

Tower Times

A Newsletter of St. John's United Church of Christ

515 E. 3rd St. Dayton, OH 45402

April, 2021



Dear Friends,

Why are we here?

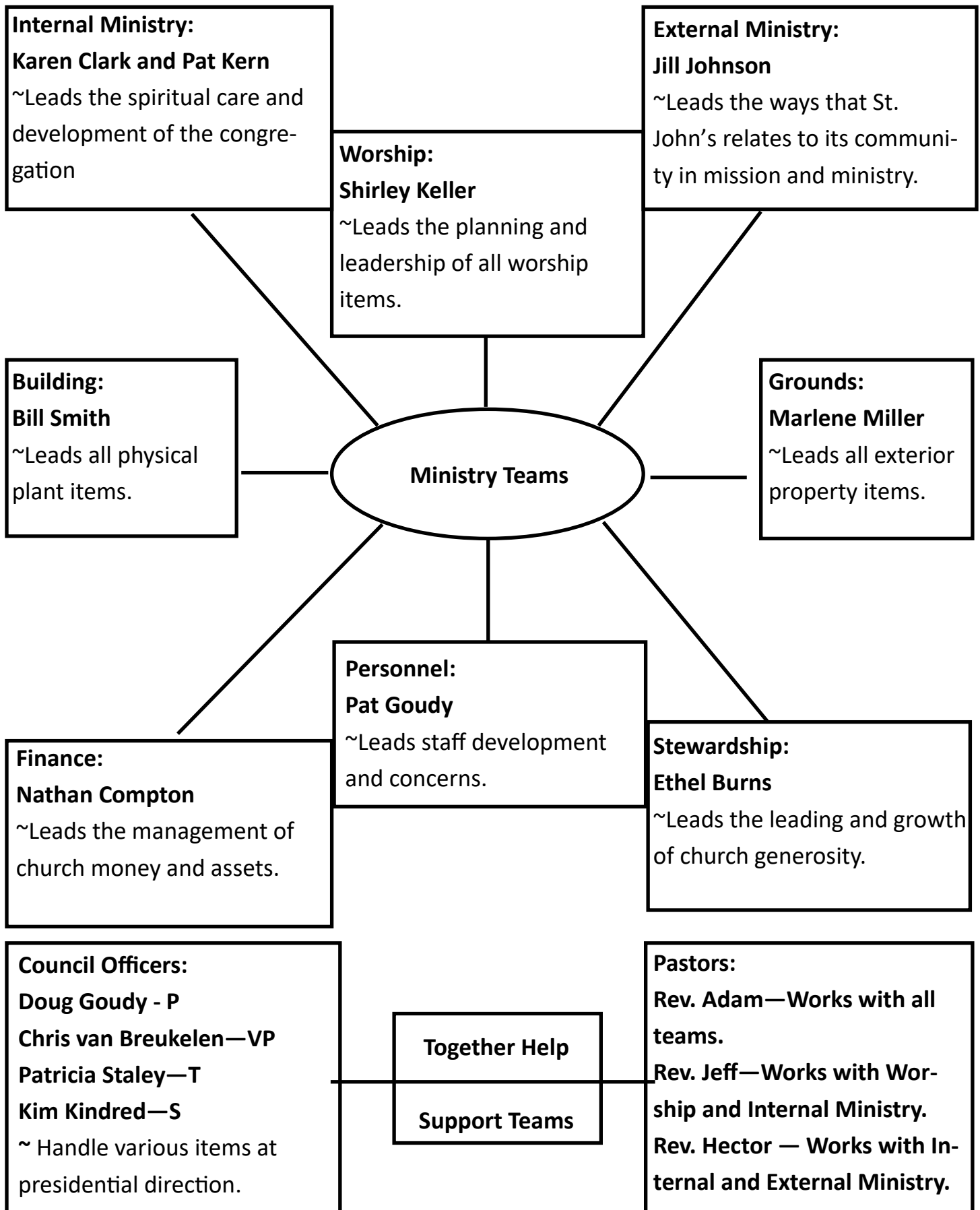
At the risk of sounding a bit like an introductory philosophy course, why are we all here? Specifically, why are we here at St. John's? What's the point of being here? Why do we call this place our spiritual home? Why do we invest our time, talent, and treasure in the work and worship of St. John's? Why do we show up —online and soon-to-be in person—on Sunday mornings?

