

MARCH



SPRING AHEAD!

Sunday, March 14 is when we move ahead into Spring. Set your clock one hour ahead before you go to bed Saturday, March 13.

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A Word from Pastor Blake

I really enjoy listening to testimonies! What great joy to hear how God delivered people from the domain of darkness and transferred them to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13). It always encourages me to hear how God can take a sinner and make them white as snow. This is why I love Daniel chapter 4. I believe this is King Nebuchadnezzar's testimony of how God transformed his life.

King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream that his kingdom is going to be taken away and that he will become like a beast of the field. A year after the dream he is walking on the roof of his palace and starts bragging about the kingdom that he built. Suddenly, a voice comes from heaven and poof, king Nebuchadnezzar starts acting like wild animal.

This story always makes me think of the movie *The Emperor's New Groove*. The emperor is turned into a Llama and must figure out how turn back into a human. I don't think King Nebuchadnezzar turned into an animal, but I am sure he was a sight to see. He went from being a powerful ruler to someone who ate grass in the field like livestock. Here are a few observations from Daniel 4 and Nebuchadnezzar's testimony.

1. We can confess God, and yet not be saved.

Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 and Nebuchadnezzar's response is "truly your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and revealer of mysteries." In chapter three Nebuchadnezzar again praises God after he sees that Hananiah, Mishaal, and Azariah come out of the fire without being burned. These words proved to be lip service to God, but he didn't really believe in God.

I can relate to King Nebuchadnezzar. I spent years saying I believed in God but there was no heart change. I said the right words, but my lifestyle didn't align with scripture. We can view this passage as a warning. Belief in God is not mere "easy believism" or "cheap grace".¹ God is not just an add on to our life, but he is our whole life. When Jesus enters our life, we are also given the promised Holy Spirit which creates a radical change in our life.

2. Repentance is a sign of change.

What makes Nebuchadnezzar's confession in chapter 4 different from his confession in chapter 2 and 3? I think repentance is the key. We don't see the typical formula where someone confesses sin in detail to God. I think this is something we should do. David is a great example of this in Psalm 51. Daniel 4:34 says, "I lifted my eyes to heaven." I think this is another way to say Nebuchadnezzar understood his place in relationship to God. He was humbled and believed God to be who He says He is. He realized his kingdom will not last, but God's will last forever.

3. God uses suffering and struggles to change your life²

If you listen to people's testimonies, you will often hear phrases like "I hit rock bottom" or "it was the worst time in my life." God often uses suffering to draw us to himself. Nebuchadnezzar would be identified as crazy if this happened today. Everything that had meaning to his life was taken from him so that he would see God as true King. Imagine an event in your life where everything is ripped from you. How would you respond? Nobody would want that to happen! Yet, this is exactly what God used to humble Nebuchadnezzar and draw him to Himself. Suffering is one way God makes us look more like Jesus (James 1:2-4, Romans 5:1-5). If you are a Christian, you can embrace the suffering because you have a sovereign God who cares for you.

4. God is sovereign in the midst of our suffering.

Nothing happens that doesn't happen outside of His control. Look at God's work in Daniel.

- God who delivered Judah into Nebuchadnezzar's hand (1:2)
- God who gave Daniel favor in the sight of the eunuch (1:9)
- God gave the four youths skills in learning (1:17)
- God revealed the dream to Daniel (2:19, 28)
- God sets up kings and kingdoms (2:31-45)
- God delivers His servants (3:17, 28)
- God humbles the proud (4:37)

It would be great to have a narrator over our lives that would tell us what God is doing but we don't. We don't have all the background information as to how God is working. We do have promises from God that we can hold onto! Daniel held onto Jeremiah 29. Destruction will come but God has a plan which includes prospering. I believe Romans 8:28 says the same things as Jeremiah 29:11. God will work everything out for good in your life. That doesn't mean everything suffering is good but the end result is good. Hebrews 13:5-6 reminds us that God will never leave us or forsake us. We can be encouraged that Christ is coming back and these sufferings will be ended (1 Thes. 4:13-18). We have been promised eternal life (1 John 2:25).

