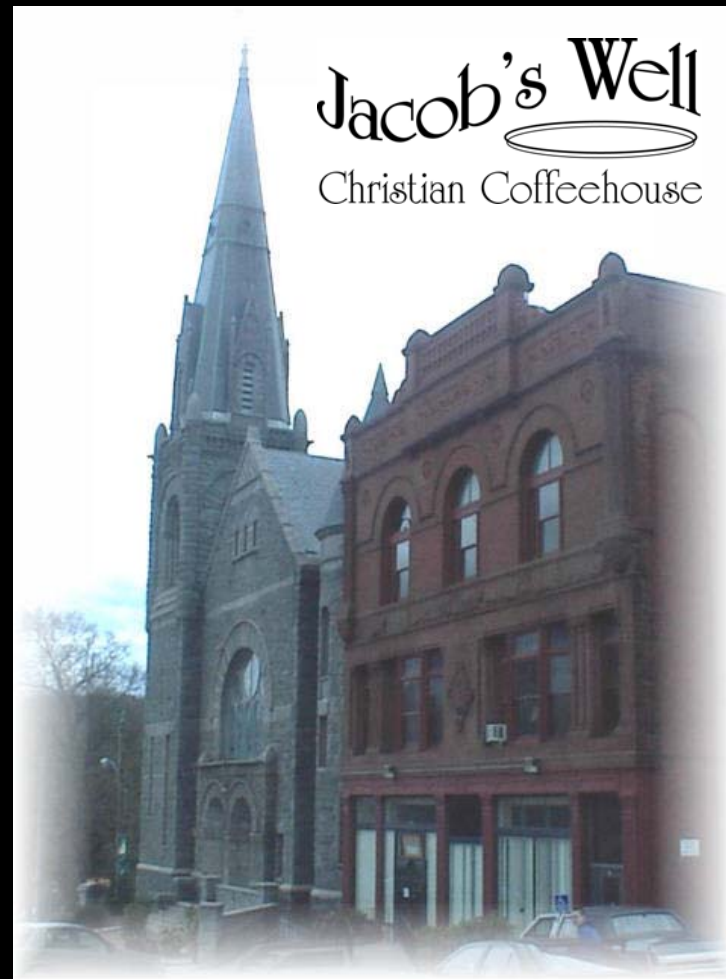


# The History of Jacob's Well Christian Coffeeshouse



The story of Jacob's Well begins  
with "a tale of two cities"  
in the 1970s...

1. Worcester,  
Massachusetts



- That's where Dawn Blais went to her very first "coffeehouse" at the Calvary Evangelistic Center in downtown Worcester.
- That's where she came to know the Lord personally in 1971 during the original "Jesus Movement."

## 2. Chicago, Illinois



- That's where Drew Crandall began going to a secular coffeehouse in the city, where he enjoyed the laid-back atmosphere, the good tunes, something refreshing to eat and drink, and playing chess.

After Drew became a Christian and married Dawn, the family moved to Ellington, CT in 1987.

For many years, Drew led the men's ministry at Grace Bible Baptist Church on Prospect Street in Rockville using a coffeehouse format.



- In September of 1994, the couple moved to Ellington Wesleyan Church. Shortly thereafter, Pastor Norm Mesel mentioned that the church was praying for new ways to reach out to the local community.
- Drew suggested starting "Jacob's Well Christian Coffeehouse" based on John 4, and put together a proposal for Pastor and the Church Board to consider.

# The Mission?

- To share the Good News through the performing arts.

- Church leaders enthusiastically approved the proposal, so we formed a team of volunteers to organize the coffeehouse, to be held on first Fridays.

- Our first coffeehouse was held on October 6, 1995 featuring singer Lori O'Brien of Naugatuck, CT.

GREAT MUSIC, FOOD,  
RECREATION, AND  
INSPIRATION...FREE!



If you're 16 or older, you won't want to miss the most exciting musical event to come to Ellington this fall! The evening will feature inspirational music, refreshing food and soft drinks, and a laid-back time of recreation at Jacob's Well Christian Coffeeshouse.

