

# MARCH



Don't forget to....

Spring Forward!

Sunday, March 13 is when we move ahead into Spring. Set your clock one hour ahead before you go to bed Saturday, March 12.

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# A Word from Pastor Blake

## Will the wicked Prosper forever? A meditation on Psalm 94

This is not the way it is supposed to be! Why does it seem like the world is falling apart? God, You declared it very good in the beginning, but it seems very bad now. These are the thoughts that keep running through my mind! My heart is heavy. I am trying to find words to pray as we watch videos of Russia attacking Ukraine. I think about fellow believers in Ukraine and I can't imagine what they are going through. I think about the people I met when I went there on a mission trip in 2009. I check their Facebook pages to see if they have any updates. I think about a former youth student who is a missionary in Russia. I wonder how this affects his ministry and how he is feeling right now. Does he have the same questions that I do? Is he wondering why it all seems to be falling apart? How are the Russian believers processing all of this?

I am also reflecting on Afghanistan. It seems like so long ago that I was watching the news of the Taliban taking over the country again, but it was only 6 months ago. It amazes me how quickly I have forgotten about all the turmoil there. I wonder how many brothers and sisters in Christ are left in Afghanistan?

Psalm 94 has been a comfort to my soul and a guide in these times of turmoil. I often find myself praying this Psalm. I am reminded that there is nothing new under the sun. God's people have always felt these struggles in a sinful world.

The last couple of days I have been praying 94:3-7. How long will the wicked celebrate? They are crushing your people, oh God! They even mock you God and say that you must not exist!

It seems like the wicked are prospering. It seems like the godless nations can do what they want. It seems like false gods are winning. I must remind myself that what seems to be true isn't always true. Look where the Psalmist puts his confidence in the rest of Psalm 94.

<sup>14</sup> The LORD will not leave his people  
or abandon his heritage,  
<sup>18</sup> If I say, "My foot is slipping,"  
your faithful love will support me, LORD.  
<sup>19</sup> When I am filled with cares,  
your comfort brings me joy.  
<sup>22</sup> But the LORD is my refuge;  
my God is the rock of my protection.  
<sup>23</sup> He will pay them back for their sins  
and destroy them for their evil.  
The LORD our God will destroy them.

### What can we do?

**Pray** – God is in control of everything. Isaiah 45:6-7 tells us there is no other God. He forms light and creates darkness. He makes well-being and creates calamity. He is the Lord who does all things. When we pray, we pour out our heart to an all powerful and sovereign God. We are placing all our cares on Him. We ask Him to bring comfort and joy!

**Trust** – We must move from bringing our cares to God to trusting in God. He is our refuge and strong hold! We find protection in Him! Pray for your cares and the cares of the world but don't just pray that the circumstance will go away. Pray for God to work in your heart during the circumstance. I am praying that my fellow brothers and sisters will experience peace that surpasses all understanding. I am praying that they will have patience to endure the suffering. I am praying that God would be glorified in the circumstances. Trust that God is at work in the good and the bad.

**Look to the whole story of the Bible** – A way to help put everything into perspective is to look at the whole storyline of the Bible. When we read the Bible, we see a God who cares for His people and brings them through circumstances that don't always seem good in the moment. Verse 9 in the Psalm says, "He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?" This reminds me of the opening chapters of Exodus when God calls Moses. He says, he has seen Israel's affliction, heard their cries, and knows their suffering (Ex. 2:24-5, 3:7). Do you know how this story began? God promises that Israel will be servants of the Egyptians in Genesis 15:13-14. This was told to Abraham years before it happened. Fast forward a couple of generations to Abraham's great grandson named Joseph. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers. There was a famine in the land, so his brothers came to Egypt to get grain. Joseph became second in command and revealed himself to his brothers. His family moved to Egypt and when Joseph died, a new Pharaoh came to power and enslaved all the people of Israel. We can read the story of Israel's enslavement and Exodus in 2 hours. There were slaves for 400 years!

We can hear about Ukraine and Afghanistan, and we don't know how long the suffering will last but we do know that God hears and cares for His children in those countries.

