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# A Word from Pastor Blake

## Lessons on Community from a Mountain Goat

Kaylee and I recently took a trip with some friends to Montana. While we were there, we spent a lot of time at Glacier National Park. We all liked to hike so we spent most days hiking the park. I will never forget one of our hikes because we were followed by a mountain Goat. It was a great experience being so close to a wild animal. It was also a little intimidating because I didn't want to mess with the horns on top of his head. Since that day I have been reflecting on lessons from that trip.

### **We must be in Community**

There are signs all over Glacier that state it is best to hike in groups because there are no reported bear attacks on groups of four or more. There is safety in community. The same holds true for us as believers. We should be in community with other Christians so that we have help when we face dangers in our Christian walk. Hebrews 3:12-13 tells us to exhort one another daily so that we don't fall into sin. Proverbs talks about sin being a snare to us (Proverbs 5:22-23). We can easily be led astray by sin if we are left alone. Sin can take control in isolation. Fellow Christians can help keep sin from becoming a habit in our lives. They can call out our sin and walk alongside us as we fight for godliness. Let us not be arrogant and think we can do this on our own. We need other believers. We need to be in community.

### **Community Warns us of Dangers on the Path**

A couple of hikers were coming down the mountain as we were hiking up the mountain. They warned us about a territorial mountain goat that followed them down the trail. We continued along the path, but we were more alert to our surroundings. Other believers can warn us of dangers we may encounter. Titus 2:1-6 says that older men should teach younger men how to live and older women should encourage younger women how to live. Why? Mature believers in the faith can help younger believers in the faith because they have walked the path already.

Farmers Insurance has a commercial with the tagline, "we know a thing or two because we have seen a thing or two." The same is true about older believers in the church. There is no better way to learn than from someone who has learned self-control or who has learned to be content. Use them as a resource. Find a small group with a mix of ages and genders and learn from those who have walked the path.

### **Welcome People into the Community**

We started our hike with four people and ended it with seven people. A girl named Holly joined us right at the beginning of the hike. She didn't want to hike alone and asked to join us. We met two other guys as we were trying to get away from a mountain goat. Welcome new people into the community. Welcome those who are different from you! The church misses out when people are shunned because they are different or don't belong. Each person brings a unique spiritual gift to the mix when they enter into the church (1 Cor. 12, Romans 12).

As we were hiking away from the goat we met two guys who added a new element to our group. We went from one guy and four girls to three guys and four girls. I knew I would have to step in and fight a goat if I was the only guy. Once Spencer and Andrew joined the group that changed. They were two guys who wanted adventure. I think they were almost hoping the goat would attack so they had a better story to tell. I felt much better hiking back up the mountain knowing they would fight the goat and I didn't have to. I know my limitations! The church is a beautiful body where people have different functions and giftings.

### **Community Encourages Us to Keep Going**

When we met Spencer and Andrew, they encouraged us to keep going. Holly was ready to leave our group. They kept encouraging us by saying things like "you can make it" and "we can do this together". Guess what? We made it to the top. The territorial goat followed us the whole way, but we were safe and secure in the group. We had others to encourage during the journey.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 says, "and we urge you brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all." This comes at the end of the letter in Paul's final instructions to them. Some people won't walk the path because they are lazy. They need to be admonished and told to make changes. Others are discouraged, fainthearted, and afraid of what they may come in contact with on the path. Tell them "you can do it" and "keep going." Others are weak and need help. They may not have the strength to keep going. You may need to lift them up so they can keep walking. With each type of person, you should be patient. What a beautiful picture of community in the church.

This all happened as we are walking along a path in Glacier National Park. How much more should this happen in the church! We have a special bond to our brothers and sisters in Christ. If you don't have community then seek me out! I will help you find it. You are welcome in my community. Just don't try to do this Christian walk on your own.



# Updates and Opportunities



## PICNIC and WALK

Ladies, you're invited to a nature walk and picnic. We will meet at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 26 at Bubolz Nature Center, 4815 N. Lynndale Dr Appleton. Please bring your own lunch and we will enjoy some fellowship in the summer sun. If inclement weather happens, we will meet inside the church instead. You will be contacted if the location changes to the church. Please rsvp by June 24 either by letting the church office know by email or phone or by using the link below:



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080C45A8AA2CA2FD0-picnic>

## Summer Book Study!

We invite you to join us in reading *Gentle and Lowly* by Dane C. Ortland. This encouraging book is about Jesus' longing to have His people rest in Him. We will meet 3 times over the summer to share and enjoy one another's company.

