



BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

June 2022

Editor Janelle Daum

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“And as soon as he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, ‘Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me. For I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot take back my vow.’”

Judges 11:35

Paul Little shared this in a sermon titled Affirming the Will of God:

‘Several years ago I knew a girl who had signed a contract to teach. In August she received another offer from a school closer to where

she wanted to live. So she broke the original contract. Had she acted on the biblical principle in (Psalms 15:4), where God says that He is pleased with a person who swears to his own hurt and does not change, she would not have done that. The department chairman ... said her justification was 'I have a peace about it,' and he commented rather sardonically, 'Isn't that lovely? She's got the peace and I've got the pieces.'

"I believe that girl missed the will of God. She violated a principle which, if she had been alert and had applied it to her situation, would have given her clear guidance in this specific detail of her life."

That girl left a terrible testimony behind. It's an issue of integrity. How important is it to us to keep our word? It's also a question of faith. Do we have the faith to keep our word and to trust God to work things out to His glory?

In our discussion of Jephthah's visionary faith we looked last month at Jephthah's vow before the Lord. Judges 11:30-31 gives us the details of his vow: "If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering." Imagine Jephthah's heartbreak when he came home and the first one to meet him was his daughter. In v.34 we read, "And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter."

Talk about a crisis of faith! It's clear that Jephthah expected to see an animal come out of his house first. To his credit Jephthah doesn't even consider breaking his vow when his daughter comes out first,

even though it was extremely painful for him. The issue of a burnt offering was off the table because God was unalterably opposed to human sacrifice, but there was still a huge price to be paid. The faith expressed here by Jephthah is amazing.

But in this passage we see more than Jephthah's faith displayed. It's clear that he had created a culture of faith in his family. When he explains the vow to his daughter she responds with the same depth of faith as that shown by her father, "My father, you have opened your mouth to the Lord; do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, now that the Lord has avenged you on your enemies, on the Ammonites."

She only makes one request in v.37, "Let this thing be done for me: leave me alone two months, that I may go up and down on the mountains and weep for my virginity, I and my companions." There is no question that she would follow through with her father's vow, but she needed time to process it and to weep over what would be lost. We also see in this verse the form that the fulfillment of the vow would take. She doesn't go to weep over her death. She goes to weep over her virginity. She would never be married. She would remain a virgin for the rest of her life.

It was a steep price to pay. She would never know the joys of marriage and motherhood. Jephthah would never know the joy of having grandchildren. Even more difficult would be the fact that his line would end with his daughter. He had no other children. It was a huge act of faith to carry through on this vow.

There is no question that they did carry through with it. Verse 39 tells us that after two months she returned to her father and her life as a

virgin. It became a time of special remembrance for the daughters of Israel. Verses 39-40 tell us, “She had never known a man, and it became a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.”

Sometimes visionary faith carries with it a big cost. To live by faith means that we do what is right all the time. That isn't always easy. Sometimes it means that we walk in the ways that the rest of the world doesn't understand. At times it can even mean that we suffer great loss of friends or family or even our possessions or our lives.

Can you trust God when the cost is overwhelming? Do you have the integrity to follow through with your commitment to God even when it is so painful that you can hardly bear it?

There is a hymn chorus that says, “Faith is the victory. Faith is the victory. O, glorious victory, that overcomes the world.” Do you believe that God will always turn our faith into victory? That is the essence of visionary faith.

Blessings,

Pastor Randy

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JUNE AND BEYOND

EVENTS CALENDAR 2022:

Sunday's

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Fellowship

10:45 a.m. Sunday School for the Whole Family

Wednesday's

7 p.m. Middle & High School Youth Group (no Awana)

Thursday's

3 p.m. Prayer & Women's Bible Study at BVBC

6:30 p.m. Women's Evening Bible Study will not meet for the summer.

Saturday's

8 a.m. Men's Bible Study will not meet for the summer.

