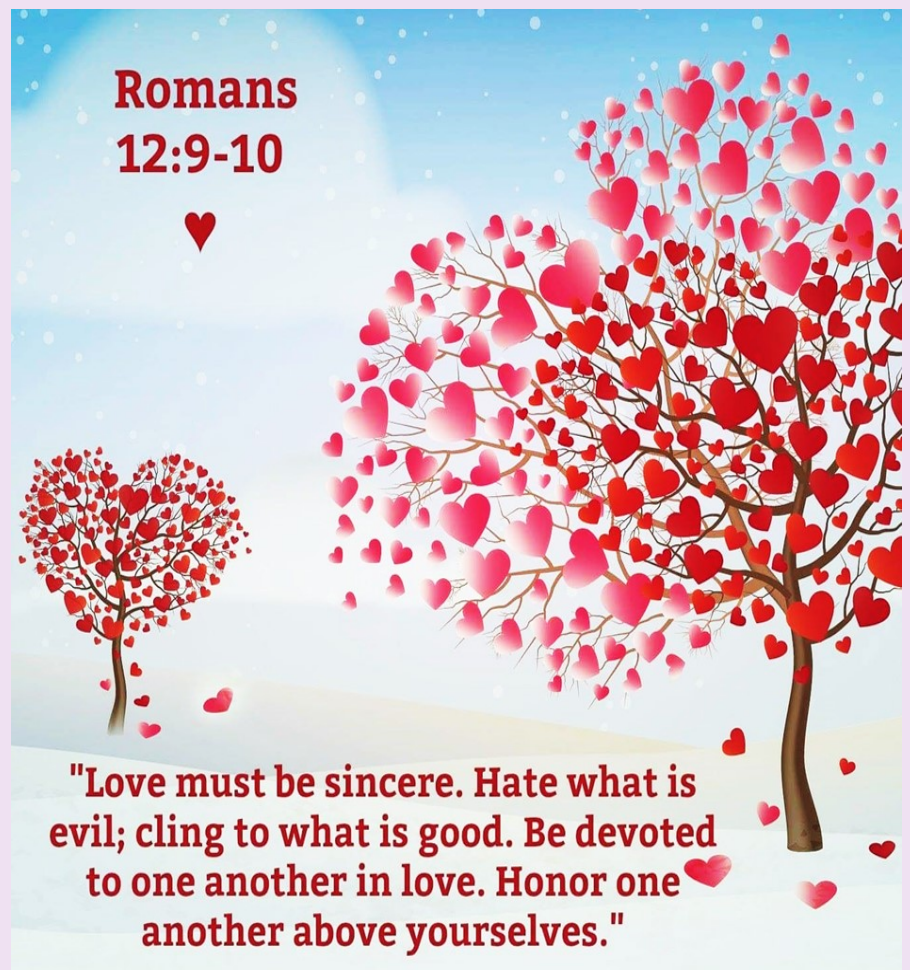


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February 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Lord's Supper 6 p.m. Twigs Youth	6 p.m. Women's Bible Study	5:00 p.m. Elders Mtg.	10 a.m. Women's Bible Study 6 p.m. Awana	6:30 Prayer Gathering		9:30 a.m. Impact Team Meeting
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
5 p.m. Twigs Youth Super Bowl Party	6 p.m. Women's Bible Study	7 p.m. The Nest	10 a.m. Women's Bible Study 6 p.m. Awana	6:30 Prayer Gathering 7:00 p.m. Men's Higher Calling		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
"Let's Do Lunch" 6 p.m. Twigs Youth	6 p.m. Women's Bible Study	6:00 p.m. Elders Mtg.	10 a.m. Women's Bible Study 6 p.m. Awana	6:30 Prayer Gathering	6:00 p.m. Chili Supper	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Elder Election after church 6 p.m. Twigs Youth	6 p.m. Women's Bible Study		10 a.m. Women's Bible Study 6 p.m. Awana	6:30 Prayer Gathering		

Updates and Opportunities



Chili Supper

Come and join us Friday, February 20 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. for a great night of warm chili, cornbread, dessert, friendly faces, and good fellowship. The entire community is welcome! The cost is \$5 per person or \$10 per family (pay at the door). Donations above and beyond are welcome! All proceeds will go to Missions & Youth.



