

NEWSLETTER



Nº 09

MAY · 2023

I remember a really strange moment when I was in seminary. My family was looking for a church home in Denver, Colorado. We drove our minivan across the city to visit a variety of potential congregations. There were big churches, little churches, new churches, and older churches. Our family was fairly young. My wife and I were just beyond 30 and we had two small children, Anna and Elijah. Our hope was to land somewhere that would engage our whole family. Our church search led us to visit a growing church plant in a thriving urban neighborhood. We heard really great things about the preaching and music. We heard that they were a lively congregation and that God was doing a neat work there. So, we gave it a shot. It didn't take long, however, to figure out that this particular church was not going to be for us. Out of the nearly 200 people gathered in this church, my wife and I appeared to the oldest people in the room. Again, we had just crossed the 30 year barrier. I had the impression that I was visiting an American Eagle in the mall. It was a really strange experience! The music was good. The preaching was solid. It was just missing something that we have come to love and value in a church family: multigenerational impact.

I love our church family. I love seeing senior adults growing in their relationship with Jesus alongside students from Waldorf University. I think it is such a blessing to sit in my Rooted Group with men that stretch across five decades. Wednesday nights provide a vivid picture of this beautiful multigenerational impact as I see many of our retired grandmas and grandpas actively volunteering with our children in the Huddle ministry. There is something profound for me in our Sunday morning gatherings hearing the young and old of our church family raising their voices in praise to the greatness and faithfulness of our God. It is faith shaping to hear the instruments drop out and the only melody heard is the united chorus

of blood-bought, faith-filled children, teens, adults, and senior adults lifting their hearts to sing, "All my life You have been faithful, all my life you have been so, so good; with every breath that I am able, I will sing of the goodness of God." I love having a church family that values being multigenerational.

With the gift of God right here in our midst, I want to encourage us to lean in. We often wait for a program to be started and a signup to be offered until we step into ministry. Don't wait! Let's lean into one another and the blessings that come with loving and serving one another across the generational lines. There is something beautiful in Titus 2 and the way God designed discipleship to be shared between young and old. We need each other! There is wisdom to be gained, character to shaped, and skills to be learned. Is God prompting you? Reach out. Pursue. Invite. Start with a shared meal. Bring someone along on an errand. Fix something together. Sew something together. Drive somewhere together. Key word: together!

Dear church family, God has given us a gift of children, teens, families, empty nesters, and senior adults. What a gift! Let's lean in, reach across generational lines, and love another for God's glory and our greater joy!

Gratefully,



ERIC WEAVER

LEAD PASTOR



FROM OUR ELDERS

IT SEEMS LIKE GOD IS LEADING US

It was twelve years ago when we moved out of the chapel and into the Family Center for our Sunday morning worship. The move was intended to be transitional and the weekly set up and tear down was meant to be temporary. However, we seem to have settled into a new kind of normal and have grown accustomed to using our facility in ways it was never intended to be used. In order to provide safe and sufficient space for our babies, toddlers, and pre-K children, we have adjusted walls, hung banners to conceal doors, and used partitions to block off hallways. Temporary chairs are set up each week in the chapel to accommodate the large group gathering for our elementary aged ministry we call The Huddle. In order to provide rec space of our elementary, middle school, and high school ministries, we set up and tear down our Family Center every week. After a decade of functioning similar to a church plant, the wear and tear is showing on our facility and our staff!

We have anticipated a change coming with our facility but we wanted to prioritize our staff and and clarify our vision

\$55,845

LAST MONTH'S GIVING

\$56,357

MONTHLY GIVING NEED



before considering any kind of building renovations. It was this time last year when our elders discerned our next step to transition Jonathan Walberg to an associate pastoral role, hire a children's ministry coordinator to lead our midweek program (welcome Elissa Hanna!), and step out in faith and hire a youth pastor (welcome Pastor Josh!). God's blessings have been evident as these changes have brought life, leadership, and gospel fruit to the next generation. Praise God! But these changes have also revealed that our facility doesn't quite match our ministry. We sense that we could better steward our facility to enhance our ministry reach and effectiveness. We have begun asking "What if" kinds of questions. We've kicked around an idea of putting up a youth building/barn to be a dynamic youth space. We've wondered about the longterm use of the chapel and how to best use that space. We've talked about our need to improve safety and security for nurseries and ministry to our children. We've taken a step back and wondered what it would be like to have a designated worship space that we wouldn't have to set up and tear down each week. All this to say we have been asking some big questions about our facility and the way we use it. We're wondering if it is time to prayerfully consider making some changes.

