

Welcome December

As we focus on preparation for Christmas and the celebration of our Savior's birth, we have many opportunities to gather as a community. Here is what is happening this month.

Prayer

The Prayer Team invites you to join them Sunday, December 2, Sunday December 16 and Sunday, December 30 from 9-9:45 am in the prayer room where they pray for the needs of our church.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be Saturday January 5 at 7:30 am at the Golden Corral in Grand Chute. Join us for great food and fellowship

Christmas Program

Join us Sunday, December 16 for our Children and Youth Christmas Program during our regular Worship at 10:00 am.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Pause during the holiday rush and come for a time of worship and celebration 5:00 pm Monday, December 24.

Men's Retreat

January 25-27 at Camp Lake Lundgren. Plan to join with other men for fun, fellowship and teaching. It is a great time away for renewal and a perfect way to start your year. Cost is \$94.00. Contact Marv Schauland for details.

Awana

Wednesday evenings from 6-7:30. All children are welcome.

Youth

Wednesday evenings from 6-7:45. Youth from Grade 6 on up are welcome.

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Save the Date

- ◆ The Nest-Tuesday, December 11 7:00 pm
- ◆ Baptism-Sunday, December 9 at 10:00 am
- ◆ Christmas Program-Sunday, December 16 at 10:00 am
- ◆ December 24-Christmas Eve

106

That's how many boxes we sent to Operation
Christmas Child!

Thank you everyone. You are a blessing.

Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study is on a break until January 7th when we will begin a study by Chip Ingram on the Ten Commandments

We meet Monday nights from 6-7 pm and Tuesday mornings from 9-10 am.

Contact Mary Noggle for details; 920-735-9971.

Men's Breakfast

Men's Breakfast Saturday, January 5 at the Golden Corral in Grand Chute. We will begin at 7:30 am and be done around 9:00 am. Contact Marv Schauland for more information.

The Nest



Join us
Tuesday, December 11
7:00 pm

Hear about "The Awful Waffle Christmas"
Make a Christmas ornament to keep or give as a gift
Enjoy some Christmas treats and fellowship
Women of all ages are welcome

Mission of the Month

New Bath Towels
for Harbor House

Place them in the
Donation Box
Thank you

Texas Trip



We are in the final stages of planning a trip to Texas to again help with Hurricane Harvey relief. The dates will be February 16-23, 2019. The cost is \$525.00. Please let us know by January 1, 2019 if you are planning to join us. We need paperwork completed for all those going with us. If you want more information please contact Tim and Sue Diestler at 851-3104 or diestlerts@aol.com.

Opportunities



Join us for our regular Sunday Worship Service
December 23 and December 30 at 10:00 am

There will be no 9:00 Sunday School for children and youth.

There will be the usual children's programming during the church service.



Candlelight Service
5:00 pm
Monday December 24

Everyone is encouraged to come for this special time of worship as we take a break from the hectic pace of getting ready for Christmas by pausing to honor our Lord & Savior, Emmanuel!

Invite family, friends, neighbors, & co-workers.



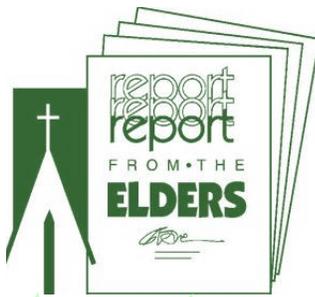
Recently while reading a daily devotion I came across Isaiah 61: 1-2 where Jesus summarized His ministry by reading these two verses in the synagogue and applying it to Himself. This directed me to Luke 4:18

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed"

As believers we have the spiritual authority to do God's will and carry on the ministry of Christ. God works through our prayers and the faith He has commissioned us with to make disciples of all nations.

