



The Edge

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOREST HILLS CHURCH, JANUARY 2016

From the *Pastor's Perspective*

Happy 2016!

We begin the New Year with a new focus as a congregation. Over the past number of years, we've concentrated on worship, welcome, outreach and hospitality. We've been developing an outward focus, recapturing our biblical calling to "go out" and engaging others in our wider communities. Yet going out also means we must come together. The Church is gathered to be sent. Jesus calls disciples to follow Him, and then He sends them out. We gather to help one another grow in love with our Lord and Savior Jesus and to encourage one another in our following of Him. In the church we call this discipleship. Yet that's kind of a church word. Perhaps it's better if we talk about it as growing spiritually, or spiritual growth.

We have made some changes to position ourselves for our new focus. This last fall we hired a part-time staff position as the Director of Spiritual Growth. We are bringing a new focus to MLT around nurture. We have set a spiritual retreat for January 9th to help wake us up to the spiritual hunger we have inside (Sign up for this free event. More info in this newsletter.). We will be launching new small groups throughout the New Year. (Join one soon!)

Further, I'm going to be making spiritual growth the content of my newsletter articles this year. I'll also be blogging about it from time to time (be sure to keep checking out the blogs on the church's web site. Here's a brief teaser to get us started:

Those who commit to be in relationship with God are called by God to grow into the intention that God has for them. At the foundation of this intention are God's two commands to love God and others completely (Deut 6:5, Lev 19:18, Matt 22:37-40).

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Church Events

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| Jan 1 | New Years Day—Office Closed |
| Jan 2 | 9:00 a.m. UMM |
| Jan 3 | 10:15 a.m. MN Teen Challenge |
| Jan 4 | 6:30 p.m. LLMT |
| Jan 7 | 12:00 p.m. Sarah Circle |
| Jan 8 | 7:00 p.m. YPA Performance 9:00 a.m. Sabbath Retreat |
| Jan 9 | 3 & 7 p.m. YPA Performance 6:00 p.m. Adult Fellowship |
| Jan 10 | 4:30 p.m. YPA Performance |
| Jan 13 | 11:30 a.m. ROMEOS |
| Jan 14 | 1:00 p.m. UMW Board Meeting 6:30 p.m. SPRT Meeting |
| Jan 16 | 8:00 a.m. Community Care 3 & 7 p.m. YPA Performance |
| Jan 17 | 10:00 a.m. Hymn Sing 3 & 7 p.m. YPA Performance |
| Jan 18 | 6:30 p.m. Trustees Meeting |
| Jan 21 | 6:30 p.m. MLT Meeting |
| Jan 31 | 6:30 p.m. Bible Journaling Class |

Pastor's Perspective (continued)

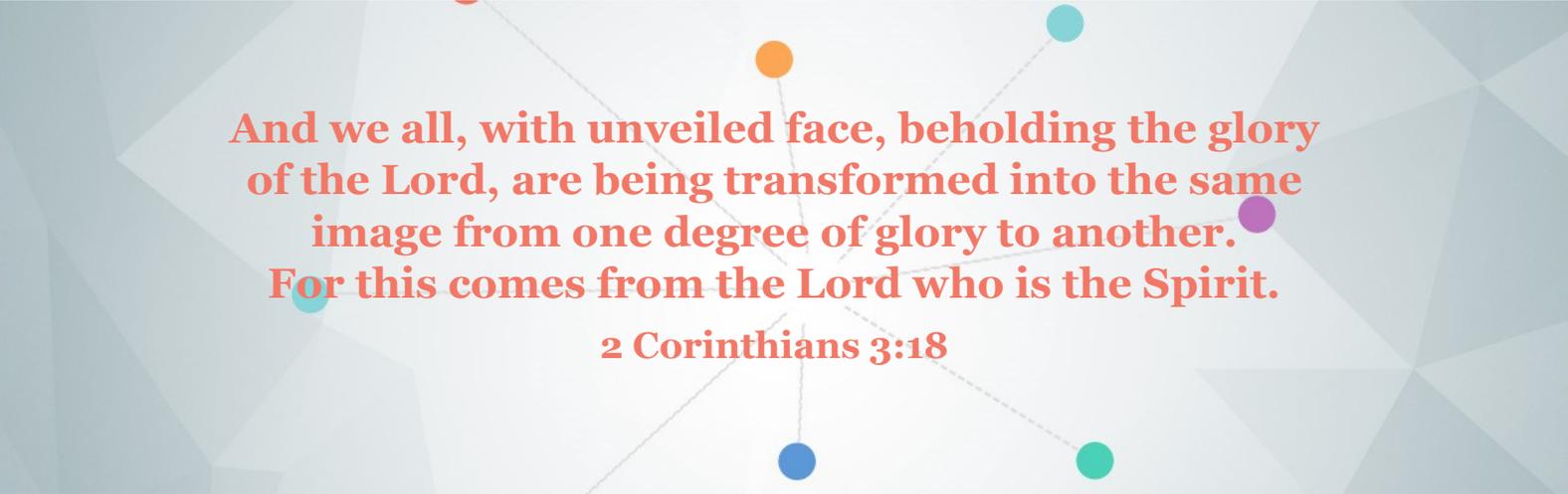
Growth, particularly as developed in the New Testament epistles, is a process. Paul describes this growth towards the desired perfection in love as growing to become more like God (2 Cor 3:18, Rom 8:29, etc.). Paul and the other epistle writers use the image of physical growth to describe spiritual growth (Eph 4:11-15, 1 Cor 14:20, Heb 5:11-6:1, 1 Pet 2:2, etc.). Another image for this growth used in the New Testament is the image of mature plants bearing fruit (John 15:5, Col 1:10, 2 Cor 9:10, 2 Pet 1:5-8, etc.).

