



## Why we host Sports Camp



As we wrap up my third time leading Sports Camp, I have a lot of thoughts and emotions. Sports camp is a tremendous effort on our part. It costs money since we offer this as a gift to the community at the school. It costs volunteer time. We had approximately 22 volunteers for a variety of tasks. What do we get in return for us here at Epiphany and the 47 students who attended this year's camp?

Each volunteer has the opportunity to reflect the heart of Jesus each day as we coach soccer skills with the children and teach them about God who loves them. Soccer coaches have the opportunity to practice their own soccer skills and pass on this skill to new students. This is fun for the athletic types among us, who are typically, but not exclusively, our teenagers. We need more athletic types who can take a week off work, or delay their vacations as they serve this needed role. This year, three of the days we played in the gym because the fields were too muddy. Huddle leaders lead a specific grade group and have the opportunity to nurture children in the faith and listen to their questions. Naturally, the kindergarten class was more enamored with eagles this week than with Jesus, but that doesn't mean the lessons we taught will not bear fruit in the future.

Hosting sports camp builds community among us. So, I might be biased because of being an extrovert, but it really is fun to be working side by side with friends in our congregation. We get to know one another as we serve together and this makes our community stronger. A church with a strong community is less likely to fall prey to gossip and petty fights. We like being together, which means we are more comfortable worshipping together as well.

We have a common purpose: to teach children about Jesus.

When we look at those 47 children who attended camp, what do they get in return? I spoke with one mom who is considering enrolling her daughter in soccer because of our camp.

An astounding 88% of these children are not from Church of the Epiphany. What that means

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is that our Sports Camp is truly an outreaching effort that goes beyond, even way beyond our church. For sure, there are church going Christian children among that 88% but the vast majority of our participants do not have a church background. My own little huddle group had Christian, Hindu, and Muslim children participating. This gives us the opportunity to teach about Jesus in the lessons.

The majority of traditional Vacation Bible Schools assumes that kids attending have general Bible knowledge. Most of our Sports Camp students do not have this foundation. Some of our children have been to camp before and are church goers, but the vast majority are not. Think about that for a moment. I spent my days with sixth graders who had an understanding of God, but whose families follow another faith. As we interacted about Jesus, they might have struggled to believe what I told them, but we don't know what kind of foundation we have laid for future truth telling. The opportunity is incredible!

For these kids, having relational connections with Christians can lower barriers to future ministry by having warm emotions associated with Christians. Friendliness alone will never convert a person. But, it is true that Christian bad behavior turns people off and makes it harder for them to hear and grasp the message. The message can be distorted if not lived out. People need to see authentic lives and they need to hear biblical truth. How often do you get to tell the story of Jesus walking on water, healing a lame man or rising from the dead? It may have been a while. I've talked about how hosting Sports Camp is good for us as a community and for the children themselves. Won't you consider marking off your calendar for next year's camp, soon to be determined? It may surprise you how much fun you would have!

*Pamela +*



Here at Epiphany we emphasize:

- ✚ Encountering God through beautiful worship and believing prayer
- ✚ Building a multigenerational congregation that loves children and families.
- ✚ Equipping every member to publicly proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.



## Missions Update: Nancy & Steve Brown

Epiphany has supported Nancy & Steve Brown for many years as they toil in Niger. A recent (excerpted) report from them highlights the strain of working in a desolate foreign country:

We want to thank you for praying for us and for the meeting with Worldwide Fistula Fund, and for your patience in waiting for an update. We have been enjoying some good times of rest since we wrote last, including a very memorable weekend reunion of a home church group of five couples who are all close mutual friends.

The meeting with the Worldwide Fistula Fund went well. We were able to come to an agreement to change the way that they fund 50-60% of the work at the Danja Fistula Center. The new system will be fairer to SIM and to me as director, in part because we will receive a consistent amount of funding, and save time by providing less detailed financial reporting. In the past, if I made economies by managing well, WFF simply paid less to SIM for the work of the center. A second result, we hope, is that WFF can concentrate on raising awareness about obstetrical fistula instead of trying to manage the work at the DFC from afar.

