

# DOWNTOWN PULSE winter 2008; vol.2, issue 1

bringing the heart of the church to the heart of the city



In early January, we drove down a narrow country road, past horse farms and little old churches and pulled up a gravel driveway. We had excitedly anticipated this day for over a month. This was the day we picked up Watson.

Watson is a five-year-old Australian Shepherd with quite a tale. Talk about against all odds. Watson was born with a genetic flub that causes blindness, deafness or both

in three quarters of affected dogs. Fortunately, he was one of the lucky quarter. Last July, however, another genetic trait nearly put an end to him. He got loose on a neighboring farm and began trying to herd the cows, as any good shepherd should. The farmer wasn't impressed, and shot poor Watson, shattering his leg bone to pieces. After two

surgeries, a metal plate, ten screws, three wires and a pin, Watson's leg began to heal. But his family, concerned that he might get loose again, gave him up for adoption. He spent a couple months in foster care before we brought him home.

We had no idea what a fantastic little missionary Watson was. Walking around the neighborhood is an exciting experience with our new dog. He makes friends everywhere he goes.

Neighborhood children gather around to pet his thick white fur. Strangers call from across the street. "That's a pretty dog you have there. Mind if I pet him?" Watson has provided an opening for conversation and a safe way for relationships to develop.

God has, for some time, impressed on my heart a desire to connect with the tough-looking teenagers that congregate on a street corner near our house. All my previous attempts had fallen flat. Perhaps, as a thirty-something white dude, I am met with suspicion. But the other day I was out walking Watson and one of the teenagers called over to me. "Hey what kinda dog is that?" We talked for a while as the young men took turns petting Watson. They were particularly interested in Watson's bullet wound. I don't know which of us gained 'street cred' that day. All I know is that God has opened a door using a furry missionary named Watson.



# PULSE points

read our blog for stories of life, ministry, and the city:

- “My coat story”
- “Well, Sugah...”
- “Showers raining down on me”
- “Standard chaos”
- “A Trilogy: Thoughts on a feast” (episodes 1-3)
- “Healing through brokenness”
- “Visiting the prisoner”
- “The eyes have it”

[www.downtownpulse.org/blog](http://www.downtownpulse.org/blog)



**Our support is now 60% raised. The goal is to be 100% raised by April in time for Lexington FUMC's mission month. In the meantime, we are continuing to meet with Sunday Schools and individuals to talk about this ministry.**

#### Other happenings:

- Speaking at Moorestown FUMC's Faith Promise Weekend
- Compassion Weekend events in the city with Lexington FUMC
- Hosting an Intersarsity short-term missions team from Maryville College
- Beginning conversations at Lexington FUMC Andover about helping refugees as they relocate to Lexington
- 5th Annual Neighborhood St. Patrick's Day Party

## a reluctant lesson

As we sit down to write our quarterly newsletters, we think about the big picture lessons God has taught us over the previous couple of months. This is not a hard thing to do, because these lessons always seem to reverberate in everything we read, hear, feel, and experience. It is as if each season has its theme, and our newsletters give us a way to share those big picture lessons with others. For this newsletter, I have wanted to rebel against that lesson. Not that I don't agree with it, but certainly I can come up with something more profound, or interesting. Certainly, as people are reading for hints of urban ministry excitement, or still wondering if they are going to support us, or if their support is going to something worthwhile, this cannot be the lesson I share. It is too basic. Too simple. At a time when I strongly feel the pressure to justify ourselves in order to raise support, this lesson says no. This season, God has been teaching us that He is God.

I want to be able to write something that gives us authority or answers questions as to why people should invest their time, money, prayers in this ministry. But the lesson has been, “trust me, I am God, I will provide.” I've searched scripture over and over to find another, “better” message, but they have all pointed to similar voices of the power of God that frees the Israelites, that brings death into life, that grows the Kingdom of God from the seeds we plant, that compels the apostle Paul to deny His own wisdom and to write that “no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.” (1 Cor 1:29-31)

So, I stand before God and, like Moses, ask “Who am I, that I should go, that I should bring people to your Promised Land.” And I have heard God reply, “Certainly I will be with you.” Then, I say, “But what authority do I have? How will they know I'm legitimate, that I'm a good missionary to support? What shall I say to them?” And God responded, “I Am who I Am. Tell them ‘I Am has sent me to you.’” (Exodus 3)

So, I tell John that I am having a hard time writing, that my message is foolishness to those seeking reason and signs. He says that we're not doing this for justification.

So God is. God is present. God is active. God is with us. God is God.

As we seek support, as we build the foundation upon which this ministry will stand, as those investing should know what they are investing in, the most profound and interesting thing I can say is I Am has sent us.

If we lose God's power, God's work, God's directive as the core of who we are in an effort to gain our own credibility, then we have absolutely nothing to offer. Everything we say would be rhetoric. Perhaps that is why God's challenge for me is to put this in print, so that we may not boast, so that everyone will know.



## contact us!

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**Please contact us if you would like to be added to our monthly email prayer letter.**