Here is why we say it seems like God is leading us. We just received a financial gift from someone in our church who felt compelled to give. The gift came without any knowledge or awareness that we have been dreaming about building/renovating space for our youth ministry. The timing and size of the gift compelled our elders to take a step back and ask if the Lord is in the timing of the questions we're asking and the receiving of this gift. Similar to our playground project a handful of years ago, we wondered if this gift could be "seed" money toward a bigger project. We knew right away that we wanted to bring this to our church family.

WE WANT TO WALK IN UNITY AND WITH TRANSPARENCY

Our elders want to be in step with the Holy Spirit and in unity with our church body. Before we start dreaming about next steps and making decisions about what to do or not to do, we wanted to come to you, our church family, and let you know we're beginning to think about a facility project. Whether

we renovate existing spaces or add to our building, the questions we are asking point toward a big project. To be clear, there is no plan in place. There is no committee formed. No consultants or growth strategy. It seems as if we might have more "I don't know" than we do answers. But what we do know is that we want to shepherd God's people with greater faithfulness and share the hope of the gospel with greater passion. Our elders are eager to pray and formulate a plan, but first, we want to start with prayer and unity with our church family.

WE WANT TO PRAY AND DISCERN TOGETHER

Will you join us in praying about what is next?
Here are ways you can pray:

- Pray that all ministry would be gospel-centered and biblically driven
- Pray that our elders would be humble, unified, and Holy Spirit lead
- Pray that our church family would love one another
- Pray that lost people would find joy in Jesus through genuine repentance and faith
- Pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven
- Pray that if a building project were to happen, our church family would be unified, generous, and focused on the mission of Jesus Christ

Matthew 6:33 offers stunning clarity and direction, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Let's keep seeking Christ together and trust that our God will lead and provide according to His good purposes!

- Pastor Eric for the Elders

" ONE GENERATION SHALL COMMEND YOUR WORKS TO ANOTHER, AND SHALL DECLARE YOUR MIGHTY ACTS."

- PSALM 145:4

I remember being a teenage boy attending church each and every Sunday. My dad was one of the pastors, so when the doors were open, we were usually there. Church relationships were important to me, and many of my closest friendships in my childhood and teenage years were formed at my church. As important as the peer relationships were, there were three adult individuals who had a profound impact on me that I will always remember; Mark, Arnie, and Robin.

These three men were all old enough to be my dad. In fact, both Arnie and Mark had sons that were friends of mine. We were a generation apart, but God used them to encourage me greatly as I grew toward maturity. What stands out most is the personal care they showed toward me. They showed interest in the things I was interested in. They followed my athletic events. They asked me genuine questions. They engaged in what felt like peer to peer conversations with me. They showed enthusiasm for the things I got excited about. Simply put, they cared about me, and they showed it.

Most of my conversations with these men were the normal conversations that make up much of life - sports, hobbies, current events, etc. But I distinctly remember being very inclined to listen to them when they shared encouragement from God's word, because I knew that encouragement came from a place of genuine care.

This example is a reminder to never underestimate the value and significance of relationship with

someone from a younger generation. When we show personal care and attention for another, we are communicating to them their value and worth. I think this is magnified when someone from an older generation reaches out to someone younger.

Scripture highlights the necessity of multi-generational impact within the community of faith. Psalm 145:4 tells us "One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts." Here is my encouragement for you: intentionally seek to engage in a genuine way with an individual from a younger generation. Know their names. Learn what they are interested in. Engage them in conversation every opportunity you have. Go out of your way to interact with them. And finally, as God gives you opportunity, encourage them with truth from God's word.

I'm not sure I ever told Mark, Arnie, or Robin the positive impact their genuine relationship had on me. And you may never receive affirmation from those you pursue. But be encouraged by the fruit of faithful labor that is seen by our Heavenly Father, and brings glory to His name.



