

Oakleaves



Pastor Reed ministering in Tanzania in February

A note from Pastor Reed

How Then Shall We Pray?

FBCO, thank you for warmly welcoming me to be your interim pastor. When I arrived in November you were kind and embracing as I began preaching, spending a bit of time with elders, doing some pre-marital counseling and so on. It has been a great joy for me to serve in this way. When I came, you were in the midst of 40 days of fasting and prayer. Those 40 days have come and gone... so let's eat! But let's not stop praying!

Do you remember Samuel? A pivotal figure in biblical history to be sure. He was the last of the judges, something of a priest and also a prophet. Samuel was the bridge that led Israel from the chaos of the period of the judges to the united monarchy under Saul, David and Solomon. But Samuel was also a man of prayer. In fact, this towering figure in the Old Testament understood prayerlessness to be a sin. Recall Samuel's farewell address to the nation when he said,

Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you. (1 Samuel 12:23)

FBCO what can we learn from Samuel?

First, we learn that prayer is not an elective in the Christian life. We are called, indeed commanded, to be people of prayer. Samuel doesn't see prayer as an add-on to his real agenda. Prayer is his agenda. Read through Paul's letters and you will find the same emphasis. Paul is constantly, devoting himself to praying for the churches to which he is writing. And he urges his readers to be people of prayer. So much so that the Apostle tells us to pray without ceasing! (1 Thes. 5:17).

Second, prayer is only prayer when we pray. A tongue twister to be sure, but I have found that it is easier to talk about praying than it is to actually pray. As Catherine Marshall writes,

One can believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ and feel no personal loyalty to Him at all -- indeed, pay no attention whatever to His commandments and His will for one's life. One can believe intellectually in the efficacy of prayer and never do any praying.

FBCO, we are in a time of transition, a period of waiting, of calling on God to supply a pastor to love, lead and shepherd our church. To that end, let us pray. Let us ask and keep asking, knock and keep knocking. And when God answers our prayer, let us keep praying. As the Puritan Samuel Chadwick writes,

The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from our prayerless work, or prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, he mocks our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray.

Third, Samuel invites us to pray big prayers. Not just prayers asking God to make our sick friends well, those prayers are necessary and good, but Samuel invites us to pray prayers that will move heaven and earth. Right after he commits himself to praying for the nation of Israel he says,

Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you. (1 Samuel 12:24)

Here is a definitive hint regarding the content of Samuel's prayer. He is asking God to keep the people's hearts supple, soft and faithful. In the midst of this dialogue with the nation Samuel warns the people,

...Do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. (1 Samuel 12:20)

Let's pray big prayers for FBCO and for other gospel-centered churches of Ojai. Let us ask that God will do more than we can ask or even imagine in our church and in our town.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20)

Church family, FBCO, let us pray!

Inside this issue

- Youth and Family Ministry.....2
- Baptism Sunday.....2
- Thank You Note.....3
- Summer Mission3
- Pastoral Search.....3
- Women's Ministry.....4
- Women's Book Club4
- Care Ministry.....5
- Birthday Reflections5
- Pictures6
- Birthdays and Anniversaries.....7



Youth and Family Ministry

Hello Church Family,

I can't believe that summer is almost upon us already! Got a lot of fun things planned for this summer for both youth and children. Starting with our youth, we have your typical outdoor activities such as beach days, hiking, and worship around a fire pit. The hope is through these events our students will be able to grow deeper in their relationships with each other as well as invite their friends that wouldn't come to a church event otherwise.

One major event that we are planning on doing with the youth is a lake camping trip at the beginning of summer. The Reynolds family is blessing us by coming along and bringing their boat so we can spend the day on the water. I will be leading us through a retreat series titled Pause. In it, we will learn how to seek God. I know for myself and many others, retreats like these are where we started or developed our faith. The goal is to have the youth recognize the need to "pause" and connect with God in their busy lives.

