

Look to the Future

The DePaul InterVarsity chapter has truly been flourishing this year. We have three strong small groups, excellent attendance at large-group meetings and social events, and students who are genuinely enjoying this growing community. However, even in the midst of all of these victories, the chapter leaders and I have been conscious of our need for new leaders next year, as three of the four current leaders will be graduating. As my own staffworker used to say, "Every chapter is four years away from extinction."

We've been astonished to see answered prayers for potential new leaders already! We are in the planning stages of some events specifically geared towards potential student leaders. We'll keep you updated on this process!

In Spirit & in Truth

Each summer, we ask a dozen different staff to wrestle with questions like these: How can we warmly invite students from a variety of cultural, church, and ethnic backgrounds into worship? Is there a way to help students to connect better with intercessory prayers for student Christian movements around the world? How can we encourage students to engage better with expository speakers? How can we expose students to new styles of worship in ways that will help them connect with the Lord?

These questions come up for worship leaders at our summer training programs at Cedar Campus. Each year, 1,500 students come through these leadership development programs from over 100 schools. I'm enjoying working with Dan Huang, a colleague of mine, in developing materials to help these worship

leaders have all the resources they need to thrive in these challenging positions.



Here's Baby Boyd's profile in sonogram. Ain't she grand?

Shelf Life

Book Notes from Ann

How To Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk
by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Believe me, I didn't expect to start reading parenting books when I was newly pregnant! However, this book holds a lot of wisdom about empathy, and I kept thinking about the copy I bought when I was a teenager trying to learn how to bring some order into my day-camp job.

The authors encourage creative thinking about how to empathize with children in ways that are authentic as parents — principles that are useful in adult relationships, too. The book brought some things into focus regarding student work, as well: I was stimulated by the chapter on "encouraging autonomy," realizing that this is exactly what God, the best Parent, has orchestrated for DePaul student leaders this year as my role has shifted with them. And they have flourished! I hope to remember this lesson in years to come when I'm tempted to tie the shoes of my five-year-old when she is perfectly capable of doing it herself.

Boyd's Eye View

Jon and I are so excited to announce that we are five months pregnant, and all is going well! My due date is April 16, which is Easter Sunday this year. We just had a mid-term ultrasound and learned that we are expecting a daughter. I've been feeling healthy, eating every few of hours, trying on lots of borrowed maternity clothes, and enjoying a bit of Baby's movement! We are so thankful for all your support and prayers, and we hope you'll continue to pray with us for a healthy, full-term birth.

Other exciting events in the Boyd household have included painting a few rooms in anticipation of baby (thanks, Mom, for that generous gift!), celebrating Jon and my fifth anniversary in October, and enjoying singing in a couple of performances with the Apollo Chorus.

Prayer Requests

Please pray:

- for new student leaders to continue to emerge for next year
- for students to deepen their relationship with God over break
- for wisdom in helping prepare worship leaders for our summer training programs
- for a healthy, happy, full-term Baby Boyd in April

Ann Boyd

5231 N Saint Louis Ave
Chicago IL 60625

(773) 588-0231

ann[at]annagram[dot]org



Extra! Extra!

Preparing for the Coming of Christ

At our DePaul Inter-Varsity Christmas party on November 5 (yes, this is early — the DePaul schedule is a bit unusual), we planned to spend some time thinking about preparing spiritually for our five-week-long winter break and

reflecting on the past quarter. Some of the questions got me thinking too. It is good to prepare oneself for Advent! Here I offer a few of my own reflections, and I encourage you to reflect on your own life. (You can read the complete list of questions at annagram.org.)

Reflection: What evidence of God's activity have I seen in my life this year?

I've seen God's activity in his guidance to make some changes in my job, in the success the DePaul chapter is enjoying, and in the joy I've been experiencing with these new responsibilities. I did feel a bit apprehensive about these changes, especially scaling back at DePaul, but I wanted to move forward in faith — and I have been so grateful to see how the ministry at DePaul has blossomed with these changes. I've sensed God's presence as Jon and I have grieved our pregnancy losses, received amazing support from our community, and now in the great joy of my pregnancy.

Preparation: What activities might God be inviting me to engage in this Advent to prepare for the celebration of his birth?

I am really excited about singing Handel's *Messiah* with the Apollo Chorus this year. Although I've always loved the piece, I've never sung it. Singing this kind of music is very worshipful for me — I keep crying during rehearsals. :) I'm also looking forward to reading an Advent reflection book: this year

I've picked up a compilation of Henri Nouwen readings entitled *Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J. Nouwen*. I am also planning on spending a few hours weekly in writing and reflection at a local coffee shop.

Celebration: What traditions do I want to participate in or initiate to celebrate Advent and Christmas with my family and friends?

Jon and I have been preparing Christmas carol sing-alongs with our families for a few years now, and we hope to continue that tradition. We also enjoy lighting Advent candles that we designed a few years ago and setting up a crèche. Singing Christmas carols and participating in Advent reflections with our Bible study group is always delightful. We'll miss baking cookies with Jon's grandma from now on (after her passing in August), but we'll definitely continue the tradition in her honor. (See annagram.org for Martha's favorite cookie recipe!)

I'll end with a quote from my Advent reflection book written by Simone Weil: "Waiting patiently in expectation is the foundation of the spiritual life." May the Lord fill you and your family with much patience, joy, and hope in your expectation of his coming this Christmas season.

For Christ & the University —

Ann

P.S. As always, there's more online at www.annagram.org. This issue's Web Extras: the complete list of questions for Advent reflection, preparation, and celebration and two recipes for Mexican Wedding Cakes and Shortbread Cookies with Chocolate.