

FBC
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God's Provision
 for the
Panzarello Family

James Sr. and Lilly and their 5 children - James Jr. and his wife Sydney with daughter Madelyn, Jovanah, Jared, and the twins Ava and Savannah. Picture by iOkreativ

by Jonathan Schaap

What do you do when your source of income has dried up? Do you have a contingency plan? Where do you turn? How do you react when the future looks bleak? How would it affect you financially, emotionally, and spiritually?

This is not an advertisement or reminder to touch base with your financial planner but rather the reality of many due to the ravages of the recent restrictions and effects of COVID-19 which is quickly approaching a year since the initial lockdown in March of 2020. Many have experienced these ravages acutely even here at FBC. The Panzarello family is one such family whose business is battling to survive during these trying times. The Panzarello family consists of James Sr. and Lilly and their 5 children - James Jr. and

Continued on page 2

Inside This Issue:

The Panzarello Family 1
 ONE28 Retreat 3
 New Members 4
 Baptism 6
 Weddings 7-8

God's Provision

Panzarello Family continued from page 1

his wife Sydney with daughter Madelyn, Jovanah, Jared, and the twins Ava and Savannah. James and Lilly Panzarello own a banquet hall and catering service that has all but shut down... A thriving business that relies on weddings, funerals, and social gatherings has all but ceased due to recent events. James and Lilly employ two of their children full-time and others part-time as well. The effects of COVID are not isolated and strike close to home in more ways than just a physical sickness. Since August, some business for the family has begun to trickle back; however, they are running at approximately 25% of where they were prior to the pandemic, and the battle to stay afloat rages on...

So where do you go from here? What do you do? Where has God been working? What has the church been doing?

The Panzarello family's responses are quite refreshing. Back in March and April of 2020, the Panzarello family provided groceries and supplies right out of their home here in Upland. Perhaps you were one of the recipients of some much-needed groceries and supplies when the local grocery stores presented empty shelves. God provided many opportunities such as these for them in recent months and many through this local church. The Panzarello family has catered for Elders'

dinners, the recent marriage conference, women's Bible study luncheons, and more! They are witnessing God's provision first hand - He gives them their daily bread as they distribute "daily bread" to others. They are grateful for the generosity and encouragement of the FBC church family - FBC has visited them, prayed for them, and provided opportunities to serve. Anonymous gifts have shown up at opportune times even. They are thankful for unity in the family, the many visits from church family, and God's sustaining grace. Jared is thankful for a promotion at work, and James Jr. is thankful for no late bills and God's continued provision. James Sr. is thankful for the sermons from Micah on providence and opportunities to serve and be served by the body. Lilly is thankful for the recent Women's Bible Study where they are going through the Psalms - it is humbling to witness a Sovereign God whose will is at times mysterious but also encouraging that our security is also found in this same God. James and Lilly are finding that their security is not found in a bank account ultimately and that their faith is being tested, but it is good! They are experiencing growth through the trials and testing that lead to perseverance... They also recognize this as good for their children - it is an opportunity to show them how to lead and how to react in light of these trying circumstances. May we at FBC continue to lift the Panzarello family in prayer and support and praise God for what He is doing here through these difficult times.

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ONE28 Retreat

by Shelly Castello

On October 23-25th, ONE28 Student Ministry held our annual retreat with a record 69 students in attendance. The location was Ironwood Christian Camp in Newberry Springs, which we reached by driving several miles down a dirt road in the middle of nowhere. The privilege of attending a retreat brought loads of excitement in the year 2020! Students left their electronic devices and the concerns of the times behind to focus on growing in their faith. Our theme was “To Live Is Christ” taken from Philippians 1:21. Pastor Luke Rhee shared a message of full surrender to Christ and making Jesus our everything. We considered the wonderful truth that Jesus is our Treasure, Lord, Savior, Shepherd, Righteousness, High Priest and Life. Listen to the awesome truths students learned:



ONE28 Retreat Picture by Ironwood Staff



ONE28 students hiked to a place to sandboard on the desert dunes.

should never try to rush our lives because everything is in the hands of God.”

The retreat also included small group discussion and one-on-one meetings with leaders. Students discussed what God was teaching them, how they want to grow in obedience, and prayed for each other. Students commented:

“Compared to Christ, everything is worth nothing. Whether through death or life, I want to be remembered as someone who shared Jesus and showed His love to everyone.”

“I was reminded that Jesus is always going to guide me and be by my side, and that at the end of the day, knowing Jesus is the most valuable thing that I have. What I wear, my grades, my number of ‘followers’ doesn’t matter.”

