

The Varnell Voice
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WOW! Moments of Wonder at the 2009 Wonder Arts Conference

As children we had that sense of wonder that seems to fade away as we become adults...

Puppies, the shape of cereal, crayons, and a thousand other moments that makes a child laugh.

They spoke of "Wow" moments of wonder at the conference.

Experiences that can make you sit back and realize how great the world is around us and realize it is all God's gifts to us. I decided to share some wow moments during the trip as a kind of snapshot of things that can't be shown with digital cameras.

Wow Moment:

Watching the "Smothers Brothers" relationship of Matt and Hugh in action as they piloted the Varnell van around Chicago. Too funny, and yet true friendships are a gift.

Wow Moment:

Six Pilgrims looking for the statue of Bob Newhart near Navy Pier in Chicago. Adults need to take moments of childhood seriously.

Wow Moment:

Having breakfast with some young Worship Leaders from Boise, Idaho. I realized that we shared so many dreams and challenges - despite a four decades difference in age. God's churches will be in good hands in the generations to come.

Wow Moment:

A pastor telling me that this conference was a rare chance to just simply sit back and worship. We all should make the time to do this when we can; it is too easy as worship leaders to focus on making the service go smoothly. We are also members of the congregation.

Wow Moment:

Having a hoarse throat from constantly screaming out songs with the rest of the crowds – and not realizing I was doing so. It was a moment that you felt like you had prayed with your entire being.

Wow Moment:

During the meet and greet, I shook hands with a young man who was from Manchester, England - who smiled when I told him how much I had enjoyed living there in the eighties. The Conference was truly international, as you wandered the concourses of the airport- like facility; the mix of travelers were a sampling of people from all over God's earth.

Wow Moment:

On the night of the Hillsong United concert, I looked out from my vantage point and saw thousands of singing worship leaders all involved in Church Arts in one form or another. We all came here seeking answers. One answer is that we should never feel alone.

By: Phillip Panis

2009 Worship Wonder of Arts Conference

August Calendar of Events

6 th Grade Confirmation	August 2 -3
Lock-In	
Staff Parish Relations	August 3
Stephen Ministry	August 4
Worship Planning	August 4
Preschool Parent Orientation	August 6
Whitfield County Schools Begins	August 7
1 st Day of Preschool - 4 year old classes	August 10
Missions	August 10
Worship Committee	August 10
1 st Day of Preschool - 1, 2, & 3 yr old classes	August 11
Trustees	August 17
Stephen Ministry	August 18
Finance	August 23
Admin Council	August 24
Worship Planning	August 25
Northwest Whitfield H/S Football Team	
Dinner at Varnell UMC	August 28

More 2009 Worship Conference Experiences From Those Who "Lived" It!

"Wonder", the Arts Conference, was truly that--WONDER--mostly in the sense of AWE (The Willow Creek Campus itself is overwhelming!) but also wondering, "How can we apply this to Varnell?"

The hospitality was impressive--there were smiling people everywhere, welcoming, answering questions, handing out little gifts, pointing the way.

The technology was amazing--massive, effective, and so beyond my understanding!

The teaching was valuable--some went straight to the heart of the worship leader/planner, focusing on things like BEING a true worshiper, LIVING as "agents of Wonder", ENCOURAGING each other, DEFERRING, LISTENING to the Holy Spirit. There was also practical, "how-to" teaching--how to present an idea, how to bring along the next generation, etc. We were taught by example, by means of lecture, video, drama, interview, comedy, music, dance, and much more.

The worship was powerful--some shared with "the masses", some intensely personal (I attended a Breakout Session entitled "Prayer Dancing".) and some both at the same time.

The fellowship with the others in our group was priceless--we rode together, laughed together, cried together, rode, worshiped, explored, rode, planned, shared, remembered and rode some more. (Thanks to James and Matt who did the driving!)

An extra blessing for me was being able to holler "John D!" and have both OUR John D. and my brother John D. answer, "What!?" I enjoyed getting both of my Families together a couple of times.

