

Journey News

A publication of Evangelical Free Church

Journey Vision

BY SENIOR PASTOR TOM LOYOLA

I am excited about the vision God has given me for our church! I want to tell you all about it in this edition of our monthly newsletter. In this first article, I will tell you how God gave me this vision ... *and how our elders have wholeheartedly supported it from day one*, I will give you a glimpse of the entire vision, and I will answer a couple of key questions. I will give further detail about specific parts of the vision in the articles that follow this one. Let's start with the questions.

We need to start by asking, what do I mean by "vision"? A vision is how we pursue our mission. But wait, that brings up another question of definition: what is a "mission"? Our mission is the job God has given us to do. What does God want the Church of His Son, Jesus Christ, to do? The Bible tells us very clearly what that job is: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." These are the words of Jesus to His disciples just before He returned to heaven. (See Matthew 28:18-20. Other passages repeat the Lord's assignment to us in different words, such as Luke 24:44-48, John 20:21, Acts 1:8.) This is our mission and it has not changed. It will not change. We have worded this mission in a phrase with which you are very familiar: "forming followers of Jesus who impact their world." That is our mission.

Now, back to "vision." Vision is the way by which we try to accomplish the mission God has given us. Our vision describes how we will actually go about obeying the commission the Lord has given us.

This brings us to another question: why a new vision? Because we want to fulfill God's call more effectively and more intentionally. We believe we can do better at what God has called us to do, and we want to do better. The reason for our new vision is this: it is to refocus us on our mission, to re-energize us in pursuing it ... to refresh our commitment to the mission and to reinvigorate us in doing it. We want to "step up our game" so we will be more fruitful in the Lord's work (John 15:5). This will bring glory to the Father (John 15:8).

With those basic questions answered, I want now to tell you how God gave me this vision. It all began with a vision for a new approach to corporate worship—that is, how we go about worshiping the Lord in our Sunday morning worship services. This vision has been percolating in my heart for some 25 years (more on that in my Worship Journey article!). About 4 years ago I actually put it into words in a conversation with Sue Ann. Her response surprised me and seriously got my attention. With tears in her eyes, she earnestly said, "I want that. I need that!" I took her response as an indication of God's leading, that this vision for worship was from Him and was no longer something merely to think about or just talk about—it was something to be acted upon.

My understanding that this was indeed from God was further confirmed when I shared my vision for worship with the Elder Board at our retreat in October 2015.

continued on Page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

Journey Vision	Page 1 & 2
Worship as a Journey	Page 2
Worship Journey	Page 3 & 4
Outreach Journey	Page 4
Caring Journey	Page 5
Equipping Journey	Page 5 & 6
Pray for Journey	Page 6
Frequently Asked Questions	Page 7
What's in a Name?	Page 8
Etcetera [on Journey]	Page 9 & 10
'National Bible Bee Competition Show' leads family-friendly spotlight	Page 10
Signs & Wonders	Page 11
Celebrate Our Church Family	Page 11
Newsletter Going Digital	Page 11
Summer Camp 2018	Page 11

CALENDAR

June 3	Communion Sunday
June 3	Vision Sharing & Lunch
June 5-8	Unite Camp for Youth
June 9	Men of Honor Breakfast
June 9	Piano Recital
June 10	E-Free & Me
June 16	Watoto Concert
June 17	Father's Day
June 21	M&Ms
June 22	Grounds Work Day
.....	
July 1	Communion Sunday
July 4	Independence Day
July 16-20	Summer Science Camp
July 22	Church Picnic

Journey Vision continued

BY SENIOR PASTOR TOM LOYOLA

They immediately and unanimously agreed that this was the direction we needed to go. We began to take steps to implement it but then we experienced turnover in our worship leader position. The vision for worship was put on hold until a new leader was in place.

During that transitional time, my vision developed beyond the one area of worship. It grew to include three more focal points, becoming an overarching vision for the future of our church. And again, I put these further thoughts into words in another conversation with Sue Ann. As we talked together, the vision took solid shape, the four focal points emerged, and the unifying word “journey” came out. This vision was all about journeying with Jesus. After all, He does invite people to go on a journey with Him: “Follow Me and I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). Each of the four focal points conveyed that sense of a journey, identifying different aspects of our journey with Jesus:

- **Worship Journey:** our new approach to worship is an intentional journey through the gospel
- **Outreach Journey:** our new approach to outreach is how we will journey into our community with the good news of the gospel
- **Caring Journey:** journeying together with Jesus as His family, we will truly care for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ
- **Equipping Journey:** we will intentionally equip believers in Jesus with what they need to take the next step in their journey with Christ

Then a compelling idea came to the forefront. With the word “journey” being such a dominant theme in this vision, it would be powerfully meaningful to rename the Evangelical Free Church of Clinton to “Journey Church.” That name would clearly remind us of our vision, help us as a body pursue God’s mission, and communicate clearly to our community that this is a church that is on a “journey” to pursue God with passion and purpose.

This, all of this, was BIG! Big change! Why even consider going in this direction? Because we want to do better what God has clearly called us to do, to more intentionally fulfill the mission He has given us.