Reading Through the New Testament—February Readings

We invite all ages – children, youth, adults, and newcomers – to join us as we read through the New Testament together. Whether you are new to Scripture or have read it many times, you are welcome to be part of our shared walk in God's Word.

Feb. 1	Matthew 21:23-46	Feb. 13	Matthew 27:1-31	Feb. 25	Mark 6:1-32
Feb. 2	Matthew 22:1-22	Feb. 14	Matthew 27:32-66	Feb. 26	Mark 6:33-56
Feb. 3	Matthew 22:23-39	Feb. 15	Matthew 28	Feb. 27	Mark 7:1-13
Feb. 4	Matthew 23:1-22	Feb. 16	Mark 1:1-22	Feb. 28	Mark 7:14-8:10
Feb. 5	Matthew 23:23-39	Feb. 17	Mark 1:23-45		
Feb. 6	Matthew 24:1-22	Feb. 18	Mark 2		
Feb. 7	Matthew 24:23-51	Feb. 19	Mark 3:1-21		
Feb. 8	Matthew 25:1-30	Feb. 20	Mark 3:22-35		
Feb. 9	Matthew 25:31-46	Feb. 21	Mark 4:1-20		
Feb. 10	Matthew 26:1-19	Feb. 22	Mark 4:21-41		
Feb. 11	Matthew 26:20-56	Feb. 23	Mark 5:1-20		
Feb. 12	Matthew 26:55-75	Feb. 24	Mark 5:21-43		

Mission of the Month—Help for the Homeless

We will be collecting NEW hygiene and cleaning items for local crisis agencies, **February 22– March 15**, through “Help for the Homeless” hygiene drive. Please place your donations in the *Help for the Homeless* collection box located in the foyer starting **February 22**. Most urgently needed items are bathroom tissue, cleaning supplies, dental care, deodorant, diapers/baby care, face/bath soap, feminine care, laundry detergent, paper towels, razors, textured hair care, and trash bags. Your donations will remain in this community.



“Let’s Do Lunch”

Come and join us February 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.

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

	April 19	July 19	October 18
	May 17	August 16	November 15
March 15	June 14	September 20	December 13





Here is the Mission Statement of our Children's Ministry Program.

"Our mission is to plant the seeds of God's truth into the lives of our children and to encourage their growth."

With church and family working together we can sow seeds of truth and love for God and His Word that will grow roots and bear fruit. Every volunteer in our program is here for you and your children. We want to partner with you, encourage and support you as you are training up your precious children in God's ways.

Evergreens

We have started our study of the Gospel of Luke. The children will be growing in their knowledge and understanding of Who Jesus IS as we spend time in this wonderful Gospel.

Sprouts

The younger children will be learning about Jesus and all He has done for us. This is a not just a playtime but a time for these youngest members of our church to learn truths about God that will last a lifetime.

Be encouraged! All that we do is worth it!

**"Let's not become discouraged in doing good, for in due time we will reap, if we do not become weary."
Galatians 6:9**



Welcome to 2026! The countdown to the Grand Prix has begun! If you still want to get in on the action, grab a flyer from the Awana table to register. Race day is March 6th!

In January, we had pajama night and glow night at Awana. Glow night is a great reminder to shine our light on dark places. Next month we'll have 3 exciting nights to remember: February 4th—fun in the sun (wear something tropical/Hawaiian/sun shiny). February 11th—Valentine Night. February 18th—Leader Appreciation night. Show your leader you how much you appreciate them with a handmade card, note, or picture.



Elder Report—Dean Pankow



The Year of 2025 in Review.

This has been a year when God was taking us and digging up the roots of the church and then holding the church in the palms of his hands and then gently replanting it again as one would do with a plant that needed to be repotted.