By: Sharon Morgan



Worship Conference attendees gather for a meal: Bethany Laskey, Matt Laskey, Hugh Henderson, Becki (Sharon's sister in law), JamesGwin, John (Sharon's brother,) John Demerdjian, Phillip Panis and Sheree Firth. James wants it noted that the bottle of wine in front of him was unopened and placed in front of him shortly before the picture was snapped.

Our trip seemed like Dorothy and her companions heading down a bumpy Illinois interstate to find answers in OZ.

At the end of the story - the lion, scarecrow and tin man only needed to believe in themselves. We too sought practical answers as worship leaders in Chicago, and there were many ideas to try here in Varnell - but the real solution is already within our grasps.



We went to seminars on specific techniques or skills, such as rehearsing a praise group, working with teens, or improving worship services. We saw live demonstrations of drama, comedy, video displays, dance, and even folks flying around like Peter Pan. Wonderful stuff, but reality says that putting stage lights and trapeze rigging in the sanctuary might not fly at Varnell.

But the vision to achieve excellence in worship arts can fly anywhere, even in the smallest most basic setting - such as on a mound where parables instead of high tech captured the soul of the listeners.

When our group of companions would get a chance to discuss our findings - there seemed to be a common thread found in all of the workshops - strengthening the spiritual focus before setting out to achieve any practical tasks.

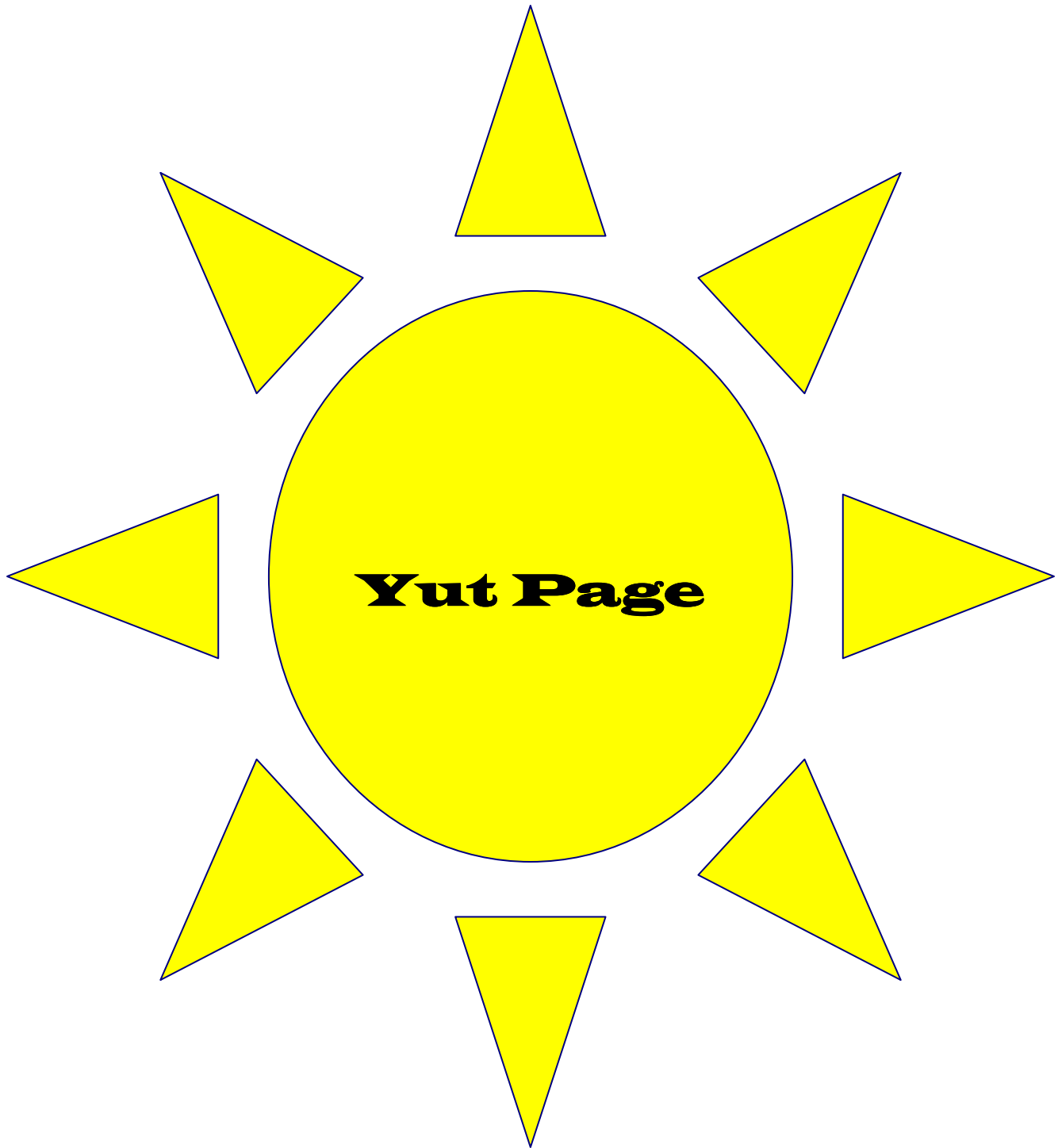
Hey.... Wait a minute, this ain't some rhetorical mumbo jumbo - we can do this!