And so, on April 29, 2016, I shared the entire vision with the Elder Board at our spring retreat ... the whole enchilada. Borrowing a phrase from the business world, I told them I was going to share a “big, hairy audacious goal” for our church. They listened intently as I shared Journey Vision with them, diagramming out the four areas on the flip chart. How did they respond? With unanimous and unhesitating support! Even for the name change! God was in this. It was again confirmed to me that this vision was indeed from God.

Indeed, the kind of support I saw in the Elder Board has been repeated with staff, with the Creative Worship Team and music/AV teams (as I shared with them the worship component), with all with whom I shared Journey Vision in part or in whole. Were there questions? Of course! However, supportive receptivity characterized the responses.

The most compelling affirmation came on April 6, 2018 at another elders retreat. To this retreat, the Elder Board invited men who had previously served as elders but who were not presently on the board. Besides myself, there were ten men gathered on that Friday afternoon. To a man, each one affirmed that Journey Vision is God’s will for our church. Our time together culminated in a time of fervent, heartfelt prayer. Besides being tremendously encouraged by these men, I also felt charged by them to lead our church into Journey Vision.

And so it is our plan to launch Journey Vision on September 9, 2018. May the Lord be glorified.



Worship as a Journey

A Gospel-Centered Structure for Corporate Worship

The Call

Invitation to meet with God

Invocation

Expressing our desire for God to meet with us

Confession

Facing our sinfulness in light of God’s character

The Gospel

Hearing and receiving the Good News of God’s grace to us in Christ

Response to the Gospel

Gratefully rejoicing in God’s grace to us in Christ

God’s Word

Listening to God speak to us

Response to the Word

Resolving to glorify God

Benediction

Going with God’s Blessing

Worship Journey

BY SENIOR PASTOR TOM LOYOLA

In this article, I will share with you where my vision for worship came from, what it looks like, and why we are stepping into this new approach.

As I mentioned in my cover article, my vision for Journey Worship has been percolating in my heart for many years. During seminary, the Lord opened my eyes to both personal and corporate worship. With regard to personal worship, I found my personal time in the Bible becoming very dry and homework-like about 2 to 3 years into seminary. Then God brought about a conversation with a missionary Sue Ann and I met during a six-week mission trip to Spain. What came out of that conversation was an entirely new approach: I focused my personal time in the Bible exclusively toward getting to know God. I looked for what God's Word revealed about the Lord and then I would respond to that revelation (e.g. with a prayer or song to the Lord). Over the course of several years, this transformed me from being a student of the Bible to being a worshiper of the Author of the Bible—the Lord God. This made a profound and lasting change in my life.

With regard to corporate worship, I had a professor at seminary who challenged me to think more deeply about worship, about what God's people actually gathered to do when they met for worship. One very significant event during that time was when I visited a church which practiced a very different approach to worship than I had ever experienced before. Sometimes that approach is called "high church" or "liturgical." The tradition in which I was raised would have called their approach empty ritual. However, any approach to worship can be empty ritual if the worshiper is not responding to the Lord from his or her heart. What I experienced at that church was a Bible-based worship service. The prayers and readings, in particular, were remarkably rich, filled with strong theology. I was astounded and moved.

Another very formative experience for me was when I planned the worship services for 10 years in a church Sue Ann and I served in Dallas. This gave me the opportunity to build upon what God had shown me in seminary about worship. I studied the Scriptures, read books on worship and thought deeply about it. I planned the worship services very intentionally, thinking carefully about how one part of the service related to the next—the importance of the order of worship.

These experiences ultimately gave rise to what we will now practice in our church—worship as a journey through the Gospel. This weekly Sunday journey together has eight steps: call to worship, invocation, confession of sin, proclamation of the Gospel, response to the Gospel, listening to God's Word, response to God's Word, and benediction. (See the sidebar on Page 2 for a description of these steps.) Although we will take these same steps each week in our worship journey, our services will not always look the same. Many of these steps can be expressed in different ways. For instance, the call to worship can be expressed through a prayer, through a song, through reading a

passage of Scripture (e.g. Psalm 100:1-3), or through words the worship leader will say. This kind of variety will help keep our services fresh.

However, what is more important than variety in how we worship is the heart we bring to worship. Jesus tells us that "the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him" (John 4:23). Isn't that amazing? The Father seeks for people who worship Him in spirit and truth. We want to be that people. A people seeking Jesus from the heart. A people with hearts longing to know the Lord and to bring Him glory. A people who gathers on Sunday morning "to come to the Father through Jesus the Son and give Him the glory, great things He has done" (hymn, "To God Be the Glory").

