

JULY—SEP 2020

ALBERT CITY E-FREE CHURCH

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

LEADERSHIP & GRACE - PASTOR JESSE

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Many things have been difficult over the last few months during the COVID-19 scenario. One area that has been impacted brutally is that of leadership. When I say leadership, I mean anybody who has had to make regular decisions that impacted other people throughout this COVID situation. This includes teachers, administrators, bosses, executives, small group leaders (in any field), supervisors, staff of various fields, pastors and church leadership. Before March, these leaders would have been required to make decisions that normally would be simple, quick, and with relatively little pushback. Since then, even little decisions that once were mundane became major, often stress-induced processes. I have personally spoken to many people in leadership and this is the story across the boards. Leadership has been tough no matter what field it is in.

One of the main reasons for this is because there are so many people underneath our current leaders who are in so many different places of thought about COVID. There are 2 completely opposite camps and a few dozen in between. This is regardless of where the leader stands on it. Leaders are having to analyze both extremes and the middle ground, come up with what seems best for their given situation (since every establishment that may serve similar purposes has its own culture and circumstances), and decide what to do. At the same time, they know that whatever decision they make is going to create a large, or at least a vocal group of people who are not happy. As you know, human nature is not inclined to “suck it up butter-cup” and move on if it does not

like a decision. Many times opinions are voiced harshly, negativity is spread, and leadership is even that more frazzled by it all. Those who are on the opposite side of the decision that was made may be experiencing frustration or thoughts of being neglected, which also can put pressure on leadership.

As your pastor, I can tell you with all assurance that leadership has valued everybody’s opinion throughout this ordeal, whether a decision was made in your favor or not. I have had office visits where I listened to an opinion and made changes based on the information given to me and I have had office visits where I have flat-out said “no” to ideas. Sometimes both happened in the same visit! The point that I am making is this: Show your leaders a lot of grace during this time as I know they are showing it to you, even if the decisions are not going your way. This isn’t just about church leadership but any leader who you find yourself under whether at work, school, or on a community level. Leadership has been difficult and ministry burnout is at an all time high right now because as stated earlier, every decision has been elevated 10x in difficulty as to what it used to be. Show your leaders grace, pray for them, encourage them, and they will better lead your organization into fruitful endeavors. Remember Ephesians 4:29, if something comes out of your mouth, it should only be intended for building others up.

BUILDING COMMITTEE UPDATE: ALAN SUNDBLAD

It was approved in April that we purchase the football field property from the school district as the location for new church facilities. The reasons supporting this move included more physical space than we currently have, and that we could have a fully brand-new structure for about the same cost of an addition to our existing facility. Our bid was submitted last Spring. Our hope was the sale process would have been completed by late May. The Covid outbreak changed that timeline. It impacted the school board's activities including the public hearing and conducting their vote for final approval of the sale. For various reasons, the school board has not conducted that vote. That is now scheduled to take place September 21.

During this period, the building committee has been working on plan designs. The committee is excited and ready to present a floor plan design to the congregation. Their intent was to have been able to do so by now. But, until the process of the sale is complete and acknowledged by the school board, we felt it would be premature to do so.

As soon as we receive final word from the school board that result will be shared. We will then schedule a congregational meeting to present plan designs and any additional updates.

2020 SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING RECAP: PASTOR JESSE

Our Semi-Annual congregational meeting was held in July and we had a massive turnout. One of the highlights of the meeting is that we voted on and accepted four new members into our congregation. This is exciting as we continue to see God at work even during the COVID-19 scenario. Our elder chair Joel Ehlers addressed our need to stand up for our faith during these dark days as the culture is trying to get believers to "bow the knee" to every social movement with a name. The most pressing issue to come out of the meeting was the Articles of Incorporation and the By-Law changes that were proposed.

The reason for the changes comes from a need to stream-line the decision making process, avoiding ministry and volunteer burnout, and having Biblically qualified leadership in place. Overall, we want to empower people to do ministry. More people will be allowed to fill service roles if these changes are approved. These changes will allow leaders to lead and servers to serve while also creating an environment for discipleship and leadership preparation to take place.

