



JANUARY 2018

VOL. 37 | NO. 1

East White Oak Bible Church

OakLEAF

East White Oak Bible Church | 11922 E 2000 North Rd. Carlock, IL 61725 | 309.454.3833 | www.ewo.org

Knowing Christ and Making Him Known

Ambitions FOR THE NEW YEAR

by Pastor Scott Boerckel

While the Bible is clear that we must avoid selfish ambition (Philippians 2:3; James 3:14-16), there is such a thing as godly ambition. So, Paul says that "I make it my ambition to preach the gospel" (Romans 15:20). We are to make it our aim to please the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). We are to aim at what is honorable (2 Corinthians 8:21). We are to aim for restoration, comfort, and peace with one another (2 Corinthians 13:11). Paul commends Timothy for following "his aim in life" (2 Timothy 3:10). So, while selfish ambition is wrong, it is clear that having honorable ambitions is a very good thing indeed.

I briefly described for you my ambitions for the new year in my message on January 7, and I thought that it might be helpful to flesh that out a bit more in detail, especially as it relates to the directions of our church. As I spent the first week of 2018 spending time getting to know my newest granddaughter, Janie, I had lots of time to reflect as I was holding her and enjoying her company. Newborns compel us to think about the future, to ponder anew what this life ought to be about, and to reckon on the life to come. So, as I thought about these matters, three words came to my mind as I thought about my ambitions for 2018—both for me personally and for our church too.

2018 GOALS:

1. *Know*
2. *Grow*
3. *Share*



Know

I want to know God better in 2018. We all have barely scratched the surface of His infinite nature. Consider Isaiah 40:25-26, "To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing."

Of course, this will involve knowing about God. We must study God as He has revealed Himself in His Word. He delights in making Himself known to His people. Yes, I want to know more about God, His character, His works, and His ways.

However, I want not only to know about God, I want to know HIM. This is the dimension of relationship. J.I. Packer notes that if we really come to know God and not just know about Him, we will find ourselves in a very freeing place. When we really know God, the unpleasantness that we experience or the pleasantness that we fail to experience will not matter to us because we have come to know God. There will be unpleasantness that I will experience and that our church will experience. In 2018 there will be pleasantness that we fail to experience, too. But if we come to know God, none of that will matter precisely because we know God!

Grow

I want to grow in 2018. Specifically, I want to grow in my relationship with God but also in my relationships with others. I am now at the point of my life where more of my life is behind me than what is ahead. There is such blessedness in this place. The drivenness of youth is past, but the energy to serve remains. The ignorance of inexperience has given way to a wiser awareness of how little I really know. The desire to pass along all that I have learned to others, especially to young men, has grown. So, I want to grow in this way in 2018, more intentionally seeking out how to impart what I have learned to others. I also am praying for the next generation of people in our church. We need to grow, develop, and fan the flame of the gifts of God in our young adults, so that our church thrives for generations to come. This will mean adapting our ministries to better serve this generation, and some of the changes that you see around The Oak do reflect this desire. This, of course, will happen without changing our grip on scripture.

Part of sharing one's life involves the commitment of time. Your elders believe that participating in an ABF and a small group are the means to maturing in Christ here at The Oak. If you are not part of an ABF or a small group, will you explore joining in 2018? I hope that you will, and it will be a very practical act to increase the spiritual growing of your life with others.

While I was with Janie, I loved giving her a bottle. It reminded me of 1 Peter 2:2, "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation." I want to grow UP, not merely grow OLD. This means that I want to be adaptable, ready to listen as much as I am to talk, able to discern issues of paramount importance from those that do not truly matter. I have the same desire for us here at The Oak. We have celebrated our 125th anniversary, but we need to be careful. We cannot have a backward look; we cannot say that our purpose is to continue to exist. No, we do not want merely to grow OLD, we want to grow UP too! Keep growing in our maturity in Christ, longing for the pure spiritual milk of the Word of God.

