

Youth minister has family ties in church

Written by Austin Benson

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He vacationed in Gothenburg as a child

Eric Sandberg moved to town Aug. 1 as the full time associate pastor at the Evangelical Free Church.

Sandberg fills the position vacated by the Rev. Terry Biers who moved to Rapid City, SD, in April 2012.

“My mom grew up in Gothenburg just south of town. So we would come here and vacation during the summer,” Sandberg said.

Ironically, his grandparents, Darwin and Eunice Edson were members of the EFC before they passed, he said.

“I had been looking for a full-time position for about two years, all over the country,” Sandberg said. “I applied for the full-time position and after a couple months of communication, I took the position.”

Sandberg attended college at Trinity International University in Deerfield, IL, and Evangelical Divinity School before spending 10 years in the Chicago area.

“Coming here was a big shift from where we were before,” Sandberg said. “Luckily, I’m used to it because of my past in Gothenburg.”

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He said the move has been made easier by supporters and the people of Gothenburg.

Sandberg said that he and his wife, Kathy, feel taken care of here.

He said he's excited to meet with students and work with them on being ministry leaders.

"The exposure on Wednesday nights to the students will hopefully lead to me being part of their athletics also," Sandberg said. "I'm grateful for that opportunity."

Although some kids registered for youth group are participating in sports, Sandberg said that making sure kids aren't away from their families is just as important as attending the ministry sessions.

"It doesn't help the family if it keeps kids away more often than they already are," Sandberg said. "Church isn't something that should be done away from families, it is something that strengthens them."

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