This growth, as stated above, is a partnership of both the work of the individual and the work of the Holy Spirit within the individual. The Holy Spirit gifts the growth, but the individual must also engage in disciplines that develop those gifts within the individual. It is a mutual relationship of working together.

Well, that's enough for now. We'll be unpacking all of this as we get into the New Year. So, are you ready?

A new year, a new start, keeping Jesus in your heart. Growing us, hands and feet, here we go, 2016 we greet!

Happy New Year! ~ Pastor David



**And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory
of the Lord, are being transformed into the same
image from one degree of glory to another.
For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.**

2 Corinthians 3:18

Kid's Korner

2016's Gonna Be a Good One (I Hope).

"Emmanuel" is a churchy word that we sing in hymns and say around Christmastime. We might know that it means "God with us" and we might understand that it is a reference to baby Jesus who was literally God among us, but we also need to keep the reality of Emmanuel in our hearts and minds as we move on into the New Year.

2016 is like any other year. There will be great possibilities and new opportunities. There will also be unforeseen struggles and fears brought to light. We seem to live in an optimistic society. We want to hope for the best in a given situation and see January 1st as a break that comes along once a year to wipe the slate clean and start over. It's like we have been given another chance to make this coming year the best one yet!

Optimism can be a healthy attitude. It is good to look on the bright side. But if we have hope, from whence does it come? Our hope comes from the Lord (Psalm 121:1-2). We do not hope in mankind's ability to fix a broken situation. We do not hope in governments. We do not hope in our own wisdom or determination. If this were the case, all hope would be lost.

We hope in the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). We hope in the God who died and rose again (1 Cor. 15:3-4). We hope in the God who indwells his people and walks with them (1 Cor. 3:16). We hope in the God who is with us.

For the King, Andrew Bonsell

Events

Adult Fellowship

Adult Fellowship will be meeting on Saturday, January 9th at 6:00 p.m. at the Blue Heron Restaurant in Hugo. There's a sign-up sheet in the lobby or contact Rozanne Foster for more information.

Youth Performing Arts

YPA will be performing *Les Miserables* on:

Friday 1/8 at 7pm, Saturday 1/9 at 3 pm and 7 pm, Sunday 1/10 at 4:30 pm, Saturday 1/16 at 3 pm and 7 pm and Sunday 1/17 at 3 pm and 7 pm. Check www.youthperformingarts.org for more info and to reserve your free ticket.

Louisiana Work Week

Join us in service at the Dulac, LA Community Center February 21-27, 2016. We welcome people with all types of skills. We will also deliver UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) Kits to the Depot at Baldwin, LA. Check the lobby soon for a list of items needed or contact the Bergerson's for more info.

Day Retreat

Looking for some rest and some time to reconnect with God? Then come to our first ever day retreat, Saturday Sabbath: I'm Enough and I Belong on January 9th from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. We will be heading to Christos Center for Spirituality in Lino Lakes. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided, and day care can be arranged upon request. Please sign up at the Welcome Center. If you have any further questions or wish to sign up through a person please contact Amelia Buschena (growth@foresthillsumc.net) or Janet Morey (janmorey@usfamily.net).

