

NEWSLETTER OF FPC:ENDICOTT

FIRST PRES PRESS

JUNE 2019 EDITION

CHURCH TRANSFORMATION COHORT WEEKEND

JUNE 13-17

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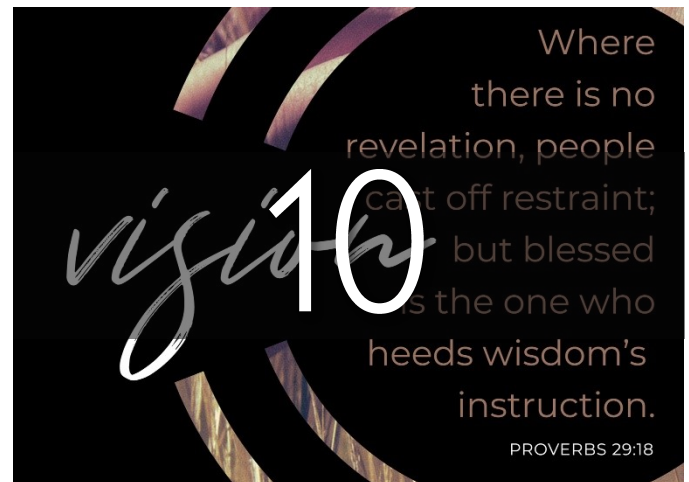
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PROGRAM STAFF

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Connecting Ministries:	Sharon Early
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LEAD

JAN & TIM DEVINE



In 2017, we and several other FPC:E leaders attended the ECO National Gathering in Greenville, SC. One of the keynote speakers was church consultant Paul Borden, who began by saying:

"I listened yesterday as many people expressed the joy and the excitement of being part of ECO and heading toward something new in the future. But what I want to ask you this morning is this: will that sense of joy and

excitement- that sense of being a movement- be here five years from now, or 10 years from now? A lot of churches and denominations have done what you are doing, but today, what was a movement has become an institution."

Paul Borden was very clear to affirm what the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:6: *"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."* And so,

he asked, if your church is not growing, why is that? What part of the equation is not happening? "The problem in churches," Borden said, "is probably not a lack of faithfulness or commitment. The problem is that churches are not being wise about what and why they do what they do. As Albert Einstein said, 'The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results.'"



2. Shift to a new paradigm of how we do church.

Reclaim the purpose of the Church of Jesus Christ, focus on developing leaders, and be accountable within your community to the goals that are set.

It is both challenging and exciting to be part of the Church Transformation Cohort. The challenging part is that as we try to honestly evaluate the statistics at FPC:E (conversions, baptisms, new members, worship attendance, etc.), our numbers reveal that we are not currently growing, but have plateaued. The exciting part is that we have the opportunity to benefit from someone more experienced in leadership and church transformation who will help us make changes in our priorities and how we act as the church so that we might flourish. God has been patiently working in many of us here at FPC:E, stirring within us a desire to be part of something that is bigger than our pride or fear. We look forward to seeing what God has in store for this congregation, and we pray that He will continue to increase our desire and ability to flourish for his glory!

We ask you to PLEASE invest in the weekend when Paul Borden, our consultant for the Church Transformation Cohort, will be here.

If this is new information for you, please read about the cohort, beginning on page 6 of the April newsletter. The schedule for the weekend is found on the following page.

Borden shared two things that we humans in the equation must focus on in order for the Church of Jesus Christ to grow:

1. Make a commitment to DO the Word of God- the Great Commission.

Numbers are important; we count what we value. How many new disciples are coming to Jesus in the life of your congregation each year? Focus on making new disciples.

“

LORD GOD,
HELP US
BECOME AN
ACTS 16:5
CHURCH:
*SO THE
CHURCHES
WERE
STRENGTHENED
IN THE FAITH,
AND THEY
INCREASED
IN NUMBERS
DAILY.*

”

THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2019

- 1:00-2:00pm: Paul Borden will arrive; pastors will give a brief tour of the church.
- 2:00-3:30pm: Interview with the pastors.
- 3:30-6:00pm: ½-hour interviews with paid ministry staff
- 6:00-7:30pm: Paul will interview the Session over a meal. The pastor and other ministry staff personnel are not involved in this interview.
- 7:30-8:30pm: Paul will meet with a focus group (15-25 people) to be interviewed at the church. This focus group is to be a cross-section of the congregation in terms of gender, age, length of time people have attended the church, etc.

