

# THE FREEDOM BULLETIN

A Freedom Fellowships Newsletter

..... APRIL 2023 .....

## UPCOMING F.F. EVENTS:

### Burden Recovery Group:

**Apr 20**, 6–7:30 p.m. at the Study Center

**May 4**, 6–7:30 p.m. at the Study Center

**May 18**, 6–7:30 p.m. at the Study Center

### Easter Egg Hunt

**Apr 8**, 4–4:45 p.m. on at the Study Center

### Respite

**Apr 15**, 10:30 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Study Center

**May 13**, 10:30 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Study Center

### Memorial Day Booth Party

**TBD** at the Study Center

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# THE RADICAL CALL OF DISCIPLESHIP

*Summary of the 2023 Fiscal Support Team (FST) Retreat teaching by Kyle McCallum, edited by Alex Herbers.*

***Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8***

Our church is changing, but change isn't new. The fellowship God has built here in Northeast Ohio has changed a lot in the 13 years I've known it, and even more in the 30+ years some have been here. Among the changes, our largest age group has shifted from college-aged to young professional and family age.

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*First things put rightly first at the FST, Kyle McCallum taught on Biblical discipleship. The following is a summary of that teaching.*

**G**od loves each person intimately and deeply. Looking at Jesus and the first-century church, we see in scripture and history some ideas on how to do that. Our church is centered around discipleship, and that will never change. That's why we have Fellowship Groups in our church, and not just one central meeting.

Jesus said, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* (Matthew 28:18b-20)

Jesus didn't say "make converts" or even "make true believers," but "make disciples." Coming to Christ by accepting His gift of forgiveness is just the

first step in a radical, purposeful, rewarding, and—yes—demanding life of following God.

### WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

Discipleship is a rewarding work. *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ... Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."* (Acts 2:42, 46-47)

The thrill in the early church wasn't the big show or the programming offered by the church—it was disciples of Christ multiplying, watching their lives change, seeing the lives of others change. Faith in Jesus is more than a comfort to the heart; it's the fruitful and life-giving way.

But discipleship is a demanding call. "Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny

themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.” (Matthew 16:24-25)

A realistic picture of discipleship with God and other believers is a lifelong journey full of awe-inspiring ups and soul-crushing downs, built on the fact that, in God’s kingdom, there will be a time when, *“He will wipe away 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)

**They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42, 46-47)**

We’re not here on earth to waste time. The biggest danger as disciples of Christ is to get entangled by the present world;

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to let the lesser things take priority over the greater things. The more we abandon and surrender to God, the more we understand it's worth it.

We are here on this earth to become more Christlike. You (yes, you!) are uniquely gifted to serve and build up the body of Christ that is the fellowship of believers.

Why are you here? To find your place in the body of Christ and your unique way to contribute.

## THE GOAL OF DISCIPLESHIP

The goal of discipleship is outlined in Colossians 1:28: *"He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ."*

We want to increase our knowledge of God (equipping), becoming Christlike (character) and doing His will (loving). So our church will continue to focus on and find new ways to excel in discipleship. Here's a set of guidelines for the type of one-on-one discipleship relationship we believe God promotes:

## DISCIPLESHIP PRINCIPLES

- **Set the right expectations:** Discipleship takes time.
- **Grace and forgiveness** should characterize our discipleship.
- **Choose carefully** who you disciple.
- **Prioritize that relationship:** Share your world with each other.
- **Teach!** Biblical discipleship is about equipping.
- **Pray!** Prayer makes discipleship work. As we grow older and learn to relate to God more deeply, our prayers look different.

