



From the *Pastor's Perspective*

"Come near to God, and He will come near to you" (NIV) - James 4:8

This past Sunday, the Church Conference voted to accept the healthy Church Initiative (HCI) Jubilee-Sabbath proposal for our church. The vote was 68 in favor, 8 opposed, and two abstained, for an 87% vote in favor of the proposal. This is an incredibly strong vote; far above the 70% we needed to pass this proposal.

This is a celebration for our church! This, I believe, points to the direction that God is calling us. It is not a proposal that was "handed down" from outside our church. It was not a proposal that our leaders drew up "out of thin air." It is not a plan that an emotional group of people pushed through. It was a patient, researched, shared, and prayed-through discerning of God's will for our church. We faithfully asked, "God, is this your will for our church?" Therefore, we can have assurance that this vote is our answer.

It was not a unanimous vote. This does not mean that some people didn't discern God rightly. I believe we all discerned carefully, and each of us had authentic, faithful reasons for voting the way we did. I have talked with some of those who shared with me that they voted against it. They had legitimate concerns that they were struggling with; and this was also true, I would add, for many who voted in favor. We all were seeking God's will. This is why it is important not to discern just on our own. Our individual concerns weigh differently to each of us. But when taken together, we can discern God's will much better.

I ask those who are against this proposal to continue to work well with those who aren't, in order to serve God together in unity. We all trust, after all, that God will work through all things and bring about His good and perfect will.

I write this while at Red Rock Bible Camp. Our camp verse this year is James 4:8, above. Camp week is a time that calls us back to our primary relationship with God. It is a time away to reconnect with Jesus, to become more open to the Holy Spirit within us, and to re-center our lives again. I need this week! I want my love for Jesus to go deeper!

I believe that this is also the intention for the HCI proposal. We have different views about how we may try to live out the proposal (this is true even for those who voted in favor of it). Yet folks that I've been talking with all agree on the intention of the proposal: it is a desire to draw closer to God. As we intentionally draw closer to God, His Word promises, He draws closer to us. And that's what we want! We want God closer! On this, we agree unanimously!

Monthly Church

Events For weekly events see the calendar

July 1	9 am United Methodist Men
July 3	Church Office Closed
July 4	Independence Day Church Office Closed
July 6	12 pm Sarah Circle
July 8	5:45 pm Adult Fellowship
July 9-14	Youth Wildfire Mission Trip
July 10	6:30 pm Finance Team Meeting
July 12	11:30 am Romeos and Juliets
July 13	1 pm United Methodist Women 6 pm SPRT Meeting
July 15	6 am Community Care Set-up 8 am Community Care
July 16	6:30 pm Lifeline
July 17-21	Pastor David and Andrew on vacation
July 17	6:30 pm Trustees Meeting
July 19	W.O.W.
July 20	6:30 pm MLT Meeting
July 23	10 am Hymn Sing Rev. Dr. Peter Law will speak
July 29	BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

Pastor's Perspective

The next steps will come quickly and slowly. The quick steps will be a consolidation of all the administrative teams of our church into one nine-member team. This will happen in July! Our coach assigned by the Conference is Rev. Jim Haun. He will work with our current leadership to assemble the nine member team based on models already implemented by other churches. This team will oversee the ongoing functioning of our congregation.

The next quick step will be assembling another team, a visioning team, who will begin the discerning through of each of our individual ministries. This team will be assembled by August, we hope.

Then comes the slow work. As the administrative team handles the ongoing life of the church, the visioning team will strive to implement a Jubilee break across our church ministries. The overall intention is to try to craft a temporary pause in our church activities so that we can reconnect with God in a new way.

This will not happen quickly. It will take time, as we want to honor each ministry and treat it well. We hope that much will be done before our 50th anniversary in December. Yet more will happen after.

This will not happen all together. Different ministries will be treated differently. The timing will be different, and what happens to each program will be different. We do want to maintain, however, our commitment to taking a real, church-wide pause. This pause, we believe, will be the context for the discerning of our future together.

This will not happen to everything. We will continue (although differently) Sunday morning worship, Wednesday evening food and fellowship, and small groups. We will keep our commitment to offer ministry to all the people of our congregation (children, youth, adults), but we expect it to be in a different and intergenerational way.

Each of us must continue to pray earnestly. We need to continue to discern God's leading all the more! We must agree to work together. We will not let disagreements divide us. We must willfully embrace change, when that change pushes us to grow. We need to agree willingly to give this proposal an authentic try, each doing our part. This means we commit to Sunday worship, Wednesday fellowship, and weekly small groups, just as much as it means we let go of ministries we may not want to, for a time. We willingly give everything to God, letting God do with our church what God wants. We go forward excited, expectant, and hopeful, led by the Holy Spirit.

As we move forward, we celebrate in confidence that God is leading us! God has a plan for our church! We have had the courage to embrace a radical proposal! Wow church! This church is open to doing anything that God wants. This is the kind of church that I want for my church! I can't wait to see what God's going to do with us! Hang on, here we go!

Pastor David

Events and Info

4th of July Parade/Float

Come celebrate 50 years of bringing Christ's light to Forest Lake by walking with our cake float during the parade!

Community Care

Saturday July 15th 8 am - 11 am

Adult Fellowship

July 8th at 5:30 pm. Watch for the signup sheet in the lobby.

Bluegrass Festival

Saturday, July 29th
Lakeside Memorial Park

Lifeline Sunday July 23rd 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!

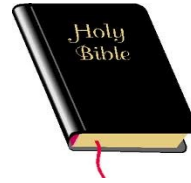
Romeo's and Juliet's

July 12th at 11:30 a.m. More details to come; watch for updates on locations.

