

The Messenger

A Publication of Community Bible Fellowship

January 2019



I am
making
all things,
new

Rev 21:5



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Meet the Karstens

Hello everyone! We are the Karsten family. We are so excited to be joining the CBF family and serving alongside you. You have all made us feel very welcomed since our first visit to Aledo in November, and your love continues to amaze us as we settle into your community. Thank you so much for receiving us with open arms and inviting us to do life with you. We have received so many invites to different events and meal outings, leaving us feeling very blessed to have said "yes" to the calling that God has placed on our hearts for Aledo, Illinois.

Since we are new to your family and town, we would like to take a minute to share a little bit about ourselves so that you may get to know us a little better. Paul and his wife, Kelli, and their son, Caleb, just recently moved here to Aledo from Redmond, Oregon.

Paul is from the state of Wisconsin, so the weather here in the Midwest is nothing new to him. Paul grew up with one younger brother and a relatively close-knit family. Throughout early childhood, Paul would often attend church with his grandparents. It was during this time where Paul began to hear and experience the wondrous stories of the Bible. Paul would help his grandparents with many of the weekly tasks such as lighting candles, preparing communion and even

an occasional scripture reading from the lectern. As an early adult, Paul took a job with a family friend learning how to install carpet. This early entrepreneurial experience led Paul to build several different companies: a flooring store, a mobile DJ company, an audio and lighting production company, and a commercial satellite television installation company. A few years later, a close friend recommended that Paul should get a few IT certifications as he was already proficient working with computers. Over the next 3 months, Paul received his A+, Network+, Server+, and Security+ IT certifications. This led to an opportunity in California as a Systems Administrator for a small rural health clinic. While at the clinic, Paul was promoted to the IT Project Manager for an electronic health records software project. Within 13 months, Paul's role was outsourced, and he began traveling weekly around the US, working for large hospital groups leading software implementations for electronic health record vendors. After working in healthcare for 5 years, Paul was laid off again. During the month following his layoff, he began to consider where his career choices and experiences had been leading him. Two separate pastors both affirmed in the same week a calling that Paul had been hearing in his heart. Paul was being called into fulltime, vocational ministry by the Lord.

Kelli is from the state of Oregon and is very familiar with small town living. Kelli and her younger sister, Loren, grew up in a little town called Lorane, where they bussed about 30 minutes from home to attend a high school with a total population of 140 students. Kelli graduated in 1989 with a class of only 25! Kelli was deeply involved with 4-H during her elementary school years, showing rabbits and guinea pigs at the Lane County fair. Kelli enjoyed attending the local church's summer Vacation Bible School and accepted Jesus as her LORD and Savior during attendance when she was ten years old. Kelli also loved playing basketball and volleyball during her middle school years and playing in the band for the boys' basketball and football games during her middle and high

school years. However, upon entering high school, she turned her attention from playing sports to being involved in theatre. As a freshman in high school, Kelli began her exploration of theatre through enrolling in drama class, which then led her to hold short roles in plays that grew into major roles in full-length plays during her junior and senior years. Acting became a passion for Kelli, earning her scholarship funds for the local community college. While Kelli continued to take drama courses in college, she never auditioned for any more plays due to working two jobs to support herself while attending college. Kelli's early college years were full of uncertainty as to what she wanted to do with her life. She thought she wanted to be a veterinarian, but after a summer working at a vet clinic, she realized that she would not be able to emotionally detach from the animals that came through the door. As for theatre and acting...while Kelli enjoyed spending time there, she quickly realized that to be an interest and hobby and not something she wanted to pursue for a career. Singing was another passion of Kelli's, and she even joined a Women's BarberShop Choir in her early 30's and competed in a local competition. But even with her love of singing, Kelli knew this was also not the career path she wanted to pursue. It took several years of working with various companies such as Xerox and Generac before she realized her interest in accounting.