5. The story isn't complete until our life is over.

This point is meant to be an encouragement to anybody who has somebody they love who does not know Christ. Wayward parents, children, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends still have a chance to confess Jesus as Lord. There is an urgency to sharing with them and we should share with them but sometimes God uses suffering to draw them. Maybe we should pray for God to use extreme circumstances to humble those we love. It is far better to be labeled clinically insane in this life than to not enter eternal life in the next.

¹Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

²David Powlison, *How Sanctification Works*

Updates and Opportunities



EASTER SANCTUARY DÉCOR . . . HELP NEEDED

I have prepared this year's sanctuary design for Easter. Installation is set for the Saturday after Good Friday, April 3, Lord willing. I will be at church most of the day. 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.

Gary Noggle (920) 574-2914 or garyalanog@gmail.com



Please pray for the missions team as we prepare to go Morehead City NC March 12-19. For the health of the team and staff, before, during and after the trip. That travel plans would fall into place and for our safety as we travel. Most importantly, pray that we follow God's leading as we serve homeowners and any one else we come in contact with. May He prepare our hearts and attitudes to reflect His love to all.

Sue Diestler



La Courte Oreilles: The Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation trip is scheduled for April 23-25. Please contact the Diestlerts for the paperwork and details at [920-851-3104](tel:920-851-3104) or Diestlerts@aol.com. This will be subject to current Covid conditions and restrictions from the tribal elders.

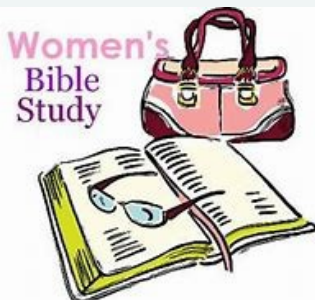


Hi Ladies!

Many of us here at ACEFC have been missing fellowship with our sisters in Christ. The past year has been interesting, to say the least, challenging and sometimes lonely. God turned many of us more fully towards him and our families. These were a blessing! Some of us are ready to find ways to get together and connect and grow in Christ once again.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Cindy Newton and I have been a member here since last spring. I have been a part of Women's Ministry as a bible study leader here, recently and in my former church home for many years. I have a passion to connect women with the Lord through the Word and each other. God tells us to gather together in his name for fellowship with our fellow believers. In the next week, we will be brainstorming and meeting to put some ideas in the works for ladies to participate in. Keep an eye out for upcoming announcements.

Cindy Newton—Women's Ministry Leader



This is an invitation to all the women of our church and your friends. Beginning the week of April 5th we will be studying Everyday Theology by Mary Wiley. What we truly believe matters! Some of the benefits we hope to gain from this study are:

- to worship with a greater understanding of who God is and His work in the world
- increase our ability to discern between truth and false teaching
- examine foundational truths to better understand what we believe
- deepen our relationship with God

What a great way to celebrate all Jesus did for us right after Easter! You have a choice 2 meeting times; Monday evenings at 6:00 or Wednesday mornings at 10:00. All meetings are at church.

This is an 8 week study and the cost is \$15. Please let Ruth know, in the office, if you will be joining us.

Growing God's Way Ministries

What's Happening in Children's Ministry:

It has been a blessing serving your children face to face in Children's Ministry Sunday mornings.



February we started teaching on The Fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23. We will continue with The Fruit of the Spirit throughout the month of March.

It has been so much fun seeing the children learn each Sunday and hearing stories from parents how they are applying what they are learning at home! What a wonderful blessing. And it seems to be working to have the children attend worship with their parents and then go to their class. The younger ones are learning right alongside their older siblings.

Lil' Sprouts: God made Animals! The little ones will celebrate that God made food. They will look at pictures of animals and thank God for making Animals. Ask them to make the animals sound. Reinforce God made everything!

