



NEWS & NOTES

First Baptist Church of Long Prairie, MN
April, May, June 2023

Pastors Page

Written By: Katie Stacey

“For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.” (Philippians 1:21-24, NIV)

Heaven looks pretty fantastic sometimes, doesn't it? When you compare its peace and perfection to the struggles and situations of this world, the better option is obvious. Amidst the hard days, a rightful reaction of the believer is to pray, “Come, Lord Jesus.” But that hasn't happened yet! God, in His wisdom, has decided returning right now is not the decision that brings Him the most glory. So, as the apostle Paul resolved in Philippians 1:24, we get to live on for the benefit of the body of Christ.

See, the truth is, the family of God needs you. We are to walk in unity and self-giving love (Phil. 2:1-4), to imitate Christ's sacrificial humility (2:5-11), to consider the good things lost for Christ to be rubbish (3:7-9), to understand the joy of the resurrection because we have experienced the pain of suffering (3:10-14), to guard our hearts and minds through thanksgiving (4:6-8), and to find our sustaining power in Christ (4:10-20). If all you need is Jesus, then you need other people, too. You're here on earth for a purpose, so fight the good fight!

Joy is perseverance with praise. It is not something God expects you to gain on your own power, but something that he gives (Gal. 5:22; Phil. 1:6; Phil. 2:12-16). The cool thing about God's gifts is we can give them away without losing them ourselves! Therefore, encourage one another (Hebrews 3:13; 10:25). Recognize that you are not alone – other people experience parallel situations to yours, and God is with you in it (1 Peter 5:5-10). He won't leave you, nor will he leave you broken for eternity. Remember... there is always, always, hope!

- Katie Stacey

Deacon's Corner

Disappointment. I think we can all relate to it. How often have you been disappointed? Maybe by your friends, your loved ones, co-workers, or leaders? And when you are disappointed, how often do you say to yourself that this is not fair. Especially as believers.

As of late I have spent a lot of time thinking about why we as Christians here in America (myself included) think and act the way we do about what we believe. If you know me well, you would recognize my passion for history. As a result, I have often contemplated when historically did the Church transition from the Church in the Book of Acts to the American Church today. Somewhere in this two-thousand-year history believers moved from meeting in homes to meeting in auditoriums. Somewhere along this timeline believers went from providing for lay pastors to hiring Senior Pastors, which often implies multiple associate pastors. I recognize one could make an argument that in today's American church environment it is the most practical. In America believers are free to worship and having a building with leadership only makes sense. But here is where it gets muddy in my mind. When did believers in America start to think that as Christians, everything should always be fair with no disappointments? Admit it, you have been programmed to believe that once you accept Christ your troubles are gone. You will always have "enough" money as defined by you. Your loved ones should never experience health problems as defined by you. Jobs will be fulfilling, and our children will walk humbly before their Lord. Plus, all home purchases and sales will go exactly as we planned. Where does this come from? For when we read our Bibles, it is exactly the opposite of what Christ said. "In this world you will have trouble" John 16:33a It is not that we won't experience troubles as believers, rather that we can experience peace WHEN we experience heartache. "But take heart! I have overcome the world!" John 16:33b. The truth is, we will be disappointed, and we will have heartache. The promise is He gives us the ability to not be anxious for when it will happen "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Philippians 4:6. He gives us the Grace to sustain us when it happens, "But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness," 2 Corinthians 12:9 and He gives us the Joy of the abundant life to see us through it all. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." John 10:10.

Whether you are in the midst of disappointment right now or recently on the other side, take courage for our Risen Savior is with us and will walk through it with you.

Happy Easter! Chris L

Student Ministry

In years past, when I have written my Spring News and Notes, I have commented on the beauty of the changing seasons. This afternoon, when I was headed home for lunch, I was surprised by blizzard-like conditions in the church parking lot. Quite simply, it doesn't feel like Spring yet. While it seems like the weather is lagging behind a bit, I have to admit that I feel a bit the same way. This winter quarter (now heading into the spring) has been a very busy one.

In our kids ministry, we have done our best to re-establish a regular routine after a difficult couple of months battling the weather. We had three Wednesday nights get canceled due to winter storms. Two of those nights were scheduled to be our monthly family nights, which meant we had to postpone until the following Wednesday. All in all, with some shakiness in the routine, we really have had a wonderful Spring with our Quest Kids families. We were able to enjoy our typical Spring family nights including The Amazing Race (January), Our 5th annual Quest Derby (February), and our Family Movie Night (March). This year we have been studying the book of Acts at Quest Kids and answering the question "What does it mean to be a part of God's Family?"

Our Youth Ministry has been a blur of opportunities, activities, and our routine meetings of Ignite and Crossfire (Junior High and Senior High respectively). Our Junior High Youth have continued journeying through the Discovery Bible Study with their SLDC leaders. This is a Creation to Christ Bible study which emphasizes reading and discussion with the students. This semester I have been leading a study on the book of Hebrews with our Highschool students. I encourage you all (please do this!) to ask one of our Highschool Youth to give you a recap of some of what they have been learning in the book of Hebrews. We have had a couple of new Youth Leaders join the team this semester. Our Quest Volunteers and Youth Leaders have been doing such an amazing job building relationships and having a kingdom impact on all of our students. Thank you ALL!

In addition to our typical ministries, this winter was filled with a lot of planning, talking, meeting, fundraising, and praying regarding our upcoming Youth Mission Trip to Nicaragua! If you haven't heard yet, we had 16 people from our church (youth, parents, & leaders) sign up for this trip. We will be going down to Managua, Nicaragua from June 10-18 to partner with NRN (Nicaragua Resource Network). If you would like to be involved in supporting this trip in prayer, financially, or by volunteering to help us with random needs, let me know! A full winter of studying, teaching, and building relationships has been bearing exciting fruit. Please join me in prayer that our ministries would go so much deeper than mere entertainment. Please pray for the Lord's strength and courage for our leaders and volunteers as we seek to share the gospel and build deeper relationships with our students!

Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Blessings,
Jackson Standafer
Student Ministry Pastor

April, May, June

Birthdays & Anniversaries

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

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

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
04/26 Sara Hibbs
04/26 Dan Johnson
04/28 Finley Gustafson
04/29 Jim Larson
04/29 Alice McMurray

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

05/02 Tracy & Jonathan Kemper
05/05 Roxanne & Scott Bergman
05/16 Lisa & David Wright

MAY BIRTHDAYS

05/01 Karli Gustafson
05/04 Iris Galligan
05/04 Judy Matheson
05/05 Chris Swartzentruber
05/06 Dave Petersen
05/07 Grace Swartzentruber
05/27 Logan Kemper

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
06/23 Anna & Dennis Pastian
06/26 Cathy & Randy Swanson
06/29 Iris & Jack Galligan

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

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 ffitch
06/25 Paul Stacey



Remember -
our fallen heros.
They are the reason
that we are free.

Welcome
Spring

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SUMMER
FUN!