Please contact the church office by June 8 if you are interested so we know how many books to order.

Cost is \$15.00 for the book



## Prayer Warriors

### Prayer Warriors for Sunday Morning

Ladies, we are planning to have a few women in the prayer room at church from 9:00-9:45 to pray for various things related to our church body on Sunday mornings. Please sign up on the link below or let Ruth know a slot that works

for you. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080C45A8AA2CA2FD0-sunday>



### Come and join us June 13 at Pizza Ranch (5450 W. Integrity Way).

We have reserved a community room for after church so we can spend some time eating and enjoying fellowship with one another. If you feel comfortable, we would love to have you fill the room with joy and laughter. If you can't join us this time, you can join us next time. We are going to get together for lunch once a month.



# Growing God's Way Ministries

## What's Happening in Growing God's Way Children's Ministry

Anxiety: feelings of fear or worry that are strong enough to interfere with daily activities. Anxiety effects 1 in 5 adults and 1 in 4 children. This ratio is on a steady increase after 2020. Here are some recommendations from a child's therapist that I thought would be helpful for all of us.

- Listen , observe, and ask questions. Show love and empathy without solving the problem. That can feel like control.
- Watch their habits, see if there is any change. Ask them how they are feeling, use a 1-10 scale, or a feelings chart. Another option is for them to draw what they are feeling.
- Use **Head, Heart, Body** questions. **Head**-how are your thoughts, what do you think about? **Heart**-can you name your emotions? **Body**-how are you feeling physically, headache, stomach, a sore neck? If they can name why they are feeling this way, come up with a plan, and if possible make changes.

Grounding Techniques can help calm anxiety. When we are calm there is more blood flow to the front of the brain, anxiety causes more blood flow to the back of the brain. Here are some examples of Grounding Techniques:

- Name 5 things they can see, 4 things they can hear, 3 things they can smell, 2 things they can touch, 1 thing they can eat.
- Name blue items or items of any color you choose.
- Breathe, slowly and deeply, pray, and recite Bible verses.

If you see their anxiety increasing or things don't seem right, ask for help. Please let me know how I can be praying for you and your family.

**Lil'Sprouts:** God Made the Water. Children will experience hands on learning with The Surprise Bag. Children are Never too young to learn about God's creation and love.



**Sprouts and Evergreens (3yrs.-5thgr.)** Will continue to meet as one group throughout the summer. All children will be dismissed from the sanctuary before Pastor's message. This month we will start to talk about Jesus' Miracles, and we will continue with Jesus' Miracles though the summer.

Verse: Nothing is impossible with God. Luke 1:37



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



# Elders Report



## Have you noticed the changes? What is your perspective on change?

There is an inherent unsettledness that accompanies change, especially when a situation is worsening, but even when it's obviously for the better. I think this comes from upsetting the familiar, the fear of the unknown, but also from an innate awareness of our Creator who made us in His image. We all have an instilled longing for a stayed support – an unwavering hand. Our Father is just that!

Throughout scripture we see how God's children are confronted with change and how they manage through it. Sometimes it is due to their own sin, other times by devotion to following His commands.

The cyclic nature of this can be dizzying, but the pattern of repentance, reconciliation, and restoration should be comforting when we experience change. As we observe the culture degradation and pace of fear overcoming some, should we not run to Him who calmed the sea? Surely we will see the steadfast love, power, and protection of our Lord.

As some in our body experience the exciting changes welcomed by new ministries, retirements, or family growth, others work through bitter-sweet moves and goodbyes. Still others struggle with health and healing.

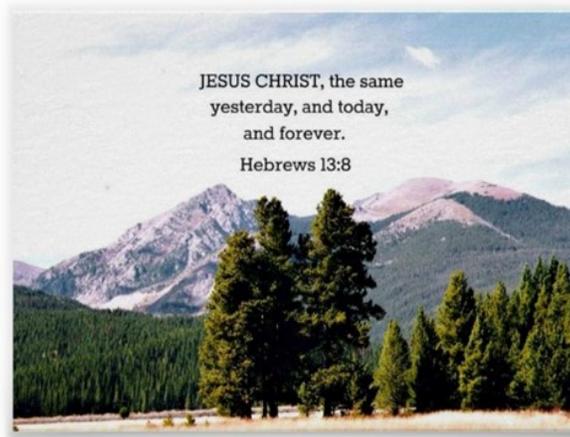
Remain rooted in His word and in communion with each other through Christ and we too will continue to thrive, come what may.