Caleb is your average 10-year-old boy, who has more energy than we know what to do with at times. We always kid each other about trying to bottle up some of that energy so we could use it on those days when we are lacking energy. If only, right? Caleb is a true blessing from God, as we were beginning to believe children were not in our future. Yet, when we least expected it to happen...it did! Caleb is a very outgoing little boy who is so smart that there are times Paul and Kelli look at each other and wonder "where on earth did he learn that?" Caleb's favorite school subjects are math and science, with reading following close behind. Kelli is always left amazed at Caleb's "computer/technology" skills, as she is often taught

by her son how to make a certain function of her phone or iPad work! Aside from playing soccer and just being a crazy boy with his friends, Caleb's favorite extra-curricular activity is...playing video games! Yep, it seems this generation loves those video games, which is kind of sad at times when we think about all the fun we had as kids...playing outside! Oh, but things have most definitely changed with our kids these days. No more making mud-pies, building forts, and using a clothespin to clip a playing card to the spokes of your bicycle to make it sounds like a motorcycle! Now THOSE were the days, don't you agree?

So, many of you are probably wondering... how did you two meet? Paul was in Wisconsin, while Kelli was in Oregon! Well, to make a long story short, we met online through e-Harmony. Yes...it is true! We met online and have been married for 13 ½ wonderful years. Paul was living in Delafield, Wisconsin working as an entrepreneur in carpet installation and as a DJ in his own business, and Kelli was residing in Beaverton, Oregon working for Xerox Corp as a billing analyst. We were both tired of meeting the wrong type of people, so we decided to work through the two-hour questionnaire that e-Harmony required before linking you with another person. After completing the questionnaire, e-Harmony then required a \$50/month subscription to their online dating service. Well, neither one of us was willing to spend \$50 at that point, so we figured we just wasted two hours of our life. However, it was soon afterwards that we both received a free month's trial for their service! And this is when we met! Yep...God was at work from the start of our relationship. Our profiles were matched up, and we began with the first step of asking a couple of simple questions, which quickly moved into what was called "open communication," where we were able to share phone numbers and emails. It was pretty clear that we were a perfect match, and thus we began long-distance dating until Kelli was able to transfer with Xerox to Brookfield, Wisconsin. Within a year and a half later, we were married. We joke about how we met, and since we never paid a subscription fee

to e-Harmony... we figured we would never be in one of their "success story" commercials.

Paul's career prospects shortly moved him into full-time project management, which resulted in moving us all over the United States. It was when we lived in Winston Salem, North Carolina that Kelli became pregnant with Caleb. Kelli was finishing up on her first accounting degree and had begun doing some bookkeeping work on the side when she realized she was finally pregnant after three years of being married. We recognized this pregnancy was a blessing from God, which made it clear to us that we needed to be bringing Caleb up in a house of the LORD.

We immediately began our search for a church. After several different churches, a move back to Wisconsin, and then to Northern California...we finally found a church we felt was "home." Community Church is where we landed and where we both ended up re-dedicating our lives to Jesus Christ. In September 2010, we were baptized together in Eagle Lake Reservoir. Aside from the day Caleb was born, the day of our baptisms was one of the most joyous occasions. We both immediately felt the Holy Spirit calling us to serve, yet we didn't know at that time to what extent. We opened our home to host a small group Bible study, where we continued to grow spiritually and realized we wanted to serve more in our church. Paul became deeply involved in the men's ministry and joined the worship team, while Kelli got involved in the women's and children's ministries. A move to Redmond, Oregon a few years later, followed by Kelli's completion of a master's degree in accounting and beginning her own accounting business out of the home, and Paul's loss of employment within the project management world revealed a glimpse of what God had been preparing us for. God made it very clear that Paul was not to continue working in the project management world as a traveling manager, but instead he was to begin his path into full-time ministry, while Kelli used her accounting knowledge to support them financially. Paul was invited to preach one Sunday in the absence of our pastors, which then immediately

led to Paul joining the preaching team and preaching a few times each quarter. It was also at this time when Kelli felt being called into Christian counseling, as our involvement in leadership within the Celebrate Recovery ministry, as well as her acceptance as a Women's Ministry Leader revealed to her the passion she had for helping people who were struggling with depression and other deeper hurts brought on during childhood. Paul and Kelli immediately started separate online college programs, with Paul focusing on biblical studies, while Kelli enrolled in a professional Christian counseling program at the same online college.