We have been praying a lot about the future and asking the Lord to guide us in decisions about how long I can continue to serve in this double director role. The strain has been building over time. The visit to SIM in Charlotte allowed us to take stock of how far down the path to burnout we both are, in ways that we could not perceive fully in Danja. Many people we talk to, especially those who understand Danja, are concerned for us.

The visit to SIM was less conclusive than we had hoped, in terms of direction. A little joke within SIM is that the letters stand for "Sure, I'll Move." During our visit, we saw that this sort of prescriptive approach of having leadership direct missionaries where to serve and in what ways is from another earlier era. SIM in the 80s and 90s probably would have asked someone additional to move to Danja to

direct one of the two medical centers, or would do so in our current situation, seeing that we need help. In the 60s, 70s, or earlier, they would have told the person that Danja was where the mission needed them and would have expected them to go. ("The times they are a changin'.") The current approach now is more about actualizing people's ambitions and their sense of God's calling for service.

The trouble for us is the dilemma of discerning the difference between a good reason for beginning something and a good reason for continuing it. We are serving in an interim role because stepping in to serve as director is what was necessary in July 2015 to keep these two valuable medical centers open in service to God and for the sake of the poor. This is still true. Month to month it remains true, and there is so much to do that is necessary and desirable, and satisfying, along the way. But when should we stop because it is simply too much for one person to direct two medical centers in a remote ultra-poor country with challenges A, B, and C and with X, Y, and Z support structures lacking to do the job? We are breaking down, bit by bit, though the Lord has given us the strength to keep going so far, to keep the centers open and even improving their capacity in many ways.

What we desperately need now is to hear from God through the work of the Holy Spirit. How does He see things and what does He want us to do?

We covet your future prayer for future steps. Help us now by praying that we would rest, yes, but that in that rest we would be able in our weaknesses and self-determination to put ourselves and our thoughts aside, to listen to God and to understand what He wants us to do.

Love, *Steve and Nancy Brown*

# Sports Camp 2018



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**BIRTHDAYS**

1	Stephen Antal	11	Krystal Apelquist	17	Josh Croft
	Elijah Nadarajah		Jessica Francis	18	Lorena Croft
2	Fred Apelquist		Severn Rash		Ellen Harrison
3	Matt Miller		Erin Schultz	19	Lucas Long
	John Newton	12	Connor Vaughan	21	David Rhoads
8	Sheila Crawford	13	Lisa Ellis	22	Julia Judkins
9	Dennis McNeely		Kate Oliphant	25	Amie Boncher
	Tom Noble	14	Lesley Ermalinski		Jan Welch
	Jim Roberts		Daniel Simonds	29	Dave Bassert
		16	Katherine Hanger		Mark Oliphant
			Bryan Saddler	30	Christina Cummings

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES**



1	Care & Jim Murphy	22	Patricia & Ed Stachew
9	Fay & Frank Cochran	23	Julie & Bill Kesterson
19	Ann & Charlie Westerman	25	Tammie & John Morris
20	Leslie & Bruce Johnson		Barbara & Alex Peake
	Carole & Keith Menzel	26	Diane & David Reed
21	Kay & Matt Miller	31	Linda & Dave Bassert

***Worship Schedule***

**Sundays**

**8:00 and 10:15 AM**  
Eucharist and Healing

At the 10:15 AM service:

Nursery available for infants through 2 years old  
Sunday School for children 3 years old through 5th grade

**Weekdays**

**9:00 AM**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

**12:15 PM**

Wednesdays: Holy Communion





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Visit our website at [www.epiphanyanglican.net](http://www.epiphanyanglican.net)

*Encountering God, Building a multigenerational congregation, Equipping every member.*

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

August		
30 July - 3 August		Sports Camp at Coates Elementary
5, 12, 19, 26	8:00 AM and 10:15 AM	Holy Eucharist
10	10:00 AM	Tabitha's Threads
12, 26	6:00 PM	Youth Connections
14	7:00 PM	Vestry
September		
2, 9, 16, 23, 30	8:00 AM and 10:15 AM	Holy Eucharist
9, 23	6:00 PM	Youth Connections
11	7:00 PM	Vestry
14	10:00 AM	Tabitha's Threads

**ATTENTION!**

Put *YOUR* activity on the Church calendar!

Contact Jimmy Crawford  
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