Over summer we will be going through the Book of Judges. You read that right. For many Christians, Judges is a book that we like to ignore because it has a lot of difficult things to talk

about. I believe the more difficult it is for us to understand why God would include it in His holy word, the more we as Christians need to address it. Especially when it comes to our youth whose faith will be challenged by the world using Judges. I know this to be true because when I was in college, I had non-Christians ask me how can I worship God when this is in our scriptures. The reason the Book of Judges is found in scripture is because it shows the wickedness of humans. There is a recurring statement, "Each did what was right in their own eyes for there was no king." The Israelites had the Law of God given to them by Moses yet they failed to follow and chaos came. The goal is to show our youth the same is true in our lives today. The world is going to try and convince you that it is "lame" to submit to the authority of God. Life is somehow more fun when we make the decisions based on what is righteous living for ourselves.

Children's Church is partnering with the Well Church as well as Redemption to put on a Vacation Bible School! I don't have the dates quite yet for it but be on the lookout for those. It is going to take a village to put on the VBS this summer so start praying now about volunteering your time to serve.

-Pastor Jack Jellison

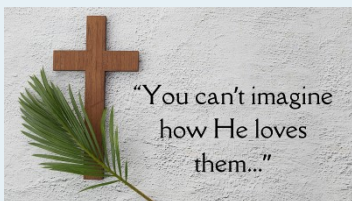
God's Love

Thank you to Hannah Hassien for her expert photography! Thank you to Jack Jellison for putting the pictures in order! Thank you to Tina Abe for singing the song "You Can't Imagine." Thank you to our Lord and Savior for loving us!

We all worked together to show God's love!

-Jan Worsham

(Edited to add: Thank you, Jan, for writing the script and putting the whole thing together!)



Baptism Sunday



Frank sharing his testimony

We were blessed to witness Pastor Jack baptize Frank Martinez in February. Let's keep lifting up Frank in prayer as he walks in the newness of life in Christ.

Pastor Jack, Frank, and Philip Woodall



Raised with Christ!

Thank You from Winnie

I'd like to thank all of you, my wonderful Church family, for all your support, kindness, love and prayers through yet another difficult, trying year for me, being here at the CCC. In my eyes, as a lot of you already know, I think I have been here way too long. But every week I came to church, I was reminded that it's all on God's time, not mine. What a difficult lesson that is. Lots of praying helps.

This last week, I met another patient here who is ready to be discharged but has no home to go to and she is a caregiver. Lo and behold, I have a home and an empty spare bedroom and I need a caregiver to help me transition home! Thank you, Lord Jesus! Our discharge date is May 1!! Hallelujah! I think I'm beginning to see part of God's big picture and that is that I am going to help somebody else out just as they are helping me out. And oh so many have helped me out. This shows me just how I can help others, no matter what my situation in life is. We all can. . And once again, I thank our Lord Jesus and all of you for all you do. Glory be to God, He is such a loving Father and teacher.

Love, Winnie Major



Pastoral Search

The Pastoral Search Committee feel led to bring before the FBCO family, Ben Ruhl, to receive your confirmation as Senior Pastor. The committee has spent many hours reviewing candidates, listening to sermons, assessing doctrinal and theological positions, praying, interviewing, and seeking the Lord's will in this important step of faith for our church. They are excited to bring Ben and his family to Ojai the weekend of May 4-5. The schedule of events is as follows:



Ben and his wife Olivia and their two children

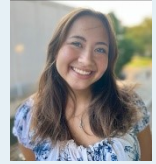
Saturday, May 4: All church potluck from 5-6 PM, followed by a time of Q&A for Ben and his wife Olivia 6-8 PM. Everyone is to bring a main dish **PLUS** a side dish (Last names A-L) or a dessert (M-Z).

Sunday, May 5: We will all gather for the morning worship service at 10 AM, with Ben presenting the message. Immediately following the service, a congregational meeting will occur and a member's vote (90% "Yes" vote required) will be taken to confirm our new senior pastor.

Please make every attempt to be a part of this important time for our church family. Come ready with your questions!

Cami Abe—Summer Mission

I will be traveling with our campus ministry SOON Movement Global to Kyoto,



Japan, this summer. We will be reaching out to Doshisha University and Kyoto University to disciple and witness to their students. These are the two largest private universities in Japan, and they are filled with students under immense pressure. This stress often leads to severe mental health issues, and we will be going to share with them Jesus and the hope of the Gospel. I'd love your support!

Prayer: The best support is prayer!