As 1 Corinthians 12:31 says, *"Now, eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way."*

**So sit, relax, and listen to the Lord, for he wants to use your gifts - and those of our whole fellowship - in "a still more excellent way."**





# Ministry Organizational Changes

There are some logistical changes going on at Freedom Fellowships, though most are happening behind the scenes. To build up the body of Christ, we are setting up new sphere organization and leadership. (“Spheres” are groups of Fellowship Groups with like demographics.) We are also designating support ministries and appoint “ministry coordinators” to lead them. Furthermore, our Eldership is undergoing restructuring, introducing “term elders,” a new position with a 1 year term. Term elders can serve multiple terms after a year off.

## Spheres

### STUDENT SPHERE

- **Sphere Leaders:** Neil Brooks & Kyle McCallum

### COLLEGE SPHERE

- **Sphere Leader:** Kyle McCallum
- **Sphere Leader Assistant:** Adam Esterle

### META SPHERE (POST-COLLEGE)

- **Sphere Leader:** Greg Morscher
- **Sphere Leader Assistant:** Ian McCullough

### FAMILY SPHERE

- **Sphere Leader:** Neil Brooks
- **Sphere Leader Assistant:** Chris Baker

## Ministry Coordinators

- **CT Experience:** Todd Muller
- **Finances:** Greg Morscher
- **Facilities:** Kyle McCallum
- **Media/Library/Tech:** Adam Esterle
- **Equipping:** Zak Rozler
- **Service:** Mike Hudock
- **Missions:** Neil Brooks

## The Elders and SLUM

- Elders – Greg Morscher, Neil Brooks, Kyle McCallum
- Term elders: Adam Esterle
- SLUM: Greg Morscher, Neil Brooks, Kyle McCallum, Adam Esterle, Ian McCullough, Todd Muller, Zak Rozler, and Mike Hudock.

# INDEPENDENCE VILLAGE

A MINISTRY OF HOPE, DIGNITY AND PURPOSE



By *Kaitlyn Farrance*

About five years ago, Richard Hunter saw the need to minister to the seniors at Independence Village in Aurora, Ohio, where he works as a maintenance supervisor. His burden was to bring hope, dignity and a purpose to the seniors living there who often wrestle with feelings of worthlessness during their final stages of life.

Since the ministry's start in 2018, it has been incredible to see joy overflow from the residents.

Throughout the years and a pandemic later, the ministry has become a spiritual hub for the senior living community. Five residents who previously did not know Jesus have come to know Him as their personal savior.

Additionally, the seniors have been encouraged to take active

roles in the ministry to care for one another. Residents have created prayer groups and led worship music with one another. Individuals from Freedom Fellowships serve weekly, providing a Bible teaching with an opportunity for residents to ask questions.

There have been talks about starting other ministry groups within other Independence Village locations. The elderly within Western culture are one of the most underserved demographics. It is well worth serving and watching others experience joy in this ministry.

*“Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.” James 1:27*

# Shake It Up!

## College Sphere Changes Schedule to Focus on Growth

By *Kaitlyn Farrance*

**W**ith the new year came a change in how the Freedom Fellowships College Sphere approached its Central Teaching (CT) meetings. Instead of meeting in the Study Center on Saturday evenings along with the Young Adult and Family Spheres, the College Sphere began meeting on Thursday nights at 8:30 p.m. in the Center of Visual Arts Room 165.

It became increasingly clear to switch gears and try a new schedule to engage college students. Many students travel home on the weekends, and the commute to the Study Center proved to be a barrier for some students.

After changing the time, day and location, many more college students have attended CT. This has created more opportunities for fellowship as well as opened the door for students to attend



multiple Bible studies each week. Many people make big life decisions while in college, so it's timely for us to reach out to college students with the gospel. It would be amazing to see more college students choosing to base their lives on Christ.

The change in CT time and location for the College Sphere has proven to be useful over the past few months. More students are attending CT to hear the gospel, and that is worth celebrating. We are praying for a spiritual revival on Kent State's campus as well as for continual growth of the College Sphere this year.





By Calvin Muller

On Feb. 17, three friends and I made a trip to visit Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky.