Sunday, June 19, Father's Day, Newsletter Articles are Due
Monday, June 6 - Saturday, June 11, Youth Group Trip to the
Creation Museum and the Ark Experience

Tuesday, June 14, Flag Day

Sunday, July 17 - Thursday, July 21, Vacation Bible School

MISSIONARY UPDATES

AMANDA BENSON - PHILIPPINES



May 1, 2022

A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING!

So much has been going on! Here is an update on some different things that are happening these days!

House Update

So far, every lead we have pursued for our ministry house for the new single female staff hasn't gone through. We currently have one house that might be a long-term possibility, but it is contingent upon the current family finding a smaller house that fits their family well and is close to school. We hope to look at this house soon to see if it is what we might want more long-term. If it is, then we will pray that God will provide the right house for this family and something temporary for us until we can move in. We will continue to pursue other leads as God brings them up.

Even though we don't yet have a house, we are starting to collect items that will be needed for our house once we have it. There are two families moving in June that will allow us to buy some of their items when they leave. Therefore, we need to raise around \$1000.

in the next month to purchase these items. Would you or your church consider giving a one-time gift to help us purchase the items to fill our ministry home? You can click on the link below to give. *Please note that this fund is different from my normal giving fund, so if you want the money to go to this project, you need to give through the following link. If you'd like to give a different way, please contact me for instructions.*

School Update

We are in our last month of school! We finish school on May 27. The next four weeks are going to go by in a whirlwind with all that is going on.

We have an 8th grade retreat coming up in two weeks. **I'll be speaking for that as well as organizing the music** (oh, and driving one of the vans!). Please pray for wisdom as I prepare to speak and that God would give me words that He will use to touch the lives of the students. Pray that we would have safety as we travel, have great fellowship, and it will be a meaningful time for the students as they finish up their middle school career (most of which was online due to Covid).

In the midst of finishing this year, I am also working with the principal and middle school lead team to start preparing for next year. Please pray for us as we continue to discuss and plan for next year. One major area where we need prayer is for staff. Right now, **we have no English or Science teachers for middle school for next year.** We also need someone to help lead our learning center (for students who need extra help). Pray that God would provide these people soon!

PHAT

PHAT (Pursuing Holiness and Truth) is our after-school Bible Study for middle school. I have been leading the 8th grade girls group with my friend, Kelly. We are studying Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.

We started with 8 girls, and every week, more girls come. Last week we had 16! It is so awesome to meet together with them and study the Word and laugh and have fun together. They are eager to spend time with one another and to grow in knowing the Lord. It is also so great to be able to have this in-person again!!!

Life Update

This year has been a blessing in the friendship department! I've been able to continue to deepen some good friendships from the past 6 years and also build new friendships, particularly with the girls in my Bible study. It has been a blessing to have this community to study God's Word with and do life with.

I've been able to go to church in person again for a couple months now! There is another couple from school who is going with me. It was such a blessing to get to celebrate Easter in person with my church! I also got to sing with my two pastors' wives.

I'll be staying in the Philippines this summer. Hopefully Marissa and I will be moving into the house God will provide in June or July. I also hope to have some time to rest and get some work done for the upcoming school year. I will be available to help new staff and returning staff as they enter the country and get adjusted to life in the Philippines.

Thank you for your continued faithfulness and support as I serve here at Faith Academy. Please let me know how you are doing and how I can be praying for you!

Amanda

Praises

- My friend, Marissa, had ACL surgery on April 8. Surgery went great, and we saw God's hand at work in many ways throughout that process. The week after surgery was break, so we were able to spend a lot of time resting and hanging out with people. She was able to spend her first three weeks of recovery at my house (since it was

a better set-up than her house).

- We have had so many girls coming to PHAT! It has been such a blessing to have this ministry with the students in person again!
- God has provided me with a great community here. I've been growing a lot this year and learning a lot about myself and about interacting with others.

