

Joshua 3-4 — CrossWinds 75th Anniversary

September 22, 2024

Good morning, CrossWinds! I am thankful you can join us to celebrate the 75th anniversary of CrossWinds Church and our mission of reaching people with Jesus. This morning, I have two objectives. CrossWinds has been around for 75 years, but most of us haven't, so I will take time to tell the CrossWind story. Second, we will look at Joshua 3 and 4, which tells us why it is important to know the story of God's faithfulness to CrossWinds and to take time to celebrate it.

CrossWinds Church History

CrossWinds began in 1949. The church began as Faith Fundamental Baptist Church. It started so there would be a Bible-teaching church with a gospel presence in the Spirit Lake community. At the time, they shared a pastor with Loon Lake Baptist. A few years later, in a step of faith, Faith Fundamental Baptist Church became an independent church from Loon Lake Baptist. At the time, there were about 25 people.

In 1954, needing a place to meet, they bought property on 15th St. in Spirit Lake and an old country church in Langdon, IA. (Langdon is located northeast of Spencer.)

They moved the old church to the 15th Street property in Spirit Lake, where it is today.



Dan Foote, one of the patriarchs at CrossWinds, told me that in those days, every time the church tried to grow and reach more people with Jesus, it was hard to pay the bills. He remembers times after church when they held up a

bill that was due that week. The church didn't have the money to pay it, so they passed the offering plate again. They counted the money and sometimes passed the offering plate a second time to pay the bill.

In 1956, they joined a new denomination, the EFCA. They took a new name. They became Faith Evangelical Free Church.

In 1973, needing more room, the church moved from the 15th St. location in Spirit Lake to its current location on the Spirit Lake campus. They began services in 1976.

The average attendance was 83. Why did they



move? The church felt

God calling them to

reach more people with Jesus. They needed more space. It was financially challenging, but when they moved forward in faith, God provided.



In 1981 AWANA began. AWANA was not just a way to disciple the



children of the church, but it was a way to reach children in the community with the good news of Jesus.

In 1990, with AWANA growing, the people decided to build the gym at the Spirit Lake campus. They needed a larger worship space but



chose to build a gym instead of a worship space because the gym would allow them to reach more children with Jesus. Dan Foote told me that building the gym was a financially tough time, but when they went forward in faith, God provided.

In 1999, they moved forward in faith to build the current Spirit Lake campus worship space. They built it to reach more people with Jesus. There were around 200 at



the time. Those who were there the first Sunday said it felt weird. It was a big room with a few people. They built a large worship space to reach more people with Jesus. God



needed to show up to fill the place with people and to help them pay for it.



God showed up in response to their step of faith. The

church grew and reached more people with Jesus.



In 2008, I showed up. I still remember my first elder meeting. They told me they had a balloon mortgage with \$250,000 left. It was due in a few months, and the church didn't have the money. We prayed about it and brought it to the church family. We wanted to pay off the mortgage to free up capital to reach more people with Jesus and put the money into programs instead of

buildings. In two years, the church gave \$250,000 above and beyond budget to pay off the mortgage.

In 2010, with the mortgage paid, the church experienced two more financial setbacks. The basement flooded and needed extensive repairs, and the roof leaked and needed to be replaced. The cost of the two repairs was \$275,000. The board expected to go back into debt. We shared the challenges with the people and prayed.

In 2011, God moved his people, and in one year, the church family gave almost \$275,000 beyond budget to pay off that debt.

In 2012, with our debts paid and buildings repaired, we were ready to take a large step of faith to reach more people with Jesus. I remember sharing with elders the idea of becoming a multisite church and opening a campus in Spencer. It was an easy elder meeting to remember because it was held in my living room. At first, the elders didn't think it was a good idea, but over the next few weeks, God worked in the hearts of all of them. They were on board with the vision and championed it to the church.

We needed to redesign the stage to begin working in video as part of going multisite. After giving over \$500,000 above and beyond budget in the last



three years, we didn't have the money for those changes. God was at work. He showed up again. I still remember the day when an elderly man showed up in my office. He hobbled in, leaning on his cane.

