



March 2024

# Fox River Life



The following article is written by Randy Newman. Randy Newman is senior fellow for apologetics and evangelism at the C. S. Lewis Institute. He was formerly on staff with Cru, ministering in and near Washington, DC. He is the author of several books, including “Questioning Evangelism and Bringing the Gospel Home.”

Dear Friend,

Sometimes doubt comes upon me like a foreboding cold. I wonder if that was just a sneeze or am I coming down with something serious. The sniffles of doubt increase when I read of natural disasters that bring unfathomable suffering. Where was God during that hurricane? Other symptoms of wavering faith show up when famous Christians espouse heresy or reveal double lives of staggering immorality. I dare to ask; Does this Christianity stuff really work?

I’ve wrestled with doubt enough times to learn some helpful strategies, so the passing illness doesn’t settle in like long-term Covid. I’ve developed enough antibodies to embrace the repeated refrain, “I believe. Help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24).

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And I have watched my episodes of this “common cold” become less severe and dissipate more quickly. Here are some treatments I have found when the unwanted infection shows up:

First, I’m not surprised by doubts. I can’t say I expect them on a regular basis, but I’m not as shocked by them as I once was. Like many, I had assumed (and probably been taught) that real Christians never doubt. I remember hearing one preacher sermonize about “living a life without doubt.” How odd, I thought! None? Never? But then I saw that often-overlooked verse in that often-overlooked book, Jude 22: “And have mercy on those who doubt.” Apparently, there have been people like me who doubt. And others should have mercy toward me, rather than heaping guilt on me for not being as doubt-free as them. In these honest stories about spiritual searching, doubt, and belief, apologetics teacher Randy Newman gives sincere inquirers the opportunity to investigate faith and encounter God’s love.

Even John the Baptist wrestled with doubt. He grew up with Jesus as his cousin, learned of his and Jesus’s supernatural births, listened to amazing messages, and delivered this astonishing announcement: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) But later, he uttered these words of doubt, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” (Matt. 11:3) Perhaps we shouldn’t be shocked when voices in our head ask, Did these things really happen? or Whatever happened to the ‘abundant life?’ And, to make matters far worse, there’s an adversary who has a good track record with questions that begin with, Did God really say . . . ?

Living a physical life in a mortal body in a tangible world, all the while trying to cling to faith in an unseen God who rules over an invisible kingdom, can lend itself to doubt. C. S. Lewis spoke of “undulations” that people naturally experience in their earthly lives. Even he, that great author of wonder-filled books about the magical land of Narnia, still had to deal with physical ailments, mundane chores, family tensions, and financial struggles. To say the least, he knew about undulations. Those ups and downs are fertile soil for doubt. However, expecting the inconsistencies of earthly life can help us weather them. They can feel more like occasional rises in the tides rather than overwhelming tsunamis.

So, we’re not surprised by doubts. But we don’t ignore them either. We examine them and determine just how formidable they are. Sometimes doubt wields a power it really doesn’t deserve. Pausing to evaluate might reveal doubt to be more like an earthworm than a boa constrictor. We need to define or describe our doubts and subject them to rigorous inquiry to see what they really entail. Just how big is this particular doubt or question?

Are you doubting that God exists? Or do you have a pretty high level of confidence that he does exist, but you’re confused about why he doesn’t run his universe the way you think he should? Those are two rather different levels of doubt. Or maybe you believe in God and accept his rule but struggle to see his goodness. It may not hurt to try to write down exactly what you’re struggling with. Asking a good friend to listen and offer feedback can clarify things as well. Sometimes we feel engulfed by a huge black cloud. But when we shine a light on it, we may find it to be rather small or not so dark. This is not unlike when you go to a doctor with a vague pain, and he asks if it feels like a burning sensation or a stabbing wound or a low-level ache. The more precise the description, the greater likelihood of proper treatment.

Many have pointed out that the word doubt has ties to the word double. In other words, one who doubts wavers between two conflicting beliefs or feelings or thoughts. On the one hand, I believe God is all-powerful. On the other hand, I’ve prayed for him to heal something, but I still feel lousy. Or I hold to a conviction that God is love, but I also know friends who struggle with depression, anxiety, and fear but no amount of Bible study about God’s love seems to lift the emotional pain. I’m of two minds about all this.

