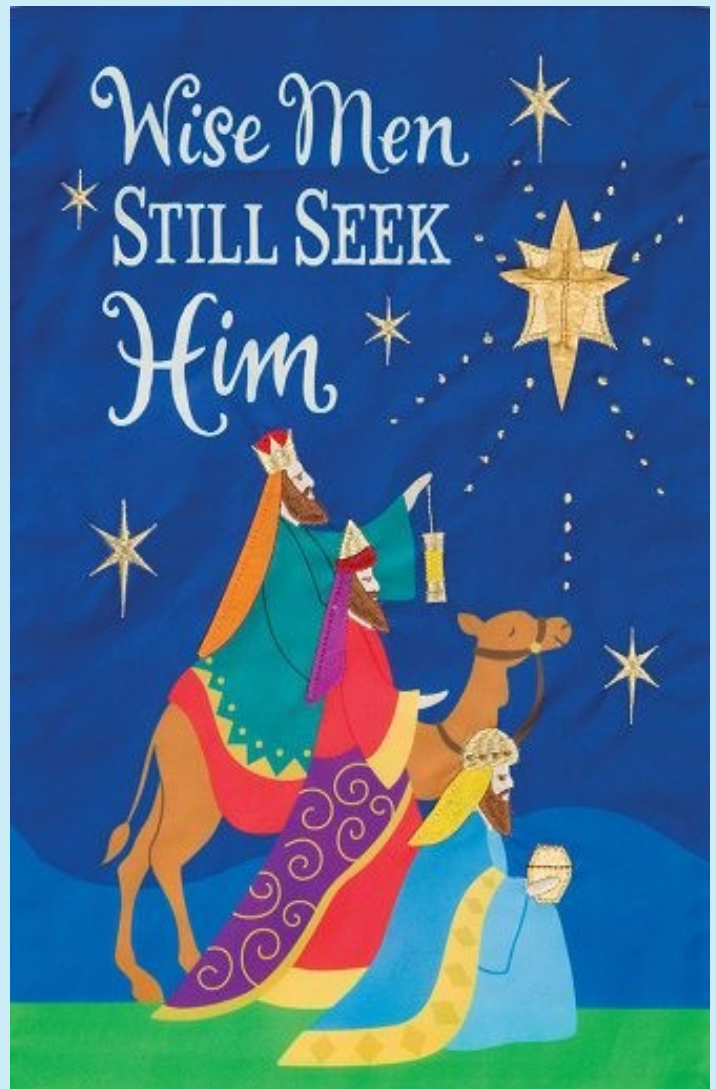




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# January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		6:30 a.m. Discipleship <b>6 p.m. Elders Mtg</b>	6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study 6 p.m. Awana	6:30 p.m. Praise Team		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<b>"Let's Do Lunch"</b>  <b>6-8 p.m. Youth Group</b>	6 p.m. Women's Bible Study	6:30 a.m. Discipleship  <b>7 p.m. The Nest</b>	6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study 10 a.m. Women's Bible Study 6 p.m. Awana	6:30 p.m. Praise Team	<b>Youth Districts</b>	<b>Youth Districts</b>
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<b>Jon Payne Guest Preacher</b>  <b>Youth Districts No Youth Group</b>	6 p.m. Women's Bible Study	6:30 a.m. Discipleship	6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study 10 a.m. Women's Bible Study 6 p.m. Awana	6:30 p.m. Praise Team		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
<b>Annual Meeting After Church</b>  <b>6-8 p.m. Youth Group</b>	6 p.m. Women's Bible Study	6:30 a.m. Discipleship	6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study 10 a.m. Women's Bible Study 6 p.m. Awana	6:30 p.m. Praise Team	<b>Men's Retreat</b>	<b>Men's Retreat</b>
28	29	30	31			
<b>Men's Retreat</b>  <b>6-8 p.m. Youth Group</b>	6 p.m. Women's Bible Study	6:30 a.m. Discipleship	6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study 10 a.m. Women's Bible Study 6 p.m. Awana			

# Updates and Opportunities

## ANNUAL MEETING



**Sunday, January 21**  
**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.



### The Nest

Snacks, A Game, Connecting, and Mary Noggle will be speaking!

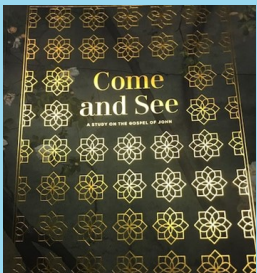
Join us Tuesday, January 9 at 7:00 p.m. for an hour of fun, treats and fellowship.

