



Lake Wisconsin
Evangelical
Free
Church
January 2012

Investing God's Way

By Pastor Brian Erickson

The definition of “invest” is “contributing money to make money”. You can invest in eternity by using your money for God’s purposes. Heaven’s banks will never need a bail out. And you will receive regular interest and it will yield eternal dividends.

God’s Word says, “*Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.*”¹⁹ *In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*”
(1 Tim. 6:18-19 NIV)

1. Invest in worship

Most of us know about tithing to the Lord. We invest in worship by giving some of our money in an expression of worship. And keep in mind that God needs nothing from us, and certainly not our money. But when we give our offering to God, a planned and proportional offering at the place where we worship – we’re saying to God, “I love you.” God’s Word says “*Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce.*” (Proverbs 3:9, NLT) When we tithe we honor God. He wants us to invest in worship before we invest in any other fund. He doesn’t want our money, He wants our lives...and when we invest in worship, we show God our lives belong to Him.

Investing God's Way...con't

2. Invest in fellowship

God wants us to use some of our money to develop fellowship by showing love to fellow believers, building strong relationships. When I give my money to God, I grow closer to Him. When I give my money to help another person, it draws me closer to him or her. When I give my money to help others in my small group, I grow closer to my small group. To buy a card and write a nice note of encouragement to another believer is an investment in fellowship. When a fellow believer is discouraged and I take that person out for lunch to encourage them, I've given money to fellowship. God's Word says "*My dear friend, it is good that you help the brothers and sisters, even those you do not know.*" (3 John 1:5, NCV) Giving our money towards developing relationships within the church directs others toward the Lord and helps bring people to Christ.

3. Invest in discipleship

God wants some of our money to go towards our own personal and spiritual improvement. God's Word says "*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory be to him now and forever! Amen.*" (2 Peter 3:18, NCV) We've all wasted our money on frivolities instead of using it to grow. But God wants some of our money to go toward developing skills and getting an education so we can become all God wants us to be. When we use our money to purchase a Christian book or CD, that helps us grow and that's discipleship. Or when we use our money to take a class that develops our skills in certain areas of our lives, even if it's aimed at career development, those same skills should be used to serve the Lord.

4. Invest in ministry

God desires us to use some of our money to help those in need. God didn't put us here so we can be selfish, living only for ourselves. This is part of God making us like His Son, Jesus Christ. Our God is generous. All we have is a result of God's generosity. We wouldn't have anything...or even be alive for that matter...if it wasn't for the generosity of God. And God wants to follow His example, being generous. And throughout the Bible God gives us a particular way He wants us to be generous, and that is toward the poor. "*He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.*" (Proverbs 28:27, NIV). "*He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done.*" (Proverbs 19:17, NIV)

Investing God's Way...con't

5. Invest in missions

God wants us to give some of our money to take the Good News to the world. Luke 16:9 (NIV) says: *"I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings."* This verse is often misunderstood. I believe its Jesus telling us to take some of our money and give it toward helping others get to heaven. So when you die and go to heaven, those people will be there to welcome you saying "Thanks so much for investing in missions. I'm in heaven because you gave your money. You came to my village in Guatemala and told me about Jesus, you gave your money to help meet a missionary's needs so they could stay in my country. You gave towards Bibles translated in my language so I could read the gospel message. Because of your investment in missions, I am now a follower of Christ and will spend eternity in heaven with you! Thank-you!" This is the greatest use of our money! You can invest locally or globally. There are people in our church that would like to go to Guatemala in July but some don't think they can afford it. Would you consider saving a little money each month to invest in them so they can take the Good News of Jesus Christ to Guatemala?

When we invest God's way we use our money for eternal goals. To invest money on earth is just storing up treasure here. But investing in eternity means we will get to enjoy the benefits of our money not only here, but in heaven for eternity!

January Theme Nights @

1/04 - Crazy Hair Night
1/11 - Pajama Night
1/18 - Favorite Song Night
1/25 - Mr. Potato Head Night



Awana is a Bible Club for children ages 3 through 6th grade. We meet on Wednesday nights from 6:30-8:00pm.