♥ Pray for my strength and confidence as we approach students and share our faith

♥ Pray for unity for our team

♥ Pray for the hearts of the students and that the Lord will open them to the hope of the Gospel

Financial: Along with prayer, I could use your help financially. I will need to raise \$5,000 to pay for travel, housing, and ministry expenses.

How to give:

Use the QR code below or go to: <https://give.smglobal.org/socal04/>

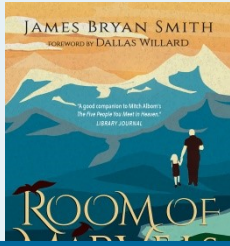
Select "Give to Japan summer mission"

Under purpose select Abe, Cami

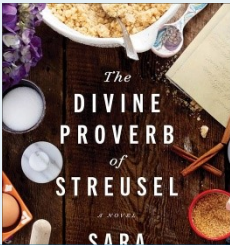
Thank you for your support!



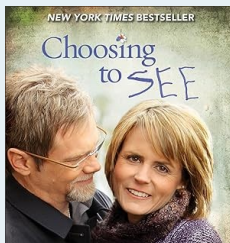
Book Club Selections



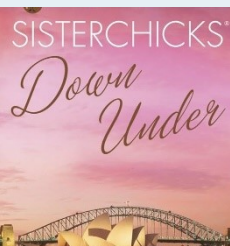
Room of Marvels by
James Bryan Smith
May 18



*The Divine Proverb of
Streusel* by Sara
Brunsvold—June 8



Choosing to SEE by
Mary Beth Chapman
July 13



*Sister Chicks Down
Under* by Robin Jones
Gunn—August 10

Women's Ministry

Greetings! It's hard to believe that our women's Bible study has already finished a book in 2024. We were all blessed by Priscilla Shirer's book *God is Able*. After a couple weeks' hiatus, we went right into a study of the book of Luke from Lisa Harper. The Lord is clearly showing His heart and compassion for the outcast, the outlier, and the overlooked. We meet Wednesday mornings at 9:30 AM in Smith Hall. Childcare is provided. Our current study will end at the end of May and we'll take break during the summer

and start again in the fall.

A big thank you to all who have served in various ministries. From wrangling tots in the Toddler room to cleaning up after a memorial service, we are blessed by your heart and love for FBCO.

As we move through 2024, we'd like to encourage those of you who haven't yet found a place to serve to step out in faith. There are many opportunities for volunteers in our church family, and we'd love to see all the unique gifts of

the body being utilized. If you're wondering where you might fit in, please talk with Cyndi or Tina and we'll get you plugged in!

-Tina & Cyndi



Women's Bible Study

Women's Book Club

Book Club meets casually on the second Saturday of the month in Smith Hall for discussion and fellowship. Women of all ages are welcome to attend and bring a friend (no sign-up necessary). Books are chosen by Christian authors in a variety of genres and can be found online or through the library. Many of our selections can be checked out through the Camarillo Library in an audiobook or ebook format. Upcoming books are featured to the left.

If you have any questions, need help finding books, or would like to be added to our email list for reminders, please contact Jill Adams:
jillythebanker@aol.com
or 805-890-0365



The Book Club visiting Camarillo Library

Care Ministry

Summer 2024 Care Ministry

What a privilege it is to serve as Deaconess of Care Ministry at FBCO. Many hands make the work light and for that I am extremely grateful. I encourage you, if you are not actively serving our church body, please contact our church staff and ask what areas your gifts can be put to use. I know you will be blessed beyond measure.

For those who may not know, Care Ministry encompasses the following:

SUNDAY GREETERS: Greet and welcome people before each Sunday service. This is a fun and low commitment way to greet our wonderful family of believers.

CARD MINISTRY: Our sweet Stephanie Paige sends out greeting cards for birthdays, anniversaries and encouragement. Thank you Stephanie for the encouragement and care you send out via US Mail.

MEAL TRAIN: Coordinate an online meal train calendar and/or volunteering to make and take a meal to someone. Please contact Tina Abe in the office or me if you would like meals provided to you and your family.

PRAYER CHAIN: Debbie Evans is our wonderful prayer warrior along with many who have signed up and are committed to pray for others as the need and opportunity arises.

