 minutes.

God used that experience in my life to show me that he had other people, living right around me, that he wanted to save. He also showed me that I had no idea how to help them. These were two of the reasons I got involved with Campus Crusade for Christ. I wanted to be able to tell those for whom Christ died why he died and rose again. That was the beginning of a lifelong quest to understand the gospel better and deeper so that I can accurately teach the gospel to all those to whom God sends me. I am convinced now more than ever that, "The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." (Rom. 1:16).

There are thousands of people living in the greater Janesville area that God wants to save who currently do not attend any church. These people need to hear the gospel if they are going to be saved. God wants us, as a church, to play a part in finding his lost sheep in Janesville. As we were reminded a couple of weeks ago when we studied Psalm 67, the means that God uses to glorify his name in the earth is to make himself known in greater ways to his people. We will fulfill our part in God's work of saving his people in Janesville as we earnestly pray, "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us so that the peoples might know his way and his salvation" (Psa. 67:1-2). I really do believe that as we grow to delight in God above all else we will pour out love on one another and upon those who live around us. We will talk much about Christ and about his salvation because people who are delighted with God delight to do so.

However, it is necessary that we learn the gospel so that we have something to say. There is a message to be communicated. Many of those whom Christ is going to save are right now indifferent or even hostile to him. Many of them are confused or believe lies about Jesus and his work of salvation. Therefore, we need to study the message and know how to answer the questions of these lost sheep. Reading the Bible for yourself and with your family is part of the process. Attending one of our Discovery Groups and paying attention in church are other important means of learning the gospel. Studying and memorizing the catechism is another. We have a unique opportunity March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> when Dr. D. A. Carson will be speaking at Lakeview church in Stoughton on this very subject. Plan on joining our contingent on Thursday night (Call the church office if you need a ride or for more info). It is my prayer that as we pray and study we will become as John and Peter when they told the Jewish ruling council, "We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20)

Working with you for your joy,