

Kootenai Communicator

January
2019

The monthly newsletter of Kootenai Community Church, Kootenai, Idaho

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*Expounding the Scriptures, Exhorting the Saints,
Exalting the Savior*

Lessons Learned from a 16-Year Building Program

**By Jim Osman
Pastor/Teacher**

Sixteen years is a long time. It is a long time to pass while doing something easy and comfortable. It feels like three times that long when it is spent doing something uncomfortable and difficult. Having church in a rented facility is uncomfortable and difficult.

On June 1, 2018, after 16 years of building on a new church facility, the saints of Kootenai Community Church moved into their long-anticipated home. I am still not over it!

To put this whole thing into perspective, it might be helpful to consider those 16 years in light of a few other related facts. When we moved out of the old church building in March 2002, George W. Bush was President of the United States. It was less than 2 years into his administration. We would be in the school for 6 years of Bush, 8 years of Obama and then 18 months of Trump. Our building program spanned three different presidential administrations.

On June 1, 2018, I had been pastoring Kootenai for 21 years and 6 months. That means that 75% of my pastoral ministry has been spent in building a building while meeting in a school. Since I am only 46 years old, this building has occupied one-third of my lifespan. My two youngest children do not remember attending church in the old church building (Ayden was 2 months old and Liam was born after we moved to the school), and my oldest two children only have the vaguest memories of the old building. My youngest daughter was 16 when we moved into our new facility and this is the only "church building" that she has ever

known as her home for worship services.

Since I measure eras of my life by the books of the Bible I preach, I find the following facts fascinating. When we moved out of the old building in March of 2002, I was preaching in Ephesians 5. After finishing up Ephesians, I preached through 1 Peter in 43 sermons. After 1 Peter, we tackled Acts from February 2004 until June 2007, totaling 160 sermons. Acts was followed by Philippians which lasted until March 2009 (73 sermons). We had a brief study (relatively speaking) in Jonah of only 17 sermons, ending in July 2009, and then came John. Yes, John. From August 2009 through July 2016 we studied John in 306 sermons. Ecclesiastes, which most of us are still trying to erase from our memories, lasted 47 sermons, from August 2016 to November 2017. We started Hebrews on November 27, 2017 and had our first worship service in the new facility on June 3, 2018. The first sermon preached in our new building was from a text completely unrelated to building programs or new facilities—Hebrews 2:1-4. Ephesians, 1 Peter, Acts, Philippians, Jonah, John, Ecclesiastes, and Hebrews, as well as numerous guest speakers, special sermons, and mini sermon series for Christmas and Easter, occupied us during those 16 years.

Nearly half of our building process took place in one book—John. John and Acts together comprised nearly two-thirds of the time it took to build the building. On a side note, John accounts for one-third of my 21 years in pastoral ministry.¹

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Over the course of the 16 years, we have moved 5 times and been in 5 different locations. We moved from the old church building to the school, to an office building in Ponderay, to the Funtastics building in Kootenai, back to the school, and then into our new facility.²

I didn't bother to keep track of how many times we had to "set up church" and then tear down again, but it was in the hundreds. It was around 850 Sundays (minus summer months) that we have been "mobile." The set-up crews composed of various people over the years worked at least 700-800 times to make sure it was all ready to go by Sunday morning.

Sixteen years is a long time! But it was a long time filled with some great lessons. Here are a few I have gleaned, provided in no particular order.

1. It is not necessary to compromise your convictions to build a building.

When we first began to seriously consider moving into the school and start a building program, we had earnest discussions amongst the elders and other spiritual leaders about the danger of temptation to compromise. Some expressed the fear that the need for money to finish the building would cause us to compromise the message, the strength of our teaching and preaching, and our biblical convictions in order to draw people in. More people would mean more money. In order to get more people, we would need to compromise and tone down our commitments to sound doctrine and deep, hard expository preaching. It certainly was a very valid concern, and not one without precedent in other building programs.