JONATHAN WALBERG
ASSOCIATE PASTOR



CHILDREN

all info at fbcforestcity.org/kids

The joy in our Kids on the Hill halls on a Sunday morning is so evident and a clear sign of the multi-generational impact happening here each week.

Many kids race to their classrooms, excited to see their friends and teachers that volunteer during Sunday School or service hour. Even outside the classrooms the kids from our rooms are enthusiastically greeting those volunteers who have poured their time and energy into loving them.

Three out of every four weeks each month we have a mother/son team serving our young families. Christen Walberg, Pennie Stone, and Andrea Johnson all volunteer to help greet, aid, and love young families while their sons (Wyatt, Andrew, and Jamison, respectively) each play and teach kids in the classrooms. As these women serve it is an example to their children, the next generation, of being part of the church. In-between these generations are the infants, toddlers, preschool kids and parents who are impacted by their selfless gift. Our youngest kids are receiving the benefit of teens, young adults, and mature adults showing God's love and teaching them the Bible each week.

Kids on the Hill ministry is such a service to parents, allowing for focused time to hear God's words. However, what an additional joy that these children are being loved for years. Frequently those who volunteer in our rooms are greeted, loved, and remembered well past when kids graduate out of our rooms. This early glimpse of who God is at church can influence how these littles understand their Lord as they grow. I am so thankful for this natural avenue for multi-generational impact as the love for each other over a variety of ages is so easily shown.

SUNDAYS | 9:00-9:45AM
Sunday School: Ages Birth - 12th Grade



VBS | JUNE 26-30

9:00am-12:00pm
Ages 3 years - 5th grade (completed)



Registration for kids is open!
Use the QR Code, or head
online to fbcforestcity.org to
get registered!



ESTHER NELSON

KIDS ON THE HILL
COORDINATOR

Have you ever had your child come home and be so excited to tell you all about something brand new they learned or figured out how to do? Once they tell you what it is, you're maybe frustrated because it's something you've been trying to tell them or teach them for a while now. However, for some reason, another voice using the same explanations as you helped it stick. As a parent you might be wondering, WHAT GIVES?! Why are they listening to other people and not me?! It's nothing you're doing wrong. It's natural for your child to more easily accept voices outside of yours because they hear you all the time. A fresh voice, with the same perspective helps drive home the point. I believe this is the point Paul is making when he writes to Titus in Titus 2:1-6, "You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. Similarly, encourage the

young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us."

There's this very simple yet profound structure Paul establishes here for the church. "Older men" and "older women" are to be instructed in order that they can then instruct "younger men" and "younger women." Paul is urging the church to not break apart into age groups for instructional value, but he's pushing them to embrace an inter-generational mindset of ministry. In other words, the church should be creating opportunities for older men and older women to be able to instruct and impact younger men and younger women.

So how does that work? What does that look like at FBC in North Iowa in 2023?

This is something I value highly in student ministry. I hope we have a lot of fun in student ministry. I hope we faithfully teach Scripture. And I hope we connect students to "older" men and women who have the opportunity to



MIDDLE SCHOOL



5TH GRADE GAME NIGHT

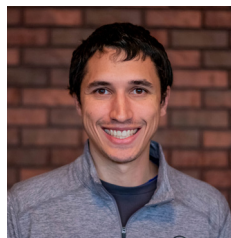
May 10th | 6:00pm-7:30pm
At the Pastor Taylor's Home

all info at fbcforestcity.org/student

SUNDAY SCHOOL | 9:00AM

Sundays: Ages Birth - 12th Grade

impact their lives. Each week our students break up into small groups after our teaching time. These small groups are led by men and women who have the opportunity for a few short minutes each week to love on our students and help point them towards Jesus. Over the past 20 years or so, numerous books and studies have shown that around 75% of students who grow up in church will abandon their faith once they move out of their parent's home. While I'm not sure the number is that high, it's certainly sets off some alarms. These studies also found that students who stuck with their faith, were most likely to do so because of the influences and relationships they had with adults in the local church who weren't their parents. I believe this backs up the importance of Paul's instruction to Titus and to us. When we ask for volunteers with kid's ministry or student ministry, it's not about pulling off a program, it's about making a difference in the life of a student. That's something we, as a church, can, and should rally around. If you're not serving our kids or students, and if you have the capacity to do so, we'd love for you to join us and see how your story, and how Jesus has changed your life can shape the hearts of kids and students here at FBC.