For those of you who were there, the Annual Church Business meeting of last January was the start of a more family friendly, Christ-like atmosphere for church business meetings than in the years past. And the one we just completed on January 18 was one that I would have liked to invite my extended family to. It was so pleasant, productive and with a very present sense of unity. My thanks to our Lord and to all of you that made it so special.

We were pleased to have Pastor Greg finish out his ministry with us this past year and we enjoyed having a potluck farewell for him and Donna. We continue to keep Greg and Donna in our prayers as they seek God's direction as to what He would have them to do in their retirement.

The Elders struggled in our search for an interim pastor. Even though we followed the recommendations of the District Office, we ended up going through interviews with four pastors before we felt called to ask Pastor Jim Vyleta to help lead us as our interim. In total it was an eight-month process, with four of those months not having a pastor in place.

During those months of not having a pastor in place, the Elders and our wonderful church secretary, Ruth, kept things going. (Mostly Ruth) These were the months that we felt held together in God's hands. So many wrong things could have happened but didn't. We were blessed to have so many different pastors and missionaries and elders share our pulpit. Each one brought their own distinctive approach to the scriptures and what God was saying through them.

By God's grace, our ministry programs were able to continue over this time of transition. With the Women's Ministry and the Awana program doing the best. The Elders were able to put together a Church Covenant to set a Biblical standard on how our church members are to relate to one another. Also, through God's grace we were able to come through the time of transition on a steady financial footing.

Pastor Jim Vyleta took hold of the reigns in November. He was just in the process of finishing an interim in Madison when the elders asked him to consider taking on our church, and he did. He brought with him some new energy, innovative ideas, and new approaches to some of the problems we were facing. We are looking forward to see where the church will be going under his leadership as interim pastor.

December finished the year with a special Christmas pageant put on by the youth of the church under the direction of Gary Nogel. We have also sensed the Spirit of God renewing our hearts and minds and filling us with an expectation of good things to come in 2026. Our church is beginning to take root again and new things are happening.

Isaiah 43:18-19 "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

In His hands---Dean Pankow, Elder



THE DEEP, DEEP
LOVE OF JESUS

“They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was. And wherever He went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak, and all who touched it were healed.”

Mark 6:55-56

This was really the height of Jesus ministry. He had shown His authority over creation, the spiritual powers of evil and over the suffering of illness and physical limitations in this fallen world.

The first time we hear of healing happening by touching the edge of His cloak was the woman who was healed after twelve years of slow

hemorrhaging. Now this was multiplied by many more being healed just by touching the edge of His garment.

Try to imagine the scene of this desperate longing. Sick people on mats everywhere you looked. Their loved ones straining to make sure they were close enough to Jesus to touch Him. Imagine the hurried journeys and search for a place close enough to reach Him so healing could happen.

What they wanted more than anything else from Jesus was physical healing. They were willing to do whatever it took to attain it. If they reached Him healing was guaranteed. How well I understand their longing. I know I would have done whatever it took if I was sure getting my loved one there would heal them.

The question that came to my mind was, what do I want most from Jesus?

Yes, what He does for us is wonderful. Above all Jesus died for us to cancel our sin debt and make freedom from sin and union with God possible. He has provided for me over and over with provision, protection, healing, and comfort.

Still I ask, what do I want most from Jesus, now that I belong? Is it everything He makes possible for me; all He does or is it Himself?

There's a wonderful hymn called the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus. It expresses so well how His amazing love envelopes us. It's this love, this presence that I want to bathe in and be part of. How could there be anything more beautiful and fulfilling than to have Jesus, God Himself, as my daily partner.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!
Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me!
Underneath me, all around me, is the current of Thy love
Leading onward, leading homeward to Thy glorious rest above!

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, spread His praise from shore to shore!
How He loveth, ever loveth, changeth never, nevermore!
How He watches o'er His loved ones, died to call them all His own;
How for them He intercedeth, watcheth o'er them from the throne!

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, love of every love the best!
'Tis an ocean full of blessing, 'tis a haven giving rest!

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, 'tis a heav'n of heav'ns to me;
And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to Thee!

