



# Evangelical Etchings

February 2021

## A Prayer for 2021, or Any Year! Colossians 1:9-10

By Pastor Randy Anderson



It was near the end of February, 36 years ago now that Shirley and I, and our daughter Shannan left after the evening service at the Wonder Lake Bible Church and drove eight hours through the night across Northern Illinois and Iowa – arriving at the Center Grove Evangelical Free Church in northwest Iowa at around 4am. I was to be the pastor there. The first set of sermons that I preached there were a verse-by-verse exposition of Paul's letter to the Colossians. I can still remember how inspiring I found it, a few weeks into that effort, to arrive at Paul's prayer as recorded in Colossians 1:9-10. What a hopeful prayer.

*<sup>9</sup> And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup> so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; (Col. 1:9-10 ESV)*

Paul is found constantly praying that several different things will take place in the lives of the people in that pagan place. First, he asks, that God would fill that recently pagan, newly come to faith people, with the knowledge of His will. That is, He prays that they would come to know – to really know – what God wants from people like them – what God wants from any people for that matter. Secondly, he prays that this knowledge would have a life transforming effect on them. That because of this knowledge they would 'walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.'

That is, that they would live lives that are fitting – fitting, given who God is and given that we are living in God's world. Paul is praying that they would take 'the knowledge of God's will' and by handling it with 'spiritual wisdom and understanding' that they would be changed and transformed so as to find the entire direction of their lives shaped by that will of God. For, we are assured, when this happens, God is pleased; such a transformation is, as Paul expresses it 'fully pleasing to Him.' For as this happens yet a third thing takes place, namely 'bearing fruit and increasing in the knowledge of God.' This third thing is what the previous two things are all about – knowing God – 'increasing in the knowledge of God.'

Week by week Pastor Donn opens the announcements by reminding us that 'Our Mission' here at First Evangelical Free Church is 'Knowing God and Making Him Known.' That is certainly an appropriate mission for any Christian Church; for here is Paul praying that this would be the ultimate outcome of his apostolic ministry. This is the goal that he is constantly praying for. And so, as we find ourselves early in the year 2021, we should join with Paul in praying this same thing for ourselves and for our congregation.

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## Library Updates

By The Library Committee

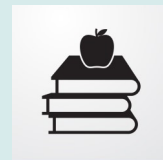
The library has recently added four new Susan K. Marlow books for our young boy readers. They are featured on our "new books" shelf in the children's area of the library. The new books include: Family Secret, Long Ride Home, San Francisco Smugglers, and Dangerous Decision.

The library continues to be open weekdays any time the church office is open and Wednesday evenings and on Sunday. The library is operating on a self-serve basis except on Sunday mornings when a librarian will be available to assist you.

Please remember to fill out the card on each item you check out and place in the blue basket on the desk. A significant number of items have been removed from the library without being checked out. This makes it impossible to locate missing items. Please remember to renew items you wish to continue using. All items may be renewed if they are not on the waiting list. (Four weeks for books and two weeks for all other items).

Thank you for donating your gently used books to the library. Books we are not able to use will be offered to our church family in a future book giveaway.

The Library Committee wishes to thank the family of Darlene Biggerstaff for their generous donation in Darlene's memory. We will be announcing the new additions purchased with these funds in a future newsletter.



## Miss a Sermon? Wish to Hear One Again?

Please visit:

<https://www.knowinggods.org/resources/sermon-audio/>  
to listen to sermons by the FEFC Pastoral Staff! You can search by keyword, date, speaker, scripture, series, or topic.

*"Be still, and know  
that I am God.  
I will be exalted  
among the nations,  
I will be exalted  
in the earth!"*

**Psalm 46:10**

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## Youth Ministry Pillar: Theological Depth Through Biblical Teaching

By Pastor Dan Montgomery



To make sure that young disciples in this church develop deep roots and produce healthy fruit, our Youth Ministry has five basic pillars. Focusing on these five pillars is how we make sure discipleship is about the right thing. Those five pillars are 1) Gospel Centrality; 2) Theological Depth Through Biblical Teaching; 3) Relational Discipleship; 4) Partnership with Parents; 5) Intergenerational Integration.

High Schoolers learn some complex and sophisticated things before graduation. World History, Calculus, Latin, and Chemistry are all considered normal offerings at many high schools. Yet, for some reason, we wonder if teenagers can handle the Bible. Certainly, the Bible can be confusing and complex. It is an ancient book written in an ancient setting by ancient authors in an ancient language. Not only that, but it also covers some of the deepest and grandest topics. At the center, is truth about the eternal and glorious God. From there we learn about ourselves, eternity, and the nature of sin and evil. These are mind-stretching topics. Bible study is not recess. But if a high schooler can be expected to explain the causes of World War I in order to pass their world history test, then we can expect them to grasp the background of Isaiah.

