



EBENEZER
BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

**Board of Elders Meeting
Combined Elder/Deacon Meeting
May 14, 2018**

Opening & Prayer

Pastor Tim opened the meeting in prayer.

Roll Call

- The following elders were **present**: Tim Gibson, Pat Barry, Dick Bickings, Dennis Flanagan, Tom Galloway, Swannie Griffin, Kevin Hardy, Jeremy Harkins, Scott Holwick, Chris Jones, Phil Norris, Mike Notary, Byron Roth
- The following elders were **absent**: Shawn Sommons
- The following deacons were **present**: Rob Christiansen, Mark Florentine, George Hardy, Mark Hardy, Kevin Kritzberger, Bob Penchick
- The following deacons were **absent**: Andy Meeks, Kamba Kalubi, Blake Kuntz

Combined Elder/Deacon Session

Devotional: Ezekiel 33:1-9, Being a Watchman

- Role of the watchman is to watch for the enemy; if he fails, the people are hurt
- God has called us to be spokesman and watchman for this ministry
 - We cannot afford to be falling asleep on the wall
 - We need to take everything seriously
 - Pay attention to everything
 - Do not coast, be onboard
- Practical considerations: (Doctrine, Practice, and People)
 - Read the bulletin, email newsletter, website, and ministry reports
 - Listen to people's concerns and have people address issues
 - Be aware of families around us and their needs; be welcoming, and praying
 - Break out of comfort zones...move around and meet new people

Prayer Time: The Deacon and Elders split into prayer teams and prayed together.

Deacon Discussion Items:

- 1) Ushering
 - Why are our ushers just men? Tradition?
 - Men need to take more roles in leadership
 - Ushers do not teach or exercise authority
 - Motion: Elders to discuss and make a decision on whether to use women as ushers. Motion seconded, and passed unanimously.
- 2) Nominations for Deacons
 - The elders and deacons discussed several candidates for deacons.

- 3) Update on Security - Phase 1: No update
- 4) Discussed whether to allow a congregant to move their belongings into the Parsonage garage temporarily
 - Motion: Allow this congregant to move their things into the garage in the parsonage, with the deacons drawing up a contract. Motioned seconded, vote passed, Yes: 18, No: 2
 - Deacons will draw up a contract and have this congregant sign it before moving their belongings in.
- 5) Communion Sundays: Serving with suits and ties.
 - Elders will discuss whether to wear suits for communion or not
 - Need to make sure all the elders and deacons are contacted to serve by email.
- 6) Counseling need (Jeremy Harkins)
 - College age girl needs counseling but can't afford it. How do we help her?
 - Elders will discuss the solution.

Byron Roth closed this combined session in prayer.

Elder Meeting Session

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the Elders Meeting held April 12, 2018; it was seconded & passed.

Financial Report - April 2018 (Attachment #1)

The motion was made to approve this financial report, it was seconded and passed unanimously.

Byron Roth gave an email update:

- Giving through last Sunday was \$8,000 below budget YTD
- Expenses down
- Overall doing well

Care List: Elder's reviewed the care list

Elder Discussion Items:

- 1) **Worship Song Selection**
 - Tim & Dick gave an update on the meeting with a member who challenged our worship songs.
 - Elders discussed praying for and being patient with this member.
- 2) **New Policy for Pastors' Expense Accounts (Attachment #2)**
 - Presented by Byron Roth, Chairman of Finance Committee
 - Motion: To receive the policy as written. Seconded, passed unanimously.
- 3) **Lynfield Ministry** – Dick updated elders on a men's bible study beginning June 2.
- 4) **Worship Intern (Jeremy)** – Jeremy proposed to the elders a worship intern with the attached Job Description. *(Attachment #3)*
 - Motion: Bring Alyssa Heric on as Worship Intern for the summer at 14 hours/week, and compensated at \$150/week.
 - Seconded, Passed unanimously.

