



CONNECT
JOHN 15:5 MIDDLETOWN



CONNECT

SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2011

“Yes, I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5



THEIR WORLD. OUR WAR.

Our theme for the week is “Connect” and takes a look at a John 5:15. Let’s read that verse together.

“Yes, I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

Throughout the week we will turn to the motion picture, Transformers, to help us better “connect” with the daily themes.

Optimus Prime, leader of the “good guy” Autobots, has led his group of shape-shifting robot friends to earth after the destruction of their home world, Cybertron. It was destroyed by the evil Decepticon leader, Megatron, in his quest to get hold of the All Spark, a mysterious and powerful cube that is able to bring mechanical and electronic objects to life, essentially turning mundane objects into Cybertronians. The Autobots want to find the All Spark so they can use it to rebuild Cybertron and end the war between the Autobots and the Decepticons, while the Decepticons want to use it to obliterate the Autobots and take over the universe.

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It is often said that teenagers today are the most connected generation in history.

Do you think that is true? Why or why not?

In what ways, and to what things, people, or groups, do you feel connected?



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

So do you feel unconnected or disconnected in any way?

Let's consider one more question that does not have a "right" answer, or a "good Sunday school" answer that you're supposed to give. Thinking of all we've just shared, what's the most important connection for you?

Each of us has connections that are very, very important to us. As we launch into a week of "connecting," let's ask God to bring His life, power and love into every connection we have.

God is going to do some amazing things this week in each of our lives as we connect with Him, with each other, and with the people of the community. We, along with Middletown, Ohio, will forever be transformed.



I AM THE VINE

MONDAY, JULY 11, 2011

“Yes, I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5



NEW CLOTHES

God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

-Colossians 3: 12

IN THE GARAGE

Before it was a book of the Bible, Colossians was a letter from Paul to a church in Colossae, written in the first century. The teachings of the Colossae church were promising believers' enjoyment of a higher spiritual life and a deeper insight into the world of spirits. Paul's letter argues against such teaching, showing that in Christ they had all things. He wrote to help them transform their lives through Jesus. Paul knew some of the Colossians spiritual lives were like old cars, breaking down and in need of repair, but God still loved them. No matter how many times you go in for a tune-up, God is glad to have you back.

WHEELS OF TIME

Sam Witwicky knows a little something about cars in need or repair. Early in the Transformers movie, Sam goes to a used car dealership with his father to purchase his first car. Sam ultimately chooses, with a little assistance, a faded 1975 yellow Camaro with black racing stripes that looks to be on its last legs. Unbeknownst to Sam, the Camaro is actually his Autobot protector in disguise, Bumblebee. Later in the film, with a little nudging and snide comments from Sam's love interest, Mikaela Banes, Bumblebee feels the need to transform himself from an in-need-of-repair 1975 Camaro into a brand new version of himself.



As we'll discuss throughout the week, the growth of our spiritual lives is dependent upon ongoing transformation. By choosing to be at camp this week, we have already taken the first step down that road. This week is an opportunity to explore and evaluate our relationship with God, and like Bumblebee, maybe it's just the nudge we need to start transforming ourselves.



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

What choice are the Colossians faced with? In your life, what kind of choices can you make to grow closer to God?

We have worked hard to be here and have been waiting a long time for this workcamp week to arrive. What are your expectations for this week?

God is constantly revealing his presence to us; we just need to see it! Throughout this week, we will refer to these revelations as "God Sightings." In what ways can we seek to be more aware of God's presence in and around us?

UNLIMITED HORSEPOWER

Life is all about choices and we make them on a daily basis. Some choices are fairly inconsequential, like what kind of gum to chew. Others are far more important, like what college to attend. When Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians, they were presented with a very important choice, the same choice each one of us has to make in our own spiritual lives. Like the Colossians, and Sam's 1975 Camaro, our spiritual lives are often breaking down and in need of repair. But we have the choice of going "all in" and "connecting" with Christ. If we take a chance, have faith, and dive in we'll see where that choice can take our relationship.



