

THE FREEDOM BULLETIN

A Freedom Fellowships Newsletter

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MAY 2022

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Upcoming Events

Joni & Friends Basketball Tournament Fundraiser

Saturday, May 21 at 10am, Plum Creek Park

Freedom Respite

Saturday, May 21 from 11am-2pm, Study Center

Special guest CT teacher Becky Stanley from IGL

Saturday, May 21

Memorial Day Festival

Saturday, May 28 from 12pm-5pm, Study Center

Collective Children's Music Time

Saturday, June 11 at 5 pm (2nd Saturday monthly), Study Center

Film Fest for Joni & Friends

Saturday, June 25 at 8pm, Study Center

Baptisms

September, West Branch State Park

Community Festival

September, Study Center

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SUMMER IS FOR PLAYGROUNDS

By Megan Smalley

The Study Center has provided Freedom Fellowships with many blessings.

During the pandemic, the parking lot served as an impromptu spot to host Central Teaching (honks to that)! In the last year, the building has been used for teachings, study, worship, parties, and more.

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This summer, the Study Center will be adding a new amenity: a playground!

Freedom Fellowships announced plans to construct a playground at the Study Center at the FST Retreat in February. Elder Neil Brooks said members of Freedom Fellowships donated enough money for the church to purchase a commercial-grade playground that will be installed in just a matter of weeks.

“We’re getting a commercial unit,” he said. “There were a lot of generous donors for this, so thank you to all the donors who donated.”

Naturally since this investment is for kids, Neil said Freedom Fellowships’ kids helped to pick the playset they wanted after a Central Teaching this spring. Playground equipment is on order now with a lead time of 8–10 weeks, which means that is the earliest construction could begin.

As of the first week of May, Freedom Fellowships purchased the playset and hopes to install the playset by mid- to late July. Burl Covan, a member of BroYo fellowship group, will prepare the playground site. Once cement dries on the site, volunteers will be needed to help install the playset and spread mulch around the unit.

“It will be a tremendous amount of work, so we’d want as many volunteers as we can get that day,” said Chris Baker, who is a deacon in BroYo.

The playground also is being designed with expansion in mind, so play doesn’t have to stop with the new playset!

“It will be a tremendous amount of work, so we’d want as many volunteers as we can get that day.”

Some expansion ideas include a sandbox and playhouses for smaller kids. Additionally, a basketball court for the bigger kids and the “big kids” (such as students in Identity Project) is in the works!

Although the expansion ideas aren’t official, Chris said the playground will ultimately be used to serve a multitude of needs: a place for kids to play at Oasis



during Central Teaching, a place to host mom's group events, a place to serve the neighborhood, and a place for Freedom Fellowships' kids to invite their friends or neighbors to play.

Chris suggested that anyone who has a burden to help with the playground construction should contact Neil Brooks or Kyle McCallum.



It's Happening: We Hired Adam

By *Elli Rozler*

Staff isn't something we have much of here at Freedom Fellowships, so it's a wonderful opportunity for us to hire a much needed Associate Pastor to serve and minister to the needs within Freedom Fellowship. Welcome, Adam Esterle!

The leadership team announced their decision and timeframe to hire Adam full time at this year's FST retreat in February. As we do not have many people on staff it can be somewhat obvious why we would need someone hired, especially compared to other churches that have people full time focusing on serving the church. FF's website, technology, organization (and more) has been largely volunteer basis so another hand on deck will give much needed attention to areas that could be especially fruitful.

Adam's new title is "Associate Pastor." His job description will be teaching CT, classes and handling technology (including websites and resources.) One of his first projects will be working with the resources we have online. "We have hundreds of teachings, classes and books that are not easily accessible because they are on old formats like tapes," said Adam. "It will be great to have all of our resources

catalogues and searchable for anyone who wants to use them to study."

Unlike many other churches that hire pastors, we have the unique privilege to hire someone who met Christ in FF and has grown uniquely within our fellowship, knowing the people, our vision and able to relate personally instead of just being hired on. Adam met Christ at a Bible study his junior year of high school. Although Adam grew up in a Christian school, he did not know what it meant to have a personal relationship with Christ until being invited to Word (FF's old high school group) by his buddy Jordan. He found a difference in the friendships he met and enjoyed what he learned from the Bible studies. He decided to receive Christ shortly after coming around and has "had a blast walking with the Lord and the awesome people here ever since." Not only has Adam been leading cell groups, fellowship groups, discipling and regularly teaching CTs and classes, in 2019 he also received his seminary degree Master of Arts in Theological Studies from TEDS, which will surely assist his efforts in his new career path.

Adam is leaving his programming job at Kent

State this month to serve our fellowship full time. Please let us join in prayer for our brother: that God would continue to mold his character and show him how to advance his Kingdom. As well as for his family through this transition: his wife Anele and daughter Joy. Their family have been dedicated to ministry and loving the people God puts in front of them. So far, he says, the transition has been, “fun and challenging. It seems that whenever God wants you to do something else for him, he shapes your character to handle it which involves facing your ugly flesh.”

“Hiring Adam is really going to help us out with all our tech needs and it will free him up to teach more often as well,” said Senior Elder Greg Morscher. “It has been very cool seeing how the Lord has transformed Adam into a powerful servant and teacher. I’m very excited to see how the Lord is going to use Adam in our fellowship in this new role.”

