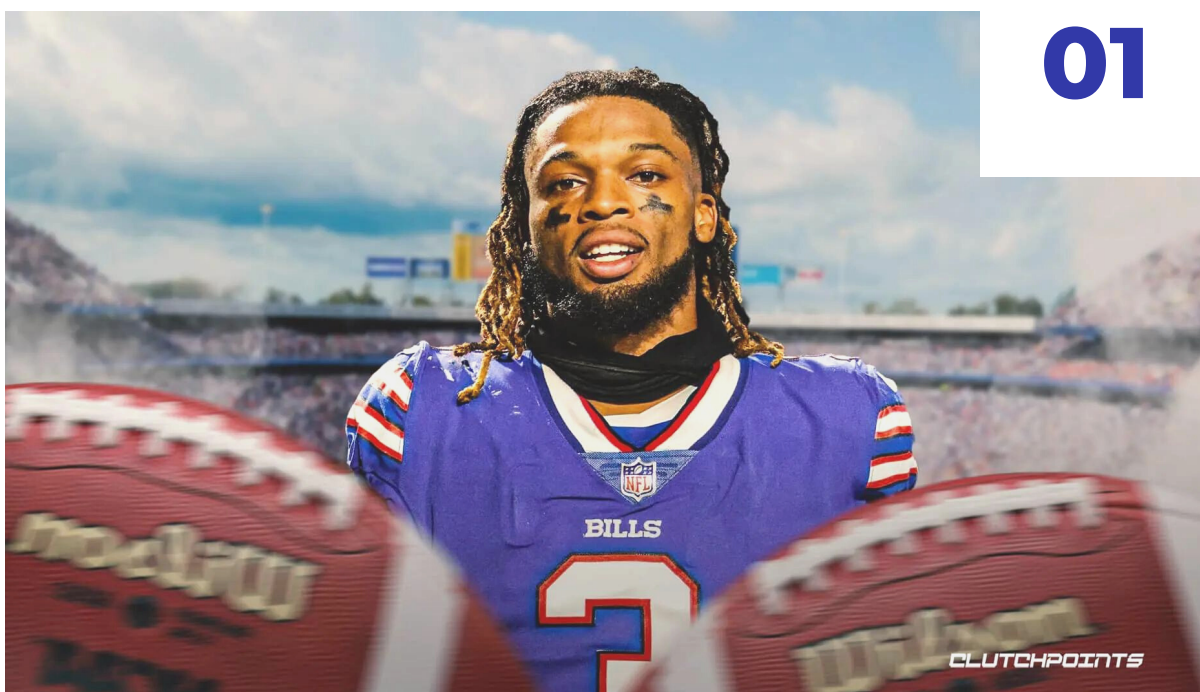


JAN-MAR 2023

FORCEY FOCUS

*zooming in on the
God stories of forcey*





DID WE WIN?

by Pastor Mike Foster

“Did we win?” were his first words after waking up. The words weren’t spoken – he was still on a ventilator after suffering cardiac arrest – but he wrote them clearly. Three days earlier he made a routine tackle and then dropped to the ground. Millions of viewers of the most anticipated game of the season were told he was given CPR – in front of his horrified teammates, 65,000 other humans, and his mom. The game suddenly meant nothing. “The only thing we care about,” everyone echoed, “is Damar Hamlin’s life.” And then Damar woke up in ICU and asked about the game.

It was a fair question. He had devoted his life to playing in the NFL, loved his teammates, and remembered the high stakes of the game. It was even an encouraging question. As his doctor commented, the question indicated “not only that the lights are on. We know that he’s home.” But it was also a very naive question – and not just because Damar didn’t know the game had been canceled. More significantly, Damar didn’t realize how two words in his question had been redefined since his heart stopped. There was a new “win,” and a bigger “we.”

The “win” was no longer about a game, but life. Not just survival of life, but caring about what matters most in life – which, judging from the way a nation reacted, is not football (not even the playoffs!) or temporal things. People matter – and so we stopped everything to help Damar. Faith matters – and so we prayed, on TV and in living rooms and at hospitals.