**Hold on to His Promises** – The Psalm ends by the Psalmist declaring that God will pay back the wicked for their sins. We as well can hold onto the promise that Christ will return. All sin will eventually be wiped out and nations will have peace. We can praise God and look forward to that day. Don't lose heart! We can move from wondering how long, to, we know you have this God.

# Updates and Opportunities



## The Nest

Ladies, come and join us on March 8 at 7:00 p.m.. We will be decorating succulent pots with your own succulent's to bring home. Amy Pankow will be speaking on Colossians. Let's have some great fellowship and spend a night together!



## Missions Trip to New Orleans

Please pray for the missions team as we prepare to go to New Orleans March 5-12. 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.

## La Courte Oreilles Reservation Trip

The Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation trip is scheduled for April 29-May 1. Please contact the Diestler's for the paperwork and details at

[920-851-3104](tel:920-851-3104) or [Diestlerts@aol.com](mailto:Diestlerts@aol.com).



## Mission of the Month



We will be collecting NEW hygiene and cleaning items for local crisis agencies, Feb. 13 – March 6, through "Help for the Homeless" hygiene drive. Please place your donations in the *Help for the Homeless* collection box located in the foyer by March 6. Most urgently needed items are laundry soap, kitchen size trash bags (shelters go thru LOTS of these), shampoo, cleaning supplies, diapers, toilet tissue, and feminine care. Your donations will remain in this community.

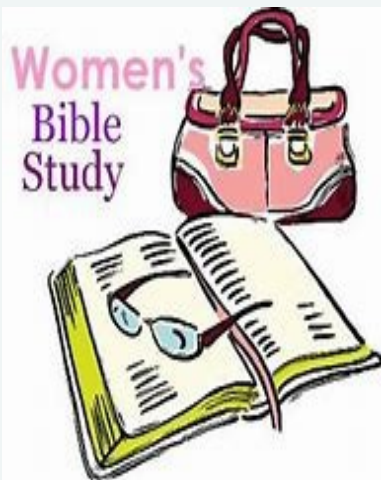
## "Let's Do Lunch"

Come and join us March 20 at Pizza Ranch  
(5450 W. Integrity Way).

We have reserved a community room for after church so we can spend some time with one another after our church service. This is a nice opportunity to enjoy fellowship with others from our church family.



Women's  
Bible  
Study



Join us for our new study beginning Monday March 14 at 6:00 pm or Wednesday March 16 at 9:00 am. We will be studying the Book of Colossians for the next 6 weeks. We live in a world of scarcity. We say, "I don't have enough time... maybe when we have more money... if only I had a little more help..." But Scripture says if we have Jesus, we have enough.

In this 6-week study of Colossians titled *He Is Enough*, you don't need hours a day to enjoy this Bible Study. Each day's study contains two paths:

**Snack on the Go:** a bite-size morsel of truth to chew on throughout your busy day

**FEAST:** a dig-deep guide to maximizing the "meat" you're getting out of your Bible study

You can enjoy this study in whatever way works best for you. Discover the joy and freedom that abounds when we know deep in our hearts that Jesus truly is enough. Please contact Ruth in the church office if you are interested.

# Growing God's Way Ministries

## What's Happening in Children's Ministry:

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

This month the Sprouts will be learning about Joshua.

**Verse:** Love the Lord your God with all your heart... Mark 12:30

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

This month using The Gospel Project, the children will be learning more about Jesus the Messiah, Jesus' Miracles, Jesus and Nicodemus.

**Verse:** John 3:16



## KIDS' BIBLE CHALLENGE

Since many of the adults are doing a Bible reading challenge, I thought it would be a great idea to have the children join them. If your child reads or has someone read the Bible to them during the week, they can fill out the Bible Challenge slip and return it Sunday morning. The goal is that we have life long learners of the Word, that they will crave His Word everyday.



*Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God' "*

*Matthew 4:4*

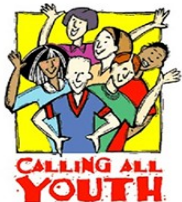


Join us on March 2nd for our Pie-the-Leader event! The top 3 leaders with the most money collected will get a pie in the face. All proceeds go to our mission project to reach kids around the world with the Gospel of Christ through the Awana program.



The week of March 9th is also Mission Week, so we will not have regular club. Instead, clubbers will have some options to complete a mission project at home or in their community.

March 16th is Leader Appreciation, so make a card or a note for your leader(s) to show your appreciation. We REALLY appreciate our leaders!



Come and join us on **Sunday nights from 6:00p.m.-8:00p.m.** at the church for our Yamily Gatherings. Everyone is welcome!



## Elders Report—Desmond VanHouten



Throughout my life, I have been able to live in various locations throughout the United States. Most of my life has been lived in midwestern states (Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin & Ohio), but I have also had experiences of living in Texas, Virginia, and New Mexico. One thing that always amazed me was how the various dialects in the different states affected the pronunciation or slang phrases that were used. Whenever I first moved to an area, it took some time to figure out how some words were expected to be pronounced or what word I was supposed to use: what do you call carbonated beverages (pop, soda, coke???) or a winter hat (stocking cap, toboggan, beanie?). Even simply moving within the Midwest posed some challenges with the dialect as Rachael needed to explain what a bubbler was to me. It amazed me that while we in the United States are united in our language, the English language isn't uniform across regions.

While the words are very similar between unity and uniformity, the definitions are quite different. Unity is the state of being united or joined as a whole while uniformity is the state of being the same in all cases and at all times.

As Christians, how does God desire us to live?

God did not create humans to fight but rather to love. In Genesis we learn that God designed us (people) in His image (Genesis 1:26), meaning that we were designed to be relational and loving. People having a need for relationships, due to God's design, is further reinforced in Genesis 2 when God states that it is not good for man to be alone, resulting in His creation of Eve from Adam. God's perfect design was to have man and woman existing together and living in fellowship.

The beauty of the Bible and God's plan is that He did not leave us on our own to figure out what living in fellowship with each other means. He gives us instructions in His Word to guide us. The Bible states that we are to love God and to love our neighbors (Matthew 22:36 – 40). God also helps guide us in our relationships by teaching us about unity. Philippians 2:1-12 teaches us about Biblical unity. God calls Christians to be unified in Christ, meaning to be of one mind, spirit, mission, and goal. As Christians, we are to understand that unity in Christ means we all believe:

We are sinners who need a savior.

Christ is God's Son who was sent to save us from sin through His sacrifice.

We are to share the Gospel of Christ with the world so that people who are lost may find salvation through Christ.

Though society would love us to believe so, unity is not uniformity. How we go about worshipping God, living our Christian lives, and sharing the Gospel is not explicitly prescribed. In the Bible we see instances where people can be Christians (living in unity) but following different paths. Paul gives examples that it is acceptable to not live uniformly in 1 Corinthians. He states that with Christ it is acceptable to be circumcised or to not be circumcised. He states that it is acceptable to live a Christian life unmarried and it is acceptable to live a Christian life married. Just like today, differences in uniformity were causing divisiveness in the society and the church, and God (through Paul) demonstrated that uniformity is not the expectation. As we reflect on our own lives and relationships, if there are areas where we are not living in unity we should address those, but we should be mindful that unity is not uniformity. We were created in God's image but that image is unique for each of us.

Desmond

### This is a Trustworthy Statement That Deserves Our Full Acceptance And Careful Attention: Our Hope Is Found When It's Fixed On The Living

*It's very likely that most of us would acknowledge that many events and experiences from the past two years have been "unusual and unexpected," as well as "challenging and chaotic." I won't bother to make a list of what's taken place, but I'll summarize by saying the overall level of fear and anxiety has impacted our lives and ministries. But recently the news cycle has been saturated with rumors and predictions of war and now we know that Russia has attacked Ukraine. Obviously, this has raised the rate of worldwide concern over the impact of war. How should we respond and react? **Proverbs 21:1 reads, "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes."** God isn't caught off guard by anything that happens. It's hard for us to understand how all this works or fits together, but He has placed every leader in the world in the role they have. It's essential for us to recognize that we worship and serve a sovereign God! (There's more about this later!)*

