

Grace Notes

May 2023

May Ministry Updates

The month of May has become as busy and eventful as December in recent years. As we continue to celebrate Jesus' victory over the grave and faithfully attempt to locate our identity, security, and meaning in Him and His resurrection, we do so in absolute hurricanes of activity that define many modern lives. God has been abundantly blessing our Church, School, and Child Development ministry from every possible angle from which you might look. Below are some updates on the hurricane that swirls around Christ's work in this place.

Associate Pastor Call Committee

Our Associate Pastor Call Committee has worked to create a job description for the position and has compiled and submitted a list of candidates to the Southern District. The Call Committee is currently awaiting the Personal Information Forms (biographical and family information), and Self-Evaluation Tool (theological and philosophy/approach to ministry information) for each pastor. When those are received, interviews will be set up and the Call Process can continue. God is supplying us with many opportunities for ministry here in Huntsville, and we look forward to additional pastoral ministry.

Music Teacher Call Committee

Our school is in need of a music teacher for next year. We are exploring both the possibility of an LCMS-called music teacher as well as the possibility of a local contracted teacher. We have identified an LCMS music teacher that the Call Committee will bring forward to recommend to our Voting Members on Sunday, May 7. Should the congregation issue that Call, we would then wait to hear the response of that music teacher before determining our next steps.

Gibson's Property Exploration

We continue to give thanks that the owners of the Gibson's property have approached Grace with the opportunity to purchase the property next door. As our space challenges are quite obvious, this would be an opportunity to expand. The Board of Directors is doing due diligence in investigating this opportunity. So far, we have had the property surveyed with ground penetrating radar, received a quote for demolition of the restaurant building, and are currently getting an appraisal of the property.

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Once the appraisal is received, the Board intends to negotiate with the owners of Gibson's for purchasing the property. The opinion of the Board is that this is a significant enough opportunity that it must be brought to the congregation for a vote. The opinion of the pastor is that regardless of the outcome of that vote, we will go forward in mission and ministry united.

Set Apart to Serve Initiative

Grace is participating in a pilot program for a Synod-wide initiative aimed at drawing attention to the need for full-time church workers in the LCMS, and identifying young men and women to serve in ministry. The data on the decline of pastors, teachers, DCEs, church musicians, and any other professional church workers is alarming. To that end, it is important for every congregation to identify and encourage young men and women that God might use to make an impact in his Kingdom. Learn more about the Set Apart to Serve program online.

Fourth Quarter Voters' Assembly Meeting

Our Fourth Quarter VAM will be held on June 4. At this meeting we will hear ministry reports, vote on the Ministry Action Plan and budget for the 2023-2024 ministry year, and, if all goes smoothly, consider a motion to purchase the Gibson's property.

The hurricane certainly swirls around us, but God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in times of trouble (and opportunity).

In Christ.

Pastor Russ

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

May 2023 Edition

School Happenings:

April was a busy and exciting month, celebrating Holy Week and Easter, preparing for Spring musical performances, doing Spring testing, recognizing Earth Day, and taking class trips.

- Earth Day Classes worked together to do nature scavenger hunts, create Earth Stewardship art, and serve, cleaning up the grounds around Grace and Gibson's.
- Class Trips The 7th and 8th graders headed to Dauphin Island for their marine biology camp, while the 5th graders went to Space Camp. Everyone had a great time learning about their different environments!

Preparing for Next Year:

Enrollment for Summer Camp and the 2023-34 school year continued throughout this month. Summer Camp enrollment is now closed with almost 90 campers attending this summer! We are looking forward to an exciting summer of activities. Mrs. Laura Galyean, our Kindergarten aide and former CDC teacher, will be leading camp this summer as Camp Director. School enrollment is going strong with a few classes closed or nearing that point. We thank God for our wonderful families, teachers, and staff for creating a great school to attend!

Hiring:

We are still looking for aides and aftercare workers for next year. If you know of anyone, please encourage them to apply.

Prayer Request:

Mrs. Sara Beth Dortch, who has served faithfully as Grace's music teacher, has had to take a leave of absence. Her husband was diagnosed with a very aggressive form of leukemia. Please lift them up in prayer as they face this medical challenge. Thank you to Amanda Weiland for substituting so that Mrs. Dortch can remain with her husband during this time.

