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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

How to Guide For Film and Faith On Tap

**Prepared by
Rev. Adam Westrich
St. Paul's UCC
The Church at the Crossroads
Where Faith Meets Life
W5706 WI-72
Ellsworth, WI 54011**

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Introduction and Background

Faith and Film on Tap was an idea birthed by me, Pastor Adam, in order to find a relevant and meaningful way to connect normal everyday non-church going folks, in particular, as well as church going folks, with their spiritual selves. Believing that to be human means that we wrestle with spiritual matters of faith and life, I wanted to create a venue through which to talk about these things in a non-threatening, life-giving way.

Given the fact that people are organizing themselves differently in our postmodern world, churches will have to begin to both pay attention to these patterns and adapt their ways of being together in order to build communities of faith in the future. For example, people today primarily create and gather in community around a specific activity, for often a very specific period of time. One example of this is when people gather around the activity of drinking coffee or enjoying a beer. Other examples include gathering for the purpose of watching a softball game or participating in one. One final example, would be the gathering of a group of people to do a service project—such as, Feed My Starving Children. Events like these, are typically a onetime occurrence that comes with a knowable and determinable commitment to, an often, very specific period of time (say 3-4 hours). This is how community is organized today.

Knowing that people will not generally speaking darken the door of a church these days, even if a free movie and/or food and beverages are offered, I decided to hold this event in a local bar and restaurant. This, again, creates a non-threatening place to have non-threatening conversations in a location normal people typically gather for community.

Now... Though, there are similar events like this held by people who love to gather around ideas, books, and discussion (just search a few church websites that have small groups as a part of their ethos), these sorts of events typically only attract more thoughtful and already spiritually seeking people. And though these are good kinds of events, they do not appeal to a larger audience and one would have to have a fairly large network of friends/people in order to organize an event like this. That said, most people like movies and many people like food. So, we gather around film, beer, and food periodically, 4 to 6 times a year, for a very specific period of time—about 3 hours.

Additionally, an event like this, particularly for a small local church, is a bit expensive. Therefore, desiring to share costs and build collaborative relationships with others—whether that be with another local church and/or a local business where all parties benefit from the relationship—I collaborated with the proprietor of Common Man Brewing, a local tap house in our small town. Together we are sharing the costs involved in this enterprise. The one time we offered this event, the proprietor of Common Man had a great night of business, and I was able to begin to build relationships with new non-church going people building community around a fun activity— additionally exposing them to our more gracious and thoughtful gospel and a church family that both loves to have fun while really, *actually*, loving each other.

Therefore, I took three of my great loves—my love of craft beer, film, and theology—and created a format through which I could facilitate a conversation with regular everyday folks regarding matters of life and faith.

Thus, when you gather for a Faith and Film on Tap event you can expect the following format.

30 minutes given for folks to arrive and order food/beverage

5 minute informal welcome, which also gives an overview of the format for the night and an introduction to the movie

1.5 - 2 hours to view a movie

15 - 30 minutes of discussion

Here I pull 2 to 3 themes relating to faith and life that one can easily discern were significant parts of the film we watched and then I offer 4 - 5 questions around these themes.

So far, I've facilitated these myself in a large group format, instead of dividing the group up into small groups of 4 - 6 participants.

Using this discussion format, people seem to be able to be engaged with the questions and conversation, even if they do not offer thoughts/responses verbally themselves.

Then, I offer a handout that people can explore, if they choose to, that will take them deeper into the themes of faith and life we discussed that night, which they can engage in on their own in private or with their family. In the future, I may simply offer a bibliography of books and/or resources that would allow for further reflection and development.

Implementation of FFT

If you plan to offer an event like this, you will need to decide with whom you are going to partner and you need to be thinking about the space it will be held in. Common Man Brewing already had a large screen and projector set up in their space for the purpose of watching NFL football games, along with other TVs that made it possible to view something from several different locations within the restaurant. So, the venue was good for an event like this.

Then, you have to get permission to view the movie that you are going to watch by purchasing a license agreement for each viewing. It's important to note that the venue where the movie is being viewed determines the kind of licensing agency you must go through to acquire a licensing agreement.

For example, if you were to watch a movie inside your local church (perhaps, even outside but you will need to check on that for sure), then the best licensing agreement to purchase is through CVLI. This is an umbrella license that gives you access to the most movie licensing agreements. However, you can only view a movie in/on your church grounds. CVLI is the Christian subsidiary of Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (MPLC) and you purchase this umbrella license through CCLI.

MPLC does offer an umbrella license for organizations like schools, if you were to watch a movie on school grounds, a business other than a bar/restaurant, a library, a community center and even in a venue like a nursing home. However, you only have access to viewing movies in those specific venues. And unless you are going to watch more than 5 in a single year, it is not worth it to purchase this larger umbrella package. MPLC does offer an umbrella package for restaurants/bars. However, it only covers two companies that offer licensing agreements. So, your movie options would be severally limited.

