

Growing Together In Christ



**GROUND**ED

Standing Firm in a Shaking World

**Revive '21 Women's Conference:** We're hosting the Livestream of Revive '21 Women's Conference - Grounded: Standing Firm in a Shaking World. Join us on October 8 and 9 for a time of worship, prayer, and biblically sound messages. **Need childcare?** This year

we are offering it during the sessions on Saturday, please sign up in the foyer so we can plan accordingly. If you don't need childcare, no sign up needed - come to any or all of the sessions. **Please see Molly Soto if you have any questions about the conference.**



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# A Word from Pastor Blake

## The Beauty of Confession

*Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*

James 5:16

Do you have any deep dark sin that you hope nobody finds out about? Be honest! Do you have any sin that you hope that nobody finds out about? It doesn't have to be a deep dark sin. It can be a sin that we see as small but would still be embarrassed if people knew about it. God's antidote to hidden sin is confession to another person.

We as Protestants tend to cringe at the idea of confession because we associate it with the Catholic church. I think we have let the pendulum swing too far the other way. We place such a high emphasis on private confession that we neglect the grace of confession to another person. Private confession is great and should be done but we miss out on blessings because we don't reveal our sin to a brother or sister in Christ.

James 5:16 is a beautiful verse because it shows us what it looks like to be in gospel community. It looks like confession and prayer. It looks like vulnerability and forgiveness. It looks like mercy and grace. It looks like a bunch of broken people helping other broken people.

### **The context of James 5:16**

Prior to James telling people to confess their sins to each other, he is talking about the power of prayer. Those who are suffering should pray. Those who are cheerful should praise. The sick should call for the elders to pray for them because the prayer of faith will bring healing. Prayer does something! God hears our prayers and answers them! It may not always be in the way we want but He answers them.

As James is talking about praying for the sick, he says "and if this person has committed sins, he will be forgiven." This helps us understand the context for verse 16. We are told to confess to one another and pray for one another because confession leads to forgiveness, and prayer has great power in helping us put sin to death.

Confession isn't what saves us! Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection is what saves us. Our profession of faith in Christ is how we have redemption and forgiveness of our sin. Confession of sin to another person doesn't save us, but it reveals a heart that has already been changed by Christ. Confession without Christ being our Lord and Savior leads to works-based salvation and removes Christ from the equation. Many people think they can confess to a priest, and all is forgiven. Then they go back to living like king of their own life. This is not what James has in mind.

### **The Power of Confession**

In the summer of 2010, I started dating Kayleen and Satan was reminding me of all my past relationship failures. I had confessed my past sin to God, but I still didn't want anybody else to know. One night it was so overwhelming that I paused a movie that a few friends and I were watching and said, "I need to confess something." I thought they were going to disown me. I thought they were going to confirm all the things I was believing about myself. Instead, they reminded me of the gospel, and prayed for me. Suddenly it felt like a burden was gone.

Confession to one another will free you from the burden that you must do this Christian life on your own. At that moment, I recruited 3 other guys to hold me accountable and help me kill the sin in my life. Joe Rigney illustrates this by imagining sin as a monster in the middle of the room that you are trying to kill by throwing rocks at it. The monster will eventually die but how much faster will it die if you recruit other people to stand around the monster and throw rocks with you?

### **The Power of Prayer**

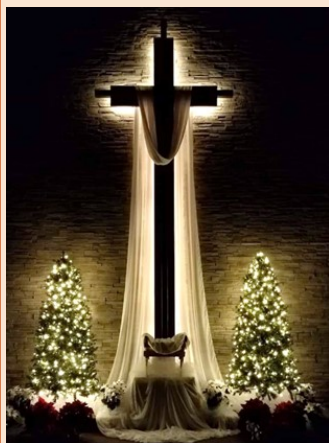
Confession and prayer are closely linked. Some of the rocks that are thrown at the monster will be prayers to a God who can take out the monster in one blow. It often doesn't happen like that, but those prayers may give you strength to throw one more rock. Those prayers may weaken the monster so you can start winning the fight. Those prayers may be someone else throwing a rock when you don't have the energy to throw another one.

### **A Song of praise.**

The defeat of sin leads us back to James 5:13. Is anyone suffering? Pray! Is anyone cheerful? Praise! The suffering of sin will come to an end which leads to a song of praise. There will still be other sin monsters to kill, but the death of one can lead us to celebrate the victory that the Lord brought about. These victories are not easy, but they are glorious. Invite others to help you fight, and sing songs of praise with you.

