

September 25, 2006

YOU ARE FORTHWITH DRAFTED INTO SERVICE!

That's right! It is time to engage the forces of darkness with the light of the Word and to impact our community as Soldiers of the Kingdom of Christ, so each of you are forthwith drafted as we go to engage in battle. What in the world am I talking about? I am talking about our biggest outreach event of the year: FALL FESTIVAL. Our Fall Festival outreach began over 20 years ago as a safe, family-oriented alternative to Halloween that was hosted in our fellowship hall. Today we rent out Garrett Coliseum to host this event that reaches thousands of people. Even though it started out as a simple Halloween alternative, it is now a major community ministry.

So why do we do it? Why do we have Fall Festival? Well, there are several good reasons. **First**, Jesus said in Acts 1:8, "*but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*" The path to reaching the world begins right here in our own community. Montgomery is our Jerusalem. Many unchurched people will not come to a church worship service, but they will come to special events, especially family-friendly events. The Fall Festival is a venue where we can share the gospel of Jesus Christ with vast multitudes of people and hopefully initiate relationships that will bring them into our church to be nurtured and disciplined.

Second, it allows us to shine a light in the midst of the darkness. Even though our culture views it as a simple evening for children to have fun and receive candy, Halloween is still a night associated with much that is evil and demonic. Even families that participate in this holiday with the purest of intentions will be exposed to things that are gruesome and macabre and not of God. Phil 4:8 says, "*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.*" Fall Festival is a safe event where we can expose families to a more wholesome environment where the love of Christ is demonstrated and the Gospel of Christ is shared.

Third, this event serves as a reminder to our church of what we are here for. So often, it is only small pockets of people who participate in missions and evangelism endeavors in the local church. We need to be a church that reverses that trend. All of us have been commissioned as Ambassadors of Christ. All of us are called to use our gifts and talents to lift up the glory of God where it is not known. Fall Festival is a unique event that employs all the members of our church in an intentional evangelistic ministry. What a blessing it is to see our entire church body unified and dedicated to a focused event where the ultimate purpose is to see Christ exalted.

Finally, Fall Festival provides an opportunity to demonstrate one of our new congregational ethics – EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY. Opportunities abound for you to use your spiritual gifts and talents. We will need people to work in Food Service and to clear tables in the Food Court. We will need many people to operate the various Game Booths. We will need some folks to work on the Midway, manning inflatables and rides. We will need people who can man welcome centers, admission desks, and door prize tables. We will also need a crew to oversee Parking and another crew to be a part of setting up and breaking down.

I also have 2 new additions this year. First, if you are one of our homebound/shut-in members, we want you to be a part of our Fall Festival prayer team that evening. Secondly, Joanie and I hope to come along side Kem and have several roving groups of lay-evangelists who will share the gospel with everyone they come in contact with. Thus, regardless of age or ability, we have a ministry opportunity for every single member of Morningview on this special evening. Plan now to answer God's call to serve and witness!