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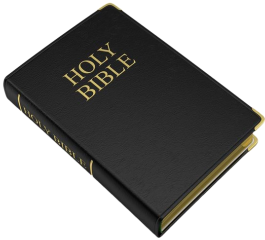
FAITH FAMILY FORUM II

PASTOR PERSPECTIVE



Pastor Karl Thompson

I have been enjoying a little extra study these days on a detail that came up in Sunday School a few weeks ago. The Westminster Confession of Faith describes God as being “without passions.” This is not teaching that God does not get excited about things, but instead teaches that he does not react to things. I make my plan for the day and then spend the rest of my day modifying my plan because of the unexpected. With God, there is no unexpected. Nothing catches God unaware; nothing surprises Him. He is not distressed when things appear to go wrong because they never go wrong. Exactly what He plans happens all the time. It is because of His Omniscience and Omnipotence that His plans always succeed.



So much of our life is out of our control. Our actions are our response to the circumstances that act upon us. But we must not think that is how our God acts. Is it not a great comfort to know that everything is under His control? Isn't it great to know that the God who loves us is in complete control of everything?

God is always in control



Five stars for *MilliM* by Lisa Pellisier! That's right, our own Lisa, has this charming book for sale on Amazon! Read all the wonderful reviews [here](#). Congratulations Lisa!



WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?



One Sunday morning the congregation was treated to the Stroms and Goodwills playing the bells. It was just lovely, a nice surprise. They also played on Resurrection Sunday and that same day we had the pleasure of listening to stringed instruments also.



If things look a little different in the nursery area, it's because it has been moved from the back area of the Fellowship Hall to the front. This makes it much more convenient for the men to bring in the tables from the seatrain. It's nice to look out the window when you sit on the couch.



Have you had a good experience with a local business and want to recommend them or give a review? Let us know, email: office.faithopc gp@gmail.com

TEACHING MOMENT By Pastor Karl

In Luke 9:62, Jesus says, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” In this context He is talking about need to follow Jesus and need to resist the temptation to look for an easier road in times of troubles. How many times have I counseled parents to not grow weary in well doing, for in due time they will reap if they don't loose heart (Galatians 6:9). Parenting according to God's word is hard work. There are days, weeks, months and sometimes years when the labor seems fruitless and the extra effort to be faithful to God feels like a burden too big to bear.

I grew up watching *The Little* sometimes they would show Pa was hard work that demanded work was done, the ground time). This is like our calling

Let's run with this illustration his eye on the goal and works needs to make corrections effort is to keep his eye on the that God will send the rains and provide the increase. See how that applies to us in the way we care for our children. The day to day grind is real work, but we can do the labors every day fixing our eyes on Christ and doing our best to make the necessary corrections as we proceed. Yet we keep our eyes on Christ and our hands to the Plow.



House on the Prairie, and working behind the plow. It constant attention but when the would be fruitful (most of the to parent our children.

for a minute: The plower sets his way across the field. He along the way, but his main goal and keep working in hope



TESTIMONY TIME

Testimonies of Tom and Barb Keosababian

Tom

I'm a second-generation Armenian-American, who was raised in a Christian home as were both my parents. This pattern continues backward for many generations. My mother led me to Christ when I was seven years old, and I was baptized soon after. However, this long Christian heritage didn't prevent me from giving in to my sinful nature, and it's only by the grace of God that I am able to give this testimony today.

About twenty-five years ago, our church in Nevada began studying the writings of the early reformers like Calvin and Jonathon Edwards as well as the Westminster and Baptist Confessions. These taught that salvation was entirely the work of a sovereign God and was not dependent on man's choosing or his "good works." This gave me a renewed confidence in my salvation and energized my faith.

I believe in a God Who is sovereign over every molecule in this universe. Our salvation begins with His sovereign election, is sustained by faith imputed to the elect by His sovereign will, and is finally completed by our glorification when we stand before Him at the final judgment. In the meantime, I want to live my life to the glory of God and enjoy Him forever.

Barb

Unlike my pure-bred Armenian husband, I'm a mutt, but I do have a Jewish grandmother and many Jewish relatives on my dad's maternal side of our family. I experienced salvation and baptism as a child after my parents were saved and had begun raising me in a Christian home. I was introduced to and embraced the doctrines of grace in the 1990s when Tom and I helped a few other families plant what became a reformed church in northern Nevada.

My spiritual journey has been greatly influenced and blessed by my reading *Tabletalk* since coming to Faith-OPC. I'm also learning new things from scriptures I've read over the years as I'm reading through the New Testament this year and using the notes in my Study Bible.