Since beginning these separate college degree programs, the enemy has thrown several arrows at us to try to distract us and steer us away from the path that God has called us to. However, through all the hard and crazy trials we have been through as a family, we remain committed to following the path God has revealed to us. A 9-month Pastorate in Madras, Oregon taught us even more how we must trust and lean on God's strength through the trials that can even hit us through the church. Our time there was both very difficult and many times depressing, but yet there were also many blessings we received as we stayed faithful to the call. We loved people with a love that can only come from the power of the Holy Spirit that indwells within us. We reached out to a community that is desperately needing to know who Jesus is. We learned a ton about how hard ministry can be, as well as how blessed we are to be serving such an awesome God! We truly believe that God used our recent experiences to grow us and transform our thinking to be more in alignment with Him. What we have experienced... many would have completely walked away from ministry and not looked back... yet our past experiences have only fueled our passion for the LORD's work. We are reminded that ministry was not exactly easy for Jesus or any of his disciples, yet the blessings that followed the trials encouraged them to continue the work that they were called to do. We are excited to see how what we have learned will impact our service here at CBF.

Member News

We celebrate the recent baptism of two of our congregants!



Theresa Harland was baptized by Pastor Pauley on November 25, 2018.



Michelle McDaniel was baptized in a recommitment ceremony by Pastor Pauley on November 25, 2018.

We give thanks to our Lord and Savior for our two sisters in Christ!



Don't Miss Out!

UPCOMING SERMONS

Join us in January as we learn more about how to reach for God. We'll start the month by taking a look at the "why" behind the partaking of communion. Following that, we'll take a look at prayer - how we should pray, why we should pray, and how to make our prayer life more meaningful.

"The more we pray, the more we shall want to pray. The more we pray, the more we can pray. The more we pray, the more we shall pray. He who prays little will pray less, but he who prays much will pray more. And he who prays more will desire to pray more abundantly." –C. H. Spurgeon

CHURCHES OF MERCER COUNTY FOOD PANTRY

It's CBF's turn to serve at the food pantry. Volunteers are needed to work on Friday morning, January 4th, from 8 AM to 12 noon. For more information, please speak to Mandi Andresen.

CHOIR & ENSEMBLE

Get those singing voices warmed up! Choir and ensemble practice resumes on January 9th. Please remember that choir meets weekly at 6 PM, and ensemble meets every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month.

BLOOD DRIVE

The first CBF blood drive of the year will be held January 19th from 7 – 10:30 AM in the Chapel. Please consider giving. In addition, volunteers are always needed to help set-up, tear-down, make goodies and host the refreshment table. If you can help in some way, be sure to speak to Michelle McDaniel.

MISSION OF HOPE: HAITI - GUEST SPEAKER

Mark your calendar! John Short, a representative from *Mission of Hope: Haiti* which is based in Texas, will be coming to visit CBF on Sunday, January 27th. He will be delivering the Sunday morning message during worship service, and we will be taking up a love offering for his cause that morning.

PRAYER FOR A NEW YEAR

–by Betty Scott Stam

Lord, I give up all my own plans and purposes, all my own desires and hopes, and accept thy will for my life. I give myself, my life, my all utterly to thee, to be thine forever. Fill me and seal me with thy Holy Spirit. Use me as thou wilt. Send me where thou wilt, and work out thy whole will in my life at any cost, now and forever. Amen.



Carew's News...From under the Guava Tree
December 2018

Just two choices on the shelf, pleasing God or pleasing self.

*Collier, Ken. Biblical Leadership: Becoming a Different Kind of Leader (Kindle Locations 1056-1057).
Ambassador International. Kindle Edition.*

Jude 1:21-25

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

After a great visit to the United States, as reported in our last newsletter, we did have a few slight issues on our return flight. The plane we were to leave on from Detroit had a problem, so we had to change planes and then change our connection in New York, but they were unable to determine where our luggage had ended up. In Paris, they told us our luggage would not arrive with us, but in N'Djamena as we were making arrangements to have it tracked after landing, we saw it all coming down the conveyer! What a praise!

