

NOVEMBER 2025

LEWIS LAKE NEWS



Pastor Appreciation Sunday

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God at Work: Changes Ahead

by Joe Reed

I love to say that God is at work at Lewis Lake. I say it because I see *life*. Life is a gift we receive, not a product we manufacture. We can't create life, we can only receive it and enjoy it. Life only comes from God, so where you see life, you see the fingerprints of God. God is at work.

Living things grow, and growth inevitably means change, for better or for worse. Baby's first steps are exciting, but seasoned parents know the glorious days of finding baby exactly where you left him ten seconds ago are forever gone. You didn't appreciate that luxury, did you? And let's not even get started on the changes accompanying puberty. Changing bodies, changing voices, and hardest of all, changing attitudes toward Mom and Dad. But what do we want, our kids to not grow? Hardly. We want them full of life. Even though the changes can be hard.

When God is at work among us, things will change, and in three dimensions. Let's think about them together.

God's work will change our lives.

In Galatians 5, Paul says that the typical life lived apart from God is marked by "*sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these*" (5:19-21). In plain language, it means people live with their girlfriends before they get married, their minds and their speech are filthy (think porn, dirty jokes, and lots and lots of talk about sex), they live only to have a good time, they have short fuses, they generally have a hard time getting along with people (think tons of drama!), they spend a lot of time with a bottle, and they're never happy with what they have – they're constantly thinking about the next car, the next house, the next sexual partner. You know, Paul says, "things like these."

And all of us have been there. But not only that, all of us still there to some degree, because we still struggle with sin. But when God goes to work in our hearts, he puts life in them, and our lives begin to change.

Where God is at work, "*the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*" (5:22-23). There's a patient kindness with annoying people, an unexpected gentleness, a biting of the tongue where once there was an instantaneous lashing out. And, I think, the most underrated of all the fruits of the Spirit, self-control. The ability to say no to our own desires and impulses. The strength to conquer our addictions. It's a new life, a life empowered by God himself.

When God is at work, lives change. And I see lives changing around Lewis Lake. I see guys once dragged to church by their wives now happily leading their children to worship. I see angry people mellowing out, and if I may be so bold, I see beer bellies shrinking away. It's the fingerprints of God, and they're beautiful.

These changes are sometimes slow, and often painful. Sometimes when I see God at work, I see people who are really struggling. God has taken something valuable away from them, and they're having a hard time adjusting. I'm glad God is still at work in my life, still changing me, but sometimes he has to smack me pretty hard to help me grow. My spiritual growth spurts usually occur in the darkest hours of life, and you old saints can probably confirm that. God is at work in those moments, breathing life into our beleaguered hearts, pruning away until we bear even more fruits of the Spirit.

God's work will change our church.

We sometimes joke that the scariest words ever uttered in church are, "We've never done it this way before!"

"because God is at work, our community will change. I hope you're already beginning to see it. As God works in you, His people, you become salt and light wherever you go. You make your community a less-dark place. You bring hope into hopelessness"

~God at Work, continued on page 8

Pray For Nigeria

by Bob De Young

November is known for a lot of things, but more and more, the focus in this month is on the persecuted Church. November 2 is All Saints Day and as we think about the saints, both living, and dead, our attention is drawn to those who are in great distress. There is great persecution against the followers of Jesus throughout the world today, more than ever has been. And the greatest amount of persecution currently seems to be centered in the country of Nigeria.

In a recent Break Point article John Stonestreet and Bob Ditmer make this statement.

Christians in Nigeria are paying for their faith like no one else in the world. Attacks from Muslim extremists were once mostly limited to sacred holidays of Easter and Christmas. Now, they are almost continuous. This year, the slaughter of Nigerian Christians has hit an unprecedented level. According to a *Newsweek* report, over 7,000 Christians have been killed in Nigeria during the first 220 days of 2025, an average of 35 killings a day.

