

A Quick Peek into 2018

By Pastor Dave Izenbart

Happy 2018 Living Springs! I sincerely hope you had a wonderful Christmas and a great New Year's Eve celebration! I don't know about you, but I personally love the beginning of a new year – filled with hope and expectation, new things, and new challenges. I love to pray and dream and seek the Lord to sense his heart in what he would want to see happen in the year to come.

Now, I know that for some of us it has been a tough year – maybe financially or medically. Maybe trouble finding or keeping a job, health concerns, or the loss of loved ones. It hasn't been an easy year for our nation – terrorist attacks, shootings, violence on our city streets, hurricanes, floods, fires, racial tensions and overt racist attacks, political turmoil, and instability. It has been in some ways a challenging year for us as a church as well – staff transitions, loss of some beautiful saints going home or moving, as well as other challenges.

However, I have also been recently reflecting on God's incredible goodness and faithfulness in the midst of a challenging year. We have much to celebrate. Consider just a couple of notable examples:

We have had much to celebrate in 2017...

- Our highest attended Fall Fest ever - over 600 people, more than half of which came from our community.
- A thriving Children's Ministry, with great leadership.
- A thriving Coffee Break Ministry, with over 100 women involved – the highest number of women in its 40-year history.
- Launched 3G groups and 13 new discipling groups!
- 2 wonderful new support groups – Grief Share and Dementia Support groups.
- Thriving youth ministry – perhaps the biggest Jr. High group ever at Living Springs! A great group of young leaders in the High School Ministry.

- Compassion Projects: 6k run/walk for clean water that provided clean drinking water for over 200 children, and we provided several rainwater tanks in Kenya to provide water for communities in desperate need through Matanya's Hope.

- We continue to be a host site for PADS, a ministry to the homeless in our area. We are so grateful for 15 years of faithful service from Denny Janssen, and for our new leader stepping up this year – Alvy Butler.

- Food Pantry continues to be used by many families and individuals from our community.

- Our Riverdale Site is really doing well - probably the most effective year of ministry yet. We are in the process of refinancing the building – to cut down on expenses, and have a dream and hope to pay off that building in 3 years. Very exciting.

- Over 40 different ministries- each of which has stories.

- 9 missionaries/ministries throughout the world supported!

- Just recently, we asked for coats and games for circle ministry and corn muffin mix for Respond Now. After the first service, all the tags for coats and games were taken, and we brought in 800 boxes of corn muffin mix!

This church is so incredibly benevolent, gracious, giving, and active, and I just want to say that I feel honored to be a pastor here. We have much to praise God for, and give him thanks!

Quick Peek into 2018...

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A Quick Peek Into 2018

By Pastor Dave Izenbart (Continued)

1) Continue our 3G Adventure. Remember the 3 G's – Grow, Gather, Go! We hope to see each person:

Grow - in a relationship with Jesus by reading and applying God's Word. The challenge is to read and apply 1 chapter a day, 5 days a week, and in the year to come we will read and apply the entire New Testament to our lives. (We are using the D-Life Tool (which you can find on the app, in the bulletin, and at the Welcome Center/Connection Booth.

Gather - together in discipling relationships – either a Bible study or 3G group (3G groups are small groups of 3-12 people that gather together weekly or bi-weekly to Grow, Gather and Go together).

Go - Every 3 G Group is encouraged to do a bi-monthly mission project – to make a difference in our world!

2) Are You Getting Connected? If you are not connected in any group, we urge you to jump into 3G Boot Camp (Round II): January 27, 8:30-12:30p.m. This boot camp gives you everything you need to lead or be a part of a life-changing 3G group.

3) Revamped Basketball and Beyond Ministry!

New leader: Elder Glenn Sterrett. We are so excited that Glenn has stepped up to lead this beautiful and important outreach ministry. He has lots of vision and ideas to make this ministry flourish, including: raising up 5 strong men to lead, a computer tracking system, food, jerseys, urban ministry materials, and more! Very exciting! If you or someone that you might know would be interested in serving in this ministry – Contact Elder Glenn – elderg51@gmail.com.

The Purpose: Leading a mentoring ministry that uses basketball and other meaningful spiritual materials to help young men get and stay on a good path to make powerful individuals.

4) Comedy Jam, March 10; a great night of food, music, laughter, and entertainment. Should be awesome!

That's just a little peak. Lots of other things in the works like the launch of LSU (Living Springs University – Adult Spiritual formation), a powerful series during lent, and a compassion project. We are looking forward to a great 2018! May you have a blessed and Happy New Year!

Partnering To Make A Difference.

by Randle Elmore

This year served as the second consecutive year that LSCC has partnered with other churches in the South Suburbs to bless over 700 hundred families during the Christmas season. December 13, Living Springs' staff volunteered with Respond Now's annual Christmas Store. Every year, the Christmas Store provides low resourced families with: four gifts, stocking stuffers, two outfits, and outerwear (winter hat, coat, and gloves) for every child. In addition to gifts, families also receive a Christmas meal (turkey, stuffing, corn, corn bread, mac & cheese, etc.). LSCC was asked to provide 600 boxes of corn bread towards this effort; we provided 846. Respond Now was blown away with the generosity of our church. The extra supplies will go to provide additional meals to families beyond the Christmas season. Thank you church family for always stepping up to impact our community and be-

yond. I'm proud to be part of such a loving church that gives so generously for the sake of Kingdom work. Great Job!



