

# THE ECHOES

JANUARY 2022

## Faith Promise Missions Conference

**Bigger**

**Better**

**Stronger**

**Greater**

# 2022

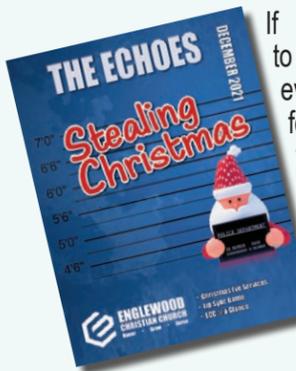


**ENGLEWOOD  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
Honor • Grow • Serve

- Sunday School "Renovation" Plans & Sign Ups
- Faith Promise Missions Conference Details & Schedule
- Faith Promise at Home

I know we just had Christmas, but to me, when it comes to the life of ECC, January really is the most wonderful time of the year! It's time for our 59th annual Faith Promise Missions Conference. The theme for this year is "Bigger, Better, Stronger, Greater" and the emphasis is on letting our lives be led by God's ways and God's will which is always bigger, better, stronger and greater than anything we could ever imagine. We hope this month's edition of The Echoes moves you to allow God to do these types of things through you.

## DEADLINES



If you would like to submit articles, events or activities for consideration for the next issue of *The Echoes*, the deadline is **Friday, January 14.**

The deadline for submitting information for the weekly e-newsletter is each **Wednesday at 5:00 pm.**

Please email all submissions to [angelah@eccjax.com](mailto:angelah@eccjax.com) with any coordinating artwork or graphics.



## Weekly Choir Schedule

Choirs for children, youth and adults are starting soon! Even if you or your child participated last fall, please be sure to sign up on the app, website, or registration table.

**Adult Choir** begins Sunday, January 9 at 11:30am in room 209. Ages 14 and up are welcome to participate, and no audition is required.

Our youth and children's choirs meet as follows:

**Wee Praise** (pre-school age) – January 12 at 7:00pm in room 314

**JWK** (1st-5th grades) – January 12 at 6:00pm in room 301

**Vocal Explosion** (middle & high school) – January 12 at 5:45pm in room 209



### CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday • 8:30am - 5:00pm

### SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Sunday School • 9:00am

Worship Service/Children's Programming  
10:30am

### WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

6:00pm Dinner

6:30pm Prayer Gathering

7:00pm Programming for all ages

### Connect with Us Online!

[www.eccjax.com](http://www.eccjax.com)



[www.facebook.com/eccjax/](https://www.facebook.com/eccjax/)

GET OUR APP!



Google Play



Scan the QR code to check in on Sunday mornings – get the bulletin, prayer list, online giving and connection card all in one place!

WORSHIP  
Every Sunday  
@ 10:30am



### DECISIONS

David & Michelle Ballard – Baptism 11/17;

Corinna & Annabelle Colvin – Baptism 11/28

## CALENDAR JANUARY 2022

**Quilting/Sewing Group**  
Wednesdays at 1:00pm

**GriefShare**  
Mondays at 6:30pm  
New series begins January 10

Tuesday, January 4/  
Saturday, January 8  
**CWF Circle Meetings**

Sunday, January 9  
**Prime Timers' Luncheon**

Tuesday, January 11  
**CWF Board Meeting**

Wednesday, January 12  
**Blood Drive with LifeSouth**

Friday, January 14 –  
Sunday, January 16  
**High School Weekend  
at NFCC**

Friday, January 14  
**e-City Kids Old School  
Game Night**

Saturday, January 15  
**Men's Breakfast**

Friday, January 21  
**Jacksonville Icemen  
Hockey Game**

Sunday, January 23 –  
Sunday, January 30  
**Faith Promise Missions  
Conference**

See details on pages 4 & 5

Saturday, January 29  
**ESM Guys/Girls  
Lunch Hangout**

Sunday, January 30  
**Family Sunday**

Monday, January 31  
**Immerse: Poets Begins**

ALL EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

### Contributions

December 19, 2021

#### General Fund

Week 29 Budget.....\$304,471.00

Week 29 Totals.....\$266,101.11

#### Faith Promise

Week 42 Budget.....\$180,868.80

Week 42 Giving.....\$189,646.00

### ECC Statistics

Morning Worship	Sunday School	Wednesday Night
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Sunday, November 21

179      115      57

Sunday, November 28

152      78      Thanksgiving

Sunday, December 5

169      120      71

Sunday, December 12

185      109      80

118 Sunday Night - Children's Choir Programs

Sunday, December 19

164      91      146 - Lip Sync

Totals include estimated  
online attendance

### ECC Church Staff

Pete Ramsey, Senior Minister

Josh Colvin, Student Minister

Karissa Mead, Worship  
Ministry Director

Serena Maerkl, Children's Director

Angela Hastings, Office Manager

Kim Owens, Publications Director

Mary Worth, Bookkeeper

Sherrie Boger, TLC Director

# Paul: Kingdom Builder



by Pete Ramsey, Senior Minister

Alexander III of Macedon, more commonly known as Alexander the Great, has gone down in history as one of the greatest leaders of all time who established one of the largest kingdoms – stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the Indus River. It was also one of the strongest empires in history; he conquered the powerful Persian empire swiftly and effectively – all with the idea of unifying the world under one system, one rule, one kingdom, and one culture – Hellenism. All throughout the Kingdom of the Greeks, the culture of Greece, Hellenism, was spread and encouraged to be practiced within the context of every other culture previously conquered by Alexander. At that point in history, the kingdom of Alexander the Great was the greatest, the biggest, the strongest and the best the world had ever seen.

