



The Servants of the Word

Easter & Pentecost 2013



Call 1-800-BRUCE

What do you need: Mechanic? Electrician? Software engineer? Guitarist? Church elder? Then call 1-800-BRUCE! We call on our good brother, Bruce Franson, in a host of circumstances, but please don't try to call him at the above number – that's not his! To say that Bruce holds a BS in Computer Engineering, a Masters in Theology, and an MBA does not begin to convey his multiple talents, and the many ways his brothers and friends have come to depend on him. Bruce is still in the prime of his experience and energy.

Bruce is one of two brothers who run Servant Systems Incorporated, a software development firm that helps to generate substantial funding for our various outreaches

throughout the world. Bruce is the Vice President and Chief Technical Officer, which means that he sets the direction for adapting new technology as well as managing several of their largest projects. In addition to that full-time occupation Bruce finds time to serve as a Lutheran Church elder and a coordinator in his local community, The Word of Life. Within The Servants of the Word, Bruce holds the office of Senior Steward (a deacon-like role), and on top of all that, he leads the household at the brotherhood center in Chelsea, Michigan.

Yet even this rendition does not quite capture what many of his older brothers find most remarkable and honorable about Bruce. He is generous to a fault toward anyone less fortunate, and has become a critical link in the lives of a number of men to stay sober and out of trouble. We've watched him time and again go out of his way to serve others, fix someone's broken computer, mediate a dispute, or encourage a recovering alcoholic to live of life of sobriety, get sober, or stay sober. And while at times he does get exhausted (he spends Saturday evening lying on the living room couch reading a magazine but mainly snoozing), he more typically finds all he does life-giving and enriching.

As one of his older brothers, I occasionally remind Bruce that he can't keep up his current pace forever! His response is "Yup. I know it needs to change *some* day." But to quote a saying from our Filipino brothers, "So far, so good, so far!"

While many of us have come to appreciate what Bruce can do, what we most often experience is his generosity of spirit – his willingness to simply serve others however and whenever he can. Bruce wears many hats and, by the generosity of God, he has not yet worn out. Above all, he is a man of faith and a man of prayer who calls on his Savior for help, and lives the life of The Servants of the Word commendably. 🏹

Dick LaCroix



Dear Friends,

He is Risen! What a profound declaration! Even more so, what a profound reality! Jesus Christ, the one in whom we place our faith is risen from the dead and as a result we too can have confidence that the same possibility awaits us. I don't know about you, but that makes all the difference in the world to me!

Don't get me wrong. I enjoy my life. And I enjoy this world that we have been blessed to live in and am not looking to leave it soon. But I am becoming more and more aware that this world is temporary. This is passing. There are a number of the brothers across The Servants of the Word who have recently communicated that their fathers are near the end of their earthly lives. My own father is beset with a terminal cancer and is approaching the end of his life. I turned 60 a couple of months ago and am more and more aware of the finite reality of my life. In light of these things and many, many more similar realities across this earth it gives great consolation to be able to declare, "He is Risen!" Since one man has risen from the dead, that means it is possible for others to follow in his path. The apostle Paul declares, "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep ... and so we shall always be with the Lord." (1Thes 4:14,17 RSV) That not only consoles me, it energizes me! I hope it does you as well!

In this issue of our newsletter you will be introduced to some special members of The Servants of the Word and to some special work that they are doing. Call 1-800-BRUCE is a very apt title for an introduction to Bruce Franson—if you need something done (seemingly most anything) Bruce will likely be able to do it or know how to get it done. I have the privilege of living at our brotherhood center where Bruce heads our household. I can guarantee that none of the brothers living there are "slackers." That being said, we are all amazed at the variety of things Bruce is involved in and the amount of work he gets done. And he does all with the kind of attitude and character I would want in a Servant of the Word. Read about Bruce and get a glimpse of the kind of man he is, by the grace of God.

The second article of this newsletter features the work of the five brothers who man our household in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I recently returned from a pastoral visit to the brothers and was, once again, impressed at how much our brothers do. Five men. Four diverse yet fruitful mission fields. At the same time I was impressed with how these brothers care for and support one another. Read about them! I would like to honor these men and, while I am at it, all my brothers of The Servants of the Word, for their dedication to the Lord and for sharing his life with others and for the fraternal support they provide for one another. "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" (Ps. 133:1 RSV) Please pray that we are always faithful to the Lord, to the way of life he has given us, and to the mission he has entrusted to us!

