

# NEWS AND NOTES

## SPRING 2024

BBC Long Prairie  
APRIL, MAY, JUNE

Pastor Matt

### A BIG Download

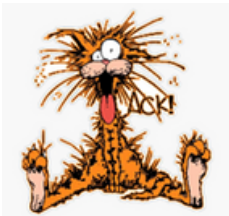
“Superman could break a leg in that garage!” - Marlin Tschetter

It's true, my garage is NOT a hospital surgery room. It is a woodworking shop. I have wood, tools, sawdust and ideas all stacked in there in various places. (For the record, I have NEVER broke my leg in my wood shop, which I can only assume means I am tougher than Superman!) And NORMALLY, I know where stuff is and am totally okay with the organized clutter of it. The same is true of my office. My desk is ... ACTIVE! But not only can I live with it, it works for me. I can handle this level of chaos.

But not everyone can. Marlin was one of my South Dakota Mennonites, who really believed cleanliness was next to godliness. I have eaten in restaurants dirtier than his son's metal fabrication and mechanic shop. Culturally, that group of Mennonites had really could only handle a very low level of chaos.



Everybody has a line, call it an “Acceptable Chaos Level” (ACL) that they can handle. I have never seen an actual scale, so you can make your own, and put a number on it. Maybe you can handle life at a 750. Maybe having the scale that big is uncomfortable for you, and you prefer a 1-10 scale, and can't function over a 3. Since there is no inspired scale or means of measuring it, you can assign whatever number you want to it. Honestly, I don't believe the number you give matters. It does not make you a better person to be able to handle a lot of chaos or a weaker person if you do not like any chaos in your life. I believe the important things to realize are that:



- A) There is a line between where you can be comfortable and where the chaos overwhelms you.
- B) Everyone's line is going to be a little different, which is okay.
- C) When you cross that line in life, bad things happen.

### The Stressors of Life

What are the things that cause chaos in our lives? Having other people in it! I see chaos as happening when the number of variables in life is greater than our perceived ability to control. Matching multiple schedules. Communicating on money decisions. Health issues. Emotional energy expended. Things that take up mental bandwidth. Things that don't go according to plan. People acting stupid. Consequences of MY sin. Anything that requires time, energy, or focus adds to the chaos of our life.



Stressors are normal and predictable.

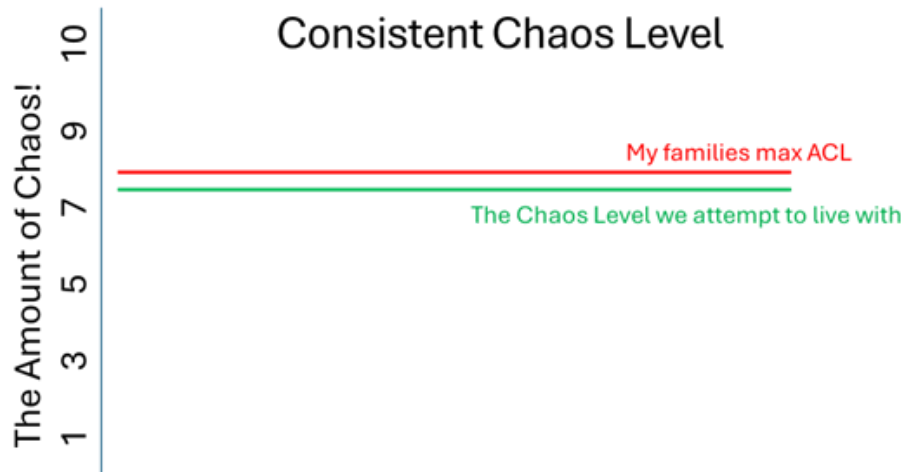
Now step #2 in the mental download I received from God Saturday AM, when I was supposed to be paying attention to someone else... :)

Not only do you personally have an ACL, but so does your spouse. And if your ACL's don't match? WATCH OUT! You are in for a bumpy ride! One of the things that we do that drives our spouse nuts is living at an ACL far above their own personal level.