After arriving home in Sarh, we soon began having sink drain issues and backups. This led to a necessity for several 'septic tanks' having to be uncovered and emptied, one of which was under a bricked-in floor in our battery room. A dirty job for some of our workers, but all is good now.

A very good friend of ours, Michael Gandombi, who has been under the care of the Dannenberg's in Bangui while he attended school there, has

come to visit us for three months. It has been a true blessing to have Mikah (his nickname) here with us. He is greatly interested in pursuing leadership training at a university and is considering his several options. He also has an interest in youth evangelism and has been a true help to us here; he has also been helping in a local youth sports evangelism program. He has helped us with Kid's Games in the Belom refugee camp and in an orphanage in Balimba. Leadership is not about seeing how you can push people into your program or your way of thinking, and everywhere we have taken Mikah, we have seen him develop a following of people as he shows interest in their lives, listens to them, and then shares what Christ has done for him. Please pray for him as he chooses a college to attend and for the necessary finances. He will be returning to Bangui on Dec. 9th.

Our house has been a very busy place since our return from our brief visit to America. Josh Hedges from Bibles



International comes several times a year and although he does not stay in our home, we host him for several meals each time. He was here in September for two weeks and then came again in November joined by Birch Champeon and his 14-year-old son, Warren. Warren also came to help with the Kid's Games at the orphanage in Balimba, and it was great to see him interacting with the boys there. These orphans are from a variety of places, and many are street kids that come and go pretty much as they wish, but they had an awesome time with the games and fun. We even made some candy-filled piñatas, and WOW!, what a free-for-all rush when the first one broke open!

The men from PEP (Pastoral Enrichment Program) were here staying with us for two weeks in October and left the 3rd of November, which made for a lot of meal preparation and extra work for Carol, as well as our house-help gals. It is always a blessing to have the guests in our home though. The three who came were teaching advanced theological courses at the large Francophone Baptist church here in Sarh. Shortly after they left, Mark Seymour of Baptist Mid-Missions (former missionary in Sarh) came to stay with us for his yearly visit to teach at the Theological Institute in Balimba. Many thanks to our co-worker here, Anna Beth Wivell of B I, for help with some of his meals and transportation needs. Mark will leave us on Dec. 10 to begin his journey back home.

After our arrival back from the States we were able to make several ministry trips. The first was to Goundi in late September. Goundi is north of Koumra and was also once a BMM mission station. We went with the Sunday School Administrator for the ATEBAM church association (the Baptist church association BMM has fellowship with here) to teach Sunday school workers. Gideon, the one that invited us, taught on the Man of God and we taught portions of our course. We have found, unfortunately, that a three-day trip like this is not sufficient for the teaching that Carol and I wish to do, so we will have to develop our own seminars. We need more time to ensure they are 'getting it' and for us to evaluate their knowledge and the progress they are able to make.

We had a great Thanksgiving meal prepared by Carol and Anna Beth too. Fellowshiping together were a Sudanese man, a South Korean woman, a Chadian friend of Mikah's and Mikah, Mark Seymour, Carol,

myself, and Anna Beth Wivell. Between visits from guests in November, we were able to make a trip to Kyabe, where Carol spent much of her childhood. Mikah was with us as we went to see the old mission station there and visit with the Baptist church pastor and some of the Kyabe Bible students. Another of the highlights for Carol and me, and for Mikah this time, was our visit to the Belom refugee area for Kid's Games. Although still very bumpy (crater like bumps and dips) for the last 30 or so kilometers, the roads are currently as best as they get due to the dry season, so we made good time driving the 100 K trip in only two hours. As we approached the church in Belom, we were greeted by hundreds of kids jumping and cheering as we tried to slowly creep through the crowd. We arrived on a Friday afternoon and held the Kid's Games on Saturday morning—ladder-ball, which they all love, bean bag toss (we had four boards made and unfortunately in spite of everything being tied down they somehow fell off the truck when we returned to Sarh), and one of the favorite games is always Duck Duck Goose, but here it is Canaard Canaard Kondo (Duck Duck Chicken). Before and after the games, we have a time of singing and storytelling with the kids. Of the 200 - 300 that were there, we had over twenty that came to speak to helpers and deacons for prayer or salvation. When we went to the Balimba orphanage for Kid's Games, something we are going to do on a regular basis now, there were nearly thirty that made decisions for Christ out of a group of on about 45 boys, ages 6 to 16. Carol led several to Christ, and Mikah was able to personally lead one young orphan who had fled the CAR to a saving knowledge of Christ!