JOSH TAYLOR

STUDENT MINISTRIES
PASTOR

HIGH SCHOOL



SENIOR SUNDAY MILESTONE

May 21st | Our church will celebrate the seniors during our 10:00am worship service!

all info at fbcforestcity.org/student

SUNDAY SCHOOL | 9:00AM

Sundays: Ages Birth - 12th Grade



There has been an exciting trend that has been evident over the past year at Men's Breakfast! These monthly breakfasts take place on the first Wednesday of each month. We gather to fellowship, enjoy a hot breakfast, and hear from one of our brothers share a testimony of God's work in their lives.

Over the past year, there has been a growing trend of boys who join their fathers for this monthly gathering. Danny and Zane Strauser come with their father Michael. Josh Pagel will bring Caleb and Clayton. Paxton and Andrew Hall will often attend together. The multi-generational ministry that is taking place early on these Wednesday mornings is exciting! First and foremost, it is exciting to see these fathers intentionally engaging their sons in this way. I am a firm believer that special bonds between fathers and sons are built in the early morning hours, and I am confident that this simple investment will reap profound rewards as these relationships continue to grow.

In addition to these crucial father-son relationships, these boys are able to engage in relationships with other men from our church. They sit at tables with other men, watching (and participating) in the conversations around the table. They listen attentively to the individual who is sharing their testimony. Often what is shared is the painful, but powerful lesson learned through suffering, sin, or hardship. I am thankful that these boys are able to hear these stories, and see firsthand how God works in the lives of other men.

Deuteronomy 6:7 commands that we diligently teach God's truth to the younger generation at every opportunity - even 6:00am! It is a blessing to see fathers in our church embrace this opportunity, and I am thankful for other men who engage these boys in a way that points them to the joy that is only found in Jesus.



JONATHAN WALBERG
ASSOCIATE PASTOR

MEN



MEN'S BREAKFAST

May 3 | 6:00am

Speaking: Jon Klauke

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**I AM THANKFUL
THAT THESE BOYS
ARE ABLE TO HEAR
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FIRSTHAND HOW
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THE LIVES OF
OTHER MEN.**



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**I CANNOT TELL YOU
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MORE IN RETURN.**



MUGS & MUFFINS

May 13 | 8:00am

Speaking: Tab Jermeland

"We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders he has done." - Psalm 78:4

I am a part of a group of ladies that minister to shut-ins and/or senior ladies from our church, "Senior Friends." This ministry is under the umbrella of our Women's Ministry Team. I cannot tell you how many times our volunteers have set out to be an encouragement to one of our senior ladies, and have been blessed so much more in return. It is a humbling experience.

One of our volunteers is Diana Pagel. Diana and her family are friends of Marlys Clark. Those of you who know Diana and Marlys know what servant hearts they have, incredible ladies! I was visiting Marlys one day at her apartment and noticed Christmas gifts on the table, they were for Diana and Josh's children. I complimented Marlys on the beautiful calendar hanging on her wall. It was a gift from the Pagels, beautiful photos that Josh's Dad had taken.

I know that today Marlys will be attending a recital given by Diana's piano students at Forest Plaza, where Marlys lives. What a wonderful way to share gifts generationally!

Marlys tells me what a blessing it is to have Diana and these young children in her life. She shared with me how kind Diana is and how she has such a gift for drawing others out.

Diana shared how much her kids enjoy going to Forest Plaza. Marlys gives special thought to each child and always has questions to ask them and is ready to listen to their stories. She appreciates having the opportunity for the kids to be around senior friends as they learn to interact and value people from all stages of life. She's very encouraged by Marlys, who graciously lifts up those around her, this spurs her to want to do the same.



JULIE AAMODT
WOMEN'S MINISTRY
"SENIOR FRIENDS"

"THEY ENCOURAGE WITH GODLY WISDOM, SPREADING PEACE IN THE EVER-STRESSFULL LIFE OF BEING A COLLEGE STUDENT."

COLLEGE MINISTRY

My name is Timothy Nielsen. Originally from California I am now a student at Waldorf University and have been attending First Baptist for almost two years now. My story to Jesus is, I'm sure like many of yours, of a person lost and living in the world who has been restored by Christ's redeeming love.