Some of the changes will include changing up our Church Board structure by lowering the number of board members from 17 to 7, with 2 advisors, while maintaining all of the officers except the missions treasurer. That office will be absorbed into the treasurers office. We also proposed lowering term limits from 3 years to 2 years with applicable offices. Beside the board structure changes, another important proposal is to require all teachers or ministry leaders to be church members. This provides accountability for both the church and the member, especially when it comes to what is being taught.

If these proposals pass at the January annual meeting, there will most likely be what is called a "sunset clause" attached to it that says we as a church can go back to our current By-Laws within a certain time frame if the new ones are not working. If you are a current member and missed this meeting, please contact me and I can walk you through the proposed changes. These changes need a 2/3 vote to pass so please, do not be unaware of what is going on.

UPCOMING EVENTS:**SEPT. 10 — ACA MOMSTRONG KICKOFF @ 6PM****SEPT. 13 — RETURN TO SUNDAY SCHOOL!****SEPT. 19 — BARB BLOOM CELEBRATION OF LIFE @ 10AM-1PM****SEPT. 27— YOUTH GROUP KICKOFF @ 3-7PM****OCTOBER — CORNERSTONE FOR LIFE BABY BOTTLE FUNDRAISER****OCT. 4 — BAPTISM CELEBRATION FOLLOWING SERVICE****NOV. 13-15 — “PSALM 23” WOMEN’S RETREAT IN WEBSTER CITY****NOV. 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19 — MEN’S GROUP “33” @ AC FIRE DEPT****FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES: ROGER SOMMERLOT**

It has been a privilege to begin this ministry of encouraging, engaging and equipping coaches in the schools. Already God has opened the door in two schools. I have had the privilege of communicating and meeting with different coaches, Athletic Directors, Principals and even one Superintendent. I have found a great deal of stress amongst administrators because of COVID-19 regulations and an openness of coaches to this ministry. One highlight was meeting a coach who is ready to help start an FCA Coaches Huddle in their school. Then he said to stop by and see his superintendent at his office. When I pulled up to my parking spot, I could see a man through the window stand up and start moving out of his chair. He met me at the door and says, “Mr. Sommerlot are you here to see me”. In his office we were able to discuss FCA vision for ministry with coaches, his vision for coaching development, and his struggles with his job this school year. He told me he will attend the FCA Coaches huddle, gave FCA the green light and we got to end our time in prayer together. It was an awesome God appointed opportunity.

Please Pray:

- * For me to find one coach in each of the 4 schools to be my main contact
- * That at each school we can find a common time to meet for FCA Coaches Huddle
- * For our school’s administrators, staff, and teachers as they navigate the reopening of schools.

Thank you,

Roger Sommerlot

NW Iowa Fellowship of Christian Athletes Rep in Pocahontas, Calhoun, Sac and BV Counties



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THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER: ELDER MIKE HOPKINS

Like most years, my focus this summer has been on growing crops, rain and markets. As a farmer, I tend to get tunnel vision with my work. All of this dramatically changed with one call from my son after a doctor appointment, giving him unexpected and crushing news of leukemia. My focus changed immediately from farming and politics to the preciousness of my family. We reached out to you, our church for prayer and experienced first-hand how important the body of Christ is to us. Our life group has been praying, our family, friends, and so many others lifted us up in prayer. The Elders asked if they could come and pray. James 5:14 says "Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him." I will never forget the Holy Spirit's presence as they came and prayed. It started to rain during prayer and it was as if God was raining down his love upon us through prayer. During this time, one Psalm has been repeatedly given to us, Psalm 91 and especially these verses (14-16) we have been praying:

"Because he loves me, says the Lord, I will rescue him. I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

As we move through this season of life, we are thankful to have a church body that we know and can call on for prayer. It's been really nice to be able to continue to have church through COVID via YouTube, but I believe it is important to attend worship so we can build relationships with each other. This photo was randomly taken in the hospital parking lot when we learned that by God's grace, the leukemia diagnosed is treatable. We are praising God for this and continue to covet your prayers for continued healing. Thank you for being a praying church!

