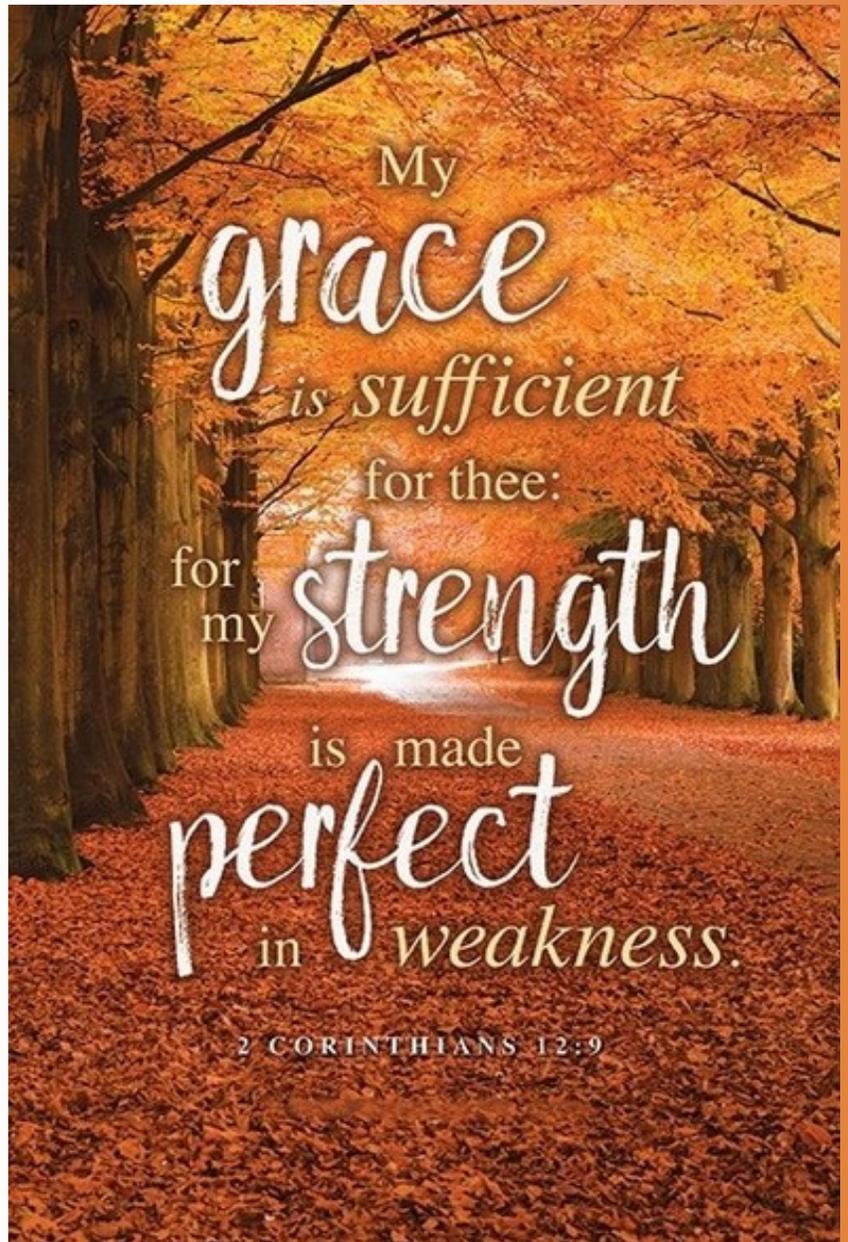




Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour on Sunday, November 7.

Inside this issue

- A Word from Pastor Blake.....2
- Updates & Opportunities.....3
- Children's/Youth Ministry.....4
- Elders Report.....5
- A Word from Pastor Greg.....6
- Missionary of the Month.....7



Church Office Closed

**Thursday, & Friday, November 25-26
for Thanksgiving Weekend.**

Have a joyous and blessed Thanksgiving.



A Word from Pastor Blake

Be Encouraged: The Gates of Hell will not Prevail against the Church

I am so thankful that Appleton Community Evangelical Free Church called me to be their pastor. If God gave me the opportunity to pick everything I wanted in student ministry, I don't think it would be nearly as good as the student ministry at ACEFC. I told this to the students as we were debriefing during Operation Fox Valley because their love for Jesus filled me with joy.