“I learned we should always leave everything under God’s control and just trust him. We

“Sometimes I struggle with doubt. In talking to my leader during our one-on-one, I learned that when I doubt, it’s usually because I want my way and not God’s way. I want to depend on God and His will and perfect plan and not my own.”

“In my small group we reflected on the sermon together, which helped us fully understand how we should make God our ultimate desire and give him glory over everything else.”

No youth retreat would be complete without a healthy dose of FUN, and there was plenty of it this year! Sandboarding, rifle shooting, an escape room, and archery tag were just a few of the many activities students enjoyed.

As we wrapped up the last morning with testimonies,



Luke Rhee taught on making God our ultimate desire.

students shared how God worked in their hearts individually, through the teaching of God’s Word and the relationships with leaders and fellow students. God used this retreat to show many of the students how precious Christ is, and that nothing this world has to offer compares to knowing Him! The leadership of ONE28 would love your prayers as we seek to see students come to know Christ and grow in conformity to Him.

New Members



Mitch and Wendy Pederson with daughter, Shelby Picture by Jenny Ritchie

Mitch and Wendy Pederson

by Cindy Behnke

Welcome Pederson Family to membership! Mitch and Wendy will be married twenty-three years in March. The high desert was their home until the commute for Mitch became too much. Working in the construction field, the long hours away from home brought them inland in May 2019. The church before they attended FBC was a great church and leaving it was hard but necessary. This left the Pederson family looking

and several friends already attending FBC brought them here in summer of 2019. Their first day at FBC was Micah's first sermon as teaching pastor. They were able to get into the New Members classes right before COVID struck in March. When asked why FBC, they both agreed FBC has a genuinely welcoming, family feel, and not just when they were new but it's remained a year and a half later. "We knew this would be our home before the sermon was even done," Mitch shared. "The teaching and preaching is so spot on. And people actually walk out their faith here."

While living in the high desert, they had attended Sovereign Way Christian Church where Mo Khazaal was their pastor. This church was with the Pederson family during their hardest valley. Mitch and Wendy's children, Brendan age 11 and Shelby age 9, did not know what March 2013 would bring. With no warning, Brendan would be diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor cancer called DIPG. Mitch and Wendy shared that while this cancer usually has a 9-12 month life expectancy, Brendan would be called home only 5 short weeks later, just two weeks after turning 12 years old. They said this too was in God's

mercy, not allowing Brendan to suffer as the DIPG brings out so quickly. Brendan was a firm believer in Jesus Christ and loved sharing the gospel with others, even until his last days when his eyesight became poor so he gave his Bible to a friend who needed the gospel. Their story is tragic, heart-wrenching and every parent's worst nightmare, yet in the ashes, God's beauty shines through. His faithful presence illuminates the Pederson family's lives. Their "grip in Him" as they worded it so perfectly, brought many tears to our family. Even my own 5 year old was moved

Continued on page 5

New Members continued from page 5

hearing how Brendan said in his last days about wanting to go home. Wendy told her son she wasn't ready for him to leave yet and he needed to keep fighting. I didn't know my son was listening so intently so when we were talking about God's love and work in the Pederson family's lives the next day, he recounted how, "at least their son got his wish, Mama. He got to go home," as he pointed to heaven. Amen. I couldn't encourage you enough personally to hear the Pederson family's testimony in its entirety; your heart will be moved.

Wendy grew up raised in faith by her mother. She always remembers being very convicted by her sins. Her favorite verse right now is 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Wendy's passions are Jesus and spending time with people. When not with family, she loves meeting friends for coffee and sharing life together. She loves her skin care business where she gets to meet so many people and help others take care of their skin in a healthy way. I'm sure you've seen her bright and welcoming smile greeting you on Sunday as she serves on FBC's greeter team. She is thankful for the opportunity to have been home with her children since Brendan was a baby and having homeschooled them since they were in 4th and 1st grade.

Mitch also grew up in a Christian home, but it wasn't until he was 18 when a pastor, Pastor Bill, saw through Mitch's happy-go-lucky attitude and really pressed him on his beliefs. He ended up

going on a mission trip to Haiti with his 70 lb. tool bag ready to build. While they did some construction work in a dental office and a church, by the end of the trip, Mitch was most needed helping a dentist pull teeth! What a way to share the gospel. :) Mitch was Director of Security for six years at their previous church. His experience and devotion to safety has led him to want to take on some trainings for FBC's current

security team where he currently serves. Mitch works at Hensel Phelps, a general contracting firm where he is a quality control manager. Wendy shared, "He is literally the smartest person I know. And a jack of all trades, just so good at everything." Mitch disagrees! He did give his passion for working with his hands to his daughter, Shelby though.