God's Blessings,

Delaine Schiestel

GROW - BIBLE STUDY TOPICS

May 2023 Edition



Bible Studies Topics - May 2023

Sunday Morning Children and Youth

- Infant—Pre-K (Church Nursery) Jesus Comes to Earth
- K—4th (Church Choir Room) Jesus Comes to Earth
- 5th and 6th Grade (School Library) Characters of the Bible: Early Church Leaders
- Confirmation (Room 106) Faith Application
- High School (Youth Room) Armor of God

Sunday Morning Communities

- Figuring It Out (Room 203) Romans
- Balancing Act (School Band Room) Grace Under Pressure: Responding Faithfully to Stress
- Tug of War (Room 204) How To Respond to Other Religions
- Now What (Room 202) Hebrews and Leviticus

Sunday Morning Bible Studies

- Discussion on Job (School Cafeteria)
- Our Life with the Holy Spirit (Room 209)
- Bible for Non-Native English Speakers (Room 113)

Bible Studies During the Week

- Digging Deeper (Wednesday at 6:30 PM in the Assembly Room) Archaeology of the Exodus
- Women's Bible Study (Monday at 1:00 PM in the Church Library) End Times: The Lutheran Difference
- Women's Bible Study (Tuesday at 9:30 AM in the Church Library) Be Still and Know
- Men's Bible Study (2nd Saturday at 7:30 AM in the School Cafeteria) Topic Varies
- Ladies of Grace Circles Topic Varies

May 2023 Edition

WORSHIP | GROW | ENGAGE is our discipleship focus. Disciple making is a process that needs ongoing attention. Jesus commands us to make disciples. We are EACH to be disciplemakers. What priority are you giving to being a disciple? Do not leave it to the church/school staff to do the discipling! Are you keeping your eyes and ears open to opportunities to build connections with someone and be ready to share your faith story?



80% of churches today are plateaued, declining, or growing at a pace slower than their communities. **52%** of those living in the United States say they have no faith affiliation at all. **It doesn't have to be this way.** Our church can continue to grow as we seek to each be active in making disciples (Church Doctor Ministries). Pray about people in your neighborhood, in your family, or who you connect with at work or fellowship activities.

We give thanks to God that He continues to bring and add new members to our congregation. 66 new adults were added to Grace Lutheran in 2022. As we live in a spirit of thanksgiving, we rejoice and celebrate a unity that we have through our faith in Jesus.

This month I would like to highlight our **Growing in Being a Welcoming Church - The Get Acquainted Conversation**. I give thanks to God for your presence at Grace Lutheran Church! We are a partnership together as we invite and extend our hands of welcome to one another.

Guests and recent newcomers are not looking for a friendly church. **People today are looking for a friend!** Here are some practical tips on how you can reach out to those you do not know:

- 1. Get started by saying, Hi, I'm I don't think we've met.
- 2. Get Connected! How long have you been coming here?
- 3. Get Interested! What keeps you busy during the week?

Hospitality is more than just knowing someone's name! Use the above questions to start a real conversation and help your guests make a meaningful connection with you and others! There are bonus points for introducing them to the pastor or to someone who has a similar interest to theirs! Do you attend the fellowship time after the first service? Invite the person you met to join you at the fellowship time.

Blessings and thanks for your partnership to get to know others who attend worship at Grace Lutheran! We can continue to grow as we care and reach out to one another.

We encourage you to help by being willing to sit up front in church. Guests prefer to have seating in open spaces closer to the back of the church. Also, be willing to move to the center of a pew so that people can fill in at the ends.

Jesus started the disciple-making movement by focusing on a few. He poured His life into them. Look at Luke 12:1-2. It says that "...the crowd...numbered in the thousands." However, Jesus' primary concern was with His disciples (Luke 12:47-48). What does that say to you? Are you interested in crowds or are you interested in disciples? Raising disciples is a long, slow, one-on-one, relational activity (Church Doctor Ministries).