Sometimes just defining or describing the doubt helps me talk to God more pointedly about it. And in some instances, he gives me insight or perspective that alleviates (but not totally removes) the doubt. On some days, that's good enough. But sometimes further treatment is needed. At this point, we need to consider a part of defining our doubts that often gets overlooked. Sometimes we need to doubt our doubts. We need to stare them straight in the face and ask, Is this really a big deal? Does this question deserve the value I'm assigning to it? Is it a tiny chink in the armor that I'm seeing as a crushing blow to the head? More to the point, sometimes we need to doubt ourselves and our ability to reason, process, and understand issues of great spiritual weight. We need to consider that we might not be the most reliable source of the information that's dominating our thinking. Recalling times when the same questions were addressed with solid answers should make us conclude, My current waffling shouldn't be given greater credence than the conclusions I drew previously. I'm not saying that all doubts are overblown. But some are. We need to know which ones to label substantial and which ones go in the bin of not much to it. A few might get tucked in the folder. This needs attention, but not now.

After not being surprised by doubt and defining it more clearly, there are times when I need to answer my doubts. And while I don't always like this step, I need to do some study. It's easy to allow vague, unanswered questions to hang in the air and dominate my doubt-filled subconscious. A refrain of Yeah, but what about . . . ? repeats as a bass note that never quits. It's time to crack some books and delve into the best answers I can find and comprehend.

As someone coming to Christian faith from a Jewish background, I came to accept early on that Jesus's birth, life, death, and resurrection were fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies. I could quote Isaiah 7:14, Micah 5:2, Psalm 22 and other predictions and found assurance in charts and lists that pointed to an overwhelming preponderance of proofs that Jesus wasn't just a good rabbi who said some nice things about love. He was indeed the promised Messiah. But at some point, nagging doubts took center stage. I had to face the accusation that maybe those New Testament writers saw things in their Old Testament that weren't really there. Did Jesus really fulfill prophecies or were there other (better!) ways to interpret those prophets?

This led me on a long (several years), deep (lots of hours in seminary libraries), and difficult study (Oy vey! Those passages are not as simple as they appear on those charts) of Messianic prophecy. I can't recreate my findings here, but I came to a remarkably profound conviction that those Old Testament passages really did foreshadow, predict, and promise a divine Messiah and Jesus really was the one they pointed to. I continue to study those passages and delight in seeing more and more of the ways God addressed our deepest needs and how Jesus met them in fuller and better ways than I had previously appreciated. What once was the source of great doubt is now the very place I run to for deeper worship and strength .

But not all doubts find resolution through study. I find that some will linger until we enter eternity. Such is the nature of seeing "in a mirror dimly" ( 1 Cor. 13:12). At least, that's how I deal with the unresolved tension I face whenever I hear of painful suffering like uncured diseases, random shootings, and almost any news from the Middle East. While I believe the Christian answer to the problem of evil is the best of all the options, it still has holes in it that leave me unsatisfied. As I alluded to earlier, I believe while I pray, "Help me in my unbelief." To make matters a bit more difficult, we may be living in a time when a lot of doubtful germs seem to float in the air. Depending on where you live and the culture that surrounds you, this might feel like a pandemic of skepticism. We must not ignore the signs and symptoms of doubt disease. Proper precautions should be taken. But so should steps of progress. Just because doubting seems to be gaining in popularity doesn't require us to hop on this vague band-

A few years ago, I met a guy who knew I was a Christian and told me that he “used to be religious.” I asked what changed and he said, “Well, I had too many questions. I couldn’t be 100% sure.” I quickly jumped in with, “Oh, I’m never 100% sure.” He looked shocked. I added, “I often have some level of doubt. I’d say that on most days I’m in the 90s.” He looked puzzled. I continued, “Most of the time, I’m 95% sure, but on some really discouraging days I might drop down to the high 80s. But I think it’s unrealistic to expect 100%.” I got the idea he’d never heard that as a possibility. I added one more piece. “I like the word confidence better than the word certainty. I think that’s a more realistic goal for ordinary people in a world full of unknowns. I have a very high confidence that God is real and good, and he created us to know him intimately. And that’s really good.” And that’s what I hope any Christian struggling with doubts will consider as well. Doubts may not disappear the way we’d like them to. But they don’t have to move in, put their dirty feet up on our nice furniture, and ruin our dwelling place where God rules, reigns, and loves us deeply.

Your brother, Randy

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## Deaconesses Ministry

Thank you to everyone who attended the soup and auction evening. It was so much fun and great fellowship. Thanks to the many hands who contributed food and auction items, and a big thank you to Kyle for occupying the kids.

We are working on our next quarterly event as well as the church picnic coming up in the summer.



# Women's Ministry

The Women's Ministry Leadership Committee had a very productive meeting on February 14.