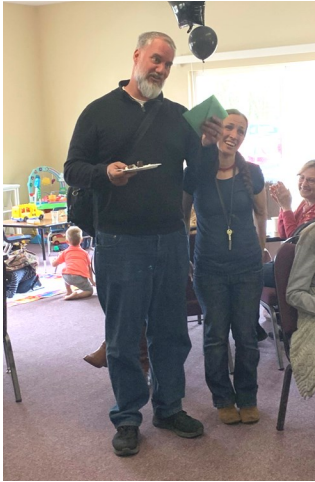
I am striving to become more like Christ while still experiencing the struggle between my sinful nature and my desire to obey my Father God. I treasure Romans 8:26, which assures me that ***the Spirit Himself intercedes for us in groanings too deep for words***, giving me needed support for these battles. Since I believe this verse is a great comfort for our *dark nights of the soul*, I love to share it with fellow believers who are suffering in troubling circumstances.

I've been dealing with progressive multiple sclerosis for the past twenty-two years, and it has made it difficult for me to do many things I'd like to do. However, God has been extremely gracious to me, teaching me to daily rely upon Him. He has also given me some encouraging verses which I frequently pass on to other people:

The LORD's loving kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3: 22-23)



OUR PASTOR TURNS 50



Well we all tried to keep the hush, hush surprise party a secret from Karl, but he's too smart for that! But we did surprise both him and Allison with enough funds to have a night or two on the coast, dinner, and hire a babysitter!



MUSICAL OUTREACH—REFORMATION



From Scott Croucher:

The kids and I have been doing music ministry for about two years now. We go out Friday nights usually from 6 to 8pm. Chloe and I play my gospel music while Nathan hands out gospel tracks. We used to play where Evangel used to be; however, we found a spot that has an electric outlet, so I can use my mic and plug in my guitar. It's where Goodness Gracious Cafe used to be in downtown GP.

Chloe is getting really good on percussion. Starting March 19th we are going to start doing our music ministry at the Farmers Market downtown. It is a tremendous blessing to share the gospel with this

ministry. Lord willing, when my album is complete, we can take this ministry around the country.

To hear Scott's music, [click here](#).



FAMILY HIGHLIGHT By Rachel VanderWall



Janine

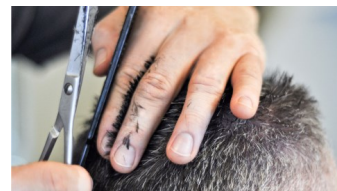
Janine Johnson was reared in a Christian home in Southern California with her three brothers. Her parents brought her and her brothers to church every Sunday, and she is very grateful that her parents taught her about the Lord since childhood. At four years old she heard a sermon that made her want to know Jesus. She went forward to profess her faith but was told that she had to wait 2 years to be baptized. She states that during that time she was very afraid that if she died before she was able to get baptized that she would not be saved. Throughout her childhood she grew more and more in her understanding of what it means to be a Christian, and this growth has continued throughout her adulthood as well.

Janine's love and heart for those with special needs started at a young age. She remembers in the 3rd grade she had a boy in her class who was in a wheelchair, and she made sure to reach out and befriend him. From a young age she felt that she would someday have a child

with special needs. She also was eager to help friends of hers who were from poorer homes and would go over and clean their homes for them.

After high school she attended a community college for awhile and then went to cosmetology school. After she graduated, she moved to Texas to live with her grandmother and lived there for about 5 years. After that she moved to New York for a time and then back to California with her kids. Her years in Texas and New York were difficult due to spousal abuse and abandonment that she suffered, leaving her as a single mom moving back to California to raise her kids. Throughout those difficult times she experienced the faithfulness of the Lord and had counselors come alongside her to help her get through those times. Because of her struggles and suffering, she has been able to be more sympathetic and empathetic to others going through difficult times.

In California she got to know Tim, a friend of one of her brothers. She would cut his hair, and they became very close. He eventually invited her to a Bible Study; they started going to church together and eventually got married. They moved up to Grants Pass because Tim's sister lived in Medford. When they moved, they started coming to Faith OPC, and Tim served as the Treasurer for a time.



When Tim and Janine moved up to Grants Pass, she worked for Safeway for about 6 months before deciding it was not a good long-term fit for her. She started volunteering at the high school, then transferred to Parkside Elementary School where she eventually got hired. She met 10 year-old Cameron in 2010. He was in an abusive home at that time, and she would ride the bus home with him every day, having to hide behind the backseat so he would be willing to get off the bus.

She and Tim helped Cameron to get out of his previous home, and they became his foster parents. Cameron was very beloved by Janine's husband, Tim, who loved him like his own son. In God's providence, Tim passed away from esophageal cancer in 2014. Janine's family is in California, but she has stayed in Grants Pass for Cameron's sake. He no longer lives with her, but she loves to spend time with him when she is not working. He comes over to her house to play and especially likes it when she takes him for long drives. Janine has learned a lot from Cameron, most notably unconditional love. "He doesn't hold grudges – even if he is mad he will forgive you right away if you are nice to him."

Janine's favorite book (besides the Bible) is *The Hiding Place*. Her favorite verse is Matthew 6:33 – "seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." Another favorite verse is I Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it," which she learned on a high school mission trip. She is very thankful for the faithfulness and steadfast love of the Lord throughout her whole life.