Along my faith journey older men have stepped along side me to mentor, pray for, and challenge me in my faith to take it seriously. One of these men's names was Robbie. Robbie spent three years, from my sophomore to senior year in high school, leading the small group I was part of. Being high school guys, we got pretty rowdy and often times tested his patience more than we should have, but he stayed with us. Robbie demonstrated to me what a Godly man looks like. He was consistent, there for group every week sacrificing time he could be spending with his family to love on us. Robbie was a humble leader, admitting that he didn't know all the answers and not trying to fake like he did. Robbie gave us HOMEWORK!! Which, as high school guys, seemed like the worst thing in the world.

Robbie modeled what a man of God looks like. This multi-generational relationship is important because it is how I have strived to live

and serve in the youth and college ministries I've been involved in. This multi-generational relationship is important at First Baptist and the Bridge because it is how I see the older dudes (Josh Pagel, Andrew Jermeland and Jon Klauke) pouring into my life and the other students in the group. They lead humbly, with grace, love, and a healthy amount of patience.

"Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom." -James 3:13

Every week as our group goes through the book of James, I look forward to how God will speak through these three men. They encourage with Godly wisdom, spreading peace in the ever-stressful life of being a college student.



TIMOTHY NIELSEN

COLLEGE MINISTRY
STUDENT

MISSION OF THE MONTH

JAMI STRANDBERG

Serving in Mexico

Missionary Jami Strandberg and FBC go back a long way. Not only has FBC been a long-time supporter of her missionary work with church plants and as a seminary teacher in Mexico, but Jami's uncle was a pastor at FBC Forest City over 70 years ago (Gordon E. Johnson)! Furthermore, FBC Forest City native Jason Mekelburg greatly encouraged Jami when he was an associate pastor at her home church of Bloomington Baptist in Minnesota.

Jami leads and participates in multiple Bible studies at Factor Fe Church and Gesami Church in the state of Jalisco in western Mexico. She enjoys helping new believers understand Biblical truth and encouraging them in their spiritual walk. Additionally, Jami teaches theology classes at Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary.

When asked how her ministry is rooted in Christ and His Word, Jami stated, "Everything I do must be grounded in Christ and in God's Word. When I teach at the seminary, I use biblical principles, teachings and examples. When I lead Bible studies, the Bible is the focus of our discussions. Jesus is the only Way, Truth, and Life (John 14.6). Through Bible study and prayer, I remain in Him as apart from Him I can do nothing (John 15)."

Jami actively evangelizes and disciples by using the principles of "Look, Listen, Learn, Love, Live for the glory of God." She utilizes diagnostic questions, such as 1. If you were to die today, where do you believe you would go? 2. If you were to die today, and you were at the gates of heaven, and Christ asked you why should I let you into my Kingdom, what would you say?

Jami has the following message for her friends at FBC Forest City, "Thanks so much for your prayers and faithful partnership in missions. I value your friendship and our ongoing relationship, working together to extend God's kingdom in Mexico for His glory. May God bless you as you continue to faithfully serve Him. Grateful for you!"

JONATHAN KLAASSEN
FOR THE MISSIONS TEAM



A PEAK AT THE PAST



MID-WEEK PROGRAMS ENDED!

What a fantastic year of ministry! All the way from our youngest kiddos, to our older students, we have watched as our youth grow in confidence in the truths of God's word. Alongside their peers, kids have memorized scripture, walked alongside awesome volunteers, and had a lot of fun!

A LOOK AHEAD

Sign up and learn more at fbcforestcity.org/upcoming



CHILD DEDICATION CLASS

May 3rd | 6:30pm | Fireside Room

Child dedication presents an opportunity for fathers and mothers to intentionally embrace and demonstrate their dependence on the gospel as they parent their kids and for our church to support and encourage the family. Join us for a 2-part class beginning on Wednesday, May 3rd.

NEW SUMMER SERVICE TIME

9:00AM BEGINS MAY 28

Summer is around the corner, and it's time to pause from our Sunday School classes, and switch to a new service time. From Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, we will be moving our service to 9:00am! Mark your calendars for this change that will happen on Sunday, May 28th.