Then came Paul. Now, let me clear things up. I am not trying to elevate Paul to a level above Alexander, or even more so, above the name of Jesus, but for the purposes of this discussion – hear me out. This is more about the watershed moment and significance of Paul's life and ministry in the bigger picture of the Kingdom of God.

You see, just prior to Paul's conversion (Acts 9), the church of Christ, or for our purposes, let's refer to it as the Kingdom, was limited primarily to the eastern coastlands of the Mediterranean and the lands of Galilee and Judea. It was seen by many as an offshoot of Judaism which wouldn't last long, but that's where they were wrong. That's where Paul comes in.

When we come to Paul's conversion, along with Peter's vision in Acts 10, we begin to see the Kingdom expand beyond the cultural realm of Judaism and geographical region of Judea. We see it begin to spread among the Gentiles in that same region, crossing cultural barriers, political alliances, religious regulations and long-standing bitter rivalries. We see it expand outside of the geographical borders of modern day Palestine and begin to make its way into what we know as Turkey. Then it moves briskly past the Aegean Sea and into the area of Macedonia, the original home of Alexander the Great. Finally, in the recorded portions of the New Testament, we see the Kingdom reach into Rome, the center of the great world empire which conquered the remnants left behind by Alexander the Great after his death.

But wait! There's more! Tradition and the early church fathers tell us of further expansion of the Kingdom – farther than anything Alexander or Rome ever dreamed of. There are stories of the apostles and other disciples making it as far west

as Spain, with some suggesting work in the northern region of the Gauls and even into modern day England. To the south was the expansion into Africa down into Ethiopia and beyond. To the east, some are said to have ventured well past the cities of the Babylonian and Persian empires into the nation of India and beyond.

All of this reminds us of the limitless potential of the Kingdom of God. It is bigger, better, stronger and greater than any kingdom or power – military or political; unstoppable by any language or culture; not even delayed by any sea or mountain range. The only things limiting this Kingdom are the self-imposed limitations of its own workers.

And it all began with Paul. Not because of anything Paul did specifically – although he did play a significant role in expanding the Kingdom by planting churches in four distinct provinces of Asia over a short ten-year time period – but more so because of his approach to his Kingdomwork. He worked like he knew he was not going to lose. Not personally, because we all know how much Paul lost and suffered for the Kingdom, but spiritually, because he knew the victory was secure, success was imminent and nothing could stop the Kingdom of God from becoming a global empire.

Why? Why was Paul so confident in the power of the Kingdom? Why, in the context of the influential culture of Alexander and the insurmountable power of Rome, was Paul convinced the Kingdom would prosper and reach to the ends of the earth?

Simple. Love. Not just any kind of love, but the kind of love which can take over the world. The kind of love able to conquer any culture, influence any language, permeate any tradition and overwhelm any nation. It's because of love, the love of God, we can be a part of something that is bigger, better, stronger and greater. It is because of love we have overcome.

*Romans 8:37-39 - No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

So let today be the day you see everything as conquerable, nothing as unstoppable and anything as possible when it begins and ends in the love of God.



**Key Verse: Isaiah 55:8 – “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”**

In a day and time when everything seems to be overwhelmingly against us (COVID, moral decline, financial instability, global conflicts, and more), we need a reminder that our God is bigger, better, stronger and greater than anything our adversary can bring against us. As we consider how to expand our faith through our Faith Promise giving, let’s remember God’s word will not return empty. As we give to the work of the Kingdom through Faith Promise, we know God’s ways are certainly bigger, better, stronger and greater. Please make plans to join us for this essential part of the faith community of Englewood Christian Church. Also, be praying now for the commitment you will make to let God stretch your faith and do bigger, better, stronger and greater things through you.

**Here is the complete schedule for this year’s conference:**

**Kickoff**

**Sunday, January 23**

Missionary displays in the church lobby  
9:00am SS – Adult Combined Session: Ryan Wolfe, Ability Ministry

10:15am – Mike Schrage, Good News Productions, International – Short interview in service and preach in service; Ryan Wolfe, Ability Ministry – Kids’ Conference during worship service; Faith Promise commitment cards distributed on this Sunday

11:45am – International Luncheon – Church-wide meal to celebrate the diversity of Kingdomwork we support through our Faith Promise Mission program

**Wednesday, January 26**

7:00pm – Vivek Lall, Mid-India Christian Mission & Cathy Perry, First Coast Women’s Services – share work during a combined adult class, as well as participate in Kids’ Conference

**Faith Promise Commitment Weekend**

**Saturday, January 29**

9:00am – ECC Food Packing Event in partnership with Lifeline Christian Mission. See details on next page about this event!