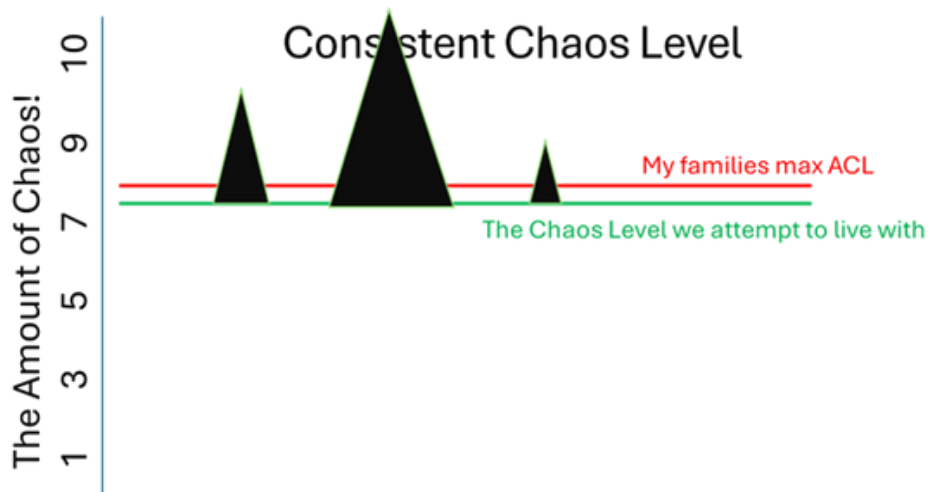
## The American Mistake

Now, perhaps this is true everywhere at every time in history, I don't know. This is all brand new to me and I am working to understand it. But I do know that in the USA today our norm is to attempt to live as close to our ACL as possible. Let's see if we can show it on a chart...



The problem is that chaos is NOT consistent. It varies from day to day. It varies depending on the weather, the time of the year, the moon phase and how the "new to me" vehicle's battery is behaving. It is affected by the things we DO, and by things that other people do that we have no control over. I mentioned my shop is a work in progress, and I am okay with that. I am okay with that until someone moves things around in my organized chaos to the place I cannot find them when I need them. Why have a hammer drawer if we are going to leave them outside where we were busting rocks? Why own 10 hammers of various sizes if people are going to hide them ALL in the backyard so I can't find ANY of them?! I am bad enough at keeping track of my stuff, but when it stays where I left it, I can survive. But when other people enter the equation, my chaos level changes. And if I am living too close to my ACL what do these spikes do?

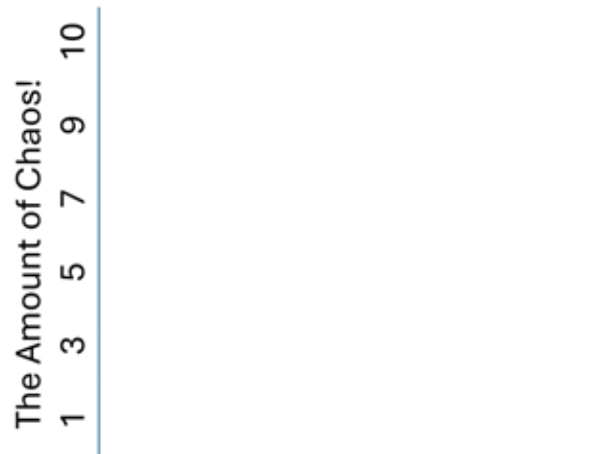
They bring me and my family beyond our ACL into the land of ACK! Where I cannot handle the level of Chaos I am being bombarded by. Where I slip into fight or flight, lizard brain thinking. Where I react inappropriately to people who don't even know why I am reacting the way I am.



So what is the alternative? It seems to me that the alternative is to intentionally live what 1 Thessalonians 4:11 says: “make it your ambition to lead a quiet life ...” You and I do not have to live a half step under our ACL. In fact I don’t believe God wants us to live that close to our max. I believe in contrast, that He would have us learn to live a full 3 points below our Max ACL. To do this we need to learn the grace of saying “No, I can’t”. To live here we will need to learn to live off our priorities, focusing our “outputs” on the things that God has called us too.

Friends, to be honest this is new ground for me. I have a tendency to live as close to MAX as I can. I hate to say no. I love the respect that comes from being good at things. I can’t stand the feeling of disappointing anyone. I love being a renaissance man capable of most anything. And perhaps all this is part of the lesson God is teaching me through this health adventure. I have lived very close to my ACL, which has forced my family to live close to my ACL. When spikes come (and they do) chaos ensues.

- How comfortable are you with chaos in your life?
- What are the “normal” chaos factors in your life?
- How close are you living to the ACL in your life?
- What spikes have you been experiencing lately?
- How does it “all fall apart” when you experience a chaos spike right now?
- What benefits do you think you’d see if you were to lower the level of chaos in your life?
- If you were kneeling before God today, and His prescription for your life included “I want you to reduce your practical level of chaos to 3 full steps below your ACL”
  - What would that take?
  - What would you have to let go?
  - What would that enable you to do?
  - Who would benefit from your stepping back?



1st Thessalonians 4:11 “and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,”

As I said, this is new and a work in progress for me. Something I am learning about and learning to live. What do you think? Does this ring true for you?