YOU ARE THE BRANCHES

TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2011

“Yes, I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5

Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

- Matthew 18:3-4

ACE OF SPADES

Humility is something that most of us struggle with at one point or another. How many times have we heard Donald Trump say he has the #1 television show, or the #1 casino, or the #1 golf course? Is he practicing humility? Bragging about yourself or trying to become the center of attention are not character traits we should aspire to have. Instead, we should aspire to be selfless, to put others first, and to be humble. Philippians 2: 3-4 reads, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

“I WISH TO STAY WITH THE BOY”

In the Transformers movie, Bumblebee acts as the protector for Sam Witwicky. At first, this is not known by Sam as he thinks he is simply driving around an old, beat up Camaro. But as the movie unfolds, Bumblebee gives us a great example of what it is like to be humble and selfless. In every battle scene Bumblebee remains at Sam’s side. When Sam needs a quick getaway, Bumblebee is there. When the battle with the Decepticons appears to be over, Bumblebee pleads to remain Sam’s protector. Bumblebee’s thought process does not center around himself and his trust in Sam is unwavering.





aside our pride and become like a child but to do so we must not have selfish ambitions. Jesus is asking us to have the same unwavering faith in Him as Bumblebee has in Sam.



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

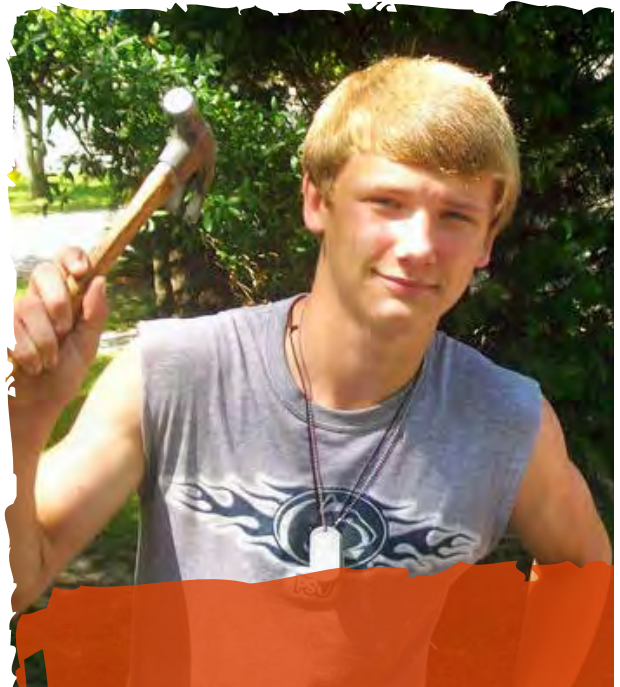
Can you think of a time where you did not practice humility?

What can we do to start putting others before ourselves and practice Jesus' call for selflessness?

How can we show God's love through specific actions during the remainder of our time here in Middletown, Ohio? at home?

WHAT'S NORMAL ANYWAY...

In Matthew 18:3-4, Jesus is asking us to make a radical departure from what seems normal for us, to change paths, to transform. He's asking us to take on childlike characteristics in our spiritual lives. Children are trusting, teachable, submissive, desire to grow up, and brutally honest. Humility is a crucial element, a commonality of these childlike characteristics, and a part of the package that we cannot do without if we are to become childlike in our faith. Humility is, by definition, the opposite of pride. Jesus is saying we can indeed set



REMAIN IN ME

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 2011

“Yes, I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5

WAITING IS THE HARDEST PART

Transformers opens with Sam Witwicky standing in front of his high school class showing the personal effects, including eye glasses, of his explorer grandfather, Archibald Witwicky. Little does Sam know that these glasses have the coordinates of long-lost All Spark imprinted on them. When Sam tries to make a few bucks by posting these glasses on eBay, the Cybertronians are alerted of the All Sparks' presence on earth.

Later this week, we'll discover how the All Spark is destroyed and why returning to Cybertron becomes impossible for the Autobots. Today, we'll look at the movie's final scene where Optimus Prime stands atop a hill in southern California knowing that earth is the Autobots new home. He says, “We live among its people now, hiding in plain sight but watching over them in secret, waiting, protecting. I have witnessed their capacity for courage, and though we are worlds apart, like us, there is more to them than meets the eye. I am Optimus Prime and I send this message to any surviving Autobots taking refuge among the stars. We are here. We are waiting.”

PATIENCE

Waiting is a faith process and it is sometimes painful. Friends of Group, Jeff and Katie, have wanted children since they married 13 years ago. Shortly thereafter, Katie was diagnosed with Crohn's disease, a painful and sometimes life threatening disease that affects your intestines and digestive tract...with no cure. Because of the disease and



the experimental drugs she has to take to treat the disease, she has not been able to have children. So they've waited.

Four years ago they felt God leading them to adopt a child from China. So they went through the process and are currently second on the list. So they wait.

Two years ago they entered into an additional adoption process for a child from Korea. This year they finally met their new baby girl on a Skype call. Madaline remains in Korea due to a paperwork log-jam. So they wait.