**Sunday, January 30**

Missionary displays in the church lobby  
9:00am SS – Adult Combined Session: Joel Augustus, Lifeline/OMOA Children’s Home

10:15am – Bob Gailey, University of Florida Christian Campus House – short interview in service and preach in service; Children’s choirs sing during this service; Joel Augustus, Lifeline/OMOA Children’s Home - Kids’ conference during worship service; Faith Promise Commitments made; Total commitment announced



**Joel Augustus, Executive VP of Field Ministry, Lifeline Christian Mission**

“My first experience with global missions was a ten-day mission trip when I was a senior in high school. My eyes were forever opened to the world beyond me and something else amazing happened: I met a cute Honduran translator that would four years later become my wife! After college we lived and served with Lifeline in Honduras for 10 years before returning to the States for grad school and ministry in a local congregation. As I’ve rejoined Lifeline recently, it’s been exciting to see now how God has blessed the seeds we helped plant many years ago in the ministry in Honduras. It’s also been exciting to join what He is doing in many other countries and churches in the US.”



**Bob Gailey, Campus Pastor, Christian Campus House - University of Florida**

Bob graduated from Atlanta Christian College after meeting his wife, Celeste. They have served in ministry for more than thirty years in student and college ministries. Bob has been the campus pastor with UFCCH since 1999. The University of Florida Christian Campus House provides a great opportunity for college students seeking the truth to know/learn more about Christianity, Jesus and the Bible.



**Vivek Lall – Director, Mid-India Christian Mission & HIS Children outreach ministry to at risk children**

Born and raised in Damoh, India, Vivek met and married his wife, Angela, while in seminary here in the US. They returned to India in 1993 to lead the mission work in Damoh. They reside here in Jacksonville while Vivek travels back and forth to India several times each year.



**Cathy Perry, Mandarin Center Director, First Coast Women’s Services**

Cathy Perry was born and raised in Jacksonville. She is married, the mother to two grown children and Mimi to two granddaughters who keep her busy. After spending 25 years working in a corporate job, God called her to the ministry of First Coast Women’s Services where she has been the Director of the Mandarin center for 10 years. She dedicates her time to helping women (and men) facing unplanned pregnancies to choose life for their unborn babies and for themselves by knowing Christ.



**Mike Schrage, Executive Director, Good News Productions, International**

Mike graduated from Ozark Christian College and has been with GNPI for more than 27 years beginning in 1994 as a Regional director and ultimately accepting the position of Executive Director in 2012. He has been married to Karolyn for 40 years. They have three grown and married children and 6 grandchildren.



**Ryan Wolfe, President and Executive Director, Ability Ministry**

It is Ryan’s passion to equip and empower churches, organizations, and individuals to reach their disability communities for Jesus. Ryan comes to Ability Ministry with 15+ years of ministry experience. He previously worked at First Christian Church in Canton, Ohio as their full-time Disability Pastor.



Join together with your Englewood family and invite your friends, family, neighbors, coworkers and more! We are partnering with Lifeline Christian Mission for a meal packing event. We need at least 30 people to help us with this event. You can register through the website, app or at the registration table in the lobby on Sundays. Cost is \$5 per person. Space is limited to 40 and is available on a first come, first serve basis.



# God Shows Up

by Angela Hastings, Office Manager

When I think of God showing up in a big way, I can't help but think of some of the stories of the Old Testament. It was hard to choose! With walls and giants falling down left and right, how could you not see God at work?!

But in the end, I just had to return to one of my favorite characters in the Old Testament, Elijah. One thing I like about Elijah is he was a man just like us (James 5:17), and over and over again, God used him in big ways. Even in the life of Elijah, there are so many stories to choose from, including fire falling from heaven at Mt. Carmel.

However, my favorite story about Elijah is when God meets him on another mountain, Mt. Horeb, the mountain of God. At this mountain, it doesn't appear at first God is doing any big miracles or showing up in a big way, but He is definitely at work on behalf of His prophet. Elijah was at a low point in life. In my professional and personal opinion, he was burned out. He was on the lam, full of fear and prayed God would just end his life. It was all too much for him. Have you ever been there? So overwhelmed. So wrought with emotion. So ready to just call it quits. Let's see how God shows up in Elijah's life and how He shows up in ours when we fall into seasons of despair or burnout.

**God acknowledged Elijah's weakness.** In 1 Kings 19:7, God told Elijah "the journey is too much for you." God didn't expect Elijah to handle the situation or the forty-day journey in his own strength. He knew it would be hard, He warned Elijah, and He gave him what he needed to make the trip. I think sometimes we can make excuses about following God or obeying Him because we don't think we have what it takes. Sometimes we don't have what it takes. But our God knows what we can and can't handle, and He acts on our behalf. Sometimes God showing up in a big way is the simple act of recognizing our limitations and letting us know He sees them and will provide what we need to move forward.

**God invites Elijah to a special place.** The name Mt. Horeb sounded familiar to me, but I wasn't sure if anything else

happened there. It turns out, it's a very extraordinary location for the Israelites. It's where Moses met God at the burning bush. It's where God gave the people water in the wilderness by having Moses strike the rock. It's where God gave the



Israelites the Ten Commandments and made a covenant with them. And when Elijah was at his lowest point in life, God invited him to meet Him there. We're invited to special places, too. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." We're also told in Hebrews 4:16, "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to

help us in our time of need." Sometimes God showing up in a big way starts with us showing up in His presence. He invites. We come. He gives rest and mercy and grace.

