

Vernonia Christian Church Expands Youth Ministry

New youth pastor Chad Dillard has big plans to provide programs and activities for community youth

The Vernonia Christian Church is excited to announce a new opportunity for youth in the community.

Vernonia Christian has hired Chad Dillard as their Youth Minister.

“Chad is someone our church has brought in to work with students in our town, and to plan and provide programs that will be good and positive things for kids to do in our community,” says Vernonia Christian Church pastor Sam Hough. “I’m really excited about this. We have a lot of kids in this town who are looking for things to do, so I think this will be a big deal. Chad has an opportunity to build something that just isn’t being built here.”

Dillard is originally from Idaho, and says he graduated from high school while living in a children’s home there. He attended Boise Bible College and then finished his Bachelors Degree in Christian Ministries with an emphasis on Pastoral Leadership at Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois. He has done some mission work and also worked as a youth pastor in Wisconsin, as well as with Youth for Christ doing campus ministry. He has played basketball and also coached football and said he loves sports.

Dillard is married; he and his wife Alison have a three year old daughter

ter Kiara. He says both will be active in the youth ministry.

Hough says Dillard will not just be available to work with youth in their own congregation. “Chad is here to work with students up to 12th grade. They don’t have to be part of our church, or any church for that matter. He will be planning trips and activities that all kids in the community are welcome to participate in. We’re hoping to build some bridges with the school and with home school students



and have that be Chad’s role.”

Hough says he sees this as a real opportunity. Dillard will organize and oversee all the youth programs and act as support for the activities already being run by volunteers, while looking for ways to improve and expand existing programs and create new ones.

Currently Vernonia Christian has a Wednesday night program at 6:30 for 4th-6th grade students, run by volunteer Jeremy Simmons. Dillard said the group recently drew 61 kids for their activities. He says the group is more of an

outreach to “...help young children experience and get comfortable with God’s love,” that includes some free time for games and activities.

On Sunday afternoons after church at 12:30, Kim Pultz runs a Young Disciples group for middle school students. Dillard says that group works more on exploring real life issues kids experience and bring a scripture based application to dealing with it. The group has lunch together and a lesson.

Dillard will teach the high school aged group which meets on Sunday evenings. “Right now we’re doing something called “Back to the Basics”

and looking at the Bible all the way back to Genesis. The meeting also includes free time for games and social activities.

Recent activities included a Valentine meal where the young men cooked dinner for the young ladies, followed by a movie night. Hough says plans include the organization of a youth camp, field trips and retreats, a local progressive dinner, a photo scavenger hunt, and a trip to a Christian rock concert. “We’re going to find ways to get out of the building and have fun,” says Dillard.

Dillard and Hough say another idea is to get the youth out into the community to provide some helpful service for those in need. “Last week we had a group of boys go out and shovel snow from someone’s driveway,” says Hough.

“Each week our goal is to reach out and allow us to incorporate personal time with them to give kids an opportunity to tell us what’s going on in their lives,” says Dillard. Dillard will also spend time with some youth one-on-one to provide opportunities for personal counseling. He notes that any one-on-one time with young woman will include his wife.

“Our church congregation has made some pretty big sacrifices to make this happen,” says Hough. “But we’re really excited about the opportunity this provides. When we look at our community, we don’t have a lot of paid staff in our churches. A common thing we hear is there is nothing for kids to do in town. Our activities will be for all the kids in our community.”

Hough notes that since he came to Vernonia Christian Church as the pastor 17 years ago, providing activities and events for the community has always been a goal. He points to the Sportsman’s Banquet the church hosted for several years as an example, which brought in nationally known speakers. “We’ve tried to bring things that our community wouldn’t normally have access to,” says Hough. “We decided to take those resources we used to try to do something we thought would be more useful – outreach to our kids. I think this will have a more lasting impact and benefits for our community.”

For more information on youth programs at Vernonia Christian Church or upcoming events go to their website at www.VernoniaChristianChurch.org.

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