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

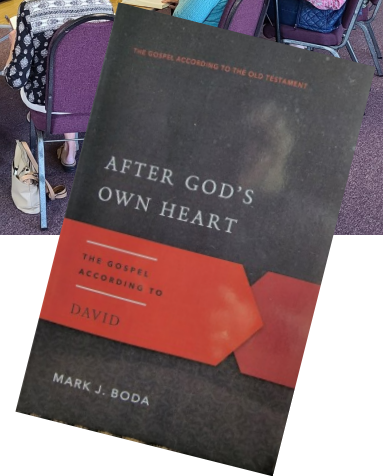
Women's Bible Study continues to meet on Tuesday morning from 10:00 to 12:00 in the church Fellowship Hall and is open to all ladies.

For our spring Tuesday morning sessions, we have taken up a study on King David. Our guide is titled *After God's Own Heart* (1 Samuel 13:14) and is a study stretching from the Old to the New Testament from King David to our Messiah.

The study was written by Mark J. Boda in the series called *The Gospel According to the Old Testament*. Over the past few years we have been greatly instructed and enriched from this series.

Please pray for our group. Our goal is to constantly increase our knowledge of scripture and thereby our knowledge of God.

Come join us! We welcome and appreciate new members added to our fellowship.



LIBRARY UPDATES



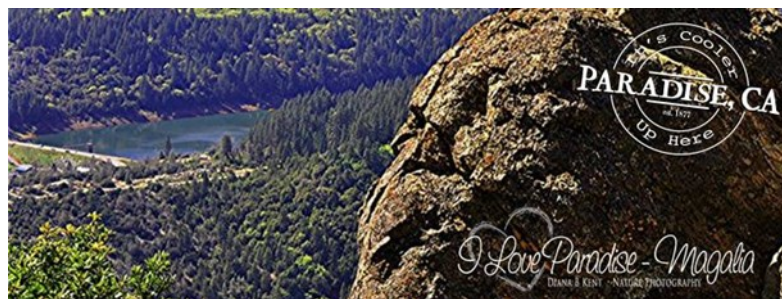
The new library bookshelves have arrived. The non-fiction books are categorized alphabetically on the new shelves. For the time being, please check out books the way you have been doing.

Now that the library is getting more user friendly, we love that the children are getting involved in reading. We encourage them to put the books they use back on the shelves or stacked neatly on a table. Our vision is that this will be an enjoyable space for adults and children.



PARADISE?

Bill and I moved to the town of Paradise, California, in 2015 when Bill retired after 35 years of landscaping. We wanted to live closer to our young grandchildren in Chico. It was a beautiful mountain community of about 26,000 perched on the top of a ridge above Chico with another community of 12,000 people six miles above it called Magalia. It was a heavily forested area with many types of trees including pines, oaks, dogwoods and maples. The thick, dense habitat successfully obscured the fact that approximately 50,000 people lived in that vast area of the ridge.



The morning of November 8, 2018, I woke up knowing that Bill's knee replacement surgery the previous day had been successful and that I planned to pick him up around 11 a.m. At about 7:30 a.m. my phone rang and buzzed with a text notification. It instructed me to evacuate immediately! I said out loud "God, I am not supposed to do this by myself!" The text mentioned a wildfire, and my heart began to race. I rushed outside and looked up to see that what I thought was an overcast and slightly foggy morning, which was typical for a November day, was really the smell of smoke and ash falling!

Adrenaline kicked in, and I began throwing my go bags into the car along with necessary supplies for my Airedale, Sam. He was reacting to my heightened nervous state, so I put him in the car. I added more clothing for us since it was the beginning of winter and my go bags contained only summer clothing. I thought we might be directed to evacuate to a higher elevation so with that in mind I packed pillows, blankets, food, water, bibles, and other personal items. I recalled that looting was a big problem there the last time a fire threatened Paradise in 2008, so I took three pieces of my favorite jewelry just in case. I also took my extended hard drive from my computer and my rolodex, the old-fashioned kind, along with our address book. My last job was to move our Amazon parrot, Hooter, into her travel size cage and put her in the car. When I tried to pull the cage down from the top of the freezer where it was stored, the plywood underneath her cage was moving with it and heading straight for my face! This would not be a good time to be struck in the face with a piece of heavy plywood, so I decided to leave her behind believing that we would be home in a few days at the most. I gave her extra food and water and told her we would be back soon.

In the midst of all the confusion, I received a call from Bill that he was being evacuated from the hospital. The fire was already there, and staff were evacuating patients in their own vehicles. I was relieved knowing he was leaving the area and out of harm's way. I told my next-door neighbor, who was outside hosing down his home, that I was leaving. He said they were going soon, too. At that time, we both heard a loud explosion. He commented that wasn't good because it was a propane tank exploding, and it was close by! My anxiety went up a notch! I got in the car with my dog and 'stuff' and headed out. I had the choice of turning right or left at the intersection. I knew there would be others evacuating, so I turned right to head to another main road to leave the area. In a few moments I realized I made the wrong choice and was in grid lock. Unknown to me the entire town had been ordered to evacuate! It was about 8:30 am at this time.