Now why would we do this? If you weren't aware, news was circulating that a religious revival was breaking out at Asbury University, a private Christian college. This news spread quickly through Christian social media circles and then on TikTok to the non-religious Gen-Z crowd.

The revival started after a normal chapel service, which essentially never ended: students stayed behind, singing, praying and reading the Bible. This continued throughout the next day, and then it turned into a 24/7 revival event that lasted for about two weeks.

When I first heard about this revival, I saw pictures and videos mainly of musical worship. I personally like musical worship, but I was a little skeptical of the label, "revival." As a natural skeptic, I wondered if this was truly a revival or just a group of Christians coming together to sing and get a spiritual-high type feeling—which would be perfectly fine and good if that was the case, it just might not be a revival.

Historically, revivals have been defined by a reawakening of spiritual interest that transcends cultural boundaries, denominations and backgrounds. The aftershocks of these revivals reveal a culture that has been hungry for the Lord, much like what was portrayed in the recent film, "Jesus Revolution." So, was this truly a revival at Asbury? Were nonbelievers finding Christ? Were believers being renewed and sent out by the Spirit to fulfill the Great Commission?



The first hint at an answer to my questions came in the form of a text message on Feb. 13. An old high school friend of mine, who was not a believer in high school, sent a message to our high school group chat, boldly proclaiming the gospel to our unbelieving friends as a result of his trip to the Asbury revival. This signaled to me that, if nothing else, what was happening at Asbury was not merely a contained, feel-good worship session, but something actually encouraging believers to be bold in spreading the gospel. So, I gathered up some friends – Jaret Maxwell, Jack Seiple and Blake Carson – and we headed down to check out the revival for ourselves.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

After a five-hour drive down, we arrived at Asbury University at about 8:30 p.m. Even before we reached the campus, we knew we were in the right spot: out of nowhere there was a long line of cars, as well as a line about a

half-mile long of people waiting in 30-degree weather to get into the chapel. We were able to park close and walk right up to the chapel. We wanted to get an idea of what was going on and talk to some people before we hopped into line. Outside near the chapel there were space heaters set up for the folks in line, as well as projector screens and speakers so that people could listen to the teachings and worship music from inside the chapel as they waited. We stood there listening to a teaching for about 20 minutes while trying to figure out our next move.

I saw a group of guys about our age in line and decided to talk to them and ask what had brought them there. I wanted to get an idea of what the Lord might be doing. It turned out that they were a loosely tied together friend group from Ohio, who all had come at the invitation of their one believing friend, Reagan. Reagan had received Christ seven months prior through a

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**REAGAN AND HIS CREW**

Christian TikTok. The other five guys were all unbelievers who had each separately felt God was calling them to get to know Him. When Reagan let them know about this revival and asked them to join him, they all said yes. My friends and I decided to hop in line with them and continue our conversations. (We sort of felt bad about cutting the massive line, but not really.) In this conversation, we witnessed amazing boldness from Reagan as he prayed for his friends to come to know the Lord... with them! We were all blown away and very encouraged to see his boldness and how the Spirit was so clearly using him to reach his friends. We were able to catch up with them later in the night as well, and we have been staying in touch with them since then.

## INSIDE THE CHAPEL

### The teaching we attended focused on discipleship and a call for Christian living firmly rooted in a body of Christ.

The whole revival was clearly structured for the youth: college students had their own separate line to get in the chapel quicker. In addition, many of the people leading sermons were college students. We got into the chapel after about 20 minutes and split into pairs of two to find open seats. Here's a general flow of events in the chapel: a 15-to-20-minute teaching, followed by about 10 minutes of worship, an altar call and a time of prayer. This generally repeated on a loop, although it was all very informal, and there wasn't a strict structure.



The teaching we attended focused on discipleship and a call for Christian living firmly rooted in a body of Christ. There was a big call for evangelism and for taking the word of God out from Asbury to everyone's respective areas. The man giving the sermon coined the phrase "Reverse Vegas:" instead of "what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas," he was challenging people not to let what was happening at Asbury stay at Asbury! He urged everyone to take it back to where they were from and spread the Good News.

