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I am excited to share that starting September 6th, Sprouts and Evergreens (2.5 yrs.—5th gr.) will be meeting. ***If you would like your child to participate, please have them bring a beach towel or a chair,*** this will be their “space”.



Sunday Service will continue as usual, but after Pastor Blake’s message, children will be dismissed. We will meet outside the front doors of church. We will do a few worship songs and a short lesson.

Verse: Proverbs 3:5-6.

If you have any questions please contact Lisa Schodorf.



God's word: More to be desired than Gold

What does your average day look like? Do you have a time slot devoted to Biblical intake? In the struggle of everyday life, it is easy to neglect the things that are most important. How often do we get distracted by the to do lists at work and at home to the neglect of the word of God? How often do we turn on the television instead of entering the word of God because we want a break from the hardships of life?

We often get distracted from the Bible because we don't believe it has any real benefit to us. King David in Psalm 19 says that the word of God is to be more desired than Gold. What would you take if I offered you \$100 or an hour of uninterrupted Bible time? Maybe this is an unrealistic example but how often do we trade an hour of uninterrupted Bible time for an hour of scrolling social media?

We choose distractions over the Bible because we don't see the amazing benefits of the word. There have been countless times where I have neglected Bible intake because I thought there was more benefit in being entertained than meditating on the Bible. I intentionally said neglected the Bible because I am not condemning entertainment. That is not the point of this devotional. I want you to see the Bible as better than anything else in life.

David in Psalm 19 says the word is better than gold because of all the benefits found in the Bible. What are the benefits?

1. The Bible revives the soul (19:7a)

We are revived when we come to know Jesus Christ as our Savior. Paul in Ephesians 2 says that we were dead in our trespasses in sin, but God being rich in mercy made us alive in Christ. We see Jesus and His work clearly through the word of God.

Many of you reading this probably have confessed Christ as your Savior but the gospel continues to revive our soul. When we feel weighted down by sin or feel guilt and shame we can go back to the cross and remember what Christ has done for us. We can know that we are forgiven. Christ has died for all past, present, and future sin.

2. The Bible gives us wisdom (19:7b,8b)

David says the word of God makes wise the simple and enlightens the eyes. God's word shows us how to live and how to live wisely. It gives us wisdom for every situation in our lives. It may not speak directly to our exact situation, but it will enlighten our eyes to see how to handle whatever we are going through. The more you read, the easier it will be to apply different scriptures to the different problems and struggles of life.

3. The Bible gives us joy! (19:8a)

I define joy as a feeling of contentment despite the circumstances of life. Joy often goes hand and hand with happiness, gladness, and cheerfulness. Joy can also be found in trying and difficult situations.

We often look for joy in places other than God and wonder why we are disappointed! The word is the best source of lasting joy. When the world seems to crash down on us, we can go back to what the word says. We can rest on God's promises. A lack of joy may mean a lack of scripture intake.

4. The Bible warns us (19:11)

I believe the warnings in the Bible are a grace of God. How many pastors have fallen into sin and then been fired because of sin in their lives? The two most common problems are sexual sin and money. We have so many warnings in the Bible about both! The warnings in scripture will prevent you from doing stupid things.

There is great reward in keeping the word of God! I have used the phrase Bible intake instead of Bible reading because there are numerous ways to intake scripture. Where do we start?

Read the word – Start small and increase over time

Listen to the word – Many apps will read it to you. This is great for long commutes!

Meditate on the word – Think about it often and apply it to everyday life.

Memorize the word – Psalm 119:11 how do you keep yourself from sinning? Hide it in your heart.

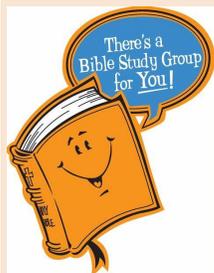
Talk about the word! – Tell others about what you are reading, ask questions about what you are reading, and be encouraged by what others are reading.

Bible Study Books

While doing summer cleaning, we came across quite a few Bible study books that we no longer are using. We would love for them to find a home so please contact the church office if you would like to come and take a look.



Women's Ministry



FALL WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDIES

This fall we are making several small group Bible Studies available . There will be 2 options:

Better- Hebrews by Jen Wilken. This is an in-depth verse-by-verse study that explores how God “provided something better for us” through Jesus Christ.

New Testament Bible Reading Challenge that will provide 5 questions to guide us as we read.

These studies will be held in a variety of settings; at church, virtually and in home.

We would love to have you be part of one of these groups. To sign up or for more information please contact the church office at 920-735-9971 or office@applefreechurch.org

For those who enjoyed the s'more bars at our August Women's event here is the recipe link:

<https://pinchofyum.com/smores-bars>

Men's Ministry



Ephesians 3:20 “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.”