Prayer Requests

- The Philippines is having presidential elections on May 9. Pray for a safe election. (Elections are held once every 6 years, and presidents can only serve one term.)
- Pray that God would provide the right house for our ministry for the new single female staff members. If it is this house that is currently a possibility, may He provide a house for the family that is in it now. If it is somewhere else, may He show us where that is. We would like to move in June if possible (or July at the latest). Pray that we would trust as we wait.
- Pray for continued healing and recovery for Marissa from her ACL surgery.
- Pray that we would finish the school year well. There is SO MUCH going on, especially now that we are able to do events in person again. Pray for balance of time and that the things that we do together would be meaningful.
- Pray that God would bring the staff that we need for next year. There seem to be so many needs, but we know that God already knows how He will provide and where each person will come from.

May 18, 2022

PowerUp! Prayer Update

Praises

- 8th grade retreat was awesome! It was SO great to watch the kids minister to little kids, then have a chance to hang out with each other.

It was a great time of encouragement for the students and staff alike. My sharing went well, too.

- We have only a week and a half of school left! It's been so fun getting to do some normal end of the year things that we haven't been able to do for three years. We have our first music concert tomorrow night since Covid!

Prayer Requests

- We really liked the house we looked at, but the current family isn't super interested in moving yet. So pray God opens another door. Right now a new possibility that came is to sublet for now, while we continue looking for a permanent house. Pray for the Lord's wisdom and direction on that. Pray also that we would not be discouraged as we keep hearing no. May we have strong faith and trust in God's perfect plan and timing.

- A lot of students (and some staff) have been sick lately (thankfully not with Covid). Pray that the sickness would pass and we would all be able to finish the school year strong.

- Pray as I process the transition to VP next year, that I would be able to trust that I'll still be able to build strong relationships with the students, even if it looks different.

Ongoing Prayer Requests

- That God will revive the hearts of the staff and students this year, that we would passionately follow after Him.

- That the Lord would provide the house that we need for our ministry for the new single staff members of Faith Academy, as well as the funds to fill it with what we need.

- That God will bring the staff members that we need for the next school year.

DARWIN & KAREN STOESZ - JAPAN



May 22, 2022

Ministry Update

We are excited to announce that our daughter Anna got baptized on May 1st with Siloam Baptist Bible Church – a church she has been attending this last year. We were very excited to hear of this big step of faith she took.

Darwin in preparation for home service has been training the new SEND Japan treasurer – Tiffany Neufeld. A position that he has held since June 14, 2013, except for one year of home service. We are thankful for God's provision during this transition time. Karen has turned over her responsibilities with Japan Area Women's Rep and she recently had her last CAJ board meeting after eight years of serving on this board.

Home Service starts on June 23, 2022

We have tickets for June 23 to return to the USA this summer for a one-year home service. We have a signed contract to live in a house on the campus of Berean Academy in Elbing, Kansas. Clara will have a very short walk to get to the school where she will begin her 9th grade year.

Our physical address starting June 23 will be: 219 W 1st St Elbing, KS 67041

Why go on a home service? There are at least six reasons why a missionary need to go on a home service.

1. Our own spiritual formation
2. For our personal / family development
3. For professional development / ministry skills to return better
4. To connect with our sending organization – SEND International
5. To connect with our current financial and prayer partners and develop new ones
6. Home service is a ministry to those that God puts into our path

Pray for our plans for home service regarding transportation, scheduling, packing up our house, etc.

Family Update

We are excited that Anna will be coming this week to be with us for a month. It has been almost a year since we have seen her. We are looking forward to showing Anna around her home country of Japan and we hope that we can do some fun things with her as this was her life for her formative years. She plans to return to John Brown University in the Fall. Clara finished basketball and she enjoys spending time with her friends. Karen finished her class with Moody Bible Institute called, “Discipline in Spiritual Formation “.