I don't believe that KCC compromised anything. We never strayed away from hard doctrines, divisive topics, or unpopular positions. In fact, it would be difficult for me to count the number of people who have left because we DIDN'T compromise on some of those issues.

2. A long, drawn-out building program does not need to detract from the main focus.

This was another concern raised at the beginning, and again, it is a valid concern. How many times have we heard about churches that start off well, then begin a building program, and before you know it their entire ministry, their entire focus, their entire budget is about nothing but the building? Pretty soon, the philosophy of ministry is driven by the need to get into the new facility and not by fidelity to Scripture. It is not difficult to forget to keep the "main thing" the main thing.

Our slow progress may have been the very thing to keep us from getting distracted. It's easy to remain focused on the important things when so little is going on with the building program. Because things moved slowly, there was not a lot to report week by week. We were able to take it slowly and not feel like we had to talk about the building every time we gathered together for

worship. In that way, I think the length of the building endeavor was a blessing to our church body.

3. Some Christians do not understand what the "church" is.

It never ceases to amaze me what some people look for when they are searching for a new church. Some people never even visited us because we met in a school. It's not that they objected to us renting a public facility, but rather, they wanted someplace that had its own building. Meeting in the school cafeteria just didn't feel "churchy" enough for them. Some people visited KCC while we were in the school, but never stayed for the very same reason. Many of these folks, with whom I have had this conversation, have ended up settling for unsound doctrine, weak preaching, and unbiblical leadership, just so they can have the feeling of a "churchy" church.

Some folks didn't stay because we didn't have convenient parking, conventional Sunday School classrooms, or places to hold midweek activities. Some folks left KCC after a number of years simply because it was "taking too long." They didn't have the patience to see it through. They simply did not understand that the church is not a building, it is a people. Consequently, they missed out on the joy and blessings that God has given to us for our patience. Not only that, they missed out on learning some very important lessons along the way.

4. God's people are generous, and God is faithful to provide through them.

It never ceased to amaze me through the years as we saw the hand of God's gracious provision through His people just when we needed it. Before we even thought about building, or even knew that we would need to, God abundantly provided over and above our budgeted needs month after month for years. That money was saved while we didn't even know what we were saving for. When we had the opportunity to buy the land at a fantastic God-given price, we had just enough money in savings to purchase the land and buy the equipment needed to move to the school.

When we didn't think we had enough people and resources to even get off the ground, God stunned us by His provision through our very first "Consecration Sunday." We raised enough money to get the building designed and start working on the foundation. Just about the time we ran out of money, the Hope Bible Chapel closed its doors and gave us their facility. We were able to sell that building and the land for \$425,000. That was enough money to purchase the concrete slab and the steel building and get it constructed.

Through the years, just when we needed it, God has provided the workers, the money, and the expertise. We have received gifts from God's



**Sunday
School
begins
at 9:30 a.m.**

4th–6th Grade Sunday School Class

Diane Rich and Kathy Conger have the privilege of teaching about 20 students in this class. We are thankful for all of them. We are taking a break from 2 Kings to have three Christmas lessons, and then will pick up where we left off with Elisha in January. Our students are very sharp and pay good attention to the lesson, and then we have a quiz at the end of class. We enjoy having contests and good food in class! If you have a child this age who has not yet been to Sunday School, we encourage you to bring them. It is a real joy to be a part of this class every Sunday morning.

>>> Missionary Moment -

December 2018

Dear Friends,

“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord!” A well-known story that never grows old. It becomes new and more exciting with each passing year. We love to tell this story. It is as precious to us today as it was when we first embraced it 42 years ago.

We have, once again, arrived at the end of another great year. It has been a year of change for us as for many of our friends. We think of the families of Aaron, Beth, Craig, Gordon, Jack, John, Molly, Muriel, and Rhoda—friends who have gone on before us to their heavenly home. We rejoice for and with them as they bask in the glory of our Lord and Savior. We also pray for the families and friends who will miss their presence during this Christmas season.