May 2023 Edition

Our next **DISCOVERING GRACE CLASS** is on **Saturday, May 20** (9 AM – 12 – Noon) and **Sunday, May 21** from 9:30 – 10:30 AM. See the announcements section for more information and registration links. Pray about whom you can invite to attend this class!



How Else Can I Help? We have a QR code that you can encourage guests to introduce themselves to Grace Lutheran. The QR code is printed on the inside page of the front cover of the Sunday bulletin!

PRAY for our ongoing outreach to persons in our community and as we connect with families in our school.

Spread the Gospel seeds of Jesus as we seek to share His love!

Blessings

May 2023 Edition



LOCAL MISSION ENGAGE CONNECTIONS

Grace Lutheran has developed a relationship with **McDonnell Elementary School** (4010 Binderton Place, Huntsville, AL 35805). We have been advocates for the school and open to responding to needs as they are shared with us. We are still stocking their Little Library with children's books. The library has been moved nearer to the school building as it was knocked down twice recently. **We have a need for children's books, activity books, and basic school supplies.** You can support this project by contributing gently used children's books or providing such items as commercially wrapped individual snacks (examples: Cheez It crackers, Lance sandwich crackers, Rice Krispy or granola bars). Books and school supplies along with food supplies may be placed in the chest in the church narthex. Thanks for your generous support as you respond in the love of Jesus.



First Stop encounters the homeless where they are, connects them to critical services and support, and empowers them toward independent sustainable living. So far this year, the First Stop team has successfully assisted 53 individuals from homelessness to independent, sustainable living. These are 53 people who are no longer living on the street but are sleeping in the safety and comfort of their own homes.

First Stop relies on volunteer support to provide hot meals twice a day at the temporary facility location – 2820 Governors Drive.

Volunteer Tips for providing meals:

- Meals should serve 80-100 people. Prepare food for 80 people! 3-4 servers are needed to serve the meal.
- Provide food that is already prepared and only needs to be heated. No cooking, please.
- We serve Breakfast and Lunch, Monday through Friday. Breakfast meals are to delivered to First Stop by 7:45 AM and lunch meals by no later than 11:15 AM
- Breakfast is served from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
- Lunch is served from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information, contact Karen Davidson or Gene Menzel!



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Love Packages

Love Packages is a local ministry in Decatur which ships Bibles and other Christian materials (new and used) to impoverished churches worldwide, free to recipients. Grace Lutheran Church has participated for several decades by collecting Bibles, Sunday School, VBS, Bible Study, and Devotional (i.e. Portals of Prayer) materials. Saints Alive and Steve and Nancy Rice take these materials over to Love Packages in Decatur usually twice a year.

If you have Bibles or any of the materials mentioned above that you would like to donate, please bring them to Church and place them in the Love Packages bin in the Haag Church Library. If you have any questions, please call Nancy Rice or the church office.

A.C.T.S. Ministry

The A.C.T.S. (Actively Caring, Tenderly Serving) ministry team is organized to serve those who are experiencing a challenge in their life and need just a little extra help with a task or two – a caretaker in need of respite care, a church member who needs transportation assistance, someone experiencing a health challenge who would benefit from a couple of home cooked meals – the A.C.T.S. ministry team exists to meet these needs. **If you know of someone who can benefit**, or if you have a particular need for yourself, let us know the need by calling the church office. Driving someone – YES – helping someone replace a light bulb – YES – picking up groceries – YES! We need to identify one or two leaders for this ministry. If you want to serve as a leader and participate in a quarterly meeting, please get in touch!

CONNECT CARD – You are encouraged to invite a friend, neighbor, or work colleague to visit our church's website at www.gracelutheran-hsv.org and complete a **CONNECT CARD**. The link is located on the lower part of the homepage. Persons completing the **CONNECT CARD** are added to our MailChimp list and receive the weekly e-mail from Pastor Russ with a link to our livestream worship service.

Serving Persons Via Facebook: Visit the Grace Lutheran Ministries — Church & School page on Facebook. Go to the page and "LIKE" the page (in top section at the bottom left side of the cover page — not below the posted comment). Liking the Grace Lutheran page helps us to get information to your Facebook account!