- 5) Outdoor Service – Saturday’s use of the tent (Jeremy)
- The Outdoor Service is scheduled for Sunday, September 16, 2018. The rented tent is set up in the front yard several days prior, so we would like to make use of it on Saturday night as well as Sunday morning.
 - Jeremy proposed that we bring in Christian Band “Seeker and Servant,” for a Saturday night concert. No cost for the concert, but we would pay for the band’s travel, room, and board.
 - Jeremy will get the final details and report back to the elders next meeting.
- 6) Elders Retreat – Elders talked about the details regarding the retreat being held May 18-19 at the Notary cabin in Laporte PA.
- Tim responsible for agenda
 - Will be light and recreational
- 7) Discussion by the PRC (Pat) – The elders discussed an issue after the pastors were dismissed from the meeting.

Swannie Griffin adjourned the meeting with prayer.

Pastoral Reports

- Pastor Tim Gibson (none submitted)
- Pastor Dick Bickings (Attachment #4)
- Pastor Mike Notary (Attachment #5)
- Pastor Jeremy Harkins (none submitted)

Respectfully submitted,



Pastor Dick Bickings
Secretary to the Board of Elders

EBENEZER BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

BUDGET VS. ACTUALS: FY 2018 FINAL BUDGET - FY18 P&L

April 2018

	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Revenue				
1100 Offerings / Gifts	94,296.66	98,480.00	-4,183.34	95.75 %
1400 Interest	28.81	30.00	-1.19	96.03 %
1700 Memorials		58.00	-58.00	
1900 Bethlehem Christian School	1,220.79	1,220.79	0.00	100.00 %
1901 Other Building Use		25.00	-25.00	
Total Revenue	\$95,546.26	\$99,813.79	\$ -4,267.53	95.72 %
GROSS PROFIT	\$95,546.26	\$99,813.79	\$ -4,267.53	95.72 %
Expenditures				
10000 Congregational Care Ministries	113.00	233.00	-120.00	48.50 %
11000 Compensation	47,867.54	50,669.12	-2,801.58	94.47 %
2000 General Church Finance	311.60	1,384.00	-1,072.40	22.51 %
3000 Discipleship Ministries	2,519.01	2,010.00	509.01	125.32 %
5000 Evangelism Ministries	51.82	140.00	-88.18	37.01 %
6000 Missions	258.66	63.00	195.66	410.57 %
7000 Deacon Ministries	2,925.25	7,354.00	-4,428.75	39.78 %
8000 Worship	19.38	167.00	-147.62	11.60 %
9000 Office Expenses	1,241.49	1,323.00	-81.51	93.84 %
Total Expenditures	\$55,307.75	\$63,343.12	\$ -8,035.37	87.31 %
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$40,238.51	\$36,470.67	\$3,767.84	110.33 %
NET REVENUE	\$40,238.51	\$36,470.67	\$3,767.84	110.33 %

Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church

BUDGET VS. ACTUALS: FY 2018 BUDGET - FINAL - FY18 P&L

January - April, 2018

	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Revenue				
1100 Offerings / Gifts	328,036.76	334,832.00	-6,795.24	97.97 %
1400 Interest	113.45	150.00	-36.55	75.63 %
1700 Memorials	340.00	232.00	108.00	146.55 %
1900 Bethlehem Christian School	4,883.16	4,883.16	0.00	100.00 %
1901 Other Building Use		100.00	-100.00	
Total Revenue	\$333,373.37	\$340,197.16	\$ -6,823.79	97.99 %
GROSS PROFIT	\$333,373.37	\$340,197.16	\$ -6,823.79	97.99 %
Expenditures				
10000 Congregational Care Ministries	798.57	932.00	-133.43	85.68 %
11000 Compensation	205,089.43	207,886.48	-2,797.05	98.65 %
2000 General Church Finance	12,190.73	25,107.14	-12,916.41	48.55 %
3000 Discipleship Ministries	8,259.13	11,325.00	-3,065.87	72.93 %
5000 Evangelism Ministries	2,868.12	3,780.00	-911.88	75.88 %
6000 Missions	45,022.02	46,554.50	-1,532.48	96.71 %
7000 Deacon Ministries	28,811.06	41,711.00	-12,899.94	69.07 %
8000 Worship	1,739.52	1,731.00	8.52	100.49 %
9000 Office Expenses	5,019.71	7,002.00	-1,982.29	71.69 %
Total Expenditures	\$309,798.29	\$346,029.12	\$ -36,230.83	89.53 %
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$23,575.08	\$ -5,831.96	\$29,407.04	-404.24 %
NET REVENUE	\$23,575.08	\$ -5,831.96	\$29,407.04	-404.24 %

