

Another New Face Around the Office!

We have the pleasure of introducing you to another new counselor to Valley Christian Counseling Center



Meet Crystal Dunham!

To me, counseling is a collaborative relationship that works toward the client's personal goals by providing a safe environment to discuss the tough issues. I believe that everyone goes through struggles, but no matter the challenge we are not meant to go through life alone.

I believe God is the ultimate healer and counselor and I strive to put Him at the center of my counseling. I am passionate about helping others walk in the joy and freedom that God has for them and find meaning in the trials. I delight in seeing people connect with God and enjoy supporting them through the challenges and rejoicing with them in success. My counseling style utilizes a combination of strength-based and solution-focused approaches as well as cognitive and behavioral strategies.

Areas of Interest: Depression, anxiety, self-esteem issues, guilt and shame, stress management, spirituality, and adjustment disorders. Works with ages 6 and up.

A Heart for Grace & Healing



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Golfing for Grace and Hope

Mark your calendars. Our annual golf tourney is Sept. 9, 2016!

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the skies above proclaim the work of His hands.

-Psalm 19:1

{SACRED} by Shannon Heick

"Counseling for me is a sacred job."

Our lovely and highly fashionable marketing director at Valley Christian Counseling Center recently asked me, "Why do you do this work?"

"Wow! That's a deep question," I thought. So I got to thinking. And then I got to writing. And I wrote this:

Counseling for me is a sacred job. A recent quote that scrolled through my Facebook feed was by the amazing Brene Brown. "Don't shrink back. Don't puff up. Just stand your sacred ground."

into those resources and really learn how to "stand your sacred ground."

The truth is, we are all on sacred ground. We are on the sacred beautiful earth that our loving and kind Creator spoke into being. Get a load of that! He spoke and the mountains obeyed and rose to their glorious place. With His spoken word, the oceans bubbled up and were teaming with colorful, brilliant life. His breath came forth and produced this splendid, magnificent earth. Think of all the best vacation spots

"The Scripture tell us over and over how valuable and glorious we are!"

That quote hit me like a ton of bricks! It resonates with me so much because of the stories you bring to my sacred counseling space. It is sacred simply because of what you bring. You bring me hard stories, you bring me scary stories, you bring me funny stories, and you bring me overcoming stories. Other days you bring me brutal stories and beautiful stories. Glennon Doyle calls these stories "brutiful." And I get to bear witness to it all. It fills me up really full when I sit in that sacred counseling space with you and we dig

on this planet. Where are they set? The teal waters, the pink sunsets, the dark mountains and the green valleys. The famous vacation destinations are God's glory! I think that creation story alone is very sacred. But He didn't stop there did He?! He had another creation in mind after that. That creation is you! How much more sacred are you, who were made in His image?! The scriptures tell us over and over how valuable and glorious we are. We were knit, each of us together, so uniquely...

Unpack Your Heart

By Heather Bjur

God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit have been doing some serious work inside me for several months now. I'm learning more of grace and love and mercy than I've ever known before, and because of this, the ears of my heart picked up on the lyrics of a song I overheard while shopping at Clothes Mentor the other day. I immediately had to Google it: "Unpack Your Heart: by Phillip Phillips. The first words that my heart heard were, "...Bring all that you're scared to defend / And lay it down when you walk through my door / Throw all of it out on the floor / Your sorrow, your beauty, your war / I want it all, I want it all."

Your sorrow, your beauty, your war.

I don't know the writer's intentions when he wrote this song. I imagine it was written to a girlfriend or wife. But these words are so strong, so searing that, in my own mind, these words are ultimately a song from Jesus to His Bride. "Bring your honor, bring your shame

All your madness, I will tame."

My own madness and shame can overtake me at times, just as my honor can. **Are we not made for more?** And are we not constantly striving, yet never fully achieving? Madness, I tell you. But Jesus' way of taming our madness is not to dissolve or cheapen it, but to focus it; to turn it from striving and trying to possess more and more, into passion, peace and purpose. In Him. And that's

not remotely tame. **There's nothing tame about Jesus.** This reminds me of the discussion in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* regarding Aslan: "Is he safe?"

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver; 'don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But He's good. He's the King, I tell you.' "

He's the King, I tell you. And He's good. My Lord and My God; My Savior. He's so good. You can unpack your heart with this Savior. He'll never turn you away, no matter what madness you bring.

"We reflect the divine -- and we know it, deep down inside."

Don't we all possess sorrow in our hearts? Whether we want to admit it or not, the truth of living in a broken world inhabited by broken, hurting people means we will know sorrow intimately. But don't stop there! We also all possess an extravagant beauty. **We are created in the image and likeness of our Creator God and His Son, Jesus.** We reflect the divine -- and we know it, deep down inside.