I imagine that the answer to those questions differs for each and every one of you reading this. Each of us has things that we like, dislike, would change, or wouldn't change here at St. John's. Each of us has a unique perspective on what St. John's, as a church, means to them and what the point of church might be. It's okay to have and I personally welcome a lot of that diversity in opinion. All the same, as we prepare to move into Eastertide and move towards a grand re-opening at Pentecost, the question of "why church" is one I think we should be asking ourselves a bit more.

As a pastor, I don't think we come to church to see friends. Though, the community we share with one another is an important part of our spiritual life and growth. As a pastor, I don't think we come to church to keep up tradition or make our ancestors happy. Though, I think our history and our traditions have much to tell us about who we are and who we should become. As a pastor, I don't even think that we come to church to be happy. Though, I think finding joy in our journeys is an important part of what God wills for us. Instead, I think that the church is here to help us grow in the love of God and become more like Christ through the power of God's Holy Spirit.

You'll find more on this thought within this issue, but, as we prepare to re-assemble ourselves before too long, I invite you to begin asking yourselves the questions: "Why are we going to church? What does it mean to us? Are we going to church to grow? Or are we going to church for show?" While hard, these are good things for us to be asking as we approach a season of new life. ~Rev. Adam

As A Reminder: Who Does What Around Here ?!?!



Lofty Words

by Rev. Jeffrey Campbell, Minister of Worship

“The Lord is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!”

Those words joyously ring out as we celebrate Easter – The Resurrection of Our Lord – on Sunday, April 4. The death and resurrection of Jesus is at the center of our faith. Our life is about newness, restoration, and rescue! The Lord promises to go with us through everything we encounter, even and especially death.

Despite Covid, we shall rejoice together in spirit and love this year. We will trust and hope that soon we can worship and fellowship together in person. Until then we pray and tune in to the internet!

I think we have had a very good Lenten season this year. Our emphasis on growing our faith – our relationship with God and each other - has shown through in all our Lenten services and lessons. Trusting God, we will move into our future with confidence and resolve.

On Easter Sunday, we will sing the traditional Easter hymns of joy. “Alleluia” will return to our service. We will welcome back Lynn and Doug Norton for special music and our worship team will lead the praise and celebration. After being a part of our service on-line, you are invited to come and receive your Easter communion as we once again offer our drive-thru EuCARist from noon -1:00 pm. If you ordered Easter flowers you they can be delivered to your car at that time.

Easter lasts six weeks like Lent. We will continue the celebration each week until Pentecost. I vow to you, that I will endeavor to make our services lively and thoughtful throughout the Easter Season and beyond.

May our Risen Lord bless your days and may you find your peace, hope, and joy in Jesus!





Maundy Thursday: Special devotional with Rev. Adam: "Wait, This Is Holy Week?"

Good Friday: Stations of the Cross video with Rev. Jeffrey

Holy Saturday: "A Test of Silence!" We invite all to take a period of time to spend in silence as we contemplate the silence of the grave before Christ's resurrection.

Easter Morning: 10:30am Worship Celebration with music, Holy Communion, and more!

12pm –1pm: "Eu-CAR-Ist" in the church parking lot. Come receive communion from the pastors and pick up your Easter flower if you ordered one!

TOWER TIMES

Hello St. John's,

Warm greetings in the mighty of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I can't help but to thank God for the gift of science and technology that enable the experts to discover the vaccine against COVID-19. With the ongoing vaccination around the world, we are hoping and praying that anytime soon the COVID cases everyday will slow down and eventually turn to a non-pandemic level and bringing life back to normalcy.