A Call to Prayer

Forest Hills is a place of prayer! We want to move where the Lord is leading by asking, "God, what is Your call for us?" To do that, we need everyone seeking God together. To receive daily prayer prompts on your phone simply text your name and number to [612-200-4421](tel:612-200-4421).

Worship's Word



Every day we wake up in the middle of an identity crisis. We are each faced with a choice: Whom will we worship? Many in our world claim that they do not worship anyone, but if a deliberate choice is not made in this matter, humans revert to a default position. If given no other option, we will simply worship ourselves.

Scripture constantly talks about the heart, which for the Jewish people, referred to the center of man's will. At our core, we are decision making entities. We are not here by random chance, nor do we simply reflect natural outcomes. We are able to enact change. We are gifted with the ability to forge our own path or to follow the crowd. We can live for others, or live for ourselves.

Living for others may be admirable, but it is not our highest end. We are called to love God above all else. If we primarily love others, we are nothing more than humanitarians. But when we choose to abandon safety, security, acceptance, predictability, and all else in order to love God, we can truly be called Christians. And this decision to love God begins in the heart.

Our actions and thoughts flow from our hearts. The words we say originate in our hearts (Luke 6:45). The life of faith is challenging precisely because it involves our hearts. It consists of a moment-by-moment decision making process in which we choose God or ourselves. This choice can only be made in the heart.

This month we are going to sing a song of praise that asks God to enact in us nothing short of a heart transplant. It sounds risky because it is! It is not an instantaneous process because we continually remove ourselves from the operating table. But as we come into worship, we come with a posture of surrender, we come in gratitude, we come having made the decision to give our hearts to the God who made them.

We pray the following together so that, as a church, we might live and work and play with the heart of Christ:

“Breathe in me, breath of God.
Fill my heart with Yours”



Kid's Korner

Forest Hills has officially embarked on a brand-new journey! We are stepping out in faith to live into a risky reality. As of last week, our church body has voted to approve of a rather counter-intuitive idea: we are looking to move forward by stopping. We are gearing up to enter into a Sabbatical year of rest. As I write this article from camp, I cannot help but think about our theme verse: "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." James 4:8. No matter where we might be, God is always present. When we gather, God is present. But we are not content with his general presence. As a church, we need the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit. We need his glory to dwell within us. We need to set aside time and space so that we can purposefully draw near to God.

As to some of the details of this idea, I refer the reader to Pastor David's article, but I wanted to take the opportunity to talk specifically about kid's ministry and how it might appear in the coming year.

Please understand that, currently, there are no hard and fast answers. That is part of the point. We seek to give up control to our loving God and find answers from him alone. All I can say is what we know. We know we have a church that loves kids. We know we have faithful and dedicated members. But we also know that the ministries we currently have in place do not reach new children or families. We know that many of the volunteers involved with these ministries are burning out and cannot go on. We know that, while sometimes new people may attend, our special events do not draw them into the larger life of our church. In the end, we do not seem to be making disciples.

I personally feel the weight of this failure. If I am in charge of these ministries, why don't we see tangible fruit? Why does it seem like a constant struggle? What am I doing wrong?

God does not want us to toil in guilt. He wants us to live, and work and minister in joy. Church should never be a duty first and foremost. Ministry should be life giving, not life taking. I believe God is calling us to a new way of doing ministry, a way that is not a program, not a system and not just another thing to maintain. God is calling us to minister to kids in a life giving way, a way that focuses on relationships and teaching by example, a way that truly creates disciples.

With these goals in mind, children's programming, as we know it, will cease. However, children's ministry will continue. Ministry can never be a program. Sometimes programs are a tool employed to accomplish certain ministry directives. Some are very successful, but no program is immune to time. Things change, and programming must as well.

So, as we prepare to enter into this time of Sabbath, we lay aside our Sunday morning kid's church, we do not renew our membership with Awana, we stop spinning our wheels putting on special events. We rest. And in this rest we seek God intentionally and we surrender to him the future of our church. We draw near to him.

With all of our "programs" put to rest we look forward to engaging in the life of faith together. This means making time and space for children in our Sunday services. How can we involve and encourage our kids without sending them away from "big" church? It means making our Wednesday nights family nights and not merely another program. How can we grow together as a church family? We also want our whole church to experience the blessing of small groups, kids included.

God has been preparing this church for a culture change, and though it may still come as a shock, I am confident that we will be able to look back on this time as one of the greatest decisions we have ever made. While we fold up our programs, we hold high our ministry and entrust the future into God's hands. In what better place could we be?

For the King,

-Andrew





50th Birthday July 4th Float

We will be participating in the Forest Lake July 4th Parade with a float! Our theme is going to be a 50th Birthday theme, with a three-tier cake float! We are celebrating 50 years of “being the light of Jesus in our community!” Join us for the parade. If you’d like to help decorate the float, or walk in the parade, contact Paulette Johnson or Angie Prchal for details! See you there!

2017 Love Offering

Our Love Offering collection this year was \$412.00. Amanda Lucas presented it at the Conference last week.



Wildfire Missions Trip

Pastor David and Jenny Richter will be leading the Wildfire Missions Trip to Superior, WI from July 9th through the 14th. We have eight missionaries going on the trip!

Bluegrass Festival

The Bluegrass Festival takes place this year on July 29th at Lakeside Memorial Park from 3-8 pm. Bands will include North Shore Trail, King Wilkie’s Dream, and Sawtooth Brothers. Proceeds will go to St. Andrew’s Family Shelter, Feed My Starving Children, and Our Lady of the Mountains Elementary School in Paintsville, KY.