Because of this sorrow and this beauty, we also experience war. War for our hearts. And not just for who gets our hearts, like boyfriends and girlfriends, husbands and wives, but WHAT gets our hearts, too; money, sex, career, power, shattered dreams, unforgiveness, loss, pain, etc. And we war.

{SACRED} continued from page 1...

...and so wonderfully in one of the most sacred spaces in all creation -- our mother's womb. And then out we came. Into the sacred earth, from our mother's sacred safe havens, to walk our own sacred journey. No one is like you. No one walks your sacred ground. Just you and, if you so choose, your wonderful Savior and His unlimited resources.

To sit in my office across from you and to step into that journey, for a brief period or even for the long haul, believe me when I say, it's an honor. To get to help

you discover your God-breathed resources and to "stand your sacred ground" is a gift back to me for sure. What I do in the listening, in the bearing witness to, in the teaching, in the coaching, in the inspiring, in the praying, in the celebrating of your victories, and even in the tears that my clinical skills sometimes can't contain, is a really, really sacred gift. Why I do this work is truly out of thanks to the Creator of everything sacred. And from that realization flows a passion for me to see you step into your God-given resources and to "stand your sacred ground."

Giving Hearts Day 2016 Recap

We teamed up with area churches and businesses to warm the hearts of those seeking grace and healing.

Giving Hearts Day 2016 has come and gone, and we had an absolute blast! This year we decided to switch things up a little bit and get area churches involved for our first ever, "Warming Hearts for Giving Hearts: Battle of the Churches Chili Cook-Off!" We had great food, great prizes, great music, great conversation and a really amazing Giving Hearts Day.

Because of you and your generosity, we were able to raise \$30,512 to jump us into our year, helping the hurting and broken in the Fargo-Moorhead area. We are beyond thankful for you and your giving hearts.

We extend a big congratulations to our First Place Chili Winner, Bethel Church (Shannon Heick and Marilee Johnson), and Second Place Chili Winner as well as People's Choice Winner, Calvary United Methodist Church (Keith Kerbaugh and friends).

Fun Facts about our day:

We had six churches participate in the Chili Cook Off: Bethel, Calvary United Methodist, Calvary Church at Village Green, Knollbrook Covenant Church, Hope Lutheran Church, and Triumph Lutheran Bretheren Church.

Without the help of the churches and local businesses we wouldn't have been able to have such a great event! We want to give a great big thanks to Breadsmith, Great Harvest Bread Co, Texas Roadhouse, and Famous Daves who donated bread sides. Kroll's Diner donated knoephla soup. Walmart and Cashwise donated gift cards we used for lemonade and crackers. Skyzone, Scheels, Life 97.9 and Fargo Force donated awesome doorprizes.

We are already looking forward to next year!



Spring Clean Your Soul

Spring cleaning is a time of decluttering and deep cleaning your house.

Why not do the same with your mind?

Every spring I like to crack open my windows and get fresh air in and all the fall and winter muck, dust and clutter out. It usually takes me around a week to get my upstairs done. It takes some time, energy, patience, and help to get it done but it gets done.

If we can "Spring Clean" our homes, why can't we spring clean our souls and minds too? We may be a few months into our year already and this seems like something you would maybe like to start the new year off with, but if we can deep clean our homes in the spring, let's look at ways to clean our souls too.

Do I still need this? Our homes clutter up fast. As life goes on we accumulate a lot of "stuff." Our souls clutter up fast with a lot of "stuff" as well. Take a look at what could declutter your life. Are activities, certain relationships, thoughts, or behaviors cluttering your life that you are ready to rid yourself of? Ask yourself, "Do I still need this?" and get ready to clean!

Where is dirt hiding? Yes we clean the obvious places for dirt, but with spring cleaning we look for hidden dirt, too. Do you have hidden gunk in your head? Negative thoughts, faulty beliefs or "that's just the way it is," can dirty up your soul. Try looking at situations for the positive. Dig into God's Word and dust away faulty beliefs with truth and prayer.

Keeping it clean. Be patient with yourself. You're living life and messes happen. Give yourself grace, pick yourself up, and be ready to try again. When you decide to change something, you need to remind yourself about that change.

Don't do it alone. When we do things alone, especially big jobs, we can get frustrated and quit. I ask my husband and daughter to help me clean our home. So let's not be afraid to ask our forever friend, Jesus, to help clean up and declutter our souls and minds.

-Ciarra Beckstrand