All women are welcome. We can't wait to have you join us for the party!



### Guest Preacher-Save The Date

Jon Payne, District Superintendent of the Forest Lakes District will be our guest preacher on Sunday, January 14. Please plan on staying after the service for a special time with Jon from 11:30 to 12:30.



### Women's Bible Study

Calling all ladies! Join us beginning January 8 or 10 for our study in the Gospel of John called *Come and See* by Kristin Schmucker.

We meet Mondays at 6:00 p.m. or Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m.

The cost is \$15.



### Lake Lundgren Men's Retreat—January 26-28

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.

### "Let's Do Lunch"

Come and join us January 7 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.

Mark your calendars now with the dates for the rest of the year:

January 7

February 18

March 17

April 21

May 19

June 9

July 21

August 18

September 15

October 20

November 17

December 15





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

This month the Sprouts and Evergreens will be learning from The Gospel Project; How do we know that God wants us to know Him? We can know that God wants us to know Him because He has revealed Himself through His Word.

Big Truth: Jesus is Alive

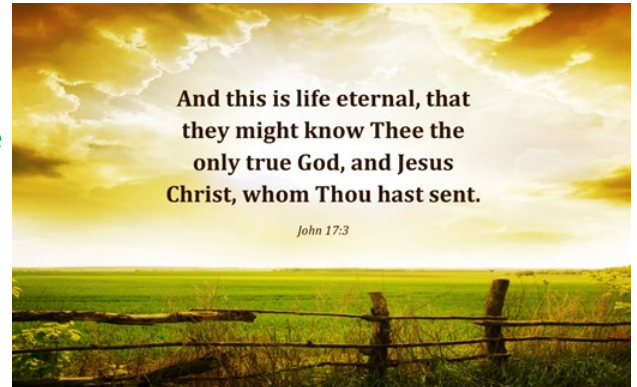


Key Passage: And what is eternal life? It is knowing you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

Key Phrase for the Sprouts: People who know God will live forever.  
John 17:3

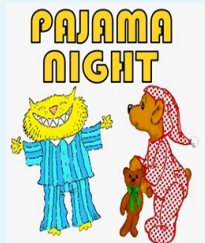


The Sprouts will also watch a short 3-4 min. video of The Gospel Project lesson each week. Both age groups will be learning the same lesson at different levels.



**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Awana!**

Awana Club resumes on Wednesday, January 3rd  
with Pajama Night! Come in your pjs!



Awana Grand Prix cars have been distributed, but we still have plenty of extras available if you have a friend or family member who would like to join in. This is a great opportunity for outreach! Car Registration for the Grand Prix can be found here: <https://acefc.churchtrac.com/connect?ei=IIZH3RR>



## Elder Report—Tim Diestler



*"Too many consider that the services of the sanctuary are intended merely to feed them. They never look on the house of God as a barracks for soldiers, or a place where workmen come together to sharpen their tools; they only regard it as a sacred pantry, or a heavenly lunch room where much is to be received and little or nothing returned." Charles Spurgeon*

I've been thinking and praying about church a lot lately when Sue showed me this quote above from Charles Spurgeon. What if we all took this to heart and really got a grip on what church is really supposed to look like. In Luke 6, Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, love your enemies, turn the other cheek, give your coat and your shirt. Do to others as you would have them do to you. He goes on to say if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. He says the same about those who do good to you and if

you lend to people. But he goes on and says Love your enemies, do good to them and lend to them without expecting anything in return. WOW! Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. Why? Because He is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. (Boy do I fall into those categories many times.) Then Jesus tells us to be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. We don't deserve the Father's mercy, but it is freely given. I pray that I can show mercy.

We are working our way through the New Testament in Chris Matula's Sunday morning class and are just starting 1 Thessalonians. Paul wrote to many churches for different reasons because they all needed reproof, understanding, or encouragement. I'm not sure what he would be writing to our church, but thankfully we have his letters to help guide us now. Please take time to read the first 10 verses of 1 Thessalonians, I am going to try to encourage you with what we as a class gleaned from them.

1. There are many people praying for our body right now. I have asked people to pray for us and I know many of you have also.
2. Our labor is not in vain here, please keep reaching out in love for each other and showing our love and honor for God.
3. Remember (even though we may not fully understand it) we were chosen by God through the Holy Spirit. That mystery alone should motivate us to serve Him and others, and if we do that well, we will be an example to other believers and our faith will become known everywhere. Let's pray for God's Spirit to move among us to make that happen!
4. Finally, let's learn from each other as we are preparing for Christ's return so that all can be saved from the coming wrath.

