



**January
2016**

**Forest Hills EFC Messenger
5183 Pebble Creek Trail
Loves Park, IL 61111**

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Email: office@fhfec.org

Sundays: 9 a.m. Sunday School ● 10:25 a.m. Worship

Wednesdays: 5:30 p.m. Meal ● 6:30 p.m. AWANA Clubs & Adult Bible Study



- January 2 Salli Jacobsen
- January 3 Bonnie Hart
- January 4 Patsy Nelson
Jack Simpson
- January 6 Bela Leathers
Courtney Reynolds
- January 15 Judy Dray
- January 16 Frank Locascio
- January 20 Martha Hussong
Kayla Robeniol
- January 21 Pat Simpson
- January 22 Tony Nelson
- January 31 Eric Neubauer

If we have missed your birthday or someone else's, please contact the office to inform us.

**Ladies Bible Study Starts Monday
January 11th 9:30 a.m.**

Studying the book "Hosea" by Jennifer Rothschild. 7 week DVD series. \$13 for workbook. Sign up on Foyer Table. See Arleen with questions.

**Ladies Book Club Meeting
January 9th 9 a.m.**

Reading "The Color of Justice" by Ace Collins. We will have breakfast and discuss the book. Contact Arleen with questions.

How Can I Serve You Better?

My chief calling is to help people grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. In looking towards that particular goal, it is my desire to know how to serve you better. I realize I am not omniscient, and I can miss things that matter to you. If there is some way I can be more effective in helping you grow in Christ, I would really like to hear about it. Please do not be afraid to make needs known. It is my suspicion that too often people do not want to impose or feel I am too busy to bother. The truth is I would rather know what your needs are, so I can be more effective in ministering to the flock. I am always happy to answer questions, give advice or comfort. Many times I may not know the answer but I can point you in the right direction to find what or who you are looking for.

I have my cell phone on and with me most all the time. My number is (815)391-3133. Please call or text me. You can also reach me at my email address: mitch@ihgg.net. This becomes all the more important in these days where we are operating without a secretary. Betty in many ways was the hub of communication for the church body, but without her in the office we have to relearn how to communicate with each other. Most matters should be handled by talking directly to the person you need, but if you do not know who to talk to, I would be happy to direct you the right person.

In His Grip

Pastor Mitch

Our Ministry Leaders

The Elders, Jon Leinbaugh and Tim Clow, help me deal with spiritual needs. If you need someone to pray with you or have a question about the church, please contact one of us.

The Deacons and Deaconesses have the primary ministry of seeing to physical needs, visiting shut-ins and the sick. Paul Jacobsen, Jack Simpson, Salli Jacobsen, Dor Pagani, Sandy Hanson, Carolyn Hunt, Sharyn Swenson and Arletta Locascio.

The Missions Board is made up of Grace Smith, Arleen Hood, Jean Alfredson, Coldeane White and Denny Neubauer. If you want to know more about the missionaries we support or other questions, please talk to one of them.

The C.E. Board oversees AWANA, Sunday School, Nursery and other programs related to children's ministry. Peggy Clow, Kira Saylor, Caroline Swanson and Char Reynolds are on this board.

The Trustees oversee taking care of the building and grounds. If you see something needing attention or have another concern, please talk to one of them: Dave Alfredson, Jim Hardin, Emmet Moore and David Beard.

Influenced and Encouraged by James

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. 5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. James 1:2-8

As I write this in the middle of December, the media and just about everyone else is in full swing evaluating the past year. Time and several other publications have selected their "Person of the Year," others are trying to rank the importance of world events, and still others are picking out the hottest celebrity stories. By the time you are reading this, we will have moved on to New Year's resolutions and how to make the next year the best one yet. The prognosticators will tell you whether the economy is going up or down, and the political pundits will be salivating because of the upcoming Presidential Election. Many more will be trying to figure out how they will survive the bills that now have to be paid after the festive Christmas season, and more than a few people will be trying to figure out the latest changes in healthcare for the year to come.

This causes me to realize there are some things that will be unavoidable this year. Stress will be as high as ever with average Americans once again trying to figure out how "more" became so much less. We will hear how the sky is falling with climate change, terrorism and a host of other insurmountable problems that will be discussed much with few solutions. Truth be told, life will continue in much the same pattern it has since the Fall of Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden.

The question is whether we as believers in Jesus Christ will be overcome by the swaying back and forth of public opinion or will this be a time we shine as lights in the darkness? Will we despair as things grow ever more difficult, or will we be found trusting what God has already told us will happen?

Will we fear as things go from bad to worse, or will we recognize the pattern of God's working throughout history?

In the face trials and sufferings, James exhorts believers to count their difficulties all as a source of joy. Not that James is

telling us to make every facet of our life as difficult as possible, but he is teaching that God has a purpose in carrying His people through seasons of suffering. God is redeeming the suffering of His people as a means of training them to have a long suffering, patient character. He is doing more than just building endurance in our lives, He is refining our character, so we may grow to maturity. It is His desire that we grow up in Christ, learning to trust Him completely in every area of our lives.

God wants us to understand why He works in this way in our lives. It is not enough to simply not give up. He wants us to understand and grow in wisdom. James' exhortation is a challenge to ask God for wisdom and understanding. He wants us to see purpose and intention in all the things He leads us to and all the things He is leading us through as well. We are not being called to mindless ritual and worship, but He is calling us to mindful trusting and enjoying His presence and His glory.

This requires us to grow in wisdom. But we must desire wisdom and ask God for it, not because He is playing games with us, but because He wants us to learn to depend upon His faithfulness and generosity. God is not looking for mindless automatons, but He is looking to create a people who truly understand the depth of their need and the extent His inexhaustible generosity.

All of this recognizes that there will be some challenges ahead in the new year. Most of us will face some personal or family crisis. Many of us will continue to struggle to make ends meet. The Church will continue to fall out of favor. We will be faced with the daily question of whether we will trust God and His ways, or will we look to our own thoughts and schemes? Will we see God make us into a people who bring honor and glory to Him name, or will we settle for making ourselves comfortable?

Will it be shown that our trust and devotion to Him is greater than our fears and shortcomings? Pray with me that we would be found trusting Him all the more in the days the come.

In His Grip & Grace
Pastor Mitch