We were invited by the refugee

church at Belom to return the week after Kid's Games to preach at their services. Mikah spoke for their newly started French service and gave a great gospel message from Mark 4:35-41, asking them if Jesus is in their boat. I then spoke in the Sango service from Colossians 1 to give them the same kind of encouragement and advice that Paul was trying to give the church at Colossae, letting them know that they were indeed a light in their community and that testimony of them has been heard even in the United States, and people there are praying for them constantly just as Paul had heard about those in Colossae even though he had not been there himself. I always finish with an offer for them to accept Christ as Savior. I used Eph 2:8-9, Rom 3:10-12 and John 3:15-16 to make the point that Christ did all the work necessary for us to gain salvation if we only confess our sin and ask him to forgive us and save us. I chose two boys to come forward for an illustration – I looked at one boy and said that we had all heard he had killed someone and that his punishment was to be put to death, BUT the that other boy had come forward and had said he would die in his place if he confessed his sin and asked for forgiveness and in doing so he would then be set free from judgment. We always make it clear as well, that this does not give us the freedom to do as we please with no consequence, because we will answer to Christ at the judgment for all sins committed after our salvation. There are many here that believe once they are saved, they no longer commit sin or that their sin does not any longer matter because they are saved from all consequences.

Carol continues to be busy with English classes and club. There are quite a number coming now, some for the beginning course and some



for a higher level. She is currently giving exams and will be taking a break until after the holidays. She has been immensely pleased with the progress of some of the students, and now even some of the Bible students from Balimba are coming for the English course! It has been a benefit to her to have Mikah here helping with the classes and English Club too, and we appreciate it much when our American guests come in to speak to the groups too. After the holidays, our plans are to have some courses here at our classroom for ECODIM (Sunday School teachers), and Les wants to teach a course on Evangelism. The plan is to teach and develop young people, and even older ones, that can then begin training others. This is the main reason we need more time to teach, watch, and evaluate the students, so we can choose individuals that will be capable of becoming leaders for lay-ministries here. Pray for us in this great concern! Les is also developing a course to teach in our classroom on the Role of the Baptist Deacon, which will be quite a challenge and slow-going course here. Les asks for much prayer for wisdom and guidance as this is developed and taught!

The culture here is SO different from America, there are constantly things we hear that take us by surprise because they are still taking place. The tribal initiations have pretty much wound down, but there are other things concerning the Chadian (and other African) Christian families that are devastating to loving, Christian relationships between husbands and wives and parents and children. The largest problem, though, is that there are just not enough people to reach the ones that are totally lost and will suffer eternally because they have not heard the gospel message. Will you pray to help us reach them? Can you come to help us reach them? Will you pray about financial support for our ministry as we strive to reach them?

The church in Kemdere is making progress on their new building. Many thanks to some of our recent guests who have raised several thousand dollars to help with church building projects. We hope to see Kemdere begin worshipping in their new building in just a few months!

A last note on 'the home front' here. One of the young men working for us lost his wife shortly after we transferred back here from CAR. Now, just recently, the child she bore shortly before her death has also passed away. Pray for Matthias and his family. His father, who worked for us before, passed away while we were in CAR. On a happier note though, two of our workers have just been blessed with children. Kade and his wife, who have a daughter, just had their second child,

a baby boy. Simeon and his wife, who already had two daughters, have just had another daughter added to their family.