CONNECTION GROUPS

May 2023 Edition

ARE YOU CONNECTED?

Connection Groups (formerly called interest groups) are a means of "building bridges" to connect with others (unchurched or dechurched) in your neighborhood or our community. It's about building a group around a similar interest (hobby, craft, fun activity, sport, or just about anything else under the sun). The goal is to help connect persons to Christ, the church, and the community. Dream the possibilities and then explore the opportunity to set up a group that meets at least on a bi-weekly basis. Of course, you can choose to take breaks in the schedule as needed for holidays/summer vacation, etc. Grace Lutheran's vision is to grow in being passionate servants. Organizing or leading a connection group is a means of being a passionate servant. Have you ever thought that you can be instrumental in connecting others around interests as a means of serving God?

Want to start your own group? Contact Kathryn Bradshaw or the church office. Not in a group? We encourage you to join one of our existing groups.

Here is a listing of the current Connection Groups (Continued on next page)



The Christian Book Club meets in the church library at 10 a.m. on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Our next meeting will be **Wednesday, May 10th,** and we will be discussing *Angel Song* by Walsh/Cushman. The next reading selection is *Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel* by Jeannette Walls. Contact: Karen Crout or the Church Office.

Can't come to the Book Club? Books from our reading selections are also available in the church library. When you enter the library, go to the bookcase on the opposite wall (to the left of the window). You will find the books on the bottom two shelves There is a sign indicating that these are Book Club books. **Feel free to take any of the books!**

The Sew 'n Sews meet on Mondays from 1-3 pm in the church choir room. This group makes *many* things that are donated to various people and organizations. *New project:* Inspirational Hearts for newborn infants placed in the NICU at Huntsville Hospital for Women & Children. These are flannel hearts that mothers place on their skin for a period of time so that the flannel might absorb her scent. The heart is then placed with the baby in the crib so the mother is always with her child. In addition to this fun project, the Sew 'n Sews made crochet hearts for a recent LWML meeting, along with making different size quilts. There's something for everyone to make, no matter your skill level or sewing/craft interest.



Come and join us! Contact Harriett Kicklighter or the church office.

CONNECTION GROUPS (PAGE 2)

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A Bridge Group meets once a month on the 4th Thursday except in November and December (meeting instead on the 3rd Thursday). This is party bridge – just for fun and friendship. If interested, contact Mary Jane Reumann or the church office for more information.

Friday Afternoon Golf is organized by Dennis Sierk and Phil Nelson. Time and place: The par 3 course at Hampton Cove every Friday afternoon. For more information, contact Dennis or Phil. Please note the following rules:

- 1. No score keeping.
- 2. If you don't like your shot, take another one.
- 3. If you don't like your lie, move it.
- 4. Refreshments in the clubhouse, afterward.



MEN'S MINISTRY GROUP generally meets on the second Saturday of each month. The next gathering is scheduled for the third Saturday - **Saturday**, **April 15th**. We meet in the Family Life Center Cafeteria at **7:30 AM**. We are currently doing a study of *The Reason for God* by Tim Keller. These are discussions on faith and life. This month's question focuses on "Why Does God Allow Suffering?" and "Why is There So Much Evil in the World?" We need to keep a focus on God's Word and know that suffering is ever present and evil is there because of sin. God in Jesus has paid the price for our sin and we live in His forgiveness. Let's explore it together! The invitation to participate is open to all men as we gather for a light meal, prayer, Bible study, and fellowship. If you have any questions, contact Gene Menzel.

LADIES OF GRACE CIRCLES (LOG)

Meet monthly for Fellowship & Bible Study, For more information:

CHARITY - Pam Lowe

FAITH - Betsy Scott

HOPE - Karen Crout

PEACE - Pam Stieglitz

SAINTS ALIVE

May 2023 Edition

Saints' Alive is a senior adult ministry that chooses a variety of activities to visit! The activities are scheduled for the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month.

