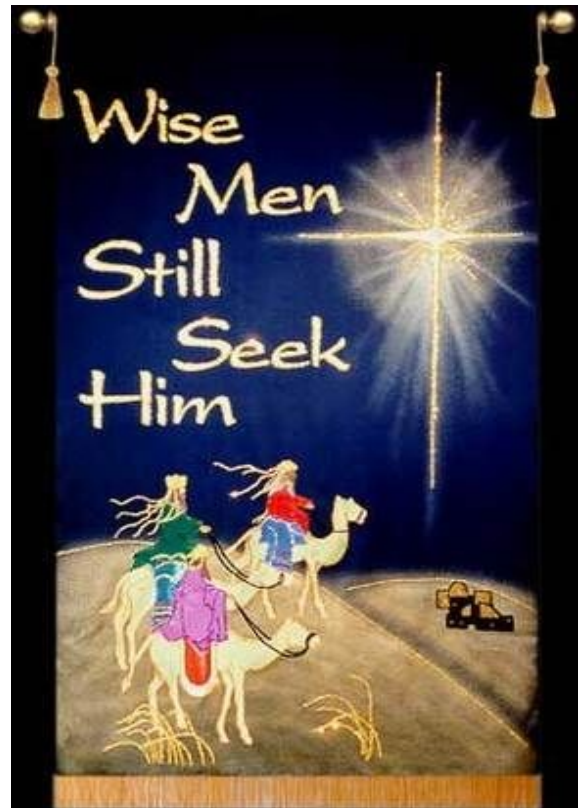




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A Word from Pastor Blake

Dear ACEFC Family,

It is with a heavy heart that I am resigning from Appleton Community Evangelical Free Church. I have accepted a call to become a pastor at a church in St. Cloud, Minnesota. This was not an easy decision for us to make. Kayleen and I spent much time in prayer and felt God calling us back to Minnesota.

All of you are probably experiencing many different emotions after hearing this and I understand. I am feeling many different emotions as well. Some days I don't even know which emotion I am feeling.

What I can confidently say is that it has been a joy to be your pastor! God in His sovereignty planned that Kaylee and I would move here and become part of your family. I am so thankful for His control because His plans are perfect. I could not have planned a better congregation to serve. You have shown us kindness, compassion, love, encouragement, and care.

I can't say enough good things about the people of this church. Kayleen and I will leave with eternal friendships and eternal memories. There have been many moments of fun and laughter. There have been hard moments that have made us closer, like living through a worldwide pandemic.

I will miss all of you at ACEFC. I will miss worshipping with you on Sunday mornings. I will miss serving with you at La Courte Oreilles and in New Orleans. I will even miss the car rides to these far away mission locations. I will miss the men's group that gets together and encourages one another. I will miss the coffee and lunch dates. I will miss small groups. I will miss serving and collaborating with the youth leaders. I will miss the hugs while I greet on Sunday morning. I will miss
Pizza Ranch.

I will miss the youth group and all the students! It's easy to look at the world and say, "it's falling apart." Serving with the youth gives me hope for the future. I am amazed by what God is doing in them and through them. They are incredible. You should watch them serve during Operation Fox Valley. I will miss their energy, passion, and love for Jesus.

Now all I can say is thank you. Thank you for calling me to part of the ACEFC family. You have been so patient with me as I learn to be a better pastor.

I will be forever grateful for this opportunity. I love every person here. I hope that our lives stay connected through more than just social media. I long for eternity so that we can tell stories of God's amazing grace.

With Love,

Blake Burton

Updates and Opportunities



Sunday January 22

Immediately following the church

Join us for the annual congregational meeting. Members and attendees are welcome. There will be a financial report and an update on the state of the church.

Women's Bible Study



Calling all ladies? Join us beginning January 16 or 18 for our study in the Gospel of Matthew. We meet Mondays at 6:00 p.m. or Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. The cost is \$15.

Explore the kingdom of God in-depth, learning what the kingdom of God is and how we enter it.



The Nest

Snacks, A Game, Connecting!

Join us Tuesday, January 10 at 7:00 p.m. for an hour of fun, treats and fellowship. All women are welcome. We can't wait to have you join us for the party!



Lake Lundgren Men's Retreat—January 27-29

You can look forward to being challenged from God's Word, hearing testimonies of God's faithfulness and enjoying times of worship. Enjoy some broomball, cross-country skiing, tubing, our annual ice cream sundae bar and more. Then relax by the fires with a hot drink. Come and play hard, eat hearty and enjoy fellowship with other men of God.

**Come and join us January 15 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.



Growing God's Way Ministries

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

Happy 2023! May this year bring many blessings, spiritual growth, and much laughter.