*Singer, songwriter, producer and pianist Lori O'Brien will be performing on Friday, October 6. Lori has three albums, and has performed at national events and on television.*



**Date:** Friday evening, October 6  
**Time:** 7-10 PM. Come when you can!  
**Place:** Ellington Wesleyan Church  
 77 Cider Mill Road  
 (Route 140)  
**Admission:** Free, open to adults 16+  
**Attire:** Casual

For details and directions, please call 860/871-1140.

**Jacob's Well**  
Christian Coffeeshouse

# Local media, including the *Journal Inquirer* covered the launch...

## Christian coffeehouse tonight at Ellington church

ELLINGTON — Games, snacks, and gospel music will be featured tonight at a Christian coffeehouse at the Ellington Wesleyan Church on Cider Mill Road, near Route 83.

The Jacob's Well Christian Coffeehouse is planned as a monthly event from 7 to 10 p.m.

The event is open to anyone 16 or older. Special guest this month is performer Lori O'Brien of Naugatuck.

The coffeehouses will be held at the church on the first Friday of each month. For more information, call Rev. Norm Mesel at 871-1140.



JOURNAL INQUIRER

10-09-95

## The java flowed like water in Ellington

By Anne Saunders  
Journal Inquirer

ELLINGTON — For drinkers of java, the nightlife was hopping Friday, as both the public library and the Wesleyan Church featured coffeehouse events.

More than 30 people gathered at the Hall Memorial Library to listen to local writers read from their work and to hear the mandolin and guitar music of Mike Bennett and Dick Carlberg.

The beat was a little louder and livelier at the Wesleyan Church basement nearby, as singer Lori O'Brien shared her Christian pop music and gospel at the first gathering of the Jacob's Well Christian Coffeehouse.

Both the church and the library started their coffeehouses this fall and plan to continue them on a monthly basis. Drew Crandall, a Wesleyan Church member who organized the coffeehouse there, said he sees a real need for such relaxed social gatherings.

"We live in a very go-go culture," he said. "You feel like you're going 500 mph all the time. You need a tranquil, peaceful environment."

Interspersed among the music, refreshments, and games at the Wesleyan Church were prayers and testimony about the role the Lord has played in people's lives.

"I think it's great," said David Greener of Vernon, as he and his friend Dan Straut played Scrabble during a break in the music.

"It's relaxing," Straut agreed.

"I think coffeehouses are starting to spread. People aren't as into going out and getting hammered," Greener said.

Those attending the Hall Memorial Library coffeehouse were also enthusiastic.

"I think it's lovely," said Ruthanne Flaum, as she sipped her coffee and listened to the mandolin-guitar duo. "I think all kinds of people are here. You don't have to be a heavy intellectual writer. This is the type of thing libraries should do."

For Nancy Lombard, who organized the library event, a coffeehouse was a good place for writers to share their work. Two and a half years ago, she started a writers' group that met at the library. The coffeehouse was a natural outgrowth of that, she said.

"I wanted to share some of the writing with the community and to invite people to the library," she said.

Childhood memories became the improm-



Emily Duclos of Ellington listens as Roger Eddy reads one of his stories in the coffeehouse atmosphere of First Fridays at the Hall Memorial Library.

tu theme of the evening. Lombard started off with a story about her Swedish grandmother's Easter hat.

Judith Goodman of Tolland picked up on the hat theme as she read from her poetry.

"When I am old, I shall wear hats. And revel in the magic they cast," one poem began.

Flaum, a Manchester writer, read a personal essay recalling the delights of a childhood outing in the 1940s.

Skip Borrell of Suffield came to the coffeehouse originally just to listen, but wound up reading one of his short stories — a Christmas tale set in the Pennsylvania Dutch country of his boyhood.

Both the library and the church have scheduled their coffeehouses for the first

Fridays of the month. On Nov. 3 at the library, writers Rosemarie Kelly of Vernon, Lucille Jones of Ellington, and Concetta Doucette of South Windsor, will be reading from their work.

On the same date, The Jacob's Well Christian Coffeehouse will feature the movie, "The Chuck Colson Story."

In December, the library coffeehouse will take a temporary winter break, with plans to resume the monthly event in March. Jacob's Well is planning a special theatrical presentation for its December coffeehouse, Crandall said.

For more information, call the Wesleyan Church at 871-1140 or the Hall Memorial Library at 875-6881.