If you are stuck in sin, I challenge you take that first step of reaching out to others to help, get you unstuck. Not everybody needs to know your deepest darkest sin but someone else should know. Don't let it grow in the darkness but bring it to light so you and some friends can kill it.

You have the freedom to ask me what my current sins are and what I am struggling with. I would love to have you help me in the fight. I desire your prayers for me. We can always rejoice together and sing "for our sins they are many but His mercy is more."



## CHRISTMAS IN THE SANCTUARY

The theme for this year's Christmas sanctuary design is, "From Cradle to Grave." Installation is set for the Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving (November 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>). For those who would like to help this year, please contact me to let me know when you'll be able to show up, so that I can plan accordingly. As always, we would like to prepare our sanctuary to be an environment that encourages an attitude of worship upon entering. Thank you in advance for your willingness to serve.

Gary Noggle  
(920) 574-2914    [garyalanog@gmail.com](mailto:garyalanog@gmail.com)



### PILLARS

Ladies, we will be cooking in our church kitchen and delivering a meal to the Pillars shelter in Appleton on October 21. Stay tuned for more information.



Ladies, you are invited to participate in our annual Christmas Tea! It will be held on Saturday, December 4th. The time is 11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. with doors opening at 10:30 a.m. We will have a luncheon and speaker. The \$15.00 tickets will be sold starting Sunday, October 31.



### The Nest

We will be having the Nest again on October 12th at 7pm. Come for snack and fellowship and feel free to bring friends.

Stephanie Zaruba



### Operation Christmas Child

In October & November our missions collection will be Operation Christmas Child. OCC, as many of you know, is a ministry of Samaritan's Purse. OCC has been collecting shoe boxes filled with gifts and distributing them to children in need around the world for 25 years. Each child receives a booklet about Jesus in their box and also has the opportunity to participate in a follow up discipleship program call "The Greatest Journey." **Stay tuned for more information coming your way soon!**

# Youth and Children's Ministry

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

### Growing God's Way Children's Ministry...

**Lil' Sprouts ages: under 4 years old.**

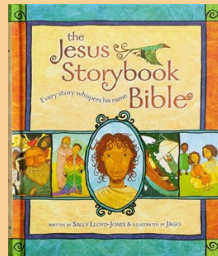
The children will be learning about Creation. Verse: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1



**Sprouts/Evergreens ages: 4 years old through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.**

We will continue in the book of Acts, learning about Paul.

**Verse:** God did extraordinary miracles through Paul. Acts 19:11



**9:00—9:45 a.m. Sunday School starting October 3.**

Ms. Aimee will be using the *Jesus Storybook Bible* starting in the beginning, Genesis.

### Tips for family time:

- Set up a calendar and encourage children to help plan meals and help prepare...and of course help clean up.
- Movie night with fun snacks.
- Set aside time to pray as a family. Make a prayer request poster.
- Take a walk and look at some of God's Creations.



Genesis 1:1

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Genesis 1:1



We are excited to announce that we are attending **Fall Fest at Lake Lundgren Bible Camp from October 15-17** This will be a weekend of friendship, fun, and spiritual growth. Please contact Pastor Blake for more information. The cost will be \$87.



Join us **Sunday nights from 6:00pm-8:00pm** at the church. Everyone is welcome!



Awana is off to a great start, thanks to our leaders and families attending! We've had a great time meeting each week and sometimes getting a little silly, like our Silly hat night. Next month, Oct.6th is Sports Night, and Oct. 20th is Noah's Ark Night. If you are still interested in joining us, as a clubbers or a leader, please email [appletonawana@gmail.com](mailto:appletonawana@gmail.com).



## Elders Report



### A Reasoned Defense.

In today's culture, the Christian faith has been under assault from every direction. We are shamed, misrepresented, screamed at, and in some cases excommunicated from our families. The responses and assertions we can have thrown at us, seem to come from so many different angles, I fear we often close up and remain silent. Are we intimidated by what the "unbelieving world" thinks about the existence of God? Do we spend a lot of time attempting to convince people of God's existence? We must not remain silent. I'm hoping that we can see some of the answers to these questions in Paul's letter to the Romans.

Reflecting on one of Pastor Greg's recent sermons, Romans chapter one plays a huge role in understanding something crucial. The apostle Paul is very clear about his description of the nature of God's revelation to all mankind. If we start at verse 18, Paul explains God's wrath being revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness. He says by man's unrighteousness, man suppresses the truth of God. I want to stop here and suggest that man's problem with the existence of God is not lack of evidence or information about God, but the willful suppression of truth about Him. If we suppress the truth about something, that means we must have the truth first.