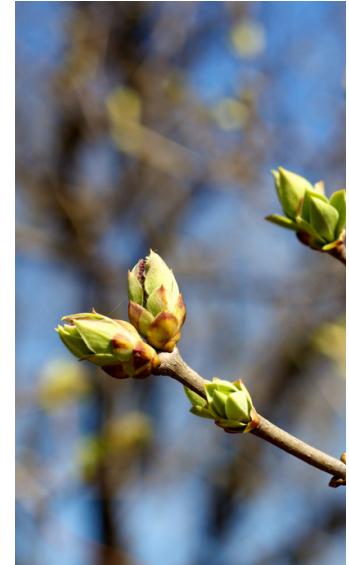
This is what God has been teaching me lately, how about you? What has God been teaching you recently?

God Bless, Pastor Matt

# Deacon's Corner

Chris Larson

During Jesus' earthly ministry, he traveled with his disciples to the region of Caesarea Philippi, which is about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. In this quiet reflective setting, Jesus asks a startling question to the group "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" (Matthew 16:13). The disciples give a variety of answers, including John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. But then Jesus presses them - almost like he is saying, "forget the white noise that is happening around us!" Don't worry about the Twitter feeds, the Instagram posts, what the alphabet soup news media is saying, lets get down to what is important. Then these recorded words, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16: 15).



If you are anything like me, you are easily distracted. I would not say I am ADD, but I can find something to do or needs to be done in an instant. I have often found myself sitting on the patio enjoying the sun with Roxanne, looking at the yard with the birds chirping in the background. Suddenly I will get up and cut a branch, move a piece of equipment, or caulk a gap in the siding thus breaking the solitude and reflection. The same can go for the day in and day out living of life. Doing life well but not really taking the time to give it the focus that it needs. As the months and years pile on I can find myself self-reflecting, wondering am I living the life I have been called to live for the Savior I have claimed to follow?

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**What is that significant thing you are orienting your life around?**

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Over the past few months I have been reading a book by Bob Buford called "Half-time: Moving from Success to Significance". The premise of the book is when we reach our forties, many people stop and consider what it is they have achieved and completed . They wonder if there is more to do. The reality is most people by age 40 will have yet to live the second half of their life, however, they have accomplished most of what they have set out to do. The question at this point is how do you wish to live out this second half? In these next 30 to 40 years what do you wish to accomplish and orient your life on? The author encourages people to take a half-time between the second and third quarters of life to reflect and pray on this. In order to do this, one should take an imaginary box and determine what is inside it? What is that significant thing you are orienting your life around? In careful self-reflection it could

be money, children, grandchildren, success, jobs, fame, things etc. But to the believer, if it is Jesus Christ, it will drive us to orient everything we do around this one truth. If this is the case and we allow God to use us we can accomplish so much more! So the question I ask you to consider today is, [What's in your box?](#) It was very evident to Simon Peter in Caesarea Philippi.

**Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."  
(Matthew 16: 16)**

# Student Ministries

## Jackson Standafer

As many of you know, Kelsey and I welcomed our third son into the world this February. Louis has been a joyous addition to our family and we are so thankful for the Lord's blessings. His provision has been apparent each day. In particular, I am very thankful for the support and generosity of our Church family. Praise God for the beauty of fellowship. The love and care that we have been shown is a testimony to God's provision through the community of believers.

This season of ministry has really highlighted the importance of our wonderful volunteer teams. We are so blessed with volunteers who have a wide variety of skill sets; including teaching, hosting, leading games, helping students stay focused, building relationships, preparing food, and more. As I have had to step out of various events/nights of gathering over the past month, our ministries have continued without missing a beat.

Quest Kids has continued to host children and families from our community. Children join for games, songs, learning from the Word of God, and relationship building. We have hosted three family nights so far this year. In January we hosted "The Amazing Race" as families traveled through the church building to complete stations. This February was our sixth annual Quest Kids Pinewood Derby! Finally, this last month, we hosted the March Family Movie Night.

Youth Group has been an exciting and full area of ministry throughout this school year. We have met MANY new students this year, which is a testament to the great job our students are doing at inviting friends AND being a welcoming group! Way to go Youth!

This semester at Youth Group we have been studying the book of Genesis. So far, we have been focusing on the creation story, and the foundational role that our understanding of creation plays in our faith. God has opened the door for us to continue this study into the summer as we embark on our 2024 Discipleship Trip! This summer we are offering a weeklong trip where we will look at how God continues to sustain His creation and make "New Beginnings" in our lives. That week of the summer will culminate in a trip to Kentucky to see the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum! Please be in prayer for this trip as we plan and prepare.