- The logo was designed by my art director at the time, the finest Christian graphic designer and illustrator Drew has ever worked with...Rick DeMarco of Willimantic. He's now with the Lord.
- Rick and Drew met at New England Revival '89 at the Hartford Civic Center.



Over the past 13 years, about 135 coffeehouses have been held, featuring over 100 different performers including:

- Kory Schutz
- Road to Heaven
- Bob Stanhope
- Dennis Grady
- Susan Lavigne



- Judy Buch & Hands of Peace
- Mike Lawson & Edgar the puppet
- Charles Denler
- Marquis Laughlin
- Robbie C
- Susan Bailey
- 33 Years
- Cornerstone



- Forgiven
- Raging Grace
- Steve Turley
- Peter Oliva
- Little Harmony
- Everett Barber
- Amusing Grace
- Nashville Fats
- True Witness



- Nate & James
- Mo Carpenter
- Heartsong
- Michael Hakanson-Stacy
- Cheryl Batter
- Broken Box
- 2 For One
- Louis Crescenti
- Emanuel  
Transmission



- George Tifft & 4PAK
- Louis Crescenti
- Debi Kiontke
- Mary Shuttleworth
- Jeannie Pomanowski
- Two Fold
- Andrienne Reedy
- Joshua Tiner
- Christy Burnham



- Zeal
- Robert Fullerton
- Cindi Meehan
- The Martels
- Promise Land Band
- The Jacob's Brothers
- Rob Carter & the Blueprints
- Jim Lenn



- Blu
- Linda Okula
- Fran Reagan
- Mercy Road
- Andrew Springman & Yokefellows
- Chris Marchetti
- Happy Wanderers
- Jim Underwood & East of Nashville



- Robin O'Herin
- Joseph Wilson
- Adrienne Reedy
- One Accord
- Red Embers
- Bizzy Bender
- Ashley Greenwood
- Naima
- The Crossing



- Book Ends
- David Deschamplain
- David & Judy Harris
- Leah Martensen
- Ryan Brown
- Chris Heard
- John DeSorbo
- Firefly
- Bryan Roberts
- Crystal Lake Praise Team



- Bob & Lisa Benoit
- Arno Groot
- Tom Petri
- Jim Albano
- Lorraine Ireland
- Kathleen King
- "Drew the Drummer"
- Roger Nelson
- Traci Root
- Sam Bowen



# We haven't hidden our light under a bushel!

- We send postcards to about 700 contacts.
- We generate ongoing publicity in local print, TV, radio and online media.
- We place posters in high-traffic locations.
- We send broadcast emails and have a website, [www.JacobsWellCoffeehouse.com](http://www.JacobsWellCoffeehouse.com).
- We create church bulletins.
- We generate grassroots word of mouth.

- We've been overtly evangelical Christian, with Gospel messages and altar calls at every coffeehouse.
- Souls are saved, saints are encouraged.
- There's emotional, mental, physical, spiritual healing...just what you'd hope from a coffeehouse named Jacob's Well!

- Jacob's Well is held on the First Friday of the month. We deliberately create a laid-back, no-pressure, casual atmosphere. We offer free parking, admission, and refreshments. We take donations and sell used Christian books/music for \$1 to help to raise money to cover expenses.



- Doors open at 7:30 pm. We pray with performers at 7:45, and the live performance begins around 8:00.
- After one set, at around 9:15, Drew shares a Gospel message/invitation, then our performer closes with one more song.
- We typically wrap up by 9:30-9:45.

# Typical attendance

- Fluctuates month-to-month based on many factors...from 30 to 130.
- Age ranges from kids to seniors; average age is probably mid-40s. Has skewed "older" vs. "younger."
- Ethnicity reflects suburban environment: mostly Caucasian, some African-American, Hispanic, Asian participation.

## Some testimonies...

- "The coffeehouse has been a time I look forward to each month. There is always a sweet spirit as you generously welcome everyone. I especially appreciate the invitation to receive Jesus, so sincerely and humbly expressed."

- "I've known Drew for a long time now. I have family and friends of many races and religions. I've been close to Jesus since early childhood. None of that has changed, but I look forward to my first Fridays at the coffeehouse. Loud music or soft, not important. We come together in friendship to glorify the Lord. We always feel we are surrounded by the love of friends and the Glory of God. Allelujah!"

