

The Edge

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOREST HILLS CHURCH
JULY 2019

From the Pastor's Perspective

I write this month's article as I face a very calm Lake Koronis. I, and many others from our church are spending the week at Red Rock camp, deepening our faith, connecting with friends and hosing off children who have spent their free time playing in a large mud hole. Things don't always go as planned at camp or in life.

Some of you have been following along with the developments of the decisions made at the special session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church. At that meeting, delegates from around the world voted on whether or not the denomination ought to change its stance on homosexuality. Generally speaking, the United States and other western delegates, were in favor of changing the language within the book of discipline in order to allow for LGBTQ individuals to serve as clergy as well as to preside over same-sex weddings. Also, generally speaking, the African and Asian delegates, held to a more traditional view on sexuality and marriage. In the end, the majority vote fell to the traditionalists.

No outcome however could deny our current divisions. Traditionalists and progressives cannot agree on this issue, but does that mean we can't live together, serve together and love Jesus together?

At last month's Minnesota Annual Conference, our collective churches voted to take a stand against the determination made by General Conference. Many feel that barring LGBTQ people from church leadership roles is unjust and harmful.

Continued on page 2...

Monthly Church Events

For weekly events see the calendar

July 3	6:00 pm Sanctify Rehearsal
July 4	INDEPENDENCE DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
July 5	7:00 am Grow group - Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith
July 6	9:00 am United Methodist Men
July 7	HOLY COMMUNION 8:30 am Prayer 10:00 am Worship - Cassi Betker 11:30 am Grow group - Fruit of the Spirit - Deepening Life Together
July 9	6:30 pm Grow group - Not a Fan - Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus
July 10	10:00 am Birchwood 6:00 pm Youth Missions Meeting 6:30 pm Youth Fun Night
July 11	10:30 am Grow group - Explore the Bible - Galatians Bible Study 6:30 pm AMT Meeting
July 12	7:00 am Grow group - Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith

Pastor's Perspective Cont'd

They feel that these individuals should be affirmed and fully included within the life of the church at all levels.

The traditionalist view holds homosexuality to be a sin and that God's plan for LGBTQ people includes re-evaluating life choices. This perspective holds that those in church leaderships ought not to be actively living into and affirming a sinful lifestyle.

Both perspectives claim to be biblical. Both claim they affirm the sacred nature of all humans. Both believe they have a better path for the future of the church.

The UMC church as an institution has become stuck. Too many people are pulling in too many directions. In my opinion, we have lost the right focus. In our conference, we spent nearly all of our three days together discussing this topic. It was a misuse of time and missed opportunity. As it is now, Minnesota has decided to repudiate the current wording of our discipline and stand for inclusion of LGBTQ clergy.

At this point, there is no knowing what this means specifically. This new vision, however, has paved a way toward division. This is not Jesus' hope or will for his body. The Apostle Paul hammers over and over again the importance and necessity of unity. Yet, we find ourselves in the midst of division anyway.

No matter what you personally think about these conferences and votes, it is only God's opinion that really counts. Of course, we all have our opinions about what God thinks! Sigh...

In hard times, divisive times, unknowing times, we are called to be about the work of producing fruit. The fields may seem dry and bare, they may seem worked over or neglected...maybe they have even been sabotaged by the enemy. No matter our perceptions, Scripture assures us that the harvest is plentiful! Workers are needed (Matt. 9:38)!

As we continue to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in our summer series at Forest Hills Church, we can keep higher church developments and conference correspondences in our periphery, but our focus must remain on the fields in which we are planted. We seek to allow God to produce fruit in us that can be used to feed and nurture those whom He brings in. Our work is not political, nor agenda driven. It is a clear call to make disciples and help heal a broken world. We do this by LOVING, GROWING, and SERVING...not by debating, voting, and dividing.

May your summer be blessed, and may you find your faith fruitful!