HOME: Help Our Moms Endure ~ This ministry is near and dear to my heart. We have "seasoned" moms and wonderful mom-like volunteers that are willing and able to help our young moms with childcare, errands and household tasks.

Please reach out to me if you have a need or would like to serve in any of the above areas. flowwhite1@gmail.com or (805) 701-4397

I Peter 4:10 (NAS) As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Joyfully in His service,

Flo White



Some Reflections on My Birthday...



Nineteen years ago today for my birthday I told Philip I needed to stop drinking. Philip was a "happy" social drinker, I am an alcoholic. Loving well, he came along with me. I am so very blessed to have a

husband and best friend to share this life with. God has given him gifts that awe me every day. Personally, he is my greatest supporter. He encourages me through the darkness and is so very, very patient. A beautiful example of a man who walks with Jesus. He takes my breath away.

Some may not acknowledge God's warning of generational sins, the commandments of God, or weakness and behavioral patterns handed down. Raised in an unstable home. Alcoholic parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents many of whom died from complications of alcoholism. Was I predisposed to depression and addictions?

Learned behavior as a child, rebellion as a teen - addictions took a deep hold on my body, mind and a very dark place in my soul. The fight is real. It's a fight for your life and those you love. The dependency and desires fade, but the battle for your mind is continuous.

Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Every day is a choice.

Philip and I lost our brothers to alcoholism just two months apart. Did we do enough? Why? So much life lost, so much help available. It comes down to bowing our knee, humbling ourselves, asking for help and being accountable. It's a choice. I thank God He gave me another day.

Choose well.

-Deborah Woodall

Pictures



Fearless Leaders: Steve Hassien, Derrek Swezey, Philip Woodall, and Chris Abe

♥Job Richard Scott♥

Born February 5, 2024



Easter morning in Children's Church

Above: Ivy Granger

Right: Chop, Max, and Hezekiah



A special birthday for Cyndi Hassien with a beautiful cake by Sherri Hoover



Winter Camp 2024!



Birthdays

May

Matthew Adams	5	Steve Hassien	15
Elijah Robison	6	Michael Hoover	17
Kaylie Turner	10	Stephen Rohweller	19
Vesta Hunt	11	Jodine Hammerand	23
Misha Mathieu	12	George Cole	24
Jackson Reynolds	12	Bill Handley	24
Jared Reynolds	12	Jane Swezey	25

June

Martha Starkweather	3	Sue Lakes	20
Cami Abe	16	Hannah Hassien	26
Valerie Bullock	16	Barry Babcock	28
Sherri Hoover	17	Jenny Owen	29
Jonathon Nordyke	17		

July

Susan Holland	1	Ken Hartenstein	17
Rod Owen	1	Brian Turner	20
Kara Ralston	3	Laura Reyes	21
Nick Nordyke	15	Jana Fletcher	22
Derek Swezey	15	Laurie Norris	22
Tom Gibson	16		

Anniversaries

May

Darrel & Kara Ralston	1
Jim & Marcia Hall	2
Dave & Jackie Rohweller	14
Steve & Susan Holland	18

June

Jim & Linda Verkuil	9
Philip & Deborah Woodall	10
Joe & Debbie Evans	11
Derek & Jane Swezey	20
Matt & Jan Sommer	21
Brian & Sarah Turner	29
Jim & Jo Jacobsen	30

July

Joey & Emily LeSuer	13
Harry & Vesta Hunt	30



“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1-2

First Baptist Church of
Ojai

Office Hours:

Tuesday—Friday: 9 AM to 1 PM

Phone: 805-633-9055

Email: office@fbcojai.org

Financial Update

Average monthly offering needed to meet budget: \$24,954

YTD as of March 31, 2024:

Actual Giving: **\$86,524**

Actual Expenses: **\$55,110**

Budgeted Giving,: **\$74,862**

Budgeted Expenses: **\$89,051**

GIVING BREAKDOWN for our MISSIONS 2024:

Philip and Corenne Smith: \$2,780

Dan and Sarah Chetti: \$2,780

Wes and Penny Chappell: \$2,780

E&K Northwest Africa: \$2,780

ABCO FLASH: \$2,225

Short-term Missions: \$7,560

Life Choices: \$1,080

Good News Club: \$750

Topa Topa School: \$1,080

Operation Christmas Child: \$100

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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