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 2019

- 9:00am-Noon: ½-hour interviews with key leaders in the church.
- 12:00-12:30pm: Paul will meet briefly with the pastors to deal with any further questions he might have and to give them a heads-up about the initiatives.
- Afternoon: Paul will prepare the report for Saturday and Sunday.
- Dinner: Paul will meet with the pastors to go over the rest of the weekend.

SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 2019

- 9:00am-3:00pm: Pastors and ministry leaders of the church will meet with the consultant for training.



3:00-4:30pm: When the training is over, the pastors, elders, and program staff will meet with the consultant to go over the report that will be presented on Sunday.

SUNDAY, JUNE 16, 2019

10:00am: United worship service with Paul Borden preaching.

11:00am-Noon: Paul's report will be given to the congregation. Childcare and a children's program will be provided. All events will be recorded and livestreamed.

MONDAY, JUNE 17, 2019

6:00pm: The consultant will host a town meeting at the church for anyone to ask questions about the prescriptions and process he shared on Sunday. It will last anywhere from 10-60 minutes, depending on the questions/concerns that people bring.

TWO-FOUR WEEKS LATER

- Between services, Covenant Partners and active non-members who REGULARLY attend FPC:E will be given an opportunity to respond to a congregational poll regarding the prescriptions/revitalization plan. The poll will be a non-binding resolution; responses will be signed.
- At a subsequent meeting, the elders will make the final decision about continuing with the consultation process.



A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue graduation cap and gown. She is smiling and looking down, with her face partially obscured by the text. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

UNITED SERVICE JUNE 23, 10:00AM

CELEBRATING
OUR
GRADUATES

Summer Camps

YOUNGLIFE | ROCK MOUNTAIN

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE





vision

Where
there is no
revelation, people
cast off restraint;
but blessed
is the one who
heeds wisdom's
instruction.

PROVERBS 29:18

— LINDA WILLETS

During the April and May meetings, elders spent time discussing, preparing and praying for the June Cohort weekend.

At the April meeting, elders and program staff collectively answered the following questions (the responses are summarized below after each

question as part of the Cohort Self Study):

1. What are the three greatest strengths of this congregation, listed in priority order?

- Worship- gifted and authentic musicians and relevant, gospel-centered preaching
- Small groups- deep study of Scripture, faith, and godly living
- Depth and breadth of gifts

and talents within the congregation

2. What are the three most significant weaknesses of your church, listed in order of the greatest need first?

- Evangelism- effectively reaching the lost with the Gospel
- Lacking an assimilation process that moves from welcoming guests to their full assimilation as

disciples

(Note: In March, several leaders began creating and implementing this process.)

c. **Effective Youth and Young Adult ministry**

(Note: We are in the process of doing a consultation with the Fuller Youth Institute, and in the past year we have had a number of larger intergenerational “sticky faith” events and smaller intergenerational opportunities.)

3. What three changes would you like to see made in your church, listed in priority order?

- a. Develop a unified vision by which we align ministries, move forward, and assess progress.
- b. Develop an effective outreach through the ministries/programs in which significant numbers of unchurched people already come into our building regularly (Nursery School- 140 students; Samaritan Supper- weekly community meal which serves between 55-100 people).
- c. Develop an effective outreach to the community beyond our walls which addresses both tangible and spiritual needs.
- d. Develop an effective ministry for and with youth and young adults.

“

PLEASE KEEP
THE PASTORS,
PROGRAM
STAFF, ELDERS,
AND MINISTRY
LEADERS IN
YOUR PRAYERS
AS WE
CONSULT WITH
PAUL BORDEN
DURING THE
WEEKEND OF
JUNE 13-JUNE 17.
AND PLEASE
PARTICIPATE!

”

4. Do the leaders want this congregation to grow significantly? Why or why not?

The group collectively appreciated this response: *“Yes. Because the world desperately needs the Gospel. The Gospel was not meant to just be shared over and over again to the same group of people who already know it, in an environment where those people just sit back in comfort, then bit by bit, reduce down to an elderly, dying group stuck in their own preferences, traditions and routine. The Gospel was meant to be shared as extensively and rapidly as possible by those who have been changed by it.”*

5. Are the leaders willing to make the difficult decisions required for change and growth? Why or Why not?

Three people were honest enough to indicate that they are not completely sure at this time, since we do not know what it will entail.