Prayer / Schedule Update

Our tentative schedule so far is as follows. Of course, all dates are subject to change. Please pray for us especially for these events:

May 23-24 Anna flies to Japan

May 24 Clara presents the highlights of her middle school year

May 27 Darwin has lunch with Tsuneizumi-san and Kanazawa-san

May 28 SEND Japan Business Meeting

May 28-31 Darwin and Anna go to Yamanaka Chalet

Jun 4 Clara has an 8th grade picnic in a park

Jun 9 Clara has her 8th grade graduation

June 11-14 Stoesz family at Yamanaka Chalet

June 20 Stoesz family moves out of house to temporary housing

June 23 Stoesz Family flies to USA to begin Home Service for one year

June 23 Move to Elbing, Kansas

June 27 Darwin pick up two vehicles from Righteous Rides near St Louis, Missouri

Jul 10 Darwin's 25th anniversary to join SEND International

July 10-16 Stoesz family at Fairhaven Ministries in Roan Mountain TN

Jul 24-29 SEND International Conference in Farmington MI called "Reconnect"

Please pray:

1. Pray that Darwin's teacher Mr. Tsuneizumi and Karen's friend Yuko-san would put their faith in Christ.

2. Pray for wisdom for decisions that need to be made in the SEND Japan office and at Christian Academy in Japan.

3. Praise that CAJ was able to hire a new Head of School who will start in August.

4. Pray for Anna and Clara that they would have continued growing relationships with Jesus.

5. Pray for Anna at John Brown University and studies kinesiology.

6. Pray for Clara at Christian Academy in Japan that she would seek God and make good friends.

Thank you for your continued partnership in our ministry.

Thank you so much for your prayers, financial support, and encouragement so that we can stay here in Japan.

Sincerely,

Darwin & Karen & Anna (18) & Clara (14) Stoesz

SHAN REED - JAPAN



May 2022

EASTER AT THE PLAZA

Praises

- He is risen! He is risen indeed!
- Praise God we were able to meet together to celebrate the resurrection.
- Praise the Lord for continuing to draw people to himself.
- Praise God for times of worship and study of his word, in person.

Prayer

- Pray for each one at Komyo Christian Church to live as one reconciled through Christ, sharing his love and joy.
- Pray for my words and life to be filled with the love and joy of Jesus so others will be drawn to him.
- Pray for the youth of Komyo and Kongo churches to learn to love Jesus.
- Pray for us as NAB missionaries and for Komyo Christian Church as there will be some significant transitions in the coming months.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things [. . .] by making peace

through his blood, shed on the cross.

COLOSSIANS 1:19 – 20 (NIV)

Spring in Japan is full of flowers and new life. I love watching as one tree after another, one bush after another, declares the beauty of our Creator.

The hope is sometimes so evident I feel like I can touch it. However, the blossoms do not last long. They fall to the earth, making way for the green foliage that provides shade from the summer sun. Again, God provides us with ways to share his hope in a world that seems filled with darkness.

As the mimosa was just finishing and the sakura trees were just beginning to bloom, I asked one of my English students who has been studying photography to take some pictures of me. We had a lovely afternoon enjoying God's creation – and enjoying tea time. I am thankful for creative ways God provides for not only enjoying his creation but also for sharing the hope we have in him.

As Easter approached this year, the leadership at Komyo Christian Church began to pray about how we could celebrate together. Many of you may remember that we usually have a sushi lunch together. Unfortunately, we are not quite ready to eat together in our small space. However, as we talked, we realized we wanted to find a way to worship all together rather than in our three services we have each Sunday. We were excited to find out the hall we had rented for Christmas was available on Easter Sunday. So, we invited our sister church, Kongo Bible Church, to join us in celebrating the resurrection at Izumi City Plaza – Easter at the Plaza!

Once again, we asked the youth to be part of the service. We learned a couple of children would be there, so the students prepared a children's story, drawing the pictures and writing the story from the Bible. They also sang a song, "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High." I am grateful for these opportunities to have the students participate

in leading portions of the service. I pray they will be encouraged to continue seeking Jesus as they mature and move on!

About thirty people attended the resurrection celebration! Two of my English students attended. Praise the Lord! They are part of the class I wrote about in my last newsletter. One of the students mentioned how this was the first time she had celebrated Christmas and Easter 'for real.'

As we look to the summer and what God has planned, we know he will continue to walk with us. The Ewing family will be leaving for home assignment. The youth are hoping for an in-person summer camp. I am hoping for more times with students and friends outside of English classes and Bible studies.