Pastor Andrew

July 13	Youth Missions Trip Begins 5:45 pm Adult Fellowship
July 14	8:30 am Prayer 10:00 am Worship - Steve Ruter 11:30 am Grow group - Fruit of the Spirit - Deepening Life Together
July 16	6:30 pm Grow group - Not a Fan - Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus
July 17	11:30 am Romeos and Juliets 6:00 pm Sanctify Rehearsal
July 18	10:30 am Grow group - Explore the Bible - Galatians Bible Study
July 19	7:00 am Grow group - Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith 5:00 pm Unload Community Care Truck
July 20	6:00 am Community Care Set-up 8:00 am Community Care Dist.
July 21	8:30 am Prayer 9:45 am Hymn Sing 10:00 am Worship - Teen Challenge 11:15 am Breakfast 11:30 am Grow group - Fruit of the Spirit - Deepening Life Together 6:30 pm Lifeline
July 23	6:30 pm Grow group - Not a Fan - Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus
July 24	6:00 pm Sanctify Rehearsal 6:30 pm Youth Fun Night
July 26	7:00 am Grow group - Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith
July 28	8:30 am Prayer 10:00 am Worship - Pastor Andrew 11:30 am Grow group - Fruit of the Spirit - Deepening Life Together 5:00 pm YPA Rehearsal
July 29	10:00 am YPA Rehearsal
July 30	4:00 pm YPA Rehearsal 6:30 pm Grow group - Not a Fan - Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus
July 31	10:00 am YPA Rehearsal 6:00 am Sanctify Rehearsal

Worship's Word

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." - 2 Corinthians 3:17

Hello church! Here we are in July already—Happy Independence Day! Never a better time than July 4th to stop and praise God for the freedoms that we enjoy in these United States and to pray for those who do not have the same blessing in this world.

The month of July will be a busy one at Forest Hills. As we continue through our sermon series *Fruit of the Spirit* we will see Cassi Betker bringing God's word on July 7th, Steve Ruter on the 14th, and Pastor Andrew on July 28th. Both Pastor Andrew and I will split time leading worship, as we did in June.

I bet you're thinking "what about July 21st?" Well, we have a special worship service that day. Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge will be with us on July 21st and will bring both worship and their testimonies. We're certainly blessed not only for the opportunity to host them again but also to be able to hear their stories of redemption and transformation. You won't want to miss the messages of freedom that Teen Challenge will share that weekend. Our God is a chain breaker! (I bet you thought of the worship song when you read that!)

As you might notice, I often think in terms of music and songs. It is hard for me to hear a Bible verse read in church without thinking of a corresponding song to go with it. Here are just a few: Revelation 1:7 and Ezekiel 37:4-5 = *Days of Elijah*. Psalm 87:6-7 = *All My Fountains*. Psalm 103 = *10,000 Reason*. Psalm 8 = *How Great Thou Art!* I could go on and on!

The verse from 2 Corinthians that I included at the beginning of this article is one I often think of when July 4th is near. There have been several songs written with these very words in them but there is one that is currently playing on 98.5 KTIS by Jesus Culture called *Freedom*. Here are just a few of the words from the song.

Step out of the shadows, step out of the grave.

Break into the wild and don't be afraid.

Run into wide open spaces, grace is waiting for you.

Dance like the weight has been lifted, grace is waiting.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom, there is freedom.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom, there is freedom.

Come out of the dark just as you are into the fullness of His love.

For the Spirit is here, let there be freedom.

Let there be freedom!

As we move through the month of July, let's not only be thankful for our political and religious freedom but most especially for the freedom we receive when we follow Jesus. We don't have to be weighed down with our human thoughts of "I'm not good enough" or "why would He want to use me for His kingdom?" The simple truth is we can show up exactly how we are today and be welcomed in like royalty. We don't have to be slaves to fear (name that song!) and we don't have to hide in the shadows. Jesus is freedom! Amen!