Thinking we are now gaining momentum in our battle with the COVID-19 but apparently there are still so many things going around making our life difficult to get out from woods. The sky is glowing red again not from the sun but from the raw HATE of the unknown that continue to perpetuate the culture of violence in the world today. Recently, multiple of Asian-hate related incidents happened across the country and the tragic mass shooting incident in Colorado. These evil deeds continually calling us to PRAY FOR CHANGE. Truly, transformation is a huge challenge but we could make it happen through the grace and guidance of our Almighty God and let this process of change bathed in prayer every step along the way.

Lenten season is concluded with Easter Sunday which reminds us that we are God's people overcoming the power of death and evil through the resurrection power. This means that we are people engaging in the ministry of transformation fighting against all forms of evil in our society to make our world a better place to live in and may the love of God prevail over all these dark forces of evil here on earth.

"Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will also help you, I will also uphold you with My righteous right hand." Says the Lord our God.
(Isaiah 41:10 NASV)

Grace and peace,

Hector F. Guzman

Director of Family Life Ministries



April Tower Times - VP Report

ADD CHEER TO YOUR DAY:

I've had the pleasure of sharing the Church Service with several families that do not have internet. We begin at 10:00. We call it a "sound check".

Really, it's Fellowship Time BEFORE the service.

It's an opportunity to share time together.

At 10:25, we re-connect & get ready for the service to begin.

It's very simple. We have also done 3-way calls.

We make the initial call, then "gather around the speaker."

Those without internet are included in the service. I get my morning smile.

Rev. Adam said in his morning message, "Call someone, you've not spoken with for a while."

You may make their day! We spoke on the phone, long before we had computers & text messages.

FRI., MAY 14 & SAT., MAY 15

Relay for Life – VIRTUAL Cancer Walk

Looking for an excuse to start exercising?

Want to do something in honor or memory of someone?

Please ask me for more details.

Respectfully,

Chris van Breukelen, VP



Finance Update:

As we near the end of the first fiscal quarter, there are some things we'd like to point out for everyone's awareness.

We are falling behind on tithes and offerings! We started the year very strongly and even beat our January budget, but we've fallen off since! Right now, there are approximately 12-15 members who normally give to St. John's who've yet to give in 2021. Combined, that's a LOT of money! (We are approx \$4200 off budget for tithes and offerings right now.) Please, if you are a member in covenant with St. John's, honor your commitment to support the work we do with your tithes and offerings. If the pandemic has hit your pocketbook badly, we understand. Feel free to let us know, if you'd like, and we'll be glad to pray for you in your time of need! Church leadership wants to support you as you support us!

In better news, we DID qualify for a second round of PPP funds. These have helped us shore-up finances in light of lower offerings, no parking income, etc.

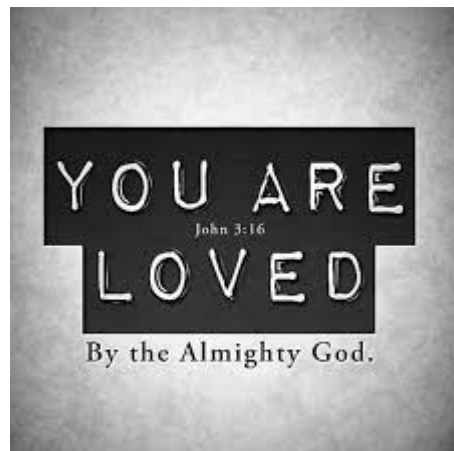
Finally, those who watch the service on Facebook can now give directly —through Facebook—to St. John's! When you start to watch one of our videos, FB will ask you if you'd "like to give with St. John's." It's a very easy process and we don't get charged processing fees, so we receive 100% of the money you give!



Internal Ministries FYI!

