

The Edge

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOREST HILLS CHURCH, JUNE 2016

From the *Pastor's Perspective*

Message Series

Our Open Door message series is opening a new door! We have talked about what inhibits us from going through the doors God opens in front of us. Then we talked about how to go through God's open doors. Just this past week we've started talking how we can live on the other side of the open door.

Over the next couple of weeks, we will continue to look at the biblical book of Titus to help us understand how we can grow and mature as followers of Jesus. The key theme of the book is making the connection between gospel belief and gospel behavior. Titus is full of rules, but the motivation for these rules is not legalism. It's the incarnation of the Son of God for redemption! Christianity is not merely rules to be followed, but instead, joy to be found.

Then, later in June, we will have guest speakers: The Rev. Dan Hair on June 19, and the Rev. Peter Milloy on June 26. You won't want to miss them! If you must, remember that each week you can either read or listen to the messages on the church's web site.

Staffing Changes

This spring brings a number of staffing changes at Forest Hills. We say "may God bless you" to three folks, say "welcome" to one new person, and see changes in two more.

Laurie Monson, who had been our half-time office administrator, finished right before Memorial Day. Some of her major accomplishments have been the redesign of the church's website, producing the new directory, and streamlining a lot of the office communication.

We are pleased to announce that Rebecca "Becca" Stenlund has started as our new, half-time office coordinator. Becca lives in Stacy and is a mother of two daughters, a nine-year-old, and a nine-month-old! She will be starting college in the fall and is excited to work at Forest Hills during her schooling. Please stop by sometime, introduce yourself to Becca, and make her feel welcome. Also, please bring all your office and scheduling needs to her. The office contact information stays the same.

Andrew and Amelia Buschena have been appointed by the bishop to serve Cambridge United Methodist Church, starting July. They will serve jointly, with Amelia being the lead pastor. Their last Sunday at Forest Hills will be June 12, and then they will take a vacation before starting in Cambridge in July.

Andrew Bonsell, who has finished his Masters of Divinity degree through Bethel Seminary this May, has agreed to go full-time starting in July. His position will continue to be half-time Director of Children and Families, but adding half-time Director of Worship (taking over Andrew Buschena's position).

Church Events

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| June 2 | 10:00 a.m. Book Club |
| | 12:00 p.m. Sarah Circle |
| June 4 | 9:00 a.m. United Methodist Men |
| | 5:30 p.m. Kickball Tournament |
| June 5 | ASP Commissioning |
| | Graduation Sunday |
| June 6 | 6:30 p.m. LLMT Meeting |
| June 11 | ASP Mission Trip 6/11 - 6/17 |
| June 12 | Buschena's Last Sunday |
| June 15 | 11:30 a.m. Romeos / Juliet's |
| | 6:30 p.m. W.O.W |
| June 18 | Community Care |
| June 19 | Dan Hair Preaching |
| June 20 | 6:30 p.m. Trustees Meeting |
| June 21 | 9:00 a.m. UMW Summer Outing |
| | 10:00 a.m. Rebecca Circle |
| June 25 | 10:00 a.m. Breakfast Club |
| June 26 | Red Rock Bible Camp week |

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Pastor's Perspective (continued)

I'm absorbing Amelia's quarter-time position as Director of Spiritual Growth at Forest Hills, as I have now more time since I have completed my doctoral program at Luther Seminary. My degree focused on how to lead small groups in a way that encourages spiritual growth evidenced in changes in behavior.

This summer, we are also seeking to hire a half-time Director of Youth, Outreach, and Video Media and Technology position. This person will take over the youth group from Andrew Bonsell, add the oversight of some of our outreach ministries, and add a role in creating video media that captures our church's ministry and helps promote it. If you know of anyone who may be interested in this position, please talk to Gina Lindholm (team leader for Staff Parish Relations Team) or me.

Pentecost Challenge

We celebrated Pentecost on May 15. On that day I laid out our summer challenge:

May: Pray daily for the Holy Spirit to bring 1-2 unchurched people to mind

For the rest of May, each of us was to pray every day asking the Holy Spirit to identify to us, one or two unchurched people in our normal sphere of influence, whom we are to pray for. We are asking the Holy Spirit, you see, to bring these people to our minds. The Holy Spirit is to do the work. We are to pray that we will notice which unchurched people are to be on our hearts. (If you haven't started this yet, you can do this for the first two weeks of June!)

June: Pray daily for these 1-2 specifically and by name

Then, in June, we are to take the one or two people that the Holy Spirit has brought to our attention, and pray for them by name each day, for all of June. Pray for them to desire to know Christ more fully. Pray for them to become involved in our own local church. After all, why not? I think ours is one of the best there is! And pray for specific connection points for you to offer influence on these people in the course of normal, routine daily life.

