

Hello Dear Loved Ones,

“I forgot to stop”. This was the answer I gave to my father on a beautiful spring afternoon as to why I had just run full speed into a tree. You see moments before, while playing with some friends at the park, someone suggested we race for the title of *The Fastest Kindergartener at the Park*. Who was I to deny myself the chance at such a title? The starting line was drawn in the sand with the heel of a shoe and the finish line was the first to touch the mammoth of a maple tree at the edge of the park. The tree was the most domineering edifice in the whole park and was impossible to miss.

With the future Olympic 100-yard dash competitors ready on the line, someone said “On your mark, get set, go”. I flew off the line with nothing but victory in my mind. Sand flew into the air with every step. I looked down at my feet only to see a blur of indistinguishable movement. No one was near me and how could they be, I was speed personified. Confident that the race was in the bag, I decided to turn to see the distance by which I was going to beat my opponents. Had they even gotten off the starting line? Were they so amazed at my speed that they just stopped to watch? I wanted to make sure they saw me win the race when all of a sudden... BAM. I ran face first into the trunk of that giant maple tree.

I learned the difference that day between running to a tree and running into a tree. With a bloody ear and cheek, scraped up knees, hurt pride and tear filled eyes, I hob-

bled back to my dad who asked what happened. “I forgot to stop” may have been my answer, but it was not the truth. The truth was, I became more focused on my running mates than I was on the finish line.

Hebrews 12:1-2b tell us that, *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith...”*

I wonder how often we treat the race to Christ like I treated the race to that grand ol’ maple. We become focused on the “cloud of witnesses” around us instead of the “founder and perfecter” before us. Beloved, let’s run the race the way in which the author of Hebrews instructs us to run. We should run in a way that encourages one another, not focused on comparing ourselves to one another. We should ask for help when it comes to laying aside the sin which encumbers and ensnares our progress. We should continually be reminded to keep our focus on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. Stay focused Loved Ones. Keep your eyes on Jesus as the finish line of His coming approaches. Let us not be caught running into Jesus, but encourage one another to run to Him.

*Pastor Wes*



## BECAUSE HE LIVES!

# UPCOMING HIGHLAND EVENTS

## Church History Seminar

Join us April 12-13th as we look at the Protestant Reformation, Puritan Era, the First Great Awakening, and the Birth of Evangelicalism. Dr. Michael Morgan is our guest speaker. More information and registration is on Church Center. See Pastor Sam for questions.

## Highland Kids Grand Prix

Kids and Dads! It's time for Highland's Annual Grand Prix. The Pit Party, *to have your car cut*, is April 10th, 6:30-8pm. The race will be on Wednesday, May 15th, 6-8pm. We will be having a Dad's division again this year. The cost is \$6. More information and registration is on Church Center. See Brittney Scherrer for questions.

## Vacation Bible School

Zoomerang 2024 will be June 4th-7th (Tuesday-Friday) from 9am-12pm with a special program for the **WHOLE** family on Friday, June 7th, at 6:30pm. You won't want to miss this! We offer classes for 'ENTERING' into Preschool through 6th Grade. Join us in learning the value God has placed on each of our lives! Sign up on Church Center. See Lauren Lilly for questions.

## WELCOME NEW BABIES!



**JACKSON IAMS**  
JAMESON & STEPHANIE  
FEBRUARY 13



**JONAH LANDIS**  
ALEX & TIANNA  
FEBRUARY 16



**OLIVIA MILANEZ**  
GABRIEL & JESSICA  
MARCH 22

## Acts 20:24

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



**RACHEL ADAMSON**



**MICHAEL & BRENDA  
BOLLINGER**



**BRIAN & VIVIAN  
DOUB**



**MATT & ANGIE HANSEN  
REBECCA, JOANNA, ABIGAIL**

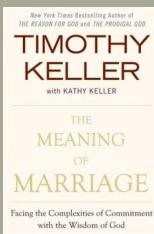


**NICK & MELODY  
RAMOS**



**RYLEE SIMPSON**

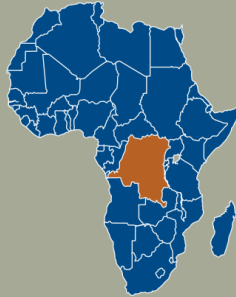
**Recommended Resource**  
"The Meaning of Marriage"  
by Tim Keller



Timothy Keller, with insights from Kathy, his wife of thirty-seven years, shows marriage to be a glorious relationship that is also misunderstood and mysterious. *The Meaning of Marriage* offers instruction on how to have a successful marriage, and is essential reading for anyone who wants to know God and love more deeply in this life.

# MISSIONS UPDATE

**Alfred & Jewel Ottosson**  
Mission Aviation Fellowship  
Democratic Republic of Congo



Alfred and Jewel Ottosson are preparing to serve in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). As a pilot/mechanic, Alfred, will take part in helping reach isolated people in the DRC by bringing supplies for their spiritual and physical needs. Jewel will continue as a stay-at-home mom and hopes to seek out opportunities where her background in teaching can be used for God's glory. Currently, they are in France for one year of language school. In early 2025, they plan to go to Bunia, DRC, to serve in these roles.

Alfred is from Sweden and grew up as a missionary kid. Being exposed to poverty and spiritual depravity, led him to dedicate his life to Jesus and missions. As he looked to serve others, Alfred discovered missionary aviation. He attended Moody Bible Institute's aviation program and graduated in 2018 with a pilot's and mechanic's license, as well as a degree in Missionary Aviation Technology.

Jewel was raised in San Luis Obispo, CA. Growing up in church, she heard stories of missionaries and went on mission trips to

Mexico, but it was watching her brother pursue a life of missions that compelled her to consider missions. In college, Jewel earned a degree in Education with a minor in Bible and Intercultural Studies. This minor led to a two month internship with missionaries, taking her to Europe, Palestine, Israel, and Asia. Jewel worked as an English teacher in Sendai, Japan, for over three years. She relocated to Spokane, WA, where she taught English to newly-arrived, junior-high-aged immigrant and refugee students.

Alfred met Jewel at his best friend's wedding. They were married in July of 2018. They have two boys, Eskil & Emrik and a girl, Eira.

If you are interested in learning more about the Ottossons, visit [maf.org](http://maf.org).

## **Prayer Requests:**

-Pray that their kids adjust well and receive the care they need.

-Pray that they learn French well and that they are a powerful witness to the people around them.