The others indicated that God has been stirring a holy discontent within them that cannot be ignored, and they believe we are ready to grow. Many felt our commitment to make difficult decisions as we went through the process to lead the congregation out of the PCUSA and into ECO in 2014-15 has prepared us for the current challenges.

SUMMER KID'S CLUB!

5:00PM-6:30PM

TUESDAYS
JUNE 25-JULY 30

REGISTER ONLINE @
FPCENDICOTT.ORG





10:00 AM

Summer Services

START JUNE 30





CONNECT

SHARON EARLY

At the beginning of Lent, I was listening to the podcast “Paying Ridiculous Attention To Jesus,” by Rick Lawrence. They were beginning a new series on “Death to Life,” and this particular episode was “The Seed Mentality.” The primary focus was on seasons and how seasons are embedded in our reality, a natural death-to-life rhythm that we cannot escape. It is relatively easy to recognize

*THERE IS A TIME
FOR EVERYTHING,
AND A SEASON
FOR EVERY
ACTIVITY UNDER
THE HEAVENS.
—ECCLESIASTES 3:1*

the seasons in nature (spring, summer, fall, and winter) and know there is no escaping that reality. But when it comes to other seasons of our lives- our children, jobs, our own mortality- we tend to resist moving to that next season and want to stay in what the author termed “endless summer.”

I think part of why I resonated with this podcast so much is

that one of the speakers, Becky Herrington, referenced her time in college and how for her, it was a season of life when she was deeply in community. She made the comment that after college, she finally recognized that she kept referring to that period of time in her life almost as if talking about someone else—the person she used to be and about a person that wasn't around anymore. She made the comment, "If this is who you want to be, you need to let go of your stories and become who you want to be." Wow! That was actually how we (Bryan and I) ended up in a small group, because we craved that sense of deep community we had experienced in college and kept mourning what had been.

Since our college campus was so isolated, the majority of our friends traveled well over 5 hours to get to campus because that is how long it took just to get to the bridge that crossed to the lower peninsula of Michigan. That meant no running home on the weekends when life got rough. Everyone remained on campus, becoming a community that bonded deeply and did everything together, very similar to the Acts 2 church.

Coming to Endicott was a rude awakening, where many people already had lives of their own and just showing up on someone's doorstep to do life together did not happen! Sure, people were friendly and occasionally we did get together to do life together, but for the most part, it felt very isolated after the tight-knit community

we had in college. Our first small group became a place where we began to build a community that shared life, and, most importantly, wrestled with the greater meaning of life by studying Scripture and figuring out how to apply it to the life we were living.

“

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”

Why do I share this? Because in our small groups, and for many of the ministries and past programs of FPC:E, we fondly remember and communicate how good it was and crave to go back (or remain in) that season of our life. We did not willingly give up our first group, but through death and families moving away, it eventually

ceased to exist. As the speaker shared, "Death forces your hand... forces you into something new." The death of our group forced us into eventually being in a new group that grew to the point that the group had to choose to do something different. When the decision was made to divide, it was again very painful to acknowledge that our group was once again changing. We grieve change, especially when something has been very good. But we are commissioned to invest in others! Jesus left his disciples with this command, *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* (Matt. 28:19-20) By moving forward into a new group, we were given the opportunity and privilege to invest in someone new, which we wouldn't have done if we had remained in our original group!

Recently, at our spring small group leaders' gathering, we looked at Mark 4:26-29 (The Parable of the Growing Seed) to discern what this Scripture passage says to us in regards to "The Seed Mentality":

He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the

full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

Leaders shared the following insights:

- We have to be willing to scatter the seed (the Gospel story) and not think that we have to have everything right. It is not by our doing whether the seed sprouts, but by God's.
- The seed must die in order to produce a harvest of grain. (*"Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."* — John 12:24)

I share all of this with you to reinforce that we are entering a new season of life at FPC:E. Small groups have been integral to many in the church and we want that for others, but we are fearful of change and what that might mean to our existing groups. This past Lent we took a step of faith and did the "Monday Night Mashup" group, where more than 50 people (those new to groups and existing members of Monday small groups) came together and mixed it up. People got a taste of what it would be like to disciple someone new (to them). There was excitement but also an apprehension about what this means down the road.