He heard the board was considering becoming a multisite church, and he wanted to know more. I shared the vision with

him and that we didn't have funding.

He believed in it. He offered to pay for it and gave me a check for \$60,000 to

transform the stage and begin the process of becoming a multisite



church. God showed up through his people again. In a matter of weeks, using a team from Chicago, the stage was transformed and video cameras were added.

Most of the change took place in one week.

In 2013, after prayer and fasting, God led us to pastor Jordan as our campus pastor. Jordan is not just a staff member, but he is a close personal friend.



In 2013, the Spencer campus began. I

remember the elder board meetings as we

planned the budget for that year. There was not enough money to run two

campuses. If God didn't show up and bring the people, the church would run

financially dry in six to eight months. We decided that since God had been faithful

up to this point, we would take a step of faith and move forward. God showed up

again. The people came. The money came. At the end of the year, CrossWinds

was running with two campuses.



In 2017, video streaming turned into the Windom

Extension site. As a group, they began watching us online in a living room. They grew to the point that they needed to meet in the public library, then began sharing a church building with a Hispanic congregation in town. Today, they meet each week, joining us for worship services via a live feed from the Spirit Lake campus.

In 2022, after years of searching, we found a permanent home for the Spencer campus on the north side of the Gateway North Mall in Spencer.

While we were looking for a permanent space, we were saving for the purchase. When the building became available, we paid \$300,000 cash for the facility.

From 2022 to 2023, we gutted and rebuilt the facility. We began in that space in January 2023, debt-free. God showed up in 2022 as his people gave \$1.8 million to meet the budget and pay for the facility in full on opening day.



Please understand that none of this is about buildings. It is about reaching more people with Jesus. Since 1954, how many people have heard the good news of Jesus through what God has done through CrossWinds? I have no idea, but I am sure it is over 100,000. Each step of faith taken to build a building or launch a campus is to reach more people with Jesus.

As I looked over CrossWind's history, I saw that since 1954, the church has taken many big steps of faith to reach more people with Jesus. When they did, times were tough, but God always showed up to carry His people forward on the mission he gave us of making disciples.

Why is it important to remember God's faithfulness?

There is much more to this story that could be told. Remembering the steps of faith taken by those who went before us is important. Why is it important? That brings us to a little Bible lesson.

It comes from Joshua 3 and 4. You may remember the context. Israel was supposed to enter the Promised Land after Egypt, but because of their lack of faith in God, they ended up wandering the wilderness for 40 years until an entire generation passed away. Even Moses passed away and was replaced by Joshua, his understudy. As the new generation of Israelites prepared to enter the Promised Land under Joshua, the first insurmountable obstacle they faced was crossing the Jordan River. How would they cross it? There was no bridge. It was too deep and too wide to take a nation through the waters. God called them to the Promised Land. He would have to make a way to get to the Promised Land. That is what God did. He showed up to make a way for his people to do what he called them to do.

God told the priests to lead the way for the people. They were to move forward in faith and obedience to God's word. God would need to show up and make the impossible possible. Let's see what happened.

So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the

midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan. Joshua 3:14–17 (ESV)

In faith, they obeyed God, and God showed up, and he parted the waters. They crossed the Jordan River, not on muddy ground, but on dry ground. God commanded his people to go to the Promised Land, but he needed to show up to enable them to get to the Promised Land.

Isn't that what has repeatedly happened at CrossWinds since 1954? In obedience to the Great Commission to reach people with Jesus, CrossWinds Church has repeatedly taken steps of faith to reach more people. On paper, it doesn't seem possible. When God's people moved forward in faith, God repeatedly showed up and carried them through enabling us to accomplish the work he gave us to do.

The new generation that entered the Promised Land had not seen God miraculously show up like this before. God didn't want them to forget that when they obeyed Him in faith, even if it didn't look like it would work out, God would show up, and make the impossible possible. This is a lesson he didn't want them to forget. Look what happens in Joshua 4.

