



**February 2021 Newsletter**  
**First Brethren Church of New Paris, In.**

**"I Believe..."**

**Pastor Jeff Estep**

**Sermon Series - Titles for February**

**February 7- Friend or Foe**

**February 14- A Pastor's Glory**

**February 21- Persecution and  
Temptation**

Art: The High Ground  
2011

## FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR JEFF ESTEP

Can I just say it? February is a weird month. First of all, it's spelled weird, or at least, it isn't spelled like we say it. Do any of us actually pronounce it "FEB- ROO- AIREY"? And then, it's shorter than the other months, almost like we put all the days that didn't fit in the normal 30 or 31 day months in some kind of a leftover month to get us to a full 365 for the year. Only for some reason we do that in the 2nd month of the year.

But the weirdest thing about February is that, at least for me, I'm kind of ready to be done with winter, but I know spring isn't going to be here for awhile. December is filled with the anticipation of Christmas. In January I'm still feeling a "Christmas high" and remembering how much I love the beauty of snow. By the time February rolls around, I'm looking with anticipation to see a crocus push through the dirt, and I'd give anything to hear the sound of a lawnmower. In short, I'm ready to see spring, and the sign of new growth on the earth!

Growth! Growth is a sign of life, of new things. As difficult as this past year has been, I think I can honestly say it has been a year of growth for me. We have all had to adapt to new ways of doing things, new ways of thinking. We've had to develop new habits, some of which we would love to be able to get rid of. (I'm having a mask burning party when this is all over...who is with me?) But one of the ways I think I've grown as a pastor is in using newer technology to use my spiritual gift of teaching.

Before the pandemic, I would have told you there was no chance I would EVER have a YouTube channel! I mean, some of the things on YouTube? One of Aaron's favorite YouTubers right now just came out with a video called "I Filled My Entire House With Packing Peanuts!" Shortly into the shutdown, Jamie suggested I videotape my sermons, instead of just posting the audio. I resisted at first. For some reason, I feel a bit silly and self-conscious staring and talking into a camera. But eventually I came around to the idea. And we've been recording video of our services ever since. On average, about 25 people watch our YouTube services every week. (Why don't we men listen to our wives more often?)

But as the pandemic drew on over the summer and I realized our Bible studies wouldn't be able to meet, the idea of Dining Room Devos popped into my head. The idea was pretty simple- short videos, drawing one main point out of a couple of verses of Scripture, using the series to walk through an entire book of the Bible. I knew it would require me to learn new skills, like video editing and scheduling YouTube videos. And, perhaps most challenging, getting into the meat of Scripture and drawing spiritual conclusions in UNDER TEN MINUTES each video. We pastors aren't known for brevity. But as I have started recording my third Dining Room Devos series, I have found making them exhilarating!

On February 1st, the next installment of Dining Room Devos will begin posting to YouTube. This series is called "Only Jesus", and through the 51 videos we will walk through Paul's letter to the Galatians. Galatians is a powerful book, so powerful that in fact that Martin Luther's study of it was one of his key motivators for beginning the Reformation Movement. The message of Galatians is that salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul felt it necessary to make this point because many Christians in Galatia were being seduced into believing that faith wasn't enough, that obeying the Jewish Law was also necessary. Paul wrote to rebuke the churches and to encourage them to walk in freedom, rather than to become enslaved to legalism.

I know some of you have been watching our Dining Room Devos videos as they've been released, and I hope that you will enjoy this new series! If you haven't watched these videos in the past, I would encourage you to make it a point to check out our new series. Not because your pastor made them, or because he asked you to. But because the message in Galatians is important, and these videos give us a chance to study that message together. And because diving into Scripture helps us grow, and growth is important! If you have questions about how to find Dining Room Devos, please let me know. I would be happy to help you.

Wishing all of you a blessed February!

In Christ,

Pastor Jeff

# A Change in Leadership Roles

As you may know, I am in the third year of a three year term on the Executive Board of the Brethren Church. The Executive Board helps to set the vision for the Brethren Church, works with the National Office to implement that vision, and makes business decisions on behalf of General Conference when Conference is not in session. I am honored to be a part of this Board, and to represent our congregation and the Midwest Region.

At our most recent meeting, due to a career change, our elected Moderator, Josh Coffee, stepped down from the position six months shy of the end of his elected term. Josh has served the Brethren Church well as Moderator, and I can understand why he feels his decision is necessary.

After discussion with the Board, I volunteered to serve as Acting Moderator of the Brethren Church until the end of this year's General Conference, when a new Moderator will be elected for a three year term. This position will require me to spend several hours per month working on behalf of the denomination, to plan meetings, prepare for General Conference, and work with various leaders in the denomination. As Moderator, I will also be responsible for leading the Business Sessions at General Conference, which this year is in Akron, Ohio. Please be in prayer for me as I tackle this new challenge, that I can be wise, diligent, and effective over the next six months. At this time, I am not planning to run for a three-year term as Moderator, though I may seek election for another term on the Executive Board.

I am very thankful for the way our church has allowed me to serve the Brethren Church, both at the district and denominational level. And I thank you ahead of time for your prayers and support over the next six months.