We can pray. We can start a project with the belief God gave us the talent to do great works. We can take the time to help our fellow artist by letting them know we care about their wellbeing more than their performance. We can become guided by the Holy Spirit to be more skilled, more committed, and in partnership with other worship leaders in our church.

Kind of a simple answer to all our many tasks within Varnell worship teams? Yes, I admit it is.... But they believed in it at The Wonder Arts 2009 Conference. After all, the Wizard of OZ fixed the cowardly lion's problem with a medal that made him believe in himself.

Phillip Panis





Steadfast in the Lord

The following testimony was published in a Stephen Ministry congregation's newsletter. It was written by a care receiver in his 50s, who has been wheelchair-bound after a stroke left him partially paralyzed 10 years ago. He is divorced and estranged from his family, and he was discharged by the hospital to a nursing home where "people are sent to die."

My Stephen Minister was first assigned to me after I had been coming to church for more than a year. Since I had already been living in a nursing home for five years, my first thought was, "I wonder how long he will last? Will he be like everybody else and fade away after a few weeks?"

He began visiting with me in August. When November rolled around, he was still coming! December marked the start of a new church year, and he began telling me about the church seasons.

After a while, I started asking him questions. I was amazed that an ordinary lay person could know so much about the church. While he did not know all the answers, he continued to impress me because, if he did not know, he would find out and bring me the answer the following week.

One of the best ways to learn is by example, and I have learned a great deal since I began watching my Stephen Minister three years ago. And I am still learning today as he faithfully visits me week after week. Through my Stephen Minister I have learned to be patient. I have learned to love and to trust. I have learned to pray, and I have learned how to worship our God. I have learned the importance of Holy Communion. Most of all, my Stephen Minister has given me the confidence to be close to our Lord. (It makes it a little easier to be a Christian when a caring Christian comes to see you every week.)

Through Stephen Ministry, I have learned the meaning of Christian love and Christian virtue. After years of thinking that nobody cared about me, I know what it means to have somebody who really does care--and keeps on caring, without growing weary of it. And my Stephen Minister was always there for me when I needed him! He was there for me when my mother became ill, and he was still there after she died. He was there when I moved to a new home. In fact, I cannot really recall what life was like when he wasn't there. And I can count on the fact that he'll be there at our visit next Tuesday!

I now am truly beginning to understand what Paul meant when he told the people of the Church at Corinth, "Be ye steadfast in the Lord." That's what Stephen Ministers are--steadfast in the Lord. And with the help of my Stephen Minister, I can be steadfast too!



