

*I've Been Thinking about . . . Our Longing*  
by Pastor Chris

“All people seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. . . . And yet, after such a great number of years, no one without faith has reached the point to which all continually look. . . . What is it, then, that this desire and this inability proclaim to us, but that there was once in man a true happiness of which there now remain to him only the mark and empty trace, which he in vain tries to fill from all his surroundings?”<sup>1</sup> So writes the seventeenth-century apologist Blaise Pascal.

Could it be that our desire for happiness is the distant misty memory of a time when humankind was truly happy? Could our longing for happiness be the memory of our first parents' joy in Eden—memory expressed as desire in the collective consciousness of our human family?

In surveying the various earthly means by which people attempt to satisfy our common craving for happiness, Pascal concludes, “But these are all inadequate, because the infinite abyss can be filled only by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only by God Himself.”<sup>2</sup> There is in every human soul an “infinite abyss,” a God-shaped hole, which can be filled only by the Infinite One Himself.

In our prideful proclivity to be autonomous from God, we attempt to fill that God-shaped hole with things other than Him. They are always too shallow, they never truly satisfy, yet we settle for them, and in so doing show our passions to be not too strong, but too weak. “We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”<sup>3</sup>

Let us not settle for being far too easily pleased. Let us fill our soul's infinite abyss, our search for happiness, our longing for joy, in God alone.

One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek:  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,  
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek Him in His temple.

—Psalm 27:4

Our longing for happiness is our desire for God. Let us satisfy our desire for God *in* God—through Christ. For Christ provides the living water that satisfies our soul's thirst for God, and Christ is the living bread that satisfies our soul's hunger for God (Jn 4:10; 7:37-39; 6:35). It is by worship that we satisfy our desire for God and sate our hunger for happiness, for by worship we enter the Presence of God, where our soul is satisfied as with the richest of foods (Ps 63:1-5). The satisfaction of our longing for happiness in God through Christ is not selfish, but is God-exalting, for “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.”<sup>4</sup>

“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”<sup>5</sup> So writes the twentieth-century apologist C. S. Lewis. Could it be that our desire for happiness is our longing for heaven—the fullness of the Presence of God?

1. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, 7.425.

2. *Ibid.*

3. C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 1-2.

4. John Piper, *Desiring God* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003), 10.

5. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001), 136-137.

## “Small Group Update”

Associate Pastor of Ministry Advancement & Adult Ministries  
Howard Lundeen

Over the past few months you have heard considerable talk about small groups. We have decided to change the name of many of the groups to “LifeGroups”. This is because we believe that the loving interaction and spiritual growth that happens in these groups contribute in a special way to the enrichment and meaningfulness of the lives of the people who attend. People experience love, renewed energy, and an increased sense of purpose, direction, and hope in life. I believe we begin to experience the truth of Jesus’ statement in John 10:10 where he says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

With this in mind, we see our make-up of groups at Christ Community as consisting of “Small Groups” and “LifeGroups”, both of which are important when ministering to all our people. However, to be considered a LifeGroup, the group has to intentionally provide the following opportunities:

1. Meet regularly – it should meet at least twice monthly and preferably weekly.
2. The key focus of the group is two-fold: Promote growth spiritually and relationally; therefore, each meeting provides...
  - ◆ Biblical instruction as a core element
  - ◆ A time for social interaction
  - ◆ Opportunities to share prayer requests & to pray for one another
3. Also, special times of fellowship and fun together, such as birthday celebrations, attending concerts, sporting events, plays, picnics, etc., are seen as critical aspects of the groups.

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2011, we have seen the number of small groups associated with Christ Community Church increase by eight. For your awareness of what small groups exist, I have provided below a list of all small groups, many of which would meet the requirements of a “LifeGroup”. I want to thank each of the group leaders and all of you as participants for making the effort to be part of a small group. It has been extremely rewarding to hear how group members are growing in love and appreciation for one another, and how a sense of “family” is either developing, or has developed, in many of the groups. My dream is that we will become a church where people truly love one another deeply from the heart; and, I’m confident that “LifeGroups” are the setting where this can best be realized.

