

CONNECTIONS

Hey, **JUNE!**

June 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

When you think about church what comes to mind? Most of you probably think about corporate worship and the singing of a classic hymn like *Amazing Grace* or *In the Garden*. Others might think of ministry, friendship, or Bible study. Certainly, over the past couple of months our understandings and expectations of church have been challenged to say the least. Some of the elements that we once considered essential have been eliminated. And other elements that we thought were unnecessary have now been deemed essential. In short, church has changed rather quickly.

This past Sunday we read the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. And in that text, we are reminded of the unexpected nature of the Holy Spirit. That is, we are reminded that the Holy Spirit often works in unexpected ways and leads us to unexpected places. It would seem that over the past several months that that is exactly what has happened. We have been led to forgo our traditional ministries and have been forced to either do nothing or to transition to having a digital presence. And although our transition to a digital platform has not been an easy one, I'm grateful that we have been able to make that happen.

The question that remains for me however, is when we are able to return to a more normal reality what then will church look like? Or perhaps a better way of asking that question is what unexpected paths will the Spirit lead us down? Will we be willing to go? As we study the book of Acts over the next couple of months we are going to learn that the Spirit of God often led the early church to do and to be things they probably didn't expect. I believe the same is true of our faith family. So, as we begin to move forward in the coming weeks and months I want to encourage you to prepare yourselves for the unexpected. If we are to become a Spirit-led church we must come to terms with the reality that "church" as we know it is always subject to change. If we are to remain faithful we must always be ready to say "wherever He leads I'll go."

Press on!
Carson

FINANCIALS

as of May 24, 2020

Actual Expenses YTD \$ 139,344

Actual Received YTD \$ 161,688

Deacon of the Month

Ken Welch

706-399-0828

VBS

UPDATE

Due to COVID-19 we have decided to cancel our Vacation Bible School for this year.

Happy Anniversary

- 06-05 Brandi & Rob Lewis
- 06-08 Paige & Barry Fleming
- 06-09 Scott & Leanna Williams
- 06-13 Roxie & Mark Whitaker
- 06-15 Nancy & Jimmie Lewis
- 06-19 Hope & John McClellan
- 06-25 Beverly & Ken Welch
- 06-26 Kate & Lance Ellis
- 06-29 Edee & Ken Sweatman
- 06-30 Brett & Lindsey Rogers

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 06-01 Leslie Perdue
- 06-03 Beverly Welch
- 06-05 Ben Hill
- 06-05 Katie Powell
- 06-10 Brooke Moore
- 06-11 Lance Ellis
- 06-11 Carla Lovett
- 06-17 Dakota Nale
- 06-20 Evelyn Stokes
- 06-22 Anna Morris
- 06-23 Joy Ray
- 06-24 Matthew Murphy
- 06-24 Andre Miller
- 06-26 Brett Rogers

YOUTH:

What is hope and where does it come from? I think it's fair to say that hope is not something that is on our minds all the time. More often, the idea of "hope" appears on our radar when we are in the midst of difficult circumstances.

When tragedy strikes, when uncertainty reigns, when sickness or injury prevails, when despair creeps up on us... when life gets tough. That's when we begin talking about hope. That is when we search for hope. Pretty much just when things are not going well or not going according to plan.

The problem with this view of hope is that it is very limiting and circumstantial. We know that when circumstances seem hopeless, that is when we turn to God. But is it possible that that is setting a dangerous precedent? Should we not be looking to God for our ultimate source of hope and provision every day, not just when we are down on our luck? Do we not need to have a hopeful countenance even when times are easy and life is good?

Fostering an everyday attitude of hopefulness—hope found not in earthly things, but in the joy that comes from our Living Savior—is an important spiritual discipline for the Christian believer. It should be evident to all that we come in contact with, and it should permeate our speech and actions. What does that mean exactly? How can we apply this to our lives, resulting in concrete action?

We can choose to not be glum or overly pessimistic when obstacles of different kinds pop up. We can choose to not complain about situations that are less than ideal. We can choose to be more positive and encouraging in the words that we use with and towards other people. We can be honest with others about our mistakes, our past regrets, our imperfections, and our current struggles... but simultaneously showing that we can still have peace and joy despite our sinfulness because God is actively at work redeeming all of those unpleasant parts of our past—and He is preparing for us a bright and shining future with Him in Heaven.

A strong argument can be made that the world needs to see hope now more than ever. And the global outbreak of coronavirus has certainly led to an increased push to circulate good news and uplifting stories. As the church, we ought to do our part. When the outside, secular world examines our lives—individually and collectively—they need to see a people that are rising above and choosing a hopeful posture. They need to see a people that have kept their joy intact because the Author of all Joys is still on the throne. We must not lose perspective. We must hold fast to the Biblical promises from God. If we cannot, in light of all the miraculous works God has attributed to His name, all the ways He has shown and proven himself faithful, how can anyone else hope... to find hope?

"Then came the morning that sealed the promise. Your buried body began to breathe. Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion declared the grave has no claim on me! Jesus, yours is the victory! Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free. Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me. You have broken every chain, there's salvation in Your name. Jesus Christ, my living hope!" *-Evan*

Music Ministry:

Gathering in Grace. I am so excited about us gathering together again! I cannot wait until we are singing in one accord, bringing Glory to our Heavenly Father! I

know that many of you are ready to storm the doors of the church, eager to see your church family, and to participate in worship in person together.

Along with the joy of knowing we will be together soon comes the knowledge that things will not look like they always have. Not being able to hug or shake hands! How hard this will be! And there will be other challenges. We must continue to show compassion and reach out to those who are unable to join us as of yet because they are at a higher risk. Those who are ready to return must show grace and understanding to those who are concerned about coming back so soon. Those who are waiting must not worry about or criticize those that return sooner. For a variety of reasons, not everyone is in the same place when it comes to re-opening, and that is okay! There is no set of Biblical instructions for dealing with a pandemic, and so we must each pray and consider what God would have us do, just as the leaders of our church have been praying and trusting the Spirit's leading over each step of re-opening and preparing to gather again safely.

What a wonderful opportunity we as the church have here to show the world we are Christians by our love for each other, even when there are differing opinions and perspectives regarding meeting together! Romans 14 has been heavy on my heart in the last few weeks, where Paul discusses the disunity found among the church regarding eating and drinking of certain foods. In reality, the entire chapter could be applied to our current situation, but certain verses stand out. "Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall... So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up." (v. 12-13, 19 NLT) As we prepare to return, we must pray and prepare to gather in grace towards one another, no matter what our perspective. God's glory must be evident between ourselves and to the world as we begin this next phase of a very unique year. *-Rebekah*