Tom Deason

Elders Report



*As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Thessalonians 1:3*

As we look forward to December events, there is always something special about Advent. I love to hear of traditions that families have centered around Christmas. The Christmas baking, the shopping, the planning, the gift preparations, holiday cards, decorating and tree trimming, caroling, holiday movies, time spent with close friends, preparing for travel, familiar melodies and hymns, snowmen, the list goes on. At Appleton Community, our family has some traditions as well, and with great anticipation of the pleasure of God's people gathering together I await these...

The Women's tea this Saturday, December 1 is always a wonderful opportunity for our women to reach out and share with friends a wonderful gathering, a meal and a message and the anticipation of lives changed.

Each Sunday in the Advent season, it is a treasure to see young families gathered, lighting a candle and sharing truth from God's Word. The Christmas program is a joy to partake in, with the bright young eyes of sharply dressed, fidgety and sometimes shy children doing their best in the performance of a story old and familiar, yet able to touch our hearts with its own simplicity.

Of course, there's the Christmas Eve service, with the message of hope, an opportunity to invite family and friends, and to be touched in our souls' by the pondering of the depth of His love, in God's precious gift as Jesus entered the world. The music, the message, the candles and Silent Night! How it evokes such an emotional response for our souls. It is well, indeed!

So with each tradition, we are enjoying the rhythms and blessings of the life and the Light that God provides through our faith in Jesus.

Take time to be still in the presence of the Lord this December, resting in the assurance of His never changing promises, and constantly be in thanksgiving—it is well. And thank you all, church family for all you do in sharing Christ's love. Share the Good News!

Rob Fox

Everyone has been working hard on the Christmas Program. We look forward to sharing it on December 16.

9:00 am Sunday School

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL December 23 and December 30

K-5 will resume Sunday School on January 6.

The Youth will be at the Districts Conference January 4-6. We have 11 youth attending this year!

Youth Sunday School will resume on Jan. 13.



Christmas Program

Sunday December 16

10:00 am

Please plan to join us

Awana Schedule

- December 5– Undercover Night
(wear a disguise but also your regular uniform)
- December 12- Regular Club
(wear your uniform)
- December 19-Christmas Party Night
(wear something Christmassy or dress as a nativity character)
- December 26-No Club

Merry Christmas

AWANA

In November the AWANA kids packed boxes for Operation Christmas Child, had a night of being thankful, worked at a Pizza Ranch fundraiser and wound it all up with a movie night.

December will have lots of fun activities. Check out the schedule and see what's in store!

Our Purpose in Children's and Youth Ministries

READY-Clear Your Mind Of Distractions

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

SET-Set Your Eyes On Him

Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Proverbs 4:25

GO-Grow In Your Relationship

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:18

If we don't teach our CHILDREN to follow JESUS the world will teach them not to!



Some “Reflections” from Pastor Greg



Glory to God in the Highest!

“It’s the most wonderful time of year ...!” These words have a special ring to them because they paint an “old-fashioned” portrait of the “glitter and glamour” of celebrating the Christmas season—one that seems pleasant and peaceful, simple and surreal, brilliant and bright, filled with excitement and enthusiasm.

As we enter this glorious time of year, we find a wide spectrum of perspectives on how people view Christmas, and it appears as if “the most wonderful time of the year” has increasingly become a victim of “something” that’s invaded and changed our culture. Personally I’m convinced that it’s also become hard to define what’s caused this change because it involves a battle between biblical and secular values. At times this conflict becomes so intense that it begins to steal our joy and decrease that sense of hope we find during celebrations like Christmas. But please realize that no one who’s an authentic follower of Christ is **without hope, because Jesus came and conquered sin and death at Calvary. We need to fix our hope on Him and on His gracious promises!** Let’s spend a few moments thinking about how we can fasten ourselves more tightly to the hope He has given us! (notice Luke 2) 

For those of us who might be listening, there are still many comparisons and comments that remind us to “keep Christ in Christmas” and to “avoid the commercialism that competes with the real reason for the season.” There also are plenty of warnings about being too busy and living life at a fast-paced speed that causes more stress and strain than we need.