As I look forward to the consultation weekend, I hope Paul will have some insights into how we can better navigate the



seasons of our groups. Reality is, we have always struggled when groups enter new seasons of life – whether through life change, size of groups, leaders being called to step away and start a new group, etc. I would love to get to a place where we embrace the season (group) we are in, but look with hope towards the new season (group) coming around the bend, knowing that our investment in

others is ultimately a win for the Kingdom and gives birth to new life! It is exciting to think of the exponential number that can grow from a single seed that dies! Are we willing to experience the death of something to ultimately have new life?!

+ <https://www.mylifetree.com/death-to-life-seed-mentality/>



ENDICOTT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
NURSERY SCHOOL

7TH ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENT

JUNE 6 @ TRADITIONS AT THE GLEN
SHOTGUN START @ 12:30PM
DINNER @ 5:30PM



GROW

TINA IDE

“

*“I THINK THAT THE GREATEST GIFT
GOD EVER GAVE MAN IS NOT THE
GIFT OF SIGHT BUT THE GIFT OF
VISION. SIGHT IS A FUNCTION OF
THE EYE, BUT VISION IS A FUNCTION
OF THE HEART.” – MYLES MONROE*

”

Looking around our church on Sunday mornings, we see a lot of activity and a lot of ministries. There is ample evidence of what we do as a church. Yet, that's not the driving force that keeps us moving forward. Those programs are a representation of what we, as a community of faith, are passionate about. They are the tangible ways in which we attempt to live out our vision.

So, what is our vision? What do we hope to see happening both inside and outside the walls of this church? What is bubbling up within our hearts that cannot be contained?

One of my greatest joys in doing Children's and Youth Ministries is witnessing those moments in the life of a young person when

faith sparks something bright and beautiful in them; when a fire is ignited and their faith takes on a new shape. For me, that is the vision I see for Children's and Youth Ministry; to have young people transformed by the Gospel.

Reaching those moments takes time and intentionality mixed with a whole lot of prayer and trust in God's plans and timing. The church's role in making this possible is two-fold. We begin by developing ministry plans whose programs purposefully create better bridges between children, youth, and young adults. These bridges enable the younger generations to establish a firm foundation they can stand on and cling to when they launch into what's next. It

provides them with a safe place of belonging and connects them with a variety of Godly adults they can depend on. In the fall, we built one of these bridges by launching a youth gathering time on Sunday mornings before breaking into small groups. The greatest fruit we saw from this was the formation of deep, honest relationships.

That leads into the second way the church can ensure our young people blossom in their faith. All of us must work together towards strengthening intergenerational relationships. Young people need to know they are valued and supported by all of the adults in the congregation, not just those directly leading or teaching them. When our young ones





grow up, they are not going to point to a program or a ministry which shaped their faith. They are going to point to the people who invested in them, who showed up to their games or recitals, who asked them each Sunday how they were doing, who prayed with them, who mentored them, who vulnerably shared the whole of their lives, who invited and mentored them into a leadership role.

“WHEN OUR
YOUNG ONES
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FAITH.”

So, take a moment and dream with me. Imagine what God can do, what possibilities lie ahead of us. If your heart shares my vision to have a church overflowing with young people who are all in for Jesus, please prayerfully consider where you fit into all of this and how you can bring it to fruition. It takes the whole church investing in the lives of our children, youth, and young adults to make this possible.

STAY CONNECTED

OUR WEBSITE IS A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ALL THINGS FPC:E RELATED:

- LIVESTREAMED SERVICES
- PAST SERMONS
- MUSIC
- UPCOMING EVENTS
- VIDEO TESTIMONIES
- DIGITAL GIVING
- MINISTRY INFORMATION
- NEWS AND MORE!



FPCENDICOTT.ORG

TEACH

RONNE SISCO



It has been a great year here at Endicott First Presbyterian Nursery School, and we're looking forward to next year! 2019-20 classes start up on September 5 for our Pre-K students and September 9 for our three-year-old students.

Contact the nursery school office at (607) 748-1744 to take a tour and register! Program information and a registration form may also be downloaded by visiting our website: nurseryschool.firstpresendicott.org.

As has become our June "tradition," we are gearing up for golf! The 7th Annual Janet Cook Scholarship Golf Tournament will tee off on Thursday, June 6, at Traditions at the Glen! There will be a shotgun start for all golfers at 12:30pm, with prizes, snacks, fun holes, and more. There is still time to join this wonderful cause— helping offset tuition to help more community children attend our nursery school. Not a golfer? Then join us at 5:30 for dinner and the Silent Auction! Contact Derek Washburn at Derek@firstpresendicott.org or (607) 748-1744.