“In your unfailing love preserve my life,  
that I may obey the statutes of Your mouth.  
Your word, LORD, is eternal;  
It stands firm in the heavens.  
Your faithfulness continues through all generations;  
You established the earth, and it endures.” Psalm 119: 88-90

I encourage you to reach out to a fellow brother or sister, share a meal, introduce yourself on Sunday, seek prayer for, or in the midst of, change.

Take heart knowing that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He is our hope and stay!

In Him,  
Marshall Legg



## Some Prayerful Thought's from Pastor Greg

### Standing Firm When It Feels Like Giving In Might Be Easier!

Recently I've heard three radio interviews that I wish every person who claims to be a faithful follower of Christ had been able to hear as well. The first one was with Jack Phillips, the Colorado baker who refused to bake a cake for a wedding that violated his Christian faith. It was enlightening, encouraging, and edifying to hear how absolutely important it was to him to trust the Lord in the face of extreme persecution, especially when it would have been easier to give in and avoid ten years of court battles. He eventually won his case when the US Supreme Court determined that his constitutional rights had been violated. But even with that, the persecution continues because he still regularly receives requests from people who simply want to harass him by asking for themed baked goods that would force him to create something that condones or supports sin.

The other two interviews were with pastors who are deeply concerned that the Church in our culture is being drastically reshaped by the "ideological collision" between basic biblical truths and the deceptive influences that are taking our society by storm, similar to what Jack Phillips experienced. Simply stated, these pastors grieve because it seems that more and more people believe it's better to simply give in and avoid any arguments or discussions with those who might disagree. It's relatively common to hear someone question the "wisdom" of standing firm on the truths and principles found in the Bible; they often suggest that the "loving thing to do" is to allow everyone to "determine their own standard of truth." One of these pastors also wrote a book where he quoted a study published in *Christianity Today* that revealed how the "church growth movement" during the 1980–90's saw an increase in church attendance which included reports of many "conversions to Christ." However, further research indicates that very few people among these "conversions" were "discipled." He went on to say that "now the Church needs to recognize how that growth came at an 'unforeseen cost' where an insufficient understanding of biblical truth and doctrine has made it easier for people to allow our contemporary culture to dictate and define their views and values."

**1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. 20 But we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. 21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.**

So ... I'd like to draw our attention to **1 John 5:19–21** and conclude by pointing out how closely and clearly John's words apply to us in a very personal and practical way.

Frequently the Church is being asked by our secular society to put "our" stamp of approval on actions that God's Word describes as sinful. John makes it clear that everything outside the realm of the "true church" lies in the power of the evil one. From a cultural perspective, the Church is the final barrier and restraint holding back a flood of immorality and lawlessness.

Since the Holy Spirit indwells our lives, we've been given a dose of godly discernment, wisdom, understanding, and spiritual strength that enables us to take a firm stand against the values and views that threaten us.

John's concluding exhortation in this letter (5:21 is the last verse of 1 John) is unique and stands out as if it was an afterthought, a post script, or an add—on. But especially since God's Spirit was guiding John, I have to believe that this was his plan. **To give a final instruction that does what we're supposed to do. IT STANDS OUT!!!** There's no reason to take the easy route—as true disciples of Christ, we've been transformed by His Spirit and by His Truth and let's stand firm by reaching out with the grace and love of Christ!



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**"If it's easier on you, Mommy, I'm willing to eat an UN-healthy snack."**

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

And as always, with prayer for our ACEFC family,

Pastor Greg



Boozhoo Appleton,

Greetings to you from **the Shack** on the Lac Courte Oreilles reservation. It is an honor to be a part of your monthly focus. It was also great to have some of you spend a snowy day serving the community here in April. Thank you for your partnership in sharing the love of Christ and the good news found in him with the people of LCO. We are gearing up for a near normal summer. As you read this, we are most likely kicking off our summer with one of our favorite ways to connect with the teens, camping! Whether camping, coaching, constructing, counseling, or simply sharing a cup of coffee, we look to share Jesus in and through relationships built in community. All of this we pray, leading to discipleship. God has blessed our place in the community here and I invite you to pray that his kingdom will come and his will be done in our lives, relationships, and in this community.

Miigwech Appleton!

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](http://applefreechurch.org)

If God didn't forgive sinners heaven would be empty.

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