Continued on page 4



FORCEY FOCUS

JAN-MAR
2023
EDITION



what is the Forcey Focus?

The Forcey Focus is a quarterly newsletter set out to do one thing: zoom in on the God stories around our church! Often so much is happening and it's impossible to even document every single thing - but we want to give God the glory for as much as we can in honest, vulnerable, and worshipful ways.

- Think of this newsletter as a newspaper - these are the current happenings and ways God is moving!
- Think of it also as a family holiday newsletter - we are family through and through. We want to stay updated on what's *really* going on and what *really* matters to our church family!



table of contents

1.	Did We Win?	Pastor Mike Foster
2.	Table of Contents	
3.	A Weekend to Remember	The Holbrooks and the McGoffs
4.	Did We Win? (Cont.)	Pastor Mike Foster
5.	Meet the Elders + Trustees	Brent Douglas
6.	Praise and Prayer Report	Mike Maslin
7.	A Word from the Principal	Cheri Vislay of FCS
8.	Meet the Elders + Trustees	Brad Holbrook
9.	Biblical Counseling Conf.	Steve D'Alessio
10.	Missions Highlight	Global Ministry Partners
11.	Priorities + Setting Goals	Heather Moe
12.	Upcoming Events	

TOP 3 REASONS TO GO TO A WEEKEND TO REMEMBER*

03

from alumni couples

The Holbrooks

- It puts a focus on being on the same team.
 - While the conference splits out one session each for husbands and wives, we enjoyed the strong message that it is up to both of you to work on your relationship and communication - while recognizing that guys and girls are different! We regularly use their one liners like "What number spouse is this for you now??" (Sorry you may have to go to the conference to get that! :))
- It connects you with other couples who invest in their marriage.
 - We have enjoyed getting to know couples at Forcey but this was a special chance to see them in a casual context for an extended period of time, and sharing the experience and lessons learned with them.
- The best for last - It has a built in date night!
 - What more is there to say than we love the chance to get away and spend some time together. We brought charcuterie to a local Shakespeare in the Park.



The McGoffs

We would recommend the marriage conference to anyone who is considering, even if they can't make it for the entire weekend. It was a great opportunity for us to get out and try something new together. We really enjoyed getting lunch with the church family and spending time in community with one another. The topics that were covered encouraged us to talk about some things we likely otherwise wouldn't have.

*A Weekend to Remember is a ministry of Family Life, which is a Cru ministry. If you are interested in attending or finding more info, go to familylife.com/weekend-to-remember. Use the code ForceyBibleChurch to be added to our group when you register!

And evidently a whole lot of little things matter too – like learning CPR, helping a mother find her son, and toys for underprivileged kids (which will be in surplus after people gave about 9 million dollars to Hamlin's charity in a week). It turns out some little things are pretty big. Life on earth itself is small in span. Psalm 90:10 still rings true: "Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures."

Damar Hamlin's heart stopped at age 24. And he was in better shape than most of us. The Psalmist writes, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (90:12). There is much wisdom to gain from Damar. Let's live for what matters most.



That's the new "win" (as redefined while Damar was sleeping), but what about the bigger "we?" At kick-off on Monday, Bengals fans shouted their "who dey" chant – "who dey think gonna beat dem Bengals?" A half hour later, there was no more "we" or "dey" – everyone was on Damar's team. Orange and black, red and blue, we are all flesh and bone. Former NFL players spoke that night of a fraternity in the league, highlighting ways in which football colleagues understand and love each other. But the night belonged to humans at large – men, women, and children who worried together, cried together, and held each other.

Fans of every team united, along with people of every party, race, class, and creed. And, notably, we did not look within. We "lifted our eyes to the hills" and remembered "where our help comes from" (Psalm 121). We looked up and called on our Maker. It is, evidently, what we still innately do when we come to an end of ourselves.

