



# The Edge

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOREST HILLS CHURCH

### From the Werners

I recently took down the wall-hanging in my office that records my life's verse:

*“Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know, your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” -1 Cor. 15:58*

Dear Church Family:

As you know I have received a new pastoral appointment to Evangel United Methodist Church in Rochester, starting Aug. 1. Although I carry a deep sense of sadness that our time of serving the Lord together is ending after 13 fruitful years, I also carry an even greater excitement about the future life and vital ministry of Forest Hills Church and my own pastoral ministry at Evangel UMC.

My last Sunday will be July 31, and the church is planning a farewell celebration after worship. It is hard to put into words the joy and appreciation we have had while serving these last “baker’s dozen” years with you. You have nurtured all of us and you have helped us raise our children. We cannot thank God enough for you, and we believe God brought us to Forest Hills, in part, to bless our family.

When we came, Rebekah was in 3rd grade and Nathan in 1st. Now they are both at college! You have served as role models, Christian examples, teachers and fellow disciples to them (and to Reese and me): you have been disciples who have made disciples of our kids! Thank you for loving my family.

Together we have served the Lord faithfully in this adventure we call Forest Hills Church. I think back over all comings and goings to our church family, the changes in worship, in staff, to our church building, in our outreach ministries. Our building and grounds look so much better than 13 years ago! We made it through all the changes in worship, children’s ministries and outreach. We share our church’s mission of Love.Grow.Serve. in fresh ways both in our interior decoration and in how we treat others. We celebrated our church’s 50th anniversary, changed our leadership structure and we embraced the Healthy Church Initiative’s Year of Sabbath Jubilee. You have

### Monthly Church Events

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>July 1</b>  | 8:00am - Grow Group   |
| <b>July 2</b>  | 9:00am - United Methodist Men   |
| <b>July 3</b>  | <b>Holy Communion</b><br>8:45am - Prayer<br>10:00am - In-person and online<br>Worship Service       |
| <b>July 4</b>  | <b>Happy Independence Day!</b><br><b>Office Closed</b>  |
| <b>July 5</b>  | 8:00am - Monday Morning Men,<br>Quilters and Prayer Knitters  |
| <b>July 6</b>  | 6:15pm - Grow Group - Church  |
| <b>July 7</b>  | 10:30am - Book Club<br>12:00pm - Sarah Circle   |
| <b>July 8</b>  | 8:00am - Grow Group   |
| <b>July 10</b> | 8:45am - Prayer<br>10:00am - In-person and online<br>Worship Service<br>11:15am - Church Conference |
| <b>July 11</b> | 8:00am - Monday Morning Men,<br>Quilters and Prayer Knitters  |
| <b>July 13</b> | 10:00am - Birchwood<br>11:00am - Romeos & Juliets<br>6:15pm - Grow Group - Church                   |
| <b>July 15</b> | 8:00am - Grow Group<br>2:00pm - Unload Food Truck   |
| <b>July 16</b> | 6:00am - Setup Community Care<br>7:00am - Community Care  |
| <b>July 17</b> | 8:45am - Prayer<br>10:00am - In-person and online<br>Worship Service                                |

put up with so much from me (even accepting some pretty crazy ideas), all in a spirit of joy, fun and adventure.

I know that there have been times I have not served or acted like the pastor you needed me to be. I have not always been as grace filled as God wanted me to be. I have made many mistakes. Please forgive me and move past the hurt I have caused. I pray that your love for God will make you able to hold me in grace going forward.

Pastor Andrew has been appointed as Lead Pastor of our church starting Aug. 1. I ask that you do your absolute best to welcome him in the process of beginning a new season of ministry together.

As of August 1, our relationship as pastor and congregation will change dramatically. While my family and I will always be your friends, I will no longer be your pastor. That role now falls to Pastor Andrew. Reach out to him for your pastoral needs; invite him into your lives. He will be the one to lead your weddings, funerals and other special events. I will not be available to return for these; indeed I will not return into the church building for at least a year. I will still deeply value the meaningful relationships we have made, and know that I will be praying for you, celebrating with you and grieving with you. Yet it is very important that Pastor Andrew serves you as your pastor, for he will be the one to walk with you day by day now going forward.

Times like this remind us that change is difficult, but it is also a constant part of life. The good news is that change also brings with it an opportunity for growth and new possibilities. I fully believe that God is at work in the midst of the changes here and that this church's best days are still ahead. I am already praying every day for the future of Forest Hills. I would covet your prayers for my family and the people of Evangel UMC as well. By managing this transition well, with God's help, everyone involved will be further strengthened for the common work we engage in for God's Kingdom.

You are such great people. I will certainly miss you all so much. Thank you for the honor of serving among you. It has been a great 13 years. I have been so impressed by all that God has led us through, and by the true Christian faith and faithfulness you have evidenced. I know God led us here 13 years ago, and God has blessed us personally through you. You have not only been our church, you have been our extended family. We will continue to love you and hold you close to God in prayers. We entrust you into God's hands, knowing you are about to begin another great chapter of adventure in God's service.