Pray for our families back home in the States. Carol's mom is having some concerning health issues from a returning cancer that will require surgery and possibly some other procedures. Les' mom just had her 86th birthday and is doing well. One of our sons has been ill with a stomach virus. Our daughter and her husband and family had some urgent prayer needs as well, but we just heard the Lord has given them an incredible answer to those prayers! Caleb, our youngest, is a coast to coast truck driver so winter is a tedious time of year for him. And please keep our eldest son Chad and our newest daughter-in-law in prayer also. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord with our friends and workers here, it also reminds us of what we miss out on with family and friends in America.

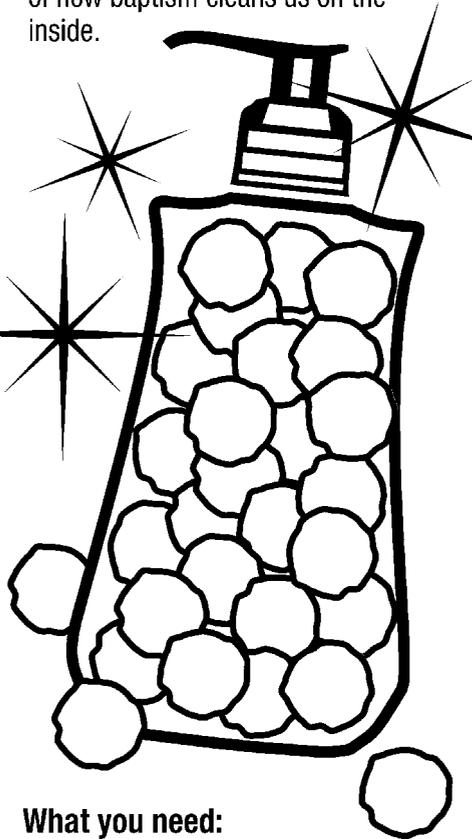
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**Sending Church: Camp Lake Baptist Church, 12150 N. Division Ave., Sparta, MI 49345 • 616-887-0708
BAPTIST MID-MISSIONS • P.O. Box 308011, Cleveland, OH 44130-8011 • www.bmm.org • 440.826.3930**

Washed Clean

Decorate a soap bottle as a reminder of how baptism cleans us on the inside.



What you need:

- Bottle of clear liquid hand soap
- Small craft pompoms (different colors)
- Wooden skewer

What you do:

1. Remove the bottle label and unscrew the lid.
2. Using the skewer, push pompoms down into the soap one at a time.
3. Replace the lid and put the dispenser in a bathroom or kitchen.

Cover photo by Sylwia Forsyńska on Unsplash

Januray Birthdays & Anniversaries

1/01	Kaitlyn Frieden	1/14	Florence Reddick
1/03	Dave Hucke	1/17	Rachel Turner
1/05	Connie Dixon	1/17	Malina Lee
1/05	Shirley Jackson	1/22	Brittany Dowd
1/08	Ty Andresen	1/23	Mandi Andresen
1/08	Jeanette Sipes	1/23	Marian Reddick
1/08	Tobias Van Zummeren	1/25	Theresa Harland
1/09	Don Johnson	1/27	Bev Barnhouse
1/12	Rebecca Gregg		

Mark Your Calendar

- 1/04, Fri | Food Pantry Duty | 8 AM – Noon | Mercer County Food Pantry
- 1/09, Wed | The Book of James Bible Study w/Bob Hoffman | 7 PM | Room N2
- 1/12, Sat | Family Movie Night | 6 PM | Sanctuary
- 1/13, Sun | High School Youth Group | 4 PM | Activity Room
- 1/16, Wed | The Book of James Bible Study w/Bob Hoffman | 7 PM | Room N2
- 1/19, Sat | Blood Drive | 7 – 10:30 AM | Chapel
- 1/23, Wed | The Book of James Bible Study w/Bob Hoffman | 7 PM | Room N2
- 1/27, Sun | Jr. High Youth Group | 5 PM | Activity Room
- 1/30, Wed | The Book of James Bible Study w/Bob Hoffman | 7 PM | Room N2

CBF Financial Report – November

	MONTHLY	YEAR TO DATE
Total Income	\$15,281.99	\$186,555.12
Total Expenses	\$17,320.73	\$172,175.31
Net Operating Income	\$(2,038.74)	\$14,379.81



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