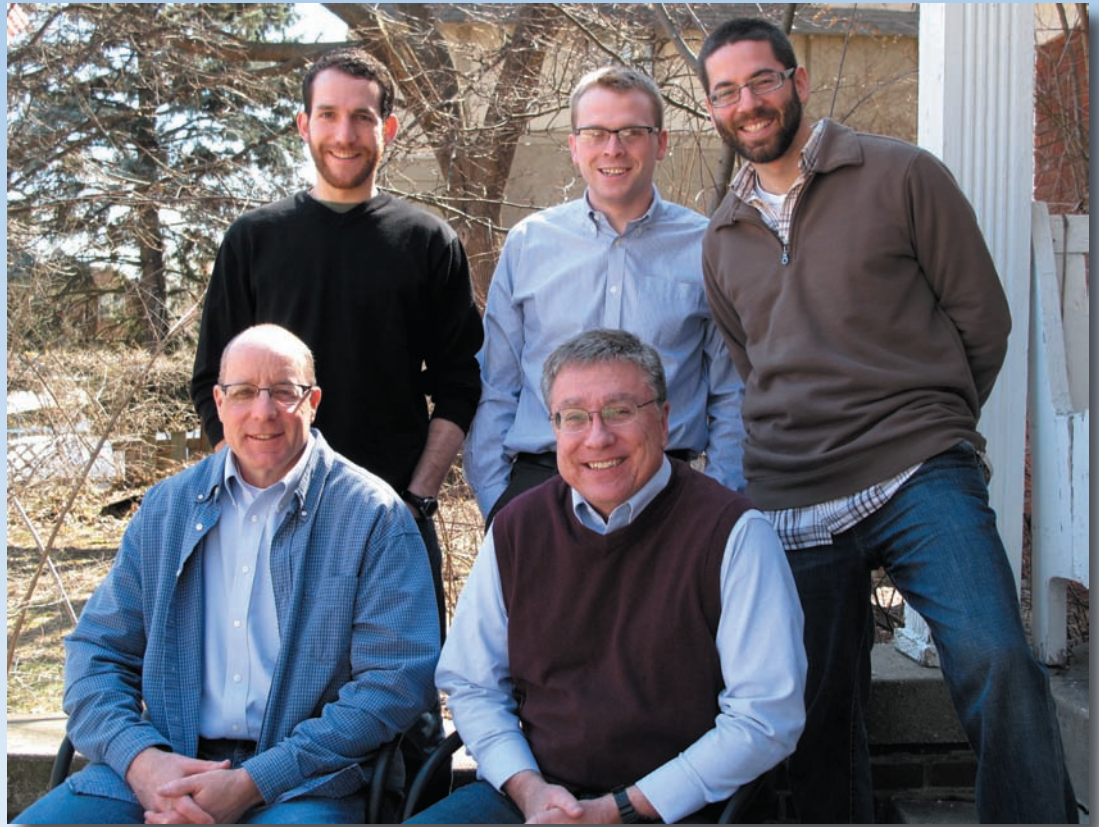
I wish you, your families and loved ones a blessed and glorious Easter. He is Risen! 🇺🇸

Kew

The Grand Rapids Servants of the Word Household on the Move

Four Servants of the Word brothers running two University Christian Outreach (UCO) chapters, a new community building experiment called the Community Living Experiment (CLE), and two Kairos- North America youth programs from our household keeps life full and energizing. Throw into that mix one of our affiliates who is just completing his university studies and you have a lot going on. To say that things are spread a little thin is a slight understatement but there is unbounded hope in the work that we believe God has called us to here on the western edge of Michigan. We will say just a few things about the opportunities God has given us so that you will be better informed and better able to keep us in your prayers.

Noel Delgadillo is in his second year leading the UCO chapter at Grand Valley State University. The GVSU chapter located in Allendale, Michigan, about 20 minutes west of Grand Rapids, has



**back: Noel Delgadillo, David Cooper, Brian Laba
front: Mike Kramer, Stan Mathay**

to work with the youth and young adult programs in the community “La Nueva Jerusalem” in his hometown of Miami, Florida.

Brian Laba always has many projects on his plate. As an Assistant Regional Director of UCO, Brian has responsibility with three UCO chapters, supervising the two in Grand Rapids (GVSU & Calvin) and providing regular outside support and advice for the

“...God has given us many chances to share the hope that invigorates our hearts...”

approximately 50 members at the weekly prayer meeting and continues to mature as an established outreach on campus now in its 10th year. Grand Valley is increasingly the destination of choice for those students not having strong affiliations to other “major” state schools in Michigan. In the past year, Noel has also been assigned as a Kairos Missionary

one in Pittsburgh. He also directs some of our major regional events such as the UCO Summer Academy (formerly the Campus Outreach Academy). But Brian’s main service this year has been spearheading the launch of a new community in Grand Rapids comprised mainly of young professionals who have

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recently graduated from GVSU and Calvin. This past January this young community had a Call and Mission conference which served well to broaden and deepen our vision for what it means to be a community of disciples on mission.

The Kairos Fellowship ministry was begun several years ago by Stan Mathay. The ministry offers wilderness trips to junior high boys in the United States and Canada. These trips provide character-forming and relationship bonding experiences for junior high boys throughout the region. Many lives have been challenged, strengthened, and renewed in this program that mixes high adventure and Christian discipleship among its young participants and staff.

The Kairos Mission Trips director, Mike Kramer, has also run short-term mission trips for high school-aged students for the past 16 years. The summer 2013 schedule will feature 2 trips for junior class members from The Potter's House High School to a location just across the southern Arizona border in

Agua Prieta, Mexico. Two Kairos teams comprised of students from across the United States will also serve in Agua Prieta. A Kairos team will also be serving in inner-city Detroit and a team of boys will be spending time on several ranches in western Nebraska on Ranch Challenge.

Our youngest household member, David Cooper, is completing his finance studies at Grand Valley State University. He plays a key role in developing relationships with other university students and helping them become more integrated in UCO. Recently, while participating with a select group of GVSU business students, David placed third at the regional SAP Design Thinking competition in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. One of his aspiring goals is to be "salt and light" in the business community.

Though the number of our household core is small, God has given us many chances to share the hope that invigorates our hearts and makes us glad to be a part of the opportunities on the horizon. 🏔️



WE APPRECIATE YOUR HELP

The Servants of the Word gets its support through the financial earnings of the brothers as well as by donations from our benefactors. Many of our brothers work for sacrificial wages or for no pay at all. Please consider if you can become a financial sponsor of The Servants of the Word. Your prayers and support are appreciated in our work with young people and our community development work.

THE SERVANTS OF THE WORD
P.O. Box 7087 • Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107 • U.S.A. • Tel: (734) 475-3550
www.servantsoftheword.org

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