This year our focus for all ministries is PRAYER. Please take time to pray for our church body and check out our monthly prayer focus board.

Colossians 4:2 "Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart."

This month the children will be learning:

That Jeremiah encouraged God's people and Daniel was faithful.

Verse: The Lord your God is with you. Zephaniah 3:17

Big Question this month is, "Where is God?" God is in all places at all times and is always with His people.

Please have your child(ren) in the Evergreen Room, bring their Bibles to class. It has been great seeing the children find verses and read from their Bibles. The older ones pair up with the younger ones

A great way to start the New Year, make a Prayer and Praise Journal with your child.



Wednesday nights at church are fun-filled with our Awana program! Our clubbers have been busy learning verses and enjoying fellowship together. If you, or someone you know would like to serve, we'd love to have you. We have an anticipated maternity leave and a leader moving and could use another adult leader or two for the remainder of the year.

Following a week's break for Christmas, we welcomed our clubbers back on January 4th for PAJAMA Night!



Join us Sunday nights from 6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. at the church.

Everyone is welcome!



Elders Report—Doug Moran



I'm thankful for what this time of year brings. Being able to spend more time with family, working a little less and working more on puzzles with the kids, visiting relatives, giving gifts to loved ones, and eating a lot more than I should.

I'm so grateful for the family that God has blessed me with; an amazing wife, five amazing children, a 91-year-old father, brothers and sisters and close friends. Plus, I'm surrounded by an amazing body of believers. More blessings than I can even count. But I'm most grateful for what we are really celebrating this time of year. Immanuel! God with Us.

Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

This Christmas season I'm reminded of all God's promises:

The Messiah would be the seed of a woman and would crush the head of Satan (Genesis 3:15)

He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)

He would be born in Bethlehem of Judah (Micah 5:2)

He would be of the house of David and His kingdom would last forever (Isaiah 7:16)

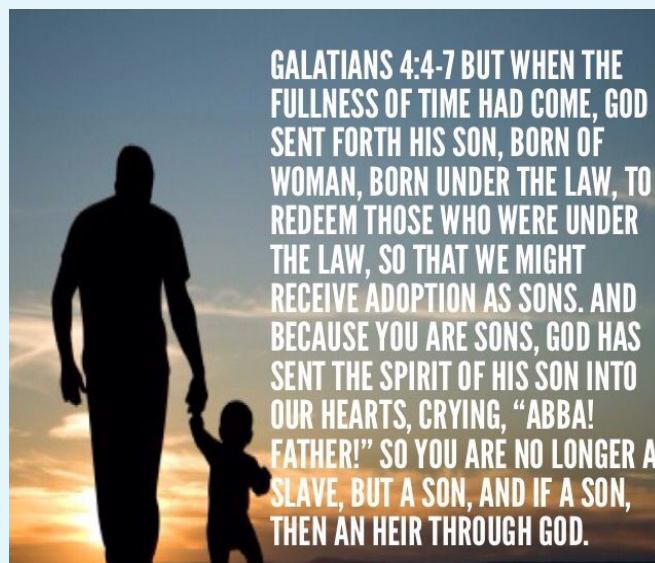
He would be called "Wonderful Counselor", "Mighty God", "Everlasting Father", "Prince of Peace", and would possess an everlasting kingdom (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Only God can predict the future and bring it to pass.

He sent his Son so that we can be with Him forever. What an amazing gift!

I hope that each of us would reflect on these promises and share them with those we love this holiday season.

Merry Christmas!



Church Happenings

Children's Church



Church Happenings

Christmas Tea 2022



Awana



Church Happenings

Children's Christmas Program





**Resolutions?
—or—
Reflections?
2022—2023**



Recently I've heard several people discuss whether making resolutions for the new year is beneficial. Simply stated, I believe prayerful planning in preparation for the future is a good idea. However, I also believe that it's equally important to reflect on how God's grace and goodness have been a source of blessing. With that in mind, please consider what Psalm 111 says:

Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart, In
the company of the upright and in the assembly.

Great are the works of the Lord; They are studied by all who delight in them.

Splendid and majestic is His work, And His righteousness endures forever.

He has made His wonders to be remembered; The Lord is gracious and compassionate.

He has given food to those who fear Him; He will remember His covenant forever.

He has made known to His people the power of His works, In giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of His hands are truth and justice; All His precepts are sure.

They are upheld forever and ever; They are performed in truth and uprightness.

He has sent redemption to His people; He has ordained His covenant forever; Holy
and awesome is His name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;

A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.

In this psalm, we are reminded to praise the Lord privately, personally, and publicly. In verses 2 and 10, there's an exhortation for us to saturate our thoughts/minds with a continual awareness of God's compassionate provision. I'd like to close with the words of the hymn, **Great Is Thy Faithfulness**. I hope this is encouraging to everyone!