It seems like we are constantly hearing bad news. Every poll is reminding us that the church is losing ground in our culture and less and less people are trusting Jesus as their Savior. The numbers seem to be getting worse for every generation. All these things may be true, but God's word gives us hope.

Jesus asked the disciples, "who do people say that the Son of Man is?" Peter confesses, "You are the Christ, son of the Living God." Jesus praises Peter and says, "on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." There is much debate on this passage, but I will condense pages of commentary to summarize it like this. The church will push forward the gospel even in the midst of opposition. Jesus, the Son of the Living God is building his church and Satan and his cohorts will not be able to stop it.

These verses still ring true even when it seems like we are losing ground to the "gates of hell." God is raising up the next generation of Christians right before our eyes!

This summer we did a local serving trip called Operation Fox Valley. The youth students helped build a memorial for Logan Collison, planned a Backyard Bible Club, and hosted a teen night for their friends. My heart was full of joy as I watched the students serve. One student described building a fire pit as "digging a hole just to fill it back up." That was a great way to put it and they did it without complaining.

The students planned an entire Backyard Bible Club for Marshall and Shay Legg's neighborhood. The students prepared all the lessons, planned all the crafts and games, and led the worship time. Fifteen kids heard the gospel over those three days! The students are helping to raise up the next generation of the church.

The last night of the serving trip they planned a teen night and invited their friends to the church to hang out, play games, eat pizza, and watch "A Case for Christ". They wanted to start ministering to their friends and share Jesus with them. The movie created ways to have gospel conversations with their friends. Some of their friends even come to youth group now and are asking questions about Christianity.

We just got back from Fall Fest where I continue to see growth in their lives. They spent a weekend having fun and learning deep theological truths. They unpacked those truths in small groups and applied them to their lives. Some of the students at teen night also came to Fall Fest! We had new students come and our students welcomed them into their community. I saw the fruit of the Spirit on display as I watched them interact with each other and other youth groups.

Be encouraged! Satan may look like He is prevailing but he's not. The numbers in the church here in the US may ebb and flow but God is still working. You can see if for yourself if you come on a Sunday night for youth group or a Wednesday night for Awana.

You will see students encouraging one another, loving one another, and bearing each other's burdens. We end at 8:00 but students hang out until 8:30 most nights. Sometimes they are even staying late for small group as they wrestle with understanding scripture and applying it to their lives.

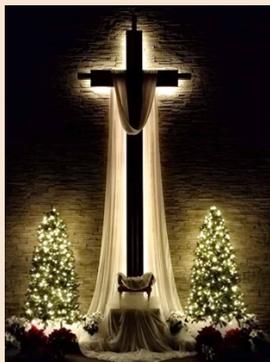
I love this church and I love these students. I will say it again. I don't think I could have written a better scenario than the one God orchestrated. I am grateful for Lisa, Matt D. Matt B, Ramsey, and Katrina who have been discipling these students for years and continue to disciple the students. I am also thankful for the students as they do the work of pushing the gospel forward in an unbelieving world.



¹Matthew 16:13-20

²The Expositors Bible Commentary, DA Carson 370

Updates and Opportunities



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 22nd & 23rd). 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



Operation Christmas Child

This year boxes are due at church by **November 14**. You may also build a shoebox online. 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 Tea

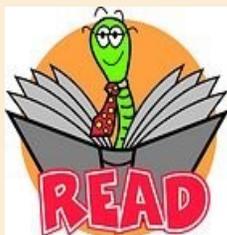
Ladies, you are invited to participate in our annual Christmas Tea! It will be held on Saturday, December 4. The time is 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. with the doors opening at 10:30. We will have a luncheon with Deb Schauland as our speaker. The \$15.00 tickets will be sold starting Sunday, October 31. Come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



The Nest

Get ready for a night of BINGO! November Nest will be on the 9th at 7pm. We will be playing Bingo, winning prizes and spending some time in fellowship. We can't wait to see all you lovely ladies there.