Why are we adopting this new approach to worship? Because we want to worship the Lord more intentionally, to come into His presence with a purposefulness which is reflected in each step of our journey. I believe God will be pleased with this approach and I believe God will transform us as we take this worship journey. Why transformed? Because "we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

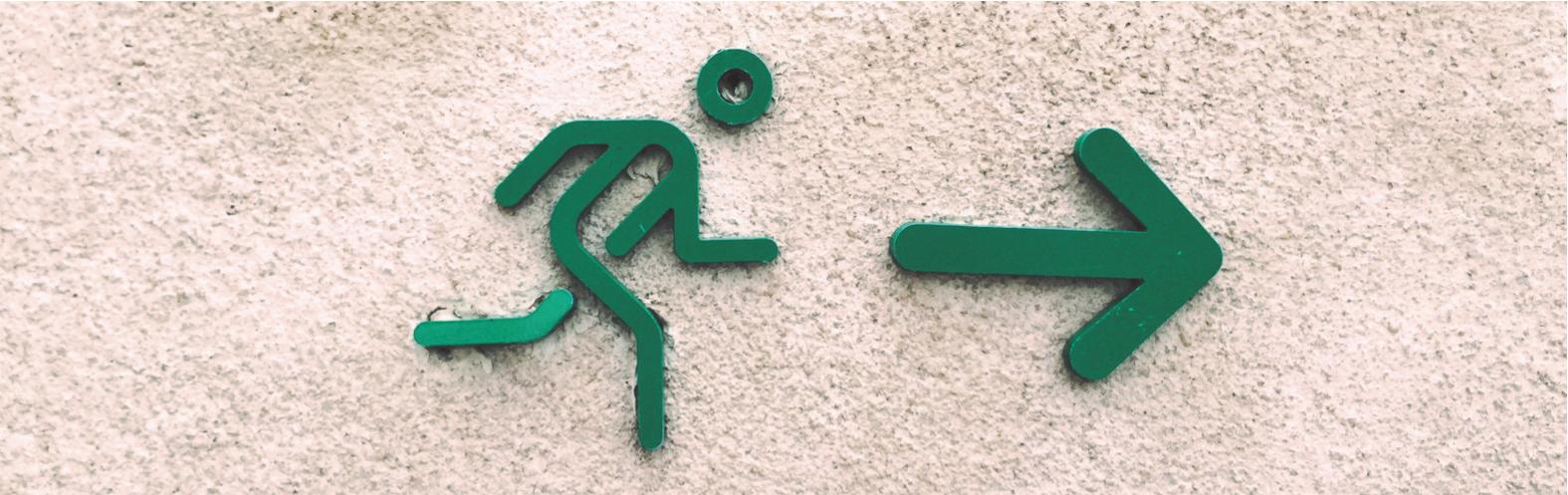
I also believe that this approach to worship is life-transformational because it is gospel-centered: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God. As we return to the Gospel each week, and worship the Lord in a journey through the Gospel, there is no telling what God might be pleased to do, powerfully in us, among us, and through us.

This approach to worship is not new. God's people have been taking these steps in worship for centuries. But be assured that this approach is not old in the sense of being outdated and irrelevant. One experience God used to rekindle this vision for worship in my heart took place during our 2014 mission trip to Booneville, Arkansas. On the way there, the team of youth and adults from our church worshiped at Mystery Church in Joplin, Missouri. The worship service took the very steps I outline above, but it was done in a very contemporary fashion. I was greatly encouraged, not only to experience this worship journey again, but also to see this "liturgical" approach done in a current style.

Worship Journey is at the heart of the Journey Vision. Yes, the entire Journey Vision sprang from my vision for worship. But more than that, worship is our highest priority—the Father seeks worshipers (John 4:23). Worship is our destiny (see Revelation 5, especially verses 11-14).

continued on Page 4

Worship Journey continued: John Piper opens his book on missions with these words: “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.” (*Let the Nations Be Glad*, p 11)



Outreach Journey

BY SENIOR PASTOR TOM LOYOLA

A key element of our Journey Vision is outreach. In His commission to us, the Lord Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). We want to be passionate “goers,” journeying into our community to make disciples—“forming followers of Jesus who impact their world.”

Three important characteristics will describe this outreach journey.

(1) It will be sustained. In other words, this initiative will be long term. This will be new for us. As a church we have reached out into the community in many ways through short-term efforts. Those kinds of efforts are good. They will continue. However, over the past six years the elders have talked about and desired our church to reach out into our community through a sustained ministry effort. One that continues year after year. Now is the time.

(2) It will be an outreach in which all age groups within our church can participate. We want this to be something “owned” by our church as a whole, something in which every person can have a part. By engaging together in this outreach, we can encourage and strengthen each other in what is, to many, a scary thing to do—reaching out to others and telling them about Jesus. In fact, by working together in this sustained outreach we may very well be emboldened to reach out with the good news of Jesus to others around us in our daily lives. I truly hope that this happens, for all of us.

(3) Most importantly, this outreach will be a platform for the gospel. In other words, we want this effort to have as its intentional goal the telling of the message of the gospel for the salvation of lost people. We are surrounded by thousands of people who are “separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel

and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). They are headed to an eternity of torment, cut off from God forever (Matthew 25:46). They need to hear the good news “that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). We want to be “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20) who share this good news because “the gospel ... is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). The only hope of heaven that anyone has is in Jesus Christ: trusting in Him alone, believing that His death provided forgiveness for my sins and that His resurrection guarantees me eternal life. Indeed, before the Lord Jesus returned to heaven, He told His followers to go forth proclaiming this good news: “And [He] said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem’” (Luke 24:46-47).

By now you may be asking, “So what is our new outreach effort?” Good question! We are currently researching outreach options which meet the above three criteria. Pray for God’s clear direction. With God’s help we will identify our Outreach Journey on that very important date, September 9.