As you all know, we have made many transitions this year, moving from Mexico, spending time with our home churches and supporters and seeking the Lord for the ministry ahead. After attending candidate training at the Village Missions headquarters in Dallas, Oregon, we felt led to go forward with serving with Village Missions. We felt that God was leading us to serve in a “forgotten” ministry, serving in a small rural church. We have been assigned to Friant Foothill Bible Church in Friant, CA. The church has been without a full-time pastor for quite a while. Please pray for our ministry to the church body and also to the community. Our first preaching Sunday will be January 20, though we hope to arrive a week before to get settled. Friant is a town of 500+ about 30 miles north of Fresno, CA. There is a lake there and a large dam. It is situated in the lower foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range, very close to Yosemite National Park and the San Joaquin Valley, part of the central valley of California. All that means hot summers and very mild winters. We will live in a house provided by the church and there is room for you to come visit. We hope you will.

Daulton, Maggie and family continue to serve the Lord at Church on the Rock, Wasilla, AK. Brietta (#1 grandchild) and her husband, Stuart, have announced the arrival of our first great-grandchild.

Anthony, Micaiah and family have returned to Kansas from Sinaloa, MX. They are now praying about the possibility of further service in Mexico on a more permanent basis.

We have much for which to be thankful and praise the Lord for His faithfulness. We thank God for your prayer and financial support, allowing us to serve the Lord these past 29 years and being able to continue to serve Him with Village Missions. Please pray for our adjustment to new life in Friant and that God would grant us favor with our new congregation and in the community. Please pray that we would serve them well. Pray for the move, especially traveling through mountainous country in the winter. Please pray for Brietta, the pregnancy and the baby. Also, for wisdom and direction for Anthony and Micaiah and their family.

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

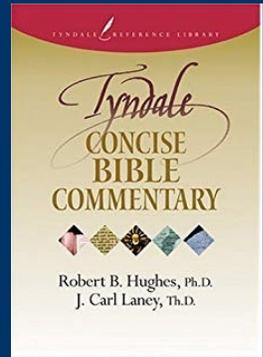
Yours by grace, Bruce & Lynda



>>>Garden of Readin'

Tyndale Handbook of Bible Charts & Maps by Neil S. Wilson and Linda K. Taylor

If your goals for 2019 include going deeper with your personal Bible study, or if you teach the Bible to others, here's a resource you may find useful. This book contains 566 Bible charts and 200 maps organized by books of the Bible, plus a topical index (and an accompanying CD-ROM, if your computer still accommodates them). The licensing arrangement allows you to photocopy charts and maps for personal or group use.



Please contact Jenny Leo (208-610-2520) about donations or any library-related matter.

Women's Ministry <<<

Save the date!

Ladies' Retreat 2019
April 26-27



Featuring author and speaker, Susan Heck
At Lutherhaven, Lake Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Tuesday Morning
Bible Study resumes
January 8

Contact Lori Wood
for more details.



Evening Ladies' Bible Study
resumes January 10

Contact Lisa Slippy or
Marcia Whetsel for details.

>>>Cocolalla Lake Bible Camp

Please visit the camp website at clbcamp.org for more details.

WINTER CAMP

January 18-20

Registration at 2:00 p.m.

For: Ages 13 and up

Winter games, food relay, and sledding (not to mention good food, fellowship and Bible teaching). What more needs to be said?! For details call 208-263-3912 .



Student Ministries <<<

January Dates

- 1 Happy New Year!
- 2 Girls' Bible Study, 7:30-9 p.m.
- 6 GBS Party @ Hills', 3-9 p.m.
- 9 Youth Group @ Juneaus', 7-9 p.m.
- 16 Girls' Bible Study, 7:30-9 p.m.
- 23 Youth Group @ Barbas', 7-9 p.m.



Girls' Bible Study Party!

January 6, at 3 p.m.

Hey, ladies! Come hang out at Emily Hill's house! There will be games, the *Elf* movie, and FOOD! Please bring a snack to share and, if you would like, a game to play. If you are a student who doesn't attend the Bible study (and are a female!), please come anyway and enjoy the fellowship! Let Emily know if you can come. Hope to see you there!

