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A Different View

Pastor Kirk Albrecht

My wife Sarah has recently been re-reading C.S. Lewis’ “A Space Trilogy.” This is a science fiction series with a spiritual edge, bringing together interesting characters and plot developments, with Biblical ideas on life and truth. As she says, he is an absolutely brilliant writer. A creative genius.

We marvel at people with exceptional creative gifts. Writers, actors, artists, musicians. Their gifts are bright and easily seen. Their craft is often wildly dynamic and stunning.

At its core, all human creativity comes from the Creator. Same root word. God in His infinite creativity fashioned the universe from nothing (Hebrews 11:1). He created it – He made up the universe! Can you imagine what an imagination God has?

And He creates humanity – in His image and likeness – with equal imagination and creativity. Because we are the image bearers of the Living God, we all share in some measure His creativity.

As believers, we want to discern what gifts God has given, and then use them in the best possible way to honor the Giver. For some of us, those gifts will be brilliant. For others, more subtle.

At FEFC, we now have a dedicated Creative Team, partners with Nancy Jo Demolin, our Creative Arts Director, to help shape our creative edge as a church. They have been coming up with some great ideas for how we present our work, and what we do in our Sunday worship services.

We want to be a church marked by creativity – reflecting our Creator’s nature in what we do, from teaching kids to running a retreat to our corporate praise of God. So we need you and your gifts! If you are not being creative with what God has built into you, now is the time! Plug in and let’s see God’s glory shine through your life as you serve!

The Evangel is the newsletter of First Evangelical Free Church (FEFC) of McKeesport, sent free of charge to the church’s community. The Evangel welcomes articles, stories, or other submissions. If you wish to be added to the mailing list, contact the church office at (412) 678-6655.

FEFC exists to guide people to becoming healthy followers of Jesus Christ.

Creative Arts Ministry

Nancy Jo Demolin

The Worship Window

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."
Matthew 4:8-10

You may wonder why God commands that we worship Him.

Consider the following question:
What if our greatest delight is in praising GOD, since He is the One most worthy of praise?

"I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but **completes the enjoyment.**" —C.S. Lewis

Is it possible that our delight is incomplete till it is expressed? Therefore, let us not hesitate to express our praise to God who is most worthy of it! Abundant joy just may be the result!

Pastor's Pen



Pastor Kirk Albrecht

I remember reading the biography of George Mueller during college. Mueller was famous in England in the 19th century for starting an orphanage in the city of Bristol and operating solely on faith. He never publicized or solicited funds for his work, but always waited on God to provide. The book is chock full of anecdotes of 11th-hour provision of needs just before the brink of disaster. All Mueller did was pray — about three hours every morning.

The German reformer, Martin Luther, is quoted as saying he had so much to do, he rose at 4 a.m. in order to pray for three hours before he started his day.

A recent study found that most pastors are unsatisfied with their prayer lives, even though they spend on average about 40 minutes a day in prayer. While over 70% of all Americans engage in prayer, most of those prayers last less than five minutes. In most evangelical churches across the land, the mid-week prayer service, so popular in the 1950-60's, has all but disappeared.

Here at First Free Church our last few National Day of Prayer gatherings at two different times of the day yielded just a couple dozen people who showed up to pray for an hour.

One of the most tricky yet dangerous trends to overtake the

American church in recent days is prayerlessness. Why is it that we find it much easier to come to a potluck lunch than a prayer meeting? Has the American church been so satiated with the tastes of egg salad and fried chicken that it has lost its appetite to "taste and see that the Lord is good"?

The tricky aspect of our corporate prayer life as the Church of Jesus Christ is in not making it an either/or with other aspects of church life. Yet as Billy Graham said so artfully at URBANA 1979 about evangelism and social action in missions—there is no dichotomy; there is a priority, but no dichotomy.

And perhaps that is where we in the West have gotten off track. Prayer still exists for us, but it doesn't have the place of importance in our corporate life it once occupied.

The Church in the "Global South" - what we used to call the developing world — is active in prayer. The most aggressive national church in the world in reaching out—Korea—has a long history of church-wide prayer meetings attended by thousands each morning before work. Every day. Beginning at 5 a.m. Across Asia, Latin America, and Africa we see similar gatherings. Prayer isn't merely a way to end meetings, but it permeates everything they do.

Why has the American church found it harder to pray?

Busyness. Our calendars are full — church, school, social, sports. Hey—we're the culture that invented the PDA—we need a hand-held computer just to keep track of all the events in our lives. For some reason as humans, the thing we need most—personal, intimate contact with the living God—is what gets shoved to the back of the line when our lives get crammed.

Fear. Often, we're afraid that God doesn't want to spend time with us. There is either real guilt over real sin in our lives which makes us hide from God, or false guilt over feelings of inadequacy due to past experiences with people. And these block us in coming to God.