Share

In caring for Janie, I noticed how absolutely dependent she was on the adults who cared for her, especially her mommy and daddy. She was unaware of how dependent she is and of the remarkable sacrifices that are taking place to make sure that she is fed, clothed, changed, bathed, loved on, warm, etc. . In fact, sometimes, for no reason at all, Janie expressed in no uncertain terms that she was not feeling the love! This is how I want to share with others. Whether they realize my care or not, I want to share my life with others.

This is particularly true in the world of sharing my faith. I want to step up my game in this area in 2018. I want to be more bold. I think that most of us err on the side of not being bold enough about sharing our faith, and that is the side that I fall on most of the time. So, if you are in the same boat, would you join me in making 2018 a year where we share our faith more freely? Of course, many people, just like infant Janie, will not realize that you are loving them as you share the most important news ever with them. But love them anyway.

Know, Grow, And Share

So this summarizes my ambitions for 2018, both personally and for us as a church. I hope that you will join me in these good and godly ambitions. Let's know God better. Let's grow in maturity in Christ together. Let's share the Good News with a hurting world.

I am blessed beyond measure to be your pastor, Scott



**Our church plant,
Living Stone
Communities will
launch weekly
services on April 1!**



*Please pray for Living Stone
Communities as they invest
in west Bloomington.*

Connect on Facebook
for pictures, updates, and more

Search
"@livingstone309"

Wounded by Abortion? **GO DEEPER STILL**

Deeper Still weekend retreats exist to offer lifelong healing, hope and restoration to those who have been wounded by abortion. Many women and men who have abortion in their past don't feel safe and free to acknowledge the pain, grief, and the regret that they have experienced. Many feel they have lost their voices to speak out in truth about abortion. Frequently they suffer in silence and bear their burdens alone.

Perhaps you've had an abortion and you've never received any post abortive healing. Or maybe you have received a measure of healing but feel like you could go deeper in your healing. If so, please consider attending the spring Deeper Still retreat April 27-29. Retreats are confidential and free.



Testimonies from October 2017:

"Coming into the retreat I had self-condemnation, strained relationships, and needed to be able to move forward. The team helped me to see the wall around my heart and tear it down. I was shown I am worthy and redeemed. All the visuals brought Scripture to life. I did not think I needed to attend a

Deeper Still retreat. I really felt certain I had worked through the pain and sin through counseling. Yet I had no joy or peace in my life. The thought of attending was so intimidating. But when I arrived, I felt a warmth and comfort. It was a weekend of spiritual surgery to erase the dark spots still hiding in my heart. I leave knowing my heart is whole and I am a child of the King. Praise God!"

"I had no idea how much I needed this retreat and how much I would benefit from participating in it 47 years after my abortion. I heard God's Words of confirmation of my freedom from guilt and shame to now being His daughter."

"Every detail of the retreat was God-breathed and planned with and for a purpose and I thank God for sending me this direction. So many things were explained and answered that have given me peace. Words cannot express this blessing. Thank you!"

"Coming into the retreat I needed help in forgiving myself and those who had hurt me. I received help and healing in all these areas. The prayers were powerful and healing. I loved everything about this retreat. The team was understanding and loving. I was able to tell my story that I held buried in my heart. I can now accept God's love through His Son, Jesus."



GoDeeperStill.org

email > laurie@hopeforafuture.com



FINDING GOD IN CLASSICAL LITERATURE

BY VICKI SOSA

I was the kid who strapped a book and a pillow to my back, climbed my favorite tree, and read while wedged in the crook of the branches.



I often had one book to read while walking the six blocks to and from school, another to read while in study hall, and still another to read at home. The library was one of my favorite spots at school and wandering up and down the fiction aisles, scrutinizing the innumerable tantalizing titles was for me as satisfying as actually making my final decision. On family road trips, we never left home without a laundry basket full of books which my siblings and I chose with eager anticipation from the shelves of the public library.

Jesus became my Lord and Savior in my second year of college, and as a result of this, I set fiction aside in lieu of spending time in God's Word, eliminating the fiction genre almost entirely from my leisure time reading. Having limited free time forced me to make choices, and thankfully for the first time, I turned my heart and mind towards the truths of the Bible.