**God whispered to Elijah.** I have no doubt in my mind God sent, or at least permitted, the strong wind, the earthquake and the fire. But in reality, those are all things from which we shield ourselves. The description "great and powerful wind [which] tore the mountains apart" makes me think "Get yourself to the cellar, Dorothy. It's a twister." An earthquake on a mountain or in a cave seems a little dangerous, too, and would have me running. And a fire...phew...I'm running for the a/c when it's 100 degrees, let alone when flames are involved. But God didn't speak through those events. He whispered. And don't you typically lean into a whisper? Rather than shielding yourself or running away, when someone whispers, you get closer. Sometimes God showing up in a big way is His small whisper. He speaks. We lean in. He is near to us in our darkest moments of despair – near enough for us to hear His whisper.

I think my takeaway from this story is God shows up in a big way by meeting His people personally. He knows our limitations, and He provides what we need to overcome them. He invites us to meet with Him in special places where He gives the help we need. He whispers so we have to lean in and listen closely. Sometimes God showing up in a big way is the fact that God shows up at all and welcomes us to be there.

# We Need A Miracle



by Josh Colvin, Student Minister



coaches and the fans will never forget. It was probably good play calling and even better execution, and not a miracle, as to why Southridge won the game that day, but I like to think it was me hoping for a miracle.

In the dictionary, a miracle is defined as "a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency." If you were to read the Bible, you would read about miracles God performed.

The life of Joshua is one of my favorite things to read because of two profound events where God showed up in a big way, performing events which natural and scientific laws couldn't account for. The first event was when the walls of Jericho came crashing down. The Israelites didn't do anything special here. They listened to God. He told them to march around the city once for six days and then seven times on the seventh day. After they did that, He told them to blow their trumpets and the walls of Jericho would fall. And that is exactly what happened. This story is one where God showed up big time and one that vividly demonstrated the miraculous power of God.

The second event, to me, is one I think shows more of the power of God. This event is found in Joshua 10 when Joshua prayed for the sun to stand still at Gibeon, so he and his armies could protect Gibeon and defeat all the kings' armies. That's exactly what happened. Joshua 10:13 says, "And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nations took vengeance on their enemies." The sun stopping wasn't the only miracle performed this time. God also threw down enormous hailstones to kill the armies. To say God showed up for His people big time is a definite understatement.

Even though these events happened a very long time ago, God is still in the business of performing miracles. Maybe not to the extent of stopping the sun (even though He could if He wanted to), but miracles you may need to see in your life. Just remember, God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. HE.DOES.NOT.CHANGE. It's sometimes easy to forget how big and how powerful God is, but no miracle is too big or too small for Him.

As the Southridge offense made their way to the field for the two-point conversion, an announcer said, "You don't come to Lucas to tie. You come to Lucas to win, baby!"

As Christians, we don't live life half-heartedly. We are called to live in the miraculous, victorious power of God because He has already won, baby!

"We need a miracle." I am positive many of you reading this right now have uttered these exact words or heard them come from the mouth of someone else. Usually these words are spoken in a plea for help. Most of us have felt this desperate hour before. Maybe in a hospital room, during a bad storm, or perhaps in the chaos of carline at your kid's school.

I remember a time when the words, "We need a miracle" ran through my mind, and probably the minds of everyone who was involved.

In 2017 the Southridge Raiders made it to the 2A Football State Championship for the state of Indiana. Southridge was a small school in the very small town of Huntingburg, where I served as the youth minister of a church before serving here at ECC. There was one high school in Huntingburg and Southridge was it. The school was so small, the middle school and high school shared the same building. For them to make it to the big stage at Lucas Oil Stadium (where the Indianapolis Colts play) was a victory for them already. But they didn't want to stop just at making it, they wanted to win the whole thing.

Going into the fourth quarter, the Raiders were down 14-7 and had already committed five turnovers. After a turnover and a few big plays, Southridge scored a touchdown with 1:22 remaining in the game. The score was now 14-13. Instead of playing for the tie, and sending the game into overtime, the coach for Southridge decided to go for a two-point conversion and the lead. I remember being in that stadium and feeling the energy from the crowd as they lined up to take the lead. I was so into it, feeling nervous and excited, so I couldn't even watch the play. I hunched over and stared at the ground thinking, "We need a miracle." When Southridge converted the two-point conversion the crowd went nuts. People were screaming, hugging, high-fiving, and even crying. Southridge was able to hold on and win 15-14. It was a moment those students, those



# Faith Promise is a Verb

by Brittany Kellar, Guest Writer

From cover to cover, the Bible is filled with promises. Some promises are between God and His creation and others are between individuals and countries. A few months after Chris and I got married, we began praying about Faith Promise and what commitment we would make as a couple. Since I grew up at Englewood, I was very familiar with the process. But this was different. It wasn't just me and my finances I was presenting to the Lord that year; it was a promise Chris and I were making with each other to the Lord. We were clueless how God was going to provide, but we were hopeful, and we knew God could be trusted.