Pastor Jeff

## **Birthdays**

**12- Gregg Miller**

**19- Ivy VanDiepenbos, Kaiden Williams**

**21- John Wessler**

**28- Sonia Miller**

**Did we miss you? It's possible we don't have all your info! Pick up a Church Directory Update form so we don't miss your birthday next time! Or your Anniversary!**

## Children's Ministry Article

Kids Club is back in full swing! We picked up our Wednesday night meetings on January 13th. We have been going through a unit called "Weird Science", which is teaching us about Obedience. This unit is taking us through parts of the book of Genesis, where we are learning about Adam & Eve's DISOBEDIENCE, Noah's obedience in building the ark, and Abraham's obedience in leaving his hometown and later, his willingness to sacrifice his own son because God told him to. (Spoiler alert, he didn't have to go through with it!) In February, we will begin a new unit called "Hanging Tough", a unit about Perseverance.

Our Wednesday evening Kids ministry is far smaller than it has been in years past. Over the next few months, we will need to begin working on our plans for the fall, on recruiting kids to be a part of this fun program, and finding new ways to engage kids in our community. Please let us know if you would like to help us put that plan together.

I want to thank those who are helping in our Kids ministry. On Wednesdays, this includes Cassandra Peters, Ruby Thompson, and Heather Houston. I also want to thank Jamie for her hard work in putting together the Children's Messages for our Sunday Morning services. She has done a great job of bringing creative object lessons to our kids, and I think us grown ups have gotten a lot out of it too!

In Christ, Pastor Jeff

## Youth Newsletter

This past Wednesday, our youth group finished up a video-based study called "Drive", which taught us about God's ability to redeem and restore what is broken. This week, we will begin a new series called "Kindred", which explores Christ-centered friendship. This curriculum features a short movie about four high school students who are thrown together to compete on a Quiz Bowl team, coached by a quirky teacher that REALLY loves Quiz Bowl.

This past month, our youth did a service project to pack food for Blessings in a Backpack, then went to the church for ice cream, an event we called "Serve and Sundae." In February, there are two events our youth should know about. The first is the annual "Winter Blast" retreat at the Brethren Retreat Center, which will be held February 19-21 at the camp. Youth wanting to register should talk to Jamie or Pastor Jeff for a registration form. The youth group will cover the cost of registration. Don't miss it!

Our other February event will be a Bowling Party on Sunday, February 28th, beginning at 3pm. We will meet at the church at 3, then caravan over to Wawasee Bowl to knock down some pins! We should be back at the church by 5:30pm.

Please continue to pray for our youth, and for our search for a new Youth Director. We know God will bring the right candidate in His time. In the meantime, please pray for Jamie and Tim as they help to lead our youth!

Pastor Jeff & Jamie

# Butterfly Mornings

Staying connected to God's Word is a challenge unless you have a plan. The lack of corporate Bible Study during the COVID pandemic has left me struggling to study God's Word effectively. I find it easy to read a devotional message with a few scriptures but to really study God's Word requires a commitment. Because I am a "Martha" personality, I tend to do everything else before I find time for Scripture. As a way to begin this year with a different strategy, I purchased "Explore the Book" by J. Sidlow Baxter. It is a survey and study of each book from Genesis to Revelation. In the introduction the author writes:

With all too many Christians today the tendency is to read the Bible just to pick up a few good points or suggestions for addressing meetings or preparing sermons, or to pick out a few nice bits to help with the Christian life. This is bad. We need to study and to know the written word of God as a whole, for such study and knowledge gives depth and richness and fulness to all our public ministry, and stabilizes our whole Christian experience.

No man's education is complete if he does not know the Bible. No Christian minister is really qualified for the ministry of the Christian Church without a thorough study of the Bible. No Christian worker can be fully effective without a ready knowledge of the Bible. No Christian believer can live the Christian life to the fullest without an adequate grasp of the Bible.

Our Lord Jesus Himself has taught us that He is the focal theme of all the Scriptures; and everywhere, therefore, we want to see beyond the written word, to Him who is the living Word. And we want to see Him in such a way as causes us to love and trust Him the more.

Let us therefore come to the Scriptures very reverently, realizing that they are in-breathed by the Holy Spirit. I have often said to the ladies on Tuesday mornings, “you cannot give away what you don’t have.” If we are to share the Gospel with unbelievers, we must understand the message of the Gospel. I pray that you too will devise a plan to stay connected to God’s Word in a way that allows you to understand His truth. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10). ... Peggy

## HELPING HANDS

We will be meeting February 11,2021 it’s the second Thursday of the month. The room behind the overflow area. Come and help with helping hands. At 1;15am.

Helping Hands Ladies.

# Deacon Thoughts

## DARE TO BE HAPPY

Dare to be happy—don't shy away,  
Reach out and capture the joy of Today!

Life is for living! Give it a try;  
Open your heart to that sun in the sky.

Dare to be loving, and trusting, and true;  
Treasure the hours with those dear to you.

Dare to be kind—it's more fun than you know;  
Give joy to others, and watch your own grow.

Dare to admit all your blessings, and then  
Every day count them all over again.

Dare to be happy, don't be afraid--  
This is the day which the Lord hath made!

by Helen Lowrie Marshall

Your Deacon Board remains as active as covid will allow. Please don't hesitate to call on any one of your deacon board for assistance, someone will be available to help meet your needs. Prayers for 2021 to be a year of getting back to some form of normal for our church family.

Jimmy Gill, chm.