

The Edge

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOREST HILLS CHURCH
SEPTEMBER 2017

From the Pastor's Perspective

"Therefore, the Lord God, the holy one of Israel, says: In return and rest you will be saved; quietness and trust will be your strength . . . the Lord is waiting to be merciful to you, and will rise up to show you compassion. The Lord is a God of justice; happy are all who wait for Him."

-Isaiah 30:15-17

First Steps

As the school year begins, so does our church's plan to begin our Healthy Church Initiative (HCI) recommendations. We have "started to stop" some of our programming. We are no longer hosting Awana or Kid's Church. Instead we are hosting all-age worship Sundays and relationship-building M&M (Meal and More) Wednesdays. We will continue to pause on a number of church activities.

The purpose is for us to spend time connecting with God. It's not idle time. It's not wasted time. It is busy time. It is hard work, being shaped by God. It's surrendering, and accepting what seems confusing and impossible. It's a different kind of work, a work that leads to living out God's plan!

We pause from our regular business. We are going to try to limit our normal activities, meetings, and programs. We want to free up capacity to encounter God directly. We are going to clean out our time, our space, how we operate. We will refresh our space, our prayers, our seeking of God.

We pause our routine so that we can reconnect to God. It is really about what we will do. There are three commitments we need to make in order to spend time with God. The first is simple, soulful Sunday worship. The recommendation is for all-age worship, reformatted, on Sundays. It's a commitment for us as a church to make this a priority, and to hear that we need to be here. For each of us, that means that, if we are in town, we are in worship. We must spend time with God.

Monthly Church Events

For weekly events see the calendar

September 2	9am United Methodist Men
September 4	Labor Day—Church Office Closed
September 6	5:30pm M&M — Pot Luck
September 7	12pm Sarah Circle
September 9	5:45 Adult Fellowship
September 11	6:30pm Finance Team Meeting
September 13	10am Birchwood 11:30am Romeos and Juliets
September 14	1pm United Methodist Women 6pm SPRT Meeting
September 16	6am Community Care Set-up 8am Community Care
September 17	6:30pm Lifeline
September 18	6:30pm Trustees Meeting
September 19	10am Rebecca Circle
September 20	6:30pm W.O.W.
September 21	6:30 HCI Meeting

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It is also a time to get to know ourselves better. We need to spend time together. We must make connections across generational ages. We do that by eating together, talking together, playing together. The recommendation is to meet together for the evening meal on Wednesdays. Again, what this means for us is, if we are in town on Wednesday evening, we are eating together here. We must spend time with each other. We need to get to know our God better. We must be in prayer. We must open the Scriptures and hear the Holy Spirit. We spend time with God's Word. The recommendation is that we do that by meeting together, three times a year, each time six to eight weeks, in small groups. We will all do the same study. We will learn about God together. Again, what this looks like for us is: we will commit to being a part of these small groups. We must spend time with God's Word.

September 24-27	Rummage Sale Set-up
September 27-29	Rummage Sale

We believe that God has an incredible and exciting future for Forest Hills. God has a plan that we will live into. But to do that, we need to hear God's voice. The recommendation is that during the Jubilee year, we commit to listening for God, and dreaming God's dream. We know that from this day forward, our church will never be the same again. We give it to God, and know God will lead us. This is an exciting time, as we prepare to hear God's voice.

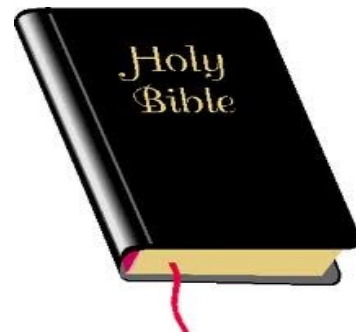
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We believe that this is the calling of God for us, for our church, right now. So, I ask us all to commit. It's not a commitment to be idle. It's a commitment to pause and work differently. It means doing things differently for a time, so we can see a way of doing things differently in the future going forward. It is, as Isaiah says, a time to return and rest in order to be saved, to be in quiet and trust so God can be our strength. We are blessed when we wait upon Him!

Rev. Dr. David Werner

Worship's Word

*"As for God, his way is perfect:
The word of the Lord is flawless.
He is a shield for all who take refuge in him."
Psalm 18:30*



Psalm 18 is written by King David as he praises God for saving him from his enemies. He had a lot to worry about. Rival kings, opposing armies chock-full of mighty chariots and the constant threat of violent usurpers are just a few of the concerns with which David would have dealt. We can only imagine the relief and gratitude that would come with a victorious battle and peaceful borders.

