

The Edge

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOREST HILLS CHURCH
JULY 2018

From the Pastor's Perspective

Summer Vines

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can't do anything." -John 15:5

This July marks the beginning of the third year on our HCI (Healthy Church Initiative) journey. Our first year was full of exploring, self-study, and honesty. It culminated last June in an overwhelming vote by our Church Conference to accept the five recommendations of our HCI plan. The plan is an attempt to turn the church in a new direction—yet unseen—rather than just keep on doing what we have always done.

The first recommendation was to pause what we normally do: to simplify our programming, our building, and our calendars. We chose to spend a season "sitting at the feet of Jesus," reconnecting to our primary love. The next three recommendations were to focus on three things we would do while we paused: simple, soulful worship (kids included), fellowship Wednesdays for all ages, and three cycles of church-wide small groups. This pausing and three-fold focus filled our second year.

We begin the third year, and as we do, we begin to fulfill our fifth recommendation: to dream a new dream for our church. Our staff and AMT leadership have already started to dream, as we ask God how we are to be the church He wants us to be. We anticipate that God will transform us in some pretty different and amazing ways. We are excited! Staff and AMT went on a Leadership Retreat in the middle of June. Here are some of the beginnings of the dreaming so far.

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Monthly Church Events

For weekly events see the calendar

July 1	Steve Ruter delivering message 11:15 am Pot luck after worship
July 4	CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED HAPPY 4TH OF JULY!
July 8	HOLY COMMUNION Pastor David delivering message Commissioning of Andrew Bonsell
July 9	6:30pm Small Group Work Team Meeting
July 10	6:30pm Small Group Host Training
July 11	10:00am Worship at Birchwood- Everyone invited 6:00pm Youth Fun Night at Church Pastor David leaves for vacation
July 12	6:30pm AMT Meeting
July 15	HYMN SING Dan Hair delivering message 6:30pm Lifeline

Pastor's Perspective Cont'd

We used Jesus' teaching of the Vine and Branches (John 15:1-17) as the foundation of our retreat. We saw three major points that not only aligned with our church's mission, but shaped our visioning for the future.

1. Love: Our priority is to point people to Jesus. (It's all about Jesus!) Jesus says He is the vine, and we are the branches. It all comes from the Vine! Key "vision starters" are that all we do must be in offer to Jesus, that to do that we each need to have a personal passion and focus on Jesus, and that our strategy is to always help people take the next step closer to or with Jesus.
2. Grow: Our priority is to help people grow in spiritual maturity. (It's all about us!) Jesus says the branches (we) are to *remain* in Him. Key "vision starters" are that together we grow spiritually much better, that how we love each other in the church is part of our witness for Jesus to others, and our church community is a foretaste of the glory to come.
3. Serve: Our priority is to make Jesus' love visible to others. (It's about them!) Jesus says the branches must bear fruit. Key "vision starters" are that we must reach out to those outside of our church and create a personal relationship with those who are not here yet, that since fruit always contains seeds, so our fruit of service must plant the seed of faith in others, and we must serve the whole person and not just physical needs or in just a transactional way.

These three points form our guidelines for all our ministry in the future. Everything we do must do each of these three, and all of these three! Making disciples in the local family system will be our primary focus, and we will do this by being a church *of* small groups (not a church *with* small groups).

These are our first steps in dreaming. But we dream *together* as a church. So, what is everyone—what are *you*—hearing God say? Be sure to use the Dreambox in the lobby to share what God is showing you for our church's future. Together we dream God's new dream!

Without Jesus we can do nothing. So, church, make a point this summer to stay connected to the Vine. Attend worship when you are in town on Sundays. Join the small group on prayer later this month. And keep praying every day for our church!

Pastor David

July 21	Pastor David returns from vacation
July 22	Pastor Andrew delivering the message 11:15 Small Group
July 25	6:00pm Youth Family Pot Luck 6:30 Small Group
July 26	6:30pm AMT Meeting
July 29	Start new Sermon Series— Transformative Prayer



Summer Message Series

Our summer message series is "Transformed: Praying in a Way that Changes You." Our church is "Dreaming a New Dream" this summer as the next phase of our HCI journey. As we listen to God for the plan He has for our church, we spend intentional time in prayer. Each of us also needs to grow in our prayer life as we grow and mature in our faith. The message series starts July 22 and carries on through August. We will also host small groups to accompany this series. We will be using Max Lucado's book, *Before Amen*, as our prayer guide. Copies of the book are \$10.

Summer Small Groups on Prayer!

Sign up even if you're busy!

We are offering a summer, church-wide, small group series on prayer!

We will be offering groups on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings, and at least one more time during the week. This 6-week session will run from July 22 through August.

The small groups will follow the summer message series, using Max Lucado's *Before Amen*, on praying transformative prayers. There is an optional \$10 study book available for those who want it.

The group sessions will include a short video and study questions for each session. Child care will be provided for children younger than youth.