IN THAT DAY THEY WILL SAY, "SURELY THIS IS OUR GOD; WE TRUSTED IN HIM, AND HE SAVED US. THIS IS THE LORD, WE TRUSTED IN HIM; LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN HIS SALVATION."
ISAIAH 25:9



>>>Kootenai Thunder

kootenaithunder.com

For the most current information, please check our website and Facebook page.

BASKETBALL HAS BEGUN! To find out details, game locations and standings, check our website or the Mountain Christian League website! Come join us for our home games at Kootenai Elementary for a night of exciting fun.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q: When are the games?
- A: Check the calendar found on the web page at www.kootenaithunder.com
- Q: Which special events are coming up?
- A: Follow Kootenai Thunder on Facebook!



SCHOLARSHIP DONATIONS:

We have started a scholarship fund for families that are unable to afford the player fee. If you would like to donate specifically to that, contact Diedre Osman.

>>>Building Update

With the holidays in full swing, there has not been a lot done in terms of finishing things around the new facility. I (Jim) have always said that once we got occupancy and were able to meet here, we would just take a few months off of activity to rest, relax, and enjoy this blessing. Well, we have been doing that. We have been planning the next few purchases and projects which we hope to get started in earnest after New Year's. We ordered a couple of components for the sound system. They should arrive around the end of January. More chairs for the sanctuary should be here around January 11. Other than a few little things like that, we are just coasting through December.

Church News <<<

EMERGENCY EMAIL LIST

Winter is here and if you would like to be on the emergency email list, please talk to Marcia. Last winter we had to cancel service at the last minute due to snow. You would receive an email letting you know of cancellations.

Reminder: During snow events, do not park next to the building on the west side. When snow slides off the roof, it can potentially damage your vehicle. Also, during the winter season, the entrances on the west side will remain locked. Please use the main entrance on the south end. We will try to keep the doors cleared on the west side for emergency egress.



Annual Potluck and Business Meeting January 27

The Annual Potluck and Business Meeting will be held Sunday, January 27. A potluck meal will take place after the worship service, immediately followed by a short business meeting. The meeting will include a yearly finance and budget report, update on the new building, and recognition of new members, among other things. Put the date on your calendar and plan on attending.

What to Bring:

- Last names beginning with A-M: Dessert and main dish
- Last names beginning with N-Z: Salad and main dish

No need to bring serving utensils—the church has plenty. Please label all your pots AND lids.

>>>Kootenai Classifieds

To place an ad in this newsletter, please get it to lisaslippy@gmail.com no later than the 15th of the month prior to the month of publication.

Firewood:
Call John Kinne,
(208) 290-4359.

Dining Table
Looking to sell a round dining table and 4 chairs. Thick pine and early American style.
Barb or Dale Shultz
208-265-7975



BUT HIS DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD, AND IN HIS LAW HE MEDIATES DAY AND NIGHT.
PSALM 1:2

people in large amounts and small from all over the country; some who have visited our church while on vacation, some who moved away from our church to other places, and some who just knew of our situation. All gave generously over the years.

God's timing is perfect, and His provision is faithful.

5. Ed Barba looks better in short hair!

Yes, it is true. When I first met Ed Barba, his hair desperately needed to be cut. His long, black, flowing locks made Fabio look like Bruce Willis by comparison. Sometimes he would gather it all together into a ponytail or a "man bun" for special occasions. Rapunzel would have envied the crown of glory that Ed managed to grow.

Then Bonnie Mauck had a great idea for a fundraiser. It involved raising money (for the building) and shaving Ed's head. He has never grown it back out long, and the world is a better place because of it.

6. God can accomplish His purposes in spite of any limitations.

Even without a building program, we would know this. That statement describes everything that God has done throughout human history. But it was certainly a blessing to see it unfold right before our own eyes.

For 16 years we were at the mercy of others. Every year we were dependent upon the graciousness of the public-school system to allow us to meet in their building. Our contract was renewed yearly. During that time, our nursery, Sunday School classrooms, and our security were far less than ideal. Children sat on the floor in the hallways for Sunday School. The nursery was right in the middle of the entryway.

