



# PULSE January 2012

Big erasers, porch lights, and hope



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I was blessed to spend the first week of 2012 serving alongside some great adult leaders and college students in Joplin. It was my first trip back since August. Our group did some amazing work during the week, working at numerous homes and meeting some wonderful people. There is still so much that needs to be done...it's truly overwhelming.

Over the past five trips to Joplin I have seen several of our volunteers, including myself, overcome with emotion--tears streaming down our faces as we see the utter destruction of lives and property. People have shed tears as they picked up someone's wedding photo, found a stuffed animal under some debris, heard the stories of survival and loss from the people of Joplin...you get the idea. This past trip was no exception.

I left the church we were staying at one evening around 10pm to head to the store. It was about a 4 mile trip along 20th Street which runs east to west through Joplin. The tornado seemed to follow this street as it went through the city. I drove a few miles and pulled over into a lot that used to contain a 64 unit apartment complex. It was the last site we served at in August. I stepped out of the truck and was overcome by what WASN'T there. It was as if a huge eraser had been pressed against this area and erased everything. There was virtually NOTHING in any direction. No houses, no stores, no trees, no people. I was struck by the utter darkness in what was previously a bustling residential area. 9000 homes...gone. It is a barren landscaped crisscrossed with streets, that's it.

As I walked around my truck I began to notice that some of lights that I had thought were at the edge of the tornado zone were actually in the middle of the tornado's path. There was some light, some hope, breaking through the darkness. It was light from a house. As my eyes continued to adjust to the darkness a few more lights became evident. There were about a dozen homes, with lights on, in the middle of this barren landscape. These small points of light from these homes were beautiful against the backdrop of darkness. Hope and light are indeed sprouting up in the desolate landscape in Joplin!

I love the words of Jesus from Matthew 5:14-16, "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." These words are for you and me, for the church God has established. God's light perhaps shines most brightly through us as our faith flows from our hearts and presents itself through our hands and feet.

I closed my eyes and imagined this dark and barren place filled with light, the light of Christ from God's people. These people, young and old, were here serving. They had decided to bring the light of Jesus to this dark place. This landscape became as bright as a sun drenched afternoon. These people were rebuilding homes and lives, and when they left the light remained. This barren landscape was once again filled with the glow of thousands of porch lights! It was a beautiful image!

Are you ready to bear the light of Jesus into this place? We have opportunities for mid high, high school, college age, and adults to serve in Joplin this summer. Let's bathe Joplin with the light of Christ this summer! The day is coming when a drive down 20th street at night will not be dark. The darkness will be punctuated by thousands of porch lights of homes that you helped to build. These homes will be filled with families, laughter, love, and hope...not because of anything we did, but rather the things that God will do through us as we let our light shine!

Yours in Christ,

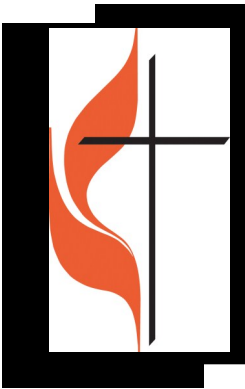
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# UTX

## High School & Middle School



### UTX has Talent!

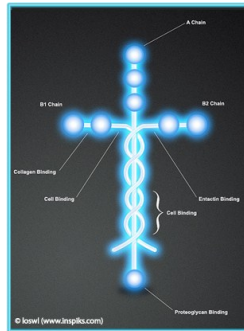
Join us for a fun evening of fun and entertainment featuring...YOU! That's right, this is a talent show where YOU and your friends can share your talents...singing, playing a musical instrument, juggling poolies, comedy, etc.! This event will be on Sunday, February 26th from 6-8pm in our main worship center and EVERYONE is invited to attend. We'll have some emcee's, some 'color commentary' from our panel of judges, and people will vote for their favorite acts with cans. Yes, we're asking everyone to cast their votes with a can (or cans) to be donated to the Eureka Food



Pantry. This will be a combined high school and mid high event. The two

### Laminin!

Colossians 1:17 - He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.



youth bands Laminin and Midnight Prayer will anchor the evening's performances. We'll be holding auditions for this event during Adrenaline and the mid high UTX 'afterschool' times beginning on February 7th.

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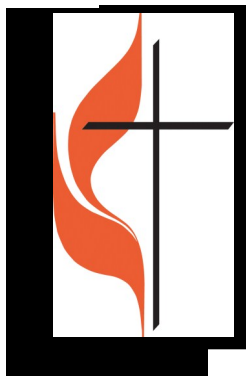
Passion Painter on 'Passion' Sunday: Join us on Sunday, April 1st from 6-8pm for an amazing evening of worship with 'midnight prayer' and Andy Raines, the Passion Painter. Andy will be 'throwing the paint' on canvas and on the walls in the renovated UTX youth zone. Andy was here about two years ago, if you missed it then you'll want to be sure to be there this time!



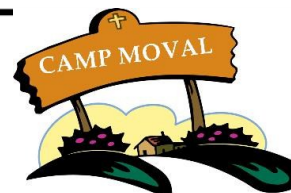
UTX 'afterschool', we're making some big changes in this ministry starting this month! Due to the large amount of students we have found it necessary to split the group. Our new 8th Grade Only sessions will be on Tuesday's. We'll pick the students up from school and bring them back to church for a light snack, some activities, and a great study based on the movie 'To Save a Life'. 6th and 7th grade only will continue to meet on Wednesdays after school.

**UTX<sub>MHM</sub>**

**Middle School Ministry**



8th Grade Only Retreat at Camp MoVal will be April 20th-22nd. This retreat will be led by both adults and high school students. It will be a great weekend of worship, reflection, quiet times with God, and other activities including the high ropes course. The cost for the retreat is \$95.00 and the registration deadline is March 11th. Register before March 11th at the reduced cost of \$85.00



## 8th Grade Dance

8th Grade Dance Limo Service, well the 8th grade dance at LaSalle Springs Middle School is on Friday, May 18th. We will be offering the use of the church bus for you and up to 21 of your friends for the evening. We'll take your group to a place of your choosing for pictures, then off to the dance, and then out for a snack or late dinner afterwards. This offer is available to the first group who requests and provides a 'donation' of \$200.00 to the UTX youth ministry. Interested, please contact Tim no later than March 11th to reserve the LIMO, CDL driver, and two adult volunteers

Mid High Mission Trip to Joplin, MO July 21st through 27th. This is a conference trip, we'll be staying at local churches, and the CCYM youth will be leading some wonderful worship in the evenings. We'll be building and/or rebuilding homes destroyed by the May 22nd tornado. This trip is for those who are currently in the 6th through 8th grade.



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