



## From the Pastor's Perspective

*"The woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson. The boy grew up, and the Lord blessed him. The Lord's spirit began to move him . . . ." -Judges 13:24-25*

Easter is fading into memory, graduation is coming quickly, and we are making our summer plans. If Easter is so important, how do we not let it slip away amid the business of now or get lost in all the planning for what's coming next? How do we live as disciples of Jesus with Easter as our defining reality?

I've been reading a book on Samson. I have to confess; I have never liked the story of Samson. It's a short story deep within the book of Judges. It's at a time in Israel's history after they have left Egypt and settled into the Promised Land, but before they had kings. The people struggled to follow God faithfully, and so God raised up "judges" who led the people to stay close to God.

Now, a "judge" in the Old Testament is not what we think of judges today. Well, maybe a little bit. They did arbitrate disputes when they arose and tried to settle arguments. But most importantly, they were military heroes who led the Israelites to victory against foreign oppressors and who governed the people to follow God.

There was a repeating cycle: 1. As long as a judge ruled, there was peace in the land, both against oppressors and in faithfulness to God. 2. But, when the judge died, the people

*Continued on page 2...*

## Monthly Church Events

For weekly events see the calendar

May 1	5:30 pm Shared Meal (Pot luck) 6:15 pm ECHO, Youth Grp, Confirmation 7:30 pm Sanctify Rehearsal
May 2	NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER 12:00 pm Nat'l Day of Prayer Program at American Legion 12:00 pm Sarah Circle
May 3	7:00 am Breakfast and Bible Study
May 4	9:00 am United Methodist Men 9:00 am Spring Yard Clean-up Day
May 5	WOMENS' SUNDAY HOLY COMMUNION 8:30 am Prayer 10:00 am Worship - Karen Seavey giving message 11:15 am Grow group 11:15 am Missions Trip Meeting
May 8	10:00 am Birchwood Worship Service 5:30 pm Shared Meal (Pancakes) 6:15 pm ECHO, Youth Grp., Confirmation 7:30 pm Sanctify Rehearsal
May 9	1:00 pm UMW Board Meeting 6:30 pm AMT Meeting

## Pastor's Perspective Cont'd

fell away from God and started worshipping other, local gods. 3. God stopped protecting the people and let other people attack and subjugate the Israelites. 4. The people repented and turned to God for help in their misery. 5. God hears their cry and raises up a judge. 6. The judge leads the people in driving out the foreign oppressors and calls the people back to worshipping the true God. 7. Back to number 1, the cycle starts over (there are 12 judges mentioned in the Bible, and, interestingly, one was a female—Deborah—who as a military hero was sort of an early Joan of Arc!).

Samson is a judge, but from my reading, only accidentally helps free the people from the oppression of the Philistines. He was not a godly man, and if you remember from the “Samson and Delilah” story, he followed his romantic desires more than God. Yet, amazingly, God used him, even with all of his problems. And here is where I’m coming to for my May Sunday message mini-series (3 weeks). I’m forcing myself to preach on Samson (I’ve scheduled this series purposefully so that I will dive deeply into all of God’s Word, and not just stick to the parts I like or understand better). I’m still not sure what all God is going to have me say, but what I am seeing right now is that God is active and working through people even when they struggle to stay close to God.

That’s a message of Easter, after all, isn’t it? Easter doesn’t fix our every flaw or make us perfect disciples. We still struggle to follow Jesus. And stories like Samson remind us—encourage us—that God uses us even when we are not tracking with Him very well. God still accomplishes His will, still fights for His people, still redeems the lost, and in the process, we also find transformation.

Living as Easter people means going through the cycle of the judges in our own hearts, with the good news of God’s assurance that He does not tire of our straying to the point of giving up on us. We all have Samson in us! We don’t always live the Easter promise well, but the risen Jesus keeps coming to us, working through us, and bringing us back.

Happy Easter, Samson!

Pastor David



May 10	7:00 am Breakfast and Bible Study
May 11	9:30 am Discipleship Training 5:45 pm Adult Fellowship
May 12	MOTHER'S DAY 8:30 am Prayer 10:00 am Worship
May 15	11:30 pm Romeos and Juliets 5:30 pm Shared Meal (Rosenbaums) 6:15 pm ECHO, Youth Grp. Confirmation 7:30 pm Sanctify Rehearsal
May 16	1:00 pm Headstart Graduation
May 17	7:00 am Breakfast and Bible Study 5:00 pm Unload Community Care Truck
May 18	6:00 am Community Care Set-up 8:00 am Community Care Dist.
May 19	HYMN SING 8:30 am Prayer 10:00 am Worship 11:15 am Grow group Host Eval. Meeting 6:30 pm Lifeline
May 20	6:30 pm CMMT Meeting
May 21	10:00 am Rebecca Circle
May 22	5:30 pm Shared Meal (Nancy) 6:15 pm ECHO, Youth Grp., Confirmation 7:30 pm Sanctify Rehearsal
May 24	7:00 am Breakfast and Bible Study
May 26	8:30 am Prayer 10:00 am Worship
May 27	MEMORIAL DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
May 29	5:30 pm Shared Meal (BBQ) 6:15 pm Family Game Show Night 7:30 pm Sanctify Rehearsal
May 31	7:00 am Breakfast and Bible Study

## *Worship's Word*

Disciplines...practices...habits...behaviors...