Stephanie Zaruba



Church Library

Our church library is a great resource, filled with books by Christian authors, both fiction and nonfiction. Looking for growth in your faith walk, check out the new books by Erwin Lutzer, David Jeremiah or Joel C. Rosenberg. New biographies and self help books are also available. Pamphlets to assist with witnessing are also located near the entrance to the sanctuary and may be taken for use at no cost.



**Come and join us November 14 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.



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 Noah.

Verse: Noah did everything God told him to do. Genesis 7:5

Sprouts/Evergreens ages: 4 years old through 5th grade.

This month we will finish up our unit on Paul in the book of Acts.

Verse: Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. Acts 16:31

Questions to ask your children:

What did people call Paul before his name was changed?

Who changed Paul and how did that happen?

When Paul and Silas were in jail what did they do? What can you learn from this?

How did Paul travel?

Challenge them to name 5 facts about Paul.



Thank you for all your prayer. We had a wonderful time at Lake Lundgren.

Join us Sunday nights from 6:00 pm-8:00 pm at the church.

Everyone is welcome!



What a fun October we had at Awana! Our Awana club continues to grow and we are still registering families. This month we welcome 2 more new families! We also had a great time dressing up as animals for our Noah's Ark Night. Our club decided to make Pastor Blake a present for his birthday and turned him into a present for our first Sparks vs. T & T leader challenge. Mr. Josh and Ms. Shay put out a great effort, but Mr. Matt and Pastor Blake were the winners!



Elders Report



Twice a year, we are forced to think about time as we try to remember whether we need to set our clocks forward or backward. In just a few short days we will need to set our clocks back 1 hour to payback the hour that was borrowed back in March. While society attempts to manipulate time, it is always good to remember how precious our days are. I believe that time is one of the most valuable resources that God gives to everyone. On any given day we are all given the same number of hours, regardless of who we are or how we try to define ourselves. What differentiates time from other resources God provides (money & relationships) is that it cannot be saved (time wasted is time spent) and you cannot work harder to earn more. All we can do is be careful with what we have and be mindful of how it is spent. Fortunately, we aren't left on our own to figure out how to be wise with time, but the Bible provides great wisdom for how God wants us to use His resources.

Recognize Life on Earth is Brief Compared to Eternity in Heaven

Psalm 39:4-5 Show me, Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you.

Psalm 90:12 Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom

As the Bible points out, the days in our earthly life are brief when compared to eternity in Heaven. With the brevity of life, we need to be diligent to spend the time we have on earth wisely. We should spend time on earthly pleasures that glorify God: spending time with our family, showing love to our neighbors, telling others how Jesus has changed our lives and made us a new creation, volunteering to serve where God has designed us to serve. While life is brief and we called to serve, God also demonstrated the importance of resting and refocusing with his example during the creation. God was diligent and created the earth and everything on it in 6 days but took time to rest on the 7th day. Since we were created in God's image, it is important to remember to work hard and to also take the necessary time to rest.

Make the Most of Every Opportunity

Ephesians 5:15 – 17 Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

In Ephesians 5, Paul encourages all believers to be like God and love others as Christ loves us. He then warns believers to be careful with how we live. God wants us to live our lives reflecting the light of God and pleasing the Lord and not living for our fleshly desires. In verses 15-17, Christians are encouraged to make the most of every opportunity we are given, i.e., spending our time wisely and being diligent with every opportunity God presents to us. In the August and September ACEFC newsletter articles by Tim and Andy, they both expressed the importance of sharing the gospel message with those around us at every opportunity that we can.

Trust in God to Help Establish Your Plans and Guide Your Time Usage

Proverbs 3:9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops

Proverbs 16:3 Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails

As with money, God wants us to give some of His resources back to Him. As believers, we should spend time in prayer thanking God for what He has provided and gaining clarity for how He wants us to live our days and lives. Through prayer time, we align our hearts to God. With our focus on God, we will be more likely to use our time wisely and be attuned to the plans that God has for us.

A few questions to reflect on:

Do I prioritize my time on areas of life that glorify God?

Have I been making the most of every opportunity that God has provided?

Where am I spending time that may not be the wisest?

Do I allow God to direct the use of my time?