Adam is also up to become an Elder for FF, which was announced at the FST. There is no set timeline as to when that is happening yet, according to Greg, just that Adam continues to move toward Eldership.

Praise God he has given us the ability to hire someone fully dedicated to serving Him, His people and passionate about advancing His Kingdom. Pray this brings our fellowship and mission much fruit!



“...AN EVER-PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE.”

By Alex Herbers

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

2 Peter 3:9, NASB

“We can live forever if you’ve got the time.”

My Chemical Romance, “Save Yourself, I’ll Hold Them Back”

WHERE IS GOD WORKING?

Following Jesus is joyous, significant, and fun. God made us, and he knows what we truly enjoy. Many of us were drawn to Jesus by the loving relationships, freedom from past hurts, and sense of purpose provided by God. But all of us will go through seasons of life where those joys are less obvious. Those times can be difficult to understand. Maybe you can relate:

“Where are You in the midst of my pain, God?” “Why aren’t You helping?” “Why won’t You take away my addiction? My disease?” “Why won’t You help me follow You better?”

The short answer is found in Isaiah 55:9 – “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Simply, two points:

1. God is working a bigger plan than we can understand. It will be revealed at the end times as spectacular, powerful, romantic, dazzling, daring, scandalous, lush, loving, kind and merciful – among hundreds of other adjectives.
2. Compared with that, the desires we have for our lives – as Godly as they may seem – are as CS Lewis said: “like an ignorant child who wants to

go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.” God’s plan is more creative and more exciting than our own.

WHAT DOES GOD PROMISE?

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” (Jeremiah 29:11)

That’s what God says. Yet it is a universal experience of Christians that God simply does not give us everything (or even most things) we ask for. Even good things (freedom from disease or addiction, salvation of a family member, a happy marriage – among many others) God seems to withhold at times.

You and I are not unique in this experience. Describing the most Godly and spiritual people to ever follow God, He says:

“All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.” (Hebrews 11:13)

Why? To remind us of our true hope: “But we are citizens of heaven,

where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.” (Philippians 3:20)

TRUE GLORY IS FOR THE NEXT LIFE

I won't bother trying to write it any better than God Himself does:

“Then I saw ‘a new heaven and a new earth,’ for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (Revelation 21:4)

God promises us a beautiful, perfect, joyful life in eternity; it won't be found in this life.

God does not promise us an easy or even a happy life in this world. There is much beauty and joy to be found in following Him; don't mistake following Christ as a life of drudgery. The friendships, love and mercy in the Body of Christ are phenomenal, but they are not what they will one day be in the next life.

What God does promise about our time on earth is that following him is a good life: the only life with eternal hope.

WHAT'S THIS LIFE FOR?

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you...” (John 15:5a)

Hold fast to Christ. Remain following Him through the chaos of life and choose to look forward to God fulfilling His promises perfectly, joyously, and eternally in the next life.

“This side of the Fall, true goodness comes by surprise, the old writings tell us, enthralling us for a moment in heaven's time... like Indian summer, where the last lavish banquet of golds and yellows and reds stirs our deepest joy and sadness, even as they promise us they will return in the fragrance of spring.” (“The Sacred Romance,” Curtis & Eldredge)

Know that even in our pains, “...God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.” (Romans 8:28)

“...you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5b)

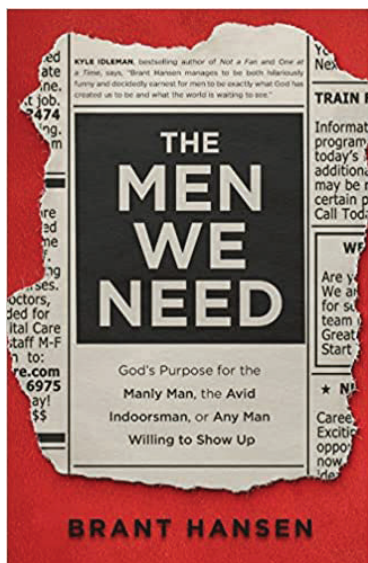
“For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (Ephesians 2:10)

With these promises in mind, we have the glorious opportunity of taking great risks for God. We can give time and money on earth to reach the lost and serve others because we know our own lives are secure! (And God will safeguard us better and more lavishly than we could ourselves.)

Where are you clinging desperately to your own security?

Where does God want you to let go and trust His promises?

Will you make the time to live for forever?



Book of the Month:

The Men We Need by Brant Hansen

Review by **Kyle McCallum**

I'm a big fan of Brant Hansen books. I consider his book "Blessed are the Misfits" a modern classic and "This is Us" isn't too bad either. Then I heard he was releasing his new book and I knew I had to get my hands on it. Fortunately, it did not disappoint

Hansen brings his familiar blend of comedy and refreshing Christian insight to bear in "the Men We Need," which describes a more accurate Biblical picture of masculinity. A real man is not the guy who can beat up the most guys and belch the loudest. Biblical masculinity is about learning to "tend the garden" and serve as protectors. Men are designed to have ambition, but having ambition for the right things is what matters.

You can read a free copy at the Freedom fellowships Study Center today!



Freedom Fellowships

It was for freedom that Christ set us free

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MEETING TIMES

Saturday 4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m.
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