One year ago, Katie swallowed an experimental camera designed to help treat Crohn's symptoms as it moves through her digestive track taking readings. Unfortunately, the camera got stuck in her small intestine. If it failed to move within one week it would have required a dangerous surgical procedure. So they waited, and prayed.

By the end of that week, the camera had moved. Madaline is supposed to be on a flight to the U.S. this summer. Eight months ago, Katie learned that the new treatments for her Crohn's disease are making a difference. She is considered in remission. Six months ago, Katie learned she is pregnant.

HANGIN' TOUGH

Sometimes we wait and God's answer is "no," sometimes it's "yes," and sometimes it's "wait a little longer." Often times it is difficult to hang in there long enough to do whatever will happen next. While he stood

on that hill, Optimus Prime did not know the fate of the Autobots but he was willing to wait for what he would be called to do. When we hang in there and remain with God, we too are saying, "God...I believe you. No matter what. So I'll wait." It's easy to say we have the patience of Optimus Prime, but really hard to do.

1 John 2:24-25 reads, "As for you, see that the Truth you have heard remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and the Father. And this is what he promised—eternal life."

What's the most difficult thing for you to believe about Jesus? Do you ever think it's difficult for Jesus to keep remaining with you? Why?



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Jesus has remained with you since the beginning. It's an incredible thought that Jesus will always remain with you. He'll never quit...never abandon you...never write you off. And that can give you the strength and encouragement that you need to remain with Jesus, even in the hardest of times.

Hebrews 12:3 reads, "Think of all the hostility Jesus endured from sinful people. Then you won't become weary and give up."

I IN YOU

THURSDAY, JULY 14, 2011

“Yes, I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5

RENOVATE

Seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!
- Colossians 3: 9-11

WHO'S IN?

The final battle scene of Transformers sees the Autobots fighting the Decepticons in downtown Los Angeles. Sam Witwicky is in control of the cube containing the much sought after All Spark which villain Megatron is frantically trying to take from Sam. The Autobots leader, Optimus Prime, is protecting Sam from Megatron and asking Sam to put the cube into his own chest. This will destroy the All Spark, as well as Optimus Prime, render Cybertron unrestorable, but ultimately will keep the All Spark's power from getting into the hands of the Decepticons. Optimus Prime is willing to sacrifice himself for Sam, humans, earth, the Autobots, and the greater good. He is willing to physically consume the cube and go “all in” for the sake of humanity and the universe.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

An important part of the good news of the gospel is that God loves us so much he accepts us just as we are. There are no tests to pass before signing on to follow Jesus. Everyone who wants to is welcomed. But there is more to it than that. An equally important part of the good news is that God loves us so much he has no intention of leaving us as he found us. The Christian life is about change and a large part of this change is personal transformation, renovation of the heart. One of the main themes in the teachings of Jesus is the connection between what is in our hearts



and the way we act. Jesus left no doubt that in order to truly follow Him, we must allow Him into our hearts and transform internally.

One of Paul's consistent themes is that followers of Jesus are to pull off the old self and put on the new. To the Galatians he writes, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23) On Monday, we saw Paul encouraging the Colossians to be "God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience." (Colossians 3:12) The goal here is not perfection; it is growth.

It is the ongoing transformation – the renovation of the heart – that is proof of God's presence and work in our lives. To

truly live as a Transformer for Jesus, we must take on the attitude of Optimus Prime and be willing to go "all in."



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Jesus' gift to us, laying down his life so that we might live, can only be received if we truly "take it in." Many people have described the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as "the greatest story ever told." If the Good News is really the greatest story ever told, why is it often so difficult or awkward to share that Good News with the people we know?

If God were to make a complete transformation of your life, what's the first thing he'd ask? How can we use this week to evaluate and seek renovation in our spiritual lives?