A few weeks after making the promise, I was given an unexpected bonus at work, and Chris and I received a refund of an overpayment from a bill. It was really fun to see God work in ways we would have never expected.

Over the past thirteen years in participating in Faith Promise as a family, there have been

blessings which have touched my heart on so many levels I can't even put them into the right words.

When Pete asked me to share a few thoughts about Faith Promise as a family, the girls and I immediately went the whiteboard in our schoolroom and began brainstorming what Faith Promise means to us.

I am going to step aside and let them share some of the thoughts they had.

**What is Faith Promise?** They simply answered, "Money for Missionaries like, UF Christian Campus House, North Florida Christian Camp" and one of the missions closest to our heart, Christian Family Services, for which many of you helped the girls raise money for a special donation during the summer of 2020. Addison added that when you make a commitment at Faith Promise, you also have faith the missionary will be truthful and honest with the money they receive. In our home we talk about integrity quite a bit, and it was encouraging to see all the talk about us showing integrity has translated over to her desire for integrity in others.

**How do we participate in Faith Promise?** Bailey said, "We use faith, in God, to pray, give money, host and encourage."

If you know me, you know I love having people over. I enjoy hosting dinners, game nights, or playdates, but the thought of hosting missionaries overnight when I had two small kids seemed

like a ridiculous request. I thought, "Who in their right mind would want to spend the weekend with a young family, navigating a slew of question from curious three and six-year olds?" But when certain people in the church ask you to do something, you sometimes can't say no. In my heart I knew we had the space, and if the person asking me to host thought we could do it, we should yield to the Spirit and just do it.

Oh, I am so glad I didn't shy away from the opportunity to host a missionary overnight. Hebrews 13:2 has never been more real than in the moments we opened our doors and hearts to the missionaries in the field.

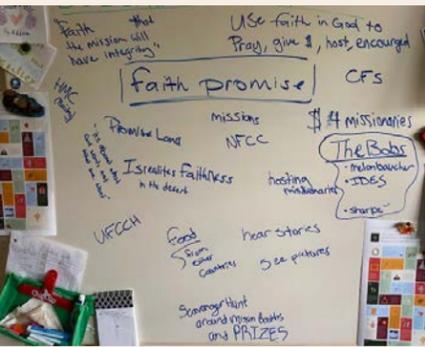
The girls and I giggle when it comes to the thought of hosting a missionary because we have only ever hosted missionaries named Bob.

Bob DeVoe from Lifeline Christian Ministries and Addison played Legos Sunday afternoon; he's pretty efficient at making the Eiffel Tower with Legos. Bob Sharpe from Family Ministries of Florida was able to avert a crisis with a student over the phone in the middle of our kitchen. Then Bob, Chris and I spent several hours talking about the ministry and the work being done for the students in the Tampa area. Both of these men have such a passion for the Lord and our family was able to ask questions and hear amazing stories of God's goodness and provision through support from churches like Englewood.

**Why do we participate in Faith Promise?** Addison piped up and replied, "It's about what God wants, not what we want." There is so much truth in those few words. When we participate in Faith Promise and giving to missions, we are able to fulfill the great commission in Matthew 28:20, "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 all I have commanded you and surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

One night after listening to Don and Aletha Hulsey, who were missionaries in Africa, four-year-old Addison declared with great passion she was going to grow up and become a missionary to Africa. My heart sank a bit at the thought of my baby growing up and moving around the globe. But then and there I started praying and remembering Faith Promise reminds us it's not what we want, but what God wants.

He wants not just our money, but our time, our hospitality, our prayers, and most importantly our hearts. Faith Promise isn't just an event we attend each year. It's what we do. It's starts in the heart, manifests through our hands, and is reflected through our lives and around the world.



# Parting the Sea of Discouragement

by Karissa Mead, Worship Ministry Director

Transition brings with it plenty of expectations. In a time of transition, you may experience a letdown of your own expectations, or others may even experience a letdown of their own expectations of you. The reverse could be true as well; you may come through in a big way for someone else, and vice versa. But the keys to a healthy transition to a new environment and new people are time and integrity. Over time, we learn what level of integrity a person has and whether we can trust them to come through for us.

Moses had to lead God's people in a huge transition from Egypt to the Promised Land. And when he led them out of Egypt, they had some assumptions about what would happen when they were finally rescued from their slavery to Pharaoh. I'm sure they didn't expect to be followed by Pharaoh's army, after Pharaoh already promised to let them leave. I'm sure they didn't think they'd go hungry or thirsty in the desert. They probably didn't think the conditions in the desert would be worse than being slaves to the Egyptians. It had to have been hard to trust God had every step of their journey in His hands. In fact, when God made the promise to them, they didn't even believe Him the first time (Exodus 6:9).

But over time, God proved Himself. His promise to deliver the Israelites from slavery into the Promised Land came true. He redeemed them "with an outstretched arm and mighty acts of judgment" when He told Moses to part the Red Sea and bring it down on the Egyptians who were hunting them down. God came through for them and saved them from being killed before they even saw the Promised Land.