Happy Fourth of July to you all, see you in worship! HA! I bet you all thought I'd say something about *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*! Well, see my blog for more on the great hymn that is #717!

Blessings,

Amanda

Forest Hills Youth Group

Over 30 people from or associated with Forest Hills set off for Red Rock camp this week <https://www.campminnesota.org/> . Red Rock Camp is a unique & special camp that people of all ages can attend. The speakers this year will be focusing on Empowering Leaders. They will be talking about how to build up spiritual practices to be leaders in your home, church and communities. We will all be back on June 30th, so ask those who went how their week was.

This summer, Youth Group will be meeting twice a month to stay connected. Our first get together was on June 12th. We started the summer off strong with eight teens. Our next night of fun and fellowship will be July 10th at 6:30 pm.

We also have our big mission trip to Alaska in July! We will have our last preparation meeting on July 10th at 6 pm. Then we'll be heading to the airport bright and early Saturday July 13th. We have 12 people from our church headed up to Wasilla Lake to serve the people there for a week. Thank you for keeping us in your prayers while we get ready to leave.

Cassi
Director of Youth Ministries

Summer Grow Groups!

Summer is the season of growth...just look outdoors! It's also a great season for nurturing your spiritual growth. The summer message series is growing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. To help us do that, we are offering four different group experiences on different days and times. We know summer can be busy, so it's okay to miss a session or two. Sign up anyway! Child-care provided. Information and sign-ups are available in the lobby and on the church website. There is one perfect for you! See the available options below:

Fruit of the Spirit - Deepening Life Together

Sundays, June 9th through July 28th, 11:30 - 1:00 pm, hosted by the Rosenbaums

This grow group complements the summer Sunday message series. We'll learn how to increase the yield of Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in our lives and become more like Jesus to those around us. Each session will include a video, Scripture reading, discussion and prayer. There will be no homework, and no cost associated with this group. Also, childcare will be provided if requested.

Not a Fan: Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus

Tuesday evenings, July 9th through August 20th, 6:30-8pm, and hosted by Sue LaVigne

If Jesus were to sit down with you right now and have a DTR (Define the Relationship) conversation, how would you respond? Are you truly his follower, or just a fan? Or perhaps you're someone who doesn't even know or care about the difference? Not a Fan invites you to make Jesus not merely the object of your admiration, but the very center of your life. New and mature Christians alike can find this study "life-changing." The group will consist of weekly video presentations by Kyle Idleman, which weave together a comprehensive story, and then discussion time and spiritual exercises. Handout lessons will be provided

Explore the Bible: Galatians - Bible Study

Thursday mornings, June 6th through July 12th, 10:30-noon, hosted by Tracy Bonsell, and at the Bonsell home (7141 208th Cove N., Forest Lake).

This study highlights our freedom found in the gospel of Jesus and teaches us how to live in Him through the Holy Spirit. There will be print outs provided, or you can purchase the book at www.lifeway.com. Childcare will be provided.

Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith, by Andy Stanley

Friday mornings, June 7th through August 25th, 7:00-8:15am, and hosted by Brad Blocher (breakfast will be provided!)

God is most honored through your living, active, death-defying, out-of-the-box faith. He's committed to growing it big! Imagine how different your outlook on life would be if you had the absolute confidence that God was with you! Imagine how differently you would respond to difficulties, temptations, and even good things that come if you knew with certainty that God was in ALL of it, and was planning to leverage it for good. In other words, imagine what it would be like to have PERFECT faith. In *Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith*, Andy Stanley builds a biblical case for - you guessed it - five things God uses to grow BIG faith! Each session will begin with a video presentation, followed by discussion and prayer time. Childcare will not be provided for this session.

Everyone is really encouraged to join a summer grow group. Despite travels, and the busyness of summer, these groups are designed to encourage continued growth during the summer months when there is less activity within the church, and the necessity of missing a session or two should not deter you from signing up! We know that vacations, etc., occur more during this time of year, but we wanted to provide you with the opportunity to continue growing in your faith and relationships with other church members. All sessions will be at the church except for Tracy's, which, as stated, will be at the Bonsell home.