This is why we are not afraid to push for theological depth through biblical teaching in our Youth Ministry. Teenagers can handle it. But there's more to it than that. We don't teach through biblical books just because we can. We do it because that is how God has promised to do his work. This is exactly what

Isaiah 55:10-11 teaches.

[10] "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, [11] so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10-11)

What accomplishes God's purpose, according to that passage? "It shall accomplish that which I purpose." The "it" in that sentence is God's word that goes out from his mouth. The word does the work. The word itself creates deep and joyful disciples.

In Youth Ministry it is tempting to act as if God's word needs help. This is how our thinking can go: Sure, we want students to learn God's word. But we need to find the latest clever and cool way to package it. They're like toddlers who will only take their medicine if it is grape flavored. So we need just the right relatable and glamorous person to do the teaching. We need to always be on the lookout for the latest and greatest program to produce growth. Yes, teaching straight from Bible is important...for adults. Teenagers will never grab onto that! It won't be effective among Middle School and High School students. Right? That's how we can think. But, what does Isaiah 55 say? God's word shall not return empty. It shall accomplish that for which God purposes. It has all the strength and potency that it needs.

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## Women's Ministry News

By Mary Lynne Johnson

The Women's Leadership Team is at work making plans for our year. "Connecting on Purpose... with Purpose" is at the heart of all that we seek to do. Sometimes that will look like Bible Study and other times it will look like crafting, cooking for the freezer ministry or hanging out in the parking lot. We hope that there will be time for *connection, study* and *service*. As you might imagine, knowing how to plan in these uncertain times has been interesting. We do have a few dates on the calendar, but please be watching for more! Some things to look forward to:

- Saturday morning, February 20<sup>th</sup> bring your sewing machine and join us as Jenny Herrmann teaches us how to make cool handmade totes.
- Saturday morning, May 1<sup>st</sup> we will host our spring Women's Ministries event.

We hope you will mark your calendars and plan to join us!

Are there service projects or topics of interest to you? We would love to hear from you! Email Mary Lynne at [marylynn@knowinggodsf.org](mailto:marylynn@knowinggodsf.org) with questions or comments.

## Upcoming Events

### February

- 14 Communion Sunday
- 20 Women's Ministry Craft Day | 10am
- 28 Annual Congregational Meeting | 7pm

### March

- 21 Communion Sunday
- 28 Palm Sunday

### April

- 1 Maundy Thursday
- 2 Good Friday
- 4 Easter Sunday
- 25 Communion Sunday

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."*

**Philippians 4:6**

## Hello From Wes Goddard

Hello Friends in Sioux Falls,

Happy New Year! I hope that you all had a great Christmas! I had a good time on Christmas day with 2 of my cousins and their families, who are missionaries here in Paraguay. On New Years day, the Pai believers at the local church here asked me to show the video "When Things Seem Impossible" about the missionary pilot in Colombia who made a miraculous escape from his kidnappers with the mission airplane, and 3 other missionaries who were also kidnapped and later released. Even though that incident took place quite a few years ago, it was good to be reminded of how God has a plan in everything, and knows how to protect His servants.

The last couple of days, I've been sick with flu like symptoms and a bit of a fever on and off. I was to make a trip yesterday to a Pai community to hold special Bible teaching sessions, but cancelled because of being sick. Today, I'm doing much better. Thankfully, it doesn't appear to be COVID-19. This part of Paraguay has a lot fewer cases of COVID-19 than the capital city area in Asuncion.

I heard that where dad lives near Litchfield, NE, they had five inches of snow recently. Here in Paraguay, it has been in the upper 90's and up to 105 sometimes, so no snow here! At least today it is cool and rainy. It has been good to be able to get back to Paraguay and get settled in again. I apologize for getting behind in my correspondence with you all. Thanks so much for your gift in November. I do appreciate it! I'll continue to keep you updated on the work here in Paraguay.

In Christ,  
Wes Goddard



## Update From Meghan Posey with the Jesus Film

Dear friends and family,

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. [Ephesians 1:3-6]

Life has been messy this year with many losses due to COVID. As I look back on this year, the Lord has been teaching me how to grieve; teaching me how to discover the grace of lament. I too often forget that one-third of the Psalms are God's people giving voice to their lament. The author Aundi Kolber, posted this on Instagram this week, and it resonated with me:

*Your grief does not diminish your joy.  
Your joy does not diminish your grief.  
Emmanuel comes to meet us in the  
messy middle of it all.*

*Please continue to pray for our partners in Mexico, Piedra Sobre la roca, who are continuing to canvass the neighborhoods with the Jesus Film during this season. Please pray that the following people groups would hunger and thirst for God: (Tzetzal de Bachajon, Tseltzal de Oxchuc, Tzotsil de Chamula). And that God would continue to provide supernaturally for Piedra Sobre la Roca.*

Serving Together,  
Meghan Posey





# AWANA

By Craig & Chris Herman  
AWANA Commanders



Remember watching Saturday morning cartoons when you were a kid? I am not sure what is airing these days in the US on Saturday mornings but in the Philippines on "Light TV" you can tune into AWANA at Home!!

