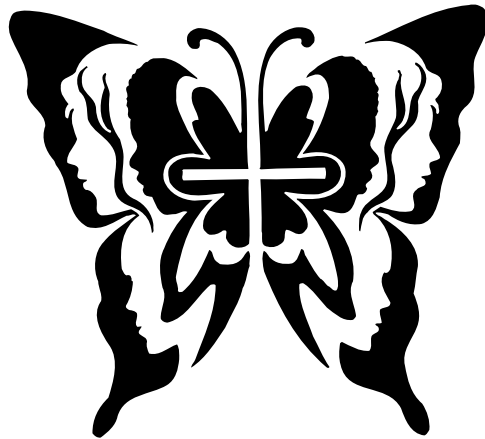


What do you see?



This is the recently retired logo for the Department of Youth Ministry.
Why a butterfly? Well, there is more to the logo than a butterfly.
Can you see the faces of adolescent boys and girls in the design in the wings?
Look closely for their silhouettes. See them now?



What the logo employs is something called "figure-ground." There is a figure hidden in the background design. Animals, insects and soldiers use camouflage in a similar way to blend into their backgrounds. The popular "Where's Waldo?" books [NOTE: Hot link the words in quotes to Where's Waldo site at <http://www.etoys.com/book/g/product/200/66/33/1.shtml>] challenge the reader to find Waldo in a busy scene.

The point? Life is busy. Life is noisy. Sorting things out of the background is a challenge. It's even more of a challenge to see God at work in your life. He's there, constantly blessing, constantly giving. The challenge is to see His gifts and His care in all the noise and business of life.

STORY:

What a noisy place our world has become!

Not noise that assaults your ears, but noise that assaults your mind. We are so bombarded with messages from so many sources today that we find it next to impossible to filter out the truth. Just think back to the last political campaign and the ads the candidates ran. No wonder everyone opts out of voting. "Who can choose the better of two evils?" people ask.

In a world that is spinning us around with every passing fancy, we look for a handle we can grab. Something steady in a constantly moving lifescape.

I hear you saying: "Let me just stand here and hold steady while everything around goes by. At least then I can have a chance to see things and evaluate them from a steady perspective!"

For some, that steady perspective seems to be death. It's the one stop sign that is certain.

God has provided an anchor in a symbol of death. Somebody DID die to stop the spinning world. That somebody was Jesus Christ.

It's a way to get your feet on the ground--to stop the spinning world.

And He wasn't just anybody--He was God in the flesh. He came to earth and lived the perfect life neither you nor I can live. And you think you've got it tough!

That the all-powerful God should enter history to rescue you is almost unbelievable. But that doesn't mean it's not true.

It's alone you feel, and it's all alone--individually--that God addresses you. He knows your name and what you need.

Grab on and experience the stop of your life.

STORY

"I know I have too much when I begin to be burdened by the clutter. I don't throw everything out or sell it at a garage sale, but I do analyze its worth based on personal value, need and future use," says Faith Richardson of Steelville, Illinois. She goes through the process every six to twelve months. "Keeping my life simple and uncluttered helps me be open to what God is putting in my life. What is important is that our lives differ from what society dictates when we are walking daily with our Lord. I keep being reminded that when the Lord is my focus, He directs my steps and at His feet my steps end."

EXERCISE

While you are driving this week, take this thought with you:

Road crews have a constant battle keeping lane lines visible. Look for ways they do it where you are driving today. Do they use raised reflectors to mark the lanes? Do they use thick heat-set paints? Watch for places where the lines are so worn they can hardly be seen.

Now look with spiritual eyes and find a connection to your heart. Jesus said, "I am the way. No one comes to the Father but by Me." (John 14:6)

Thank the Lord that the Holy Spirit keeps your Christian lane lines visible, even in the worst storms of life.

PRAY with Paul (Ephesians 1:17-19a): I keep asking that...the Father may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLES--PRINCIPLE TWO

God's stewards are managers, not owners. We have been entrusted with life and life's resources and given the privilege of responsibly and joyfully managing them for Him. See Genesis 2:15; Psalm 24:1; Psalm 89:11; 1 Chronicles 29:1-20; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7; Luke 12:41-48; 1 Timothy 6:17-19. We encourage proper management of all life's resources for God's purposes. We promote biblical stewardship approaches that encourage cheerful, firstfruit, proportionate living and giving in all of life. We receive and use God's gifts with thanksgiving.

*This site is maintained through the Board for Congregational Services,
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