Unwinnable Arguments

By Pastor Scott Larson

Have you ever got caught up in a foolish argument?

I argued with some college roommates off and on for two years about whether it would be better to fight a crocodile on land or in water. I took the pro-land side. If a venue must be chosen, I want to be able to dodge, jump, and swing a stick. My opponents kept coming back to a random trivia claim that for brief periods, a crocodile can outrun a man. This they argued, probably made the fight easier for a human if the battle was taken underwater. I tried to point out that regardless of land-speed; a muddy river bottom is the worst environment possible for a man to fight a torpedo shaped prehistoric predator with giant jaws and webbed feet. And yet they kept coming back to this claim that a crocodile can outrun a man.

Now none of us involved in this feud took it too seriously. Its origins probably came more from Steve Irwin dominating cable television for all of 1998, than a genuine interest in reptilian scholarship. And as I have matured (pretty easy from that starting point, you might agree) I have noticed that many student aged Christians make a similar mistake in logic (by elevating a lesser point) when it comes to evaluating the value of church. Have you ever heard someone say they don't want to go to church or youth group because "it is not fun" or "my friends don't go"?

This is an unwinnable argument for a parent in the sense that the Bible offers no ammunition or rebuttal. Of course, such is true only because the Bible never claims that following Jesus will be entertaining or lead to popularity. So if you find yourself in this debate, I suggest that you reframe the discussion around the big claims that the Bible does make. It declares that following Jesus brings purpose (Eph 2:10), leads to deep contentment (Matt 6:33), helps us withstand crisis and hardship (Matt 7:24-27), brings forgiveness and new life (Romans 6:3-7), and much more. Every week during our High School AWAKE service, I bring in speakers from our LWEFC congregation who testify to the truth of

Unwinnable Arguments con't

these claims in their own lives. Because our high school ministries are designed to teach and empower students to gauge Christianity on these claims, not arbitrary and unwinnable criteria.

My hope here is not to start or rehash arguments, or to produce winners or losers. Instead, I merely challenge you to identify the Biblical claims of what Christianity offers, and then dialogue with your child (and with me) as to the best possible ways we can help students understand and apply these grand promises. After all, elevating a lesser point over the larger truth is illogical and dangerous. Just like fighting a crocodile underwater.



Parents of Teenagers Support Group

There is a new group starting which will focus on Parents of Teenagers. We will share together, encourage each other and pray for one another each time we meet. We may even go through a book on parenting teenagers. The group is going to meet every other Saturday morning from 8-9:30 a.m. at church. We will start on January 7. If you are interested in attending, or you would like more information, please contact Darla at the church office (592-3091).



Middle School Winter Blast is taking place February 3-5 at Fort Wilderness Christian Camp. This weekend is a highlight for many and includes horseback riding, downhill tubing, meeting new friends around the fire, cross country skiing and much more. Additional information may be found at www.fortwilderness.com. The cost for this weekend is \$60.00 and parents can RSVP with a call to the church office any time before January 21, 2012. The spots always fill up, so don't wait till the last minute!



LAKE WISCONSIN MISSIONS MINISTRY

Debra Storer Mission Impact

Debra Storer is the field administrator for Mission Impact in Guatemala. As field administrator, her duties include communication through prayer letters, publishing, pre-field communication and logistics. Her primary task is follow-up of servant teams, but her most important responsibility is the pastoral care and encouragement to women on staff and on servant teams.

One of the highlights of Mission Impact is “The Sowing Hope Child Sponsorship” program, which provides children with education based the Word of God. If you have ever considered sponsoring a child, please contact Deb at debra@missionimpact.com for more information.

We recently heard from Debra:

“Thank you for supporting my portion of the Mission Impact ministry in Guatemala as we continue to grow through everyday challenges (such as finding balance) and even crisis (family illness/death). God is faithful to set before us grace and provision! I recently returned from a month in Guatemala. A highlight was hearing about plans for increased discipleship throughout the ministry sites, preparations for 2012 Servant Teams, and learning about a new ministry site near Paramos. In the coming months I will be recording training videos for my database responsibilities and, after someone is trained, would like to focus on two new areas of ministry, photography for MISSION IMPACT publications and doing groundwork for preparations and follow up for Mission Impact Servant Teams.”