Shelby is 17 and in 11th grade

**The
Brendan Pederson
Foundation:
Brendan's Bible Blessings,**
is a nonprofit charity
whose main focus is to carry out what
Brendan so strongly did;
share the Word with others!
The charity gives Bibles
to children who
are fighting cancer.



at Faith Christian Academy, a homeschool program. She loves to bake, sew, and craft with her Cricut. She even started an Etsy business with her neighbor called "Bee Blessed Boutique" where they make large porch signs and other custom signs. They are so adorable! Shelby also absolutely adores children. She is a nanny two days a week for a 5 month old and serves in FBC's children's ministry, where I can personally attest to having her as a helper in the 2&3's class with me. Shelby has a sweet gift with children! Her tender patience and fun-loving spirit make her a huge blessing in the class! She is thinking of possibly becoming a preschool teacher's aide.

The Pederson family is in the Bohler small group and absolutely loves it. Since COVID changes and craving fellowship, they also started meeting with the Becker and Chambliss family outside on Saturdays and going through the Psalms. They continue to do this even now as they enjoy the relationships so much. This incredible family loves their family time, and while hobbies like camping and racing have changed since losing Brendan, they have bonded over new ways. One way was starting the Brendan Pederson Foundation: Brendan's Bible Blessings, a nonprofit charity whose main focus is to carry out what Brendan so strongly did; share the Word with others! The charity gives Bibles to children who are fighting cancer.

Please greet our newest members and spend the time hearing God's powerful, faithful work in their lives. You will be truly blessed!

Understanding BAPTISM

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38"

by Zara Plakakis

I thank God that He has brought me to this conviction to obey Scripture as it commands believers to be baptized. I had previously been immersed in water at the young age of 17. I grew up attending a church very similar to FBC, however, my motives to get baptized were not from Scripture, but simply because my brother had done it and I thought I should too. I had no intention of submitting my life to Jesus. Several years later, as a Sophomore in college, I had come to a sad bitter point in my life and felt enslaved by sin. I knew I needed a change, and knew it had to start with God. I started attending a group I thought to be Christian. I dove into their Bible studies and they had convinced me of several major things. The first was that I wasn't saved. The second, I needed to perform many works and start living as they thought to be Christian. I had to do all these things before I could be saved in their eyes. Thirdly, this group taught that baptism by immersion into water is what saves you. In this false gospel Satan was masquerading as an angel of light. I had no idea how unbiblical this was. I did not realize I was adding my works to the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Ten years later, God began working in my family. By God's grace we were pulled out of that organization. God directed us to FBC in 2011. It was through the expository teaching of Scripture where I came to hear the true Gospel. I came to



Zara and Niko Plakakis

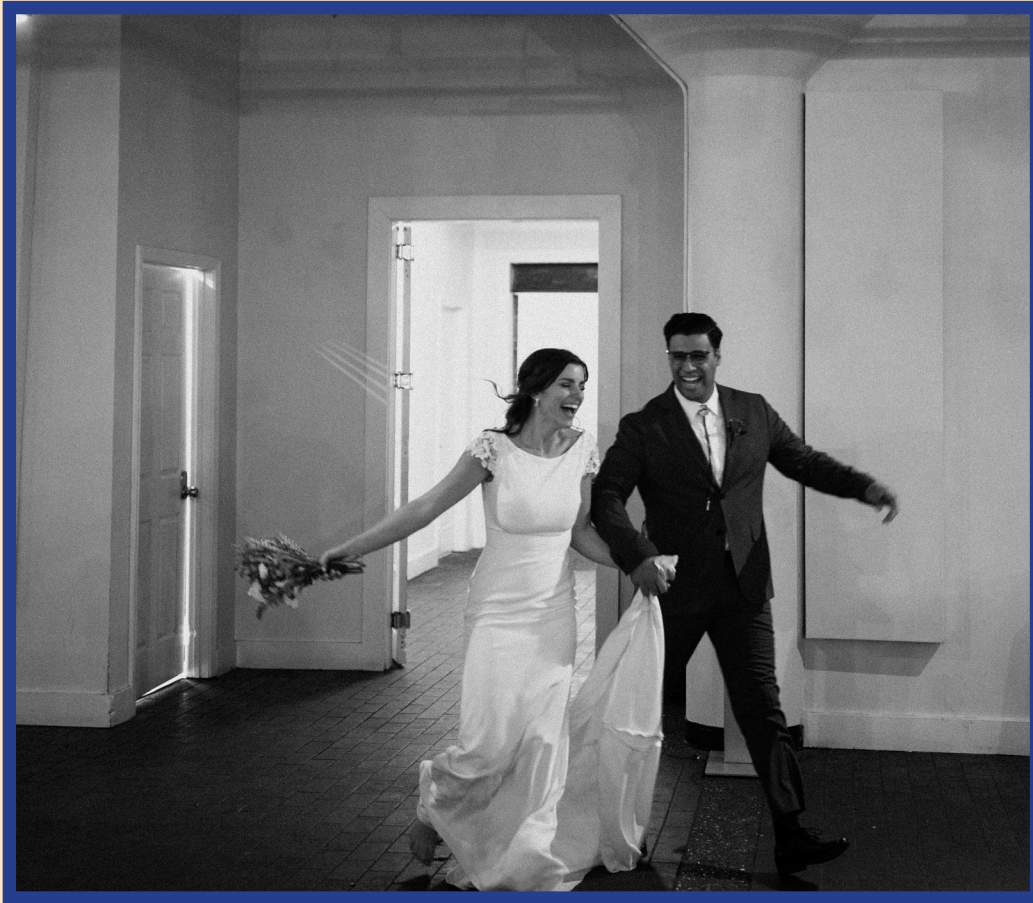
realize I have nothing good to offer God. I understood the riches of His grace in Christ. Praise God for His love and faithfulness that He would unplug my ears, draw my heart, and have the scales fall off my eyes. So here we are now, many doctrines have been corrected and we are forever grateful to our church family for walking alongside us.