Too many resources. We've got more Bibles than we can count, the Internet, books by the thousands, help groups. The American church is resource-rich, yet we've managed to replace the resource of God and His Spirit with other (usually good and helpful) tools for personal growth. It's not an either/or choice.

Unresolved requests. God doesn't always give what we ask for, and we get confused, thinking that because we ask, He should give. Sometimes the answer will be yes in our timing. Sometimes the timing will be different, sometimes the yes won't look like we thought it would, and sometimes, the answer is no, for God's own wise reasons. When

we don't get a yes, we doubt whether we should even pray, and a bit of frustration with God enters our minds.

There is no denying that prayer—on a personal and corporate level in America—doesn't command the attention it once did. What can we do to turn this around?

See the example of Jesus. Whenever Jesus had anything important happening, we see him praying. Sometimes he just needed that quiet time with God. He made sure He took it.

Read the book of Acts. As the young church—without the Bible yet written, no tapes or books or DVD's or CD's—knelt together in prayer, God moved. It's no accident.

Learn from others. Find out about the church in places where they really spend time in prayer.

Set a time. Make a date with God on your PDA or calendar, and keep it. Go to hear more than to ask. Enjoy time with God, focus on his characteristics and think on a verse. Come out to our church prayer times with others.

Yours in prayer,

Pastor Kirk

Children & Family Ministry

Joel Rishel

Children's Ministry is about planting seeds. So is parenting. We plant as much gospel truth as we can. We talk about it, we explain, we demonstrate it. We keep it simple, we make it relevant. But there's one thing we can't do—we can't make it grow.

That's the work of the Holy Spirit. We certainly pray for it, and we celebrate it when we see it happening. Those moments are special. But the majority of Children's Ministry and parenting is faithful seed-planting, consistent watering of the soil, and laborious weed-pulling. Week after week. Day after day.

I like to think of all our Children's Ministry events, programs, relationships, and ministries as seed-planting opportunities.

- ◆ Summer Blast. We prayed for 150 kids, and we ended up with 163 registered—we sought to faithfully speak of Jesus to each of them. Please pray for them.
- ◆ Wacky Wednesdays at the McKeesport Library. The slip-n-slide attracts the kids to come, but we are always looking for ways to give them some Bible truth.
- ◆ Sunday school. Every Sunday at 9:30 am we have committed teachers and helpers ready to help kids see Jesus in every part of the Bible.

- ◆ Junior Church. Every Sunday during our worship service we provide songs, Bible lessons, activities, and crafts with an emphasis on being a worshipper of Jesus.
- ◆ Awana. On Wednesday nights (starting back up in September) we create a club environment where kids can play games, hear the Bible taught, and experience small group discipleship.

We'll keep planting seeds. Would you please join us in praying for the Holy Spirit to cause these seeds to land in good soil and to grow? "Those that were sown on good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold" (Mark 4:20).

Longing to be faithful,
Joel Rishel
Pastor of Children & Family
Ministries

Deaf Ministry

Rich Wilson



The Deaf Ministry Wants You to Know

Sign-A-Thon 2018

The month of April was the annual Sign-A-Thon sponsored by the Pittsburgh Hearing and Deaf Services. The Deaf Ministry had a table at the event held at The Mall at Robinson Township. There were approximately 200 or so Deaf in attendance. This year our table was located next to the stage. Anyone watching the performances was in clear view of our table and banner. We passed out more church brochures and information about our church.

The highlights of the event was meeting Deaf friends, who had visited First Free at one time or another. Many of which moved out of the area to other locations in Pittsburgh. I was able also able to meet students I had interpreted for in the classroom. These students were from North Allegheny School District, Carlynton School District, Forbes Technical School, and the list goes on. It was nice to be able to invite them to church even though many live a far distant from the church.

Learn ASL Opportunity

If you are interested in learning ASL in the fall, I will be teaching at CCAC South Campus starting in the September. I will also be teaching a class for kids on a Saturday morning at South Campus in October. This will be my first class in teaching a class for kids. It is a 6 week class meeting for two hours on a Saturday morning. Please check the CCAC catalog for non-credit courses for more information.

Global Ministry

Pastor Kirk Albrecht

KAREN ZANDO

CAMPUS CRUSADE

I am writing this from 35,000 feet over the Atlantic Ocean. I am returning from eight days in (location not disclosed) where I helped to kick off a spiritual and leadership development program called "Deep Waters."

Last year, the leadership of several Central Asian countries started this one-year program for senior staff. It is designed to help them grow in character and leadership capabilities.

It was so fun to hear the material being translated into English, Turkish, Russian, Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Tagalog. Outside of the meeting I was humbled as I met with various individuals and heard the stories that come out of their counties. These men and women sacrifice in many ways to serve in difficult places.