- "I've enjoyed coming to Jacob's Well several times. The entertainment is great and I really feel the Spirit of the Lord here. I wish I had come sooner. God bless your ministry and fellowship."

- “The people and music are very uplifting spiritually. Jesus is present with the talents we all possess.”

- "I have come to Jacob's Well a few times since moving to Ellington. On one visit, I shared with Drew that I was going to be a foster parent to a young boy who needed a temporary home. Although I was delighted that God had chosen me for this assignment, I was a bit nervous about being a single parent and providing a balanced, Godly home to this child..."

- "...Drew gathered a few men, his Pastor, Dr. Benjamin and a few others, and they prayed for me and for little Alex. I felt such a relief and a burden lifted that night. I cried as I drove home filled with peace and a sense of the love that was shown towards me. Alex lived with me for two years and he had great experiences during this time. He enjoyed the times he came to Jacob's Well. He is back home with his mother and always looks at his time here with happiness. Thanks to you all for all your love and support."

- “When ever work and life takes it toll, we can come here to be refreshed in Spirit and Word, to carry on.”

- "Tonight was my first time at Jacob's Well. This tremendously blessed me, since little did I know more than half of the group worships with me in a church in New Britain. This was like Old Home week for me! Since I had also gone through a painful divorce and other pain, this night caused deep blessing of encouragement in my life..."

- "...We are all in different churches seeking to continue to follow our King. I have been very encouraged and exhorted in the Lord tonight. Truly a blessing. Awesome presence of the Lord!"

- “Last night I brought my grandson to explore the coffee house experience. We really enjoyed Dave's music and had a really nice time.

By the way, I really appreciate that you are informative, as well as informal! Very nice welcoming. Felt very comfortable!”

## **Influence and Impact beyond**

- Since 1995, we've assisted over 30 organizations that have considered launching coffeehouses in Hartford, East Hartford, Enfield, Waterbury, Meriden, East Longmeadow MA, Wilbraham MA, Catskill NY, Myrtle Beach SC, across the USA and even at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq.

- We brought the Life Action Singers to *Ellington High School* in 1996...
- which led to two encore performances at *Rockville High School* in 1999...
- which helped to set the stage for JesusFest (held annually since 2002) and the Forgiven play at *Tolland High School* in 2005, Robin Mark in 2007, Carman in 2008.



- At least 30 performers at JesusFest were “discovered” through Jacob’s Well.



## After 11 years, in fall 2006...

- Although the coffeehouse was one of the church's most vibrant and visible ministries, Ellington Wesleyan Church was facing a financial crisis, and church leaders made the hard choice to cut coffeehouse funding.
- However, Drew and Dawn were convinced the Lord wanted the coffeehouse to continue, so our business, KEEP IN TOUCH, stepped to the plate to fill the financial gap. Our volunteer staff stayed as we went into 2007.

- In early 2007, Pastor Mesel announced he was leaving. Drew felt very strongly that the coffeehouse would help the church to have some degree of continuity during the pastoral transition.
- The new pastor came aboard in July. We continued to have the coffeehouse at Ellington Wesleyan Church in September. After that, Drew and Dawn chose to leave the church.

## Changing churches and venues

- Having been a church leader there for 13 years, Drew worked carefully with the new pastor on a logical, tactful transition plan.
- “Released” from Ellington Wesleyan Church, Drew chose to move the coffeehouse to The Colony, and switch the core sponsor to JesusFest. That gives JesusFest year-round, local visibility and creates strong synergy for two well-known Christian event “brands.”

## We went month-to-month

- November and December coffeehouses were at The Colony in Vernon, then it suddenly closed. We scrambled and moved to the Super 8 Conference Center in January. Then we reached an agreement with Union Church to move to the North Wing storefront effective April 2008. *It's a great venue!*

## **As for the future? God Willing...**

- We may grow into the "Jacob's Well Café."
- We may collaborate with the Crossroads Community Church youth ministry.
- We may create a combination indoor / outdoor café in the summer, pending clarification of zoning do's and don'ts.

# It has been an amazing journey!

- If you have any questions, please call Drew Crandall at 1-800-JOY-9075 or email him at [dcrandall@ChristAtWork.org](mailto:dcrandall@ChristAtWork.org) .