What we are talking about in this part of Journey Vision is evangelism, one of our six core values. We want to evangelize more intentionally. We want to do better at what Jesus has so clearly called us to do. That’s what Outreach Journey is all about.

Caring Journey

BY SENIOR PASTOR TOM LOYOLA



God’s desire for His people is for them, for *us*, to be a family. Frequently throughout the New Testament Christians are referred to as brothers and sisters, and even as mothers and fathers. (See 1 Timothy 5:1-2.) Jesus teaches us to address God in prayer as “our Father” (Matthew 6:9).

As members of the family of God we are to care for one another, truly. As we journey together with Jesus, we are to care for each other along the way.

Listen to three of the many verses where we find God’s call for us to care for one another: “that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another” (1 Corinthians 12:25), “above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8), and “beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11). (Other verses you can read are Romans 12:10, Ephesians 4:2 and 4:32, and 1 Thessalonians 3:12.)

Note especially the words of Jesus in John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” If we want people around us to know that we are followers of Jesus, we need to show this to them by loving each other, by caring for one another as a church family.

Now caring for one another in our church is nothing new. We do care for each other. We are grateful for the ways mutual care and love are being expressed in the body. In fact, we already have an area we call “caring ministries.” This includes the ministries of the deaconesses and of the visitation team. The people serving in those ministries do a phenomenal job of extending very practical care to members of the body.

Where we especially want to see further progress in Caring Journey is through our Life Groups. We launched Life Groups in the fall of 2014. Our vision for Life Groups is captured in the phrase, “Connecting, Caring, Community.” It is our desire that all who regard our church as their home church will be engaged in a Life Group. It is there—in the context of a small group focused on praying, learning from the Bible, and sharing life—that true caring can take place. It is there that we can be real with one another, open and transparent about our own personal journeys ... weeping with those who weep, rejoicing with those who rejoice, bearing one another’s burdens. We can do better at that. We want all of our Life Groups to move forward in fulfilling the vision of connecting, caring, and community.

As we look forward to the Caring Journey, the challenge of 1 John 3:18 is very fitting: “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”

Equipping Journey

BY SENIOR PASTOR TOM LOYOLA



The idea of “equipping” is presented quite clearly in Ephesians 4:11-13, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” As these verses indicate, God has given church leadership the task of preparing church members to minister within the church, helping them to be ready to do the work of God. Someone has summarized this goal as “every member a minister.”

Like Caring Journey, this is not new to our church. However, we want to be more intentional about helping one another take the next step toward maturity in Christ. We want to purposefully equip folks in our church to step further in discipleship, to step into serving, to step into leadership. This is the Equipping Journey.

Let me share an experience that motivated me to think about a specific aspect of equipping.

continued on Page 6

Equipping Journey continued:

Over the past couple of years, a theme that surfaced periodically in our elder meetings was our desire that ministry leaders would reproduce themselves, that they would mentor someone who participated with them in ministry and help them be ready to take over the leadership of that ministry. Whenever we would talk about that, I would think, “What about me? Am I reproducing myself in other men?” Out of that God placed in my heart the desire to instill in men the teaching and preaching skills God has developed in me: “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). This was very instrumental in arriving at the Equipping Journey component of the Journey Vision.

Even though this is part of the Journey Vision, we have already started! With the blessing of the elders to move forward, I developed a 2-year plan for equipping men to effectively teach and preach God’s Word. We call it “Bible Exposition Training.” Pastor John and I began this course of training last September. We just completed the first 9 months; the final 9 months will be completed in the 2018/2019 school year.

Bible Exposition Training is only part of the Equipping Journey. Pastor John is currently working on a plan for leadership development. Beyond these new initiatives, equipping is already taking place within other ministries of our church: children’s Sunday School and Awana, student ministries, Life Groups, Daughters of the King, and Men of Honor (take a look at the MOH calendar of events for this year and you will notice that the first two events are labeled as “equipping” events).

Equipping is taking place; we want to do it better. We want to purposefully equip each person for his or her next step forward in journeying with Jesus.

Pray for Journey

BY JIM NORMAN

Worship – bringing glory to God and lifting him up (Philippians 2:9-11, Rev. 5:13)

- Pastors, staff and worship team as they plan services
- Director of worship and worship/music team
- Church family’s individual worship in daily life
- Holy Spirit’s leading and moving

Outreach – sharing the Gospel for salvation (Matt. 28:19-20)

- Sustained community outreach with Gospel and Word
- Special events (Passion Experience, etc.)
- Individuals sharing the Gospel and being invitational
- Gospel presentation at Sunday worship
- Use of our facilities
- Missionaries we support

Caring – meeting physical and spiritual needs (Gal. 6: 2, 10)

- Within church family (Life Groups, deaconesses, visitation, pastors, individuals)
- Outside of church family (family, friends, neighbors...)
- For our missionaries
- Ongoing ministry of prayer to be persistent and fervent

Equipping – preparing the body for ministry and service, discipling others (Matt. 4: 19, 2 Tim. 3:16-17)

- Pastors, elders and staff efforts (sermons, classes, leadership...)
- Life Groups
- Children’s Sunday School and middle/high school youth
- Church body’s daily devotions, prayer and Word time
- Elder’s leadership and equipping roles
- Individual discipling and mentoring efforts

In all areas, pray that we are giving thanks and praise to God for what He has done, what He is doing and what He will do. Pray that we will follow obediently as God leads us into the future. Pray that God will position us for the most effective ministry as our community changes. Preeminent prayer goals are God’s glory and growth of His kingdom.