Thank you for praying with us at Komyo Christian Church, with the youth, and with me as we live and serve in southern Osaka, Japan.

Soli Deo Gloria

Shan Reed

BRANDON & MARCI JONES - BRAZIL



May 2022

REDISCOVERING HOME

Prayer

- Safe and smooth travels to Brazil in June.
- Monica and Olivia to be enrolled at Pan American School in Porto Alegre.
- Grace in adjusting to our family being spread across two hemispheres.

Praises

- Health and safety during our spring church visits.
- The new semester at the seminary and with Kairos are off to a great start.
- Seven new church plants becoming official churches in Rio Grande do Sul.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die."

JOHN 11:25 (NIV)

This spring we had the privilege of connecting with many partnering churches. Our travels brought us through four time zones and all kinds of weather, ranging from hot sun to blowing snow. One travel day we got both of those conditions within a span of a few hours!

One person asked Brandon if he ever got sick of sharing the same thing over and over, and the honest answer is no. While all kids love hearing the same stories again and again, perhaps some of us grown-ups enjoy sharing stories again and again, especially when we get to share good news of the Kingdom of God.

Wherever we go we get to share about what God is doing both in Brazil and in North America. We introduce the ongoing opportunity that lies before us and celebrate how God has invited us all to come alongside where he is already at work. One of the last things we like to share when we visit a church is that in 2021 the Baptists of our state in Brazil officially recognized seven church plants becoming official churches! And God used graduates of our seminary to equip and prepare some of those church planters who are now pastors.

The heartbeat of our mission continues to be our students, and we can dream of how God might use them after they graduate. The fall semester began well in March, and we also added two new Kairos students. We will return to Brazil in late June to give us a little bit of time to adjust before the spring semester begins in August.

June will also close another “first” for us as missionaries as we finish our first home assignment. Looking back, our first home assignment has been a time of discovery.

Olivia discovered a joy for painting on canvas and has turned the garage into her little art studio. She has also caught up in her English spelling and reading skills and is currently tackling a 350-page memoir.

Monica discovered that she’s a great student. Her time in Brazilian school left her feeling perpetually behind her classmates, so she has excelled in eighth grade in North America. She was even inducted into the National Junior Honor Society.

After attending six different schools across three states and two countries, Daniel discovered he is college ready. He is not only ready

academically, but in life. He has proven himself to be a great employee at Sonic, has gained confidence driving in towns and cities, and has found how much he loves to give gifts to loved ones now that he has a little bit of money of his own.

Having lived so close to her mom this home assignment, Marci discovered that she and her mom are more alike than she ever imagined. She also got to see all her siblings and all their kids, gaining two more nieces this home assignment.

Brandon discovered that when he now talks about “home,” it comes out as a mix of Kansas City, Aurora, and Porto Alegre. Relating somewhat to Monica, he also has been relieved to speak, preach, and teach in English again, because doing all of that in Portuguese is still rather difficult.

Next month only four of us will head back to Brazil to begin our second term as missionaries and await new discoveries there. Daniel will be staying stateside to attend university. Thank you for your prayers and support during our first chapters as missionaries. Together may we be open and ready to receive what God has for us next.

Brandon & Marci Jones

MARIJANA



May 24, 2022
Ministry Update

Thank you for your prayers and support! ZZ, and I are appreciating them very much. Please do feel free to connect with me in between my reports, prayer request. Every email is a huge encouragement for me and ZZ team. Thank you.

Praise God:

- **an office** - after a lot of prayers ZZ finally has an office!!! After 2-3 years I decided to make a bit of faith and we are renting an office. It is a new apartment but it is empty :) Now, we need to fill it with furniture :)

- **ZZ retreat** - ZZ had our regular spring retreat for Board members, volunteers, workers. Hebrews and Heroes of faith was our topic. It was challenging as everybody came with some burden but we found our hope in God's word and we talked about not quitting even if it's hard. We had volunteers from South Serbia, one of the Roma villages we are working with there.

- **my education** - I gave all the exams (3 altogether) in Psychotherapy by the end of April and I have finished II year.