As we read further, how do we and everyone else, know of God and to what extent? Paul says it is plain. Why? Because God himself has MADE IT PLAIN to everyone. May I suggest that whatever God makes plain...we don't need to make "plainer." Paul continues with the evidences of God's nature having been CLEARLY PERCEIVED in the things that have been made, ever since the creation of the world. To what purpose is this revelation? It is so they/we are without excuse. Verse 21 says that "For although they KNEW God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks...they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened."

First Peter 3:15 calls us to set apart Christ as Holy, always being prepared to give a defense of the faith. The word used for defense in the Greek is "apologia." This is where we get the term "apologetics" from. What is interesting is that in Romans chapter one, Paul uses another form of this word for those that are "without excuse" or in the Greek, "anapologetos." We are called to give a reasoned defense in 1 Peter, but in Romans, Paul explains those who suppress the truth of God are WITHOUT a reasoned defense. It seems clear that any attempt at arguing against the existence of the living God is not only impossible, but also complete foolishness!

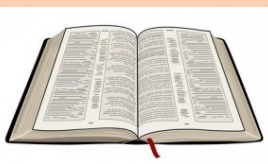
What are some applications that are meaningful to us in our efforts to win people to Christ? First, set apart Christ as Holy. We should believe what our Lord has already revealed about those whom we wish to engage with. Recognize the truth about them - they know God. Humankind knows with certainty that God exists. Let me take this one step further and suggest that everyone not only knows God, but they know THE God. Paul does not offer a generic deity; he does not propose that people have some sort of fuzzy idea that something is "out there" up in the sky. They know with certainty the true and living God, being made crystal clear by the revelation of that self-same God such that they are without excuse.

Secondly, let our "methodology" be consistent with our theology, or better yet, Paul's theology. Does this change our outlook on how we respond to folks? Does it change our "strategy" in evangelism? How much different would our witness be knowing that everyone knows this God? Are we spending too much time trying to convince people of something that God has already made plain and clear?

As we seek to win people to Christ, it's my hope and prayer that we, as redeemed sinners, engage in a way that is obedient to and consistent with God's revelation. We serve a mighty God! Let Paul's words strengthen our defense as we go out into the world. Let us strike straight blows to the sinner's heart that bring about conviction, repentance, and faith.

With love and prayer

Andy.



## A Word from Pastor Greg

### The Blessings & Benefits of Forgiveness: Forgiveness Is Christianity At Its Highest Peak!

Each month when I begin to write this article, my mind is filled with ideas and my heart is pumped with emotion. I've always enjoyed putting words on paper and even though I have no idea how many people read these short essays, that really doesn't matter. Often I start and restart, wanting to glorify and honor the Lord, and seeking to express something that might be an encouragement to at least one reader. The topic of forgiveness has been rolling around in my head for quite a while. I realize that I won't be able to cover everything that could/would/should be said about it, but I'd like to say enough about this marvelous gift from God to influence you to consider how **forgiveness should affect our actions and attitudes every single day! We should never underestimate its value to our personal welfare.**

With that said, an initial reality that's essential for us to process is that ***unforgiveness is a toxic poison that fills our hearts with bitterness, and deceives our thinking in a way that distorts our entire perception of life.*** Among other harmful emotions, anger, anxiety, and aggression often begin to overshadow and overwhelm us. ***Therefore, having an accurate understanding of God's capacity for forgiveness is fundamental to our spiritual, personal, physical, and emotional health. In other words, finding forgiveness for ourselves and then extending forgiveness to others will provide good medicine for our souls.***

Please notice and carefully read the insert of Psalm 32 in the box on the right side of the page. In this passage, based on his personal experience, David encourages others to seek the Lord's amazing grace and goodness by acknowledging and confessing sin. He also describes the pain, sorrow, and tensions that will mount up when we try to hide or pretend that we're not influenced or impacted by sinful temptations and tendencies. David's counsel/advice in verses 6—11 is direct, straightforward, very personal, and true. We can avoid unnecessary distress and enjoy God's peace and deliverance if we pray for God's power and protection any/every time sin begins to tempt or trouble us. Verse 9 appears to be David's description of himself when Nathan came to confront him about his horrible sin with Bathsheba. It's sad when we are forced to confess our missteps and shortcomings. ***I'd like to conclude this article with a few specific points of application. As authentic (faithful) followers of Christ, we all have God's Spirit living in us, but until we arrive in the glory of Heaven, none of us are immune from the potential and power of sin.***