The licensing agency that offers the most options for acquiring licenses, for venues outside of a local church, is SWANK Movie Licensing. SWANK Movie Licensing has access to most of the major licensing companies that exist. They price each movie license based on venue, number of people who will view it, square footage of the venue if you choose to do this in a restaurant/bar, and whether you are viewing the movie indoors or outdoors. Given the specific circumstances you intend to view a singular film, you simply purchase an individual license agreement for a singular use for that singular title. If you have to cancel the event and do not view the movie, you get to use the agreement for a different date.

So, for example, to view a movie at Common Man Brewing, an establishment under 3000 square feet, indoors and for an audience under 50 people, the total cost to view a movie one time is 135 dollars. See below for a graph that explains pricing further:

Movies per Year	Price per Title Less than 50 people	Price per Title 51-100 people
1-11	\$135	\$185
12-23	\$110	\$160
24-39	\$90	\$130
40+	\$80	\$110

Here are the rates for the outdoor events for 50 people or less:

\$185-\$225 depending on the title

Lastly, here are our rates on television episodes for indoor use only:

30 minute episodes: \$75/episode (5+ \$60/episode)

Hour long episodes: \$150/episode (5+ \$125/episode)

All of these are, of course, subject to change.

To find any of these licensing agreement companies, just simply google their names and you will find them. In addition, if you were to do a google search for “title by title movie licensing”, you would find nearly all of these above discussed companies and others, too. For example, you could check into Greenlightright.com . I have not. Let me know if you do. I am curious.

Finally, please see below for my notes and contacts with CVLI and SWANK and the information they provided. Also, see below for the discussion questions and worksheet I handed out for my first Faith and Film on Tap event where we viewed the movie titled, *The Adjustment Bureau*.

If you have any further thoughts and/or questions, please feel free to contact me at the information also provided below. Many blessings to you, as you discern the ways God is calling you to transform lives in the community/communities you are called to serve. May God connect you and your community with both faith and life.

Most sincerely,
-Pastor Adam

Rev. Adam W. Westrich
Pastor of St. Paul's UCC
The Church at the Crossroads
Where Faith Meets Life
W5706 WI-72
Ellsworth, WI 54011
Email: revadamww@gmail.com
Office #: [\(715\) 273-3118](tel:(715)273-3118)
Cell #: [\(715\) 716-0146](tel:(715)716-0146)



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See below for more information.

NOTES from the creation of Faith and Film on Tap (FFT)

Swank—*Can use within a restaurant, these are restaurant/bar prices.*

Good afternoon,

It was great speaking to you earlier. I look forward to helping you with your film events in any way that I can! Attached you will find a copy of the exhibition request form that we discussed over the phone. If you can please fill that out and return it to me via fax or email at your earliest convenience, that will help me get an account set up for over here. As I mentioned, here is the set pricing that we have for INDOOR events for our bar/restaurant events (keep in mind that there will be a \$28 S&H charge if you are utilizing our DVDs):

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Please let me know if you have any other questions for now.

Thanks!

Tyler

Tyler Krueger | Account Executive | P:[800.876.5577](tel:800.876.5577) | F:[314.909.0879](tel:314.909.0879) |
Email: tkrueger@swankmp.com

Swank Motion Pictures, Inc. | 10795 Watson Road | St. Louis, MO 63127 | United States of America | www.swank.com

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CVLI—Only able to use within/on church grounds.

Here is the current info-

The Church Video License enables you to legally show movies at church. Coverage includes playing just a few minutes of a movie all the way up to showing the full-length feature. The Church Video License is one of the most cost effective and convenient ways for churches and other ministry organizations to protect themselves from the possibility of being fined for illegal use of DVDs. I have attached the information sheet for you.

To determine what movies are covered, you must first know which producers are covered and that is determined by what package you choose. There are three packages to choose from for a church 25-99 in attendance (category A):

1. Family Values Package contains over 70 producers. The titles focus on religious, educational and family-based themes. Hollywood Studio producers are NOT covered, even if the film is religious.
Category A is \$90.00 / 12 months.
Producer list: <http://cvli.com/producers/family-values-package/>
2. Total Producers Package contains over 650 producers, including the Family Values producers and major Hollywood Studios like Disney, DreamWorks, Fox, MGM, New Line Cinema, Paramount, Universal, United Artists and Warner Bros.
Category A is \$235.00 / 12 months.
Producer list: <http://cvli.com/producers/total-package/>
3. A Event license for one time use with the Total Producers Package - Same coverage as the second option above, but available for one time showing.
Category A is \$80.00 /
Producer list: <http://cvli.com/producers/total-package/>

Once you choose the package, this video provides essential information to determine what movies are covered: <http://cvli.com/support/>. You're also welcome to click on the 'Movie Ideas' tab at <http://cvli.com>.

If one of these license options would benefit your ministry, I can be reached at [1-800-234-2446, x1414](tel:1-800-234-2446). If you would like to order the CVLI Video License online, click here: <http://cvli.com/get-started/>. Let me know if you have any questions. You may also review www.screenvue.com for illustration ideas.