EBENEZER BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

BALANCE SHEET CURRENT VS. PRIOR MONTH

As of April 30, 2018

	TOTAL			
	AS OF APR 30, 2018	AS OF MAR 31, 2018 (PP)	CHANGE	% CHANGE
ASSETS				
Current Assets				
Bank Accounts				
18000 Branch Banking & Trust	577,367.61	529,452.22	47,915.39	9.05 %
18002 BB&T Certificates of Deposit	67,799.37	67,799.37	0.00	0.00 %
19000 M&T Bank Savings	93,076.14	93,068.49	7.65	0.01 %
19001 M&T Bank Checking	5,375.67	5,375.67	0.00	0.00 %
Total Bank Accounts	\$743,618.79	\$695,695.75	\$47,923.04	6.89 %
Total Current Assets	\$743,618.79	\$695,695.75	\$47,923.04	6.89 %
TOTAL ASSETS	\$743,618.79	\$695,695.75	\$47,923.04	6.89 %
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY				
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Other Current Liabilities				
100 Payroll Liabilities	-6,844.14	-5,197.76	-1,646.38	-31.67 %
2111 Direct Deposit Liabilities	123.02	123.02	0.00	0.00 %
901 Building Fund	72,701.70	71,847.70	854.00	1.19 %
902 Capital Improvement Fund	-16,389.00	-16,389.00	0.00	0.00 %
903 Transportation Fund	288.00	288.00	0.00	0.00 %
904 Scholarships	3,739.44	3,739.44	0.00	0.00 %
905 Faith Promise	16,467.31	16,537.82	-70.51	-0.43 %
907 Benevolence Fund	13,492.01	14,961.50	-1,469.49	-9.82 %
908 Music Fund	384.20	384.20	0.00	0.00 %
909 Heyer Trust Fund	18,523.55	18,634.14	-110.59	-0.59 %
911 Year End Accruals	8,480.16	8,480.16	0.00	0.00 %
912 Run for the Children	110.86	110.86	0.00	0.00 %
914 Health Care Accounts	5,009.53	5,269.03	-259.50	-4.93 %
915 Youth Summer Missions	23,810.99	13,423.99	10,387.00	77.38 %
Direct Deposit Payable	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$139,897.63	\$132,213.10	\$7,684.53	5.81 %
Total Current Liabilities	\$139,897.63	\$132,213.10	\$7,684.53	5.81 %
Total Liabilities	\$139,897.63	\$132,213.10	\$7,684.53	5.81 %
Equity				
1000 Opening Bal Equity	-407,878.80	-407,878.80	0.00	0.00 %
900 Retained Earnings	988,024.88	988,024.88	0.00	0.00 %
Net Revenue	23,575.08	-16,663.43	40,238.51	241.48 %
Total Equity	\$603,721.16	\$563,482.65	\$40,238.51	7.14 %
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$743,618.79	\$695,695.75	\$47,923.04	6.89 %