Bible Journaling Class

Cassi Betker will be teaching a Bible Journaling Class on Sunday, January 31st at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The class will cover the basics of bringing art and journaling to your Bible study. Come with a Journal Bible or a Bible and sketch book. Contact Cassi for more info – cassi.betker@gmail.com or 612-708-9772.

Worship's Word

Didn't it go fast? December in the church is sometimes like a whirlwind and a marathon all together. There are so many things that we do to celebrate the birth of our Christ! This year at Forest Hills we heard the Voices of Christmas telling us the Christmas story from different perspectives, our children and our choir helped to show us the meaning of Christmas with their Christmas Celebration service on December 13th, we celebrated together with activities and a meal at our Family Christmas night, and we symbolized Christ coming into our world by lighting candles at midnight during our Christmas Eve service. Wow! And this doesn't even count all of the decorating and cooking and hosting that all of our families have been doing during this month!

After all of this celebration it is easy for us to forget that in the church we don't stop celebrating Jesus birth on Christmas day. The church season of Christmas goes well into January and we remember the parts of the Christmas story that happened after the birth in a stable. Visits from wise men, schemes from kings, messages from angels, and families fleeing in the night. We'll hear all of this and more from our last Voices of Christmas. And in this New Year we'll also hear stories and testimonies of lives being made new. On January 3rd, Teen Challenge will be at Forest Hills to help lead our service and we will hear from them messages of redemption and transformation.

God is always moving in all of our lives. Sometimes it is easier for us to know than at others, but the God who is making all things new is seeking out me and you. We are reminded of this at Christmas when we are told of Emmanuel, God with us. "For our eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before all people."

I pray that all of you have a happy New Year, and that the year ahead holds for you the hope, joy, peace, and love that came down to us in a manger.

Many blessings, Andrew Buschena

Spiritual Growth

With the Christmas season coming to an end we are all quickly looking to the beginning of the New Year. Sometimes the New Year comes quickly and sometimes it feels like it takes forever to get here. This year for me has been one of those years where it has quickly snuck up on me, I blinked and it seemed to be 2016. This rapid arrival of the new hasn't left me much time to reflect on the year we are leaving behind, or to contemplate the un-lived potential in what lies ahead this next year.

Amidst this last busy year, I decided to reflect on the pauses we had in our life rhythm rather than the many things we did all year. I began thinking about the times Andrew and I were able to enjoy a good movie together, or when we got to go to the farm to help with the cows. Times when I got to skype with old friends from far away, and times with a cup of tea and a good book. I began realizing that these small moments were not the bulk of our year but were extremely important. It is these pauses that gave the bulk of our year its framework and meaning. In the same way that a period distinguishes sentences on a page, or a well-placed rest makes a piece of music come alive, it was our brief moments of pausing throughout the last year that made our sentences and music notes of life more beautiful.

My hope then for myself, my friends and family, and all of you is that in this New Year we would each find moments of pause, and that we would see the beauty that those moments bring to our lives. Take the time to play that game with one another, allow yourself those extra five minutes with a magazine in the morning, and pause long enough to realize the exquisiteness surrounding you in that moment of rest. On this note of pausing, I also wanted to remind everyone of a new event that is quickly approaching. On January 9th we are having a Saturday Sabbath Day with the intention of starting our year off with an intentional pause, an intentional time to stop and see God's majesty around you. May your new year bring you a beautiful symphony full of perfectly placed rests.

Many Blessings,

Amelia Buschena

Thank You!

This congregation really shared the joy and celebration of Christmas with us this year through all the wonderful well-wishes, words of appreciation and encouragement, and all the generous gifts. Thank you! We are certainly blessed to be part of such a kind and loving congregation! We look forward to serving with you in the year ahead. May the Lord continue to bless all of you and the ministry we do together in 2016. Thank you, and Happy New Year!

~Pastor David, Andrew, Andrew, Amelia and Laurie

More Thanks

This is from a Thank You card we received in the church office:

"Dear Forest Hill Carolers,

My sister and I wish to thank you for choosing to sing to us. It was very uplifting as well as quite a surprise. We wished that we had some figgy pudding to give you; ah well maybe next year!

May the lord truly bless each of you in this most sacred season."

Love Always,
Cathy & Pat McFadden