Christianity is an exclusive religion. That is, the Apostles taught what Jesus had first taught them, which is the truth that the only way to be saved from the natural consequences of our very real sins against God is to believe on Jesus. Any other religion is false and will not accomplish the eternal salvation of the human soul. Jesus Himself said as much in John 14:6.

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” But, even though Christianity makes this audacious claim, in the end it simply invites people to come and put their faith in Jesus. It is your choice. Take it or leave it. It is up to you.

When it comes to Islam, however, especially the “Muslim extremist” brand of Islam, there is no choice given. Islam is also an exclusive religion. Islam teaches that the only way a person can be saved is to accept the truth the Allah is God and Muhammad is His prophet. Islam did not appear on the world scene until about 600 years after Jesus. But it claims to be the last word on the salvation of the soul.

Islam differs from Christianity, however, in one very important way. Though these two religions are both claiming to be the only true way, Islam gives no choice to people as to whether they will follow the teachings of Muhammed or not. “Follow Islam or we will kill you” they say. The extremist followers of Islam demand that people submit to the teachings of this religion or be destroyed. This is what the Nigerians are finding out in very negative ways.

Persecution against Jesus exists all over the world today. But, as Pastor Joe said in his recent sermon on the Church of Smyrna, perhaps the church in Nigeria is going through its own “ten days of

testing” Let us remember them during the International Day of Prayer, especially, not just in November, but until their “ten days” are over.

Pastor Bob

“the only way to be saved from the natural consequences of our very real sins against God is to believe on Jesus. Any other religion is false and will not accomplish the eternal salvation of the human soul. Jesus Himself said as much in John 14:6.”



Bob De Young is enjoying being semi-retired and holds the honorary title of Pastor Emeritus.

The Colson Corner: All Things Are Christ's

by Clark Hauger

A number of years ago I was introduced to the Colson Center for Christian worldview through the Breakpoint podcast. This ministry was founded by its namesake Charles Colson. Who was he?

Once known as the “hatchet man” for President Nixon, Chuck Colson pled guilty to obstruction of justice and served seven months in a maximum-security prison. Beforehand he had converted to Christianity after talking with a friend and reading C.S. Lewis’ *Mere Christianity*. Chuck left prison in 1975 committed to taking the Gospel to prisoners and their families.

When Chuck started the Colson Center, he recognized that U.S. churches were focused on evangelism but were missing the “cultural commission,” neglecting potential influence in the culture. Chuck believed in the importance of equipping every Christian to live like one. Every single day. [1]

What is the “Cultural Commission” referred to here? Sometimes called the “cultural mandate” it is drawn from the first chapter of genesis, in short: [28] And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ESV)

- The cultural mandate is the command to exercise dominion over the earth, subdue it, and develop its latent potential (Gen. 1:26-28; cf. Gen 2:15). God calls all humans, as those made in his image, to fill the earth with his glory through creating what we commonly call culture.

- The cultural mandate is given to all people. In Genesis 1:26-28, it’s given to Adam and Eve as the only people and as representatives of all humanity. In Genesis 9:1 it’s given to Noah as the representative of all humanity.
- Therefore, the cultural mandate is not just for the people of God. Moreover, it’s not uniquely tied to the gospel or the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20), which is a distinct mandate given to the people of God alone.

“the cultural mandate is not just for the people of God. Moreover, it’s not uniquely tied to the gospel or the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20), which is a distinct mandate given to the people of God alone”

•Having said that, only the true people of God (the church) will be able to fulfill the cultural mandate as it was intended—according to the desire to give glory to God. [2]

This past summer I enrolled in what they call the Colson Fellows program and since then have been participating in monthly cohort meetings to discuss assigned books and articles as well as to engage with other fellows examining case studies to apply our learning. The program also includes creating a personal ministry plan and preparing a course to teach to others.

Thus far I’ve thoroughly enjoyed this experience and look forward to sharing more with you about what I’ve been learning and how it’s impacted my walk with Christ as I seek to apply His word and call to all of life. So far we’ve read or been reading:

Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

Why You Think The Way You Do by Glen Sunshine

Knowing God by J.I. Packer

~All Things are Christ's, continued on page 9



Youth Group meets
Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm
For Students in 7th -12th Grade

Youth Group Corn Maze Trip



Thank You!

