**Faith Baptist Community Church & Center – February, 2019**

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Greetings from Inner-city Cleveland, February 5, 2019

Someone once said: “You are always one decision away from a totally different life.” That is true in both a positive and negative sense. It should certainly characterize our lives as Christians…as children of God…as sinners saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, when we decided to trust Christ as Savior, we were transformed into new creations and, according to Romans 12:2, that transformation occurred, and continues to occur, by way of renewing the mind. If you have never placed your faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, that one decision can and will lead to a totally different life for you!

While that quote definitely applies in the spiritual realm, it also has application to life in general. Back in August of last year, when Sherri and I were trying to make a decision regarding DBS surgery, we had heard, but had no idea personally, just how totally different my movement and life would be on this end! I am thrilled to report that DBS has changed my life. All three surgeries were successful. The generator was activated on 1/19. For the first five days, I felt so normal, it seemed as though I had been “cured.” On day six, I was quickly reminded that DBS is NOT a cure! As the programmer described it, my body simply “ate up the stimulation,” which returned me to very belabored movement. She assured us that it was just a “wrinkle” in the process. She adjusted the settings on 1/26 and, with that change and my iPod controller (yes, they give me some latitude to adjust my brain stimulation settings), I have been able to manage my movement fairly well. I still struggle with some freezing in my gait (feeling as though my feet are stuck to the floor), which I’m working on; however, the dyskinesias (strange movements) and dystonia (involuntary muscle twisting) are pretty much gone! I am calm for the first time in a long time! Also, I am medication-free at this point! One extra benefit of DBS has been an amazing change in my body’s temperature regulation. One of the issues that I have dealt with over the past five years has been drenching sweats. After the stimulation was started, I noticed a very strange sensation…I was cold…really cold! I had always joked that I was going to have my thermostat adjusted down when I had DBS surgery! Well, it happened! We were told that many patients end up feeling warmer as a result of DBS. God knew my situation, though, and He gave “exceedingly, abundantly above all we could ask or think” just on that issue alone! Thank you so much for the prayers, ncouragement, and concern for me and my wonderful family as we went through this process together. God is good and I hope (as a result of this change) to serve Him with more passion and energy than I ever did or could before!

In men’s Bible study on Saturday mornings (I am so glad to be back to teaching!), we have been discussing the subject of prayer. It has been good to be reminded of the power that we have in prayer. We were created for fellowship and, while sin erected a wall, Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection tore down that wall. I know many people prayed for me over the past several months. Thank you for praying!!! God heard those prayers and God answered those prayers. God is good…yes, God is good all of the time!

We love you in Christ,

***Michael, Sherri, Emily, and Benjamin Vanek***