

prayer
encouragement
biblical truth
evangelism
worship
fellowship

It's November!



Don't forget to set your clock back one hour on Sunday, November 1. Use that extra hour to join us for some of the wonderful opportunities to be together this month. Here's what's coming up:

Operation Christmas Child

Shoeboxes are due here at church Sunday, November 15.

If you haven't filled yours yet there is still time to bless a child with a wonderful gift filled shoebox.



Bible Studies

Men's Virtual Bible Study Wednesdays at 6:00 a.m.

Women's Bible Study meets Mondays, Tuesday's, and Wednesdays at various times and places.

Virtual Awana Wednesdays 6:00 p.m.

Youth Group Sundays 6:00 p.m.



November 1st Pumpkin Launch



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Church Office Closed
Thursday, & Friday, November 26-27
for Thanksgiving Weekend.
Have a joyous and blessed Thanksgiving.



Hope in a Psalm 88 World

Stop! You should open up your Bible and read Psalm 88 before you go any further. This article can wait! Did you read it? Did you notice anything weird about this Psalm? It ends without giving much hope. It ends by saying “darkness is on my only friend.” There is no one but God in this Psalm to contradict all the bad that is going on in the psalmist’s life. There is no self-talk or reminders that God has worked in the past and will work again in the future. There is no ray of light poking through the clouds revealing God’s plan for the psalmist’s life. This psalm is raw and real. I am so thankful this chapter is in the Bible. These verses resonate with my soul in certain seasons in my life.

Psalms are meant to be read as poetic language. It is similar to our worship songs that we sing on a Sunday morning. Far too often we move too quickly to singing happy worship songs without resting in the lament and anguish. We fake a smile because we think joy and sadness are mutually exclusive. In reality we can hope in Jesus while at the same time be destroyed over life circumstances. This Psalm offers deep encouragement and gives us hope in this broken world.

Listen to the words the Psalmist uses. He makes his complaints known to God.

I have had enough troubles, and my life is near death (3)
I am like a man without strength (4b)
I am like someone you no longer remember (5)
Your wrath weighs on me (7a, 16a)
Your waves overwhelm me (7b)
I have no friends (8, 18)
My eyes are worn out from crying (9)
Lord, why do you reject me (14a)?
Why do you hide your face from me (14b)?
I have been suffering from my youth (for a long time) (15)
Your terrors destroy me (16b)
Darkness is my only friend (18b)

He is complaining about the circumstances in life. This is not self-centered rage at God, but a deep emotional appeal for God to make things right.¹ It is longing that sin be removed from the world and all things would be made new. It is expressions of sorrow, loneliness, anxiety, fear, worry, frustration, confusion, and weakness.

This psalm doesn’t tell us the reason for complaining so it’s easy to insert ourselves in the psalm. Many things in our lives can cause lament: health problems, marriages, a death of a loved one, a pandemic, and many other circumstances in life. The Psalmist doesn’t stay in complaining but he goes to God in prayer. He says multiple times that I cry out to God (1b, 2b, and 9b), let my prayer reach you (2b, 13b), and I call out to you for help (13a). The hope in the midst of a Psalm 88 world is found in our relationship to God. We can go to Him in prayer and bring our hardships to Him. He is bigger than the problem that we are currently facing.

The psalmist’s only friend is the darkness, which forces him to go to God in prayer. What is causing you turmoil right now? Have you brought it to God in prayer? Know that to lament is to be human. We voice our complaints, but we don’t stay there. We bring those complaints to God.

Reread the list above and notice how many times the psalmist attributes the pain to God. He knows that he has a sovereign God over every single detail of life. We live in a fallen world where things are not the way they are supposed to be. How comforting to know that God is the one who is in ultimate control. This world is under the control of a loving, merciful, gracious, kind, generous, and sovereign Lord. All the things you go through will never pluck you from His hand. You can move from complaint, to prayer, and ultimately trust because of who God is.

The first line of this Psalm is very telling, Lord, God of my salvation. The psalmist is broken but he is holding on to the God who keeps His promises. We can do the same thing. We can read Psalm 88 and feel hopeless, but we cannot neglect all the other chapters in the Bible. We can lament but we can’t live there. We may keep coming back to lament, but we can move to other scriptures which remind us of the hope we have in Christ.