When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, "Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, and command them, saying, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.' " Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe. And Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it passed over the

Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever.” Joshua 4:1–7 (ESV)

They were to take 12 stones from the Jordan and place them on the shore. These stones were to be a memorial to remind them in the future of how God kept his word and miraculously showed up in the past. Don't forget this day. You need to remember this day.

Why? Why is it so important to remember God showing up and providing for his people in the past? Two reasons.

And Joshua said, “Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Joshua 3:10 (ESV)

The first reason it is important to remember how God showed up in the past is...

INDUCTIVE: When we remember how God showed up in the past, it gives us confidence God will show up in the future.

Crossing the Jordan River was only the first impossible challenge they would face. They needed to conquer the Promised Land. They needed to conquer the Canaanites, who were militarily far superior. As we learned from our studies in 1 and 2 Samuel, the Canaanites had chariots. They had horses. They had sophisticated military equipment. The Israelites were only foot soldiers. On paper, Israelite foot soldiers conquering the Promised Land filled with people who were militarily superior didn't pencil out. What were God's people do to? It would be the same formula. They were to step forward in faith and obedience, and God would show up. This happened again and again as they conquered the Promised Land. The memorial stones on the side of the Jordan would constantly remind

them how God showed up in the past. When they moved forward in faith and obedience on that day, God showed up. If God showed up in the past in obedience to God's word, God would show up again in the future when his people moved forward in obedience and faith.

This was not just true for Joshua and his generation, but it is true for us. We are to reach people with Jesus. When we take some big steps of faith to move forward and do that, God shows up to carry us through. Look back on how God showed up again and again in the last 75 years. Those stories are our memorial stones to remind us of God's faithfulness in the past, so we have the courage to take big steps of faith to reach more people with Jesus in the future.

There is another reason we need to celebrate.

...When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever." Joshua 4:6-7 (ESV)

The memorial stones by the Jordan were not just there to remind Joshua's generation of God's faithfulness in the past so they would have courage as they conquered the Promised Land in the future. There was a second reason for the memorial stones.

INDUCTIVE: When we remember how God showed up in the past, it gives our children confidence that God will show up in their generation.

Today, we celebrate God's faithfulness to CrossWinds for the last 75 years for the sake of our children. It won't be long before our generation will be gone.

We will be home with the Lord. Those people in this room under the age of 25 will

be leading the church. They need to know the stories of how God showed up in the past in response to the big steps of faith taken by their parents to reach more people with Jesus to encourage them in their generation to take more big steps of faith to reach more people with Jesus.

Today, we look back on God's faithfulness in the past to encourage us that God will be faithful in the future. We also celebrate God's faithfulness to CrossWind's mission of reaching people with Jesus to encourage our children to take big steps of faith in their generation to reach more people with Jesus. God will show up in their generation when they take big steps of faith to reach people with Jesus, just as he showed up in their parent's generation.

What is the vision for CrossWind's Future?

Where is CrossWinds heading for the future? What big steps of faith do we see on the horizon? This morning, Pastor Jordan and I will share two.

1. **Reaching Our Community By Serving Our Community** (Kurt) — We believe good works create goodwill, which opens hearts to hear the good news. To reach more people with Jesus in our community, we want to be more actively involved in serving our community. This spring, we did that on the Spencer campus as they became an emergency shelter for more than 150 people a night during the flooding. This fall, the Spirit Lake campus will help with the Habitat For Humanity homes being built in our community. There is more coming for both campuses in the next few weeks. We ask that you pray for God to open more opportunities to connect with people in our community and serve them.

2. **Reaching people with Jesus outside of our communities** (Jordan) — We are thankful God gave us a Spencer campus and a video extension site in Windom, MN. Maybe God will give us more. As elders, we ask you to join us in prayer for God to let us know when and where to open a third campus. Pray that we would clearly sense God's direction and timing. Pray that we will be obedient when the opportunity arises and that as we step forward in faith, God will do as he has always done: which is show up to carry His church through.

In all these things, we know that looking back to celebrate and remember God's showing up in the past gives us the faith we need to take big steps to reach people with Jesus in the future.



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