One story that impacted me is about a bride kidnapping. In this specific country, it is not unusual for a man to kidnap a woman off the street and to force her to be his bride. If she resists he may abuse her thereby making her "used goods" that no one else will want. The parents of the women often will not come to her rescue because it would involve shaming themselves. Typically, a female from the offender's household will lay themselves across the threshold of the home. To step over that woman will bring shame to yourself and your family. This situation is unthinkable to me. On one occasion our staff banded together to rescue a sister of one of our workers.

On the brighter side, I heard stories of men and women coming out of an Islam background and accepting Christ. God is working!

JORDAN & STEPHANIE RYDER

Ethnos360

We are officially done with training and members with Ethnos360! Now we begin to put together a team of people who are willing and desiring to partner with us both prayerfully and financially. Since we're planning on leaving the country in July next year, there is a lot to do!

Here's the plan for the next step - We have always wanted to make ourselves available to serve, work, listen or speak for the mutual benefit of developing better friendships. Our hope over this next year is that we get to spend time with as many of you all, our co-workers in this effort to go to the nations, as possible! We not only want to sit down and catch up, but also serve with you, work with you and even work for you if need be! We will also be getting everything in place for uprooting our lives here in the States and planting ourselves into the ministry in Papua New Guinea.

With that said, could we plan on reaching out to each other simultaneously and together work towards accomplishing these next steps of going to a tribe in Papua New Guinea? In the effort to build a sending team of co-workers, do you know of other individuals or churches that would share in our vision that we could meet? We are willing to share with them or even serve them in the hope of developing better friendships and ministry partnerships. Please let us know!

Third, we have been working with leadership at our home church in Pittsburgh to put together a weekend trip to Jersey Shore, PA for a program called [Wayumi](#). Obviously, we are gearing it towards our home church family, but wanted everyone else to know as well. The trip will be in the fall, on October 27-29. Well keep you all posted as we get closer, but please try and keep that weekend available and join us!

Senior Achievers

Gerry Nelson, Secretary

Senior Achievers is going strong, but we know we have many more seniors that we would love to become acquainted with. This venue is to get to know the seniors in our church. We would invite all those 50 and over to join us at our meetings. I have shared what we are about in previous issues. Join us for a meeting of Seniors who love the Lord. Information about our meetings are always in the weekly bulletin and on the overhead in church. Detailed information on our meetings and trips is always at our Senior Achiever desk in the church lobby. We would love to see you! If you know of any senior shut-ins, please let Karen & Dave Bower know. They have done a wonderful job in visiting shut-ins.

We had no meetings in July or August, however, the Committee will have a retreat at Wayne & Gerry Nelson's summer camp with lots of corn and hot dogs. We will play a corn-hole game & Polish golf. Dave Bower will give our devotions. We will pray for a very productive year ahead because soon we will be planning the programs for the coming year.

◆ **September 11** - we will have our "Funny Fashion Show" with Pastor Alex Ielase giving our devotions.

◆ **October 9** - we will have our Pastor and Staff Appreciation meeting with Cheryl Kelly giving our devotions. We will have a game and then Cheryl Kelly will show pictures of our trips of this year.

◆ **November - 13** our Thanksgiving luncheon, we will have Walter Marr performing as Pontius Pilate. Rob Gibala will be giving our devotions.

◆ **December 11** - Cindy Rishel will present a vocal concert and Terry Judy will give the devotions.

Our trips have been great with a lot of folks joining us. Our last trip on August 7 was to Zanesville, OH where we visited the 5 B'S embroidery factory. We met the owner who is a Christian man and runs his company with consideration of his employees. Even though the company works 7 days a week, 22 hours a day with different shifts, he sets the schedule on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings to allow those that want to go to church can. The women had a good time shopping. We visited a stern wheeler on the Muskingum River and the studio of a sculptor. The sculptor had life size bronze figures on an entire block outside of his studio. He also

had a gallery with hundreds of sculptures. He gave us an overview of how he starts and then the finished project. His work is always commissioned. His work was breathtaking. We visited an indoor fish hatchery of a family of five. They received a grant to do a feasibility study and the implementation to produce business plans, instructions, etc. They harvest 22,000 tilapia every 9 months. The men as well as the women loved this fascinating business very much.

Our next trip is November 26 and is titled "Amazing Grace". The travel committee feels that this is going to be a dynamic trip showing the life of Christ.

JOIN US SENIORS WHO ARE DOING THINGS FOR SENIORS!!!!



Student Ministry

Alex Ielase

Coming up in Student Ministries we have the kickoff of our fall programs. We are excited to welcome back our students in middle, high school and college. Our Reach and Alive ministries will seek to lift up Jesus and point people to Him. Please pray that God would raise up student leaders who are passionate about reaching their schools for Christ. We want to bear much spiritual fruit-we don't just want attenders!