It is also what God taught us to do when He became one of us, part of our human fraternity. "Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in our humanity" (Hebrews 2:14). "He too" – big little words. He too suffered, He too cried, and His heart also stopped. As one commercial during the game pointed out, "He gets us." He also saves us. Jesus became like us "so that by His death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (Hebrews 2:15). As a brother, He knew what we most needed. As a Savior, He provided it. He conquered death and now revives the hearts of all who call on Him. Actually, He gives us new hearts that last forever (Ezekiel 36:26).

So, "did we win?" We sure did, Damar. We all won something much bigger than a game. We won an opportunity to regain perspective and renew relationships, including our relationship with God. They say winning is addictive. In this case, let's hope so. Let's keep winning together.

-Pastor Mike Foster

Meet the Elders and Trustees

I became an elder just before the start of Covid. During the national quarantine, I have seen God move in the Forcey family by bringing people closer together, helping one another and caring for each other more than before. It is a blessing to see how God cared for his children which encouraged me to step up and bless others by helping where I can. It's a joy being part of the Forcey family.

In the past year, God has protected me from Covid and has blessed me at my place of employment. I have personally grown closer to Him and lean on Him regularly. He has blessed me with my 13th grandchild, a beautiful healthy girl who was born on my birthday – what a blessing! I've seen God blessed us with successful surgery on my wife, Linda, knee and a quick recovery.



I love snorkeling. It's amazing how you can see God's glory while have fun doing it. I'm currently in a scuba class because there's so much more to see in the ocean. My favorite candy is chocolate, give me more chocolate, favorite movie is Terminator, favorite color is green and favorite ice cream is salted caramel and pineapple coconut. Oh! Did I say chocolate 😊.

I serve in the following Forcey ministries, Baptism ministry, Usher ministry, Repast team, Stephen Minister, Shepherding Cohort, Elder, Toolbox ministry and Communion. I love to serve the Lord. Serving the Lord not only helps me grow but also being obedient to Him. I've recently joined the local Colesville Lions club. In addition to its service, I'm able to help others who are in need to medical equipment.

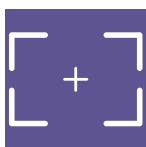
-Elder: Brent Douglas
Chair of the Board of Elders

06

PRAISE AND PRAYER REPORT -

PASTOR MIKE MASLIN

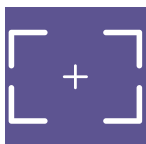
Two quick snapshots among the areas I am privileged to serve:



Kids Sunday School: A major praise from this fall is an increase in total workers within our Sunday School. Staffing needs has (and is) a recurring prayer and since Covid we have experienced challenging staffing shortages. Currently, we have about 60 different workers each month including teachers, assistants, and teen helpers! Our classrooms are filling up, and we are usually able to find the workers we need to staff the classroom each week, though it is always a journey of faith watching God provide each Sunday!

Because of the climbing numbers of children and more settled staffing situation, we are now in a place to shift from basic maintenance of the Sunday School ministry to growing the Sunday School department. An example of desired growth is in our 4's/5's class, where we average about 14-18 children per week. It would be ideal to break this into two classes. Doing so would help with classroom management and better equip teachers to reach kids for Jesus, which is made harder in a classroom of this size. We are also in need at the 9:15 service of adding to our infant care roster, and additional support for the 1st-4th grades. **Please pray for more workers into this great harvest field!**

**Email Mike-Maslin@forcey.org if you are interested in serving with children.*



Church Membership: I was privileged to lead the church membership class last fall. Eight people (all married couples in this case), journeyed together on our six-week membership class. Elder interviews with these membership applicants are under way, and we look forward to formally recognizing new members to our church body soon. **Please keep an eye out for the announcement of the next membership class, which will be starting soon.** And praise God for how He is adding to the number of members in our Forcey Body for His glory!