EBENEZER BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

BALANCE SHEET VS. PRIOR YEAR

As of April 30, 2018

	TOTAL			
	AS OF APR 30, 2018	AS OF APR 30, 2017 (PY)	CHANGE	% CHANGE
ASSETS				
Current Assets				
Bank Accounts				
18000 Branch Banking & Trust	577,367.61	560,971.27	16,396.34	2.92 %
18002 BB&T Certificates of Deposit	67,799.37	67,742.94	56.43	0.08 %
19000 M&T Bank Savings	93,076.14	92,983.11	93.03	0.10 %
19001 M&T Bank Checking	5,375.67	5,375.67	0.00	0.00 %
Total Bank Accounts	\$743,618.79	\$727,072.99	\$16,545.80	2.28 %
Total Current Assets	\$743,618.79	\$727,072.99	\$16,545.80	2.28 %
TOTAL ASSETS	\$743,618.79	\$727,072.99	\$16,545.80	2.28 %
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY				
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Other Current Liabilities				
100 Payroll Liabilities	-6,844.14	5,973.32	-12,817.46	-214.58 %
2111 Direct Deposit Liabilities	123.02	123.02	0.00	0.00 %
901 Building Fund	72,701.70	106,418.44	-33,716.74	-31.68 %
902 Capital Improvement Fund	-16,389.00	0.00	-16,389.00	
903 Transportation Fund	288.00	268.00	20.00	7.46 %
904 Scholarships	3,739.44	2,556.00	1,183.44	46.30 %
905 Faith Promise	16,467.31	9,015.24	7,452.07	82.66 %
907 Benevolence Fund	13,492.01	10,450.90	3,041.11	29.10 %
908 Music Fund	384.20	374.20	10.00	2.67 %
909 Heyer Trust Fund	18,523.55		18,523.55	
911 Year End Accruals	8,480.16	8,480.16	0.00	0.00 %
912 Run for the Children	110.86	637.51	-526.65	-82.61 %
914 Health Care Accounts	5,009.53	3,785.45	1,224.08	32.34 %
915 Youth Summer Missions	23,810.99	20,729.88	3,081.11	14.86 %
Direct Deposit Payable	0.00		0.00	
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$139,897.63	\$168,812.12	\$ -28,914.49	-17.13 %
Total Current Liabilities	\$139,897.63	\$168,812.12	\$ -28,914.49	-17.13 %
Total Liabilities	\$139,897.63	\$168,812.12	\$ -28,914.49	-17.13 %
Equity				
1000 Opening Bal Equity	-407,878.80	-407,878.80	0.00	0.00 %
900 Retained Earnings	988,024.88	941,468.45	46,556.43	4.95 %
Net Revenue	23,575.08	24,671.22	-1,096.14	-4.44 %
Total Equity	\$603,721.16	\$558,260.87	\$45,460.29	8.14 %
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$743,618.79	\$727,072.99	\$16,545.80	2.28 %

Expense Reimbursement Policy

1) Overview

- a. Ebenezer Bible Fellowship Church (EBFC) recognizes that certain expenses paid by the pastors are part of the ordinary and necessary costs of the ministry. Accordingly, we have established an Expense Reimbursement Policy to cover these costs.
- b. A "Reimbursed Expense" account line item shall be included in the budget for each pastor and shall be in addition to the Pastor's annual salary. The amount of the reimbursed expense line item will be reviewed annually by the PRC during the budgeting process to determine if any adjustments should be made for the following year.
- c. Any unused portion of the expense account will not be paid to the pastors at year-end, but will be unspent budget for the year. Failure to follow this requirement will result in the expense reimbursement amount for the year being included as taxable income.
- d. Use of EBFC credit card will be in accordance with the "Procurement Credit Card Policy".

2) Expense Account Guidelines

- I. The pastors shall be reimbursed from the reimbursed expense account for his ordinary, necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the conduct of the ministry for and on behalf of the Church. The following are examples of expenses that would be considered necessary and reasonable.
 - a. Books, subscriptions and periodicals – either hard copy or via electronic medium.
 - b. Continuing education and seminars – These are encouraged and should be charged under conference expense line item. Expense reimbursement can only be used with the approval of the PRC. Travel to and from such conference or continuing education would be covered under "f" below.
 - c. Automobile – payment for mileage, tolls, parking when using personal vehicle for travel, visitation or other situations as required by the ministry of EBFC. Guidelines for this expense:
 - i. The mileage rate will be in accordance with the "standard federal mileage rate".
 - ii. Mileage to be included should be mileage related to the event or situation. For example, taking a side trip for personal reasons while travelling would not have that mileage reimbursed.
 - d. Entertainment required for EBFC business – lunches or meals fall into this category. As a rule, these need to be guided by legitimate business purpose. In the submittal and approval of these expenses there needs to be an evaluation by both the pastor and approver as to the legitimacy of the expense. By way of guidelines the following are guidelines to follow:
 - i. Off-site meals with only pastoral staff included. This should be kept to a minimum and the senior staff member in attendance should pay. Those involved should always ask, "Could the meeting be held on site vs. having an off-site with a meal." High level of frequency of offsite meals could result in these expenses being viewed as an employee benefit vs. a legitimate business expense.
 - ii. Lunches where the entire staff is involved, the senior member of the group should pay for the bill. Approval by the PRC should be provided in advance with a justification for the expenditure is provided and approval given.

