

CONNECTIONS

July 2020

THE PASTOR'S DESK

Our Vision:

To glorify God
through loving
Him and serving
others

Our Mission Statement:

A Faith Family
helping to make
and develop
mature disciples

What a joy it has been to be back worshipping with some of you all. Although it has not been a return to normal, and many are still unable to return to corporate worship, it has been a breath of fresh air to see familiar faces over the past five Sundays. We have also recently transitioned to a live streamed service; and, although we had a couple bumps in the road I think we finally have most of the glitches worked out. For those of you worshipping from home, I pray that you feel some sense of connection to your faith family through this technology. I am grateful for the time that we've been able to worship together both online and in person in this trying season.

I must confess that when this pandemic began I truly believed we would only be away from the norm for a few weeks. I never anticipated that this would last over three months with no apparent end in sight. If you're like me, you probably just want to be able to eat at a restaurant with no restrictions or go on vacation without any apprehensions. Certainly we would all like to toss our facemasks aside and never look back. Unfortunately, as the number of infected individuals continues to climb across the south we must continue to be diligent to fight this pandemic. I pray that we are each doing our part to combat this virus. But, I do believe that there is more that I can do. Perhaps there is more that we can all do.

In 1 Thessalonians the apostle Paul says, "Always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances..." (1 Th. 5:15b-18, NIV). Certainly these words are important in all seasons of our lives. But, I find that these words are of particular importance for the global Church in the midst of this pandemic. Here Paul lines out three ways that we can do good for one another. The first way is simply to "rejoice always." When we spend our days rejoicing it becomes much more difficult for anxiety and fear to fill our lives. Paul also calls us to "pray continually." We need to fill our days with prayers for our communities, our healthcare workers, those who are sick, and our leaders among other things. Prayer must be at the center of the Church's fight against this pandemic. Finally, we are told to "give thanks in all circumstances." To do this is to center our minds on thanksgiving giving us a positive perspective through which to see our current circumstances.

I believe that we are in a season where many Christ followers are wondering what they can do to help. Certainly, many of our global leaders have given us some practical ways we can help alleviate this pandemic. But, we must not neglect the Biblical ways we can also help. I pray that we can move forward in this season choosing to rejoice, pray, and give thanks to our God daily.

*Press on!
Carson*

Church News

FINANCIALS

as of June 21, 2020

Actual Expenses YTD \$ 167,626

Actual Received YTD \$ 192,117

Deacon of the Month

Mark Whitaker

706-533-3489

Happy Anniversary

- 07-02 Christopher & Alisha Hummel
- 07-03 Mitchell & Brigitte Cozart
- 07-05 Bob & Susan Knight
- 07-11 Evan & Katie Powell
- 07-15 Mickey & Emily Lonergan
- 07-16 Keith & Sonja Soloman
- 07-18 Benjie & Annette Moore
- 07-18 Brett & Kathy Arrowood
- 07-24 Curtis & Mandy Rhodes
- 07-28 Jim & Yong Clark
- 07-31 Miguel & Claudia Rodriguez

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 07-01 Randall Hill
- 07-02 Peggy Edwards
- 07-03 John Eckenroth
- 07-03 Raymond Hawkinberry
- 07-03 Susan Knight
- 07-03 Matthew Nelson
- 07-05 Pamela Jones
- 07-07 Paul Grimes
- 07-09 Randall Cook
- 07-13 Gerald McKetrick
- 07-14 Scott Williams
- 07-16 Daniel Dickerson
- 07-17 Ruth Hill
- 07-15 Billy Elliott
- 07-18 Tara Taylor
- 07-25 Shawn Birchfield
- 07-25 Alfred Hines
- 07-27 Ken Adams
- 07-29 Chris Gurley
- 07-30 Taly Birchfield
- 07-30 Pat Jacobs

YOUTH:

Just this past week I made the comment to Katie, "Honey, I don't think my brain has ever had spring fever quite this bad."

Katie and I have plans to do a little bit of traveling and beach-sitting in Florida and St. Simon's coming up in two weeks, and those vacation plans have been dominating my thought life for 10-14 days already now. At this point, I feel like July 10th will NEVER get here.

Why am I dreaming of vacation so much?

If I have learned anything about myself over the past three months, it's that I am, at my core, a creature of habit. Since the outbreak of this pandemic, there has been little to no habit or routine for anyone. In this time, I have found myself so very anxious and restless. I have been unsettled and unable to find peace. My heart and mind have constantly felt uneasy. And over time, all this has led me to a place of mental and emotional exhaustion. I have spent so much energy being concerned/uncertain about what the future holds that I have tired myself out.

So, I look forward to a vacation – a "break" from all the topsy-turvy chaos.

But honestly, a vacation will only help so much. What I need most is not 4 or 5 days sitting with my toes in the sand. What I need most is the Holy Spirit – the Advocate sent from the Father to provide us all with peace and comfort in extraordinary circumstances. And so my prayer of recent days has been: "Father, help me to find peace, joy, and comfort in You. Help me to be filled with the Holy Spirit – to inhale it with every breath I take. So that I may truly rest in you."

If you, like me, have found yourself restless and anxious, I want to offer you the use of this prayer as well.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

-Evan

Music Ministry:

As I mentioned Sunday, I recently learned that the word enthusiasm is based upon two Greek words: "en", meaning *within* and "theos" meaning *God*. Thus to have *enthusiasm* means to demonstrate outwardly the God that is within you.

I am a bit of nerd about lyrics and language and words, and I have to say – I LOVE this. To know that being enthusiastic, excited, passionate about something is demonstrating that God is living inside me is both gratifying to the personality God gave me well as encouraging to me for those times when I have struggled. Too often I have held back in worship for fear that my enthusiasm would be seen as fake or insincere. But because enthusiasm means God is dwelling within me, suddenly all of the arguments in my mind and fears of what others might think or say disappear in the freedom to bring the joy of my salvation into the light. It is not a false sense of happiness on a sad day or fake joy in the midst of devastating circumstance, but is instead living out life to the fullest because my source is not myself, my feeble strength, or my circumstances - but the God of the universe, who is within me flowing out in everything that I say and do. I can face my struggles and heartaches with enthusiasm – that is, with complete confidence that God is in control and that circumstances were not a surprise to Him - and so I can worship Him completely no matter what. I can be excited about what God is doing without worrying about people assuming it is fake – how can it be anything else than sincere when it is *literally* God shining out in my life?

I can't wait to begin living daily with enthusiasm. And for each of you, "I pray that out of his glorious infinite resources, He may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that, being rooted and established in love, you may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, (and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.)" (Ephesians 3:16-19).

It's time to get enthusiastic about life, brethren. Let us shine so brightly that people can't help but be drawn into the Light.

-Rebekah