When faced with a big change, how often do we jump in and trust God every step of the way? I know my first instinct is not to trust... it's actually a bit closer to the Israelite's response: discouragement. When they were about to be attacked by Pharaoh's army, that was the case. They said, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" But the command for them in the face of their discouragement was this: "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will

see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." (Exodus 14:13)

In the midst of discouragement, we can take a cue from Moses' words and obey the command to stand firm – to trust, to be still, and to see what God will do to deliver us from evil. We can avoid believing untrue thoughts about God (didn't the Israelites do this when they believed the lie they'd be better off back in Egypt instead of under the protection of God?) and instead remember how He has shown Himself to be trustworthy to us and to others through our testimony. We can embrace other's encouragement instead of resolving to despair over our own circumstances. And we can slow ourselves down to see how God will work in extraordinary ways. Instead of making the mistake of envying the life we had before, let's take action steps to believe in God's integrity and trust He will work in His own time, for our good and for His glory.





# Powerful Influence

by **Serena Maerkel, Children's Director**

There are many people in my life who left a lasting impression. Some were there for only a short time, and others have walked with me for ages. One such person was my high school English teacher, Mr. Carstenn. I have memories of the majority of my teachers, but he was the one who was truly unforgettable. It's no surprise he won teacher of the year in 2011. He was tough with his critique, and equally celebratory over his students' successes. He was one of the only teachers who really pushed me to do better, to think more, and to trust my instincts when it came to literature and writing. Whenever I think about him, one story comes to mind more than any other. We had just read a short story, and he was asking us for our opinions on it. When he came to me I had difficulty putting my feelings about the main character into words. In my frustration I blurted out, "I just want to see her eat!" Right away, everyone in the class erupted into laughter. I was so embarrassed, and prayed the floor would just open right up and swallow me whole. I hated being the center of attention, and I definitely didn't want my friends to think I was as stupid as I felt in that moment. Then Mr. Carstenn did something incredible. He immediately jumped to my defense, and told the class I was right. He knew exactly what I was trying to say, when most people needed me to explain myself. That quick five-minute interaction meant more to me than any award I could have received. He transformed my embarrassment into pride, and it gave me the confidence I needed to keep going. It's the same type of confidence Jesus can inspire in us every day if we're willing to trust Him.

When I was studying the Word for this month's article, I found myself drawn to Matthew 10. When I read through it, I was transported back to that classroom portable, and the remarkable influence a great leader should possess. The best leaders are known by their ability to equip and empower others, for the betterment of everyone. These are just a few of the ways Jesus shows us this in chapter 10:

- He shared His power and influence with them. Verse one says He "gave them the authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness." They weren't just followers of Jesus. He trusted them enough to lead in His name.



- He gave them detailed instructions. Where to go, how to get there, what to do and say when you get there, etc. Verse nine even discusses the trust in Him He expected in return. They were given the power to care for others, but they needed to be reliant on God's provisions for their care. He wanted them to know exactly how their actions would influence the kingdom, and He wanted them to know He was setting them up for success.
- He gave them warning. While Jesus knew a lot would go right, there would be times people would resist the Gospel. He warned they would be like "sheep among wolves," and at times, they would be punished by the local government for following Jesus. He even said they would be hated for loving Him.
- He inspired them. He let them know they would be backed by the full power and presence of God. The Spirit would give them the right words when needed, would help them flee persecution, and would give them salvation in the end. They, just like us, were worth more than the sparrow, intimately known (down to the very hairs on their heads), and acknowledged in Heaven by God.

The best leaders never stop pushing us to be more than what we think we're capable of. Mr. Carstenn inspired me to love literature and writing, but Jesus? His influence can lead me to change the world. The same man who inspired twelve regular men to give up everything they had, can make the same transformation in you.

# ECC Adult Sunday School Changes

On Sunday, December 5, there was a special combined adult Sunday school meeting addressing the upcoming "renovations" to the current ECC Adult Sunday School program. There was much information shared (available via link in the weekly e-newsletter) with the clear intent to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our adult Sunday School program.

These changes will bring about a wider variety of topics of study with the ability to "dive deep" and get very specific in these classroom settings. With a range of topics including expository (verse by verse) studies and topical themes like parenting, dealing with divorce, grief, finances, marriage and more, this new program will allow everyone to engage in classes specifically geared toward their spiritual hunger and need as they study the Word.

The basic premise is to offer four classes each "term" for people to choose from. Each "term" will run for two months at a

time, thus resulting in six different eight-week terms during the calendar year – with four special fellowship celebration Sundays included in that same year!

The goal is to create ample opportunities for growth and the development of our faith through the studying of God's Word. Please be in prayer for the leaders and teachers of these new classes and for everyone to be excited to get into the Word of God.

This new program begins on Sunday, February 6, 2022. The first term is during the months of February and March. Pre-registration is strongly suggested but not required. This will allow us to make appropriate plans for class preparations including copies of materials, technological needs and classroom assignments. The last day of classes in our current Adult Sunday School format is Sunday, January 16 (January 23 and 30 are part of our Faith Promise Missions Conference).