July: Once or twice, talk with them (phone, over the fence, BBQ, coffee, etc.)

Then, in July, we try to connect with them. Perhaps you spend some time talking with them over the backyard fence. Perhaps you spend your afternoon break with them. Perhaps you call them on the phone. Perhaps you invite them out for coffee. Perhaps you invite them to your grilling out in your backyard. Perhaps you can invite them to the Blue Grass Festival the last Saturday in July.

Aug.: Invite them to the Wed. evening BBQ

In August, invite them to one of our church's Wednesday evening BBQs, and offer to go with them, that you'll pick them up, and even offer to give them a ride.

Sept.: Invite them to Rally Sunday service (September 11)

And then, in September, invite them to come to worship with you here at Forest Hills, perhaps on Rally Sunday, September 11. It will be awesome!

Pentecost requires boldness. The disciples were pushed out of their closed room. We are pushed through an open door. We are called to go share with others, helping them to know the joy we have in Jesus. You see, each of us has a unique sphere of influence that no one else has. It's been given to us by God. And God wants to use that in us to touch those people, as no one else can. It's true. Don't believe me, believe the Holy Spirit.

Our Pentecost goal is that come September, we will have new people added to our number. Perhaps not 3,000, but how about 3? How about 13? How about 30 new faces here in this church, getting involved in the life of this congregation? I believe we can do this. Go through the open door, and let's do the Pentecost Challenge!

Lobby Redesign

In June, we will begin a special project of redecorating the lobby. Special gifts totaling \$8,500 have been given to freshen up our lobby and sanctuary. (Just to be clear, this is a separate project from the recent capital drives.) First, the sanctuary and lobby will be completely repainted. Then, the welcome center and coffee shop areas will be redesigned. Wall hangings are going to be changed, communicating our new branding icons of Love, Grow, and Serve. There'll also be some new furniture, new signage, and a whole lot of excitement! It all starts June 13.

Events and Info

Grad Sunday - June 5

We'll be recognizing our graduates, Erin LaNay Goodale (Forest Lake High School), Gabriel Benson (Forest Lake High School), Andrew David Bonsell, M. Div. (Bethel University) and David Alan Werner, D. Min (Luther Seminary), during service on Sunday, June 5th. There will be a reception in the lobby following service.

Adult Fellowship

Adult Fellowship will be meeting on Saturday, June 11th at 6:00 p.m. at Pizza Ranch near Maplewood Mall. There's a sign-up sheet in the lobby or contact Rozanne Foster for more information.

United Methodist Day at the Twins: August 23rd, 7:10 p.m. at Target Field, Minneapolis. Join other United Methodists for an evening of Big-League actions and fun as the Twins play the Detroit Tigers. Bishop Bruce Ough will throw out the honorary first pitch before the game and will lead the 7th inning stretch.

Buschena's Last Sunday- June 12

On Sunday, June 12th we'll be saying goodbye to Andrew and Amelia and wishing them well as they start their new adventure at Common Ground UMC in Cambridge.

Shabach Messianic Jewish praise team

The Shabach Messianic Jewish praise team will be leading worship on June 19th and Rev. Dan Hair will be preaching. Hymn sing will be on Sunday, June 26th.

Camping Sunday - June 26

On Sunday, June 26th we will be commissioning those going to Red Rock Bible Camp, so, we are asking everyone to dress like you are heading to camp (casual, t-shirts, shorts). Rev. Peter Milloy will be preaching.

Spiritual Growth

When I sat down to write this month's newsletter article I realized I didn't have much to say. From time to time I'm sure we all know what it's like to need an idea and find that nothing is coming to you. Well I began thinking, "why don't I have any ideas, or anything to say". I ran through the basics, "Are there any updates I need to give people about what's going on at church?", "Have I read anything lately that has made me feel closer to God or been worth sharing with others?" And I kept going down the list only to come up empty each time. Then as I sat in my chair growing more and more frustrated with the lack of inspiration I seemed to be having something clicked and I could almost hear an inner voice saying, "Do something for yourself. Spend time doing what you love. Spend time being with the people you love. Spend time with God and fill your soul until it begins to overflow. Then you will find creativity, passion, ideas, and new life. Then you will have something to say."