Upcoming Saints Alive Activity

HUDSON ALPHA TOUR - Saints Alive will have the opportunity to tour the Hudson Alpha campus on **Thursday, May 18th** at 10:00 AM. The bus will leave Grace Lutheran at 9:40 AM. The tour runs from 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM. This is a walking tour with many steps. The tour will be of the flagship building and the new greenhouse. They do have elevators and places to sit in case anyone wants to sit at any time. Lunch will follow at 11:30 AM at the **Atrium Café** at **Hudson Alpha**. Participants will need to have their names emailed to Hudson Alpha by **Monday, May 15th**.

The sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board in the church lobby.



STEPHEN MINISTRY

May 2023 Edition

"Let Go and Let God"

By Merle Trich

How many times have you heard the phrase "Let Go and Let God"?

Remember learning to ride a bike? I had training wheels, so I knew if I started to wobble, my training wheels would catch me. But then my dad took those training wheels off and ran alongside of me, holding the back of my seat to steady me. And then he LET GO! I was riding on my own until I looked back and saw my dad behind me, cheering me on. Well, looking back was not a good move, because in front of me was the garage wall. Of course my dad came running as I ran into the wall and fell over.



God is training us through His Word and wants us to trust him. He wants us to keep our eyes on Him. In Philippians 3:13:14, Paul wrote to the Christian congregation in Philippi, "Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Many times it's not until we lose control that we realize who's really in control. Just like when I fell learning to ride my bike and my father came to comfort me, God our Father in Heaven is always there to provide grace, forgiveness, and comfort.

What do you need to "Let go" of and "Let God" go to work on? Lingering doubts, fears, past sins, troubles of life and of this world? "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." -Proverbs 3:5-6 Let God direct our paths, know we can take all our troubles to Him in prayer, and submit our lives to God alone.

So as you are training in the ride of life, hold tight to the handlebars of hope and the promises of God, trust God to direct your path, and if you stumble and fall, our God of mercy and grace will forgive you and comfort you during your time of need.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." -Romans 8:28

Would you or someone you know benefit from having a Stephen Minister to listen and encourage you through a time of doubt or fear? Please contact Judy Zecher or Pastor Russ to discuss your desire to be assigned a Stephen Minister, or if you have any questions about Stephen Ministry at Grace.

Our current class of Stephen Ministers have completed their training. Please keep the members of this class in your prayers as they prepare for commissioning into Stephen Ministry and service to our congregation. May God strengthen our Stephen Ministers as they serve members of our congregation and the community with one-on-one, confidential care.

May 2023 Edition



VBS

June 4-8, 2023

Elementary: 5:30 PM-8:15 PM Preschool: 5:30 PM-7:45 PM

Get ready to launch your kids into adventure! At Stellar VBS, kids discover what it means to shine Jesus' light in everyday life. Stellar is filled with awesome Bible-learning experiences kids see, hear, and touch! Sciency-Fun Gizmos, team-building games, unforgettable Bible songs, and tasty treats are just a few of the standout activities that help faith flow into real life. Vacation Bible School is open to all children who are 3-years-old as of March 1st, 2023 through those entering 5th grade. All children must be potty-trained.

Online Registration is open from May 1 – June 2!

Register on the Church Center app, online, or by scanning the QR codes!

Registration: https://gracelutheranhsv.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1678861

Volunteer Registration: https://gracelutheranhsv.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1678832





May 2023 Edition

Monica Naatz Retirement

On May 6th, we will honor and celebrate Monica Naatz's years of service as a teacher at Grace Lutheran with a dinner at The Summit on Redstone Arsenal. The deadline to purchase tickets has passed, but you may email any greetings for Monica to Donna Behnken. Send cards and/or a monetary gift to:

Grace Lutheran School ATTN: Donna Behnken 3405 Memorial Parkway SW Huntsville, AL 35801

Voters' Assembly Meeting - May 7th

On May 7th, following the 10:45 AM worship service, we will hold a Voters' Assembly meeting to consider a recommendation from the Grace Lutheran Teacher Call Committee for issuing a call for a music teacher. The Call Committee has held two interviews with the candidate and has made a recommendation to the Board of Directors.