- iii. Off-site meals or entertainment should be for the purpose of the pastor to be ministering to the other individual or group in line with the pastor's duties and responsibilities. Relationship to the individual should also be identified.
 - e. Travel fares, lodging and meals while on business for EBFC
 - f. Other expenses related to the ministry approved in advance by the PRC or the Senior Pastor.
- 2. All expense reimbursement should be given an adequate accounting of each expense item, including but not limited to a statement concerning the expense, an account book diary or other similar record showing the amount, date, place and purpose of the business and associated receipt for expenses over \$25. For expenses less than \$25, documentation as to the purpose of the expense a description of the expense and the associated credit card bill or other detail identifying the expense.
- 3. It is the intention of this policy that reimbursements will be paid after the expense has been incurred vs an advance for a future purchase. It is recognized that expenses for travel would be before the trip, but the expense will have taken place.
- 4. Expense reimbursement should be for EBFC business expenses only and should not be used for personal expenses. In the event personal expenses are included in a particular expense report the amount should be reimbursed by the Pastor at the time of seeking approval for the expense account or as soon as practical.
- 5. Expense account reimbursement should not be used for computer equipment unless pre-approval is obtained from the head of the PRC committee. It is the intention of the budget that computer equipment and accessories should be included within the technology budget for the church and not included within the pastor's expense accounts.

Letter of hire for worship internship for Alyssa Heric.

Alyssa is majoring in music and Eastern University. She approached me with a request to serve and shadow different worship responsibilities for the summer to fulfill credits needed for her graduation.

14 hours per week for 12 weeks

She will be doing 3 components

- 1) Learning the philosophy behind the worship we do at Ebenezer
- 2) She will be taking responsibility of the tasks associated with the position
- 3) She will be ministering through the music in selecting and incorporating arrangements as well as leading in music.

Wed. night start @ 7:30 by helping with set-up and assisting in the worship practice (2.5 hours)

For one day during the week she will be in the office shadowing Heather and myself to understand the process of selecting and preparing songs as well as the administrative responsibilities associated with the position (4-6 hours per week)

On Sunday she will assist by participating in the Sunday services and ultimately plan and orchestrate her own worship set for the service. (5.5-6 hours per week)

In addition she will be helping with a music outreach opportunity such as Vacation Bible School, Light in the City, or another opportunity. (VBS 20 hours & LITC 20 hours)

She will also be required to read a book ***Worship Matters*** by Bob Kauflin that we will discuss throughout the summer.

I propose that we pay her \$12 per hour for her time in assisting us in worship music ministry. This is a way to bless her for her commitment to the local church and help with her college expenses.

Pastor of Discipleship Report, Apr/May 2018

I completed my 3-year trek through the scriptures, and began again with of the book of Genesis, and recently read this:

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'" (Genesis 2:15-17, ESV)

Here we read the first covenant that God had established with man, the "Covenant of Works". In order for Adam to remain in perfect harmony with God, he must remain completely obedient to God's commands. Herein lies the problem, because man did not remain obedient, but broke his covenant with God, all human beings became culpable before God and are under His condemnation. However, herein lies the solution. God sent His son Jesus, the perfect God-Man who obeyed the Father in every detail, and therefore, those of us who repent of breaking God's covenant and place our trust in the perfect obedience of Jesus the Christ, which included payment for our disobedience, are now *in* Christ, and are now able *through* Christ to keep God's covenant of works...Hallelujah!