After the teaching there was musical worship, followed by an altar call, where anyone who didn't know the Lord but wanted to know Him could join in prayer and ask the Lord for forgiveness. Numerous people stood to receive Christ each time this happened. Volunteers gave these new converts some beginner resources and urged them to go back to wherever they





## INSIDE THE CHAPEL AT ASBURY

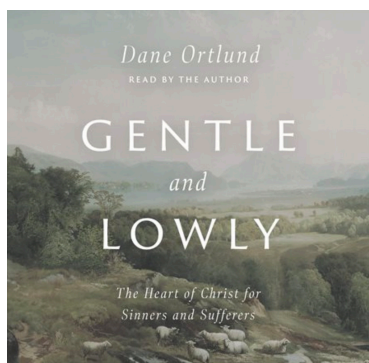
were from and get plugged into a body of Christ and into a discipleship relationship. It was a beautiful thing to see such a diverse crowd: people of different ethnicities and people with different disabilities and needs coming together to praise the Lord, and come together to receive the free gift that he offers.

Now I'm not sure what the clear-cut definition of a Christian revival is, but by all accounts it seemed to be happening at Asbury. Only the Lord knows what the full effect of this revival will be, but pray that a revival in America would happen! Pray that more and more of the younger generation would find what they are searching for in all the wrong places: God. Pray for Reagan and his young faith as he reaches out to his friends. Pray for the new believers who accepted Christ at Asbury, as well as the thousands of believers who renewed their faith. Pray that believers

would be bold in spreading the Good News and taking the Great Commission's call to discipleship seriously.

Of course, much more happened over our weekend at Asbury. We saw the Lord work in great and powerful ways, but unfortunately that cannot all be contained in my word-count constraint. So if you want to know more about our experiences, come talk to us! I'm sure the fellas would be more than happy to share about their time there and how they saw the Lord move. Pray that the Lord would continue to make his name great.

**Pray that more and more of the younger generation would find what they are searching for in all the wrong places: God.**



Book of the Month:

## **Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers**

by *Dane Ortlund*, review by *Dar McCallum*

I am so grateful for Dane Ortlund's book, "Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers." As someone who grew up in a somewhat legalistic church, coupled with a personality that leans toward performance, it was just what I needed to

remind me that what is most natural to Jesus, what flows from Him freely and instinctively is a "heart for sinners and sufferers." Christ's heart is most fundamentally a tender, open, welcoming, understanding heart. Ortlund says, "Jesus rejoices to love his people even more than we rejoice to receive his love."

Ortlund is riffing off the passage in Matthew 11:28-30, which says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." He says "...Jesus is the most understanding person in the universe. The posture most natural to Him is not a pointed finger, but open arms."

This speaks to my soul as it's been a constant struggle to see God not as distant, demanding, and disapproving but as the One who is tender, open, and welcoming. We don't need to pull ourselves together or clean ourselves up. As a matter of fact, it is our very burdens that qualify us to come to Jesus. As Ortlund says, "But for the penitent, His heart of gentle embrace is never outmatched by our sins and foibles and insecurities and doubts and anxieties and failures." In fact, it is because of our sin that He came to us in the first place.

This book is deeply rooted in the Scriptures. I love that it talks about not only what Jesus DID for us but how he FEELS toward us. It is not duty on Jesus' part. It is a deeply felt and active love.



## **Freedom Fellowships**

*It was for freedom that Christ set us free*

### **CONTACT**

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### **MEETING TIMES**

**College Sphere:** Thursdays at 8:30 p.m.  
CVA 165 at Kent State University

**Young Adult & Family Spheres:** Sat. at 5 p.m.  
500 VFW Pkwy, Kent, OH 44240