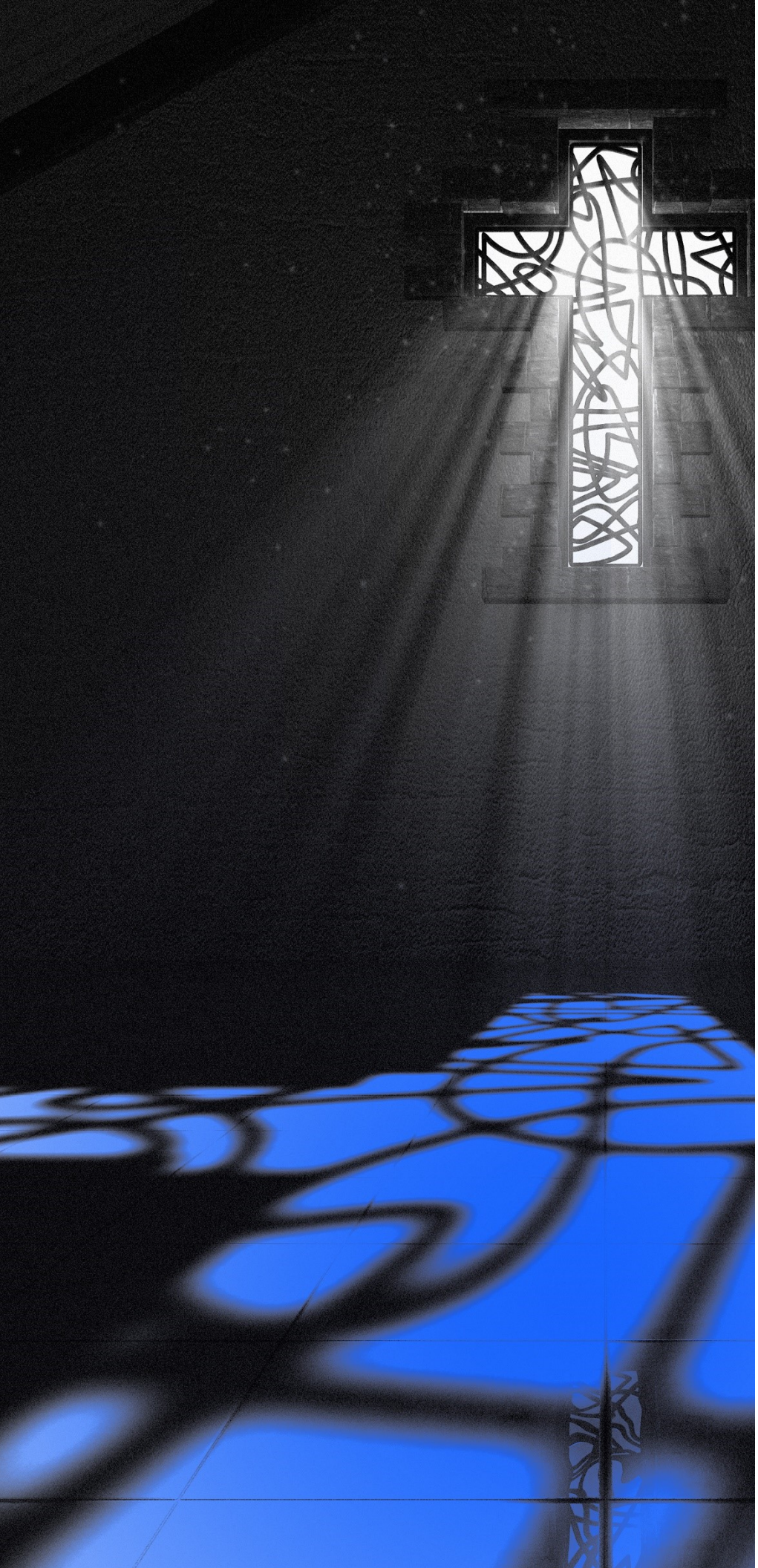


“

JUNE FINDS US WISHING WELL OUR DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS, DEREK WASHBURN. HE HAS SERVED OUR NURSERY SCHOOL FOR SEVEN INCREDIBLE YEARS. WE THANK HIM FOR HIS SERVICE, FRIENDSHIP, AND COMPASSION FOR OUR FAMILIES AND STAFF. WE WISH DEREK, ERIN, WILLIAM, AND DAVIS A WONDERFUL AND BLESSED FUTURE.

”





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