## Class Descriptions – February/March 2022

(Class locations TBD; see e-newsletter on 1/21 for details. Sign up at the registration table, with the link in the e-newsletter or using the QR code.)



### Building on the American Heritage

Teacher: Tom Bush

For centuries, Americans were taught a truthful view of history that recognized the Godly heroes and moral foundation our nation was founded upon. But in recent years, a new version of history has assaulted the moral and spiritual fiber of our nation, leaving the truth of our past eliminated and forgotten. Until today. Join historian David Barton and experience the untold story of our nation's history in the American Heritage Series.



### Striving Together: Teamwork in the Local Church

Teacher: Pete Ramsey

Throughout the New Testament, we see repeated commands to combine our efforts with others to accomplish the work of God. Scripture instructs us to function as a team, to support one another, and to work together toward a common goal. But just how do we work together as a team? What does biblical teamwork look like? How can I contribute to the success of the mission?

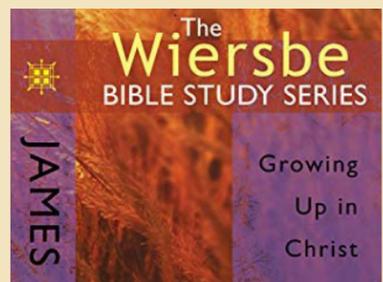


In this series we will see biblical examples and receive practical instruction for teamwork within the body of Christ. Discover how you can strive together with fellow Christians and experience the fruit of biblical unity.

### James: Growing Up in Christ

Teacher: Keith Vincent

The powerful message of James' letter to the church is as relevant today as when he originally wrote it—though it is still as challenging to hear. Many of our problems in life stem from our own spiritual immaturity. However, our spiritual life doesn't end there; God has more planned for us. He wants us to grow up, not just grow old.



### Philippians: Living the Cruciform Life

Teacher: Chris & Karissa Mead

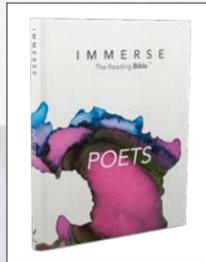
In this RightNow Media series, Michael DeFazio, Professor of New Testament and Hermeneutics at Ozark Christian College, will introduce and walk us through the content of Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. The emphasis is to encourage believers to let the gospel change you.



# IMMERSE

The Bible Reading Experience™

During the month of January, we take a break and catch our “spiritual breath” from our Immerse Bible Reading program. Pre-orders for the next book, *Immerse: Poets*, must be completed by Sunday, January 9. You can preorder your book through ECC at the registration table on Sundays or through the website and/or app on your smartphone or other electronic device. Even if you are not ordering through us, please take a moment to sign up, and let us know you are participating in our Immerse program this next quarter. Remember, if you miss the opportunities to purchase your *Immerse: Poets* book at the discounted price through ECC, you can still find it at any online bookstore (Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc.), use an e-book version on your smart device or even listen to the audio version through the Immerse website or your device’s podcast app (watch for link in the e-newsletter each week). Remember, our *Immerse: Poets* series will begin on Monday, January 31 as the start of “Week 1.”



## Thank You

Dear Englewood Family,

Thank you all so much for the meals, cards, visits, calls and texts as I recuperate from my leg injury. Your love and care is deeply appreciated and uplifting for me. I am reminded, once again, how wonderful my Englewood family is. The healing is slow but steady, and I am grateful for all your prayers and encouragement.

Diane Dewsnap

# MISSION SPOTLIGHT



Central Brazil Mission  
Earl and Ruth Anne Haubner

We have been partners with the Haubners for almost two years now, having first been introduced to them by former ECC members Ben and Marlo Moseley and getting to know them more through our VBS offering program a few years ago. Here is an excerpt from a recent newsletter:

*Greetings from Brazil and from the U.S. By the time you get this we will be in the U.S., arriving November 10 and remaining until January 19. During this time, we will attend the ICOM Missionary Conference in Richmond, Virginia where we also will have our annual CBM Board Meeting. We will be speaking at a few of our supporting churches and reporting to some Mission Committees.*

*Thanks for your prayers on behalf of the 6 most recent Amazon Boat Trips. There weren't any problems with those that came from the U.S. for the trips nor their return. Everyone tested negative both coming and returning.*

*On the FAME trip which was a 2-week September trip we travelled over 1500 miles on Amazon rivers, visiting 15 new villages and treating 830 individuals. We were even able to go into the State of Pará just southwest of Parintins. The crew was excited about this new area we were visiting for the first time and came up with this slogan: “Conquering Pará”.*

*Each team that came brought plenty of meds and vitamins, and we can't say enough about how much we need your help with these vitamins and meds. THANKS AGAIN!*

Please continue to pray for the Haubners and their work in Brazil. Watch for more details about opportunities to participate in a trip with CBM on the Amazon River. Also, see below for details about a chance to meet the Haubners in person here at ECC.



## Coffee & Convos

Friday, January 7, 2022 @10:00am – Fellowship Hall

Earl and Ruth Anne Haubner, leaders of the Central Brazil Mission, will be with us to share the latest updates on their ministry endeavors in the nation of Brazil, along the coasts and waterways of the Amazon River. Join us for this up close and personal time to hear all the latest the Lord has done through the work led by the Haubners.

