

February Already!

It seems as though it was just New Year's Day! Our days are full but please consider making time for these wonderful opportunities to gather, to study and to serve.

Prayer

The Prayer Team invites you to join them Sunday, February 4 and Sunday, February 18 from 9-9:45 am in the prayer room where they pray for our church needs.

The first Wednesday of every month is set aside for Fasting and Prayer for all those who feel led. This month Fasting and Prayer is on Wednesday, February 7.

Ongoing Bible Studies

Women's study on Forgiveness meets Monday nights at 6 pm or Tuesday mornings at 9 am.

Men's study Wednesday mornings at 6 am.

Awana

Wednesdays at 6-7:30. All children are welcome.

Youth

We gather every Sunday from 9-9:45 for Bible Class and every other Wednesday from 6:00-7:30 pm for fun, fellowship and some good conversation.

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Save the Date

- Friday, February 23-
AWANA Movie
Night



Opportunities



Discipleship Notes

In the January newsletter I kicked off a new monthly feature on discipleship. This is designed to give you info on making disciples by growing together in Christ. January notes included a review of the gospel of grace as told in Paul's Letter to the Romans.

The question raised from Romans 5: 1-11, 'what's the seven spiritual blessings of our lasting justification.' With the help of Warren Wiersbe's 'Be Right' book he lists the following:

1. Peace with God (v1)
2. Access to God (v2a)
3. Glorious hope (v2b)
4. Christian character (vv3-4)
5. God's love (vv5-8)
6. Salvation from future wrath (vv9-10)
7. Reconciliation with God (v11)

'These seven blessings of justification shows how certain our salvation is in Christ.'

In future newsletters I will continue to offer both scripture and comments from respected Christian authors of how we can help each other to grow together in Christ.

At ACEFC's annual meeting on 1/21 I spoke of my decision to step away from the elder board to concentrate on my role as the discipleship ministry leader. This provides me with more time to work with the elders, Pastor Greg, and other ministry leaders to expand this important ministry. If you have any questions or comments please email me at thdeason@yahoo.com. Thank you.

In Christ,

Tom Deason

Men's Bible Study

Wednesday mornings from
6:00-7:30 a.m. Contact
Marv Schauland for details:
920-450-2698

Please consider joining us
for a time of fellowship,
reflection and growth.

(Coffee and donuts too)!

Men's Sunday School

Join us Sunday mornings at
9:00 for a great time of
study from the Man in the
Mirror series. Contact
Marv Schauland for details.



We have 12 people going to Texas Feb 24-March 3 to help with Harvey Relief. Please pray that our hearts are prepared and the team members and their families remain healthy. The team members are: Marshall Legg, Rob and Barb Fox, Larry Bangert, Chris Matula, Nancy Dedecker, Amy Ledin, Marv Schauland, Jim and Colleen Ziehr, and Tim and Sue Diestler.

Houston Relief also is in need of Lowes and Home Depot Gift cards. If you are willing to donate a gift card, they can be placed in the offering box. Please write the amount on it. Thank you!!

Mission collection for the month of February is peanut butter for the Salvation Army. Please place in the box near the water fountain.

Looking ahead to April...We will be working on the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation in northern Wisconsin on the weekend of April 27-29. More details will be coming soon. The cost is \$50.00.

January Doings

January was month of roller coaster weather but that did not cause hibernation!
Here are photos from some of our January activities



Youth at Districts



AWANA Grand Prix

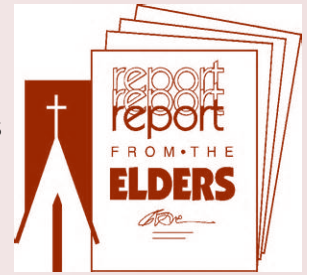


Sunshine Boxes



Elders' Report

In the past year, the Elder board has studied, discussed, and formulated the ideas which form a basis of our church family's core values, which help establish a focus where we should concentrate our energies in ministry here at Appleton Community. We have looked at our Mission, "To lead all people in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ."



So, now, what does that look like today and in the future? In the past year, Pastor Greg has taught the truth of God's Word, so we better understand the basis of our faith. Lisa and Pam have really developed an exciting program for growing our kids in their relationship with God, one another and loving adults. Ken and Nicole share their musical talent in enriching our worship. Growth groups have been a wonderful place to share, encourage and pray. People are getting involved and using their gifts. Thank you all so much!

So we have to ask, where will this all lead? In the next few years, will ACEFC be similar in size and activities or might God plan to grow us as we reach into our community to tell the good news of the Gospel of Jesus to those who hurt and weep so silently and alone? Folks, the Elders need prayer, both within our leadership, and for our leadership, as we seek God's will and clarify a vision for our church.