I sincerely pray for you the verse above from 1 Corinthians 15:58. I leave you with Paul's closing words in Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth: "Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you....May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2 Corinthians 13:11-14)

In Deep Christian Love,  
Pastor David, Reese, Rebekah and Nathan

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>July 18</b> | 8:00am - Monday Morning Men, Quilters and Prayer Knitters   |
| <b>July 19</b> | 10:00am - Rebecca Circle  |
| <b>July 20</b> | 6:15pm - Grow Group - Church  |
| <b>July 22</b> | 8:00am - Grow Group   |
| <b>July 24</b> | 8:45am - Prayer<br>10:00am - In-person and online Worship Service   |
| <b>July 25</b> | 8:00am - Monday Morning Men, Quilters and Prayer Knitters<br>9:00am - Theatre Intensive<br>4:00pm - Theatre Intensive |
| <b>July 26</b> | 2:00pm - Theatre Intensive  |
| <b>July 27</b> | 9:00am - Theatre Intensive<br>6:15pm - Grow Group   |
| <b>July 28</b> | 2:00pm - Theatre Intensive  |
| <b>July 29</b> | 9:00am - Theatre Intensive  |
| <b>July 30</b> | 10:00am - Theatre Intensive   |
| <b>July 31</b> | 8:45am - Prayer<br>10:00am - In-person and online Worship Service<br>11:30am - Farewell for                           |

## Tuesday Talks with Pastor Andrew

As you may already be aware, Forest Hills is currently engulfed in a time of transition. As Pastor David moves to a new church and context, I will be moving into the “big office” so to speak. It won't be a new context, but it will be a new role and by God's grace, we will continue to grow together as a church full of disciples.

Even though this transition is “in-house,” there are still some typical steps a new pastor needs to take. Even though I already know our church well, I can say that I don't know anyone as well as I would like. I want to begin my job as Senior Pastor with a fresh start! I don't want to assume anything about our church or its members. As Senior Pastor, I want to have the opportunity to get to know each of you better and gain a deeper grasp on who we are as a church.

To that end, I am proposing to host discussion groups in my home throughout the month of August. Each Tuesday I hope to gather with twelve or so folks from Forest Hills with the goal of getting to know each person better and finding out what hopes and dreams you all have for this church. In these groups you will be able to ask me questions as well as help me gain a better understanding of our past and where we want to go in the future.

Sign-up in the lobby or [online](#) for a Tuesday Talk in August and be ready to share your thoughts! We will meet at 7pm in my home at 7141 208th Cove here in Forest Lake.

Thank you in advance for this unique opportunity. Please continue to pray for both myself, Pastor Cassi and Pastor David as we navigate new waters.

For the King, Pastor Andrew

## July 10th - Church Conference

There will be a short Church Conference after service on July 10th to approve staffing changes and compensation.

## Action Ministry Team Update

These last few months have seen a whirlwind of change coming through our church. Not only have we seen a change in senior leadership, we have also been working with CMMT on a Capital Fund Campaign. Before all this, AMT had planned to spend two, maybe three, meetings on the human sexuality question within the United Methodist church that will be coming to a head at the General Conference in 2024.

We felt that the visioning team of the church with staff should work on discerning how we at Forest Hills will engage this conversation. Pastor David guided us through a Bible study on unity in Ephesians 4 and helped us discern as a leadership team that we will embed human sexuality within our church's missional understanding of godly love, reaching others and scriptural authority. We believe we are called to continue with the vision God has given for Forest Hills of making disciples who make more disciples. As our vision statement says, we will “love God and others”.

This means all others, as we affirm that all people are of sacred worth. In the fall, we would like our new Senior Pastor, Andrew Bonsell, to help us carry this conversation to our whole church family. Please pray that we as a church continue to “Love God and others, grow in Christ and serve our wider communities”.

In Christ Always,  
Marilee Leonard  
Lay Leader

## Farewell for Werners

**July 31 following service** will be a farewell for the Werner family! We will have food, a time to share stories and a chance to celebrate God's ministry. Come enjoy a provided meal and give the Werners a heartfelt send off! If you would like to bring a dessert to share it would be appreciated.

## KIDS' SUMMER BASH!

Forest Hills will be hosting Kids Bash the first four Wednesday mornings in August from 9-11:30am. I am excited for this opportunity to reach kids for God and am looking for volunteers to help with story time, crafts, snacks, activities, and games.

Each week will be a different theme from God's house, the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, and God can use kids. This will culminate with the End of Summer Bash & BBQ at 5:30pm where the kids will invite their parents for a meal, meet their teachers, and perform some of the songs they have learned. If you are willing to give of your time and talent to this kids outreach, please sign up in the lobby for the days you are available. Thank you and I look forward to serving with you.

Sue L



## Youth Group & Young Adults

We will also be planning a summer fun outing on August 9th. We will be going to Bunker Hills Water Park. Invite your friends! Stay tuned for more details. Our goal is also to spend one day in service in our community. This year we will be going to Community Helping Hands on Aug. 23rd to help sort and organize donations, exact times will come soon.

Pastor Cassi

## Red Rock Camp

We had 30 people from Forest Hills Church at Red Rock Camp this year! It was an amazing time of fellowship, renewal and relaxation. Save the date for next year's camp June 19-25, 2023.

## July Birthdays

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!

Madelyn Leonard 7/2      Judy McKee 7/2  
Carol Humphrey 7/5      David Ash 7/17  
Loren Foster 7/19      Carol Pope 7/24  
Teresa Werner 7/29