### Christ Community Church Small Groups: (Bold print indicates new groups since 1<sup>st</sup> of December)

- **“Discovering the Christian Life” (Mondays) - - - Jared & Stacy Dufault**
- **“The Power of a Praying Husband & Wife” (Sundays) - - - Barry & Stacey Dufault**
- **“Sacred Marriage” (Sundays) - - - Tim & Becky Dennis**
- “Regroup” (Wednesdays) - - - Pat & Peggy Davis
- **“Love is a Decision” (Sundays) - - - John & Eileen Langford**
- **“Bringing up Boys” (Sundays – biweekly) - - - Jason & Melanie Teachout**
- **“Not a Fan” (Sundays) - - - Maynard & Sara Stensrud**
- **“Philippians” (Sundays) - - - Bert & Connie Perry**
- “Your Move: 4 Questions to Ask When ...” (Wednesdays) - - - Mark & Gina Schaus
- “1<sup>st</sup> Peter” (Mondays) - - - Howard & Carol Lundeen
- **“The Truth Project” (Thursdays) - - - Mark & Nancy Christensen**
- “What in the World is Going On?” - - - Mark & Mary M. & Bob & Teri P. – Elysian group
- “The Front Porch” (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays – prayer ministry) - - - Randy & Sherry Volkmann
- Sunday evening prayer group --- Pastor Chris
- Thursday noon men’s group --- Bob Schwarz
- Friday morning men’s group (at church) --- Pat Davis
- Friday morning men’s group (at Dennis Funeral Home) --- Tim Dennis
- Monday morning ladies Bible study --- Mary Milton
- Thursday evening ladies Bible study --- Cindy Austin
- MAKS on 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays --- (Stacy D., Stacy A., Aimee M.)
- Worship Team (Thursdays) --- Gloria Seifert
- Quilting Group (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month) --- Clarice Krause
- Clear Lake Connection (Seasonal college-age ministry) --- Pastor Chris
- Monday evening “Precepts” --- Dottie & Fred Salsbury

*Pastor Howard*

## Heart Thoughts for Cornerstone

By: Zach Marino

It was last month that we took time to reflect on how we can draw strength from God's unmoving, unending, beautiful and gracious love. Remember, "*He always lifts me up by his love and strength.*" That love is one filled with strength that people like Job experienced. When Job's life literally was stripped of everything he loved and held dear, Job remained faithful; not because of Job's strength but rather because of the Love of God for Job. We too can remain in that love and receive strength.

Well, what's all this for? What's the end result we really desire after studying all these reflections on this Psalm passage? It is stated simply as the last line of this poem, "*to become more like Christ.*" Our ultimate goal in studying the Word and living a Christian life should be focused on becoming like Christ, nothing more, nothing less. You see, once we start living our lives to represent Christ, **His desires, His character** start to develop and flow from us. Well, let's take a quick peek at a man in the Bible who wanted to know Christ and become like Him.

*"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead"* (Philippians 3:10-11). Paul's goal, after living a life persecuting Christians and living on the opposite side of the faith, came to realize that it was all "rubbish." He wanted to know Christ. He just didn't want to know the "loving, graceful, peaceful" Christ, but also the Christ who humbled himself, received torture, was beaten and suffered death on a cross. Paul wanted to know the whole person of Christ, His beauty, His death and torture but also his resurrection and the resurrection power that flows from Him! Paul knew that becoming like Christ not only brought satisfaction to his current life, but for all eternity, he would be spending in the presence of Jesus Christ, attaining a spiritual and lasting resurrection! In other words, his hope was not found in the world but rather in the eternal. What got Paul up every day was his hope in the eternal not the temporal.

How desperately do you want to become like Christ? We are given the power and tools to do so, we learned that last month. However, like Paul, we need to make a choice, will we put aside our worldly desires and passions to more fully pursue and become like Christ? "But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things" (v7-8). What do you consider profitable? What motivates you to get up in the morning? The pursuit of money? The pursuit of status? The love of recognition? When our daily focus shifts from us to Christ, that is the moment we become more like Christ. Remember, it starts with the Lord's never ending faithfulness being demonstrated through His strong love each and every day. When we start to embrace that our lives become about living that love out, living like Christ.

I hope these past months have been encouraging and challenging to you! This passage will forever touch my heart and I pray God will continue to draw you near to Himself, into His love; His strong, passionate and faithful love.

*Pastor Zach*

# WOMEN'S MINISTRY



## Upcoming Events

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### \*\* BIBLE STUDY \*\*

## *Jesus the One & Only*

11 Week study by Beth Moore - Book of Luke

Beginning Monday, March 5th, 10am-Noon  
& Thursday, March 8th, 7-9 pm

Cost of \$18.00 Sign up at Information Booth

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## BREAKFAST & BIBLE STUDY

Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup>

9-11:00 am



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## DEVOTED HEARTS CONFERENCE

Autumn Ridge Church - Rochester, MN

April 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>

Tickets: \$40.00 / \$45.00

Guest speaker: Alicia Williamson Garcia

Musical guest: Selah

More information available at [devotedheartsrochester.com](http://devotedheartsrochester.com)



# Thank You

The Women's Ministry Team would like to sincerely thank the following people for their contributions that made our "Souper Bowl Sundaes" a success once again:

Stacey Dufault Stacy Dufault Aimee Miller Terry Stahl Bev Emery Melissa Sexton  
Lori Hanson Paulette Born Naomi Volkmer Trudi Remund Nancy Ristau Jody Nelson  
Molly Erdman Kathy Overland Jennifer Goblirsch Dorothy Nordaas Belva Prins  
Jenny Stoesz Hua Zhu Lisa Poppe Jonna Moen Teri Pearce

Thank you also to the men who helped to set up and clean up the tables.  
A special thanks to Dave Real and fiancée Shelly who helped clean up in the kitchen!



## Children's Ministry: What is the 4/14 Window?

The 4/14 Window refers to the world of children between the ages of 4 and 14 years old. 85% of individuals in the United States who become Christians, do so between the ages of 4 and 14 years old. Studies also show that around the world about 60% reported coming to Christ during this same age period. **The 4/14 Window recognizes that children are the most receptive people group to the gospel.**

With that information I encourage the entire Christ Community Church family to consider how they can become involved in ministry to children in our church, community and around the world.