Michele and I want to express something our gratitude for your many kind words and acts of generosity to us over the past month. We thank God for bringing us to you, and you to us. It's a deep joy to serve you, and to serve Jesus with you. Your love is very special to us, and we happily say with all our hearts we love you too!

Pastor Joe & Michele

It is always a bit of a struggle to find the words to say just how grateful Sandy and I are for all of your kind expressions of care and love that we received this past Sunday. Thanks so much for all those wonderful cards, the great gifts, and the expressions of support and encouragement. We truly do feel blessed to be part of such a great church. It is only by the grace of God that we find ourselves here and we are so thankful. Thanks so much, too, for the wonderful words that were shared and the music that was played during the program on Sunday as well. We loved it. It truly does our hearts good to be part of such a great congregation.

In Christ, Pastor Bob and Sandy

“Christ did not die to forgive sinners who go on treasuring anything above seeing and savoring God. And people who would be happy in heaven if Christ were not there, will not be there. The gospel is not a way to get people to heaven; it is a way to get people to God. It's a way of overcoming every obstacle to everlasting joy in God. If we don't want God above all things, we have not been converted by the gospel.”

— John Piper, *God Is the Gospel: Meditations on God's Love as the Gift of Himself*

Subscribe to the Pulse



Subscribe to the Lewis Lake Pulse, a weekly email sent out on Monday mornings with the week's announcements, along with a few things Pastor Joe recommends for feeding your soul throughout the week. To subscribe to The Pulse, shoot an email to office@LewisLake.org with the subject line "Subscribe to Pulse" and we'll get you fixed up! Or you can scan the QR code to the right.



Fellowship Hall Remodel Project



The remodel is coming along nicely. The walls are all framed up and ready for the electrician who is currently working on the wiring.

The electric fireplace is prepped and ready for the mantle and stone work to be completed.

Thank you Gary Hoyles for your handwork and dedication to seeing this project completed and thank you to everyone who has stepped up and put in time helping Gary with the work - we appreciated you.



Feed My Starving Children



Mark Sholtz and the Diaconate organized a recent trip down to Feed My Starving Children.
Thank You!

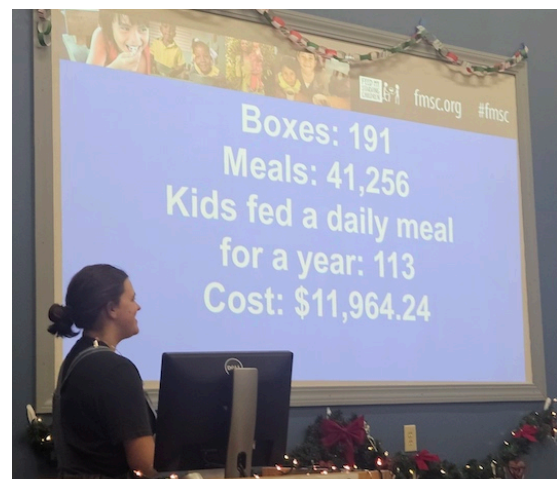


Photo Credit, Sarah Terpstra

There's something very healthy about holding on to our traditions and not detaching ourselves from our roots. Wandering trees make cool stories in *The Lord of the Rings*, but in the real world they make lousy forests. The church's roots – her deep attachment to Christ and the mission He gave us – must remain firmly planted, while the way we express our attachment and pursue our mission is always changing, and always has been.

When God's life-giving finger touches a church and fills it with vitality, things start happening. Ministries grow, new ones begin. Budgets grow, buildings expand. Some traditions get left behind while new ones emerge, often imperceptibly. New people do new things in new ways, simultaneously creating a sense of excitement and anxiety – “We've never done it that way before!”

The way I see it, there's two kinds of church change. One is changing to preserve life. This is a common theme in Jesus' letters to the churches in Revelation. Think of it like treating a disease. Something in the church is very wrong and needs to change, and fast, before it's too late and the church withers and dies. That kind of change is God's work too, but it's a hard one.