(1) Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father There is no shadow of turning with Thee Thou
changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be!

(Chorus) Great is Thy faithfulness Great is Thy faithfulness Morning by morning new mercies I see All I
have needed Thy hand hath provided Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

(2) Summer and winter and springtime and harvest Sun, moon and stars in their courses above Join
with all nature in manifold witness To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love. **(Chorus)**

(3) Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide Strength
for today and bright hope for tomorrow Blessings all mine with 10, 000 beside **(Chorus)**

As we step from 2022 into 2023, I pray, hope, and trust that everyone among our ACEFC family is finding personal peace and spiritual prosperity in God's great and gracious faithfulness. One final biblical exhortation that might resonate with all of us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; And don't lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body; and refreshment to your bones." —Proverbs 3:5–8

Happy New Year! With prayer for God's glory and praise for His grace, Pastor Greg



JESUS Film team members went to show JESUS in the village of Chanddon. Upon arrival near the community, they sensed something was not right. With no moon, all the team members could see were faint silhouettes of buildings and trees. They began playing music through the speakers to attract people from the nearby community to the film showing.

Suddenly, they heard the sound of rustling bushes and the cracking of branches breaking under the feet of 12 radicals rushing toward them. Waving machetes, the radicals screamed, "We are going to kill you!" The three team members fled for their lives, running as fast as they could to their Jeep and sped away. They prayed for nearly a year as to what they should do. They felt God urging them to go back. The members loaded the JESUS film and equipment into the back of their Jeep, along **with** three boxes of Bibles, and headed for the village, several hours away. On the road, they came to a police checkpoint. The officer asked where they were going. They said, "We are headed south." To their surprise, he said "So am I. Can you give me a ride?" He jumped on the back of the Jeep and he sat on a box full of Bibles. They silently prayed and drove on. A little later, the team approached another checkpoint. Popping his head out from the back of the Jeep, the first police officer told the other officers, "I'm with them. You don't need to search the vehicle." The police waved them through. This happened at three more police checkpoints with no searches! The officer asked the film team, "Tell me, what's your destination?" "The village of Chanddon." "Why, that's my village!" he replied, "I'll go with you!" At his request, they drove him to his home where he invited them in for tea. Inside, he asked, "And why have you come to Chanddon?" "We've come to show a film about the Great Prophet Isa (Jesus)." Having experienced their kindness, the officer asked, "What do you need?" "We need permission," they answered. "Oh, that's no problem. My brother is the mayor! Where do you want to show this film?" They asked, "Could we use the town square?" To which the policeman replied: "Sure, but you know we have some radical elements here. So I'm going to have my police force guard you as you show the film." The team prayed and set up their equipment. Once again, as they did a year earlier, they played music as darkness fell to draw the people. This time the crowd sat down and watched JESUS. For the first time in their lives, they learned who Jesus really was. Jesus was not just a great prophet, but he was the Son of God who demonstrated power and authority over sickness and death and was raised from the dead. That night 167 people came to Christ! God is faithful to show up and orchestrate people and circumstances so that His son, Jesus, may be known throughout the world. Even though the film team had to literally run for their lives the first time, God protected them. They then listened to God's urging to go back and He showed up in a big way!

As the Christmas season is upon us, let us celebrate together that some of the villagers of Chanddon will now be able to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas this year. God has graciously allowed all of us to play a part in spreading the story of JESUS all around the world! Thank you for your prayers and finances that support us all throughout the year! We greatly appreciate you and your sacrifices on our behalf so that we can work full time with the JESUS Film Project. Together we are bringing the life changing message of God's love and forgiveness to those who have never heard of the name of Jesus in their own heart language.

Julie and I are trusting God to provide for our current needs. We ask you to please consider giving a year end gift. We are in the process of paying down medical bills for Jenna. In addition to her depression, in August, she was officially diagnosed as having Tourettes syndrome (TS). We had suspected this for years, but it was good to have it officially known. Now we are getting resources for it. She has started going to a specialist that helps teach her how to interrupt her muscle tics and train her body with a counter action in order to make her tics less noticeable.

Instead of blinking hard and closing her eyes, one of her tics, she practices blinking slowly. Instead of turning her head hard to the left several times, another one of her tics, she tries moving her head in the opposite direction slowly, just slightly. She practices on her own for 30 minutes each day and with the specialist once a week for an hour or more. She is seeing slow progress, but it is progress. We are thankful that this route is a non-medicated treatment plan. Please pray along with us that this strategy will greatly reduce her muscle tics. Thank you!

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 EFC
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Regular Church Office Hours
Closed Mondays
Tuesday—Friday
8:30 am – 2:30 pm