Suddenly it dawned on me, inspiration and beautiful things to say about your community or Jesus don't always just flow out of you when your cup is empty. Sometimes we might squeeze out a last drop or two, but if we aren't putting anything into the cup how can we expect to have anything to pour out? So maybe I couldn't think of anything to say because I haven't been taking the time to fill my own cup, which ironically is essentially my job, to teach others to cultivate time with God and time for themselves in order to grow spiritually and have full cups. I realized that I wanted my cup to be overflowing with crisp, cool, rushing water and it really only had a couple of drops left. So how did it get this way? I mean I've just been finishing up work, filling out paperwork, buying a house, preparing to move, finalizing licensing things with the UMC, and so on and so forth. You know what that list of things didn't include? My prayer time, time with friends, worship in a way that I'm not the one leading things, and so on and so forth. My list of current life activities is beautiful and full of new exciting adventures but I realized through this newsletter that it hasn't left much time for my spiritual cup to be filled, and I know I haven't been working on filling it.

So what does this mean for me and for all of you? Well my friends, this is where grace comes in. When we work with Jesus to grow spiritual we will still find ourselves with dry and empty cups at times. But grace comes in and gently reminds us that life is so much better when our cups are overflowing, grace holds our hand as we begin to pour new water into our cups, and grace even waits patiently for us when we haven't yet realized or accepted just how dry our cup really are. Grace is also the one softly telling us that it's ok to choose ourselves and reminds us that when we do we will have so much more to offer others. So my prayer for myself and for any of you who might be realizing that your cups are getting dangerously close to the last few drops is that we would hear grace telling us it's ok to be right where we are and telling us that it's time to be full again.

Grace and Peace ~ Amelia

Worship's Word

A little more than a year ago I was finishing up seminary, looking for a job, and having no idea what my future would hold. Fast forward to July and I'm back in the great state of Minnesota, moving into a place in St. Paul, and starting at this church called Forest Hills (confusingly in the town of Forest Lake). I still didn't know what my future would hold, but I was excited to start this new journey. Now, having been here for almost a year I'm once again in a place of transition, once again looking forward with uncertainty, and once again excited to start a new journey. As most of you know Amelia and I have been appointed to serve at the Methodist church in Cambridge, MN. We are both excited for this opportunity, but we are also both sad to be leaving this community that has welcomed us with open arms during our time here. Thank you all for your spirits of hospitality and grace, it was quite apparent to us very early on that this was a community that cared deeply about each other and we have been glad to be a part of it.

Looking forward there is a lot to be excited about here in the coming months including staffing changes, the Bluegrass Festival, August BBQs, and a new look in our lobby space! Some of these things are brand new, and some of these things are continuations of our already successful ministries. All of these are evidences of God's work in this place! I pray that in the months and years ahead that this community continues to listen for the movement of the Spirit and to make decisive movements in response to its leading.

Grace and peace,
Andrew Buschena

Kid's Korner

The end of the school year is upon us. This means that children's ministry at Forest Hills will look a little different for a while. Instead of our weekly program, we switch our focus on bigger events (i.e. VBS). Summer also affords us an opportunity to regroup and reconsider how we do things during the more normal and predictable school year.

This past year I have embarked on a new ministry venture. Since I began my role as Director of Children's Ministry I have been commissioned as not only a minister to the kids within our church doors but also as a minister to children within our wider community. This is a daunting task indeed and I knew that becoming involved with our local schools would be the best way to impact families in Forest Lake. I had formed some relationships with school officials, counselors and other staff, but I still felt that I had no real impact in the lives of students.

As I considered a solution to this problem, God put it on my heart to start smaller. If I couldn't affect the Forest Lake school system at large, then I should focus my efforts on a single classroom. It is to this cause that I have been committed. I have volunteered two hours nearly every Thursday morning in a 4th grade classroom at Forest Lake Elementary. Through my time there I have had the chance to work directly with kids helping them with their spelling, math facts and whatever else the teacher might need. For the past few months I have even been able to spend some time with one boy in particular who was struggling with relocation after his parent's divorce.

As I enter the classroom, I come as a servant willing to do whatever is asked of me. There is no great glory involved. I simply try to be the hands and feet of Jesus. The kids look forward to seeing me and the teacher is always grateful, but what's more; I have made myself available to be used by God in the very heart of our Forest Lake community. This is outreach, this is mission work. I invite you to join me this September. Give some of your time to our community classrooms. I commit to setting it all up with a teacher in a way that works with your schedule. What if our schools began to be inundated with our church members? What if our church's presence exceeded our church building? What if school administrators and overworked teachers, parents and kids began to thank God for Forest Hills Church?

Join me in this endeavor! Contact me this summer and get plugged in for September!

For the King ~ Andrew Bonsell