It has been exciting to see what is happening around the world through the AWANA ministry as they reach children across the globe with the gospel. Many clubs that were closed for a while because of the pandemic are back up and running in places like Senegal and Cambodia. New training sessions have taken place in Nigeria and Bangladesh, equipping adults to teach AWANA in their regions. We have been blessed with the adult and high-school leadership that commits themselves each Wednesday night to minister to the children who come through our doors to learn about Jesus.

Along with memorizing God's word, we seek to teach these children about love for others. Nov 4<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> they participated in "Sharing is Caring Night" by bringing in non-perishable food items that were donated to the Union Gospel Mission. In all we were able to drop off 450 lbs of food for them to use to make meals for those in our community who need a hot meal. We were so blessed to have the gentleman who helped us unload ask if he could pray with us before we left. He was so very thankful to all who helped. We truly felt that we received the greater blessing!



So many contributed to the AWANA store which was held Dec 9<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>. A huge thank you to everyone who helped!!

February 10<sup>th</sup> is "Love your Neighbor Night" which is another opportunity for clubbers to reach out and do random acts of kindness to family members and neighbors.

March 3<sup>rd</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> we will be doing our annual "Building a Lego-cy" contest. For the past several years we have been using the proceeds from this fundraiser to help children attend club in the country of Mongolia. Around 600 children are now hearing the gospel there because of the love and support shown by the clubbers and families of First E. Free Church. We will be discussing where we might out-reach to other possible countries this year as the need is so great in countries such as Austria, where out of the 1 million children there under the age of 15, only 98 of them are attending AWANA. Or France, where out of the 12 million children there under the age of 15, only 305 attend AWANA. This is such a great opportunity for the clubbers to learn about children in other parts of the world who need to hear the message of Jesus' love for them.

Pray with us that the light of God's word would take root and grow deep, in the hearts and minds of the children that come each Wednesday night.

In His service,  
Craig & Chris Herman  
Awana Commanders



## ...Continued from P. 1: Pastor Randy's Column

*"...that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,<sup>10</sup> so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God..."*

It is likely that it will become increasingly costly to be a follower of Jesus in 2021 – our culture is running rapidly in an anti-Christ direction and means to punish anyone who will not run with it. What are we to do? How are we to live in such times and in such a place? The answer is found here in Paul's prayer, for what is needed in such times is that we be filled with the knowledge of God's will; what is needed in such times is spiritual wisdom and understanding; what is needed in such times is bearing fruit in every good work; what is needed in such times is increasing in the knowledge of God. What is needed in such times is knowing God. The hope of the world remains the knowledge of God in and through the person of Jesus Christ. We must pray to this end in 2021.

Pastor Randy



*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

**Jeremiah 29:11**

## ...Continued from P. 3: Pastor Dan's Column

In Sunday School and Youth Group, we spend most of our teaching time walking through Bible passages. We tackle theological topics. The kids can handle it. In fact, they thrive off of it. The work God does through his word is what makes them deep disciples. It is what makes them fruitful season after season. Following the recommendation of Psalm 1, we meditate on God's word and become "like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither." It may be possible to get quicker and flashier responses from teenagers with different methods. Jesus seems to warn us in Matthew 13 that the first seeds to spring up are not the seeds that flourish. Those first sprouts come from the seeds that fell on rocky soil. The seeds that produce grain "some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" take a little longer to spring up. The delay is because the seed is falling on good soil, putting down deep roots.

So, if your kid is coming to youth group, or you stop by a Sunday School class or Youth Group meeting, let me tell you what you'll find. It might be loud. There will probably be some chaotic moments. We will have games and snacks. Things will get silly from time to time. But we will also never be far away from the Bible. Foundational to everything we are as a youth ministry is the goal of being used by God to create disciples with theological depth through biblical teaching.



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***Need to Update  
Your Information?***

Have you or a member of your home moved recently? Do you have a new cell phone or e-mail address? Please call the church at 605-338-2077 or e-mail: [office@knowinggods.org](mailto:office@knowinggods.org) to help us keep in contact with you!