To be sad, mourn, and weep is what it’s like to live in a broken world. Let’s not feel like we have to “rub some dirt” on our wounds and pretend like everything is great when everything is falling apart around us. Run to Jesus in prayer. He is a God who hears you and cares for you.

¹ Dark Cloud, Deep Mercy, Vroegop, 43

Updates and Opportunities

Operation Christmas Child



November is Operation Christmas Child month! This year boxes are due at church **November 15th**. You may go on line and follow your box to find out the country where it goes. The kids would love a note from you and a picture if you desire to do that. The most important thing to remember is to pray for the child who receives your box to come to know our Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. Thank you so much for helping kids to be introduced to Jesus!



CHRISTMAS IN THE SANCTUARY

I have prepared this year's sanctuary Christmas design. Installation is set for the Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving (November 23 & 24,) Lord willing. All of you who helped last year were truly a God-sent blessing. For those who would be available this year to help install it, please contact me to let me know when you'll be able to show up, so that I can plan accordingly. Once more, I would like to prepare our sanctuary as an environment that induces an attitude of worship upon entering. Thank you in advance for your willingness to serve.

Gary Noggle (920) 734-0832 garyalanog@gmail.com



Crisis Response

We are tentatively planning a trip to Morehead City NC to help Crisis Response rebuild after a hurricane. The dates are March 12-19. Right now we are looking to see who may be interested in going. Please contact Tim and Sue Diestler for more information. 920-851-3104. Diestlers@aol.com. Cost approximately \$525.

Youth Group meets every Sunday

6:00pm to 7:30pm (unless noted)



Lake Lundgren Fall Fest



Flag Football



Archery

Spending Time Together



Axe "Throwing"

Growing God's Way Ministries



*Here's what's happening this month in Growing God's Way Ministry:

We are excited that Growing God's Way Children's Ministry is **open Sunday mornings!** Registration is required since spots are limited. If you have any questions please email lshodorf0419@gmail.com

Lil' Sprouts (6wks-2yr.) Each month we will explore one of God's wonderful creations with hands-on learning using the items in the Surprise Bag. The theme for November is "Thank you God for Animals".



Sprouts and Evergreens will be meeting as a large group, ages 2.5yr-5th grade. They will attend service with their family and be dismissed before Pastor Greg's message. This month children ages 2.5-5th grade will learn what it means to put on the full Armor of God! Right now it is more important than ever to wear God's Armor, to stand for God and against what the world is telling us. Arrows are coming at us from all different directions, media, friends, school..... Our prayer is that this will be a great time of spiritual growth and that they will use these tools to stand firm.

*Subject to change



Awana is ZOOMing into the fall!



We are thankful for our leaders and families who participate each week. Each of our clubs has an opportunity to sing songs, discuss the lesson, and work on verses via Zoom. Sparks and T&T also have virtual games each week. While Awana looks and feels very different this year, we are still enjoying our time together. We enjoy both the fellowship an opportunity to grow and learn together.



Prayerful November

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Thank God for 3 people that mean the world to you.	2 Pray for the scientists who are trying to understand COVID-19.	3 Thank God for being your PROVIDER!	4 Pray for your family members, each by name.	5 Thank God for being your FRIEND!	6 Write your name. Thank God for one thing that starts with each letter of your name.	7 Tell God about your favorite smell.
8 Pray for the leaders of your church.	9 Make a list of questions you have for God. Talk to Him about them.	10 Thank God for being your SAVIOR!	11 Ask your mom or dad if you can pray for them.	12 Thank God for being your FATHER!	13 Pray for people who are sick and need healing.	14 Go outside and take a minute to look at the stars. Then tell God what's on your mind.
15 Read Psalm 20:1-4. Turn these verses into a prayer for your family.	16 Pray for someone who doesn't know Jesus yet.	17 Thank God for being your GUIDE!	18 Learn to pray from Daniel! Read Daniel 6:10.	19 Thank God for being your COMFORTER!	20 Thank God for your close friends.	21 Close your eyes and sing your favorite praise song to God.
22 Spend two minutes enjoying God's company in complete silence.	23 Pray for someone who has hurt your feelings.	24 Thank God for being your DEFENDER!	25 Tell God something you love about November.	26 Thank God for being your REDEEMER!	27 Create a Thankful Tree. Write on the leaves what you're thankful for.	28 Pray by the bonfire.
29 Pray the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13.	30 Pray with your parent(s) or your sibling(s).	Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. Psalm 100:4				