Items on the agenda include:

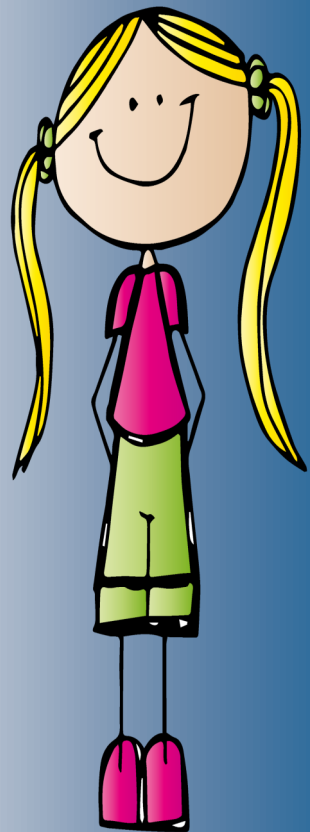
1. Reviewing end-of-the-year activities of 2023 (Brewster Village Christmas, Craft Day and Cookie Exchange) with the intent of making them better in 2024.
2. Working with Lois to define the purpose and set guidelines for Single Women's Fellowship. An interest inventory will be made available soon to interested women in order to determine the scope of the Fellowship. The responsibility of overseeing the Single Women's Fellowship was given to Women's Ministry by the Elders, and we are looking forward to completing this part of the work in the next month or so.
3. Setting an activity calendar for 2024. Our goal was to not be worn out at the end of the year by too many late-in-the year projects. We have come up with a plan that nicely spreads out Vida Gifting, Brewster village blessings, craft days and other special events more evenly through all the months.

At our March meeting we will be planning the first of our semi-annual Vida gifting opportunities. Be watching for more details of this event.

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## CHILDREN'S CHURCH

We are moving along in our memory verse. As soon as it is all memorized the kids will show off their skills for the congregation. We are in the period of Judges in our class studies. Samuel is up to bat in the in our class studies. Samuel is up to bat in the next few weeks. Pretty soon the kids will learn about Saul and David. They are doing great!!!!





## Sunday Evening Services Schedule

**March 3 —Ask Pastor Tim @ 5:00pm**

**March 10 —Prayer @ 5:00pm**

**March 17 —Sol Fide @ 5:00pm**

**March 24—Prayer @ 5:00pm**

**March 31—Have A Blessed Easter**



Financial Update 2024  
Budget needed weekly: \$ 2836.35  
Contact Mark Wildenberg 920-378-3380  
with questions.



Women's Prayer  
Wednesdays at 9:30am

Women's Bible Study  
Thursdays at 1:00pm

Men's & Women's  
Bible Study  
Saturdays at 8am

*Connect*  
WITH OUR  
CHURCH FAMILY



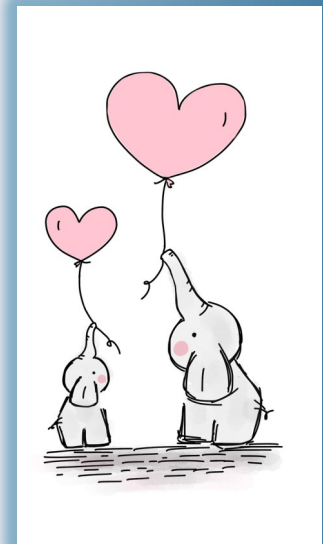
**March 3**  
**Christopher Smith**

**March 10**  
**Ray Rudzinski**

**March 17**  
**Jeffery Smith**

**March 24**  
**Kyle Tubbs**

**March 31**  
**Bob Abitz**



**Please contact the Church  
Office at 920-734-6162 or Carol  
Smith at (920) 475-8727 to  
volunteer for Nursery  
Ministry.**

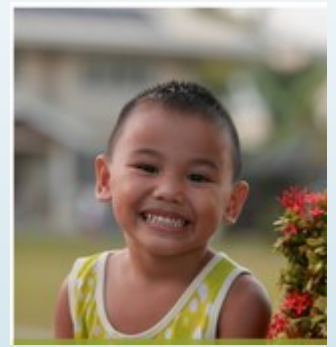




**Jaireh**



**Guada Mae**



**Samuel**

The **Mission Board** will meet March 4. We have been given the responsibility to select the sponsored children who will replace Cris and Juliet as they approach high school graduation. CSC has given us three names, Gauda Mae, age 11: Jared age 7: and Samuel age 4. The congregation was introduced to these three children during the February 7th Mission Spotlight. The ages of the SCS children match well with our Children's Church children, so we look forward to the heart connections that may result

The Mission Board may choose for FRBC to sponsor all three children if contributions continue to be generous. The other option is to sponsor two children and give medical support occasionally for Gauda Mae's surgical needs. Please reach out to Mission Board members with your comments regarding this big decision.