The sky was grey with thick smoke and ash falling. The smoke was just above the homes, so the road areas were clear to see. I was trapped in traffic that was barely moving. I was talking and praying to God to keep us safe and help me to stay in control. Thankfully, my wonderful husband had filled my car with gas the night before his surgery, so I knew I was good in that area. The traffic crawled slowly along as more and more people were lining up along every side street to join us. People were thoughtful and allowed others to pull in ahead of them. I saw this generosity often throughout the morning regardless of how dangerous the situation was.

I finally reached an intersection where an officer instructed me to drive in a direction that I felt was towards the fire not away from it. He assured me there would be others to direct us further along. I felt terrified heading in that direction! I had not seen any fire at this time but very thick smoke was all around. The wind was blowing, so leaves and pine needles were falling along with burning embers. What would I do if the debris landing on my wipers caught fire???

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(Continued from page 7)

The grey smoke was now turning black as more houses and buildings burned. The burning oil products, like roofing material, create black, toxic smoke so even though it was 9:30 in the morning, it was pitch black. The electricity was out, and there were no street lights on. I sat in my idling car not knowing when we would ever move forward. Again, the sound of propane tanks exploding was increasing in frequency and louder as the fire was getting closer. I thought of turning around and heading anywhere else, but there were deep open drainage ditches along most all the roadways. There was no where to go with vehicles in front and behind me. I began to believe that this might be it for me. The fire was getting closer now; I could see a grocery store burning. I could also see some homes and shrubbery on fire. My terror was turning into panic.

I had received a few cell phone calls when the towers were working, and my sister, Lynn, told me she had her church praying for us! My faith was encouraged, and that was all I had to keep me in control. I listened to Christian music on the radio which kept my mind focused-on God and that He is in control of my life. Bill called was further along in the evacuation-called while I was sitting in the some advice about raising his the time to do that. I knew he I wasn't sure I was going to get going to happen and that the hour now. I told him how much knowing that this might be the The waiting was unbearable and time. He could see what was smoke. Some people had abandoned their cars and were on foot as the wind blew and new fires were starting from scattered embers.



to give me some updates since he tion ahead of me. My youngest son traffic jam. I had wanted to give him new daughter and felt this might be was close to tears as I was. I told him out of this. I had no idea what was cars had not moved for at least an I loved him and said goodbye last time I would ever speak with him. my dog, Sam, whined most of the happening and could smell the

Suddenly, the traffic started to move forward! Thank you Lord I thought! At another intersection I joined another group of vehicles. Later I learned that someone from our church was in this group and her husband was a deputy sheriff. She had called him while she was stranded and told him where she was and that if someone didn't get this traffic moving, she and his children would be burned to death. He raced to the closest intersection and stopped the cross traffic so we could move forward! At this time, I saw a familiar pickup ahead of me, and my lane was catching up to it. It belonged to my close friends from church! I was so excited and relieved to see them and know they were alright! As I passed them, she and I rolled down our windows to say we loved each other and tried to touch hands. It gave me much needed encouragement to keep going and reminded me that God was with me. I knew God had arranged that brief meeting for us. At the intersection the officer told me to go fast and I did! I punched the accelerator and raced through the intersection. I literally flew over the dip in the road but had to come to a sudden stop for vehicles that were once again stopped in front of me. On this narrow two-lane road, fire engines and ambulances were honking and sirens screaming for us to get out of their way! Two-lanes of vehicles pulled over as close as they could get to the sides to make enough room for them to pass. I was amazed they could squeeze through!

Soon I was at another intersection that was more terrifying than before! What had been a four-lane divided road was now 7 lanes of vehicles of all kinds trying desperately to move forward and out of harm's way. Some of the cars were driving on the sloped sides of hills where the road had been cut through. There was an opening for a second, so I turned into the traffic to move forward. Ahead was a major intersection with no lights, just the headlights of cars and trucks! Officers were standing in the midst of all the crazy traffic telling us to go as fast as we could and follow the car ahead of us. I don't know how those brave officers were not run over! I was finally on the main road called Skyway which becomes the divided four-lane highway down to Chico. Safe at last I thought, but buildings ahead of me were on fire in the black darkness as cars moved slowly forward.

(Continued on page 9)



A school was on fire to my left, so that gave me light to see. At that moment I saw a truck to my right was stopped with the driver door open and no one around. Before I could understand what was happening, three large black cables fell on my car! I stopped not knowing what they were or where they came from! I thought at that time that maybe being electrocuted was better than burning to death. I had no fear at that time. Whatever was going to happen was God's will for me, and I accepted that. The cables then jumped off of my car and I decided to gun it and drive over whatever was ahead of me! It was so dark; I couldn't see anything in front of me, so I hit the accelerator and lurched forward. Soon I was in congested, slow-moving traffic again as both sides of the road were now on fire. Everything was burning, the buildings, fences, trees, and electric poles. The electric poles looked like Roman candles! It seemed like a tunnel of fire. There were three lanes of traffic moving slowly, and I was in the middle lane. It was so hot inside the car; the heat was coming from everywhere. I thought if one person stops or has any car trouble, we would be dead. The flames were roaring and sounded like jet engines! I had never seen or heard anything like that! I couldn't figure out where I was since fire was consuming everything in sight.