Today, I am once again blessed with the free time for fiction reading. With the fantastic abundance of options for reading material, here are the two primary factors that motivated me to read (and re-read) classical fiction literature. I hope they will prove to be incentives for you as well!

Be intentional about how you spend your leisure time. How we choose to spend our leisure time is directly related to being spiritually disciplined; it is not mere idleness, and it is certainly not mindlessness. I desire to put into my head ideas that have substance as well as those that entertain me. So often technology, and in particular social media, reduces stories into gossip, relationships fall to self-absorption and narcissism, and we become unable to respond to issues and to others with depth and empathy. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are admonished in Philippians to think about things of excellence, not mediocrity and inanity. Liberty University professor Karen Swallow Prior says "God uses the things of this earth to teach and shape us. I thought my love of books was taking me away from God, but as it turns out, books were the backwards path back to God, bramble-filled and broken, yes, but full of truth and wonder." Become thoughtful book readers again!

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Be discerning of the worldview portrayed in your choice of reading material. In a "Focus on the Family" publication, a worldview is described as the framework from which we view reality and make sense out of life and the world; therefore what you believe becomes the driving force behind every emotion, decision and action. Someone with a biblical worldview will have as his primary reason for existence to love and serve God, and he will believe the Bible to be the authoritative and infallible word of God. In much of today's fiction, you will find the worldview of secular humanism which holds forth that the material world is all that exists, rejecting supernatural claims, theistic faith, and religiosity. Today's fiction authors frequently present a world view that is unabashedly anti-God at worst, or at best simply disregards the fact that humans are spiritual beings.

Not long ago, while browsing at a Barnes and Noble Bookstore, I started pondering the question of why Christian fiction has its own section, separate from other

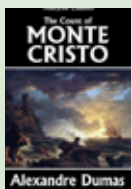


fiction literature. Setting aside the explanation of easy access to a particular genre, it occurred to me that in say the 1800's, bookstores would most likely not have had a designated "Christian fiction" section. I reasoned that this was because perhaps the presiding worldview of authors during the Victorian era was predominantly Christian, while the majority worldview of today's authors is decidedly not, unless of course you are looking at the Christian fiction section. This thought prompted me to wonder further what it would be like to read books from a time period when there existed at least a Christian-consensus, if not an actual born-again Christian majority. What would I find in the books written at a time when the divide between the secular and the spiritual was not as impenetrable as it appears today? And more importantly, what would it be like for me to re-read with a biblical worldview, classic books that I had read as a non-believer?

I eagerly scooped up a stack of classics from the bookstore and plunged in. And oh, what an astounding world of characters, ideas and stories I encountered! Here is just a tiny bit of what I discovered:



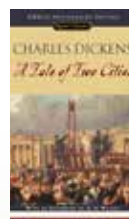
Using scripture references and depictions of church bishops, Victor Hugo clearly proclaimed God's grace in **Les Misérables** and compassion in **The Hunchback of Notre Dame**.



In **The Count of Monte Cristo**, Alexander Dumas wrote of forgiveness, with direct references to God as our model.

I found in Nathaniel Hawthorne's **The Scarlet Letter** the destructiveness of legalism and the consequences of the absence of God's grace and mercy demonstrated on the cross.

The Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens alludes to the sacrificial death of Jesus in



the self-sacrifice portrayed by one of his characters, once again packing the book with scriptural references! (Dickens, as well as many other Victorian era authors, had the expectation that his readers would be very familiar with the Bible and drew on that understanding when creating his characters and storylines.)



Emma, the main character in Jane Austen's book by the same title, learned lessons of the downfalls of self absorption and pride. Through-out all her books, you will find Austen drawing upon her deep biblical knowledge.



Charlotte Bronte created an important character in **Jane Eyre** devoted to Christian mission work and the spread of the gospel.

Daniel Defoe shares the gospel message in its entirety in **Robinson Crusoe**!