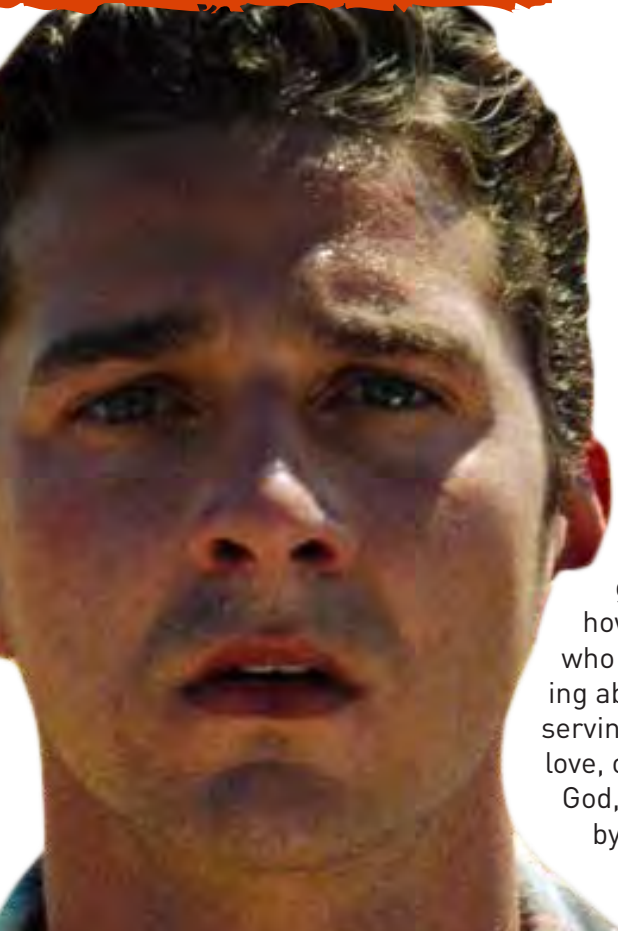


YOU WILL PRODUCE MUCH FRUIT

FRIDAY, JULY 15, 2011

“Yes, I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5



JESUS LASTS

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’

- John 21:15 - Jesus and Peter

TROJAN HORSE

In the Transformers movie, the Decepticons attempt to take control of the United States government’s computer network. They attempt to do this by planting a virus within the system which will give them full system control. Their attempt is successful and the United States is forced to shutdown their network completely to limit the Decepticons data collection and influence. The network intrusion’s data signature is so complicated it is unable to be deciphered by any of the government’s top analysts. Eventually, analyst Maggie Madsen takes a copy of the network intrusion to her hacker friend, Glen Whitmann, who deciphers the code which points Maggie and Glen towards Sector 7 and Sam Witwicky.

FAITH IN ACTION

Sometimes scripture verses are very much like network intrusions. At first glance, they might seem impossible to decode but when we have the proper skills and take the time to really explore the text we can see God’s word to us. In John 21, Jesus is asking Peter if he loves Him. When Peter says that he does, Jesus replies, “Feed my lambs.” What is Jesus talking about? Jesus is giving Peter, and all of His followers, directions on how to show God’s love. Jesus is saying to feed those who are in need but not with physical food. He is talking about spiritual food: teaching, praying, leading, serving. Jesus is asking for Peter’s love, but with that love, obedience too. That’s the way we show our love for God, by feeding the sheep, by bringing the good news, by putting our faith into action.



When we do put our faith into action we extend ourselves beyond what is expected and we connect in a real, genuine way. This is when people begin to see a glimpse of what Jesus did for them. Jesus' love is the reason he connected with us on the cross, and when we share love in Jesus' name, he can connect to others through us. That's really what today's theme, "Produce Much Fruit," is all about. Being connected with Jesus, and Jesus being connected with you, in such a way that your life can be fruitful and used by God.

Our challenge is to leave Middletown forever transformed. Not transformed into a Camaro like Bumblebee, or a Peterbilt truck like Optimus Prime, but in our attitudes towards servanthood. Like the Autobots, may we live our lives as Transformers...for Jesus.



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

What's one way you felt fruitful for God this week? Let's take that one step further as we prepare to head home. How can we be a youth group that produces much fruit after this week is over?

At the beginning of the week we talked about expectations. Now that it is Friday, were your expectations met? What unexpected things happened throughout the week?

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

SATURDAY, JULY 16, 2011

“Yes, I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

John 15:5

LIFE AS A TRANSFORMER

At one point in the Transformers movie, Sector 7 captures Bumblebee and Sam observes, “He’s not fighting back.” Willingly, Bumblebee was attempting to lay down his life for the greater good and transform the situation and those around him. Throughout the week, this is the theme that has been played out by the Transformers and has kept us “Connected.” It’s how we can leave Middletown and be transformers too! John 15:13 reads, “There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” How can we accomplish this? We are given a good description of how we can be transformers through

Jesus in Romans 12:16-18,21, “Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all! Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.” May this be so for all of us as WE live our lives as transformers for Jesus.