Journey - Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What will change on a Sunday morning service with Journey?**

You will notice two changes: (1) some parts of our worship will be new (such as a time of confession of sin) and (2) the sequence of the parts of our service will be different (call to worship, invocation, confession of sin, proclamation of the gospel, response to the gospel, listening to God's Word, responding to God's Word, and benediction). We will follow this order each week but the service will not be a carbon copy from week to week.
- 2. How does changing to Journey affect me?**

As you wholeheartedly step into Journey, this vision will help you mature in Christ. You will find God changing your life as you worship Him through our weekly gospel-centered worship journey. You will care for others and be cared for by others as you engage in a Life Group. You will partner with others in our church in helping lost people in our community experience salvation through Christ.
- 3. Will we be changing denominational affiliations or will we stay an EFCA?**

We will not change our denominational affiliation. We will stay with the EFCA.
- 4. Why are we changing to Journey?**

We are changing to Journey in order to do better what God has called us to do. Journey will help us refocus on our mission of "forming followers of Jesus who impact their world." We want to be reinvigorated in our pursuit of God's will and to pursue His will more intentionally. We want to bear more fruit for the Lord, bringing glory to God the Father.
- 5. Will we vote on the church's name change?**

Yes. The members of our church will vote on July 8 after the worship service.
- 6. What do we hope will happen by changing the name of the church to Journey Church?**

We hope that adopting the name Journey Church will help us in our mission by opening doors for us to speak to others about our journey with Jesus, by eliminating confusion arising from the name "Evangelical Free," and by reminding us of our vision—journeying with Jesus and inviting others to come along.
- 7. What all will change when we convert to Journey Church?**

The most noticeable changes will be our new approach to worship, a sustained outreach into the community, and our new name, Journey Church. Some things will remain the same. In time, as God wills, we will also see changes in our facilities as the renovations of our Facility Improvement Plan are completed.
- 8. Will any of our existing ministries change, such as DOK, MOH, and Life Groups?**

These ministries will continue. They play a critical role in the Equipping and Caring aspects of Journey.
- 9. What is the timetable to implement Journey?**

During June and July Pastor Tom will preach a sermon series on the different aspects of the Journey Vision. Two key dates are July 8, the date of the business meeting for approving our new name, and September 9, the launch date for Journey. On September 9 will be begin our new approach to worship and we will unveil our outreach strategy.
- 10. Will there be any physical changes to the church structure with the implementation of Journey?**

There will not be any facility renovations by our launch date, September 9. However, we do hope to have some renderings of proposed future changes to put on display on September 9.

What's in a Name?

BY SENIOR PASTOR TOM LOYOLA

Ah, yes! One of most visibly obvious changes in Journey Vision is changing the name of our church to Journey Church. What?! Yes, let me explain and allay a possible concern.

First, the possible concern: Are we leaving our denomination, the Evangelical Free Church of America? No! When I became the Senior Pastor of CEFC in 2004, one of the charges the elder board gave me was to strengthen our connection with the denomination. I believe I have faithfully discharged that responsibility through leading our church to increase its financial support of the EFCA, through serving personally in denominational leadership roles, and through regularly attending district and national EFCA events. I thank God that when He called me to this church He also called me into the EFCA and into the EFCA Central District in particular. It has been a great fit! We are not leaving the EFCA.

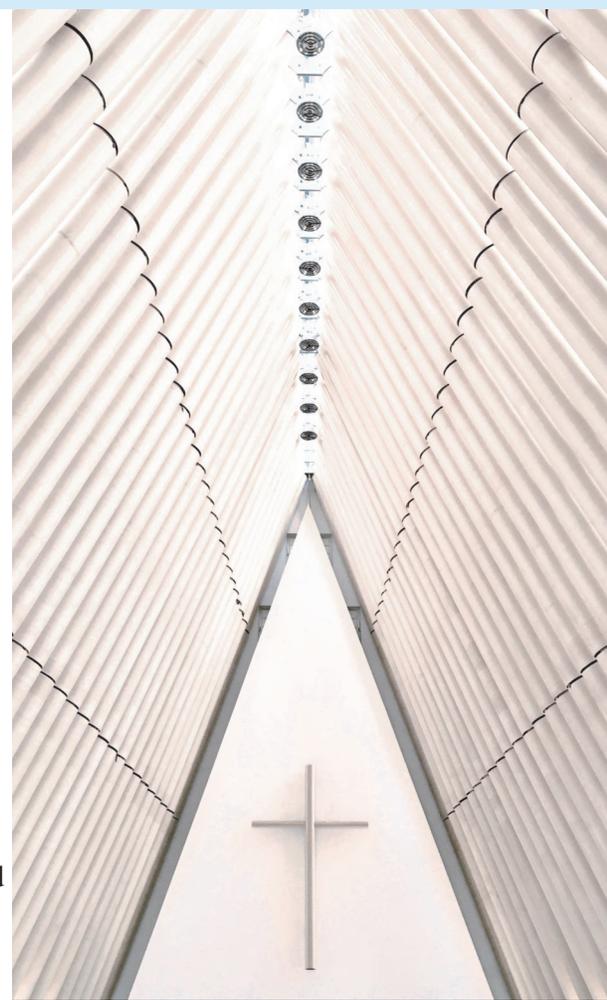
It may be helpful to know that many Evangelical Free churches do not have the words “Evangelical Free” in their names. Some have changed their names (e.g. our sister churches in Ames, now “Christ Community Church,” and in Cedar Rapids, now “Stonebridge Church”) and other churches have chosen not to include “Evangelical Free” in their names from their very beginning (e.g. “Cornerstone Church” in Marion, “Waukee Community Church” in Waukee). The directory of churches in our district, Central District EFCA, reveals many churches which do not have “Evangelical Free” in their names. Why is that? Read on! I believe the reason is the same as what I offer as an explanation for our decision.