Men's Ministry invites you to join us as we, fellow brothers in Christ, explore what scripture has to say about our powerful, almighty God, and how to walk in His truths. We meet **Wednesday mornings at 6:30-8:00 AM online**. Contact Pastor Blake for online info. Really looking forward to seeing you there.

Marv Schauland

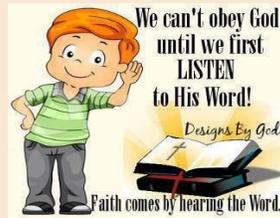


What's Happening in Growing God's Way Children's and Youth Ministries:

We will continue to do the Children's videos, we will be in 1 Samuel.

September 20, Bible Sunday!

Children entering Kindergarten and 6th Grade will receive a Bible to celebrate this milestone.



BONFIRE = YOUTH KICK OFF SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13!



Fall events are in the planning stages with a bonfire night in September and a pumpkin launch for November. Come and join us on Sunday nights for fun and fellowship! For more information contact Pastor Blake. A calendar will be coming out in the near future.

Fall Retreat

Join us **October 16th–18th** for Fall Fest at Lake Lundgren Bible Camp. Please sign up by **September 27th**! Cost is \$50.



What a fantastic **Awana Awards Drive Thru** we had! Thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate! What an encouragement to see everyone! Be sure to watch our Awards Video as well and visit our FB page for more pictures from our drive thru, I've included a few below as well. If you still need to pick up your clubber's award, you can stop by church during office hours, Tuesday through Friday, 8:30am to 2:30pm.



FALL update: Our fall club will be kicking off virtually for the time being.

What will it look like? We envision Awana being a time to meet in small groups to discuss the week's lesson and verse (20-30 minutes maybe), as well as some fellowship time and maybe some online types of games. Stay tuned for a schedule.

How will we meet virtually? We will be using Zoom to meet each week. A link will be sent shared with those registered for Awana for 20-21. Families will login with their names and will be placed in a waiting room for the host to admit them. As you consider the changes that have occurred this year, I want you to be encouraged that our **God does not change**. While it may seem overwhelming for one more "new" thing in signing up for virtual Awana, I also want you to know that we WANT to serve our children this year and help them to grow in Christ. We will continue to pray that we may be able to meet again in person sooner than later, but in the meantime, we hope you will join us this fall for our virtual Awana club.

Please note that the \$30 dues fee includes all of your materials, the book, patches, jewels, stickers, and end of the year awards and that we do not in any way profit from Awana dues. If you have financial concerns, we have a scholarship application as well.

Elders Report



Trying to get a school district ready to accept students and staff back during the pandemic has been a bit challenging. Health officials, government agencies, and people's general concerns all have to weigh in on every decision that the administrators and the school board makes. Then all those thoughts and ideas get put into a plan (that can and does change often) which must be implemented by each building. Some of this gets to my desk at facilities where we have to turn these plans into solutions. How do you feed over 4000 children and keep them at a safe distance from each other? How will you protect the staff while doing this? How will they all get a drink of water without touching the bubbler? How will they walk down the hallways and not get too close to each other? How do you keep everything clean and sanitized? And the list goes on and on...

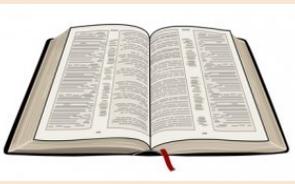
The same questions are being asked as we decide how to begin meeting together indoors and when to let the children's ministry ramp up. Thank God He has blessed us with being able to meet outside and use technology to continue to worship together as a body. We as leadership are working on plans to move forward in a safe manner. Please be in prayer for that and for God to take this virus away.

At my job as a facility director I can't promise that everything we do will work to keep the schools open. We in leadership will not have all the answers on how to open up when the time comes. We can talk and plan and do the best we can, but our best laid plans and ideas can fail. Sometimes I can get discouraged and overwhelmed by all that is going on right now. I think David felt the same when you read his Psalms, but as you read them you see that in many instances, he would repeat God's promises back to him. As Moses was giving his leadership over to Joshua, Moses gave Israel one of God's great promises that He would never leave us or forsake us. Thinking about God's promises during trials gives me a better outlook on things. Some of my favorites are: In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me. Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit. All things work together for good to them that love him.

Those are just a few. Look up others or google God's promises and read though them. Whatever may happen or whatever you may have to face, remember you have a God who loves you and wants the best for you.

Tim Diestler





Some Relevant “Ramblings” from Pastor Greg

God’s Word: The Foundation & Focus of Our Faith

Most everyone would agree that we’re living in some uncertain times. The number of “challenges and concerns” seems to grow longer each week and I won’t take the time or space to make a list. Beyond the various items in the daily news cycle, our culture is also facing a sense of darkness—for many years, a Christian worldview hasn’t been the majority perspective for our society. In a book written to support the authority of the Bible, Erwin Lutzer states, “The freedoms Christianity brought to us are being destroyed before our eyes. We are living at a time when humanistic thinking is coming to its natural conclusions in morals, education, and law. If we are to withstand the onslaught, we must be convinced in our own minds that we have a message from God, a sure word that ‘shines in a dark place.’