Elders Report



This year has been an interesting time within our society. Tensions have risen among people because of differing opinions regarding the impact of the global pandemic, the US election, with a near equal split between the parties, along with other things. These differences are heightened because we live in an age where anyone and everyone can be a “reporter” with the advancements that have been made in cell phone technology and the openness of people to share ideas over social media that may have been more difficult to share directly with someone. During this time, it is important that we as Christians stand apart from this world and demonstrate unconditional love in spite of our different opinions.

As the Elders have been meeting throughout this pandemic, a lot of energy has been put into prayer and discussion about how to effectively lead ministry while balancing the greater good of our church family. Candidly, here are a few of the questions that we continue to wrestle with:

How do we open up the church and ministries safely?

If we open, will volunteers feel obligated to serve even if they don't feel safe?

Will the congregation feel obligated to attend church even if they may not feel it is safe?

Will the people who don't attend be judged for having a different viewpoint than those who are attending?

Will those who aren't attending judge those who do attend?

Satan would love nothing more than to use this opportunity to fracture our congregation by driving a divide over differences of opinions. Paul lays out an example of a Christian life in Romans 12:

9 Love must be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. 10 Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not lack diligence; be fervent in spirit; serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer. 13 Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. 16 Be in agreement with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Try to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes. 18 If possible, on your part, live at peace with everyone. 19 Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for His wrath. For it is written: Vengeance belongs to Me; I will repay, says the Lord. 20 But if your enemy is hungry feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. For in so doing you will be heaping fiery coals on his head. 21 Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

Here are some practical applications for us to fulfill the expectations God has of Christians:

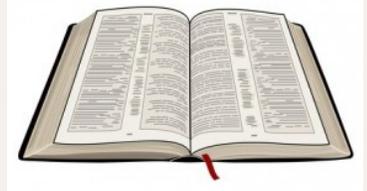
Love one another unconditionally – Our church has been doing great at serving the needs for those within our congregation.

We should continue to look for needs that we can fulfill and volunteer to step in to help, even if it is just for a season. We expect that it will be some time before the majority of the people are venturing back out to have church in person. Therefore, there may be needs to serve in an area of the service that someone else may have filled in the past. If you feel comfortable attending church in person, reach out to ask an Elder or the Pastor to find out where you may be able to step in and fulfill a need.

Be persistent in prayer – Pray continuously. Pray for leaders to have Godly wisdom and to lead according to God's will. Pray for the afflictions that are a part of this world due to sin. Pray that God would heal our land and remove this virus from existence. Pray to give thanks for all that God has given us, even during unsettling times.

Be humble and grounded in our wisdom – Do not judge others according to your wisdom but allow God to judge others according to His. Do your part to live at peace with one another and not to spread anger and tension. If you feel safe in attending church in person, do not look down or judge those who do not attend in person. Likewise, if you feel it is best to stay at home, do not judge those who are attending Church in person. You can insert most any of the controversial topics into that pair of sentences. We should feel respected to have our opinions, but we should also respect that others may have a different opinion. We do not know the circumstances that may be leading to other people's viewpoints. Love and respect for others, and their opinions, will allow us to live peaceably.

Let us live apart from this world so that others will know we are [Christians by our love](#).



Holy Harmony: Glory to God & Hope for Humanity

In order to properly introduce what I’m trying to say in this article, please allow me to point out three characteristics of our society that relate to why this is important.

First—the pace at which many of us live our lives has created what could be called “a culture dominated by headlines and sound bites.” It’s very common for many people to only read the headlines and the news media typically plays brief “cut—off” statements or quotes from interviews or speeches that are featured in their tv, radio, or internet broadcasts. We’re only given a summary or snip—it and we rarely receive an accurate perspective if we don’t take time to find out “the rest of the story.”

Second—other than during the days of the Civil War, it’s hard to find a time when there’s been more division or disunity between differing viewpoints, perspectives, or opinions within our country/culture. We might also say that the intensity of the disagreements has increased the amount of stress and strain we experience in our lives. Some people consciously avoid talking about politics, religion, or anything else that relates to the issues involved and others seem to enjoy getting into debates and discussions that seem to accomplish very little besides leading to more tension and turmoil.

