

# The Bluff Hall News

May 2025



## Pastor's Thoughts

Last night I had the opportunity to give a devotional at the Trail Life campout. At first I wondered if I should agree to do it, after all, this was a very busy week for me. The truth is it would have been very easy to come up with several excuses; “Wesley had two Quiz Bowl matches, and a band concert”, “I’ve already got the newsletter to put together this week”, and last but not least “I just don’t want to do it”. It is quite easy to be selfish at times. Yet, I jumped at the chance to share a word with the 40 or so boys and several dads. The words of Peter bring quite the conviction to an “excuse making heart”.

In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. (1 Peter 3:15–16 ESV)

The phrase, “always being being prepared” does not leave us any wiggle room. As followers of Jesus we have been given a great gift free of charge and as such Peter tells us to share the “reason for [our] hope”. Notice that we are to present the “defense” of our “hope” in “gentleness and respect”. For the follower of Jesus we are seeking to be winsome and kind when we share the good news that has transformed our lives. Now I want to point out a few things that Peter does not say in this passage. He does not say “Bible teachers, be ready”. First off, remember he is writing to the early church most of whom may only have had a very basic education. Secondly, you’ll recall that Jesus called Peter who was fishing because he failed at rabbinical school. He also does not say “when you deem the situation is right”. Along with the “always being prepared” phrase, Peter adds the idea of when someone “asks.” If someone asks, Peter expects the Christ follower to have an answer. Have you ever considered that it was the Holy Spirit that prompted the person to ask you in the first place? As a faithful follower of Christ Jesus we must strive to be ready to share the good news of Jesus any time and any place. Paul would put it this way to Timothy, “be ready in season and out of season.” (2 Timothy 4:2 ESV)

As I stood by the campfire waiting to present a short devotional, the Lord “changed my mind”. Instead of the message I had prepared and rehearsed I found a favorite story popping into my mind. It is the story of Jesus restoring Peter found in John 21. Peter, warming himself by a charcoal fire, had denied knowing Jesus three times. Then in John 21 Jesus sitting beside a charcoal fire gently asks Peter three times “Do you love me?” It is a story that shows the depth of Jesus’ love and forgiveness. It reminds us that even when we forsake Jesus, he does not forsake us. We can come to him, seeking forgiveness and restoration, and Jesus will just ask us “do you love me?”. What a joy to hear from several boys and adults how much the word encouraged them.

To God be the Glory!

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Sunday Worship Service: 9:00 am    Christian Education Hour: 10:30-11:30am



# Prayer Needs



## New, Recent, & Updated Requests:

- Pat Runquist – Health
- Janice Waner – Cancer battle
- Kathy Schorn – Cancer battle
- Ruth Anne Bowen – Cancer battle
- Janice Rogers – Recovery from knee replacement
- Eric Rogers – Continued healing
- Jack Doran – Heart health
- Johnny Sparks – Cancer treatment
- Brenda Martin – Cancer treatment and surgery
- Eric Rogers – Continue healing
- Steve Kaiser – Strength
- Grant House – Cancer treatment
- Bob Cutforth – Continued recovery
- Alley Buck – Healing from terminal cancer
- Shelia Harwell Parkhill – Healing complications
- Judy Booth – Recovering from a stroke
- Leo Dietrich – Cancer diagnosis
- Danny Thomure – Cancer treatment
- Chris Blackmore – Cancer battle
- Peace in Ukraine and Israel

## Ongoing Requests:

- Betty Speckhart
- Joan Groh – Healing for foot and shoulder
- Ron Whittaker – Pain management
- BJ Cutforth – Needs miraculous healing
- Jim Woods – Continued recovery
- Carolyn and Steve Kaiser – Health
- Ralph Venvertloh – Health
- Tim Davis – Continued health
- Janice Walbring – Health
- Gail Otiker
- Myanmar Mission and Seminary
- Those in our community battling cancer.
- Those in our community grieving loss.
- Those who gave us our freedom.
- Our local, state and federal leadership

## Praises:

Praise for Bob Cutforth, released from surgeon's care!

**Military:** Seth Miles, Henry Dodd, Ryan Mena, Blaine Brown, Gary Velasquez, Lucas Velasquez, Kason Spratt

If you have any prayer concerns, please let the prayer chain know by contacting Pastor Richard.

Also if you are in need of pastoral care please contact Pastor Richard or a Deacon.

Date	May 4 <sup>th</sup>	May 11 <sup>th</sup>	May 18 <sup>th</sup>	May 25 <sup>th</sup>	June 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Announcements &amp; Prayer</b>	Richard	Geoff	Bill	Richard	Geoff

**Deacons for the month:** Clayton and Paul

**Flowers:** April, Brenda, Meredith, Barb S.



## Bluff Hall Outreach Mission

If you would like to support Bluff Hall Missions, please use the envelopes in the pew-backs and place in the offering plate at the back of the sanctuary.