As Francis Schaeffer told us, only a strong view of Scripture can withstand the powerful pressure of relativistic thinking.” (*Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible*, pg 10)

In this article, I’d like to encourage everyone to realize that having a strong view of the Bible is absolutely essential, but it’s only the first step we need to take to be convinced in our own minds that we have a message from God that shines in a dark place. Beyond maintaining a firm belief or trust in the authority of God’s Word, it’s important for us to understand the practical and personal advantages involved in affirming and acknowledging that the Bible has something to say to each of us.

First, I’d like to explain briefly that because we’re in the minority in today’s world when we hold to the belief that God’s Word is true and trustworthy, it’s helpful if we regularly review (& memorize) biblical truths that clearly define how the Bible stands out above all other literature. The most specific verses that express this are in 2 Timothy 3:16—17. “All Scripture is inspired (literally breathed out by God) and is profitable (especially productive and beneficial) for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness, so that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work.”

The next steps revolve around these principles:

—The Bible is filled with wisdom and knowledge that God reveals to us. It’s very important that we realize that God’s goal for us is godliness. **The key to godliness is accepting and applying the truth of His Word with an obedient attitude.** Please consider what Psalm 119:9—12 says: **9** How can a young man keep his way pure? By obeying Your word. **10** With all my heart I have sought You; Don’t let me wander away from Your commandments. **11** Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You. **12** Blessed are You, O Lord; Teach me Your statutes.

—God’s Word is absolutely essential for our spiritual health and well—being. There is no substitute, replacement, or alternative. **Every faithful follower of Christ needs personal interaction as well as personal instruction.** On a regular basis we should read and study the Bible for ourselves, and we should also sit under the accurate teaching of God’s Word. Consider what it says in Ephesians 4:11—12. “And He gave (to the Church) ... pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.” Also 2 Timothy 2:15, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

In conclusion, please notice Jesus’ prayer for us inserted above. As His disciples, He desires that we would “**stand out**” from the rest of society because our lives are impacted and influenced by God’s Truth!

In the early morning hours before Jesus died on the Cross as our Substitute, He prayed for us, “Set them apart in the Truth. Your Word is Truth!”

With prayer for God’s glory and praise for His grace ...

And as always, with prayer for our ACEFC family, Pastor Greg

Missionary of the Month-Nikki Tetschner with CRU



Hello,

You may be wondering what ministry during a pandemic has looked like. Here are some of the phrases that come to mind: So many Zoom calls, chaotic because my kids are almost always in the background of whatever I'm doing, trusting and believing that God is still moving, looking for new and creative ways to reach people that don't know God, waking up extra early to spend time with God before my kids get up, reading through the Bible in a year plan, I've spent plenty of hours planning and thinking through what ministry is going to look like this fall. So many unknowns and yet so many possibilities. I know that God is not surprised by my current situation. Even though I often feel unsure and a little overwhelmed by the unknown, I'm also excited to begin a new school year of ministry.



Student Leader Training: Instead of our usual spring weekend getaway to train our upcoming leaders, we had a series of Zoom calls in June. We had 43 students representing 8 leadership teams from campuses across Nebraska. On Tuesday nights we had guest speakers talk about leadership and loving God. Later in the week we broke down the group into campus leadership teams for discussion and application. I got to spend time with students from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and Wesleyan State University. I was encouraged to hear how God is preparing each student to lead in the fall. One of my favorite conversations revolved around the Strength Finders Test that every student took. We got to process how God has designed them and the unique ways they can contribute to reaching their campus for Christ. It was such a fun conversation.

Saying Goodbye: One of my roles on our team is to coach and train our staff women. I LOVE this role so much. I love watching women gain confidence in ministry and life. This spring our team sent off 3 of the women that I've trained and become friends with. Aime has been working with International students. She is planning to get an engineering job with the hopes of moving overseas to use her career to connect with and reach people for Christ. After two years of interning on our team, Stevielee is joining staff full time and has been placed on the Portland team allowing her to be closer to her family. Leslee is getting married and joining the South Dakota team where her husband currently serves. I'm going to miss these women a lot. We have gained one new staff gal to replace the 3 that are leaving. We are thinking creatively about how to use our time to replace what these 3 women were doing with fewer people.

Thanks for all your prayers and support! I'm so grateful for you and our partnership!

Nikki Tetschner: 5910 S 32nd St. Lincoln, NE 68516

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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)



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We're on the WEB!
appletonfreechurch.org



Church Office Hours
Closed Mondays
Tuesday—Friday 8:30 am – 2:30 pm

