

Cross CURRENTS

LIKE A TREE

It's about this time of year that I really start to wish I could see some greenery. Fall's colors have long since faded. The Christmas lights have been unplugged. And the glaze of snow on dormant trees is no longer fresh and exciting. So, come February, I get this deep desire to see some greenery soon.

I suspect that I'm not the only one. After all, When God created the heavens and the earth, he created a fully-mature ecosystem, including trees that were ripe with fruit. He gave Adam and Eve a world in which they could stroll under the shade of the canopy of trees and could gently touch different shapes of green. God's creation was "very good," and vibrant trees contributed to that beauty.

The beauty of green, fruitful trees inspired the poet of Psalm 1. He wrote about "a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither." He marveled at a tree that "prosper" all the time. But he's not writing about some tree you can

look up in a textbook or find on a hike through the Glacier Drumlin Trail. The psalmist is talking about people, specifically believers. He's talking about you and me.

The familial feelings of Thanksgiving have long faded. The brightness of gift-giving at Christmas has dimmed. Now, over a month into a new year with new challenges and familiar monotony, maybe you are looking for some spiritual color in your life. How will it come about?

The psalmist warns you that if you're stuck in a spiritual drought, things won't get better if you start walking in the shoes of "the wicked." It may feel good in the moment, but taking the path of sins which God forbids in the Ten Commandments only brings you misery. It may feel fun to chum it up with those who love to mock this and that, but it will only dry you out on the inside. And when even greater problems of body or soul come up, you will be blown away as easily as chaff in a breeze.

That person is like
a tree planted by
streams of water,
which yields its
fruit in season
and whose
leaf does not
wither—
whatever they do
prosper.

—Psalm 1:3 (NIV)



Instead, if you're looking for some greenery in your spiritual life, it will produce itself the more you delight in God's word. It'll come the more you meditate on God's instruction, day and night. In his word, God flows into your heart, soul, and life the promises you need to be vivacious in your faith. In his word, God opens your eyes to all the ways you can serve him by serving those around you, even in the monotony of a second semester or another week at work. The more your delight in God's word and meditate on it, the greater confidence you have that no matter what, God is going to watch over you, not because you are so perfect by yourself, but because Jesus has given you his own righteousness.

Through faith in him, God has made us like trees planted by streams of water. And since we don't have to worry about our status before him, we're now free to look forward to the greener days of spring... and of paradise in heaven.

In Christ,

Pastor Voss



NEW BEGINNINGS

New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers is a long-term, Christian-based program that offers structure and spiritual guidance for a mother and her new baby. Mothers are invited to stay at the home for up to six years following the birth of their child. In that time, they can learn the skills needed to manage a household while adjusting to life as a family.

The ministry focuses their efforts on serving generationally poor single mothers. The generationally poor often lack advantages to change their poverty status—many times, all that they have known are handouts to make it day to day and how to survive in environments with minimal resources. *New Beginnings* seeks to serve this population with a hand-up, not a handout.

New Beginnings' services are built on six pillars. The first two pillars are the Educational goal and the Vocational goal. The Educational goal is customized for each mother based on her needs. The Vocational goal is to help the mother find employment in a career that can support her and her child. The third goal is Parental—encouraging the mothers to learn how to best care for their child. The fourth pillar is Social. While

recognizing the culture that each grew up in, mothers are taught the necessary social skills for personal and professional interactions. The fifth pillar is Personal. Financial management, good hygiene, and healthy eating habits are some of the topics in this goal. The last pillar is Spiritual. *New Beginnings* is a Christian ministry based in a Christ-centered home. The residents are taught about Christ's love.

New Beginnings is currently located in an apartment home in Milwaukee which can house up to four women and their children. They are full and frequently have to tell applicants that they do not have room. They have purchased land on the north side of Milwaukee. They are looking to build a home that can house up to 12 mothers and children along with space for offices and programming. They are raising funds towards this house in the Heart Campaign.

We will support the operating expenses of *New Beginnings* through a freewill offering on February 5 & 6.

More information about their ministry and other ways to support their work can be found at www.homeformothers.com.

STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE

At the December Voters' Meeting, a resolution was passed which asked Council to approve and appoint a Steering Committee to look at the many possibilities for renovations and/or additions to our property. Since then, Bill Walter has accepted the chairman position. To his leadership role, Bill brings a wealth of experience, both professionally and in this congregation. He is retired as a construction project manager and he was heavily involved in the planning and building of our current facility.

Along with President Graffenius and Pastor Voss, Bill has been discussing

expectations for the Steering Committee and how to round out the committee. While there may seem to be little tangible progress since December, the goal is to lay groundwork that equips the individual committee members for their tasks and that positions the Steering Committee as a whole to move forward with clarity and confidence.

We thank God for Bill Walter's eagerness to use his gifts in this leadership role and we are confident that God will bless the process in a way that blesses us and honors him.

OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS

Several volunteers are needed to routinely follow up with visitors. The follow-up will be done via email, phone calls, and/or emails. If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, please contact Tim Gauerke at 414-241-9961 or timbog1979@yahoo.com.

*Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you;
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do
as with his love he befriends you.*

—CW 624 st. 4

PRAYER

Confident of God's promises to us in his word, we pray for:

- Our congregation's Steering Committee, that God would bless Bill Walter's leadership of it and that God give wisdom to the committee members.
- The work of New Beginnings as it seeks to provide a loving and supportive place for single mothers. May God also move us to have compassion for and pray for the unborn and for parents in difficult circumstances.
- Those in our community who may be struggling with employment, finances, or shelter, that God give them their daily bread, open our eyes to see how we might help, and through these struggles bring them closer to his forgiveness, life, and salvation found in Jesus Christ.

Through Jesus, King of the Jews and Savior of all. Amen.



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HIS FINAL STEPS

Midweek Lent
Worship Services

February 22
March 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29
6:30 pm

Dinner served beginning at 5:30 pm.



6525 Milwaukee Avenue
Wind Lake, WI 53185

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WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday - 9:00 am

Monday - 7:00 pm