



**March
2016**

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

WWW.FHEFC.ORG

Email: office@fhefc.org

Phone: 815-877-1919



Birthdays This Month

- March 1 Wendy Boehme
Larissa Lownsdale
- March 3 Jon Leinbaugh
Lavon Rowell
- March 9 Betty Bouma
- March 13 Sandra Hanson
Arletta Locascio
- March 16 Debbie Gangel
- March 18 Peggy Clow
- March 19 Becky Stubbs
- March 21 Amanda Evans
- March 24 Kira Saylor
- March 26 Marie Lane
- March 29 David Tregay
- March 30 Emily Meyerdirk
Charles Vertin
- March 31 Lori Morse

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

Contacting Pastor Mitch

If you need something from the Church Office or Pastor Mitch, Please Call or Text him at

(815) 391-3133

Or email him at
mitch@ihgg.net

or visit his blog ihgg.net

Special Dates

Please make special note of these dates coming up this month

March 13th

Nate & Courtney Reynolds
Sharing about their ministry at Michigan State University
Sunday School & Missions Moments

March 24th

Maundy Thursday Service
Come and remember the Lord's Supper as instituted before Jesus' death and resurrection

March 27th

Dave & Angie Ziel
Sharing about their ministry in Costa Rica
Sunday School & Missions Moments

March 30th

AWANA Awards Night
Come celebrate with our Awana Clubs as we recognize their accomplishments this year.

Weekly Schedule

Sunday Morning

- 9 a.m. Sunday School
- 10 a.m. Fellowship Time
- 10:25 a.m. Worship Service

Mondays

- 9:30 a.m. Ladies Bible Study

Wednesdays

- 5:30 p.m. Meal
- 6:30 p.m. AWANA
- 6:30 p.m. Adult Bible Study

Saturday

- 8 a.m. Men's Prayer Group

Check Out The Church Website

If you are looking for the latest sermons, dates, schedules or other information, check out the church website
www.FHEFC.org

Pastor's Blog

You can also check out Pastor Mitch's blog at

www.ihgg.net

You can find out the latest of what is on his mind and other issues you may find interesting. You can also ask him questions.

What is the Gospel? Part 1

If you have been reading my newsletter articles all these years, then you will recognize this series articles I will be rerunning the next several months. Why do this? Because we need to remember the foundational truths of Christianity. In particular, until we have the elementary truths established, there is little hope to progress or mature. Agreement on The Gospel is particularly important for us to truly have fellowship with one another. This is true as individuals and it is true as a church with other churches.

How often do you ask yourself this question: What is the Gospel? Or what does it mean to be a Christian?

I hear a lot of talk about the Gospel, but I hear little that accurately reflects the true nature of the Gospel. It seems the gospel of today treats Jesus like an infomercial – “Try Jesus for three easy payments of \$19.95, and He will make everything in your life better. Of course you do not have to change anything else. Money back guarantee, less shipping and handling.”

I wish I could say the Church was wrestling with this as a major issue, but in these days where all we do is count numbers “decisions for Christ,” is anyone disturbed by the number of people who seem to be converted over and over, “rededicate their lives” over and over? Has anyone stopped to ask what is wrong with the message we are proclaiming? Are we really proclaiming The Gospel of Jesus Christ, or are we proclaiming a gospel of “easy-believism” to make ourselves and our churches feel like we are doing something good.

My intention over the next few months is to look at what the Bible holds up as the Gospel or Good News.

One of the most succinct statements of the Gospel is given to us by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians:

“³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.”

1 Corinthians 15:3-5 NAU

1. Christ Died for Our Sins

The good news of the Gospel begins with bad news. Jesus Christ had to die to save us from our sins. Because we have sinned, we all live and die under a death sentence (see Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23). We are unable to save ourselves from this death sentence because God is infinitely just and we are utterly corrupted by sin. God is also infinitely loving, so He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die in our place, taking the punishment we so rightly deserve (see Romans 5:8-11).

The Gospel necessarily contains the confrontation of Sin. To lack a discussion of this truth along with God’s justice and wrath towards sin, short-circuits the Gospel. If you hear a Gospel presentation with these, then the Gospel has not been presented. Sinners must know what they are being saved from to truly believe. Certainly God’s love in sending Jesus is an obvious part of this as well.

2. According to the Scriptures

This may or may not be obvious, but part of the Gospel is remembering and pointing to the source of our authority, the Scriptures. We have not made up this story about Jesus, but God has given us this truth. Romans 10:17 tells us that the sharing of the Scriptures is vehicle the Holy Spirit uses to bring faith to the sinner.

3. He was buried & He was raised on the third day

This is necessary to believe, because of the implications otherwise. If Jesus did not really die, then there is no sacrifice for sins (see Hebrews 9). If Jesus was just acting, then our faith in His sacrifice for our sins is a sham.

Just as important is the fact that Jesus not only died, He rose from the dead on the third day. If there is no death, there can be no resurrection. If there is no resurrection, then there is no hope of eternal life. Paul is making this very argument in the larger context of 1 Corinthians 15.

These are essential parts of the Gospel. To leave them out or to nullify them is to nullify the Gospel and salvation. Jesus’ death and resurrection are absolutely essential.

4. He Appeared to Cephas & the Twelve

The Scriptures are the record of those who personally lived with Jesus, watched Him suffer and die, and not only saw but touched the risen Jesus. The Holy Spirit inspired these men to write down what they saw and heard from Jesus’ own mouth. It is their testimony that we read and hear when we read the Scriptures. It is God’s design that the Gospel would pass from one person to another with the Scriptures to provide authority and objective testimony to what one generation shares with another.

It is these truths about Jesus and ourselves that form the heart of the Gospel, but the implications go far beyond this concise statement. We will look at them further in the months to come.

This month, I would like you to think about these questions: What evidence or changes should be expected of the new believer? Is our response only a prayer? What about repentance – is repentance required for salvation?

In His Grip & Grace
Pastor Mitch