However, my pride had put aside the idea of baptism for many years. Recently, I was reading a sermon transcript called *Understanding Baptism* by John MacArthur. I was prompted to refresh my thoughts on this topic to help someone else. MacArthur explained very plainly:

"If you were not baptized according to the New Testament, if you were not immersed in water after a conscious commitment of your life to Jesus Christ after

you became saved, then you need to be baptized, period, because whatever you did before was nothing. It was nothing. It's only for believers; it should be done immediately. (1989)"

This really pricked my heart and I felt moved by the Holy Spirit to obey the ordinance of baptism and was baptized at Foothill Bible Church on October 11, 2020. I realize now that being baptized with the wrong doctrine is a serious matter. I believe that I should obey God's word down to the smallest iota and not lean on my own understanding. I am thankful for His grace that gently led me here.



Lucas and Corey Roybal Picture by Alec Vanderboom

Lucas and Corey Roybal

by Julia Buehl

Lucas Roybal and Corey Murray exchanged wedding vows on October 4, 2020 in Louisville, Kentucky. The ceremony was officiated by Micah Lugg and witnessed by close friends and family from California and Kentucky.

So how did this couple meet who lived 2000 miles apart? Lucas shares, "It's a little bit of a long story but in short, we were set up. We had each traveled to Papua New Guinea at different times. I went for two weeks and the year after Corey went for three months. The missionaries that hosted me, (Bill & Kelley Housley who serve with FBC supported missionary Promise Vaughan), were longtime friends of Corey and her family back in Louisville, Kentucky. After hearing about each other from Kelley, we both agreed to meet

on September 3rd, 2019. Corey would fly back home from Papua New Guinea but not before she stopped in Los Angeles so I could pick her up to show her around California for three days. Not long after we found ourselves in a long distance relationship awaiting God's plan for us to finally be married."

Luc is currently the Coordinator of Communications and Creative Arts at Foothill Bible Church. Corey is seeking employment in the area. She has previously worked as an administrator in the restaurant industry, the mission field, and the medical field. Luc currently serves on the worship team while Corey serves in the nursery. The couple are in the Benkhe Small Group which they have so quickly grown to love.

Nicholas and Melanie Collins

by Julia Buehl

Nicholas Collins and Melanie Roman exchanged wedding vows on June 27, 2020 in an intimate ceremony in the backyard of Scott and Janice Collins. Micah Lugg officiated the wedding.

Having grown up at Foothill Bible Church, Nick is the fifth child of Scott and Janice Collins. He met Melanie while taking a Spanish class at Citrus College and then Melanie began attending FBC in 2017. Melanie is currently completing her education at California Polytechnic University, Pomona while working as a nanny. Nick is employed full time at a recycling plant and they reside in Ontario. They have been in the Beatty small group for the past two years and both serve in the nursery.



Nicholas and Melanie Collins Picture by Luke Rhee

FBC Connection

The purpose of the FBC Connection newsletter is to inform and inspire the FBC body of what God is doing in the life of its members. Please note that the testimonies and articles are written by volunteers and do not necessarily reflect the sentiments or endorsements of the elder board. The apostle Paul explains in I Corinthians 12 that the local church is one body made up of many members and gifts. FBC Connection recognizes this diversity in the FBC body and seeks to promote community through this form of communication. On behalf of the elder board of FBC, we invite you to proclaim the excellencies of Christ who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

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