Dreambox

God has a dream for our church! During this Jubilee year, we have committed to pause and listen. We want to sit with Jesus and hear His dreams for us. This summer we are intentionally dreaming a new dream (hearing God's dream) for our church!

We want to "capture" your dream. "Upload" what you hear the Holy Spirit saying to you about our church in the Dreambox (notice the wordplay on Dropbox?) in the lobby. We want to be dreaming together as a church. So, please fill out a dreamcard and put it in the Dreambox. Dreamcards will be available ALL SUMMER in the church lobby, in Sunday bulletins, in the church office, on the church website, and in the weekly emails. We want to collect all of our dreaming, because we believe that when they are all put together, we will discern the dream that God has for our church.



Summer Potlucks

This summer we will connect, build relationships, and get to know each other better with monthly potlucks after worship on the first Sunday of each month. This Sunday, July 1, will be our July potluck. We ask those who remember to bring a large dish to share, so we can then tell everyone to stay and eat even if they have not brought food. Plan to stay, and encourage others to stay as well. Invite some friends or neighbors! Let's keep building community this summer!



Pastor Andrew

It is with great joy that we announce that, after a long time of study, preparation, and assessment, the Bishop and Cabinet of the MN United Methodist Church, will be licensing Andrew as a local pastor, and, starting July 1, will appoint him full-time as Associate Pastor to Forest Hills Church. We will celebrate his achievement on Sunday, July 8 with Pastor Andrew leading Holy Communion. Be sure to congratulate Andrew on becoming a pastor, and continue to affirm and pray for his ministry of pastoral leadership among us.

AMT Update

On June 15 and 16 the Action Ministry Team had their first overnight retreat. The purpose was to have uninterrupted time as a group and move forward with the “dreaming” phase of our HCI (Healthy Church Initiative) journey, while outside of the walls of our church building. On Friday evening we began with the question, “Why did each of us keep coming back to this church family?” The answers were varied but they continually came back to biblically based sermons, being spiritually fed (small groups), authentic welcoming people, feels like home, there is a family connection.

Pastor David connected our “Love. Grow. Serve.” goals with the story of the vine and the branches from John 15: 1-7. We need pruning to produce more fruit. Growth requires tending, effort, both personal growth and growth as a church.

Much of our time was spent in prayer, talking to God and listening to Him, as a large group, small group and individually.

How is our church different from any secular group that does good? The answer is Jesus. Our dream must be about Jesus. Dreams included: growth in personal relationship with God, walking away from worship feeling filled with the Holy Spirit and wanting to come back, focus on relationships, culture of family discipleship, full small groups that are meeting the needs of people where they are at, lay down what’s good and find what’s best. These ideas really led to wanting to be a “church of small groups, not a church with small groups”.

AMT does not plan on changing our existing mission statement or our three goals of Love, Grow, Serve. We decided that ministry activities should meet all three goals. We are keeping the long held values of the church, but need to make sure we are meeting spiritual needs as well as relationship needs.

Paradigm shift-Christ centered with focus on making disciples by meeting spiritual needs of church family, community and the world.

Comments from the group at the end of the weekend included: unity as a team in the direction we need to go, joy to work with people in love with Jesus that want to help shape the direction of our church, good to get started on the dreaming portion of HCI, God's spirit was truly present, the diversity of the group is a strength.

We made more progress in 1 and ½ days than we could have done 2 hours a month. There was a breakthrough in the unity of our team. We are now moving forward with a common goal.

Please pray for our group as we continue the forward progress of God's dream for our church. This was only the beginning, we have much more work to do to expand the ideas our group felt God was leading us to.

Thanks to Andrea and Amanda, whose notes I used to create this update.

In Christ,

Marilee Leonard

Lay Leader

***Deputy Brandon Yetter (WA County Sheriff's Office),
son of Chuck and Donna Yetter, received
2017 James Trudeau Law Enforcement Award
Given by Lakes Center for Youth and Families***



Brandon Yetter, (son of Chuck and Donna Yetter) has been quite busy in Washington County giving outstanding service to our youth! He has been serving Scandia, and Washington County for 6 years. He teaches DARE to the youth in a way that engages them and makes them want to stand up for themselves. He also takes time out of his day to have lunch with kids at school, and play with them on the playground. He stops at local parks and asks how everyone is doing, and is recognized in the Scandia Community as someone they can trust and lean on when necessary.

In addition to the above, Brandon has also been involved with Fish with a Cop, Shop with a Cop, Cones with a Cop, Night to Unite, and he gives community presentations on safety and other topics.

Brandon was honored and given this award on June 26, 2018 at 9:00 am at the Washington County Government Center in Stillwater. What a testament to his upbringing, and what a way to bring love to the community!

Go Brandon!

Do you have a family member at Mayo and need a place to stay?

Christ UMC in Rochester offers a hospitality house for those receiving care at Mayo Clinic. Please contact the church at 507-289-4019 or at email@cumethodist.com. All that is needed is a pastor's recommendation and a free-will donation!

Worship's Word



Worship is a strange word.