Internal Ministry is sending Easter cards to our members to keep in touch. If you are not on our mailing list, please contact the church office so we can add you! (Email: office@stjohnsuccdayton.org or Telephone: 937-224-1747.

Hopefully our next contact will take place in our beautiful church.



Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving

The St. John's Prayer Chain is here to lift to God your troubling concerns as well as rejoice in your blessings. Contact Dottie Norton (937 298-4876) with your requests, or Rev. Adam (937-532-9322) if Dottie is unavailable. The information you provide will remain confidential and can be as brief or in-depth as you choose. Dottie will then pass your requests or rejoicings onward to the prayer chain members. Members on our Prayer Chain are Ethel Burns, Karen Clark, Pat Goudy, Jill Johnson, Pat Kern, Ann Morrissey, Janet Neubauer, Dottie Norton, Anne Pepiot. If you'd like to join the chain, please let Dottie Norton know!



Worship Team

Holy Week is upon us. We have a couple of opportunities on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday to complete our Lenten journey as we look forward to the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ on Easter morning. The glory of Easter morning is represented in the Easter lilies that will be adorning our altar. The color of the lilly symbolizes the purity of Christ. The shape represents a trumpet sounding the message that Christ has risen and the way they grow represents the Resurrection.

If you ordered an Easter flower for our altar, I will be happy to make delivery or pick-up arrangements with you after Easter.

Lenten Practice

Have you wondered why our religious images have been covered with a purple cloth during this Lent? The old custom of veiling religious images is a way of focusing all attention on the Passion and death of Christ. It reminds us that our faith is made possible only through the work of Christ in his suffering and death of the cross.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley A. Keller



St. John's Grounds Team

Thanks to all who came out and helped with our Spring cleanup and preparation at St. John's!



GROUNDS
TEAM

St. John's United Church of Christ

Building Team

"It is not the beauty of a building you should look at; it is the construction of the foundation that will stand the test of time."-David Allan Coe

One of those good news/ bad news months.

First the good news. No major emergency maintenance repairs. Building Team worked this past month to continue efforts to "clean-up" and enhance space. At immediate moments there are no reasons for extra space, but they have become the recipients of whatever no one knew what else to do with it. Most of it has no purpose or value. So Good Will is getting a blessed set of bags soon.

The Defibrillator (AED) is here and in a very visible box for church safety. It is in the hallway on the first floor in between the Education Building and the sanctuary. It is charge and "live." In case of emergency a person needs to pull the white box open and remove the AED. Open the case over the AED and follow instructions. The instructions are noticeably clear and user friendly. The first instruction is to "call 9-1-1.

Anyone feeling the need to meet the emergency and use the AED should understand that because of the emergency, you are protected under the State Good Samaritan law. Follow instructions and save a life. If the person is not in a crisis and immediate heart issue, the AED will not discharge.

Carpet Cleaning Sanctuary May 3, 4 and 5.

The carpet cleaning has been scheduled for May 3, 4 and 5. The sanctuary, Narthex, altar, and choir loft are closed those dates. This service is a thorough cleaning and sanitizing for safety. Supporting this project with that Extra donation is appreciated. On you giving envelope please mark "Carpet cleaning" and the Building Team appreciates your support. That extend our repair budget.

Kitchen refrigerator seals replaced and cleaned. Floors have been cleaned both in main hall and kitchen. Obviously, no one have been using that area but there is continuing dust and need to maintain. The ESOL School will use the hall for their annual police workshop but that is four days and safety protocols will be enforced.

Bad News

The second-floor restrooms have decided that it is their turn to cause water problems. We have been attempting to determine the start point of a leak and damage. So far limited success. Korrekt Plumbing has been working with us for the past two weeks. We made progress each day but not final solution.

We have a couple ceiling tile water damage issues in the main office first floor. We have changed some plumbing parts that date to original 1964 and show damage and wear. We are continuing to find origin or cause of leak but have not made very satisfying progress. Those efforts are continuing.