*Last week Franklin Graham sent out a prayer request asking people to pray for Vladimir Putin. Sadly, Graham was attacked by many, even some pastors and Christian leaders. They questioned whether Putin was worthy of our prayers. That illustrates how our secular society has lost sight of what God desires from those of us who are authentically following Christ. Please note what Paul wrote years ago to instruct the Church. All of us should be praying for those who are in authority, as well as for those who are affected by what's happening in the places of conflict, strife, and war around the globe. **1 Timothy 2:1—4 exhorts us to pray by saying, "As a top priority, then, I urge that appeals and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all people, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, Who desires all people to be saved and to come the knowledge and understanding of the Truth."** Prayer should never be a last or final resource—it's a top priority! We should be praying for those in authority throughout the world, as well as those who are leading both our government (local, state, and national) and the Church. Pray for wisdom and for God's message of Truth to change lives!*

*Finally, I want to address the fear and anxiety that's having such a large impact on most everyone within our society. Earlier in this article, it was noted that we serve and worship a sovereign God Who is never caught off guard. Not only is He absolutely aware and alert with regard to what's taking place, in some manner that's beyond our human understanding, His plans and purposes are being carried out in a perfect way. **Please consider Romans 8:28 where we're encouraged by these words of Truth, "We know that God orchestrates all things to fit together for good for those who are called according to His perfect plans and purposes."** During times like we're facing throughout our society, culture, community, country, and the whole wide world, those of us who have totally trusted in the Lord's promises and provisions can rest assured that "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands!"*

Our hope is built on the Truth of God's Word, the Trustworthiness of God's Worth, and the Triumph of Christ's Work when He died, arose, and ascended into Heaven as our Lord and Savior Who's coming back to rescue us from the future wrath/tribulation to come!

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

Pastor Greg

## Mission of the Month— Jim and Ginger Moore



Dear Appleton E-Free,

We are Jim and Ginger Moore. 25 years ago you sent us out to be missionaries with Wycliffe Bible Translators! Hard to believe it has been that long since we were sitting in your midst and a JAARS pilot came to speak about how many people groups in the world did not have God's word in their language. He also spoke to us of Wycliffe's need for computer personnel and God spoke to our hearts. Over the years, we have served in different places and different roles, all in support of the work of Bible translation. *Please pray for all to have the Word in their language.*

Jim presently works remotely from our home in NC in the area of digital publishing. This area of ministry takes translated Scriptures and makes them available to local language communities all over the world through development of websites and phone applications. The focus is on languages that have little or no Scripture available in this form. In some languages, this is the only means of access to Scripture, as the Bible is not allowed in written form. The goal is to make God's Word more readily and easily available to any language community. Due to the pandemic, travel to areas of need have been restricted and the work of training locals has been done remotely, but face-to-face workshops are easier. Thankfully, things are opening up and a workshop was held recently in Cameroon. One is planned for Indonesia in July. *Please pray for these workshops and for travel to resume.*

Our family is well. Ginger retired from hospital nursing and volunteers at the JAARS clinic. Our kids are all married and away. Natalie and Francis are in England, Abby and Sam in SC, Mitch and Elizabeth in NC. We have one grandchild and one on the way. Being grandparents has been a delight! *Please pray for all of us that we would love the Lord and walk closely with Him.*

In closing, we would like to thank you as a church for your friendship, love and support these 25 years. We would never have been here without you! Prayerfully, we can visit you soon.

Here is a link to a short video about current needs for Bible translation.

<https://youtu.be/GpXwXYE2H4k>

In Christ,  
Jim and Ginger Moore



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)



We're on the Web!  
[applefreechurch.org](http://applefreechurch.org)

Appleton Community Evangelical Free Church  
2490 West Capitol Drive  
Appleton, WI 54914  
Phone 920-735-9971

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

