



Let the heavens be glad,
and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar,
and all that fills it;
let the field exult,
and everything in it!

Psalms 96:11-12a

Gary and Kris Wood | April 2025

We took two grandchildren with us when we visited our friends in Pennsylvania. Pictured right, we are with our friends Hope O'Hara and Awana Ministry Directors Colter and Kayla Cekella at Castlewood Alliance Church in New Castle, PA. Castlewood Alliance started their Awana Club in the fall of 2024, and they are discipling every age group, starting with toddlers (Puggles). The Puggles group is full of parents and children learning God's word together. We were filled with joy as we visited our friends at Castlewood Alliance. Wonderful, caring adults work together to disciple the next generation of Christ followers.

Ministry & Equipping Highlights

- Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Hurricane, WV, strongly focuses on child discipleship. We visited their Awana Club in March, where Awana Ministry Director Angie Withrow and a great team of leaders give children a place to belong, believe in Jesus and become all God has for them. Great praises to God for children completing their books, growing closer to Jesus, and the incredible leaders serving with selfless hearts.
- Gary shared what it means to be an Awana missionary with the children and leaders at Bethel EPC in Enon Valley, PA. Awana Ministry Director Emily Gwin is leading the team. Everyone is doing great!
- We have had many opportunities to share the Gospel during numerous visits to Awana Clubs this past month. It has been amazing!
- Tying shoe laces, listening to memory verses, helping children understand the Bible. It is all a part of a typical Awana Club night. Thank you for all the shoes you've tied, bandaids, ice packs, hugs, and love you show to children in the name of Jesus.



Thank you so much for being a part of raising up the next generation of resilient disciples!



Impact Stories

Awana Ministry Directors Ron and Trudy Collins at Centerpoint Community Church in Center Township, PA, have served children and families through Awana for 28 years. We spent time with them at their annual grand prix in March. Children and adults of all ages participated, and Pastor Stephen Vesolich presented the Gospel to a packed room of children with their friends and family. The Awana Grand Prix has become a fantastic night at Centerpoint with church-wide participation. We spoke to a young woman with her daughter, and she shared that night was her first Awana Club night. She recently recommitted her life to Christ and was excited about what God was doing at Centerpoint. She is looking forward to getting her daughter involved in their Awana Club. Ron is pictured above, right, weighing in a car.

River Cities Community Church, Huntington, WV, hosted pie night, and Gary along with some fearless Awana leaders got sticky for a purpose. It was well worth it because they raised nearly \$500 for the Africa Child and School Initiative.



Family Update

- Please pray for the safe delivery of our next grandchild. Please pray for Mom and Baby's health. We are so excited!
- We praise God that our seven-year-old grandson put his faith in Jesus! He has great questions and continues to be very curious.
- He is risen indeed! We celebrated Resurrection Sunday with family and friends. Kris shared the Gospel and read The Garden, the Curtain, and the Cross with the children. Afterward, we searched for eggs, ate a fabulous dinner, and topped it off with Elvis Pie.

Praise and Prayer Requests

- We praise God that Gary could share a message of Child Discipleship with the congregation at New Hope Baptist in St. Albans, WV.
- Training plans are in the works for this fall. Please pray that many leaders will come to be equipped and encouraged.
- Please pray that God will call His people to become Awana missionaries. Currently, only 54 U.S. missionaries are supporting 6,780 clubs.
- Please pray for God to heal Dawn, a T&T Director in Martinsburg, WV, who is battling stage 4 cancer.

Ministry Goals

- We want to conduct eight training/equipping events over the next 12 months.
- Challenge churches with a call to action, making child discipleship a priority.



From the Awana Global Headquarters



Spring is all about new beginnings; flowers are blooming, birds are singing and butterflies are starting to appear. It is a season of growth and transformation, a reminder that God is always at work. Just like the fresh starts we witness in nature, over time, we are witness to growth and new things in the kids we disciple.

In Isaiah 43:19, God tells Isaiah that He is doing a new thing. He gave Isaiah hope that He would make a way in the wilderness and desert. We love the same God today! He wants to do a new thing in our lives and the lives of the kids and families we serve.

Be encouraged! Every story you share, every prayer you pray, is a part of God's renewing work in these young lives.

Partner with us in reaching more children!

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