- **my health** - I had some health issues for last 6-8 months and now this is getting better but I have some setbacks so please pray for full recovery.

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

Hebrews 11.1-2

Please pray for:

- **Roma Network Business seminar** - Randy Schmore is coming to Serbia in two days and we will be part of the Roma Network seminar for Small Business for Balkan region developing relationship and learning from Roma how they are doing small business. After that we are planning to travel to South Serbia visiting two of our projects /two Roma villages/ and holding meeting/Church there. Please pray for blessed times, safe travelings

- **Summer camp in DP community** - 10-14 Jun 2022 - volunteers should come from South Serbia /two of the Roma villages we are working with/ please pray that they come and use this time to learn how they can do this in their own communities, good team, good times...

- **Social work education** - I still have 6 more exams to give so please pray to have strength, time, easy progress and give these exams by the end of summer.

Attached is a picture of Ron, Jeannie, Snežana and I, we are holding a CHE training in Zagužanje, South Serbia. This is our second village we are working with.

Blessings and thank you, for His Kingdom! Marijana and ZZ team

HARLAN MOSS - PRISON LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRY



May 2022

“Encourage one another daily as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.” Hebrews 3:13

Christ’s church is made up of people who can encourage one another! We all go through difficulties in life. It is important to have other believers around us to talk to in these times. Ephesians 4:2-4 says, “With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit.” Thank God for His church!

It is interesting to see how God works things out! Even if we make a mistake, God can use it for good! I called for a man to come to the office to encourage him since he was in prison again. I have known him for quite some time. When the man arrived, I noticed it was not the same man who I thought it was. He had the same first and last name as the guy I knew. However, we had a good visit! He never thought he would end up in prison! Adam said he had everything he could want in life, nice vehicles, a great wife, a great job. Still, he

wasn't satisfied, so turned to another woman who got him started on drugs. He stated he had not used drugs for fifteen years, and here he was caught in a bad situation because of his poor choices. Adam couldn't believe how he took his wife for granted, and how now she is willing to stick with him through his prison time. Wiping his eyes he said, "I don't deserve her." Adam's wife is a good example of grace. We do not deserve God's forgiveness either. If it were not for grace, we would all be in trouble. Since we talked, Adam comes to church and Bible study! God works in ways that we would not expect!

Joe does not ever remember hearing the gospel explained before he came to prison. He is very open to the Bible and is trying to understand it. He is a man who seems to have been beaten down by life's problems. I gave him a basic Bible study for new believers a few weeks ago. He had not started on it when I visited with him the second time. I asked him, "Do you know how to look up these Bible passages in the Bible study I gave you?" What we take for granted is that everyone knows how to look up Bible passages, but that is a wrong assumption. Some people like Joe, have never opened a Bible before. I was able to show him how to look the passages up. Joe was in an area where there are about 30 guys. He told me, "The other day a man walked up to me and said he could see that I was struggling. So everyday this guy would come to where I was and read the Bible to me!" Joe said, "How did this guy know that this was very encouraging for me!" God is amazing in how He works through some men in prison to encourage others.

Jim has come a long way in his spiritual growth. He said, "The Lord has been working on me for a long time, but I was not willing to surrender. Now that I have surrendered, I notice that my roommate is really in opposition to me and my beliefs. The spiritual battle has intensified. I knew God was greater than all the powers of darkness!" He wept as he prayed, "Lord I'm sorry for waiting so long to surrender

my life to You!”

Thank you for your prayers and financial support! God’s Word will not return void!

In Christ, Harlan

Missionary Contact Info.

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JAPAN

How To Give to North American Baptist Missionaries:

Step 1: Go to the NAB's new missions webpage **nabonmission.org**.

Step 2: Click on the “missionaries” label.

Step 3: Click on the national missionary to whom you would like to designate your support.

Step 4: Click on the “give to..” button on the national workers page.

Step 5: Fill out the form. All gifts given through the NAB are tax deductible.

**BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH
PRESENTING A CHANGELESS CHRIST FOR A CHANGING WORLD**