I could see ahead of the traffic that the flames were less intense, so we must be in a residential area and out of the business district. I felt relief to see fewer flames, but it was still pitch black. I turned a familiar corner, so I knew I was on the edge of town. The traffic began to move faster as everyone realized there was some hope! I saw a patch of blue the size of a postage stamp. God was telling me that we were going to survive this!!! I told Sam we had made it! The roadway now was heading downhill towards Chico, and soon there was no fire, and the smoke was left behind as I flew down the highway. There were no cars in front of me, and I wondered where they had gone? How could they disappear like that? Then I realized how fast I was going and that I needed to slow down to avoid having an accident. In minutes I raced into Chico and saw lots of people on the sidewalks watching the evacuation. Some waved and yelled. I was shocked! I had survived! I couldn't drive to my son's home since most roads were closed and blocked off allowing for the most vehicles to get away from the fire area. I knew how to get to Costco, so I drove there and parked. Lots of other drivers did the same, and we all exited our vehicles in shock. How did we survive that? What do we do now? I looked towards Paradise and saw an ominous scene that reminded me of the movie "Close Encounter of the Third Kind." A huge black, rolling mass of smoke was spreading outwards in the sky from Paradise. It was similar to the mother ship coming out of the thundering clouds and lightning in view of the startled citizens. I called my son to ask him to come and get me since emotionally I could not drive anymore, I couldn't remember how to get to his house.

His wife dropped him off in a few minutes, and we hugged not believing I had made it out alive. I could not stop talking because of the adrenaline. I was a motor mouth with no off switch. He drove me to his home where he had left Bill after picking him up at the local hospital where he was dropped off. I walked in to the house, and there was Bill, still in his hospital gown with part of the IV still taped to his arm! He was using a walker to get up so we could hug each other. All I could say was, "Why are you still in a hospital gown?" It was 12:30 pm, and the ordeal took four hours to make a trip that normally took 25-30 minutes. We sat on the couch in shock trying to understand it all. Sam was very happy to see Bill too! All we knew was that we were together and had survived. God saved us that day along with thousands of other people! I was reminded that God is always faithful! Nikki Stevenson



STAND FOR LIFE



Every week is a new adventure. Observe first hand how those driving by respond to 'life of children' and reminders that God is the creator and sustainer of all. Occasionally some give encouraging waves and honks of their horns, but some responses not so honoring to the Lord. Hearts are challenged as the Holy Spirit works!

God creates life. Life is important to our Lord, so to it is to His beloved (us). How do we at Faith let the world know God's heart? Take time to join us next to the front of Planned Parenthood to pray and hold a sign proclaiming Truth about life and faith in our Lord!

Rain or shine, 1:30-3:30pm every Tuesday. We pause for prayer at 2:30, so stop by and pray with us.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Last breakfast (pancakes, eggs, sausage, fruit cups, pineapple, etc.), our session reviewed the specifics for preparing for leadership at Faith OPC. It was noted Faith has a leadership development study which includes 12 lessons of study. These are reviewed one by one with one of our Elders. This is an excellent opportunity for spiritual growth and understanding. Contact Pastor Karl or Frode Jensen if you would like more information.



The May breakfast will follow-up by looking at the Biblical qualifications for leadership from Timothy and Titus. I Timothy 3:2 temperate, sober-minded, good behavior and able to teach. All of us grow in fellowship and faith at this time, 7- 8:30am, Saturday, May 14th. Bring a friend!

PONDERINGS By Pastor Karl Thompson

Needing the Body of Christ

Take my word for it, every time you gather together with the saints, you benefit from it. You get godly examples, encouragements, and help. Sometimes the help is imperceptible, but it is real. You have heard me say it many times before that we were not created to live independently, but we need to live in relationship with other believers.

As a church, we have a growing number of shut-ins, and that number is likely to increase in the next 5 years. People who genuinely can't get out of the house to get together with other saints suffer from a spiritual malnutrition that is often imperceptible but real.

It was a real joy for me to welcome Ralph Swanson into the membership of the church last month. Because of his medical situation, he is unable to regularly attend church. Since he couldn't come to us, we went to him. We filled up his living room with saints and had a real worship service. As part of that, he took his membership vows, and we promised to care for him. Now he joins our growing list of shut-ins.