Most of these are well-intended and actually do provide some healthy advice. However, too often the steps we’re tempted to take in order to implement these suggestions might cause more tension and make life even more complicated and confusing. In today’s world, for these “ideas” to work well, everyone needs to be on the exact same page and even though most of us probably “have received the same memo,” only a few are willing to pause long enough to read it. **Cultural change takes time and sooner or later we need to recognize that only God can bring the change that has to happen.**

But, what can we do? Is there something that will enable us to “get a grip” on “the most wonderful time of the year?” Here are four simple (simple, but not something extraordinary or unique—but they are biblical) steps that each of us can take:

- (1) Pray in a specific way that God’s glory will be revealed in your Christmas celebration!**
- (2) Each day, take a few minutes (as many as possible, but not necessarily a large block of time) to praise God for sending the Savior in such a humble way. Express authentic praise and honor to Him for this remarkable gift.**
- (3) Ask God to help you become aware of the opportunities to share the joyful Christmas message with others.**
- (4) Like Mary did following the visit from the shepherds, treasure the Truths related to Christ’s birth and allow them to become a wonderful source of joy that influences your daily actions and attitudes.**

—from Luke 2:8—20

Now there were shepherds nearby, living out in the field, keeping guard over their flock at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and **the glory of the Lord** was shining around them—and they were absolutely terrified. But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid! Listen carefully, for I proclaim to you good news that brings a message of great joy to all people: Today your savior is born in the city of David. He is Christ the Lord; you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.” Suddenly a huge heavenly army appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among people with whom He is pleased!**”

When the angels left them and went back to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see what has taken place that the Lord has revealed to us.”

So they hurried to locate Mary and Joseph, and found the baby lying in a manger. When they saw Him, they explained what they had been told about this child, and all who heard it were astonished by what the shepherds said. But Mary treasured up all these words, pondering the meaning of this in her heart.

So the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and witnessed. Everything was exactly what they had been told.

Mission of the Month-Forest Lakes District Our Church Affiliation

Forest Lakes District of the EFCA- *We Are Better Together!*

Our MISSION:

We exist to strengthen our member churches so that together we may multiply transformational churches among all peoples.

Our strategic values:

- Connect: Create environments for relationships.
- Equip: Offer resources and training.

Multiply: Support the multiplication of disciples, leaders and churches.

Our VISION is to enable multiplication by:

RELATIONSHIPS

The foundation of everything we say or do is our personal relationship with all pastors and lay leaders in the District.

- Personal contacts between District staff and pastors/lay leaders

RESOURCING

- Consulting and coaching
- Training
- Staff issues (hiring, evaluating, compensation, etc.)
- Disciple-Making, Leadership Development, Elder Training
- Crisis Intervention and Conflict Management
- Conferences, Retreats, Special Events

REFOCUSING

- Church Health Assessment
- Visioning and vision casting
- Pastoral Health (Ministry Support Program)

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Placement Services (including interim pastors, pulpit supply)
- Credentialing (licensure and ordination)

Discipline

The Forest Lakes District is VALUE DRIVEN:

In all that say or do, the FLD is driven to provide value to local churches as they seek to fulfill their mission. The idea of being “driven” brings to mind being compelled, forced, pressing ahead, relentless exertion, setting in motion, energized, determination, no detours, and mission accomplished. Value is taken from the Latin *valere*; “to be worth”. Value is further defined as “relative worth, utility or importance; degree of excellence; something intrinsically valuable or desirable.” We are value driven.

We are value driven:

- To build relationships with and between churches, pastors and leaders that ...
- To offer or recommend resources that ...
- To help maintain or refocus the efforts of the local church so that ...
- To fulfill our responsibilities in a way that ...

enhances the leadership and ministry of each pastor, leader and church member toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

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)



Church Office Closed
Friday December 21 and
Wednesday December 26 for
Christmas holiday

Have a joyous and blessed
Christmas.

Regular Church Office
Hours
Closed Mondays
Tuesday 10:00 am-4:00 pm

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We're on the Web!
applefreechurch.org