Some “Additional Thoughts” from Pastor Greg

Typically when I write an article for November, I begin to focus attention on the Thanksgiving Season. So in keeping with that tradition, I'll begin this by saying that there are many different directions I could go in expressing my sincere gratitude—there's a long list of people and things for which I'm thankful. Over the last couple months on Sunday mornings, I've been teaching about our ACEFC Statement of Faith and the past few weeks we've been looking at the importance of the Bible. This emphasis has given me an opportunity to review some biblical truths that help me realize how deeply thankful I am for all that God has revealed to us in His inspired Word. I wholeheartedly agree with the Psalmist, *“Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, so I might observe it continually. Give me understanding that I might observe Your Law and keep with all my heart. Guide me in the path of Your instructions, for I find pure delight in them.”*

My preparation for this study has opened my eyes to many things that are especially relevant for anyone who's a faithful follower of our Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout history, the authority of the Bible has been questioned and challenged by many skeptics who are also considered to be scholars by some people. But in more recent times, these critics have become more aggressive and it seems as if many churches like ours have been impacted and influenced by this cultural trend. Please observe the four sections of 2 Timothy inserted on the right side of this page. This is a very simple summary of what Paul wrote to Timothy at a time when Timothy was facing an increasing challenge from critics who were teaching some ideas that opposed what Paul and Timothy had taught the Ephesians. We could look at this *four—part—summary* as a “connect the dots” exercise to help us guard the incredible integrity of God's Word.

—Dot #1— In 2 Timothy 1:12, Paul reminds us that his perseverance was a result of knowing God's faithfulness in a personal way. Some people question God and His Word by saying they no longer believe (trust) what they were taught to believe. Trusting God involves knowing Him and literally entrusting ourselves to His care. When we take note of how many blessings and benefits we've received from God, that strengthens our faith.

—Dot #2— 2 Timothy 2:15 encourages and exhorts us to make every effort to understand what God's Word says. We should meditate and memorize what it says by prayerfully asking God to teach us so we can accurately teach others.

—Dot #3— Knowing God's Word is essential if we want to be properly equipped to serve the Lord. It's our primary resource and anything else we read, study, or use to prepare should completely agree with the Bible!

—Dot #4— In 2 Timothy 4:2—4, we're reminded to always be prepared to insert relevant biblical truth into conversations we have with others. It's important to do this with a true sense of humility and gentleness. But as we try to convey Truth to others, we're providing them with something that the Holy Spirit could use to draw them into a relationship with the Lord. In our deeply divided society, most people listen closely to things that agree with their views—it's often difficult to hear things that contradict one's beliefs. But God has called us to speak the Truth with love. It's a wonderful privilege to realize that we've been given the Truth and we also have the special role of presenting it to others!

—2 Timothy 1:12

For this reason (God called me to serve Him) I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have trusted and I am absolutely convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

—2 Timothy 2:15

Diligently make every effort to present yourself before God as an approved worker who does not need to be ashamed, teaching the message of truth accurately.

—2 Timothy 3:16—17

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the person dedicated to God may be properly equipped for every good work.

—2 Timothy 4:2—4

Preach the word; be prepared and persistent whether it's convenient or inconvenient; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound teaching; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers who will match their own desires, and will turn their ears away from the truth and will turn aside to myths and fables.

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

Congregation Rejoices At New Building

"Mother Toltu" was raised as a follower of the Oromo traditional religion, but she committed her life to following Christ when she heard the gospel for the first time. She donated a plot of land from her property to be used for a church, and several other believers contributed funds to the construction of a church as well. However, a mob of local Oromo religious groups attacked the believers and tore down the church they had built. With VOM's support, the church building was reconstructed in 2021. "Because we live in the countryside, we don't know people that can help us. All we could do was pray to God," one of the believers said. "God has heard our prayers and sent you to help us." After construction had ended, local church leaders visited the congregation to see the new church building. "Mother Toltu praised God for the support given to them and expressed her happiness for seeing the rebuilding of the church," a front-line worker said. Pray that God will bless this congregation as they meet in their new church building. Pray that the new structure will show Christ to those who tore down the original church building, and pray that they may seek God and find life in Christ.



Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

ROMANS 8:35

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

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
Phone 920-735-9971

We're on the WEB!
appletonfreechurch.org

Church Office Closed

Thursday, & Friday, November 25-26
for Thanksgiving Weekend.

Have a joyous and blessed Thanksgiving.