Please be in prayer for Ahdi and family during this time of upheaval in Myanmar.

Also if you have a neighbor or know someone that the church might be able to serve in our community, please let the Missions Team know.

– Thank you!

Looking for a way to serve the Lord on Sunday?

We are always in need of people who can help lead the announcement/prayer times during Sunday service once a month or so. See Pastor Richard for more information.

## Service Live Stream

For those who are unable to join us Sunday on mornings check out our live stream. You can find our youtube channel by searching bluffhallefc at youtube.com or a link can be found on our website at bluffhallefc.org/sermons .



Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Happy Mother's Day	12	13 Bible Study 6:45pm	14 Deacon Meeting 7pm	15	16	17
18 Recognition Sunday	19	20 Bible Study 6:45pm	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Bible Study 6:45pm	28	29	30 Make Ice Cream 4pm	31

## Bible Study



Mid-Week Bible study has resumed on Tuesday evenings at 6:45pm. The study is entitled "Prayer and the Voice of God". We'd love to have you join us!

## Women's Fellowship News

**Outing:** Stay tuned for more information about the annual outing event.

## Happy Anniversary

May 10 Ralph & Mary Fairchild

**BLUFF HALL NOW  
ACCEPTS ONLINE  
GIFTS**

Want to give online?  
Go to [bluffhallefc.org/](http://bluffhallefc.org/)  
donate and click the link  
to fill out the giving form.



May 1 Kenny Speckhart  
May 8 Nancy Speckhart  
May 9 Kase Thomure  
May 15 Ross Loos  
May 16 Cathy Willer  
May 28 Gabby McGee  
May 30 Barb Cutforth



## Church Chuckles

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget all His benefits.

Childcare provided with reservations.

## Announcements

- Bible Study is Tuesday, April 29 at 6:45pm.
- Bible Study is Tuesday, May 13 at 6:45pm.
- Deacon Meeting Wednesday, May 14 at 7pm.
- Recognition Sunday in May 18<sup>th</sup>
- Bible Study is Tuesday, May 20 at 6:45pm.
- Bible Study is Tuesday, May 27 at 6:45pm.
- Making of Ice Cream Friday, May 30 at 4pm.
- Please check website for any updates.

## Looking Ahead

June 1 – Men's Fellowship Ice Cream Social

June 8 – Pastor Richard's last Sunday

June 11 – Church Council

June 25 – Women's Fellowship

## Sermons Online

Miss a Sunday? Want to listen to a message again? You're in luck!  
Sermons can be found online through our website: [bluffhallefc.org/sermons](http://bluffhallefc.org/sermons)  
Sunday's messages typically post on the following Tuesday.

**Please pass along any information you have for the newsletter. It may be emailed or called-in to Pastor Richard. Thanks!**



Bluff Hall Evangelical Free Church  
951 North 400th Ave  
Payson, IL 62360

## Highlights of April 9<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Meeting

Prior meeting minutes read.

Church Account Balances through 3/31: Checking \$21,073.13; Money Market \$15,410.15;  
Memorial \$13,500.51.

Nothing to report from Sunday School Superintendent.

Pastor: Will be finishing sermon series on Hebrews. Next 2 weeks will be Palm Sunday & Easter.

Cemetery: We plan to have clean-up day this weekend. Any decorations found on ground or that are unsightly may be taken down then.

Deaconess: Everything going good.

Deacons: Looked into interim ministers.

Trustees: Officers selected. Books audited. Looking into dining room floor maintenance.

Women's Fellowship: Sewing day in February made hats for hospital, Family Day in March went well. April had a cleaning day.

Men's Fellowship: Ice cream Social scheduled for June 1st.

Community Outreach: Checkbook balance is \$4,623.60. Keeping up with all expenses.

Old Business: Approval to pay for ½ page OSA ad.

### New Business:

Leona given approval to find best rate for CD's that mature soon.

If anyone is interested in CPR class, contact Leona.

Starlink cost has gone down.

Recommended to add more handicap parking spots.

Discussion & approval to proceed with getting search committee set up.

Need handicap/elevator signs outside.

Approval to purchase mini Ipad and Computer for Worship Services.

Discussion on availability of using Church email for business going forward.

Question on whether to purchase a locking collection box or continue using offering plate in back going forward.

Next Council Meeting will be Jun 11th at 7 pm.

Next Quarterly meeting will be Jul 9th at 7 pm.