AMT Update:

The Action Ministry Team met at Teresa Gruber's home in June. Thank you so much for your wonderful hospitality, Teresa.

Some of our evening included a devotion from Pastor Andrew, reading through our AMT Covenant and discussing upcoming summer events.

We spent a lot of time talking about a new self-assessment spiritual tool we are putting together to help people figure out where they are on their own personal road to becoming the best disciple Christ wants us to be. We believe this will be helpful for our church family to not only see where their strengths lay, but also see in what areas work is needed. As individuals, it will help us figure out which grow group would be a good fit.

Are we a new Christian who needs to see the basic truths of our faith, are we lacking in our personal relationship with God, do we know how to reach out to others and share His truth and the Word, are we ready to be trained as a leader? Whatever questions we have, we want our grow groups to provide the steppingstones to new growth within each of us and new growth within our body of believers. Being open to new ideas and working on making ourselves into the best disciples of Christ leads us to helping others become better disciples and so on and so on.

So, feel free to join one of our summer grow groups. Talk to the church office to find out more info or check the clipboard in our church lobby.

To help show our love for our community, there will be a community-wide BBQ in August. I have no definite date yet, but please watch for more information coming soon.

AMT is also working on a project highlighting either a ministry of the quarter or possibly having a Ministry Sunday celebration. We're still working on the details of this, but plan on this happening starting in Jan 2020. This will give ministries of our church a chance to highlight what they're all about, to show how they support our main principles of Love.Grow.Serve and invite people to join in and be a part.

I pray each of you will have a blessed and fun summer. Come each Sunday and hear our different Pastors speak on the "Fruits of the Spirit".

In Christ Always,

Marilee Leonard



Happy July Birthdays!

Madelyn Leonard July 2

Judy McKee July 2

Roy Truax July 4

Carol Humphrey July 5

April Yetter July 16

David Ash July 17

Loren Foster July 19

Carol Pope July 24

Teresa Werner July 29

May your special day be blessed and filled with joy! If your birthday isn't listed, please call the office and let us know so we can add you to the list!

Summer Worship and Pastoral Coverage Schedule:

Pastor Andrew will serve as the lead pastor for our church this summer. Others will be providing additional assistance. Feel free to connect with any of these ministers during the summer.

Weekly:

July 8-21 Steve Ruter

July 22-Sept. 2: Pastor Dan Hair

Sundays:

July 7 Preaching: Cassi Betker; Leading Worship: Andrew

July 14 Preaching: Steve R; Leading Worship: Amanda Lucas

July 21: Teen Challenge; Leading Worship: Andrew

July 28 Preaching: Pastor Andrew; Leading Worship: Sandy Gildersleeve

Aug. 4 Preaching: Pastor Dan Hair; Leading Worship: Andrew

Aug. 11 Preaching: Pastor Andrew; Leading Worship: Julie Berninghaus

Aug. 18 Preaching: Pastor Andrew; Leading Worship: Amanda Lucas

Aug. 25 Preaching: Pastor Dan Hair; Leading Worship: Andrew

Sept. 1 Preaching: Pastor Andrew; Leading Worship: Amanda Lucas



Events and Info

Adult Fellowship

**Saturday, July 13th, 5:45pm See
Rozanne Foster for more details!**

Romeos and Juliets

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

Youth Fun Nights

**Wednesday, July 10th and 24th
at 6:30 pm here at the church**

July Preachers

**July 7th - Cassi Betker
July 14th - Steve Ruter
July 28th - Pastor Andrew**

Community Care

**5pm 7/19- Unload Truck
6am 7/20 - Set-up
8 am 7/20 - Distribution**

Lifeline Sunday July 21st 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.**

Minnesota Teen Challenge!

**Sunday, July 21st
Breakfast to follow!**