Second, to explain: Why would we want to change our name? Let me offer two thoughts. (1) Our name, the Evangelical Free Church of Clinton, does not help us in fulfilling God’s mission for us. Sadly, because of the way our culture has developed over the years, our name is very misunderstood and, because of that, can be a barrier to pursuing our mission. How is it misunderstood? “Evangelical” is now commonly regarded as a voting bloc, as a certain demographic that pollsters talk about and politicians seek to woo over to their cause. That is not who we are. “Evangelical” is a wonderful word which speaks of our commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to the Bible. However, it is not understood in that way by folks at large. (2) “Evangelical Free” is now commonly understood to have the same sense as “caffeine free” and “sugar free”; that is, an “Evangelical Free” church is perceived as being a place where there are no evangelicals. This sounds humorous at first. Like, no way! I heard about this happening at a sister church in Wisconsin . . . and then it happened right here in our own worship center! A visitor asked me what our name meant. After I explained, he replied, “Oh. I thought it meant there were no evangelicals here.” Wow!

On the flip side, I believe changing our name to “Journey Church” will *help* us in fulfilling God’s mission. Again, let me offer two thoughts. (1) The name “Journey Church” aligns with our vision. In fact, it is a one-word description of our vision. Every time we use the name we are reminding ourselves of what it is we are about: journeying with Jesus and inviting others to come along. (2) The name “Journey Church” can open doors for conversations about Jesus. Imagine a dialogue between you and a friend in which you invite them to an event at our church. You: “Please come to the Passion Experience this Friday at our church.” Friend: “What church do you go to?” You: “Journey Church.” Friend: “Journey Church?” You: “Yes, we are on a journey with Jesus and would love for you to join the journey!” There! In just a few moments time you are able to mention the name of Jesus. God just might open the way from there to talk about the gospel.

It is very likely that people in your circles who know you attend E-Free will ask about why we changed our name to Journey Church. Again, this will open doors for you, for all of us, to speak to others about how we are on a journey with Jesus. It will open doors for us to be purposefully on mission.

What are our steps forward regarding changing the name of our church? On July 8, immediately following the worship service, we will have a business meeting. At that time the membership will vote on whether to change our name or not. With an affirmative vote we will begin the legal process, which takes about two months. Our goal is, then, to officially be Journey Church on September 9, the launch date for Journey Vision.



Etc. [on Journey]

BY SENIOR PASTOR TOM LOYOLA

There are several other aspects of Journey I want to share with you. I am grouping them together into one article, not because they are less important, not at all, but simply because I am writing less about each of them.

Prayer

Prayer is indispensable. Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for *apart from me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5). After pointing out our absolute inability, Jesus goes on to say, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, *ask whatever you wish*, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7). We are moving forward with Journey because we want to “bear much fruit.” So, let us pray to the Lord.

We want to pray. We *must* pray. Pray!

By praying to God about the Journey Vision we are acknowledging that (1) we want God’s will to be done, and that (2) we cannot do God’s will in our own strength. We need God’s help! We have given careful thought over time to Journey and we have worked diligently to launch Journey well. But that is not enough because the fulfillment of this vision is beyond our ability to pull off. Not to mention the fact that I am certain there is more than one “t” remaining to be crossed and more than one “i” needing to be dotted. But *now* is the time to move. We are stepping out in faith.

As an aid in praying for Journey, please use the guide in this newsletter entitled “Pray for Journey.”

Invite

For three years the staff has been working intentionally to help our church become more invitational. What does that mean? It means we want to reflect the way God invites people to come to Himself (see Isaiah 55:1-3 and Matthew 11:28) by doing the same thing ... inviting others—inside our church and outside—to journey with us as we journey with Jesus. After all, it was Jesus Himself who said, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). Now *that’s* being invitational!

How has the staff worked toward this end? We pray regularly that God will help us become more invitational. We brainstorm invitational initiatives, small (e.g. ask someone to sit with you at the fellowship meal, reach out to someone at worship today whom you don’t know and get acquainted) and large (e.g. put door hangers out in the community, invite someone to your home for a meal). We put a sandwich board just outside our church building’s front doors saying, “Welcome home!” and a tall banner in our lobby saying, “We warmly welcome you!” Pastor John sees to it that every weekly eblast contains a specific challenge to be invitational.