This will be my last article as an Elder. I want to thank you all for the grace you have shown me as I was honored to serve you these last 6 years.

With Love,  
Tim



Dear Sisters,

The bustle of the holidays is past us, a fresh new year is before us... And, snow or no-snow, now we begin our trudge through what an old Christmas hymn calls "the bleak midwinter."

Bitter weather and a barren landscape may accompany us for longer than we'd prefer... but I'd like to gently remind you that **the season of Winter has an important purpose**. It's a very humbling season in many regards, but it's also a necessary part of growth – in nature around us, in our souls, and in our ministries alike.

Along with the foliage around us, we can also "lose our leaves" and fruit for a time. But we've come to realize the seemingly frozen flora, laden with snow, aren't actually dead - there is still life in the roots. **There is life in the unseen places.**

Winter offers an outward death, a purposeful rest, and a slow rooting as God's creation readies itself for the unfolding rebirth. Through careful cultivation, this pattern of revitalization will lead to growth and bearing fruit throughout the following seasons.

The same is with our souls: we may not see the fruit that God is bearing in us for a season! It may not seem abundant or even apparent to us... but this is where we must walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7), trusting in unseen ways that the Lord is renewing us day by day (2 Cor 4:16) as we abide in the True Vine (John 15).

If we are genuinely seeking the Lord by coming to Him in His Word, and asking Him to use it mightily in our hearts and lives, then we can rest assured that Life is there. **If we are united to Christ, He is busy doing an unseen, powerful work in us, as slow as it may seem sometimes.** That is a promise we need to trust in by faith, especially when we cannot see the immediate fruit. As I've written to you before, fruit always finds a way to grow in the soil of obedience.

Let's be deeply rooted together in the Word – let's bring Jesus' Light and Life to those around us.

Your sister and fellow sojourner in Christ,

Amy





## Church Happenings—Men's Breakfast





# Church Happenings—Youth Group

## Winning Skit



## Second Place Skit



## Third Place Skit



## White Elephant Gifts



## Christmas Party Skit Judges





## Church Happenings—Youth Group



### YOUTH GROUP

If you are in middle or high school, join us Sunday nights from 6pm-8pm. We meet at church, unless otherwise posted.

### WHAT WE DID LAST MONTH

We concluded our study in Cold-Case Christianity last month and are now beginning a new study in the book of John. We also had our Christmas Party and our church lock-in! For the Christmas party we all received amazing gifts during our white elephant gift exchange, performed our Christmas skits, and of course ate a bunch of holiday treats.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH

Date	Time	Location	Event
Sunday, January 7 <sup>th</sup>	6:00pm - 8:00pm	Church	Regular Youth Group
Friday, January 12 <sup>th</sup>	4:30pm	Church	Drop off for Districts
Sunday, January 14 <sup>th</sup>	11:30am - 12:00pm	Church	Pick up for Districts
Sunday, January 14 <sup>th</sup>			<b>No Youth Group</b>
Sunday, January 21 <sup>st</sup>	6:00pm - 8:00pm	Church	
Sunday, January 28 <sup>th</sup>	6:00pm - 8:00pm	Prairie Hill Park*	Broomball*

\*Weather permitting; otherwise, regular youth group at church

### Student Spotlight: Adeline VanHouten

**Grade:** 8

**How long have you been attending youth group at ACEFC?** This is my 3rd year. I've been attending since the summer of 2021.

**What do you see yourself doing in 5 years?** It is hard for me to see what I want to do right now because there are so many options of what I can be and choose to do.

**Favorite thing to do in your free time?** Crochet

**Favorite food:** Tikka masala

**What is your favorite memory from Youth Group?** I do not have a favorite youth group memory; I just like going to youth group whenever possible.

**What is the dumbest way you have injured yourself?** Either giving someone a hug or falling out of a tube in a water slide.

**Tell us what God has been showing you in the past year?** He has been teaching me how to stay more controlled of myself. It is making notice that God can help you in any way if you call out to Him. It helps comfort me when I am frustrated and overwhelmed that I can just call out for His company, and He will help me with my problems. Sometimes it is difficult to ask if you feel like you have your situation under control or if you think that you can do it all by yourself, but God has been teaching me that He is there to help and He will make it a whole lot better.