Third—this is obvious and it would seem that none of us needs to be reminded about this, but for the sake of putting things in proper context, most everyone is feeling an extraordinary amount of fear and frustration due to the pandemic. As followers of Christ, we realize that the words of the hymn, *The Solid Rock*, (or the chorus, *Cornerstone*) were never more true or relevant than they are right now. “*When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace!*”

So before I run out of space ... let me refer to Romans 15. I have a list of about 15—20 absolutely favorite Bible verses and each one is valuable to me. One of them is Romans 15:13. (Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust Him, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.)

Please consider what Paul wrote in the verses leading up to verse 13—especially notice the flow of thought in 4—6. (4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.)

How does this apply/relate to us today?

—1— **The Bible is our best resource** for us to see how God has worked throughout history. Keep in mind that God has never changed and His promises are trustworthy. The historical examples in the Bible are there for our instruction, encouraging us to maintain a sense of faith—filled perseverance that leads to hope.

—2— **God’s Word instructs us with the goal of providing hope.** Now both hope as well as discouragement are contagious—they will spread like wildfire. But, based on what this passage teaches us, it seems that we should strive to spread encouragement and hope. The terms “*be of the same mind*” and “*with one voice*” place an emphasis on being unified, and they also describe the beautiful sound of harmony that resounds in the unity God’s family has in our common (mutual) faith in Christ. Our role involves consistently helping one another find hope in God’s provisions, promises, and power, described throughout biblical history.

—3— **Our primary responsibility as faithful followers of our Lord is to bring honor and glory to God.** Our view or perspective of God is an essential foundation that gives us the stability to fulfill this role. Do we see Him as a God of hope—or do we allow our secular society and corrupted culture to block our view of God’s lovely face and His unchanging grace?

I’m praying that our God of hope will saturate each of us with joy and peace as we trust Him ... so we can abound in hope by the power of His indwelling Spirit and glorify Him with one harmonious voice of praise!

With prayer for God’s glory and praise for His grace ...
And as always, with prayer for our ACEFC family, Pastor Greg



The Voice of the Martyrs is a nonprofit, interdenominational Christian missions organization dedicated to serving our persecuted family worldwide through practical and spiritual assistance and leading other members of the body of Christ into fellowship with them.

This mission is based on Hebrews 13:3; “Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.”

We, as a church, give monthly support to this mission to our hurting brothers and sisters in Christ.

SOMALIA: Christian Couple Arrested

Sources: Middle East Concern, Geeska Afrika Online

At an October 5th news conference, police in the self-declared autonomous region of Somaliland announced that a Christian couple had been arrested for being "apostates and evangelists spreading Christianity." On September 21st, the two were taken from their home in Hargeisa where police also found Christian literature in their possession. The police spokesperson, Faisal His Elmi, stated that the arrest came from an anonymous tip. He also threatened that "whoever dares to spread Christianity in this region should be fully aware that they won't escape the hand of the law enforcement officers and that the spread of Christianity will not be allowed and is considered blasphemy." He encouraged others to report Christians who share their faith. The detained couple, who are the parents of three children, will face trial by a regional court. Their arrests and detentions have generated fear among other believers in the area, causing many of them to flee for safety.



Teenager Kicked Out

Only days after he accepted Christ, 15-year-old Seng was already facing the persecution Jesus often spoke about. After his parents learned of his decision, they sat down to talk with him, telling him he needed to renounce his “foreign” faith. If he didn’t, they would kill him or kick him out of the house. When Seng told them he wouldn’t, they bagged up his belongings and told him to leave. “Go stay with those Christian friends of yours. You are not welcome here,” his parents said. “Stop this religion at once.” Seng is staying with friends with assistance from VOM. Pray that he remains firm in his faith and grows in maturity in Christ.



These believers are thankful for the support and prayers of Voice of the Martyrs and those who are a part of this ministry. Their prayer is not that God take them out of the situation but that He enable them to be faithful, to stand for Him no matter what the cost may be. They desire to be witnesses of His love and mercy to all who don’t believe, even those who persecute them.

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)



Appleton Community Evangelical
Free Church
2490 West Capitol Drive
Appleton, WI 54914

We're on the Web!
applefreechurch.org

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