You may argue that there are many authors today that convey similar messages. This may be true, but they inevitably do so without any reference to God and in a decidedly secular humanistic worldview, leading the reader to conclude that morality, or goodness, or love can exist in the world apart from a personal God. In contrast, most of the classical fiction literature I have read does not ignore God or relegate Him to irrelevance. Not all of the authors from centuries ago were avowedly Christian. Their books are most certainly not found in the "Christian fiction" section of Barnes and Noble, but God and His influence on the cultures of eras gone by is there for all to read. I challenge you to discover God in the pages of the classics!



Meet Bill Fahrenkrug

Children's Ministry Volunteer 5th Grade Boys Sunday School Teacher

"God has breathed life into all Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right." 2 Timothy 3:16

As a teen and young adult, Bill Fahrenkrug worked as a lifeguard and swim instructor. It was near the sunny waters of California that God revealed a love for helping children stay safe and teaching them to swim. Although Bill didn't know it yet, God would use this love for helping young people to teach them His own Way and Word!

Bill has been married to his wife, Diane, for nearly 39 years and they have 4 children and 3 grandchildren (with another on the way this spring)! A native Californian, Bill loves to swim, fish, and kayak, enjoying God's picturesque creation. Two and a half years ago, Bill retired from State Farm where he had worked for 38 years.

God never fails to meet us right where we are, and Bill's faith journey begins near the water! In his own words, Bill shares: "I first heard the gospel message from a friend while working as a lifeguard/swim instructor during college. I'd have considered myself a Christian because I believed in God but didn't know enough about my own sin or God's solution. This friend gave me a Bill Bright tract that explained the 4 Spiritual Laws, provided scripture to confirm the points, and invited the reader, after studying the Biblical truths, to trust Christ. I recall understanding that this decision was very, very significant, and that I would be committing to following Christ as a disciple for all the rest of my life. The Holy Spirit did work in me to illuminate the scripture I was reading and to draw me toward Jesus. I also recall being so amazed at how the gospels seemed so applicable to me. The process was clearly designed by the Lord for me."

His love for the Lord and for children has inspired Bill to serve in children's ministries for 27 years! He has always worked with 5th and 6th graders and has even enjoyed the privilege of teaching his own 3 boys in Sunday School. Of his service, Bill says, "I currently work with Brian Wiltz and Dan Gott. The combination of men with differing styles works well. It's especially gratifying to see young men we've had in class continuing in the faith through middle & high school, and then college and family.

In conjunction with Sunday School, I've also been an AWANA leader for many years. This ministry gives me additional contact with many of the boys I will have or currently have in Sunday School. I'm not a particularly polished or skillful teacher but rely upon establishing relationships with the young men for the opportunity to encourage their own Christian faith. I find this ministry fulfilling & enjoyable and do still attempt to improve."

Relationship building with the young men is what brings Bill great joy as he serves in Sunday School and AWANA. "Because I still retain the mentality of a 5th grader, it's enjoyable to share their sense of humor and to work at making the truth of scripture both understandable and 'possess-able.' As a dad, I especially appreciated any teacher that seemed 'enthused' about my own son or daughter. I would now like to be one of those teachers that parents know genuinely loves their son."

Finding time to pray and prepare for class can be a challenge for all who serve. Please pray for Bill and others who serve that God will give them just the right amount of prep time. Further, please pray for Bill in this way: "I would like to model genuine discipleship, particularly before the boys. Though I'm a person who seeks out pattern and routine, I never want to become one just going through the motions or no longer growing. For the class, pray that these young men would love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength."

It is a true joy to see the work of God in Bill's life. He rescued Bill from sin near a swimming pool in California and has used him all these years in central Illinois to share His plan with hundreds of young men! "To God be the glory...great things He has done!"



Short Term MISSION TRIPS

LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO SERVE?

Cedine / March 2018



March 24-30

All Ages Welcome (kids too!)

\$50 per person includes housing / food

Help Cedine prepare for their summer season of camps. This is a family trip with no special skills required!