## Church Happenings-Christmas Tea





## Church Happenings-Christmas Tea





## Church Happenings—Children's Church





## Church Happenings—The Nest Cookie Exchange







### Prayerfully Preparing For The Year Ahead



One of the most precious privileges God has given those of us who are faithful followers of Christ is prayer. Most everyone realizes that prayer is important; when challenges or concerns become overwhelming, it's common for many people to ask for prayer. Some might say, "It can't hurt;" or "It might help." But, it's also true that prayer isn't always the first place where many people turn.

Therefore, as we move into a new year, I'd like to encourage everyone in our church family to take some additional time to pray that:

- (1) God's glory would shine through our church ministries and our church members in 2024;
- (2) God's will might be our greatest desire throughout each and every day;
- (3) we can be instruments who are greatly used by God to reach others with His glorious Gospel of grace;
- (4) our faith would grow as we wait and watch eagerly for the Lord's return;
- (5) all faithful followers of Christ would stand strong against the spiritual battles that characterize the times leading up to the Day of the Lord! (That's the time when God prepares the world for His Promised Kingdom.)

In addition to these suggestions for what to pray, I'd also like to make three recommendations about how to pray in a manner that might assist us to become more effective in our prayers.

First, **PRAY BIBLICALLY!** Please allow me to explain. For several years I've tried to use specific Scripture passages as a guide for what I pray. But recently, I heard Erwin Lutzer describe how he uses God's Word when he prays for certain people and I've decided to adjust my prayers based on what he suggested. Let me give an example from what he said. In Philippians 1:9–11 we read, "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." When I pray for certain family members, I could use this passage and pray that their love might abound and that they might be filled with the fruit of Christ's righteousness. Or I could use Psalm 23 and pray that someone would enjoy the care of the Lord's shepherding role and that they would find comfort as they walk through the peaks and valleys of life. Just think, you never have to question if something is in line with God's will when we are praying what God's Word says!

Second, **PRAY BELIEVINGLY!** In James 1:6–8, we are encouraged and exhorted to pray in faith, trusting that God will answer. Notice what it says, "(The one who prays) must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." I believe that James says what we need to hear about this. God might not always provide the exact answer we desire, but He will provide what's best for us when we ask in faith.

Third, **PRAY BOLDLY, especially for those who aren't following Christ!** We live in a sin-saturated world and God's judgment toward sin is real. If that isn't true, why did Jesus die on the cross? No one has a valid excuse when standing before God. (See what Romans 1–2 says.) In Ephesians 3:8–12 and Hebrews 10:19–25, we're instructed to pray with boldness because we've been given access to God's throne of grace. We always want to acknowledge that God's will is our goal, but we should also pray boldly for God's glory, for the Gospel to reach those who need to hear it, and for God's grace to abound! Note what Jesus said in Matthew 17:20. "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

**As we step into 2024, praying for God's glory and praising Him for His grace,  
Pastor Greg**





The JESUS Film is the life of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke. It is an evangelistic film. The JESUS Film has been translated into 2,100 different languages so far. The last three years there were 598,107,636 that heard and saw JESUS in their own heart language. Of them, 13,475,390 decided to trust Christ to forgive their sin and as a result 146,228 new churches and groups were started. Praise the LORD!

### Prayer request:

Julie and I are currently trusting the LORD for \$800.00 new monthly gifts. If any individuals would like to give to us personally and receive our monthly prayer letter, email us at

[bryan.augsburger@jesusfilm.org](mailto:bryan.augsburger@jesusfilm.org)

### What we do:

I, Bryan, my job as a technician is to test all the electronic and audio components we use in the portable recording studio. I test the microphones, the speakers and audio cords before it is packaged into the suitcase. The systems are for our recording teams and for our partners we train to record new JESUS Film languages. I also install software apps on the computers to enable the recording tech to capture the voice actors in a digital format. It is part of my job to research how to make the system lighter for travel. This is done by identifying new technology that replaces older and heavier parts. The other computer that I set up is the translation computer. They are handed off to the translation teams that train others to get the Gospel of Luke script translated. This team does both oral translations (no written language exists) and script translation (those who do have a written language).

Julie, my wife, watches the young children of those who attend our JESUS Film briefings where donors of businesses can invest in new languages and film showing equipment.

Bryan and Julie Augsburgers  
JESUS Film Project



Rev. 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count. They came from every nation and tribe and people and language...

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!  
[applefreechurch.org](http://applefreechurch.org)

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