Samuel T. Francis

Mary-for your Women's Ministry Team

Chocolate Nest

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 10

7:00 PM

**HOT CHOCOLATE, CHOCOLATE
CHARCUTERIE BOARDS, FELLOWSHIP
AND A TIME FOR SHARING.**

**Don't miss this one!
Come and bring a friend**



Church Happenings—Twigs Youth





TWIGS YOUTH (Teens Working In Growing Spiritually)

If you're in middle or high school (grades 6–12), we'd love for you to join us on Sunday nights from 6:00–8:00 PM. We gather at church each week (unless otherwise posted) to learn, grow, and spend time together.

WHAT WE DID LAST MONTH

We continued our year-long journey through the Bible using *The Non-Prophet's Guide to the Bible* by Todd Hampson. We also took 10 students to the Forest Lake District Youth Conference in Green Bay. This year's theme, **"The Journey,"** helped students better understand who Jesus is, what it means to receive Him, and how we are called to respond and be sent by Him.

Looking ahead, our next Bible Reading Challenge will guide us through the rest of the Old Testament, with a goal of finishing by **June 2026** (1 Chronicles through Malachi).

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH

	Time	Location	Event
Sunday, February 1	6pm-8pm	Church	TWIGS (regular youth group)
Sunday, February 8	5pm-8pm	Emmi's house	Super Bowl Party!
Sunday, February 15	6pm-8pm	Church	TWIGS (regular youth group)
Sunday, February 22	6pm-8pm	Church	TWIGS (regular youth group)



Church Happenings—All Church Potluck & Annual Meeting



Look who's sitting at the kids table!



Church Happenings—Annual Meeting & New Members



Welcome our new members Lois Schroeder, Nancy Winter, and Char Backus!



Church Happenings—Men's Retreat @ Lake Lundgren 2026

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.





We invite all men to join us the 2nd Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. for a time of fellowship where men connect, grow, and strengthen their walk with God together.

MEET & ENCOURAGE

*Don't stop meeting together with other believers;
Instead, encourage each other.*

- Hebrews 10:24-25

Some Prayerful Thoughts from Pastor Jim



If you've joined our New Testament Bible reading program by now you've "watched" Jesus get baptized by John the Baptist (and it was by immersion!), Jesus refutes the devil with Scripture, may have realized the devil's solicitation happened to him having just come off a 40 day fast, talk about an opportunists! The devil will always look to tempt us when we're hungry, angry, lonely or tired aka H.A.L.T.

You've read the most famous sermon ever known to man in the sermon on the mount, pausing to take a breath to appreciate and internalize His message. What were some of your most challenging moments in the sermon on the mount? I was struck by the on going juxtapositions between murder and murder in the heart, adultery and adultery in the heart, loving my friends but not my enemies giving publicly versus privately, longer prayers in private and shorter prayers in public, fasting privately or letting the world know how devout you are.

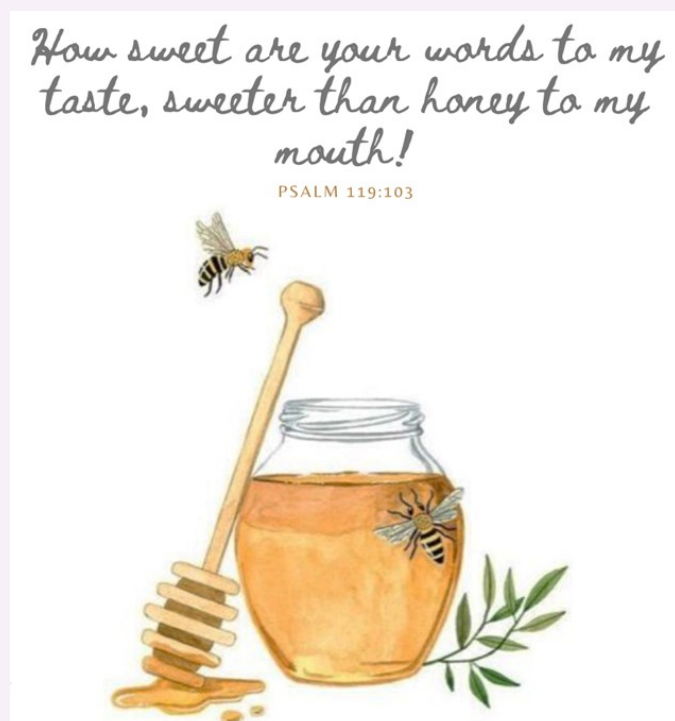
The comparisons continue when Jesus challenges us regarding where we're storing our treasures, thinking we can serve two different masters, then telling us our worry is the result of simply failing to understand how birds live and lilies grow. Why not jump on board and join us in this Bible reading adventure through the New Testament?