Prayer for your children (and parents), that they would experience His peace and put God first! Lead by example, if your child sees that you are anxious they will become anxious. If they see you putting God first and reading your Bible they will do the same. The world (the enemy) is pulling us and our children in so many different directions. He wants nothing more than for us to be distracted by the world, our phones, media, video games...the list goes on. These things aren't bad but when they take priority over God that's when there is a heart issue. Praying we all are putting God first, reading His Word, applying it and putting on the full armor!



Awana continues to meet online via Zoom each week. In February we had a silly sock night, a hot chocolate night,  and a valentine night. 



We look forward to seeing our clubbers online each week and have settled into a pretty good routine with songs, stories, lessons, games and fellowship. Coming up for March, we have crazy shoe night, leader appreciation and crazy hair night.



As a reminder, we will not be meeting on March 31st for spring/Easter break.



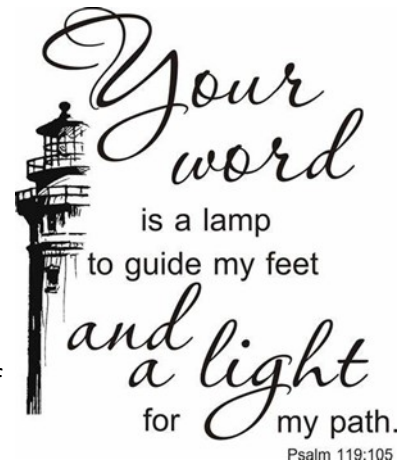
Come and join us on **Sunday nights from 6:00pm-7:30pm** at the church for our Yamily Gatherings. Everyone is welcome!





It is hard to believe we are in March already. This year is moving right along, but I want to let you know that it is not too late to start the reading through the Bible in a year with some of us that have taken on that challenge. If you go to the church Facebook page or give the office a call you can get a copy of the daily readings. You can just start in March and finish next year or catch up by reading a few extra days as you have time. I have found it to be very rewarding to read these first two months. It great to see how God has worked in the past in

the Old Testament readings, being able to reflect on His goodness in the Psalms and learn from Jesus' time on earth and what the Apostles are teaching us in their writing. If you cannot join us in this journey, please try to be in the Word and join us for online or in person worship and take advantage of Pastor Greg's devotionals.



As I start my tenth year as an Elder here, I think about the almost twenty Godly men I have served with, and am thankful for each one of them. We, as your current Elder board, love our Heavenly Father and are committed to serving Jesus our Lord and Savior. We pray for God's wisdom and guidance as we lead this body of believers and want to do what He would have us do to serve this body in a way that brings glory and honor to Him. We want you to know that we are always willing to

Church Elders



hear from you. We want to pray with you and for you. Please feel free to call anyone of us at anytime for anything. This is a group of men who are willing to serve this body and who want to see His kingdom advanced. Please contact us with any requests, concerns, or needs.

PRAYER WARRIORS



PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

Keep on praying. No Matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:17 ~ NLT

I ask that you please pray for our staff. They have all gone above and beyond during this past year and I am so thankful for all of them. Please pray for anyone in a leadership position in the body. Please pray for our local body and the church here and around the world that we can stand strong and be bold in these uncertain times.

Praying for You,

Tim

Some “Prayerful Thoughts” from Pastor Greg

Finding Hope in Prayer & Peace in His Promises!

Holding
Onto God's
Promises with
Expectation

Recently I've been thinking about a saying I've heard several times over the years. It's been attributed to two different people for whom I have great respect, so I'll give credit for this relevant reminder to both Corrie Ten Boom and Elizabeth Elliott. **“God hasn't called us to the playground, but He has asked us to serve Him on the battleground.”** For most of us, it's probably

obvious that many of our biblical views and values are being challenged and because we're faithful followers of Christ, we are involved in a spiritual battle. It should also be clearly evident that we can never be properly prepared or equipped for battle without prayer! What I'd like to do in this article is simply encourage everyone to obey Paul's instructions in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, “pray without ceasing.” If we can be honest with ourselves, finding time to pray is a significant part of the battle that many of us are facing. Before I begin, I want to admit that I've repeatedly studied what the Bible teaches about prayer for many years, but I sincerely believe that I've just scratched the surface of grasping the depths of all that's involved when we enter into God's throne room.