Contact Wes Hill

825-4536 / patwes65@gmail.com

New York City / July 2018



July 22-28

7 Day and 4 Day trips are available

\$875 / \$610

Share God's story in New York City this Summer! Choose from 1 of 3 Ministry Tracks. New York City is one of the most diverse cities in the world. You can shine God's light into a city that needs Him desperately.

spreadtruth.com/experiences

or contact Pat Gregory

662-6935 / pgregorydecoys@gmail.com

Costa Rica / August 2018



Tentative Dates August 2-14

All Ages Welcome (kids too!)

Estimated \$1750 per person

Serve the Lord and encourage one of our EWO missionaries! Consider joining a team to go to Costa Rica and working along side Mark and Meg Kuzdas. Teams as small as 3-4 and as large as 45 people have been hosted by Mark and Meg. Family teams with young children will likely serve on CLFCR property; while a team of older team members could do a VBS type of outreach in grade schools or in the streets, or outreach parties for feeding center families, prayer walks, soccer clinic or work projects at a variety of locations. No need to speak Spanish—translators will be provided.

Contact Janet Schlagel

825-0197 / janetschlagel@aol.com

ELDER / DEACON NOTES

A search committee has been established to locate a replacement for Pastor Larry. Please be in prayer that the Lord would bless the committee with unity, joy in serving, and His grace, as the committee undertakes to locate the man God has planned for The Oak. Committee members include Adam Garey (chair), Amberly Herbst, Brenda Howerton, Dave Halteman, Dave Rowden, Janet Keighin, and Steven Mann.

The deacons continue with work on several fronts, including the recently installed 125th anniversary sign and removal of the bridge on the south side of the church building (and moving the mailbox to the front entrance.) Work also continues in assessing and implementing safety and emergency procedures.

BIRTHS

Easton Eli (born December 31)

Son of Calvin & Lauren Fehr

Natalie Grace (born January 5)

Daughter of Kevin & Katie Wills

Atalie Joan (born January 5)

Daughter of Michael & Jamie Somers

Carolina Jo (born January 16)

Daughter of Cory & Abby Phillips

DEATHS

Bill Mortimer

(Irma Mortimer's husband)

Passed away November 16

Marjorie Metcalf

(Bob Metcalf's wife)

Passed away December 2

Gene Edwin Hetz

(Marilyn Hetz's husband)

Passed away December 22

Lillian Ruth Foster

(John Foster's mother)

Passed away December 27

Jo Ann Fischer

(Andi Benedict's mother)

Passed away December 27

Bonnie Vance

(David Vance's mother)

Passed away December 28

Ken Keighin

(Kevin Keighin's father)

Passed away January 8

Rosetta Owens

(Judy Owens' sister)

Passed away January 19

Margaret Rader

Passed away January 25

RUTH

THE PERFECT STORY

NEW SERMON SERIES • PASTOR SCOTT BOERCKEL

Series begins February 25!



"Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." 1 Timothy 4:7b-8

Women's EAST WHITE OAK
MINISTRY

Morning Women's Event

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24 / 9:00—10:30AM

Food—Your Greatest Weapon

Christ—Your Greatest Ally

This **FREE** event will equip the women of The Oak to make healthy food/lifestyle choices and prepare for the daily battle of living for Jesus.



Presented by **RENEE JOCSON**

registered nurse, nutrition therapist, health coach

www.yourfoodfight.com



LADIES' PRECEPT BIBLE STUDY

Jeremiah Part 2

Begins Thursday, February 1 | Thursdays either 9:30-11:30am or 6:30-8:30pm | 9 weeks

Missed Jeremiah Part 1? You can still join in Part 2 "When God's Judgment Finally Comes." Jeremiah Part 2 covers chapters 25-52 and continues study of God's Word to His people through the Prophets. Learn what God's message was to a rebellious Judah as Babylonian exile loomed. For information or workbooks contact Lynny Wegman, ljwegman@yahoo.com or call or text 309-824-6598.