A WORD FROM THE PRINCIPAL

07



God is truly blessing the work at Forcey Christian School as we begin our 45th year of ministry. Each day 383 students enter our doors and hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are discipled and taught by Christian teachers who love God and love their students. I'm honored and blessed to be a part of the mission work that goes on here each day. We are celebrating and thanking God for His favor and blessing so far this year. We have over 100 members in our newly launched parent teacher organization (PTO). Some are brand new families to Forcey. This parent community is essential to help create a sense of family, belonging, and unity in the faith. The PTO has implemented a new room parent program. Room parents provide support for individual teachers and students and work to bridge the gap between school and home. The PTO has planned some successful fundraisers that do more than raise funds. They provide opportunities for families and students to socialize and fellowship together. This is so needed and welcomed after those difficult Covid years where we were so isolated from each other.

In a year of nationwide teacher shortages, God has blessed us with 5 new teachers this year. Mr. Lawrence, our assistant principal, has launched a new teacher mentoring program. New to FCS teachers are paired with an experienced teacher to offer support, help with transitioning into FCS culture, and provide help with instruction and classroom management strategies. These mentoring opportunities are turning into blessed times of community, support, and care.

Forcey Christian School has a renewed focus this year on service. Another area that took a hit during those Covid years. We are partnering with Image Makers Ministries and have adopted a public school in Baltimore City. It has started with a toy drive but my hope and prayer is that it turns into something much more, allowing the students to do the work of service, and making new friends and partners with the people of this public school community. Ultimately, being able to share the good news and hope of Jesus Christ with these students and their families.

On a personal note, God is stretching my faith and making me into the leader He wants me to be. Many times, I don't see how a situation will resolve, but God is always faithful, God always provides, God always carries me and the school through challenging situations that ultimately bring Him glory and are for the good. I'm trying to pause during those moments and thank Him for being Jehovah Jireh, my provider, and use them as a reminder of God's constant provision, wisdom, favor, and strength for the next challenge. **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. ~2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

Mrs. Cheri L. Vislay

Forcey Christian School Principal

08

Meet the Elders and Trustees

Being on the board, I've most noticed the financial blessing the church has seen recently. We haven't had to make major budget cuts, we've seen an increase in staff, and it is clear through regular/online giving and the staff love offering and end of year donations that God is blessing his people and they are giving sacrificially.

Since summer 2022 God seems to be wanting to grow our family (no we are not having more kids!). Ginny and I did the father-daughter half-week camp at Camp Hemlock in August and had a great time of bonding - Ginny especially over shooting .22's and catching crawdads. We took home a devotional book, started family devotions over breakfast, and are still going strong 5 months later praise the Lord! We've seen the girls grow in many ways as kids do but it's been special having time to talk about how the Bible applies to every day situations.



Personally I've seen the most growth through Bible Study Fellowship this season, including starting to lead a BSF Discussion Group. Pouring into the men and hearing how the Lord is working in them is both convicting and inspiring. We've been studying the stories of Israel and Judah, who have more than their share of falling repeatedly into sin, and I've been drawn to 1 Peter 4:3 ESV "For the time that is past suffices for doing what the gentiles want to do..." and 2 Peter 1:3 NIV "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him...". Those have become my prayer for my own life in this season.

-Trustee: Brad Holbrook



at Faith Church in Lafayette, IN*
by Steve D'Alessio



I have very much enjoyed attending the Biblical Counseling Training Conference sponsored by Faith Church in Lafayette, IN. I attended in February 2020, 2021, and 2022, and will also be attending in 2023. The first year I attended the conference in person, and the next two years, I attended virtually. This upcoming conference, I will again be attending virtually and will be taking Track 4, having already taken Tracks 1-3 in previous years. If you are interested in Biblical Counseling, please do not hesitate to attend this great conference. I have been so blessed with the training that I have received from the fantastic instructors. As they taught me in the very first session I attended three years ago, "The best counselor is a good counselee." I learned so many things about what the Bible says about the dynamics of the human heart and how our desires drive our behaviors. I have found the class material to be of great practical application to my personal struggles with sin and suffering, and I have been exposed to so much great Biblical Counseling literature. I have also been able to apply what I learned to help friends of mine who have had various struggles over the past few years. The two primary things that God has taught me through my attendance at this conference is that:

(1) His Word is sufficient for whatever we are going through in our lives if we would simply believe it and obey it and (2) Our God is a restoring God!