During part of that time we held Awana in a grossly undersized building. All our big events had to be at the school. We had to arrange for renting other facilities for anything that was not a Sunday-morning worship service. We had no place to do conferences or any kind of special events. The amount of equipment, chairs, and Sunday School supplies was limited by the trailer that housed all our equipment for those 16 years.

Yet during that time we continued to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The saints that comprise KCC used their spiritual gifts in serving and ministering to one another, our Sunday School and Awana ministries flourished, and our church body thrived.

7. The body at KCC is a serving, sacrificing, and adaptable group.

Meeting in the school was a lot of hard work. It took a lot of effort for a crew to shovel out the snow around the trailer and move it over to the school every week for set-up. It was a lot of work to shovel out the school and unload the trailer in the worst and harshest weather that North Idaho has to offer. It was a lot of hard work to pack

everything up each and every Sunday, load it back in the trailer, and take it away. It was a lot of work to sweep, mop, and clean the school after every use.

Being mobile makes everything more difficult. Sunday School, the sound system, music practice, leading worship, special music, the nursery, and cleaning the building were all more difficult. Even preaching and teaching in that environment was more difficult.

Yet the believers of KCC were willing to call a school cafeteria "home" for 16 years. So many were willing to endure that pain, work, and frustration. Why? I believe it is because they understand that the church is not a building but people. The building is irrelevant. The people are not. I do hope that this is one lesson that we will not lose sight of now that we are in our own new facility.

8. The conventional wisdom is wrong.

Conventional wisdom says that any church building program that goes more than a couple of years will never get completed. The conventional wisdom is wrong.

Conventional wisdom says that any building program longer than five years will split the church. The conventional wisdom is wrong.

Conventional wisdom says that doctrine and preaching must be compromised in order to draw people in to fund a building program. The conventional wisdom is wrong.

Conventional wisdom says that a church without its own building cannot thrive. The conventional wisdom is wrong.

Conventional wisdom says the church must go into debt in order to build a building quickly. Conventional wisdom is wrong.

Conventional wisdom says that within one year after a building program, the senior pastor will resign and go to another church. The conventional wisdom is wrong.

Conventional wisdom says that people will not put up with the difficulties and challenges that we have faced. The conventional wisdom is wrong.

Sixteen years is a long time! When everything is more difficult, it seems even longer. Yet I'm not sure that in the end I would really have wanted it to be any different. It is difficult for me to even express the awe and wonder that I feel, the overwhelming sense of gratitude to our God, every time I walk into this facility to work or worship. I stand amazed.

What would this church (the people, not the building) be like if we had not had to endure those 16 years? That is a question I cannot answer. I am certain that it would not be as good. That much I know. I can say that with certainty because God worked it out this way for our ultimate good. If there were a better outcome, a better path, God would have taken us down that one. Whatever that other path would have been, I'm glad we



Kootenai Community Church

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did not take it. 16 difficult years was worth it! It was all for our good!

Even if the only thing we were to get out of it was Ed Barba in shorter hair, it was still worth it!



¹Before moving over to the school, between December 1996 and March 2002, I preached through 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Nehemiah, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Ecclesiastes (Yes! We did this twice!), Habakkuk, Haggai, Malachi, and 1 John.

²We had to vacate the school for 1 year while they did expansions and renovations. They were sad to see us go and thrilled to have us back.



NEW DIRECTORIES

New directories will be coming out soon. If you have not filled out a Directory Information sheet, you may pick one up at the Welcome Table. If you missed having your picture taken at church, you may still send an electronic copy of your own photo to secretary@nctv.com.



FELLOWSHIP DINNERS

Fellowship Dinners will be starting in January. If you have not signed up but would like to participate, you can sign up at the Welcome Table or talk to Angie Cates for more information.

Jim Osman's newly updated book *Truth or Territory* is now available at the Welcome Table. The cost is \$10 and all proceeds go to the Building Fund.