Nothing would be good without the outstanding support of Wilfred van Breukelen, Brian Dunkle, Steve Boggs, Doug Goudy and Rev. Adam Wiring

Please remember we are facing some serious deferred maintenance with interior painting (especially second floor and sanctuary), upgrade of all restrooms for handicap access, brick and mortar work, maintenance of stain glass windows, maintenance of bells, maintenance of organ, pianos, and bells and the need for an elevator. Your continuing support is great appreciated.



Council Minutes

St. John's United Church of Christ

March 11, 2021

Present: Rev. Dr. Adam Wirrig, Douglas Goudy, Chris van Breukelen, Ethel Burns, Nathan Compton, Jill Johnson, Shirley Keller, Kim Kindred, Marlene Miller, Bill Smith, Patty Staley

January meeting called to order by President Doug Goudy at 5:59 p.m.

Prayer offered by Rev. Adam Wirrig.

February minutes approved with no changes.

Financial & Treasurer's Report

February 2021 Financials Summary

This Summary is a combination of comments from both myself (Patty Staley) and Rev. Wirrig. Given that we tag team the financial work in Realm and Reporting at the moment, it just makes sense. I hope to continue to provide these summaries from here on out in an attempt to simplify the Treasurer's Report presentation at Council.

February's financials are something of a mixed bag for us. On the one hand, we got a good amount of cash paid (ESOL and Sonka Rent), we also applied for and received our second PPP fund. This is helpful as we spent A LOT in February. Construction expenses (Mobility Plus \$6,156 wheelchair lift), insurances/inspections (\$3,887.78 Property Taxes), and utilities hit us hard this last month. Thankfully, insurances/inspections SHOULD be up to date and out of the way, utilities should go down significantly after this month, and we are inching ever nearer to the end of construction expenses. Payroll was a little out of tolerance for February, but that is largely due to an accounting issue that Rev. Wirrig is working with ACS/Realm over and should hopefully be fixed sooner than later. Also \$1,000 paid out was for Angels Cleaning to cover while Steve Boggs was out.

Otherwise, the only notable item was offerings (down \$1,882.08 vs budget). While we had a good amount given, for February at least, we are still not seeing some folks -including a couple of previously heavy givers- be consistent with their tithes. With the amount of deaths that we've endured in the last year, it is going to be more and more important to have folks be consistent with these offerings. We may want to think of putting something in the Tower Times that says as much. We HAVE been approved by Facebook for online giving -which drastically simplifies the giving process for those not registered in Realm- we brought in approx. \$70 in February via the Facebook online giving which includes nonmembers.

It will take time but we will continue to emphasize this new tool for giving.

For future note: March utilities, particularly Vectren, will be higher than we'd like thanks to the cold in Feb. Thankfully, we've seen it get LOTS worse than what the website notes it will be. Secondly, brace yourselves for the costs of salting and plowing. We had a bunch of snow and ice in February and we're going to have to pay the piper for that (approx. \$2,000). Also, there was a considerable RAMM expense for the older boiler in February. (\$1500) Building Team tells me that this should tide it over for a number of years, but, we will come to a time that we need to prepare for future replacement – possibly sooner rather than later.

Now we're down to the "Wishlist" expense items for the year. Worship has 1K in their budget to redesign/decorate the main floor before we go back to in-person worship. This is something that is, believe it or not, far more than just a cosmetic thing. They and Rev. Wirrig are working together to make things "experiential" for those who visit St. John's on Sunday morning. (i.e.: Every space should help lead into the mission and work of St. John's.) Right now, our spaces do nothing of this sort and it's really important for us to be on the ball with this for the future. Secondly, there are some Building Team wishlist items that are actually rather prudent; particularly having the front narthex and sanctuary carpets professionally cleaned along with the pew/altar pads. This is about \$1500. These items were discussed by the Finance Team and it is recommended to Council that these projects both be approved to move forward.