With that in mind, here are some of the ministry updates from April/May 2018:

Kids Crossing

- **VBS 2018 (June 18-22, Theme: "Game On"):** Cindy Lasso and her team are working hard and gearing up for this years Vacation Bible School's evangelistic outreach. Here are the details...

Promotional Info: Lace up your cleats, grab the megaphones, and tune up the instruments for Game On! 2018 VBS from Lifeway! As they fill up the offensive line, sideline, and drum line, your players, cheerleaders, and band members realize God has given them His ultimate playbook. He wants them to join His team, train hard, celebrate salvation, and encourage one another.

Theme Verse: "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence," (2 Peter 1:3, ESV)

Motto: Gear Up! Get Ready! Game On!

Registration: We are currently registering volunteers and participants for VBS. The latest count is, volunteers: 51, and participants: 40.

- **Cross Time Sunday School (10:05 AM):** All Cross Time classes, are continuing to studying how the church is to respond to others, both from within and outside the church, taking passages from various Pauline Epistles. We praise the Lord for this Christ honoring curriculum! Also, we currently have all the teacher spots filled, praise the Lord.
- **Early Childhood (2&3 year-olds):** Praise the Lord, he has brought us all the teachers and helpers, for all the services, and for both odd and even months!.
- **Children's Church:** The Gospel Project curriculum worship segment continues to work well for Children's Church. We continue to see around 6-8 students each week. We are presently looking for a fourth team, as Joe and Lois Favere have had to step down because of other responsibilities, and therefore we have gone to a six-week rotation. Please pray that the Lord will raise up the needed team members to fill this spot.
- **Wednesday Evening Programs:** We are wrapping up this years Awana Clubs with several special activities in May. May 2, the Awana Store, May 9, the Pinewood Derby, and May 16 will be our Awana awards and closing program for the summer. We are looking forward to restarting again in September 2018.

Adult Ministry

- **Adult Electives:** An all new Adult Electives for the Summer Session will be starting on May 27, here's the run down:
 - Church History: various adult teachers
 - The Book of Job: Phil Norris
- **Student Ministry:** See Pastor Mike Notary's Report.
- **Senior Fellowship Ministry:** No update
- **Men's Ministry:**
 - **Bethel Series:** The Bethel Series is on summer hiatus. We will reconvene in October 2018 with Bethel NT.
 - **Men's Bible Studies/Prayer:**
 - Thursday mornings from 6:15 AM – 7:30 AM, This early morning bible study group is currently studying the "The Twelve Disciples".
 - Thursday mornings from 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM, This Men's Bible Study is studying the book of Jude.
 - Saturday mornings from 7:00 AM - 8:00 AM, This men's pray time is for men who are serious about going before the throne of grace together to cry out to God for their marriages, family, jobs, neighbors, country, etc.
- **Women's Ministry:** Here's the update from Laura Sommons:

"Bible Study: Tuesday morning finished up in the Gospel of John in April and now we are going through Kyle Ildelman's Study for 4 weeks. I am encouraged by the ladies desire to come to study each week. We have 15 ladies who faithfully come. The Lord is and has been so good during our study time. We have all grown in our love for His word on Tuesday Mornings.

Vicki Cowley continues to meet with Monday night ladies once a month and that will continue throughout the Summer.

Future Studies: This is something that I work on all Summer. I research and complete different studies and pass along to Pastor Dick for his approval.

Tis So Sweet: We will end with a cookout in June with the Jessie Seneca coming to join our last discussion on her book "Sisters on a Journey". Linda Visco has been a wonderful host and leader of this book discussion. I am very thankful for her taking on this leadership role.

MOM to MOM: We have 2 more weeks to go due to the snow make up days. Lisa Pyles leads this group. We have 8 women that come and about 14 children in the nursery. Charity Roth and myself minister to the children on these Thursday mornings.