Dear Church Family,

How can I begin to thank you for all your prayers, visits, calls, cards, flowers, and food that you have showered me with since I have been sick? Your prayers have and are still being answered in a mighty way. Please continue to lift me before Jesus while I go through the surgery on Wednesday at 12:00 and for a quick recovery to follow. All of your kindness has lifted me up and is a wonderful reminder of all the special people that God has put in my life. I love all of you more than I can put into words.

May God bless you, Janice Richards



To My Church Family,

I want to thank everyone for the wonderful cards, gifts, flowers, brownies and recognition I received Sunday, May 2009. I was totally blown away by your standing ovation, so much so that I couldn't speak without breaking down in tears.

There is so many things I could say about how much I love this church and my job here, how much I have grown in my walk with Christ over the past 3 years – thanks to so many wonderful people here at Varnell.

Thank you again for your support and I will endeavor to always do the best job for God's glory and for Varnell United Methodist Church.

Love in Christ,

Tammy Burek "Blessed" Office Administrator



First of all, let me extend a word of deep gratitude and thankfulness to Pastor James and the wonderful people of Varnell for letting me ride along. Chicago is a long ride down a rough, very rough, road, but the trip was well worth it.

I was amazed at the sense of excellence that oozed all over Willow Creek. If you are going to do something, you need to do it well. If you are going to provide something, make sure it's the best you can provide.

In the worship services, break out sessions, and our time together as a group, I learned that God wants us to worship with all we have. Worship is about bringing God our all. Worship is also about receiving all we can from God is pouring out grace upon grace into our lives.

Thanks again for letting me ride along and we will find the Bob Newhart statue next year!

Hugh E Hendrickson

Pastor of Smith Chapel

July/August 2009 Birthdays & Anniversaries

July Birthdays

Harold	Caldwell	July 3
Sally	Creswell	July 3
Gracie	Hill	July 3
Matt	Laskey	July 6
Mason	Satterfield	July 6
Inez	Cannon	July 9
Alec	Longmire	July 9
Lindsey	Roberts	July 9
Ashley	Clarey	July 10
Kerri	Longmire	July 10
Kyra	Kolaski	July 11
Bob	Parker	July 11
Rob	Cannon	July 12
Kerry	Holmes	July 12
Bryan	Jackson	July 12
Sami	Newsome	July 12
Shelby	Owens	July 12
Bobby	Thames	July 12
Denise	Caldwell	July 14
Elaine	Dickie	July 15
Vickie	Millsaps	July 15
Kyle	Baron	July 16
Cheryl	Clarey	July 16
Sara	Kyer	July 16
Steve	Poole	July 16
David	Gallegly	July 17
Ann	Sheppard	July 17
Phyllis	Ellis	July 18
Orenda	Gregory	July 18
Cathy	Parker	July 18
Allison	Hicks	July 22
Joyce	Wilson	July 22
Walter	Creswell	July 23
Eva Jean	Hendrix	July 23
Cody	Long	July 23
Bill	Cleghorn	July 24
Sarah	Arthur	July 25
Bob	Chiddister	July 25
Donna	Grant	July 25
Harold	Reed	July 25
Tammy	Watson	July 25
Brett	Duvall	July 26
Eric	Kyer	July 26
Jackson	Sheppard	July 26
Laura Grace	Duvall	July 28
Brandon	Falconer	July 28
Doris	Lee	July 28
Sharon	Morgan	July 28
Eli	Chumley	July 29
Travis	Hillis	July 29
Roger	Farmer	July 30
Caleb	Sullivan	July 31
James	Wilson	July 31