Debra and her late husband, Dr. Michael Storer, began attending LWEFC in the early 1980’s. Mike and Deb were active in our church and in Bible studies. After ten years of practicing veterinary science in Lodi, the Lord called them into mission work. They served with Christian Veterinarian Missions on the Navajo Reservation in Hardrock, Arizona. From there, they went and served in Les Cayes, Haiti from 1987-1992.

Mike went to be with the Lord in 1995. Debra, after home schooling and raising Jessa, Jason and Kevi, has faithfully continued to serve the Lord in missions. She has been blessed with seven grandchildren.

**CHRISTMAS OFFERING FOR
OUR MISSIONARIES**

A few weeks ago, you gave a special offering to give to our missionaries for Christmas. Many of them work overseas and therefore cannot celebrate with family and friends. A special reminder that we are thinking of them at Christmas is a great encouragement.

Thanks to your support...

We were able to send each of our full time missionary families \$130. Many have already expressed their heart felt appreciation and want to say "Thank You!"

Christian Discipleship 101 Class

SESSION 2

Beginning Sunday, January 15, 2012

Topic: *The Spirit Filled Follower of Jesus*









Christian Discipleship 101 is starting Session 2. This 6 week class meets on Sundays at 9:00am in the Prayer room. Topics covered include: studying God's Word, Prayer and Witnessing. Everyone is welcome! For more information please contact Kelly Jo Lynch, 279-3933 or hopeinthevalley@hotmail.com.

New Precepts Class Begins January 24, 2012

Join us as we study *John, chapters 12-21, The True Vine... "One With Him"*. We will learn about Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, and their significance to our salvation.

This class will meet on Tuesdays, beginning Jan. 24, 2012, with a morning class offered at 9:30 a.m. and an evening class offered at 7:30 p.m., in room 108 at our church. Workbook cost will be approximately \$32.00. If you are interested, please see the sign up sheet located on the bulletin board in the church lobby, or you may contact Jamie Rowe directly at 608-345-2515 or rowe1218@charter.net.

Deadline for sign-up is January 8

Sun 	Mon	Tue	Wed
January 2012  	 	 	
1 7:50am Worship Practice 9:00am Worship Service 10:30am Worship Service	2	3 Elders Meeting	4 6:00am Bible 5:30pm B.I.C. 6:30pm AWA
8 7:50am Worship Practice 9:00am Worship Service 10:30am Worship Service	9 9:30am Prayer Team Missions Meeting	10 Trustees Meeting	11 6:00am Bible 1:00pm Book 5:30pm B.I.C. 6:30pm AWA
15 7:50am Worship Practice 9:00am Worship Service 10:30am Worship Service 12-1:00pm <u>Guatemala</u> <u>Missions Trip INFO</u> <u>Meeting-Joe's Cafe</u>	16 9:30am Prayer Team	17	18 6:00am Bible 5:30pm B.I.C. 6:30pm AWA
22 7:50am Worship Practice 9:00am Worship Service (Gideon Presentation) 10:30am Worship Service (Gideon Presentation)	23 9:30am Prayer Team 7:00pm <u>Annual</u> <u>Congregational</u> <u>Meeting</u>	24 9:30am Precepts 7:30pm Precepts	25 6:00am Bible 5:30pm B.I.C. 6:30pm AWA 
29 7:50am Worship Practice 9:00am Worship Service 10:30am Worship Service	30 9:30am Prayer Team	31 9:30am Precepts 7:30pm Precepts	

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Study S.I.C. WANA	5 6:30pm 2nd Service Worship Practice	6 District Youth Conference January 6-8	7 8-9:30am Parents of Teenagers Support Group/Church Lobby
Bible Study Book Club S.I.C. WANA	12 9:30am Women's Ministry Meeting 6:30pm 2nd Service Worship Practice	13	14
Bible Study S.I.C. WANA	19 6:30pm 2nd Service Worship Practice	20	21 8-9:30am Parents of Teenagers Support Group/Church Lobby
Bible Study S.I.C. WANA <i>WSLETTER ADLINE</i>	26 6:30pm 2nd Service Worship Practice	27	28

**Been Praying and Pondering the
Possibility of Being Used by God...in
Guatemala?**



If you are considering serving this summer in Sumpango and have questions about food, transportation, language, safety or anything else...please join us at our:

Informational Meeting

WHEN: Sunday, January 15

TIME: 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

WHERE: Multipurpose Room

Applications for this trip are due February 5th. You can pick up a copy at the information desk located in the church lobby. They can be dropped off in the basket in the copy room, adjacent to the church offices in the lower level.

