Youth pastor locks in New Year's fun

Nazarene church offers New Year's event

By TAMMY MALGESINI
COMMUNITY EDITOR

A journey in youth ministry recently brought a Chicago-area man to Hermiston Church of the Nazarene.

Michael Castello and his wife, Claudia, moved to town in September. The worship and student ministries pastor is gearing up to provide a fun and safe New Year's Eve for area youths.

Castello

The New Year's Lock-In is Tuesday, Dec. 31 from 4 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. at the church, 1520 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. Youths in sixth grade through high school are invited to attend. The cost is $10.

"We want to give students a positive alternative to going to a party or place where they can spend time with other like-minded kids who are looking for a good time but not looking to drink," Castello said. "It's just an opportunity to hang out and have some fun and be in a safe environment on New Year's Eve."

The evening, Castello said, features Nerf gun wars, several variations of dodgeball, food and loads of fun. The event is open to all teens in the community. In addition, Castello said about a dozen adult volunteers will be on hand.

The youth program at the Nazarene church is called Elevate Student Ministry. Castello said the moniker reflects the geographical location of not being far from the mountains, but more importantly an urging for youths to share their faith with their peers and families.

The overall theme, Castello said, comes from Luke 15:1-10, which shares through parables about loss and redemption. He said it's important for believers of all ages to take opportunities presented to them to share about Jesus.

For Castello, his relationship with Christ blossomed as a 16-year-old. Attending a fall retreat, Castello said, "God grabbed ahold of me — that was 2000 and I have not looked back since."

Contributed photo

The Elevate Student Ministry at Hermiston Church of the Nazarene served treats and led activities during the recent Polar Express Experience. The youths will enjoy a fun and safe New Year's Lock-In Dec. 31 at the church.

Just out of college in 2007, Castello was serving as a volunteer youth leader. As he was driving to the church one day, the song "All to You" by Lincoln Brewster was playing. Feeling a need for silence, Castello turned the radio off and heard a voice in his head urging him to enter the ministry full-time.

As he continued driving, Castello found himself arguing with God about not being qualified. However, by the time he arrived at the church, God had already intervened. Castello's mentor, Adam Lewis, told him while praying he felt led to ask Castello when he was going to pursue his minister's license. Castello said that was the first of many affirmations along the way that led him into the ministry.

Castello has been in the ministry for 10 years — serving in Illinois, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Indiana, Oklahoma and now Oregon.

"I can't imagine doing anything else," he said.

Elevate Student Ministry meets Sundays from 5-7 p.m. It features a time of games, life groups, prayer and lessons. In addition, the ministry also includes camps, retreats, conferences and mission trips.

For more information about the youth ministry or the New Year's Eve event, contact Castello at 541-567-3677, michael.hermnaz@gmail.com or visit www.hermistonnazarene.org.

Here's your chance to party like it's 1920

HERMISTON HERALD

A Roaring Twenties theme will be making a flap at a couple of area New Year's Eve celebrations, including the Union Club and Midway Bar & Grill. Both gatherings get started at 9 p.m., and there's no cover charge.

The Midway, at 1750 N. First St., will offer food and drink specials all night. Revelers are encouraged to don pearls and pinstripes and feather boas.

People are invited to kick up their heels with dancing as well as live entertainment featuring Jamie Nasario & Luke Basile at the Union Club, 201 E. Main St. Also, other musicians will be taking the stage during the evening. Be sure to bring an appetite as food specials will be available.

Photo contributed by city of Hermiston

Hermiston Parks & Recreation is hosting a fireworks display and watermelon explosion for New Year's Eve on the city's Festival Street.

For those who prefer to rock in the new year, head to The Pheasant Blue Collar Bar & Grill, 149 E. Main St. The Hermiston watering hole will offer a pair of live bands beginning at 8 p.m.

Bands taking the stage include School bOI, which features the sounds of AC/DC. The tribute band presents the music of both the Bon Scott and Brian Johnson eras. And Wicked Mary is a guitar-based rock 'n' roll cover band, playing tunes from the '70s to present. There is no cover charge.

And, for a real blast, head to Hermiston's Festival Street (180 N.E. Second St.) just before midnight for fireworks and a watermelon explosion.

For more information, call 541-667-5018.

BRIEFS

Recreation department offers family night

A night of inflatable fun and activities is offered at the Hermiston Community Center.

Presented by Hermiston Parks & Recreation, Family Friday Night is Friday, Dec. 27 from 4-7 p.m. at 415 S. Highway 395. Activities include bounce houses, a bungee run, cornhole, ping pong, Mario Kart and more. The cost is $5 per person. Also, concessions are available with cash purchases.

Kids under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Other upcoming Family Friday Night events are Jan. 17 and Feb. 14.

For more information or to register, call 541-667-5018 or visit www.hermiston.or.us/parks-recreation/home.

IMAC serves hearty breakfast

After winding down from Christmas, what better way to treat yourself than breakfast at the Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center fundraiser?

The meal is Saturday, Dec. 28 from 7:30-10:30 a.m. at Stokes Landing Senior Center, 150 Columbia Lane, Irrigon. The cost is $4.50 per person.

The Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center group is dedicated to preserving Irrigon's 1921 school building and developing a regional art venue. For more information, call Peggy Price at 541-561-1737.

Hermiston library hosts scavenger hunt

Look high, look low, see what you can find hidden at the Hermiston Public Library.

A scavenger hunt drop-in activity is Thursday, Dec. 26 from noon to 2 p.m. at 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. The event includes a special puzzle to be solved.

For more information, call 541-567-2882 or visit www.hermistonlibrary.us.

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