There's an encouraging statement that Paul used frequently in his New Testament letters and it seems to emphasize the priority he placed on praying for the people in those specific churches. For example, notice Colossians 1:3, “We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” He says something similar in 1 Thessalonians 1:2, “We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers.” As I pause to reflect on this, I realize that Paul didn't have any of the technological advancements (or should we call them distractions?) that we have. He couldn't make immediate contact with anyone unless he was in close proximity. But he invested in the lives of people by taking time to pray!

Another biblical principle related to prayer that comes to my mind involves dealing with times when anxiety, worry, fear, or concern become overwhelming or unsettling. Peter provided a remedy for that in 1 Peter 5:6—7. “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.” *Paul told his Philippian friends that whenever they became anxious, they should pray and gratefully anticipate God to supply what's needed by making “your requests be made known to God.” He goes on to say that “the magnificent and mysterious peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* Essentially, these instructions teach us that prayer involves **humbly** placing ourselves under God's authority as we ask Him to help us follow His will, **honestly** expressing our desires, concerns, and gratitude, and **hopefully** trusting Him to provide what's best for us. When we pray, we're never telling God something He doesn't know and we're claiming His promise that He will care for us and give us peace.

There are many more principles and truths that could be included in any discussion about prayer, but there's one more aspect that I believe needs to be included. 1 John 1:9 is a vivid reminder to us that keeping short accounts with God about our actions and attitudes is important. Notice what it says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” As faithful followers of Christ, we're assured that Christ paid the penalty for our sins. There is no condemnation for those who are dependent on what Jesus accomplished for us in His death, burial, and resurrection. But there are moments when we might be burdened by a sense of guilt or grief because of sin. Passionate prayer for peace and personal prayer of gratitude for God's forgiveness is not only a **remedy**—it's also a **reminder** that might come to mind when we're tempted to do, say, or think something that might be disobedient to God.

I pray that this is an encouragement for everyone to find greater enjoyment in the privilege of prayer!

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

Mission of the Month— Jim and Ginger Moore



For more than 75 years, Wycliffe Bible Translators has helped people all over the world translate the Scriptures into their own language. Today, at least 2000 languages still need a Bible translation started. It has been almost 25 years since ACEFC sent us out as missionaries with Wycliffe to serve in the work of Bible translation through the use of computer technology! You have faithfully supported this work all those years by prayer and finances. Perhaps most importantly, you have continued to be our friends, standing with us and holding the ropes as we have labored in different roles in different places. Thank you.

Jim currently leads a team (Kalaam Media) that helps minority language groups publish translated Scripture through digital media. They teach them to build websites, mobile phone applications and social media pages to distribute Scripture, videos (Jesus film), and audio. This gives more widespread Scripture access to people groups that may be in sensitive locations. Due to Covid restrictions on travel, Jim now teaches workshops virtually, using video-conferencing software and training videos. He also evaluates products and services that would optimize use of digitally published media in many areas of the globe. Ginger retired from nursing this past year and now keeps her grandson a couple of days each week.

Please pray:

- For Scripture access for those that don't have it.
- For remaining language groups that need a Bible translation.
- For Jim's team, wisdom, as many are facing difficult life decisions.
- For our family, that we would walk with the Lord.

Jim and Ginger Moore

For more insight into our ministry and sample training videos visit

www.mooreimportantthings.org

[Training Video](#)

www.kalaam.org

or scan QR codes



Ministry of Jim and Ginger Moore

Kalaam Media

Example Training Video



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!
applefreechurch.org



Church Office Hours
Closed Mondays
Tuesday—Friday
8:30 - 2:30

