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Dear Parents of Youth:

As most of you know, the senior and junior high ministries at Clearcreek Chapel recently experienced a transition in leadership. Michael McDonald, after a number of years of good service, has transitioned to other ministry areas and I have taken his place as the Elder overseeing youth ministries. The month of February served as the transition period during which Michael familiarized me with the youth ministry. Beginning in March, I took on formal responsibility for the ministry area. As with any change in leadership, there are questions about what will remain the same and what will change. I hope to *begin* addressing those questions in this letter knowing that my own understanding of the ministry is still growing and that new thoughts and ideas are yet to come. In efforts to answer those questions, I would like to share some facts and information with you under two headings: **Where We Are** and **Where We Are Going**.

### **Where We Are**

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The most important things about the youth ministry will not be changing. The mission and values of the ministry function as the rails that direct its path. The mission of the youth ministry at Clearcreek is to reinforce the biblical training provided by the parents to the youth for the glorification of our Lord and Savior. As we grow as a ministry and in understanding of our work, the form of this expression may also grow and develop. Its substance, however, will remain the same – the glorification of our Lord and Savior. The values of the youth ministry are captured under four main headings: valuing a biblically spiritual atmosphere, valuing living together in a biblical way, valuing corporate worship, and valuing Christian mission. Again, the form of these expressions may change over time, but the substance expressed will remain fundamentally the same. When thinking about how to do youth ministry at Clearcreek, the reasoning should always be driven by this mission and these values. If we do our job well, it should not be difficult for a parent, for instance, to understand why the ministry functions as it does given an understanding of the mission and values. The lines connecting our activity to our beliefs should be readily identifiable.

There are three arms of activity simultaneously functioning in the youth ministry: Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings, and “other” activities. On Sunday mornings, Brian Braxton teaches the senior high Sunday school and is currently in a study of prayer. Todd Warrix teaches the junior high Sunday school and is currently looking at the concept of Christian liberty as taught in Romans. Sunday evenings are somewhat variable this spring. To help you keep track of what is happening each Sunday evening between now and June, a calendar indicating the youth’s activity during this time is attached. Other activities include the monthly events that were planned in May ’03 for this present ministry year. Many of you may still have the copy of the flyer that documented the what, where, and when of these events throughout the year. For those of you who do not, the flyer has been attached to this letter as well. Many further comments could be made about any of these three areas of activity as there is much more to each one than what I have communicated here. More will be said in future letters such as this one – and you can also feel free to contact me with specific questions.

### **Where We Are Going**

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Assessment is my main focus in the youth ministry at this time. Assessment started with a number of conversations with Michael who took the time to thoroughly introduce me to the youth ministry and its various aspects. Currently, I am meeting with those who serve in the youth

ministry to understand from their perspective where the ministry stands, what areas are functioning well, and what areas need strengthened – all in the purview of our mission and values. Beginning on March 28<sup>th</sup>, Beth and I will begin hosting individual families who have children in the youth program in our home. We hope to meet with each of you over the next 4-6 months. The purpose of this is two-fold. First, there are many of you who do not know us and vice versa. We want to be enriched by your company. Second, we want to enter into conversation with you about the youth ministry at Clearcreek and gain an understanding of your thoughts and perceptions as well as communicate ideas, directions, plans, hopes, etc. that are being developed by those who serve in the youth ministry. This approach to assessment is not speedy but it is thorough. Given that any one child will spend up to 6 years in the youth ministry, it seems wise to think long term and plan carefully.

Some topics of discussion that will reach the table sooner than others include Sunday evening programming, the recruitment of more members of the body to serve in the youth ministry, the fostering of aspects of the youth ministry that will allow for the further development of purposeful relationships between the youth and those who minister to them, and the development of a website that will keep everyone up to date on the youth calendar. There are other more long-term issues as well. These include the further development and clear articulation of vision, mission, purpose, values, goals and objectives; the possible restructuring of the youth ministry model as a whole; continuation of the Sunday school curriculum development process; utilizing activities (evangelism/mission, service, fun/fellowship) purposefully to fulfill our mission; and addressing developmental differences important when ministering to an age group that spans the ages of 12 to 18.

The planning of the 04/05 ministry year will take place in May. It is during that time that in-depth conversation and subsequent decision-making will occur about these and other issues. The new ministry year will begin in August, 04. It is likely that by or at that point several changes will be implemented in the youth ministry. As a reminder, this is also the time at which current 6<sup>th</sup> graders will formally move into the youth ministry and current high school seniors will be invited to continue with SyM (the singles and young marrieds group).

As I close, I want to clearly emphasize that it is my desire and the desire of those who serve in the youth ministry to consistently, vividly, and biblically bring Christ to your children. We cannot change your child's heart, but we can open the Scriptures and ourselves to them and portray, by His grace, all that God is for them in Christ. For those of you who have believing children, we hope to be used as catalysts for their growth and maturation in Christ. For those of you who have unbelieving children, we hope to be used as salt and light and to see God bring them to salvation for His own glory. Pray for us even as we pray for you and your children that we may all serve Him well.

In Christ,



Devon Berry on behalf of the youth ministry team:

Brian and Rosemary Braxton  
Pete and Amy Frederick  
Todd and Amy Warrix

## **Sunday Evenings**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
March 28	Game/Activity
April 4	Discipleship
April 11	In PM Service
April 18	In PM Service
April 25	Game/Activity
May 2	In PM Service
May 9	In PM Service
May 16	Discipleship
May 23	Game/Activity
May 30	Service Project
June 6	TBA
June 13	Discipleship
June 20	TBA
June 27	Game/Activity

## **Activities**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
April 3	4pm – 8pm	Flier Distribution for Easter Contata
May 15	10am – 3pm	Spring Planting for Seniors
June 28-30		Rafting Trip
August 7	9am – 2pm	Car Wash