And it’s not just the staff working on this. Our Host Team does a fabulous job being invitational to all who come on Sunday mornings by warmly welcoming them and by helping folks feel

at home.

But we can do better! We want to have hearts that see others, hearts that are compassionate and caring. Changes of the heart are God’s work. We are simply trying to offer up some avenues by which we pray He will be pleased to do His work in us.

This invitational attitude is the atmosphere of Journey. It is the culture we want to flourish among us. We are on a journey with Jesus and we want to invite others to come along!

Facility Improvement Plan

For a couple of years we have been working on our Facility Improvement Plan (FIP). You may recall the update reports Scott Smith has given about the FIP at each of our business meetings since November 6, 2016. The FIP team has worked diligently to incorporate ideas you have offered into a final plan. Just a few weeks ago we hired a firm which specializes in church building renovations, asking them to present to us some specific proposals based on our final plan.

How does this relate to Journey? It dovetails with Journey, supporting our efforts to pursue our mission. I want to briefly mention the FIP’s connection with Worship Journey in particular. Our desire is to make some renovations in our worship center which will aid us in worshiping the Lord. Specifically, as you come into the worship center and look toward the stage, you will see things, perhaps artwork or words or objects, which will explicitly direct your thoughts to the Holy God we have come to worship. We will be visually prompted toward worship simply by entering that room. We want to harness, as much as possible, all our senses and employ them in worshiping the Father in spirit and in truth.

Timeline & Dates

As we move forward in the summer, I will preach a sermon series on the Journey Vision. This series began on June 3 and will conclude on July 15. I will preach from God’s Word on the different aspects of the vision. Toward the end of that series, on July 8, we will have our special business meeting. On July 22, we will return to the Gospel of John for a couple of Sundays and then on August 12 I will give a recap of the Journey Vision. We will launch Journey Vision on September 9 with a four-part sermon series from 1 Peter entitled “Sojourners.”

Important dates to remember are:

July 8 – special business meeting to approve the name change

September 9 – launch date for Journey Vision

Conclusion

Journey Vision has been developing for years. In fact, we have already launched several aspects of it (e.g. the “invite” initiative, Bible Exposition Training, several means of equipping and caring, the Facility Improvement Plan). However, on September 9 we will step wholeheartedly into the complete Journey Vision. The most noticeable and obvious changes at that time will be our new approach to corporate worship, the sustained outreach into the community, and the name change.

continued on Page 10

Etc. [on Journey] continued: It is also our hope that by September 9 we will have some renderings from the firm we have hired to help with our Facility Improvement Plan. We will display those renderings as a picture of what is to come.

Please understand that Journey Vision is not about being trendy, it is not about competing with other churches, and it is not about trying to become a “megachurch.” It is about doing better what God has called us to do. It is about reinvigorating us in the pursuit of our God-given mission ... hitting the “refresh” button. Let’s refocus on “forming followers of Jesus who impact their world” and step more purposefully into our journey with Jesus!

If you have questions about Journey Vision, please feel free to contact one of the elders: Jon Balk, Tom Loyola, Chris Pluister, and Scott Smith.

‘National Bible Bee Competition Show’ leads family-friendly spotlight

By Michael Foust

Editor’s note: This new monthly series, “5 Family-Friendly Things,” spotlights five family-friendly entertainment choices on DVD, streaming or television.

How long would it take you to memorize five Bible verses? Fifty Bible verses? Even 100 Bible verses?

What about nearly 1,000?

Incredibly, that’s what some contestants in the *National Bible Bee Competition Show* did. The six-week series is broadcast yearly by the National Bible Bee and premiered April 24 on Facebook Live, with a new episode going live each Tuesday at 8 p.m. Eastern through May.

The *National Bible Bee Competition Show* is **No. 1 on this month’s edition of “5 Family-Friendly Things.”**

I watched the debut with my wife and 10-year-old son, not knowing if it would keep his attention. But by the end, he was engrossed in the competition and ready for the next week’s episode.

It is co-hosted by Emeal Zwayne, president of Living Waters Publications, along with Jason and David Benham (formerly of HGTV) and Hannah Leary, who won the first season.

The series involves three age groups (7-10, 11-14 and 15-18) competing for a total of \$100,000 in prize money and is as convicting as it is inspiring. Sometimes, you even feel sorry for the contestants – like when one was eliminated because she said “was” instead of “is.”

Watch it at BibleBee.tv. (A Facebook account is required. Click on "Videos" to access the show archives.)



Also worth watching:

2. ‘Monster Trucks’

This quirky PG comedy bombed at the box office but was a recent family-friendly hit in my home. Now on Amazon Prime, it tells the story of a friendly octopus-looking monster that becomes the “engine” for a teen boy’s truck. It’s the type of goofy plot that would have made for a hilarious 1970s Disney flick, but it hit theaters four decades too late -- in 2017. It has no language. No sexuality. Not even a kiss!