While most of us may not find ourselves on literal battle lines, we will all be engaged in combat of a different nature. Personal struggles, spiritual warfare, health concerns, relationship problems...these characterize some of the challenges we face. These battles are wearisome; they push our convictions and test the strength of our character. We are called to stand strong in the face of an enemy, whatever form they may take.

The good news is that we do not stand alone. God is our fortress and shield. As Forest Hills continues to progress into a time of Sabbath, as we pursue God's will for our church, we know that our greatest enemy will not be taking a break. We will undoubtedly experience attacks, doubts, added stress and other effects. We may have to fight against a double dose of apathy or anger, stubbornness or discord.

No matter what might come our way, we know that God's hand is mighty to save. He will deliver, he will defend. What a joy it is to take refuge in him!

For the King,
- Andrew



KID'S CORNER

Ministry is looking a little different these days at Forest Hills church. We have revamped the way we do Sunday mornings and we have changed our format for Wednesday evenings. We at Forest Hills have dedicated ourselves to be available and involved on Sundays, Wednesdays and in small groups. These are no small changes! And while there are more to come down the road, it is good for us to take some time to digest the changes that have already occurred.

Any new idea will come with concerns. And as we move forward living into a season of rest, it is important to address these reservations. One of the main questions that we have had to consider boils down to kids. What about the kids? We are now operating with no Kid's Church and no Awana. We are taking a break from many of the larger events we used to host. What is left for kids?

This is an important question, but it assumes too much. It assumes that if we have a list of things available and dedicated to kids, then we will be doing our job as a church. The longer the list and the more options, the better the ministry. However, when we specify something as "children's ministry" it automatically becomes second tier. Only people who like kids will be involved. Only people who have kids will be interested. It takes its share from the church budget, but in the end, children's ministry is not a part of the overall life of the church. It can easily become a list used to point out that we take care of children here.

The second assumption is that specified children's ministries create adult Christians. This certainly *can* be true, but it is not so necessarily. Children, like adults, need to be discipled in the faith. More and more, I have come to see that a classroom setting (Kid's Church, Awana) is not able to accomplish that goal. In a classroom, kids learn information, but they are not shown how to love Jesus with all their hearts. Discipleship must include more than information alone. Like any of us, kids need mentoring and modeling. They need to be shown how faith applies to life.

That brings us to our new model. We want to focus on discipleship. We want to show kids, by example, what loving Jesus is all about. We want kids to be a part of the heartbeat of our church. We want to be intentional about involving them. So instead of dismissing kids to kid's church, we want to re-format the service to be more accessible to all ages. We want Wednesday night activities to revolve around our church as a family so that we can spend time together. Kids and adults can interact meaningfully instead of functioning out of a pre-made curriculum. Kids will also be a part of our new small group model, which will begin in

January. They will be included and involved in every aspect of our church with the conviction that real discipleship is based on relationships and not simply on learning new information.

What about the kid who does not attend our church? What do we do for them? What if their parents are not believers? Though this new model seems to lend itself to the already Christian family, I believe it is even better suited for the unbeliever because instead of providing a program, it provides a family. In the future, we will be better able to show God's love in real and meaningful ways to those new to church because we have made relationships a priority. This also means that each of us is now responsible for the kids in our neighborhoods. It is no longer the job of the children's ministry team to get the word out about the latest fun event. Now every one of us takes on the role of disciple making by personally inviting the kids and families we see and know. This could even involve offering to provide transportation. When these people do attend, they are not pushed off into a program, but rather, they are welcomed into the central life of the church.

The church makes disciples...programs alone do not. We exist to make disciples and to faithfully follow where God leads. We believe that God has called us to a different way of doing church, a way that we will try to faithfully follow.

For the King,
-Andrew



Events and Info

Adult Fellowship

September 9th at 5:45 pm. Watch for the sign-up sheet in the lobby.

Romeo's and Juliet's

September 13th at 11:30 a.m. More details to come; watch for updates on locations.

Financial Peace University

The first class for Financial Peace University will start on October 3rd, and go through November 28th, meeting Tuesday nights at 6pm at the church. If you are interested in joining, or learning more about this class, please contact Paulette Johnson.

Rummage Sale

Our Fall Rummage Sale will be held the week of September 24th through the 29th. Volunteers are needed to set-up Sunday through Wednesday, and to work at the sale on Thursday and Friday.

Community Care

Saturday September 16th 8 am - 11 am
Truck unloading Friday, September 15th at 5pm

Lifeline Sunday September 17th 6:30 pm

Sometimes God can feel distant and it seems like we are alone. If you are weary and disconnected, come and seek God's presence. Lifeline is a simple gathering of prayer and praise. Come and be filled!