It is used as both a noun and a verb and can even be used to describe a type of service or team: I *worship* (verb) while I am leading *worship* (noun) on the *worship* (adjective) team. See what I mean? It can be a little convoluted. In spite of these uses, the most important is the first: I worship.

For the Christian, worship cannot be a choice. It is not just singing songs, it is not an emotional trip, it is not a production. Worship begins with your heart. To stand before God, praising Jesus Christ and opening yourself up to the working of the Holy Spirit is the what a worshipper is all about. In the service itself, staff do their best to say the right words, sing the right notes and minimize the things that might distract, but the heart of worship beats inside each of us and we are responsible for our own experience.

We can worship with the largest choir or an off-key soloist; the most talented band or those who are just learning.

As worship leader, my job is to put together a team that will offer it's very best to God as we lead in worship. We seek to do this every week through Sanctify. As you may have noticed, we have lost two of our long-time musicians. Our bass player, Perry Ostlund, has become overstretched with a new schedule and Chris Murphy our guitarist has been experiencing pain from carpal tunnel in his hands. Please pray for them both as we ask God's blessing on them in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, Sanctify has tried to adapt to these changes. As we move into summer dreaming a new dream, we look to God to fill our ranks and bless us with leaders who have a heart for worship!

Though it might be a strange word, worship is the lifeblood of our walk with God. Pastor/author John Ortberg puts it this way: *"I need to worship because without it I can forget his [God's] calling and begin to live in a spirit of self-preoccupation. I need to worship because without it I lose a sense of wonder and gratitude and plod through life with blinders on. I need worship because my natural tendency is toward self-reliance and stubborn independence."*

Shout with joy to the Lord all the earth,

Worship the Lord with gladness

Come before him with joyful songs!

-Psalm 100:1-2



This summer the youth group is meeting twice a month. Our last meeting was a potluck with all the families. We talked about how youth group went this year and the teens shared their favorite memories. We also played some teens against parents trivia.

This week, almost all of us are at Red Rock Camp for a week of fellowship and spiritual growth. I love watching how God works in each of their lives at camp.

In July we will meet again to discuss a 2019 mission trip and how youth group should look going forward. I can't wait to start dreaming a new dream with this crew.

-Cassi

KID'S CORNER

Leading a church in today's cultural milieu is a daunting task. Any pastor who seeks to truly make disciples must admit that the job is actually impossible. Jesus explains as much in John 15:5, "apart from me you can do nothing." It is that simple. If we desire a church that shines a light and makes an impact for the Kingdom of God, we must remain connected to Jesus. He is the vine and we are the branches. Our ability to bear fruit (that is, make disciples) is totally dependent upon our willingness to remain connected to the source of life: Jesus.

It is challenging enough to put together and sustain social clubs these days. People are less and less committed to groups, they are more and more involved with social media. Up and coming generations are experiencing more and more loneliness. Kids are dealing with addiction to screens and other devices. But even as our culture continues to move into isolation and surface level relations, we want to stand and offer something that brings us together.

However, the church is much more than a place that provides socialization or even a place that offers help and support to others. These are certainly good things, and although they play a part in the work of the church, they are not our primary call, they are not our reason for being.

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The bottom line, our beginning and end, our great commission from Jesus himself is to **make disciples!** If we are not doing this, we might as well pack up now. There is no need for another civic group.

As we take time to dream and allow God to shape within us a new vision for Forest Hills, we keep our purpose firmly in mind. How can we best make disciples? How can we use the gifts God has given us to accomplish this impossible task?

As the staff person in charge of our Children's Ministry, I would love to be able to ascend a mountain, converse directly with God and have him write down my calendar for the year on a couple of stone tablets. Then I just have to show up at one meeting and implement the perfect plan. God however, works a bit differently. I believe that he has given me a piece of the puzzle and someone else another piece and someone else yet another. As our leadership team continues to meet and puzzle together, I ask you to remain in prayer. Ask God to instill a dream in your heart. When he does, share it with the rest of us so we can piece it all together.

For the King,

-Andrew



Walk to Emmaus

Below are the dates for the Fall/Winter Walk to Emmaus:

Camp Koronis
Men October 25-28 2018
Women November 1-4 2018

Good Counsel (Mankato)
Men January 17-20 2019
Women January 24-27 2019



If you are interested in participating in the walk, or would like more information about it, please contact Teresa Gruber.

Events and Info

Summer Potlucks

**July 1st
August 5th
September 2nd**

Summer Small Groups

**We will begin a small group
in line with our "Prayer"
series on July 22nd. See the
sign-ups in the lobby!**

Lifeline Sunday July 15th at 6:30 pm

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5.

We take these words of Jesus seriously. We depend upon him. Our connection to the vine cannot be ignored. Lifeline is a way for us to come together to be with God. There will be songs to sing and prayers to pray, but you can simply come to enjoy the presence of God. All are encouraged to attend because we need Jesus! Our church needs Jesus! Hang on tight to the lifeline.

**GOD
Bless
America**