Join the Prime Timers for a Soup & Sandwich Luncheon in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, January 9 after the worship service. Sign up online or with the Arnolds.

The ECC Young Adults (18-28) are starting a RightNow Media video driven Bible study on the book of Ephesians. We will meet at the Meads on Thursdays at 6:30pm beginning January 13. In addition to the study, we also eat together each week, with everyone bringing something. Sign up for the group online, and we'll be in touch!

Everyone eats lunch after church events. Why not do it with your friends?  
On Sunday, January 29th from 12:00-2:00pm after the meal packing event (see page 4 & 5), the middle school and high school guys and girls of ESM will go out to lunch separately. This is a time for dudes to hang with dudes and ladies to hang out with ladies. Bring money for lunch. Sign up online TODAY!

Middle School students, only one more month until the Middle School Weekend at North Florida Christian Camp. Mark your calendars for February 4-5, 2022. The cost for this weekend is ONLY \$75. This includes everything you need at camp, PLUS A SHIRT. Sign up at [nfcsc.org](http://nfcsc.org) TODAY! For scholarship needs, see Josh. You won't want to miss this.

The Men's Breakfast has been going strong for several months. Mark your calendar to attend the breakfast every third Saturday of the month. This month, breakfast will be on Saturday, January 15th @ 9:00am in the Fellowship Hall followed by prayer and a short devo. Invite a friend and make plans to enjoy breakfast. Sign up online.

Join your Englewood Christian Church family for a fun and unique night out, as your hometown Jacksonville Icemen hockey team go to battle against the South Carolina Stingrays on Friday, January 21! Tickets are just \$15. Sign up online. See Josh or Karissa if you have any questions. YOU MUST SIGN UP BY SUNDAY, JANUARY 9TH for this event as tickets will be purchased in advance.

High schoolers, make plans to attend the second annual HS Weekend at North Florida Christian Camp. Mark your calendars for Friday, January 14th – Sunday, January 16th. The cost for the weekend is ONLY \$120. This includes everything you need at camp, PLUS A SHIRT. Sign up at [nfcsc.org](http://nfcsc.org) TODAY! For scholarship needs, see Josh.

Kids in grades K-5th grade are invited to join us for an epic night of fun on Friday, January 14! We will be meeting in Room 301 from 6:30-8:30pm. We'll be playing some of your favorite classic video games and retro gaming systems! This event is completely FREE, but we are asking that everyone please register so we can make sure we have enough TV/Game system setups and snacks for everyone to enjoy! As always, parents are more than welcome to stay and join in on the fun. If your family has games or systems you wouldn't mind sharing with us that night, please contact Serena Maerkl to let us know.

Englewood Christian Church Blood Drive  
LIFESOUTH Community Blood Centers

On Wednesday, January 12 from 5:00 – 8:00pm, we will be partnering with LifeSouth Community Blood Bank again for a mobile blood drive. You can sign up online, and walkups are also welcome. See the website for more details!

GriefShare begins a new series on Monday, January 10 at 6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. This thirteen-week support group is for those who have lost a loved one. You can get more information and sign up by visiting [griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org).





Thanksgiving Day Football was a success again this year. We had multiple people show up to play and a few fans to cheer them on. There were no serious injuries and everyone who was there had a great time! Thanks to University Christian School for opening up their field to us.



Young Adult Ugly Sweater Christmas Party



MS Shopping Trip – Joel and Trent stopped to take a break from our Christmas shopping adventure.



Thanks to all the adult leaders and students who showed up to hang out during Parents' Night Out. Everyone had a great time building Play Doh snowmen, watching a Christmas movie, and making a homemade ornament.



Pat Underwood shares gifts from the Day Circle with TLC Director Sherrie Boger for TLC families

**Christmas Musical Celebrations!**



Wee Praise



Jesus' Worship Kids



Our Youth Choir...Vocal Explosion

**Christmas Lip Sync Battle!**



Congratulations to all the contestants, judges, and fans who made this year's Christmas Lip Sync Battle a HUGE SUCCESS!!!



Jonathan Maerkl serenades judge Gayle Gemeinhart  
ENGLEWOOD CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Lip Sync Champs The Acapella Christmas North Pole Revival Band



Julie Topping as DJ Cooks-a-lot  
THE ECHOES JANUARY 2022

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**Dated Material**

(See panel to left)

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January 2022

**Offering Envelopes – Offering Envelopes for 2022 are available to pick up from the church lobby. If you do not have envelopes and would like to receive them, please contact the church office.**

**SERMON SERIES**

During the month of January, we have several things going on with our Sunday morning worship services and the messages which will be shared. Here is the schedule of speakers and topics for the month of January.

- Jan 2 – Efren Rosario, Guest
- Jan 9 – Firstfruits: Obedience in Stewardship (Pete Ramsey)
- Jan 16 – Firstfruits: Attitude of Stewardship (Pete Ramsey)
- Jan 23 – FPMC – Guest – Mike Schrage, Good News Prod. Intl.
- Jan 30 – FPMC – Guest – Bob Gailey, UFCCH