If we really live our Mission mandate, I can't help but believe we will see growth in numbers as people come to Christ. As that happens, leadership needs to have a clear strategy for how we design ministry to accomplish the ministry ends. That is what we are working on. Please help us by providing your input, and praying, as we lead. We may need additional staff, space, and different ministries to serve and learn and follow hard as disciples, and it will require organizational and cultural change. Are we ready for and accepting of it? Is it in God's will? Most definitely yes, Jesus came to seek and save the lost. So, be in prayer, and share God's answers with us. The Elders would love to listen to you as we follow God's will.

Be aware, we are in the process of seeking an individual to lead our building and facilities team, so as to free Ted Parish from that responsibility so he can focus on his responsibility as an Elder. We also seek a man to join us on the Elder board to fill the remainder of Tom Deason's term as Tom devotes his full energy to Discipleship ministry. Pray for those individuals who God is preparing and revealing to us. "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (1Cor 15:58)

Loving and working alongside you, to the Glory of our Everlasting God and Father with whom we look forward to sharing Eternity!

Rob Fox

Missionary of the Month-Vera Hanson



Vera is from our own church here in Appleton. She has been a missionary with Greater Europe Mission first in Austria and now in Germany.

This picture is of a Christmas potluck at the church in Oberursel where Vera attends, just outside Frankfurt city limits. They have seen God move in wonderful ways bringing in families who fled Iran only to find Jesus Christ in Germany.

Here is a brief update from Vera. More complete information is on the Missionary Focus board in the Missions hallway.

Ministry update from Vera:

Stephen Beck is the one who officially invited me (Vera) to move from Vienna, Austria to Frankfurt, Germany to do Women's Ministries...and specifically to serve at a small church in Oberursel, which is just outside of Frankfurt. That once "*stagnant church of just 35 members in [Oberursel] Germany*" (see GEM Christmas letter) now, 26 months later, averages 60 adults and 10-20 kids per week. Yet, we have 90 - 100 who are increasingly connecting with us. PTL! -- We had been renting a small room at a pre-school, but since last summer (July, 2017) we had to move into a bigger facility...a dance school! The dance school is located on the 2nd floor of the Oberursel Train Station - and we've almost out-grown that now too! So **please pray** that the Lord will provide a larger place for us to rent...and to provide the funds for the rent! (So many of the new believers don't understand "tithing" yet...and many of the former refugees don't have the resources to give much.)

Just this past week as the Women's Ministry team met to plan for the February 3 Women's [Outreach] Brunch, we counted 73 women between the two church/campuses! Since January, 2017, the Lord has brought five women into my life who have specifically requested me to disciple/mentor them one-on-one. This is what I most love to do!

Prayer & Praise Requests:

Pray for the Women's Brunch on Saturday, Feb. 3

On Friday, Feb. 16, I'll be starting a new Women's Life Group (small group) in my home; we'll meet every other week. Please pray for wisdom and insight! I'm not sure what the topic will be yet.

Pray that the Lord would continue to reveal a deeper understanding of Himself to the five women I'm currently discipling/mentoring.

Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out more workers! The harvest is great, but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord to raise up additional monthly financial support.

Over the last three months I've lost support and am in need of \$527/month.

Praise & Pray that the Lord would continue to pour out His Spirit all over Germany!

Praise the Lord that both church locations (Oberursel & Frankfurt/Bockenheim) are experiencing steady growth!



August 2017-Back to School and Fall Sunday School kick

Youth & Children's Ministry



The Power of Prayer! Join us in praying for our children/youth. I send out my weekly emails on Wednesdays, so the dates are Wednesdays-Tuesdays. February children/youth to pray for:

1/31-2/6: Madeline Kempen (lil'sprouts), Aria Jankowski (sprouts), Evelyn Carmody (K-5).

2/7: Tiya Donaldson (youth), Jack Jankowski (sprouts), Izzy Carmody (K-5)

2/14: Huxley Soto (lil'sprouts), Adalay Legg (sprouts), Bella Holmes (K-5)

2/21: Brehanna Cohen (youth), Miriam Legg (sprouts), Ian Holmes (K-5)

2/28: Ansel Van Houten (lil'sprouts), Kohler MacDonald (sprouts), Bella Jankowski (K-5).

Colossians 4:2

LET'S GET BACK TO THE BASICS! IT ALL STARTS IN THE HOME!

SURPRISING DISCOVERY - numerous studies have been made to find out why we are losing two-thirds of our kids. Researchers found 5 commonalities in the families whose children continue to follow God long after they leave their parents' home. Want to guess what the first common factor was? **They had regular family meal times.**

Questions around the dinner table:

Here's a fun and easy way to make sure that your dinner time as a family is both SPECIAL and SACRED.