There are some people in church who have the special gifts and availability to spend time with our shut-ins. There are people in our church who spend many hours a week helping our shut-ins. Their ministry is an extreme blessing, but frankly it is not enough. Our shut-ins need the blessing of a broader exposure to the saints. I know your lives are very busy, but what if each person in our church determined to spend 1 hour a month with one of our shut-ins? That would amount to 2 or 3 special visits per shut-in per week. Can you imagine the blessing that would be to someone stuck at home? It takes no special skills. Just arrange a visit, come over, sit down and share life together. It will be a mutual blessing



WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT MY CHURCH By Ron Strom

In 2020, when Leanne and I first began attending Faith OPC and then eventually joined the church, friends we talked to would ask us why we chose Faith. These friends are Christians who attend more typical evangelical churches in town but who were genuinely interested in our choice.



When questioned, I would mention one or two distinctives we appreciate about Faith, but my answers were never really comprehensive. This essay, then, is my attempt to let others know what it is I appreciate about my church, those distinctives that differentiate it from many other churches. They are in no particular order:

My church values the theologically rich hymns of Christendom that have stood the test of time for years – in some cases, centuries. We normally sing six hymns during each Sunday morning service, accompanied by only piano, which allows every worshiper to hear the voices of brothers and sisters around them as we corporately lift our praise to God. The focus of the hymn lyrics generally is not on me, but on the Savior – Who He is and what He has done in saving a people unto Himself.

My church has a specific purpose for each element in the worship service as we enter into the Lord's presence, not nonchalantly but with a recognition of His holiness. This liturgy causes God's people to acknowledge their perfect Lord, their debilitating sin, their great need and the glorious atonement that perfectly and graciously meets that need. In our current state as sinning saints, it's imperative that we hear the Gospel clearly every week so we might regularly exalt Jesus for His saving work on our behalf. From prayer to the corporate reading of Scripture, to the Benediction and Doxology, each element progressively flows to highlight the Gospel of Christ.

My church has Communion every Sunday morning near the end of the service. Far from growing perfunctory or routine, weekly Communion is a blessed event that reminds us forgetful sheep of the Savior's broken body and shed blood and what they accomplished for us. Gluten-free bread and a choice of wine or grape juice ensure that all His people can joyfully participate.

My church purposely includes children in the worship service. Children's Sunday school is offered before the service during adult Sunday school, but then we gather together as families for worship as our kids learn the importance of honoring God as a multi-generational body and we adults learn to welcome active, sometimes-noisy little ones.

My church emphasizes the historical Reformed faith – the teachings that turned religion upside down in the 16th century as Martin Luther took his stand for justification by faith alone and John Calvin spread the doctrine of God's gracious, sovereign, irreversible regeneration of His elect.

Like the Reformers, my church prioritizes the preaching of the Word of God above all else and considers the Bible infallible and foundational for all of life. God uses His Word and preaching to teach, convict and encourage His people, week in and week out. The folks I worship with take their Bibles seriously, which is an encouragement for me to do likewise.

My church has formal membership, which allows the elders to know specifically who it is they are to oversee and shepherd. The bar for membership is relatively low. One needs to profess his or her faith in Christ and intent to follow Him in the context of the local church, but there are not precise theological tests that need to be passed

(Continued on page 12)



before one is considered part of the family. My church has elders who take church discipline seriously, including excommunicating those members who stray into unrepentant sin, action that is taken with tears after heartfelt pleading with the errant member. Prayers then are regularly lifted up for the excommunicated member to return to the Lord and the church.

My church is fairly small, which means I am known and am missed when I am ill and cannot attend. Such a church is the kind of place where people feel needed and loved.

My church holds not only a strong position against legal abortion but puts that stance into action every week by peacefully protesting the local Planned Parenthood. This ongoing activity shows our community that abortion is a horrific stain on our nation and an offense to God, not just one day a year, but every day it is allowed to continue.

My church leaders are open to debate and discussion about theology as well as church practices. They willingly meet to talk over issues, explain church policies and respectfully receive suggestions.

My church is not perfect as it is populated by imperfect people. But by God's grace, it faithfully meets every week as the Word is preached, the sacraments are administered, and the Body of Christ is built up to the glory of God. May our Lord sustain Faith OPC for many years to come.



Ron Strom

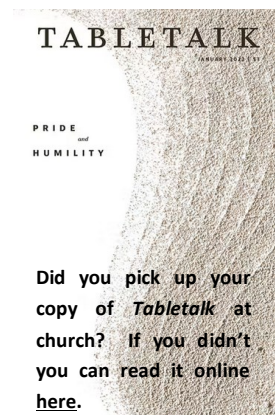
PARTY PARTY PARTY



Spaghetti and Game Night

Rachel Uhl, our party planner, organized a spaghetti and game night at Faith church. It was a fun, fellowship time for all and there was lots of spaghetti AND CAKE!





Since reading *Tabletalk* I have found several articles and topics that have really appealed to me. The January 2022, "Pride and Humility" issue has all its articles written by various men of faith. I can hardly read and not hold a pen in my hand to underline all the meaningful sentences.