SO COOL IN HER NEW CAMARO

When we think about Transformers, one of the images that first enters our minds is of Bumblebee transforming from a Camaro into a walking robot. It’s a very visual and noticeable change. When most people think of a work-camp mission trip the first image that enters their mind is home construction and/or repair. While this has been a major part of our trip, it has not been the main focus. In fact, this week’s focus has been on the transformation of our relationship with Christ. It’s been an opportunity to go “all in” with God. We wanted to transform, and to help others transform, by becoming closer to Christ through



thought, character, attitude, behavior and purpose. Contrary to popular perception, the transformation that continues to take place in Middletown is not limited to homes, but more importantly is focused on hearts. When we go beyond the surface, dig deeper, “take in” God, and seek deeper relational “connections,” we see there truly is **MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE.**



MIDDLETOWN, OHIO

For the past 20 years, Faith Presbyterian Church has participated in Group Publishing's summer workcamp program. The primary goal is the spiritual growth of high school and college-aged students. Workcamps are an intensive week of community service offering teenagers an opportunity to perform hands-on home-repair projects for low income families. Projects include carpentry, roof repair, step and porch construction, weatherization, wheelchair ramp construction, painting, and drywall work.

As the campers serve, their confidence and character can grow like never before. Their faith ignites as they complete hands-on, meaningful work that really counts, and they discover a genuine appreciation for all God has given them. Some residents must choose between putting food on the table and fixing a leaky roof. The real repairs, however, are done not to the homes, but to the lives of those they touch.

This year we head to Middletown, Ohio.

Middletown is an All-America city located in southwestern Ohio. Middletown was incorporated in 1833 and currently has a population of approximately 50,000. The city was the home of AK Steel Holding Corporation (formerly Armco), a major steel works founded in 1900 but the corporate offices were relocated in 2007. AK Steel's departure has had a devastating effect on the economy and has left many lives and homes in disarray. This workcamp week will provide much needed Christian home repair and answer the community's cry for help.

The theme for this year's workcamp was **CONNECT**. This booklet has guided us through the primary scriptural focus of this summer's workcamp, John 15:5. We set aside time each day at lunch, during the evening program, and during our youth group time to really focus on these verses and to help our faith grow. We hope you have done the same. We hope God's word has spoken to you just as it has spoken to us.

**THANK YOU FOR
MAKING
A
DIFFERENCE!**



Faith Workcamps is thrilled to be celebrating its 20th Anniversary this year by attending camp in Middletown, Ohio! Be sure to stay up-to-date with all of the workcamp happenings by checking out our daily blog and twitter feeds at FaithWorkcamps.com. We'd love to hear your feedback, so please feel free to leave us a comment on the blogs or you can e-mail individual campers directly by going to GroupWorkcamps.com and clicking on the email a camper button. We look forward to sharing our experiences with you both online and upon our return!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

20 YEARS OF FAITH WORKCAMPERS

Dave Arney	Jenna Gross	Trina LeFevre	Diane Millick	Katie Smits*
Carolyn Baittinger	Jessica Hartman	Christina Leinweber	Grady Millick*	Dorothy Smits
Joanna Baittinger	Rachel Heffner	Greg Leinweber	Leigh Moring	Harvey Trop
Judy Baittinger	Dan Hemberger*	Nick Leinweber	Platte Moring	Karen Trop*
John Barabas	Kate Hemberger	Christy Lillegard	Will Moring	Kelly Trop
Sara Baxter	Kathy Hemberger*	Eric Lillegard	Brett Moss	Suzy Venezia
Julie Benner	Larry Hemberger*	Jim Lillegard*	Darren Ortiz	Jan Vitale
Erick Brewer	Tyler Hill	Stephanie Lillegard	Gwen Osterwalt*	Matt Vitale
Jill Brewer	Bill Holzer	Tiffany Lillegard	Lauren Payea	Sarah Voros
Gabrielle Burger	Joey Hutzayluk	Sarah Liming	Sarah Ratchke	Liz Walters
Jillian Burger	Steph Hutzayluk	Dianne Macdonald	Katie Rath	Katie Warner
Jonna Burger	Jayne Ingram*	Sean Macdonald	Sue Robinson	Emily Webb*
Emily Cole	Lynn Ingram*	Ester Marchetti	Lauren Sammak	Carol Wilson
Ben Colson	Mark Ingram*	Phil Martin*	Laura Schaefer	Jess Wilson*
Kip Coonley	Rachael Ingram	Allison McCracken	Steve Seem	Joanna Yen
Bryan Cope	Alex Kemps	Jack Melnick*	Rachael Shussett*	Jonathan Yen
Jackie Decker*	Courtney Kemps	Meghan Melnick*	Christy Smits*	Justin Yen
Lisa Decker*	Melanie Kramer	Annie Mick		
Carol Fry	Josh Kreider*	Liz Mick		
Lynn Fry	Emily LeFevre	Andrew Millick		
Chad Gorr	Joy LeFevre			

* Denotes 2011 Workcampers

