

Flint First Summer Update

August 19, 2023

Hello Flint First Families and Friends!

We are sending out a quick note to share about all the fun and exciting things happening at Flint First and in our surrounding community. First, if you haven't heard, Pastor Amy & I were elected by the congregation to be the Co-Lead Pastors of the church. We officially started on April 17th and were installed on April 30th, 2023. Amy & I are bi-vocational, meaning that in addition to leading the church, we are both still working at our previous secular jobs. As you can imagine, this takes some balancing between personal schedules, church schedules, and work schedules, but God is making a way.

We have taken the last few months to meet with our talented staff at Flint First to get our summer and fall schedules planned out. Our summer program is now, of course, underway. We kicked it off with the first block party of the summer at Polk Park on July 5th. We were excited to see a lot more people from the community at this block party than ones in the past. The weather was beautiful and many hands from Flint First were there to help talk to our neighbors, provide dinner, play games with kids and adults, and run stations like face painting, the bounce house, yard games, and more. The night was capped off by one of our Flint First students being baptized! It was a great blessing to be a part of this experience. We held our second block party on August 16th at Davison Roadside Park. The Lord blessed us with beautiful weather and a few people from the community. Of course, we would have loved to have had more, we did hand out over 900 flyers throughout the nearby community after all, but we trust in the Lord throughout this process. On August 23rd, we will have a game night at the church, followed by a community service night the last Wednesday in August. Please add the rest of our summer events to your prayers as we intentionally reach out to our surrounding community. The devil is certainly trying to throttle back these events, but we are going to continue to pray our way right through his obstacles.

If you are not familiar with our Wednesday Summer Program and what we have been doing this summer, I encourage you to check out our website (<http://www.flintfirst.org/wednesday-night-summer-program.html>) for more details. In fact, you may want to check out all of our newly overhauled website (Homepage: [flintfirst.org](http://www.flintfirst.org)). Thank you to Hannah Krupp, our Director of Communications, for making many of these much-needed changes. We are continuing to monitor the website and make updates as needed. In fact, some updates we are in the processing of making are to our Staff Page (<http://www.flintfirst.org/our-team.html>). After the passing of Carol Richardson, we desperately needed to have someone help as our Congregational Care Director. Paula Wood was gracious to fill this position's responsibilities for many months, until a replacement was found. Now, I am excited to tell you that Becky Poupore has agreed and has been approved to be our next Director of Congregational Care. She is meeting with her teams and getting settled into this new role. In addition, with Pastor Amy transitioning into the Co-Lead Pastor role with me, there was a need for someone to lead our Missions department. What a blessing it is to have Adrianna Burzyck and Alexandria Villarreal agree to be Co-Directors for Missions. They were just approved by the LBA in August and are just now starting in their new role.

It is with a heavy heart that I mention the passing of Pastor Frank Beck. Although we are very sad here on earth, he is walking the streets of gold in heaven enjoying every second of it, I'm sure! He served the Lord faithfully as a Pastor for over 60 years and his faith was strong even before that. For

the last 18 years, he served as the Discipleship Pastor at Flint First. His reward in heaven had to be huge. His passing, however, has left a vacancy in our staff. Amy and I are continuing to evaluate and understand the next best steps for our Director of Discipleship position. In the meantime, Amy & I will be fulfilling these responsibilities for the church. Please pray with us that the Lord will raise up the right leader for this area.

We want you to know that we have not slowed our ministry down for the summer!! Heather Jones, Children's Director, and Family Ministries Director, shares that:

“In our Children's Ministry, on Sundays, we are breaking down the Bible into 16 themes to help the kids understand that the stories they learn are part of the real timeline of God's story. On Wednesdays, we are learning the most crucial Bible stories and how they fit together. In our Family Ministries we are enjoying fun summer events such as family beach day and block parties, with our next one on August 16th at Davison Rd Park. We're gearing up for another year of our MOPS ministry that officially starts in September. The Coordinators will be attending a conference next month. We are also preparing for our Women's Retreat we are hosting on August 26th.”

Our MOPS ministry ended the season to take a break for the summer with 11 moms. Its rapid growth once the word spread is evidence of the importance of this ministry. The team continues to do meet ups/play dates through the summer and is looking forward to kicking off the next season this fall. Thank you to Heather Jones and Hannah Krupp for being Co-Leaders!

Our Youth Ministry is also making big plans for the summer. Brianna Villarreal, our Youth Director, has partnered with another church to do fun events like play waterslide kick ball. She also took a group over to Unity Festival on the west side of the state. Unity Festival is a large Christian music festival where thousands of people gather together to worship the Lord. This is always a great event. Plus, four teens, (three from Flint First), Brianna, and Karen Sweger are joining Pastor Amy and Stoney Creek to go on a mission trip to Tres Rios, Mexico to work with children in the area. I fully believe that this will be a great learning experience for everyone involved. Join me in praying for this trip in October. We can start praying now that the Lord will go ahead of them and work in the hearts of those that our team will interact with and prepare them to receive the Lord. As a fundraiser for this trip, Brianna is leading a Youth Café/Silent Auction on August 27th, 2023, at 12:15pm, after the Sunday morning church service. We'd love to have you help support this team as they step out in faith for this trip. Brianna is also leading our newly reinvigorated Young Adults Ministry. We have seven teens currently regularly attending. The group meets weekly and is planning on going to Mackinaw Island together later this month. They not only meet for fun fellowship events, but also for more in-depth discussions together as they are all navigating this stage of life.

In addition to everything going on in the ministries of the church, we have also been making some significant upgrades at the church. Our monthly food pantry distributions have converted over to electronic registration. To be able to support this, we have extended the range of our current Flint First and Flint First Guest WIFI signal. This has really helped facilitate food distributions. Things are getting smoother and smoother as we learn more about the system and become more familiar with it. But, even beyond the WIFI upgrades, we made a significant upgrade to the sound system earlier this year. Our old Mackie system failed, and we needed to purchase a new board. So, as it is with many new technologies, there is a learning curve. Our Tech Director, Mario Villarreal, and his team have invested countless hours into improving our in-house sound as well as the live stream. Satan seems to really want to attack this area. Sometimes it seems that we take one step forward and two steps back, but he isn't defeating us. We are continuing to work to be able to stream the

services and are regularly learning more about the system. Mario even brought in outside support help to set up and get the system better dialed in. Great strides have been made recently and we are happy to see the progress.

We are continuing to look for ways to develop our team and to keep them refreshed. We have had conference calls with other churches to pass along lessons learned, we have some staff members that have conferences coming up in the near future, and we are even looking ahead to a regional event this fall. These are all great ways to network and get encouraged in ministry together.

As we continue to look ahead, we also recognize that this year our church celebrates it's 110th Anniversary. We have formed a committee and plan to celebrate what God has done through the years to bring us to this historic milestone. We have set aside October 29th, 2023 for this celebration, so I would encourage you to mark your calendars and prepare to celebrate with us!

Pastor Amy & I have ministered to and continue to minister to several different people in the congregation through many different needs, including hospital visits, funerals, food insecurity, pre-marital counseling, general counseling, one on one mentoring, numerous phone calls and texts, as well as helping others with more serious issues. Please pray for us as we continue to seek the Lord's guidance when needs arise. In that same regard, we would love to hear from you. Should there be something that you want to talk about, feel free to talk to us at church or send us an email. We would be happy to meet with you, pray for you, and celebrate with you. Should you decide to send us an email, please feel free to reach out to either of us at Amy@FlintFirst.org or Chad@FlintFirst.org.

In His Service,
Pastor Chad & Pastor Amy