

DISCOVERING WHERE GOD IS AT WORK



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Discovering Where God Is At Work

2021 IN REVIEW

PASSION, PLANNING, AND PROVIDENCE

Henry Blackaby says that discerning God's will means that you discover where God is working and join Him. I love that definition because it assumes that God is working in the world, which He is, and it is an invitation to get connected with what God is doing rather than asking God to bless our plans. Find out where God is working and join Him - that's a compelling thought.

Faith Family, today May 30th, is the day I leave for Tanzania with my family. It has been our *passion* to make disciples of all nations. One of the ways we feel called to do that is caring for our missionaries. This trip has been in the *plans* for quite some time. In fact, many trips have been *planned*. Our plans haven't all worked, but God is at work. In His *providence*, He saw best for us to join Him in Tanzania.

My life is just one example of asking, "Where is God at work and how can I join Him?" It's been six months since our annual meeting. By God's grace, our Faith Family remains steadfast in its *passion* in seeing every Christ follower a disciple and every mature Christ follower a disciple maker. We made *plans* to intentionally make disciples. But God, in His *providence*, has exceeded our expectations in every way! Let me rehearse for you where God has been at work in 2021.



TO THEM GOD CHOSE TO MAKE KNOWN HOW GREAT AMONG THE GENTILES ARE THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY, WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY. HIM WE PROCLAIM, WARNING EVERYONE AND TEACHING EVERYONE WITH ALL WISDOM, THAT WE MAY PRESENT EVERYONE MATURE IN CHRIST. FOR THIS I TOIL, STRUGGLING WITH ALL HIS ENERGY THAT HE POWERFULLY WORKS WITHIN ME.
COLOSSIANS 1:27-29

EXALTING CHRIST

You can always tell where God is at work when you look for people who are exalting Christ. Paul exalts Christ when he says, "HIM WE PROCLAIM." I love the simplicity and the power of those three words. It is our *passion* at FCBC to exalt Christ. As Ernie always says, "It's all about Jesus." Our message and our mission is to exalt Christ because people who worship Jesus live for Jesus!

In God's *providence*, we proclaimed Christ in the preaching of the Word, the teaching of the Word, and the singing of the Word. Subsequently, God changed lives to the praise of His glorious grace! No human could *plan* what God did in the lives of Brad DeGaetano, Nicole Denoncourt, and Adam Harlow. Remember their baptism testimonies of counting the cost and cherishing Christ? (If not, check it out online.) Praise God for the *passion* to proclaim His name from every platform! Be Thou exalted, O Lord!





EXPERIENCING COMMUNITY

In God's *providence*, proclaiming HIM creates an "US." Paul says "WE" proclaim Him "TO THEM" for God to make an "US." In other words, exalting Christ leads to experiencing community. But we know in 2020 the enemy's *plan* was to keep us excluded from one another. I praise God for the *passion* He gave you to explore more and more ways to embrace! In fact, the very number of new community groups that I can list is only evidence to the fact that there are more I can't list. So here's an attempt to summarize the *new* groups I know about of where people are experiencing community...

The Lommens started a young marrieds' small group. Other couples are meeting together to discuss "*Improving Communication in Your Marriage*" and "*Building Up Your Spouse*." Mark Debowski, Tracy Menard, and Josh Owens are meeting with young adults to engage divergent views in order to understand our neighbor's beliefs, engage them on their own terms with honest, humble conversations instead of outrage, and strengthen our own biblical convictions. So far, they've covered *How to Think: A Survival Guide to a World at Odds* and *White Fragility*. Josh Planchet has started a Bible study for young men (Jr. High-High School). Don George leads a weekly group of post-high school young men in discipleship every Sunday night. They have gone through *Every Man a Warrior* and are currently engaging God's Word by studying Acts. Sharon Dehart started a women's Bible study. The elders' wives have met monthly for fellowship, prayer, and discipleship. Finally, the next membership class has fourteen people signed-up!

On many fronts 2020 was hard. Hard is not bad; hard is hard. And God uses hard things to bring about good things. In His *providence*, He produced a people who *passionately* engaged a Christ-exalting community for endurance. Faith Family, you have made a compelling case that we are not Faith COMMUNITY Bible Church in name only.

EMBRACING YOUR CALLING

I hope you noticed the repetition of the word "EVERYONE." In Colossians 1:27-29, the repetition of the word "EVERYONE" was meant to communicate that every single person should be involved in this spiritual maturity process. There were to be no exceptions.

It's a verse that also calls us to never use the size of our ministry as an excuse. God has blessed FCBC with a lot of people. However, that just means we have to work hard to help every single person embrace their calling. It is not just the responsibility of the elders, but it is all of ours together. Faith Family, thank you for considering how to stir one another up unto good works.

The hardships created by the pandemic hit our shut-ins hard. However, God used the hard as a platform for the gospel in new ways. Thank you Sharon, Elizabeth, and Tracy in ministering to our shut-ins during the Pandemic. FCBC is built on the backbone of unsung heroes like you! Thank you for embracing your calling to love your neighbor as yourself.

EMBRACING YOUR CALLING CONT...

Thank you Missions Committee for your commitment to grow and go. It was a privilege to grow with you through the Upstream Collective training. Thank you for also helping people go. So far, FCBC has sent individuals to Hampton Beach, to Tampa, to Haiti, to Zambia, and to Tanzania.

Thank you Martha, Pablo, Lane, Laura, Grace, Hudson, and Janelle for leading the church in worship for several months in the second service. We were a young team and a new team, but we embraced the call and exalted Christ.

Thank you Jim, Wendy, and Georgia for your dedication to our technology needs. You labored behind the scenes for the glory of God and the good of the church.

Thank you Faith Family, for opening up your hearts to Nick Guiliani. The experience of genuine community nurtured Nick to continue to embrace his calling as a pastor. God bless you Nick as you embrace your calling in South Carolina!

Thank you Advisory Team in sifting for our first Family Pastor. Pat and I were overjoyed each step of the way with how God brought together such a group. Kendra, Becky, Susan, and Darald; what a gift you are to FCBC. We can't thank you enough for bringing before us Michael and Shelby Foose! On June 21st, FCBC agreed with your recommendation, passing the motion to call Michael Foose to be our Family Pastor.

Thank you FCBC members who stepped up and into new ministry positions. A heartfelt thank you to John Gorham and Martha Testerman for joining the Deacon Caring Board, Brandon Reed for filling the demanding Trustee slot, Josh Planchet, Faith George, and Krisztian Davis for joining the Youth Leader team. Cheryl Rice, your smile and grace has made our social ministry a blessing to so many.

Thank you Faith Family for your financial generosity. It was the Trustees' goal to be debt free by December 2021. What a financial highlight to hear that because of your giving we paid off our loan on June 18th!



THE CHURCH IS NOT A BUILDING

FCBC is not a "come-and-see" church. We are a Faith Family. I trust you realize that with the blessing of a family comes responsibility as a family. Until the Lord returns or calls each of us home, we have both, a responsibility and an opportunity before us.

Exalt Christ:

Worshiping with God's people every Sunday.

Experience Community:

Finding a place to connect with other believers.

Embrace Your Calling:

Discovering how to use your God-given gifts.