- 1— God's forgiveness thru Christ's sacrifice is an amazing blessing! It's a reason for great rejoicing every day!
- 2— *If we, like David, have experienced the mercy of being pardoned from the penalty of sin and have received the grace of being granted forgiveness for our sins, we should tell others about it.*
- 3— Extending forgiveness can be challenging, but we should always remember that unforgiveness is toxic, often causing unnecessary distress and difficulty. God will help us do what's right!
- 4— *Because we've received forgiveness from God, the words of Paul in Ephesians 4:31—32 should resonate in us. "Don't allow bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander, or malice to overwhelm you. Instead, be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." When forgiveness takes hold of us, our actions and attitudes will change!*

—Psalm 32 By David; A well—written song.

1 How blessed is the one whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is pardoned.

2 How blessed is the one whose wrongdoing the Lord does not punish, in whose spirit there is no deceit.

3 When I refused to confess my sin, my whole body wasted away, while I groaned in pain all day long.

4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My energy was drained away by the fever heat of summer.

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to You, I no longer tried to hide my wrongdoing. I said, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord."

And then You forgave the guilt of my sins.

6 Therefore, let every one who is godly pray to You when You may be found; Surely when the surging water rises, it will not reach them.

7 You are my hiding place; You protect me from distress. You surround me with songs of deliverance.

8 I will instruct and teach you about how you should live. I will counsel you as I look you in the eye.

9 Don't be like the horse or mule who don't understand, unless they are controlled by a bridle and bit.

10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but the one who trusts in the Lord will be surrounded by lovingkindness!

11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones! Shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart!

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

## Missionary of the Month - Chris and Carrie Davis



School has started... Here's a phrase that we might have taken for granted in the past; but not this year. School has actually begun for Caitlin and Nate as well as at the University of Georgia and we're very grateful.

Some things have changed while others have kind of remained the same. Some of it is done in-person and some is virtual. Our ministry team added two interns this year – Steph Paul and Jessie Denney. Both are former UGA athletes who grew in their faith through our ministry and are now being trained by Carrie.

She meets with them for 2-3 hours each week to go through curriculum and to talk about the bible studies or one-on-one times they lead. Carrie loves leadership development and wants to continue pursuing this in the years to come. She is also

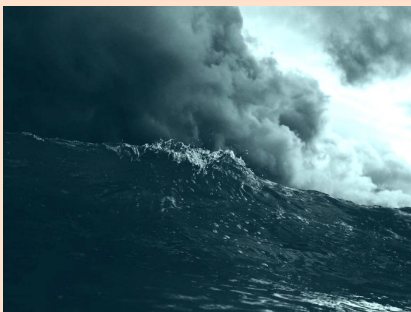
discipling a couple of girls from the equestrian team.

I'm discipling a few of the returning lacrosse players and am looking forward to getting to know the rookies after tryouts. I've also made some inroads with men's rugby – it's a slow process but I'm praying I'll get to speak to the team. Ministry with the Redcoats marching band has really taken off. One of the freshmen who was part of the student-led bible study last year– Langdon – has become a leader this year. He's been faithful to reach out to other redcoats to tell them about the bible study and God has honored those efforts. The study is thriving. We try to meet each week and I'll equip him to lead the bible study and help him grow in his faith.

Overall we are doing well as a family. I feel like it's a mix of being tired, grateful, then having energy and feeling good about things, but at the same time feeling like a lot in the world is changing – it can be a strange place to be in. But we also have a great group of friends here who we get to lean on. We know who God is and He doesn't change, which is a relief. We're all grateful for that. Caitlin is wrapping up cross country, which she loves. Nate is having a great time playing with his friends throughout the week. It's so great to see them outside, playing and enjoying their teachers and school.

Thank you to all of you and we look forward to seeing you all soon.

### Missions Trip



We are planning our annual trip to aid in disaster relief with Reach Global (division of the Evangelical Free Church of America) This year we are headed to the New Orleans area, which was affected by hurricane Ida. We will leave March 5 and be returning March 12. The cost is \$340 plus travel expenses. We will be rebuilding houses and ministering to those who God puts in our path. No skills are needed as they have great training and wonderful



discernment placing people where their strengths are. We typically travel by car as a group but other arrangements can be made. We will have a meeting after church on Oct. 24th for those that are interested. If you want more information please contact Tim and Sue Diestler, 920-851-3104, or [diestlerts@aol.com](mailto:diestlerts@aol.com).

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](http://appletonfreechurch.org)



#### Church Office Hours

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