I admit I do not use social media, and one article in this issue was written about social media. "Humility on Social Media" is by Tim Challies, a founding blogger of challis.com. Everything has a good side and a bad. Not all things are bad, such as social media, to quote the article, "But though we so easily see drawbacks of these new technologies, they do still have many benefits. None is so far beyond redemption that it cannot be used in ways that will bless others and glorify God. Behind all the vices are many genuine virtues, for through social media we can say words that dry crying eyes, we can share quotes that raise drooping hands, we can upload videos that strengthen weakened knees. We can graciously

engage with the lost and the hurting, we can gently challenge the straying and the wayward, we can carefully shore up the uncertain and the untrained. We can be present and active in these forums where people are taught, where ideas are discussed, where the great concerns of our age are debated. We can be where the people of this world gather so that we can speak God's truth with our mouths while displaying God's love in our lives."

When God has sent His armies out, His people have had to go to the masses where the most corrupt and dark are gathering.

When I had Covid, I had to stay home and miss church. Our church offered worship services online through YouTube, I thought, "Good deal, the media is getting the attention of the God we love." It was a blessing to think God could use even this form of reaching the lost, especially at a time when so many needed it!

Thank God that He sent others to reach out with this knowledge to spread THE WORD on this media.

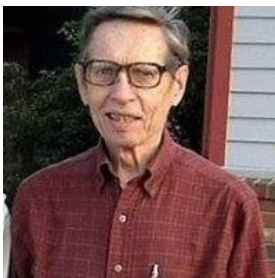
Here I am Lord, send me— Layle Parades

WHAT A BLESSING

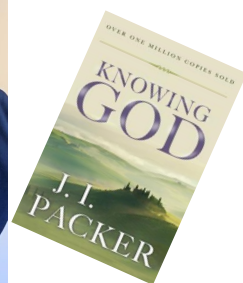
On March 6 the Goodwill family was accepted into membership. What a blessing to all of us as we get to know Kerry, Rebekah, and Peter. Welcome to Faith!



On March 23 Ralph Swanson was accepted into membership. Praise the Almighty! Since Ralph has a hard time leaving home, the church body went to him.



Tabletalk is a monthly magazine dedicated to helping you grow in Christ. With articles from pastors, scholars, and teachers, every issue of *Tabletalk* focuses on something different. Each issue contains feature articles, daily devotions, and columns touching on biblical, theological, and practical themes to help strengthen and encourage you in your faith.



On April 24, Jim Miller was accepted into membership. He quoted a passage from J.I. Packer's book *Knowing God*. What a wonderful day.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS By Frode Jensen

There are some questions about congregational meetings. Why do we have them? Who decides when we have them? How are they to be conducted? You will find answers below.

The OPC has a book of church order; in that book the first section is called the “Form of Government.” Congregational meetings are discussed on pages 26 and 27. The standard reference to any portion of this section would be FOG XVI, and then the paragraph and subparagraph would be listed.



FOG XVI, 1 says that the session will call the meetings and that at least one meeting should be held annually. The purpose of that meeting is to consider the affairs of the church and hold such elections of officers as necessary. No proxy voting is permitted, and only members in good standing are allowed to vote. This section also allows for ¼ of the members in good standing to request a congregational meeting in writing. So the why and who questions are answered.

The other paragraphs in this section regarding congregational meetings deal with mission works, who shall moderate, what the clerk needs to do, what sort of business the laws of the state might require, and how to go about holding a congregational meeting should the church members wish to withdraw from the OPC. There is a section on public notice that states a notice of such a meeting is to be made two Lord’s Days in advance of the meeting, so these sections explain a few details on how the meetings are to be conducted.

Some additional information is helpful. While there is to be an annual congregational meeting, the session or the people as outlined above can call other congregational meetings as well. A meeting where no business is transacted is an informational meeting. An example would be when the session reads a document to the members as a result of some disciplinary action. In that case, no formal minutes need to be taken although mention of that meeting will occur in the official session minutes. If a vote of any sort is taken, that requires minutes of the meeting, a quorum, and so forth. For instance, a special congregational meeting was held when the Harbeck facility came under consideration for purchase. We have these meetings to better inform the church as a whole about the general goings on in the church and for the congregants to raise questions or make comments about such things. The elders also conduct family visitations where such things are discussed.

In summary, the FOG says the church is to have an annual congregational meeting but may have more. It explains that the session or a body of the congregation may call a special congregational meeting and that a two week notice must be given. And finally, the FOG gives some guidelines on how the meetings are to be conducted. God is a god of order, and the OPC tries to do things in good order. (1 Cor 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order.)



COMING UP

May 1—Fellowship Meal

May 14—7am Men’s Breakfast

May 21—Mother & Daughter Tea

May 23—6pm Men’s Meeting

June 11—Men’s Breakfast

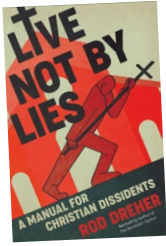
10am Tuesdays—Ladies Bible Study

1:30pm Tuesdays—Stand for Life

6pm Thursdays—Bible Study

May 11 & 25—Youth Night

May 29 —6pm Evening Bible Discussion



Live Not By Lies by Rod Dreher



January 23, 2021 [Frode](#) rated it 5 stars

Goodreads review by Frode Jensen

This book is in the library and available to borrow.