As I reflect on this season of life for our family and the ministry of our church, two exhortations from the New Testament are overwhelmingly present: the body of Christ showing love to one another (John 13:34-35), and the body of Christ engaging their time and unique talents in the ministry of the body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Thank you to our Church family for following these exhortations to the Glory of God!

Blessings,  
Pastor Jackson

# Connections Pastor

Josh Anderson

First Baptist is under spiritual attack, and it's a great thing. Matthew 12:22-37 reminds us that Satan doesn't attack the ones that are his. In fact, spiritual battles are a blessing of sorts. God's pruning is always happening. We must walk through the trials of this life by faith. A necessary key to walking through trials is to "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

As our two churches join, there will be plenty of places of unfamiliarity and unknown. Everything feels new and shifting. Change often evokes feelings of being uncomfortable or anxious. Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Communication. Healthy communication amongst our congregation will be an essential tool as we move forward. Healthy communication will foster understanding and unity. Something we need to be aware of and veer far from that will harm healthy communication is gossip. It is important to understand that gossip is a killer of God's peace. Gossip is actively or inactively taking the control out of God's hands and putting a crown on a person's own head and claiming your own sort of joy, while stealing other people's opportunity for God-given joy. Someone who is willing to gossip wants the power of God, yet doesn't want the responsibility of being God.

The craziness and damage of gossip must stop before it starts to take control of the church culture. In fact, actively using gossip as a power over people is a vile form of abuse. It is the height of manipulation and is directly connected to the enemy. Inactively or unintentionally gossiping is a pathway to Satan's schemes and severing. Our mindset must be to choose not to poison God's church with gossip. We need to have a mindset that either God gets all the credit, or he doesn't get the credit. Either we give God all of our hearts, or he doesn't have all of our heart. Joshua 24:15 says, "Choose this day who you will serve." Revelation 3:16 warns that it is better to be cold or hot because the lukewarm will be spit out. John 7:17 adds, "Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."

We have no right to steal God's glory and manipulate with gossip.

As we begin to merge, if there are questions regarding decisions being made, please come talk directly to the deacons or the Pastors. As relationships are being formed, give people room to be human, have brave conversations, seek peace, lean into desiring to understand others. As change is happening, first start in "prayer and petition, making your requests known to God." Seek Him first. Let's move forward in unity, not leaving room for the thief to steal, kill, and destroy.

## Connections Pastor

First Baptist is at war and has been since it was first chartered in the year 1872. Today, we are trying to find a relevant vision and direction as a body. God has gifted us with great resources, wonderful people, and great leaders. May we march forward with grateful hearts, being faithful to pray continually for the work God is doing and planning on doing through our humble efforts. Let's commit together to not let gossip have a place now or ever in our church. Let's continue to fight the good fight, as God requires: by faith. Let's commit together to throw out Satan's tricks and tools of deception. Let's trust the Lord as we march forward together.

Josh Anderson  
Connections Pastor

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# April, May, and June

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

### April Anniversaries

04/17 Diane & Larry Brandes  
04/28 Jim & Lori Larson  
04/28 Cheryl & Matt Junkin

### May Anniversaries

05/01 Hannah & Isaac Swartzentruber  
05/05 Roxanne & Scott Bergman  
05/16 Lisa & David Wright

### June Anniversaries

06/01 Lindsy & Andy Barnhart  
06/06 Vicki & Ross Munson  
06/07 Gretchen & Ron Hibbs  
06/13 Diane & Bob Gustafson  
06/14 Jeanne & Byron Cook  
06/17 Faith & Dave Petersen  
06/20 Bev & Dennie Anderson  
06/23 Anna & Dennis Pastian  
06/26 Cathy & Randy Swanson  
06/29 Iris & Jack Galligan

### April Birthdays

04/01 Danielson Betty  
04/06 Marissa Lentz  
04/07 Hazel Warner  
04/14 Roxanne Bergman  
04/14 Elsie Puck  
04/23 Carol Peterson  
04/23 JJ Reinbold  
04/26 Sara Hibbs  
04/28 Finley Gustafson  
04/29 Jim Larson  
04/29 Alice McMurray

### May Birthdays

05/01 Karli Gustafson  
05/04 Iris Galligan  
05/05 Chriss Swartzentruber  
05/06 Dave Petersen  
05/07 Grace Swartzentruber  
05/27 Logan Kemper  
05/28 Hannah Swartzentruber

### June Birthdays

06/02 Ezekiel Swartzentruber  
06/03 Bob Gustafson  
06/11 Dennis Midthun  
06/12 Barb Copley  
06/12 Jack Galligan  
06/13 Macgregor Standafer  
06/19 Jeanne Cook  
06/21 Adelyn ffitich  
06/25 Paul Stacey