3. Amazon Prime’s kid’s Christian shows

Netflix and Hulu each have their strengths for streaming fans, but for children’s Christian or spiritual content, nothing beats Amazon Prime, which has at least three series that my children have watched recently: *Torchlighters*, *Superbook* and *Davey and Goliath*. Hopefully, Netflix and Hulu will catch up.

4. Netflix’s new Christian movies

Amazon Prime may shine with its children’s faith content, but Netflix wins in the grown-up category, including with two new selections: *Is Genesis History?* and *A Question of Faith*, each of which were in theaters in 2017. Netflix also has *The Case for Christ* and *Little Boy*. Search for “Christian” and you’ll discover similar content.

5. ‘Lost in Space’

In this new Netflix remake of the 1960s series, the Robinson clan gets stuck on a planet and tries desperately to survive. It’s rated TV-PG and contains mild language – around two to three words each show -- so caution is advised. It’s not entirely family-friendly, but it’s oh-so-close. I watched the first two episodes and enjoyed it.

Visit Michael Foust’s blog, MichaelFoust.com

Michael Foust has covered the entertainment industry for more than a decade and is the father of four small children.

Signs & Wonders

a Watoto Children's Choir concert

The Watoto Children's Choir of Kampala, Uganda will present a concert at Evangelical Free Church of Clinton, Iowa on **Saturday, June 16 at 4:30 pm**. According to the Watoto website the "Watoto Children's Choirs have traveled extensively since 1994, sharing a message of hope for Africa's orphans and widows. Watoto's performances are a soulful blend of native African rhythms, contemporary gospel music and ethnic dance." The recent production, Signs and Wonders, was launched to celebrate the joy of salvation.

Each child in the Watoto Children's Choir has suffered the loss of one or both parents and now lives in a Watoto village. The experience of traveling on a choir helps the children to develop confidence and boldness, as well as broadening their worldview. Accompanied by a team of adults, the choir presents Watoto's vision and mission by sharing personal stories, music and dance. While on the road, the children act as advocates for the millions of other African children who have experienced the same heartbreaking pain and suffering as them.

The recent production, Signs and Wonders, was launched as a celebration of the joy of salvation. The concert is a fund raising event.

"Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion."

- Isaiah 8:18 (NASB)

Newsletter-Going [More] Digital

We are going digital! We have and will have our monthly newsletter available to download on our website. The digital newsletter will be out at the beginning of each month and will be in an easy to read format.

If you'd rather have a physical copy we will have printed copies in the foyer and the office. If you'd like to get it mailed to you, please sign-up at the Connection Point, let us know with a Connection Card, or call the office.

CELEBRATE OUR CHURCH FAMILY:

Happy Birthday!

- 2 Joanne Tietjens
- 4 Hans Hinrichsen
Mike Foley
- 5 Seth Bolen
- 6 Keith Boysen
Nan Powell
Rachel Hansen
- 7 Jason Lower
Lilleigh Pluister
Tracy Smith
- 13 Natalie Hirl
- 15 Laura Jorgensen
- 16 Tom Loyola
- 19 Ann Reed
June Matyas
- 21 Elizabeth Yoder
Gary Parsons
- 23 Faith Pluister
- 24 Errol Peters
- 25 Dan Liedtke
Jeremiah Haas
Ray Dellit
- 27 Deighton Eggers
- 30 Rebekah Johnson

Happy Anniversary!

- 7 Terry & Sharon Braun
- 10 Mike & Janet Ketelsen
Cletus & Judy Portz
- 12 Nathan & Annette Eslick
- 13 Neil & Crystal Gray
- 16 Casey and Kelli Overberg
- 18 Jason & Joy Lower
Ken and Donna Okland
- 24 Dale & Diane Wilson
- 26 Mike & Linda Gordon
John & Patricia McClung
- 29 Rick & Frances Wilke



Science Inspired, Christ Focused VBS Program

Summer Camp 2018-Register Now!

Hey parents! Ready to drop a TON OF FUN right into your child's summer? Then Faith Lab Science Camp is right for you!

Camp is for children going into kindergarten through 8th grade.

Camp will be Monday July 16-Friday July 20 from 6:00-8:30 pm. There will be a meal served before camp every evening from 5:00-5:45 pm.

There is no charge for camp attendees. Online registration is open now!



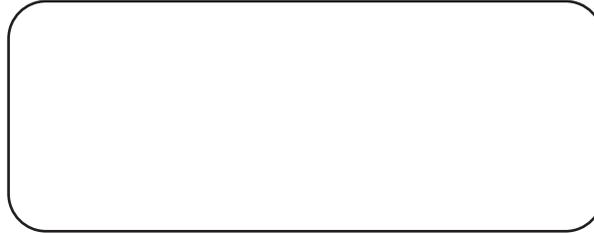
Evangelical Free Church
1010 13th Ave. N.
Clinton, IA 52732
Return Service Requested

Phone: 563-243-4164
Fax: 563-243-0255
E-mail: info@clinton-efree.org
www.clinton-efree.org

Volume 1, June 2018
Issue 6



FORMING FOLLOWERS OF JESUS WHO IMPACT THEIR



Journey News

A publication of Evangelical Free Church