MOPS: I cannot believe we are down to our last one this week. Amy and Suzi Hardy have done an incredible job coordinating for this past year. We have a huge need for this ministry to continue. We have had the majority of the steering step off due to just life demands and moms. We are currently praying that God will rise up some leaders to take on the demands of volunteering for this ministry. I have spoke with many of the moms that come to our church, and believe this is a Vital ministry. Please pray for us.

Connecting/ Mentoring: We are planning a Coffee/Cake /Connecting night for June 28th. We have some ladies who are prepared to share their testimonies about their mentoring relationships. I am praying more women will take advantage of this ministry and have a desire to either mentor or be mentored. We will continue to use Nancy Leigh DeMoss Woglemuth's Book: "Adorned" as our guide.

Welcome To the Well: We have decided to break for the rest of Spring and Summer. We are excited to have a kick-off of this ministry in the Fall. We are hoping to change this a little with a more clear vision and purpose.

I continue to mentor a young woman in our church.

I am also busy encouraging women in and outside of our church. I spend a great deal of time studying and reading and preparing for the next season.

Speaking: I had the privilege of speaking at Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church ladies retreat.

I will be speaking again this year at the SHE LEADS conference in September.”

Discipleship Support

- **Kinship:** Our 20+ kinship Groups will be winding down for the summer, though some may meet throughout the summer. We look forward to starting strong again in September 2018. Please pray that the Lord will continue to use these groups to disciple, grow, and meet the needs of our people who attend.

Other:

- Continued to visit and provide physical & Spiritual care for several people in our church.
- Attended the BFC Annual Conference in April.
- Facilitate the Men's Prayer Group each Saturday mornings.
- Completed Romans and Bethel classes
- Continue with my Seminary Studies, taking a course on Church History as time permits, and am about to complete my final test by this week.

Respectfully Submitted, Dick Bickings, Pastor of Discipleship

MERGE Ministry Update: Mar. – Apr.

Update:

Current Study Series:

We have continued in our study on Paul's 1st recorded letter to the Corinthian Church. Our times have been challenging as we recognize we are not too different than our struggling brothers and sisters at the time of Paul's letter. However, as we have taken an honest look at our own walks with Christ, we have found the joy of our salvation that Paul so strongly desires for the church in Corinth. I have been taking the study slowly in order to draw out the depth of Paul's writing. After a month long break to consider sexual purity, we will likely remain in the letter through the summer.

New Study Series:

We will be taking a month long break to do a topical series on Sexual Purity as a result of Paul's clear admonishment of the sexual sins present in the church. I believe that this is an appropriate time to challenge our youth to a greater understanding of and commitment to sexual purity. Our lesson breakdown is as follows:

Week 1: A study on 1 Cor. 5 (Apr. 17)

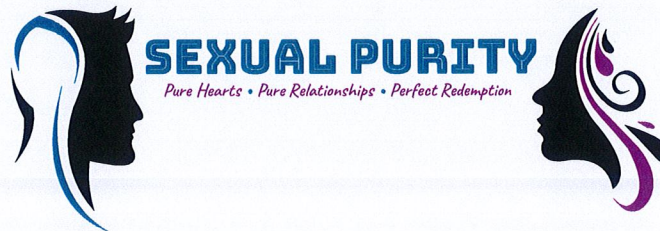
Week 2: What is purity of the heart? What is sexual purity? (Apr. 24)

Week 3: Purity is not simply abstinence. (May 8)

Week 4: God honoring sex is an act of worship, but never to be worshiped. (May 15)

Week 5: Sexual mistakes are not beyond redemption. (May 22)

* I have attached an email letter that I sent home to parents when we announced our intentions to begin this series. The letter was sent about a month before the study in order to provide parents an opportunity to address any potential concerns.



Planet Wisdom:

We had an opportunity in Mar. to take a group of 25 MS and HS youth as well as 8 leaders to the annual Planet Wisdom event in Washington, DC. This year's theme was the role of the Holy Spirit. Youth were challenged by God's Word, solid doctrinal truth, and a call to put these words into practice in our lives. While the travel was difficult due to poor weather conditions, the Lord was faithful to provide protection and safety for all involved.