The other kind of change is changing to facilitate life. Think of your growing teenager. Sure, she can still sorta squeeze into those jeans that barely go below her knees now, and when she can't stuff her feet into her shoes anymore she could just go barefoot, but you're a loving parent and want her to look nice and feel comfortable, so you bite the bullet, spend some money, and get her some new changes of clothes.

That's the kind of changes we're going through right now. It's exciting, sometimes expensive, and we find ourselves trying to figure out if we need to just let out a

hem here and there or just buy new pants. I get it – I've raised girls and I'm sure I've said more than once, “Can't you go another month or two in those?”

This month we're adding an Associate Pastor. I'm excited and anxious – it's going to be a significant change for us, for me, and for Josh. We're not doing this because of tradition, or because we're trying to fix some major problem, or because we've got more money laying around than we know what to do with. We're doing it because God is at work, the ministry is expanding, and we're just trying to keep up. We're remodeling the Old

Fellowship Hall into something the original builders probably never envisioned, but the kitchen was too small to handle the amount of food we need to make, and the space was too small to squeeze us in. So we're changing it. We're running out of chairs on Sunday, and space to put the chairs. Probably means some changes are coming there too. God is at work.

God's work will change our community

Finally, because God is at work, our community will change. I hope you're already beginning to see it. As God works in you, His people, you become salt and light wherever you go. You make your community a less-dark place. You bring hope into hopelessness, and a sense of God's presence to people who don't often think about God. Sometimes people I'm with will curse or swear, and then they'll remember that I'm a pastor, and they'll instantly apologize. I'm a big boy, and my ears won't burn off if I hear a crass word. But I'm glad that my presence makes them aware that words matter, and they shouldn't be so careless or crass with them. In that sense, I don't mind making people feel uncomfortable. I want them to think about God, because they don't usually, and when

***“when God is at work,
God creates life. Life
causes growth, and
growth causes change.
Changes like we're
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work”***

they do, I want them to think they're not right with God, but they should be.

As God works in you, and as God works in Lewis Lake, the light of the Gospel has shone further and further. A couple days before she died, Margaret Hill said to me with a delightfully intense and perceptive twinkle in her eyes, "We're not just an *Ogilvie* church anymore, we're a *community* church." We have people carrying God's life-giving work into Ogilvie, Mora, Milaca, (let's not forget Bock!), Hinckley, and have even penetrated our historically impermeable southern border, the Isanti County line, to reach into Braham, Stanchfield, Dalbo, and regions beyond! It's quite remarkable, really. God is at work.

And when God is at work, God creates life. Life causes growth, and growth causes change. Changes like we're

experiencing are sometimes uncomfortable and challenging. But they're changes brought upon us by God's life-giving work, and we want to give thanks for them. I hope you'll join me in praying that God would continue to work, continue to fill us with life, and continue to change our lives, our church, and our community.



Joe Reed is the Senior Pastor here at Lewis Lake.

How Now Shall We Live by Charles Colson

Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview by Gary Phillips

The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self by Carl Trueman

I invite you to discuss these things with me informally any time. At some point, probably next summer we can explore these themes through Focus on the Family and the Colson Center's joint project: [Truth Rising](https://truthrising.com/) [3]. In the meantime I'll begin unpacking some of these issues and ideas in December's article. Until then I'll leave you with an insightful statement from the Dutch

theologian Abraham Kuyper:

"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!'"

Clark Hauger



Clark Hauger serves as the Worship Director here at Lewis Lake.