2023 Graduates

If you or a family member is graduating from High School or College, we would like to recognize all graduates. Please submit the following information, with a picture, to Kristin Haycock:

- -College Graduates: Full name, name of college, degree, honors/activities/interests, plans after college, Parent's Blessing.
- -High School Graduates: Full name, name of high school, confirmation verse, honors & activities, interests, plans after high school, I would like to thank...,Parent's Blessing.

The deadline to submit information is May 14th. We will honor our graduates on May 21st.

Acolyte Training

We will hold an acolyte training session on Wednesday, May 16th at 4:00 PM in the Sanctuary for those who will be going into 5th-8th grade. This training session is for new acolytes as well as those who have previously served to go over the basics. If you have any questions about being an acolyte, contact Pam Lowe or Jen Roettjer.

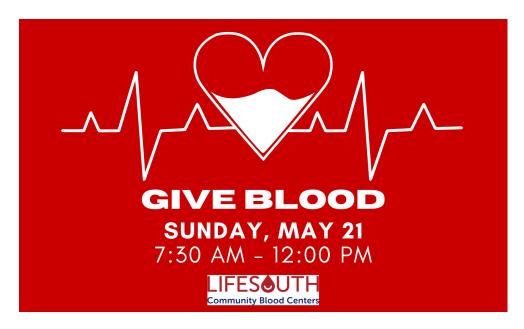
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Upcoming Discovering Grace Class

Interested in Membership? On May 20th & 21st, 2023, Grace Lutheran will hold the next Discovering Grace Class, which is our portal to membership. If you are interested in learning more about Grace Lutheran Ministries, and/or would like to join the church, please contact Gene Menzel or the church office. To register for the class online, scan the QR code above.



The LifeSouth Bloodmobile will be at Grace Lutheran Sunday, March 21st from 7:30 AM-12:00 PM in the Church parking lot. To sign-up to give visit: https://donors.lifesouth.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/774655

May 2023 Edition

Faith Night at Toyota Field

Grace Lutheran will host a fellowship event during Faith Night at Toyota Field on Tuesday, May 23 at 6:35 PM as the Rocket City Trash Pandas take on the Chattanooga Lookouts. Grace has reserved a concourse suite that can accommodate up to 35 people. Food will be available for 1 hour before game time and available for another 1.5 hours once the game starts. The menu includes hot dogs, hamburgers, coleslaw, baked beans, seasonal fruit, tortilla chips, and assorted cookies and brownies. Pepsi products and water will also be included. This is a fellowship night for you to get to know others. The regular cost is \$54.50/person, but it has been discounted to the price of \$40/person. Place your ticket order by visiting the link below, registering through the Church Center app, or by scanning the QR code.

https://gracelutheranhsv.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1672748





Grace Lutheran Church & School

3321 South Memorial Parkway Huntsville, AL 35801

Phone: 256-881-0552 Fax: 256-881-0563

E-mail: secretary@gracelutheran-hsv.org

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP Sundays

8:00 AM

Blended Worship
1st & 2nd Sundays of the Month

Traditional Worship 3rd & 4th Sundays of the Month

10:45 AM

Contemporary Worship Every Sunday

Communion

Check Us Out Online! www.gracelutheran-hsv.org

STAFF & LAY LEADERSHIP

STAFF

Pastor	Pastor Russ Gipson
Principal	Delaine Schiestel
CDC Director	Jessica McGuire
Director of Christian Education	Jen Roettjer
Director of Outreach	Gene Menzel
Business Manager	Laura Muelling
Properties Manager	Jack Hengel
Event & Facility Coordinator	Pam Lowe
Office Manager	Kristin Haycock
Receptionist	Laura Ohme

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Vice Chair	Phil Nelson
Financial/Secretary	Nancy Kiser
Member at Large	June Kalange
Member at Large	Steve Rice
Member at Large	Jeff Rullman
Member at Large	leff Sanders

ELDERS MINISTRY TEAM

Michael Beutel	Jim Hartmann
Mike Banzhoff	Jordan Haycock
Dick Bradshaw	Scott Jagger
Craig Camealy	Kevin Pedersen
Jason Cuny	Dexter McClure
Mike Ellis	Gene Satterfield
Ed Fulda	