Have a great day,

Debra Williams

Account Representative

Christian Copyright Licensing International

Phone: [+1 503.257.2230 x 1414](tel:+15032572230)

Toll Free: [800 234 2446 x 1414](tel:8002342446)

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MPLC—Sister company to CVLI, has only two major licensing distributors at this point. So, though we can get an umbrella licensing agreement for like 625 (any restaurant/bar under 3000 square feet), it would not be worth it. Too few options. Check back in a couple of years, though. They are trying.

Search for “title by title movie licensing”

Could look into Greenlightright.com *This may prove worth looking into. It's another place like Swank.*

Worksheet for 1st FFT Event Below—Movie: The Adjustment Bureau

Worksheet (1st page was a half cut page I placed on all tables for discussion)

Faith and Film on Tap.

- Show *“The Adjustment Bureau,”* with Matt Damon and Emily Blunt.

Round Discussion Questions: *Let’s talk about our God pictures.*

- How did God influence the actions of Matt Damon and Emily Blunt’s character?
- How does God interact with the world in which we live and us?
- How have you interpreted God’s direction/activity in your life?
- Does God have a bigger purpose? How do we know what it is? How would we interpret it?

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Handout (these were handed out as people left, dble sided/stapled)

Early reformation/early modern concept of God: God is in control.

- Hyper-Calvinism (Calvin lived: 10 July 1509 – 27 May 1564):
God is in total control of life—both the broken parts (sin) and the whole parts (righteousness).
- Lutheranism (Luther lived: 10 November 1483 – 18 February 1546):
God is in total control of life—but not the broken parts (sin), that part is our fault.
- Arminianism (Arminius lived: October 10, 1560 – October 19, 1609),
Human beings have the *free will* to resist both God's will and God's grace.

In all of these God pictures, God is distant, judgmental (God judges us for our sin), punitive (needs to punish someone/something for our sin), and... people will either go to heaven or hell. Salvation comes only through faith, which in all cases is a result of God's grace through Christ and Christ's work on the cross, and faith is primarily about what I believe about God.

Late modern concept of God: God is either in control and with us, or does not exist and we are all alone.

- Popular/Scientific concept: Atheism (anti-theism), there is no God (typically anti-early modern concept of God).
- Popular Christian (Evangelical) concept of God: God wants control of your life, but you have to give God that control.
 - God is very near us (immanence).
 - God is like Jesus. Just as Jesus suffered, God knows your suffering and has experienced anything you might experience in this life. Therefore, God knows what you are going through.

Often, it's felt like we've only had a few options. God has either been in total control and absent or wanting control and with us. However, in this later case, God is only with us once we give that control over to God and subscribe to a confessional (a set of beliefs about God). Or, of course, not here at all, non-existent (atheism).

In addition, this late modern God picture seems to suggest that God's kingdom and salvation are something we experience primarily after death. Salvation comes through faith, and faith is primarily about what I believe about God.

Postmodern concept of God

- God is always with us, *and for us*, as well as with/for God's creation.

- God is immanent (very near us) even though God is somehow very large, transcending our creaturely existence, and is bigger than the creation.
- God is not in control of our world.
 - That is not to say that God is not actively working to influence our world for a larger purpose, it is just that we—as free agents—have the freedom to work with God’s activity in the world, and our lives, against it, or we can even ignore it all together.
 - This said, God only does so motivated by love and through those persons willing to work with God to see God’s will done on earth as it is in heaven.
 - In summary, God does not want control of your life nor does God have control of your life.
 - In addition, you are a free agent—free to will, free to think, and free to act.
- Instead, God wants you to become wise.
 - By becoming wise you discover through time the good life, enabling you to then lead and live a good life—one that promotes the wellbeing of all.
 - Additionally, the wise life is one that follows the way and example of Christ—for Christ, being God, is the one who is most wise.
 - Through the process of becoming wise, then, you develop the capacity to make whole, God “willed,” decisions on your own.
- So, the difficult parts of human living—such as, our vulnerability to harming ourselves and others, emotional brokenness, etc.—are largely the fault of and/or the result of the condition of being human.
 - In other words, the brokenness we experience in life is not the result of an all powerful God “allowing” such things to happen, but it is the result of our freedom in our agency (our will) to make errors and live from our vulnerabilities.
 - In addition, God does not stop these things from happening.
 - Instead, God is somehow very much aware of them and powerfully present to and with human suffering.
 - Indeed, God is powerfully with all people in all circumstances in life—whether good or bad, whole or not—and is working to heal and to reverse the effects sin has had in/with the human experience.
- Therefore, and in conclusion, since God is here with us, in the now, all the time, present to all human choices, which we are free in our agency to make (free will) and since God is always promoting the good, then it reasons that God’s kingdom is more about brining/experiencing God’s heaven/realm in our own realm/creaturely existence/world, and is therefore something, at some tangible level, that can be experienced this side of death—instead of only after we die—and is *the thing* (the kingdom of God/realm of God) that we are called by Christ to seek, search for, work towards, and promote in both our personal lives and in our world (in our families, our communities, and our global community).