RELIGION

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Check out a list of local church activities.
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VIEWPOINTS

SONNY GALLMAN

People relate to God in many different ways

A few months ago, our church began putting another element into our worship service. We called it the "Minister and Missionary" moment. Every week we asked a different person to come up and talk about the ways in which they were being a minister or missionary to the community.

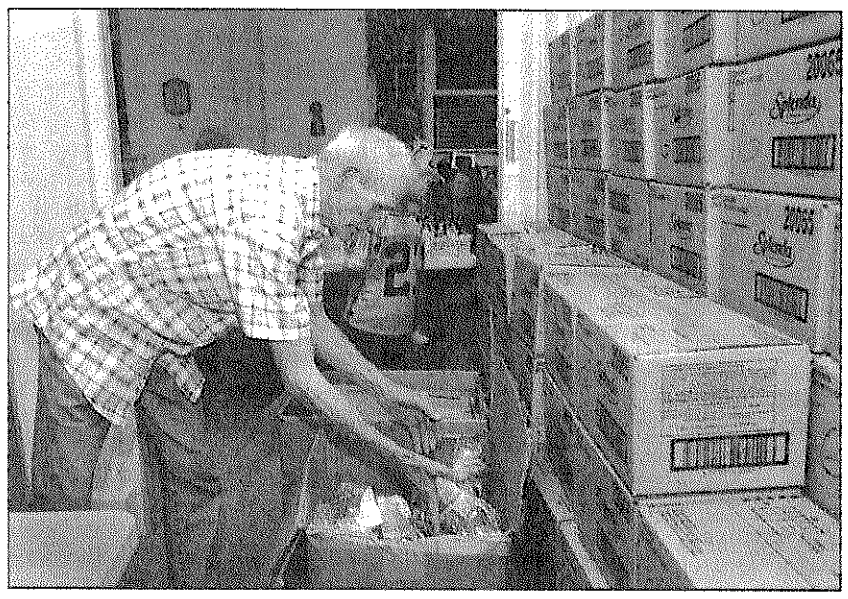
At first, there were some who were concerned that adding another element to our already full worship would detract from the service. And then there were concerns that we did not have that many people who were actually out doing stuff for the kingdom and that it would run its course in about five or six weeks.

Neither of those concerns came to fruition. When we started, we only had three or four people lined up, enough to take care of a month. But halfway through the month and even now, people come up to me and say that they wanted to share. "I never thought of what I was doing as being a minister," I would hear, "but after hearing Kurt share, I realize that I want to share something about what I am doing."

We had people talk about what they were doing with Relay for Life. We had people talk about the new chocolate company they were starting for people allergic to soy and whey products. (By the way, "Whey Out" chocolates is located behind Club 908 in Old Town.) We had people share about their experience with taking care of loved ones and how they were ministers to their families. We had a woman struggling through cancer talk about her ministry of trying to give hope to new cancer patients she sees in the doctor's office.

And the list goes on and on. Soon we are going to hear from Matt Thien, one of our music leaders, and how he is pursuing a career as a musician and singer that appeals to the churched and non-churched in the world through his music (he is playing from 7 to 8 p.m. today at the Starbucks on Ga. Highway 138). And we are still going strong, with new ways that people are ministering coming up all the time.

I am not telling you this to



Staff Photos: Sue Ann Kuhn-Smith

Above, Julia A. Porter United Methodist Church Pastor Jim Moore, left, helps church members fill bags for needy families in Mexico. At the top of the page Loyd Brooks places bags of supplies into boxes.

legacy of love

Church prepares gift boxes in memory of a fallen friend

BY BETH SEXTON
Staff Correspondent

Operation 405 is taking shape and already, volunteers have loaded more than 4,300 gift boxes onto a truck that will head to Mexico in a few weeks to make the Christmas holidays happier for boys and girls. It is a project that would have made Matt Allen smile and one that his friends later discovered actually fulfills a promise he made just before he died.

Allen, who was killed July 15, 2000, when the 15-passenger van he was riding in flipped over during an accident on its way back to Georgia from a mission trip to Mexico, had told the pastor in Mexico he was coming back and bringing gifts to the children in the village.

Later that year, Allen's friends decided to honor his memory by putting together gift boxes for the Mexican children. Ironically, they later learned from the pastor in the village near Chihuahua City, Mexico, that Allen had promised holiday gifts before he headed home from that fateful trip.

Volunteers packed and sent 1,000 gift boxes that first year. This year, the number has grown beyond 4,000, and, thanks to efforts from other area churches, the number is expected to swell to between 11,000 and 12,000 before the truck leaves town.

"Our church was having a difficult time getting beyond this event," Doug Doster said of how friends and family in the congregation of Julia A. Porter United Methodist Church in Porterdale dealt with Allen's death.

Doster said he and the others talked about how much Allen loved the children

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Devil's walking stick gets name from sturdy ste

In spite of our severe drought, God has extravagantly blessed us with many gifts of beauty this year. From the least to the greatest

Consider the Lilies