*If you are interested in attending the conference, email Sharon-Lamy@forcey.org for more info!

10



WHAT'S NEW with our **GLOBAL MINISTRY PARTNERS**

For 30+ years, Forcey has partnered with Julius Murgor, a member of the Pokot tribe (population 700,000) in West Kenya. God has used Julius' ministry, POM (Pokot Outreach), to bring thousands to faith in Christ. They have established 3 orphanages, created women's initiatives, and enabled thousands of children to attend school. In 2022 Julius was elected as Member of Parliament (Kenya) and retired from POM. Julius will be succeeded by another Forcey partner, Reuben Meriakol, who has spoken during Forcey services twice in the last 5 years. Reuben is also Pokot; his family was mentored by Julius. Reuben became passionate about serving the Lord and expanded Pokot Outreach to include various tribes in South Sudan. Another Julius, Julius Kaprech, will now oversee evangelistic outreach and discipleship in W. Kenya and part of Uganda.

Please pray for Julius as he represents West Pokot in the Kenyan government, for Reuben as he assumes the role of Director of POM Kenya and S. Sudan, and for Julius Kaprech as POM continues to reach out to new areas.

Julius Murgor



Reuben Meriakol



Verses to meditate on:
Psalm 119:105
Matthew 6:33 + 19:26
1 Corinthians 15:58

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW YEAR

How to find motivation when it seems impossible.

- Heather Moe

11

Resolutions are trendy at the start of the new year. I've always struggled with them because of how "trendy" they can be, but also because they always seem insurmountable and impossible to keep! I tend to really struggle with motivation anyway, and as I have been praying through this struggle God opened my eyes to something. *Resolutions will never stick, habits will never develop, if my priorities are out of line.* So, this year I'm looking to not make *resolutions* but set *priorities*.

If you set your priorities in line, then those changes and resolutions are easier to keep throughout the year. For example, I have a resolution to take care of my physical health. If the priority is my family - being there for them long term - then my health becomes very important, making it easier to have motivation to keep the resolution. Because it's deeper than just *wanting* something - it becomes a *need*.

After setting our priorities in line, then we can set realistic AND lofty goals/resolutions aligned with those priorities! If you don't set lofty goals, then you won't carry on hope for something greater. But if you **ONLY** set lofty goals and if you don't reach them, then you'll be discouraged. Let us both be hopeful and realistic. Then, lastly, it's time to plan the steps needed to accomplish those goals and dreams. Giving yourself bite-sized steps helps make it feel not quite so impossible.

Throughout 2023, **the most important priority should be our relationship with the Lord!** With Him at the top of our priority lists - the rest will fall in line. He will give us the grace to endure when our priorities slip, when we misstep, when we don't reach our goals, and He will help us to stay motivated through it all. **Above all**, prayer, worship, the Word - these will help inform us as we make resolutions, goals, and steps. "Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105.

In this "self-help" society, let us not strive to just to "be better" but to have correct priorities, lots of motivation, and grace when we fall!

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." 1 Cor. 15:58

UPCOMING EVENTS

January-February-March
2023

- Forcey Christian School Open House: **January 26**, 6-8pm
- Missions prayer breakfast: **January 28**, 8:30-10am, in room 150.
Followed by training from Bridges International staff, 10am-12:30pm,
on ministry to international students.
- Biblical Counseling Training Conference: **February 12-17**. forcey.org/bctc2023
- Creation Ministries International during services **February 19**
- Walking in Faith: Women's Retreat - **February 24-25**. forcey.org/sisconference2023



Luke, a drama production, will take place the first weekend in April, but we need many volunteers! Contact Pastor Mike Foster, AJ Itzel, Justin & Heather Moe, or the Forcey Office for more information on how to be a part of this fantastic event!

for more info on these or other upcoming events:



forcey.churchcenter.com
or download the app



forcey-office@forcey.org



www.forcey.org/events