Go around the table and have each person take turns answering these questions*:

- 1) What was the best part of your day? Talking about the most favorite part of the day will let family members celebrate each other.
- 2) What was the worst part of your day? Talking about the least favorite part of the day will give family members a chance to show empathy and support.
- 3) Where did you see God at work today? This question will teach children to be looking for God's involvement in their lives and in those around them. As a result, their spiritual senses will sharpen and their awareness of God's presence in their daily lives will increase.
- 4) What mistake did you make? This is the BIG one. Kids need to hear their mom and dad openly talk about their mess-ups (age-appropriate of course - lost my temper, ran the red light, got jealous, etc.) This will give them courage to talk openly about their weaknesses and failures. This is the best way to protect our children from soul destroying shame, teach them the meaning of grace and the power of confession. As they experience the unconditional acceptance of their family they won't have much trouble accepting God's love. Also, imagine the trust that will be gradually built during this question.

If you do this little ritual consistently, you will notice that every time it will feel a little bit more natural. After a while your children will be looking forward to this time of sharing and will remind you if you missed it.

* With younger kids you will want to ask just the first 2 questions and then add to them as kids grow older.



Youth & Children's Ministry-continued

February in AWANA

**February 7-Incentive night:
Pie-in-the-Face**

**February 14-Valentine Night:
Wear something red/pink or with
hearts**

**February 21- Regular club:
Launch Help for the Homeless Drive**

Friday February 23-MOVIE NIGHT

**February 28-Crazy Shoe Night:
Wear crazy or mismatched shoes**



What's Happening in Awana? We had a wonderful Grand Prix event with many visitors! A special thanks to everyone who helped with this event.

Despite being halfway over, our club continues to grow! We had 3 new clubbers join in January. We would love to have additional volunteers on our substitute list, especially with the winter sicknesses hitting some of our leaders.

If you love children, love to have fun, and love Jesus, I challenge you to join us in this great ministry! Feel free to come and visit on a Wednesday night to see what our program is all about. We meet Wednesdays from 6-7:30. Visitors will need to check in with our Awana Director (Pam) or Children's Ministry Director (Lisa).

Join us February 7 at the end of club for Pie-in-the-Face Night. Come see some of our leaders take pies in the face to celebrate our clubbers hard work.

Join us Friday, February 23 for our church Movie Night! This is a FREE event with popcorn and a movie. Movie TBD. Everyone who comes will have a chance to win Marcus Movie Tickets! Everyone is welcome! Invite a friend, a neighbor, or a co-worker!



We will be collecting NEW hygiene and cleaning items for local crisis agencies through The Family Radio Network's annual "Help for the Homeless" hygiene drive, Feb. 18 – March 11.

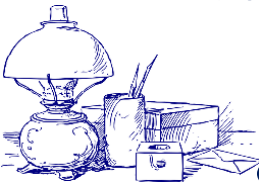
Please place your donations in the *Help for the Homeless* collection box located in the church lobby by March 11.

Supplying these items to local shelters will help them direct their limited funds to providing qualified staff, counseling, food and shelter to those they serve.

Most urgently needed items are cleaning supplies, laundry soap, garbage bags, dental and hair care, baby diapers, paper products, and feminine care. **Your donations will remain in this community.** Note: Food Share (formerly Food Stamps) does not cover the cost of non-food items such as soap and diapers.

Thank you! More info. at thefamily.net or 800-236-9364.

Some (Encouraging) Thoughts from Pastor Greg



Being **Encouraging** Isn't Optional ... It's An Obligation!
The Privilege & Priority of TLC

There's a radio program that Donna and I both have enjoyed when we can get its signal. Sometimes we'd hear something helpful or interesting on the program and talk about it at supper. Now the only time we can listen is if we're in the car traveling a distance during its time slot and a nearby station carries it. I can't say that it was particularly "profound," but the host of the show (named Chris Fabry) describes his format as being "two hours of spiritual **encouragement** coming from his 'backyard radio fence.' The program is designed to **build up the spiritual immune system of the Christian man and woman.**" (a quote from his website)

In other words, his program is both informational and entertaining, providing a personal touch that makes him seem more like a friend or neighbor than a man in Arizona broadcasting through the Moody Radio Network. He often acknowledges that in our current culture, we're too busy, too distracted, and too dependent on technology and media (opposed to sitting across the table or standing at the backyard fence) to meet one another's social needs in a truly personal way.

This isn't suggesting that we need more "radio," but from what I can tell by the requests and comments people make to me, many (if not most) people are starving for what this radio program tries to offer. **That's "encouragement!"** Yet, when we get this from our one another, it brings even more satisfaction and fulfillment—for everyone involved.