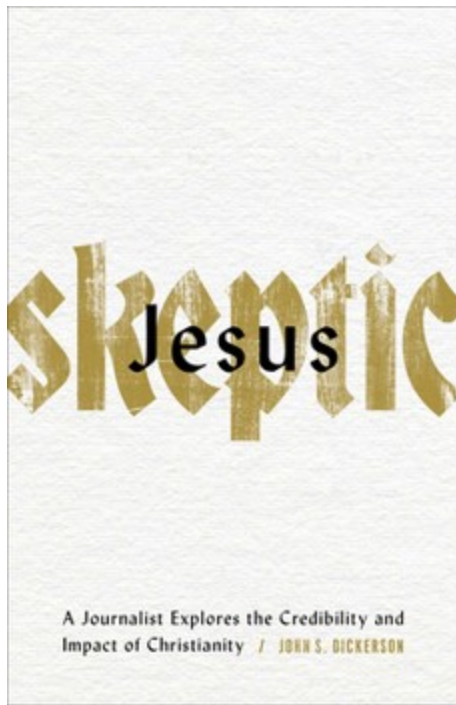
Here's a challenge for all of us; In reading Matthew 7 would you look for the beam in your own eye rather than the speck in your brothers?

Please let the office know if you need a Bible reading schedule and feel free to let me know when you're knocked over by an "aha moment" while reading "His" word!

His word is sweeter than honey,

Pastor Jim





I recently discovered the book; "Jesus Skeptic" written by an award winning writer and millennial John Dickerson. As a self proclaimed skeptic with a marginal Christian background he set out to research the impact Christianity has had upon the world.

Employing investigative methods and researching only primary source materials he came to a stunning conclusion; **Jesus inspired his followers into the greatest social movement of all time!**

Dickerson details the history behind Christians who founded every one of our top 10 colleges, almost every leading hospital, and yes addressed and ended slavery

Next time you hear someone blame shifting Christianity as a contributor to our countries decline you will be equipped to share an historical apologetic and give a defense to the undeniable history behind our countries foundations and concrete inscriptions.

The book made for a meaningful Christmas gift to my daughter which I know will be an eye opener as she contends with conversations around equity that consume many of her Millennial and Gen Z peers.

Every generation has had its apologists who capture the attention of Christians who in turn are emboldened to share the gospel to the skeptics among us. My generation consumed Josh McDowell's series of books "Evidence Demands a Verdict." Many have found Lee Strobel's series on the "Case for Christ" compelling and helpful in bolstering faith and emboldening gospel witness. John Lennox the Irish mathematician, bioethicist and lay theologian provides brilliant logic in defense of the existence of God not to mention more secular thinkers like Jordan Peterson's quest for truth.

It's evident the book "Jesus Skeptic" is one of the premier apologetical works that's inspiring Millennials, Gen Z and Alpha giving them courage and conviction to believe, defend and declare the gospel.

I trust many of you will dive into this read and engage our culture with the good news of the Gospel of Jesus and the undeniable impact Christianity has had on forming the best and most altruistic parts of our society.

If you're interested in discussing the book please let me know.

If you're participating in our New Testament Bible reading challenge you have marveled over how Jesus changes our lives when we interact with Him in believing faith.

"The unfolding of your words gives light: it gives understanding to the simple."

Psalm 119:130

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

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