Questions may be directed to:

Leader Contact Information

Kelly Jo Lynch - 279-3933 hopeinthevalley@hotmail.com

Patti Schmitz - 592-4449 psh751@charter.net

Tracy Jesse - 592-7491 tmjese@frontier.com

Kim Pollock - 849-8649 pollock@chorus.net



Book Club News

Submitted by Delores Parsley

Wednesday, January 11, 1:00pm in the Church Library

The Lightkeeper's Bride

By: Colleen Coble

Katie Russell has known since childhood that she was expected to marry well. Her family has been pressing her to marry wealthy Bartholomew Foster. This would promise a secure future for her and her parents.

While working as a telephone operator, one evening she accidentally overhears a chilling exchange between her friend Eliza and a familiar male voice. Katie soon learns that Eliza is missing and the crime may be linked to another investigation by the new lighthouse keeper, Will Jespersion. Katie is very drawn to Will. She can't help but notice his sense of peace. It is a peace that rests in God - a trust she has never had to depend on with her future so clearly mapped out for her.

But the more Katie uncovers the mystery, the more she discovers about herself, her past, and the bright future that could be hers if only she has the courage to trust in God and follow where her heart is leading her.

February Book Selection is Vision of His Glory

By: Anne Graham Lotz

If you have any questions or would like more information regarding our Book Club, please contact Delores at 608-592-7344 or through email at chardel@charter.net.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Adult Sunday School

Begins January 15, 2012

Sunday Mornings

Room 108

10:30-11:00am

Pastor Dean Sherman/Video

Questions - Dick Meyer 592-3577

We Believe . . .

The Evangelical Free Church of America is an association of autonomous churches united around these theological convictions:

God

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

The Bible

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

The Human Condition

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus, Israel's promised Messiah, was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

The Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

The Church

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

Christian Living

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

Christ's Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Response and Eternal Destiny

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

Nursery Volunteers

January

9:00am

- 1 Judy Keller & Beth Lang
- 8 Ben & Jenn Newcomb
- 15 Jeremy & Cheryl Piontek
- 22 Heidi Braden & Karen Callahan
- 29 Beth Lang & Lita Lang

“Thank You!”
to all our
volunteers.

10:30am

- 1 Mark & Judy Stewart
- 8 Mark & Darla Niebuhr
- 15 Ron & Heather Treinen
- 22 Jean Winter
- 29 Linda Rand & Eric Schmidt



Cross Walk Children’s Ministry Volunteers

9:00am

- 1 Jeremy & Cheryl Piontek
- 8 Jenn Erickson & Bob Walters
- 15 Lisa, Connor & Caleb Doyle
- 22 Dean & Karen Anderson
- 29 Mark & Darla Niebuhr

10:30am

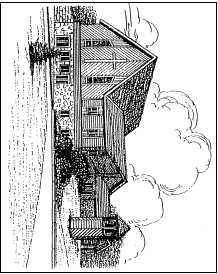
- 1 Cherie Schmidt & Jenn Erickson
- 8 Mark & Judy Stewart
- 15 Judy Keller & Sue Martin
- 25 Remi & Anne Malig
- 29 Cherie Schmidt & Jenn Erickson

Volunteers Every Sunday: Loretta Parker, Dave Padley and Ron Rowe

Gideon’s Report

Sunday, January 22, Matt Jesse will be giving a report during both services on the work of the Gideon’s. It’s exciting to hear how God’s Word is changing the lives of men, women, boys and girls - here, there and everywhere!

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Return Service Requested



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