August Birthdays

Ashley	Reed	August 1
Cole	Roberts	August 1
Rick	Johnson	August 2
Rebecca	Creswell	August 3
Amelia	Hill	August 3
Chris	Howell	August 5
Kelsey	Morren	August 6
John	Peabody	August 7
Jessica	Bell	August 8
Kyle	Harmon	August 9
Mitchell	Johnson	August 9
Don	Detar	August 11
Lauren	Mann	August 11
Don	Barber	August 12
Baker	Chiddister	August 12
Brenda	Scott	August 12
Ann	Boyd	August 13
Chip	Hicks	August 13
Kevin	Kolaski	August 13
Donald	Suarez	August 14
Gavin	Thompson	August 15
Wyatt	Mann	August 16
Bre Ann	Steadman	August 16
Taya	Harness	August 17
Margaret	Ogle	August 19
Pete	DuBeau	August 21
Daisie	Bruce	August 22
Beth	Gwin	August 23
Kelsey	Harmon	August 23
Jeff	Martin	August 23
Ralph	Morgan	August 23
Beth	Waskul	August 24

July Anniversaries

Mike & Sherri Steadman	July 1
Brad & Daphne Henderson	July 2
Bob & Susan Chiddister	July 4
Pat & Prissy Henry	July 6
Bill & Sharon Bell	July 9
Ron & Inez Cannon	July 10
Sean & Melissa Torbett	July 13
Bill & Nancy Cleghorn	July 14
Bill & Kathy Baron	July 16
Matt & Ambyr Gallegly	July 21
Michael & Carolyn Taylor	July 21
Bryan & Dee Jackson	July 27
Kenny & Tracey Harmon	July 30
Mike & Marget Sikes	July 31

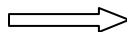
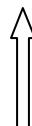


August Anniversaries

Don & Ella Smith	August 2
Chris & Julie Scoggins	August 3
Joe & Caroline Fanelli	August 5
Andy & Elizabeth Day	August 6
Rick & Elaine Johnson	August 9
Jack & Ann Boyd	August 13
John & Kathy Ford	August 16
Martin & Orenda Gregory	August 17
Bob & Kathryn Collier	August 18
Geri & Geri Geren	August 26
Bruce & Kerri Longmire	August 29
Kevin & Suzan Duvall	August 30
Marty & Tonia Johnson	August 31

August Birthdays continued

→ Kelsey	Harmon	August 23
→ Jeff	Martin	August 23
→ Ralph	Morgan	August 23
→ Beth	Waskul	August 24
→ Mickey	Brock	August 27
→ Colter	Creswell	August 28
→ Pat	Henry	August 29
→ Sam	Sikes	August 29



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- Matt Laskey** Minister to Families with Youth
cell phone: 706459.8579
email: matt@varnellumc.org
- Janice Richards** Musician (8:40 & 10:45)
- Tena Stines** Infant Worker



“Created By God”

A human sexuality study for

5th & 6th graders & parents

Youth, do you wonder what's happening to your body, and what's going to happen next? Does anyone out there understand what you're going through? Relax! You're not alone. You've begun the exciting journey that will take you to adulthood. God has created you, and God is still at work, helping you become the person that you were created to be.

5th & 6th graders are invited to participate in an upcoming event called *Created By God*. This is a study of human sexuality with a Christian foundation. It will offer both you and your child an opportunity to learn, grow, and celebrate the fact that we have each been wonderfully created by God, and are called to responsible living as sexual beings.

This study involves a commitment from parents, young persons, and leaders, but the benefit will be well worth the investment. In addition to being provided an arena where accurate information and proper terminology can be gained and practiced, the young people involved will better understand how their sexuality fits into God's plan for human relationships. *Created by God* uses a highly interactive approach to learning and is a lot of fun for everyone involved.

The schedule is as follows:
Parents (required) and Students – Sunday, September 13, 3pm – 7:30 pm (Parents dismissed at 4:30 pm)
Students Only – Sunday, September 20, 3 pm – 7:30 pm
A snack supper will be provided for the students at each session.

The fee for the event is \$25.00, payable to Varnell United Methodist Church. This covers the cost of books, meals, and supplies. If you plan to participate, please return the completed form and fee, no later than Wednesday, September 3, so materials can be ordered. For more information, call Libby Satterfield 706.694.2850 or Beth Gwin 706.694.8447.

Last year's *Created By God* Class works diligently on their individual masks that shows the special talents and abilities that God has given each of them.