You Can't Ever Forget Love

by Christine Biegler

I was 15 the first time Alzheimer's disease hit me. My paternal grandmother was diagnosed with the disease and lived with it for 19 years (far longer than the 7-year average). I was worried and sad but had no idea, yet, the beast that Alzheimer's really was. I had been too young to remember both of her parents dying from the disease. Over the next two decades, I watched my grandmother, as I knew her, leave us bit-by-bit. During the same time, I watched her three siblings also disappear from Alzheimer's.

As awful as it was, the true devastation of the disease did not hit me until my own father started to forget. When we first started noticing, I begged God to stop the disease before it really started. I would sob into my pillow at night asking God to let me keep my dad; the most amazing man I have ever known. My dad: **strong, compassionate, generous, loving, handy, problem solver** and **storyteller**, was disappearing before my eyes.

As I've walked this lonely path, I have tried to find peace and beauty in it, despite the heartbreak. I've tried to understand what God wants of me through all of this. He knows my pain and fear, right? He knows my dad better than even me, right? There has to be something good from this. My dad has recently declined to the next stage of Alzheimer's. There is less and less of who he was still there. But I do my best to focus on my dad exactly as he is now. We chat about old times, he comes to my kids' band performances, we listen to his favorite music, and I let him tell me the same stories over and over. I still laugh when he

tells me about the time a nun fell off a ladder and he caught her and saw right up her habit! GASP!

Recently, when talking about my dad with my kids, my son, Patrick said, "I hate Alzheimer's, but if this is it, I can handle it." My eyes filled with tears as I said, "this is not it, buddy, it's going to get worse. He will forget everything." Patrick began to cry and asked if Papa would forget him too. I took a deep breath and this is what I told him, "He will forget your name. He will not remember how old you are or which grandchild you are or that you are a lefty like him, or that he taught you how to play Cribbage and Euchre, but he WILL NEVER FORGET LOVE!" I believe this firmly, as I remember my grandma's eyes light up when we walked into the room, long after all her memories and words were gone. I told my children that until papa dies, he will feel the love he has for his family. Alzheimer's steals almost everything, but it can't steal love! That is God's gift in this. That is what God gives me, even as I lose my dad in every other way. And, one day in Heaven, he will be fully restored and healed. He will be whole in Heaven. There is no Alzheimer's, no dementia, in Heaven. And I praise God for that!

If you are touched by dementia as a patient, caregiver, loved one, or friend, please join us at the Dementia Support Group the first Thursday of every month from 7-8:30 p.m. at LSCC in room 215. We will be taking a break in January, but meetings resume February 1, 2018. I look forward to seeing you.

Notes & Quotes from the Church Mouse

We will open the book. It's pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. This book is called opportunity and the first chapter is New Year's Day.

Egith Lovejoy Pierce
"Bits & Pieces"



January Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Claudia Barnick	2 <i>Harold & Pearl Koning</i>	3 Sandy Epley Beth Hackett Bill Reder	4 Brian Kleinfelder Nansi Strong Elliott Ten Clay	5 Kasey Balbuena Chris Denman Lukas Denman Loni Elmore Joel Gatto Sam Stewart Gemma Villarino	6 Jenny Scanland <i>Nick & Sally Maloni</i>
7 Lydia Mutua Joseph Muyskens Ceaser Norfleet Jackson Ten Clay	8 Gabriela Rodighiero	9 Sasha Gowder Cora Timmer	10 Ebenezer Epey Katie Hackett Don La Vette Sarah Owolabi	11	12 Angela Buckley Marcus Carpenter Mya Dixon Elise Kochheiser	13 KJay Baron
14 Kathy Bennett Carl Koning	15 Milton Carter Marijo Kleinfelder Robert Williams <i>John & Linda Hurt</i>	16 Deborah Bivens Martez Collins Quinn Grevengeod Isabella Jackson Thomas Williams Noah Zehnder <i>Larry & Jeanne Benson</i>	17 Elijah Morris Jamila Salter	18 Tracy Kitchell Dan Reagan	19 Casey Denman	20 DeAnna Blackwell Laylah Elmore Micquelyn Walker
21 Nick Voll Kamria Wade	22 Andrew Lindstrom Lester Scanland	23	24 Thomas Adams Denny Janssen Scott McCormack CT Tates Madelyn Zirbel	25 Wayne Aardsma Donna Gayden Melanie Jongsma David Weinum	26 Sam Contreras John Hurt Nathan Jann	27 Isaiah Fields-Nelson
28 Aaron Holliday Eileen Meier Gayle Ritzema Naomi Thrall	29 Steve Hadley Antonia Nevan	30 Jacqueline Anderson Isaiah Fields	31 Jeanne Benson Sydney Dore			