We are dying the death of a thousand cuts. We are sacrificing our freedoms on the altar of convenience. How are we to respond, especially how are Christians to respond? The culture war has been lost according to Rod Dreher in his latest book, *Live Not by Lies*. The subtitle is “A Manual for Christian Dissidents.”

There are two general sections in the book. The first section is a warning and an education to what soft totalitarianism is like. It is coming; in fact, it is here now and is becoming more evident as time goes by. The totalitarian societies of the last century were imposed by force and ruled by fear. That may be coming, but today’s soft totalitarianism is different. It is no longer fear of being imprisoned and tortured or perhaps killed. Today it is fear of losing a job, losing social status, being listed low on the social credit list, maybe just having others look upon you with disfavor. Economic and social pressures are brought to bear. Free speech is silenced; free exchange of ideas disappears. Fear of what others might say, particularly to those in power, becomes real.

The second section is about how to live in truth. There is a need to pass on a cultural heritage. Tearing down public statues is an attempt to erase cultural memory. How will you know who you are if you don’t know where you came from? The follow-up question then becomes where are you going and why? Dreher explains through examples from those who came through the Nazi and Communist rules how the family is key. The nuclear family is under attack by design. It is the basic cell of resistance to tyranny. For the family to survive, it has to have a core of shared values. Dreher and those he interviewed explain that religion is the bedrock of defining those values. However, there needs to be more than just a family here or there; they need to be connected somehow, somehow to stand together and encourage one another. Suffering will happen in some form; prepare for it. He and many in the book explain that suffering sets apart those who truly believe in their cause and those who only give it lip service. Many reported that suffering purified their faith, truly made them free at least in spirit.

Much of the book is told through interviews with different folks who were in the resistance behind the Iron curtain. Poles, Russians, Czechs, Slovaks, Romanians and Hungarians are represented along with some I likely forgot to mention. Their stories are brief but powerful. They lived it, and they are very concerned for their grandchildren. Having lived through the communist occupation, they looked to the West. Now they believe the West is drifting into totalitarianism because of the signs they see. Their grandchildren have no memory of the persecution, so they are lulled by the promises of freedom, comfort, self-fulfillment, and happiness. It is the siren song of the forces changing the culture, but it ends in slavery, not necessarily in chains, but certainly in other ways.

It is a book of importance. It is a book published as a warning to Millennials to get ready to meet the future, get ready now for the problems that are coming. It is a book of faith, faith exemplified by those who lived through the terror, and an admonition to believers to pass on that faith as best they can. It is a book of hope for the long term although the short term looks tough. Read it and get prepared. Live not by lies; live by the truth. Frode



MEMBER PHOTOS



We have some exciting news to share! Ed Pelessier and his wife Lisa have volunteered to take professional photos of each family for the Church Directory. The photo date is planned for Saturday, June 25 and Sunday June 26 after church. Please see Linda Gay to schedule an appointment time that you can be there.

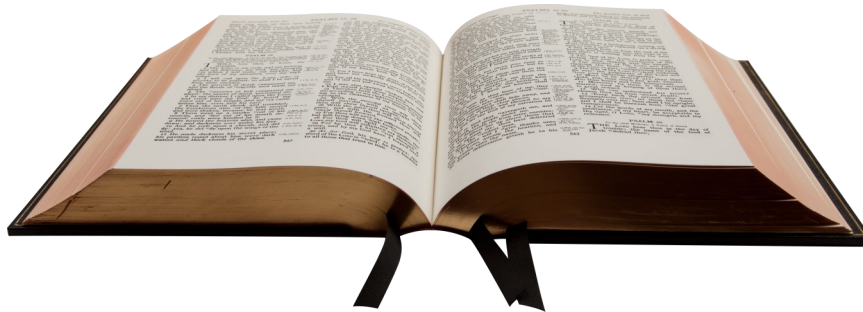


How exciting!

These stunning black and white photos are some of Ed's work.



We have greeter badges (they have a magnet on the back) for the Sunday greeters. Please use it when you are a greeter. We will keep them on the table in the foyer.



If you haven't already been reading, jump in now and read along with us. There are two plans: Through the New Testament in a Year (one NT chapter per day) and Through the Bible in a Year (the NT plan plus three OT chapters per day). Imagine the value of all of us reading the same portions of scripture together.

You can see on the page NT (for New Testament reading) and OT (for Old Testament reading), and they are listed by date. Catch up is a day that a reading is not necessary, and you can use it to "catch up" or study. Reading the Bible is an enrichment to your life and to your relationship with God.

[Click here to see the Bible Reading 2022.](#)

A lot of care, time, and effort went into the publishing of this newsletter and we would love to hear your comments, recommendations, and thoughts. Drop us a line at: office.faihopc.gp@gmail.com

Special thank you to the proof readers, Marylou Hansen and Frode Jensen. Thank you to Scott Croucher, our event photographer.