We also look forward to responding to the plans and needs of our sponsored missionaries, as revealed to us in the recently returned "Missionary Yearly Evaluation" forms. We appreciate your prayers as we work to be a blessing to those faithful servants.

*Young at Heart will be sponsoring a Praise Connection on Friday, March 1st at 6:30 pm at the home of Bill and Doris Olson. This is an opportunity to sing together, share what God is doing in your life, and pray together the theme will be **"Wonderful Words of Life"**, so please bring a favorite Bible verse to share with others.*



*Our ministry at Care Partners in Fox Crossing will continue on Thursday March 7th at 1030 am feel free to join us as we share a worship service with the residents.*

*National Music Therapy Day is Friday, March 1st Bill and Doris Olson have been invited to provide a musical program at Care Partners on that day to commemorate the event. They will be playing at 10:30 am: pray that this will be a sweet hour of music for the residents.*



### March Birthdays

The **Single Women's Ministry** will be meeting on March 17th after Sunday School Service, meet at Angel's Restaurant at 12:30 pm  
Any questions please contact Lois Peeters at 920-419-4921

06 Howard Schimke  
14 Lynn Abitz  
18 Doris Olson  
19 Pat Groff

#### **Fox River Baptist Church**

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Website: [foxriverbaptist.com](http://foxriverbaptist.com)

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday  
& Thursday - 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm



Here at FRBC, we have a prayer chain meant for the sharing of prayer request needs and for sharing praise for the awesome & mighty work God does in our lives. Please feel free to share any praise or request at our new Prayer request email address:

[Prayer@FoxRiverBaptist.com](mailto:Prayer@FoxRiverBaptist.com)

**Care to be part of the prayer chain?**

Email or call Becky Godfrey at  
[becl.godfrey@gmail.com](mailto:becl.godfrey@gmail.com) —  
(920) 277-1526

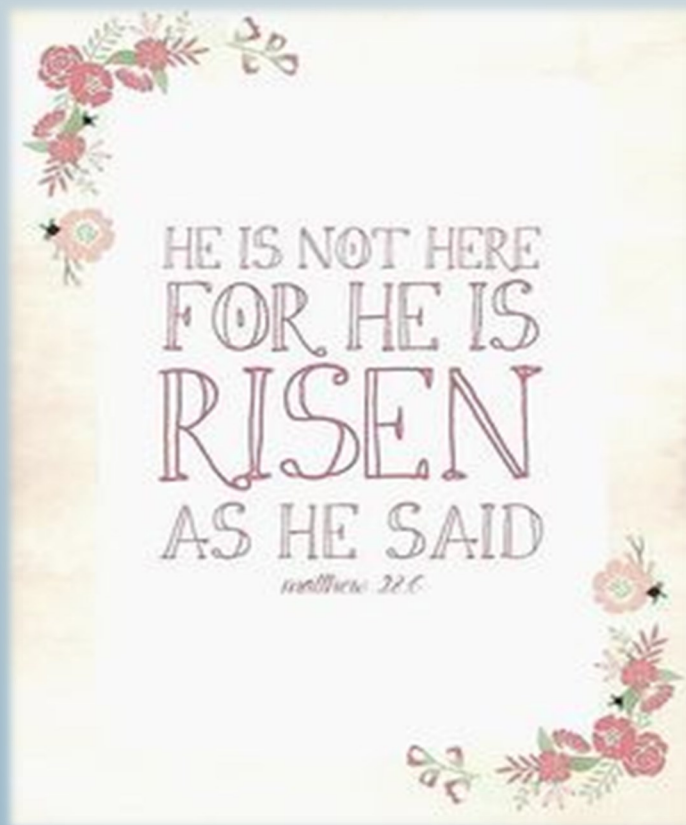


# *March*

## Canned Chicken



Help us reach our goal of 1,000 cans!



# DISCIPLESHIP



## **Intentional Discipleship**

Men and Ladies Bible Studies will be back on our normal schedules .

The Saturday morning Bible Studies will start at 8:00 am.

The Thursday afternoon Ladies Bible Study will resume Thursdays at 1:00 pm. We are continuing our study in 1 Peter.

## **Sunday School:**

We will be continuing our Sunday School Curriculum this winter and spring with the next book in the series which is Unit 19. The title of this unit is Living for Jesus. The books are in the Fellowship Hall where we meet for Sunday School and the price is \$5, if you are not able to pay pick up a book anyway. Sunday School 10:45 in the Fellowship Hall

## **Membership Class**

If you would like to join us for membership class, Please contact Angela Groff Church Secretary or fellow Elders for information.

FRBC phone # 920-734-6162

PT