### **MAKS** *(Moms And Kids)*



MAKS is a moms & kids group that meets the **1st & 3rd Tuesday** of each month in the Fireside Room from **10am to noon**. There is no cost to attend. Meetings are geared toward mothers with small children at home; but all are welcomed and encouraged to attend. It is a blessed time to relax, unwind and enjoy spending time working and learning together as mothers. Then, we have the benefit of a meal together while our children are well cared for and having fun.

*Whether you have come in the past or are new to MAKS, be sure to put us on your calendar and relax with a little "mom time."*

#### March 6th *"Natural Babies"*

Join us as we learn how to take care of our young ones using natural products. We will hear from a mom who uses cloth diapering & another mom who uses homemade & all natural cleaning products in her home.

#### March 20th *"Love & Logic" - Part 2*

Sheryl Stroda will join us again as we discuss how we followed through with what we learned from Love & Logic Part 1. This will be an insightful discussion!

**Come prepared to relax, laugh & meet other moms.**

*Our leaders this year will be Stacy Dufault, Aimee Miller & Stacy Anazagasty. Please contact any one of us with questions.*

# MARCH 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b> <u>Noon</u> Men's Study <u>6:15pm</u> Worship Team <u>7:00pm</u> Women's Study	<b>2</b> <u>6:00am</u> Men's Group	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> <u>8:00am</u> Worship <u>9:30am</u> Sunday School <u>10:45am</u> Worship <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer <u>6:00pm</u> 21 Laws	<b>5</b> <u>10:00am</u> Women's Study <u>6:30pm</u> Precepts	<b>6</b> <u>10:00am</u> MAKS <u>6:30pm</u> Children's Commission <u>7:00pm</u> Cong. Care Commission <u>7:00pm</u> Property Commission	<b>7</b> <u>Noon</u> Lenten Lunch <u>6:00-7:30pm</u> AWANA <u>7:30-9pm</u> Youth Group	<b>8</b> <u>Noon</u> Men's Study <u>6:15pm</u> Worship Team <u>7:00pm</u> Women's Study	<b>9</b> <u>6:00am</u> Men's Group	<b>10</b> <u>6:00am</u> Journey Men <u>7:30am</u> Next Man Up <u>9:00am</u> Grand Prix Workshop
<b>11</b> <u>8:00am</u> Worship <u>9:30am</u> Sunday School <u>10:45am</u> Worship <u>2:00pm</u> Bridal Shower <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer	<b>12</b> <u>10:00am</u> Women's Study <u>6:30pm</u> Outreach <u>6:30pm</u> Precepts	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <u>Noon</u> Lenten Lunch <u>6:00-7:30pm</u> AWANA <u>7:30-9pm</u> Youth Group	<b>15</b> <u>Noon</u> Men's Study <u>6:15pm</u> Worship Team <u>7:00pm</u> Women's Study	<b>16</b> <u>6:00am</u> Men's Group	<b>17</b> <u>9:00am</u> Women's Breakfast & Bible Study <u>9:00am</u> Grand Prix Workshop
<b>18</b> <u>8:00am</u> Worship <u>9:30am</u> Sunday School <u>10:45am</u> Worship <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer <u>6:00pm</u> 21 Laws	<b>19</b> <u>10:00am</u> Women's Study <u>1:00pm</u> Quilt Group <u>6:30pm</u> Precepts	<b>20</b> <u>10:00am</u> MAKS <u>6:30pm</u> Elder Board Meeting	<b>21</b> <u>Noon</u> Lenten Lunch <u>6:00-7:30pm</u> AWANA <u>7:30-9pm</u> Youth Group	<b>22</b> <u>Noon</u> Men's Study <u>6:15pm</u> Worship Team <u>7:00pm</u> Women's Study	<b>23</b> <u>6:00am</u> Men's Group	<b>24</b> <u>10:00am</u> AWANA Grand Prix 
<b>25</b> <u>8:00am</u> Worship <u>9:30am</u> Sunday School <u>10:45am</u> Worship <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer	<b>26</b> <u>10:00am</u> Women's Study <u>6:30pm</u> Precepts	<b>27</b> <u>6:30pm</u> Worship Comm. <u>7:00pm</u> Adult Discipleship	<b>28</b> <u>12:00</u> Lenten Lunch <u>6:00-7:30pm</u> AWANA <u>7:30-9pm</u> Youth Group	<b>29</b> <u>Noon</u> Men's Study <u>6:15pm</u> Worship Team <u>7:00pm</u> Women's Study	<b>30</b> <u>6:00am</u> Men's Group	<b>31</b>

## Christ Community Church Mission Statement

As a local body of believers, we will seek to glorify God in worship, in evangelizing the unsaved and in teaching Christians to obey everything Christ commanded. To that end, prayer will be our foremost task, Scripture will be our authority, God's Holy Spirit will be our source of power and love will be our motivation.

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