One of the most important roles and responsibilities we, who are faithful followers of Christ, have been given is to "come along side" each other with messages of encouragement, exhortation, edification, appreciation, affirmation, admonition, and advice. The root meaning of the most common biblical word used for this idea of encouragement is "to be called to one's side" for the benefit or strengthening of another person. Throughout the history, there's often been a tension between the Church and society/culture. Regarding this, God wants His followers (us) to be supportive and helpful toward one another for the sake of His glory and for the testimony we give to the world around us.

Notice what Paul says to his readers in 1 Thessalonians 5. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. ¹² But we request of you, **brothers and sisters**, that you appreciate those who diligently do ministry among you, and have authority from the Lord to give you instruction, ¹³ and that you respect them in a loving manner because of their work. Live in peace with one another. ¹⁴ We urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the undisciplined, encourage the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ Make sure no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek what's best for one another and for all people. ¹⁶ Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Edify
Nurture
Comfort
Others
Understand
Restore
Accepting
Gracious
Enrich
Motivate
Energize
Nourish

A Word From Pastor Greg-continued

Before we conclude, let's consider how this should play out and how it should look. To do this, we'll try to personalize it with a few questions to help us determine what God might be saying—to allow us to see the positive impact of **“encouragement”** on ourselves as well as those around us. When we begin to spread encouragement, it will become contagious. A simple comment of encouragement to someone else could be the beginning of something special.

How much does a word of **encouragement** lift your spirits or change your attitude?

How often do you personally have a desire/need for **encouragement** or comfort?

What thoughts go thru your mind when you notice someone else who appears to be discouraged?

Does the fear that others don't have time or don't care cause you to “put on a happy face?”

How often does it cross your mind that **“everyone needs encouragement?”**

How much does your personal need for **encouragement** influence your ability to encourage others?

How much has social media (email, texting, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc...) affected our capability for personal interaction with others? (positive & negative)

What's holding you back from becoming an **encourager**?

My greatest concern in writing an article like this is the fear of being discouraging. This is especially true because I'm trying in some way to be **“encouraging!”**—therefore, my greatest hope in trying to address this “topic” is to strengthen everyone's desire to brighten one another's days and to heighten our awareness that we all share **the privilege of building up** each other's faith by spreading joy. We are brothers and sisters in God's family. Our relationship with one another is eternal—and it lasts forever and ever! Isn't that an **encouraging** thought? But just think how much more **encouraging** it is when we all practice the art of **encouragement** with one another.

With appreciation and thanksgiving for you & all you do to serve alongside one another ...
as well as with prayer for God's glory and praise for His grace,
Pastor Greg

February 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 No Regrets at Christ the Rock
4	5 Women's Study 6 pm	6 Women's Study 9 am	7 Men's Study 6 am AWANA/Youth 6 pm	8	9	10
11	12 Women's Study 6 pm	13 Women's Study 9 am	14 Men's Study 6 am AWANA 6 pm	15	16	17
18	19 Women's Study 6 pm	20 Women's Study 9 am	21 Men's Study 6 am AWANA/Youth 6 pm	22	23 AWANA Movie Night 6 pm	24
25	26 Women's Study 6 pm	27 Women's Study 9 am	28 Men's Study 6 am AWANA 6 pm			

March 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 Men's Breakfast 7:30 Golden Corral
4	5 Women's Study 6 pm	6 Women's Study 9 am	7 Men's Study 6 am AWANA/Youth 6 pm	8	9	10
11	12 Women's Study 6 pm	13 Women's Study 9 am	14 Men's Study 6 am AWANA 6 pm	15	16	17
18	19 Women's Study 6 pm	20 Women's Study 9 am	21 Men's Study 6 am AWANA/Youth 6 pm	22	23	24
25	26 Women's Study 6 pm	27 Women's Study 9 am	28 Men's Study 6 am NO AWANA	29	30 Good Friday	31

Our Mission here at Appleton Community EFC is to lead all people in a growing relationship with Christ.

Growing together in Christ we value:

Biblical Truth

We depend on the Bible as our source of authority in what we believe, what we teach, and how we live. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Worship

We believe that we are created by God to worship Him. Therefore, we live in worshipful response to God's character and activity. (Psalm 86:11)

Prayer

We believe that daily prayer is essential in the life of a believer and as such we pray with expectancy knowing that God is actively involved in our world. (Colossians 4:2)

Evangelism

We believe in sharing the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ with honesty and humility. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Fellowship

We believe that accountability, caring and a sense of belonging are essential for each believer to grow in their relationship with Christ. (Philippians 2:1-4)

Encouragement

We believe we are responsible for caring for and encouraging one another. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)



We're on the Web!
applefreechurch.org

Appleton Community Evangelical Free Church
2490 West Capitol Drive
Appleton, WI 54914
Phone
920-735-9971