Whichever word you might choose, no one naturally gravitates toward these ideas. Attach the word “spiritual” to them and you will be even more hard pressed to elicit a response. In our modern marketing age, the Church has tried innumerable ways to dress up the terminology of discipleship, but that fact remains: it is something we just must do.

Like any effort to implement life changes, the process is much more effective when you undergo it with someone else. That is why we have ECHO. We don't have to stay in the fight alone. We need accountability, encouragement and a place to voice our struggles. We want everyone in our church to be disciples, and we have a very specific definition of what that looks like: Disciples make other disciples.

There is no age range to discipleship. And there is no point at which you “know enough.” ECHO is for all ages, old and young alike, so we can hear again, or for the first time, the message of God's word. Does it ECHO in your life?

In the last weeks of this school year, we will be taking a look at the spiritual disciplines that set us up for living the life of a true disciple. You might think you know all there is to know, and if that is the case, be a disciple and share that knowledge with others! You might wish you lived a more spiritually focused life. Come on Wednesdays and find out how that could be possible.

We need each other. We need God's presence. We need to hear God's word for us again...and again...and again.

For the King,  
-Andrew



## *AMT Update*

The Action Ministry Team (AMT) had a retreat this past March continuing our visioning for Forest Hills. We watched a wonderful Ted Talk by Benjamin Zander about classical music. We tried to bring what he showed us about classical music and compare it to what we need to know about “being a disciple.” It may seem strange to find the many similarities between the two. What I found is that, like music, we need to allow the Spirit to move us. In music, the conductor has the power to allow the spirit to move among the musicians and bring out the best in them and the music. God is our conductor, we are the musicians, He has the power to bring out the best in us, if we allow it. Like the conductor, God wants everyone to catch the vision, to see beyond their finite minds and bring heart and soul into creating us into disciples who make other disciples.

One of our goals at the retreat was to define what we mean by an activity verses a ministry of the church. We defined a “ministry” as primarily “making disciples.” This would use staff resources and include Worship time, Wednesday Grow Groups, Echo groups, Confirmation, Youth, small accountability groups and more. “Activities” are groups that are largely self-run, and include fellowship groups, essential church building maintenance groups, one-time service activities, and more.

As a team, AMT has promised to help different teams in the church help define where they see themselves fitting in. If groups and teams want to move to more intentionally make disciples, we will help guide and coach them so that their vision can ignite and turn into a flame. A fellowship group may not primarily be making disciples, but it is an important way for folks to interact with others in the church, make friends, and possibly help get people connected to ministry groups.

AMT aims to fan the flame of all the musicians in our church orchestra, so that everyone’s gifts from God may be used to the fullest. With God conducting us, we can make the Spirit move and swell among us.

We need all of you to help take this small flame and grow it into a fiery spirit like that first Christian Pentecost in Acts 2:2-3, “Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”

May God continue to guide us,

Marilee Leonard  
Lay Leader

## ***CMMT UPDATE***

It's spring! I always love watching my garden slowly wake up and turn into a fresh, new look every year. This spring we're also working to give the church a fresh, new look. The Monday Morning Men have been working to install televisions, move cupboards, remove shelves, and remove the room divider, getting us ready to paint the education wing.

Thank you to the many people who helped declutter in April. Getting rid of old, unused items, making space! And on May 4th we'll be freshening up the exterior of the church.

We're still working to update the Fellowship Hall. We have identified the contractor and are currently working to determine the schedule and get work underway.

I am so excited to see it all come together. Thank you all for pitching in and for your patience as we work through all these projects.

Teresa Gruber  
CMMT leader



## *Forest Hills Youth Group*

Last Friday, 26 of us from Forest Hills went to Feed My Starving Children mobile pack at Hosanna Lutheran Church. In two hours we packed 191 boxes. Each box includes 36 bags, totaling 41,256 meals, which will feed 113 kids a meal a day for a year. This was such an amazing experience for all involved.

May starts the last month of weekly programming for the youth group. We will be finishing out our year with a series called "How to be a Bad Friend." What does it mean to be a good friend? Perhaps the best way to figure out the answer to that question is to look at what makes a bad friend, and then do the exact opposite! In this four-week series, a combination of Scripture and reverse-psychology sarcasm is used to look at four real ways the typical teen fails their friend.

We will end on May 29th with a family night of fun and fellowship.

Cassi Betker  
Director of Youth Ministries





Jason Keintz May 14th

Avery Yetter May 17th

Morgan Lindholm May 21st

Connor Keintz May 30th

To all of you! Have a wonderful birthday and a blessed year! If your birthday is missing, please call the office and let us know!



## Events and Info

### National Day of Prayer

Thursday, May 2nd - 12:00pm  
Forest Lake American Legion

### Romeos and Juliets

Romeos and Juliets meet on  
April 17th at 11:30 am.

### Spring Yard Clean-up Day - May 4th

9:00 am - Pastries and coffee -  
then yard clean-up

### Community Care

5pm 5/17 - Unload Truck  
6am 5/18 - Set-up  
8 am 5/18 - Distribution

### Discipleship Training

Saturday, May 11th 9:30 am to noon

### Lifeline Sunday May 19th at 6:30 pm

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.

### Adult Fellowship

Saturday, May 11th, 5:45pm See  
Rozanne Foster for more details!