We are always looking for a few good cooks to feed our college students and young adults. Can you make a meal once or twice a year for our Alive students? We usually have around 10-12 people. It doesn't need to be anything fancy. If you are willing please contact me at 412-352-8876 or my office phone at 412-678-4761 ext. 111.

God has definitely opened doors this year! He has allowed us to be present on Penn State's campus to share His love with the students. We also were welcomed to the Carnegie Library in McKeesport to do our "Wacky Wednesday" outreach to children. We had a huge slip and slide, face painting, snacks and a Bible time every week. We hope this will be the start of a more long-term partnership with the library and with the community. We want to be salt and light-that people would "see our good works and glorify the Father in Heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

On a personal note, it is a pleasure to be a part of the First Free church family. The Ielase clan has now moved into Port Vue and we are settling in. God is so faithful to lead, guide and provide for His people. We can't wait to see what is in store for us as we serve Him together with all of you.

Pastor Alex Ielase

Sonshine Community Ministries

Terry Ruccio

Serving those in Need

Here are some practical ways you can help our community through Sonshine.

- Be a prayer partner for our Hang 5 kids this year 2018-2019
- Come serve a meal with your family or small group (3:30- 6:00) – call us for a date
- Participate in our Golf Event – September 22 @ Butler’s Golf Course (see the website www.sonshinecm.org)
- Donate in-season clothing for MEN, WOMEN and KIDS
- Adult + Kids gloves needed for winter
- Come help with Monday Clean Up at 5:30 or some general cleaning throughout the week.
- Come pray with us on Sunday Oct. 7 as we pray for our community and Sonshine Ministries and its families and children.
- Watch for a flyer about this.



Family News

Celebrating New Lives!

Congratulations ...

To Bill & Erin Hooke on the birth of a granddaughter, Charlotte Jane Hooke, May 22, 2018. Parents are Josh & Sammy Hooke.

To Owen & Marie Zajdel on the birth of a new daughter, Elora Grace Zajdel, July 1. Proud grandparents are Dan & Erika Zajdel. Elora joins siblings, Giles, Ardea & Viera.

To Barry & Janet Wagner on the birth of a new grandson, Landry Wagner, August 11. Parents are Brian & Debbie Wagner.

To Bill & Lisa Haines on the birth of a new grandson, Carson Kenneth Fleming, August 15. Parents are Daniel & Amanda Fleming. Proud great-grandmother is Marilyn Fawcett.



Passings

Our Christian love and sympathy is extended to ...

- Randy & Joyce McDonald & family at the passing of Joyce's mother, Lois Bonadio
- Norman Terrijoni at the passing of his step-mother, Elaine Terrijoni
- Ellen Firda & Todd & Cheryl Nestor & family at the passing of son & brother, Gerald Firda
- Family & friends of Virginia Anderson
- Family & friends of Ellen Henderson

Memorial Gifts

Lois Bonadio

John & Linda Gougler

Frank Gironda

Bill & Dolly Halas

Rita Hale

Harold & Rhoda West

Ellen Henderson

Irene Zack

Colleen Lucas

Harold & Rhoda West

Edie Pavlischek

Harold & Rhoda West

Joey Pudlowski

Dave & Barb Badstibner

Ruth Schmidt

Bill & Dolly Halas

John Sprentz

Harold & Rhoda West



Sept. 3		Labor Day—Church Office Closed
Sept. 5	6:30 p.m.	Connect Start-up Dinner in the Gym
Sept. 6	7:00 p.m.	GriefShare Fall Session Begins
Sept. 7	9:30 a.m.	Moms Connect Begins in the Game Rm.
Sept. 7-9		Women's Retreat at Ligonier Camp
Sept. 11	11:00 a.m.	Senior Achiever Lunch
Sept. 20	9:00 a.m.	White Cross
Sept. 23	1:00 p.m.	Church Picnic at the Blue Top Pavilion
Oct. 2	7-11 a.m.	40 Days for Life Prayer Vigil
Oct. 6	1-5 p.m.	Fall Out at the Lake - Student Ministry
Oct. 9	11:00 a.m.	Senior Achiever Lunch
Oct. 18	9:00 a.m.	White Cross
Oct. 28	12:15 p.m.	General Assembly Meeting
Nov. 4		Daylight Saving Time Ends
Nov. 11		Veterans Day
Nov. 13	11:00 a.m.	Senior Achiever Lunch
Nov. 18	6:00 p.m.	Praise Service
Nov. 22-23		Thanksgiving Holiday - Office Closed
Dec. 7-8	6-7 p.m.	Live Nativity
Dec. 11	11:00 a.m.	Senior Achiever Lunch
Dec. 20	9:00 a.m.	White Cross
Dec. 24	5:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service



In obedience to Scripture, we please the Spirit

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