I was particularly blessed to engage in a breakout session with the 11 boys who came and was encouraged by their vulnerability as they collectively shared areas in their lives

in which they believed the lies Satan and others placed before them. Each boy shared a specific lie and the rest of the group had the opportunity to speak truth into that lie. It was an amazing testimony to the work that God is doing in the hearts of these young men through the Holy Spirit.

Student Leadership:

Jenn and I continue to lead G3 Student Leadership at our house every other Sunday night. During these times we have been working through the book, "Gospel Growth". After a brief lesson time and discussion together as a group we break the boys and girls into separate prayer groups and spend time praying for one another. Our challenge is always for individual's prayer requests to be linked to what they were challenged by in the lesson. We have had a few fellowship nights that are continuing to develop relationships not only between the youth but between the youth and our family as well. My sons have begun to ask when their friends are coming over to study with us, which has been a blessing to witness just how much these youth love our kids well.

Youth Volunteer Staff:

Jenn continues to host our Youth Leadership Team for dinner every other month where we fellowship, vision cast, process issues, and prepare for the months ahead. These times have not only been beneficial logistically but relationally as well. I've said it many times before but we are so blessed to have such faithful servant leaders who are committed to God's Word, each other, and the youth. We are thankful that these times have helped us prepare in ways that make our ministry much more effective here.

Summer's Coming:

As much as I can't believe it, summer is rapidly approaching. We are encouraging our youth to consider serving at EBFC's VBS, Light In the City, and the DR Trip fundraising efforts. We believe that MERGE exists to not only equip our youth with truth but to embrace the truth and live it out in the world around them. These summer service opportunities provide a place to put their faith into action and we are committed to challenging youth to "go" with the hope of the Gospel.

See attached parent letter →

Dear Parents:

I continue to be humbled by God's call on my life to minister to your kids and this church. As I have had the opportunity to teach, disciple, and grow together with these youth, I have been greatly encouraged. Our times of fellowship have strengthened relationships and I am thankful for His Spirit as He continues to draw us together in unity.

I wanted to take the opportunity to share about a future study that will be taking place during our Tues. night youth groups. As we have been studying 1 Corinthians over the past months we are approaching 1 Cor. 5 which addresses the sexual impurity of the Corinthian church. While I am confident God's desire is that we'd teach the entirety of His Word, I am aware that this may be a more sensitive subject due to the ages, experiences, and maturity of our youth. I want you to know that these lessons will be bathed in much prayer, study, and counsel. My intention is that I would use 1 Cor. 5 as the introduction to a longer series on sexual purity.

I wanted to give you a brief look at how I have outlined these lessons and provide an opportunity for you to share any concerns you may have. Ultimately, God has called you to be the primary individuals who provide discipleship to your children. While I am thankful to be another source of that teaching and discipleship, in no way would I desire to usurp your role. I pray that you have been taking time to talk to your children about sexual purity in regard to God's Word. Statistics suggest that the average age of exposure to explicit sexual content is 8. It is crucial that we are a louder voice than the culture and that starts with the Church and our families.

The following is a brief outline of my intended study times with our youth.

Week 1: A study on 1 Cor. 5 (*Apr. 17*)

Week 2: What is purity of the heart? What is sexual purity? (*Apr. 24*)

Week 3: Purity is not simply abstinence. (*May 8*)

Week 4: God honoring sex is an act of worship, but never to be worshiped. (*May 15*)

Week 5: Sexual mistakes are not beyond redemption. (*May 22*)

Each one of these studies will be backed with Scripture and handled appropriately in the context of ministry to youth of all ages. My intention is to invite parents to one of our lesson times and then provide a group discussion for parents while the youth participate in their usual growth group times.

I would appreciate your prayer as we address these passages in Scripture as well as their impact on our Christian walk. May you, our youth, and the Church be blessed by these times.

Blessings,

Pastor Mike