[1] <https://colsoncenter.org/about/>

[2] <https://www.9marks.org/answer/what-cultural-mandate-who-it-given/>

[3] <https://www.truthrising.com/>

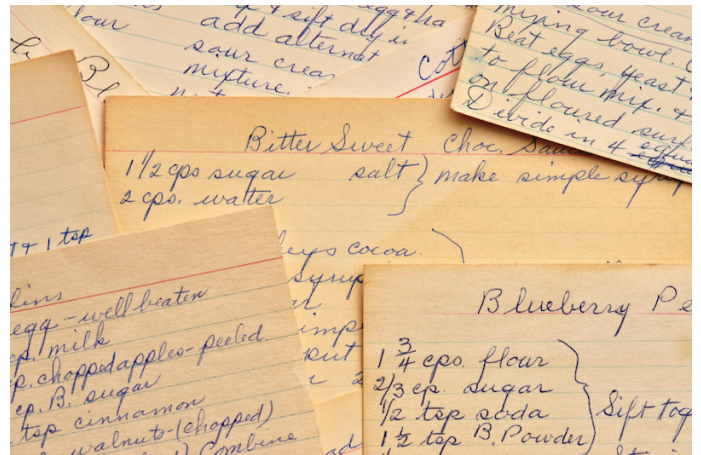
Recipe Corner

Lake Beauty Baked Oatmeal

For a Crowd

Makes 2 9x13 pans

9 eggs
5 1/2 cups milk
1 1/2 cups oil
3 cups brown sugar
pinch of salt
1/4 cup baking powder
1/4 cup cinnamon
3/4 gallon (12 cups) oatmeal



Preheat the oven to 325. In a big mixing bowl mix eggs, milk, and oil. Add in the dry ingredients adding the oatmeal last. Pour mixture into greased 9 x13 pans about 1/2-3/4 full. Bake at 325 degrees for 30 minutes or until golden brown with cracks on top.

This is usually served with maple syrup or cream. Add some blueberries or your favorite fresh fruit. Yum!

For a smaller batch

Makes one 8 x 8 pan

3 Cups quick oats
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 large eggs
1 Cup warm milk
1 Cup brown sugar
1/2 Cup butter melted
1 teaspoon vanilla extract



Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease an 8 × 8 baking pan.

Mix the quick oats, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt in a large bowl.

Whisk together the eggs, warm milk, brown sugar, melted butter, and pure vanilla extract in a smaller bowl.

Combine your liquid ingredients mixture with your oat mixture and stir well. Allow the batter to sit in the bowl for 5 minutes.

Pour the batter into a greased 8×8 pan and bake for 30-35 minutes until an inserted toothpick comes out clean and the edges are a deep golden brown.

Serve warm and enjoy plain or with cream, powdered sugar, or maple syrup.

WOMEN'S *Ministry*

GROWING TOGETHER IN FAITH

Women's Ministry Meeting
Monday, November 10th
6:15pm
All Lewis Lake Ladies are
encouraged to join us.

Women's Ministry Project Day

Join us for Women's Ministry Project Day, a wonderful opportunity to connect with other women, share creative ideas, and work on your personal projects in a supportive and encouraging environment. Whether you're an experienced crafter or just starting out, all are welcome!

Date: Saturday, November 8th

This is a repeating event held on the second Saturday of the month

Time: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM - Lunch will be provided!

What to Bring:

Your craft, hobby, or personal project (quilting, sewing, knitting, scrapbooking, card making, painting, or any creative endeavor).

Don't have a project? No problem! We'll have some activities to join and opportunities to learn new skills.

Come ready for fun and fellowship!



ATTENTION VETERANS!

ARE YOU NEW TO LEWIS LAKE?

Women's Ministry will be giving away a quilt to one of our Lewis Lake Veterans on Sunday, November 9th in honor of Veterans Day.

Please let Tami know so we can get your name added to the list.

Get the App!



It's not always easy to keep up with everything that's happening at Lewis Lake. Your life is busy, and so is ours. To that end, we've created the Lewis Lake phone app. Watch sermons, check the church calendar, sign up for events and activities, it's the place to go to see what's happening and plug into the madness. So go wherever you get your apps, and look for Lewis Lake.



Notary Services Available

Notary Services are available at zero cost to Members and Non-Member friends of Lewis Lake Covenant Church. You can catch Tami on Sunday mornings or make an appointment to stop by the office during the week.