With the receipt of the PPP funds to cover payroll, we believe we can -and really need to- do both of these items. These are items that help with the presentation and engagement of the church and should pay off in the long run. And with the PPP funds it makes sense to get these done now rather than wait. PLEASE NOTE: While we do have the PPP Funds (and we are also hoping to receive another EIDL grant, amount yet unknown) as a buffer, they should not be considered as having the funds to spend carte blanche. We really do need to have each of the Teams put together their list of projects and projected costs to be submitted to the Finance Team for review and recommendation to Council on when funds are available and how projects will be funded. Expenditures should not be made without prior approval of the Finance Team, Treasurer and Council.

This is essential to move us from a spend like we have money (but we don't) to a spend only if the funds are available and to build reserves for emergency expenditures. If we don't seriously do this now, we will continue to use the remainder of the funds in the Endowment and Memorial (Vanguard and JPMorgan) to the point of having nothing to fall back on to keep us going.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Staley, Treasurer and Rev. Adam Wirrig

[Technical Delay]

Patty Staley made a motion to approve the expenditures to move forward in completing the first floor redo, carpet cleaning in the front narthex and the pads in the sanctuary at a total of \$1578. Jill Johnson seconded. Motion passed by vote of the church council. Bill Smith made a motion to approve the financial report as presented. Chris van Breukelen seconded. Motion passed by vote of the church council.

Old Business

Free Little Pantry

Jill Johnson shared that Marlene Miller had DP&L mark the power line area and we have a permit#. Bill Smith reminded everyone that there must be a 10ft clearance away from the building to the east to allow easy access for the width of a crane for any possible future projects.

Items for the Good of the Order:

Chris Van Breukelen shared that she has a matched grant with WDPR on Monday. In the past we always used it in the honor of St. John's UCC. Would we like for her to do that again this year? The committee agreed to put it in honor of St. Johns.

Committee Reports Received

VP Chris Van Breukelen, Financial Committee and Internal Ministry submitted written reports this month.

Calendar:

Council Reports Deadline: April 5, 2020

Next Council Meeting: April 8, 2020

Tower Times Deadline: April 23, 2020

Adjournment: Patty Staley made a motion that the meeting be adjourned which was seconded by Jill Johnson.

Closing: Council meeting was closed at 6:30pm due to technical difficulties.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Kindred, Council Secretary

Next meeting is Thursday April 8th at 6:00 PM.

Your church's purpose is not to make you happy

OPINION MARK TIDSWORTH | NOVEMBER 30, 2020




Your church's purpose is not to make you happy. Your church's purpose is to help you become like Jesus.

Expect the former and live disappointed. Expect the latter and live with deep satisfaction and significance.

This conversation has happened enough times to be thematic at this point. Nearly every coaching group the last two weeks started with a statement/question something like this: "I got wind of another one this week ... another one threatening to leave our church because (insert an issue here that blames the pastor and/or church). Anyone else seeing an uptick in angry people in your congregation?"

Heads nod around the Zoom room, and the conversation starts.

Going with the popular advice, "See something, say something," I feel the need to broaden this conversation. Lay leaders, clergy and church staff are keenly aware of this issue; they are struggling to manage themselves and the church in this outrage culture. I was hoping that after the election, angry projections onto churches would

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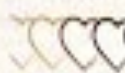
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The strange saga of the Riley Foundation lawsuit now forces SBC to figure out who has the right to remove a seminary trustee

NEWS



What if we cared about Black History Month as much as Lent?

OPINION

<https://baptistnews.com/article/view/your-churches-purpose-is-not-to-make-you-happy>

recede, but my field notes tell me I was mistaken, at least to date.

At the root of this problem are two key insights that make all the difference. They are about our ecclesiology, the way we understand God's church. When we get these straight, accept them as guidance for our church experience, so many dilemmas and imagined concerns melt away. When we misunderstand or misappropriate these two insights, our church experience goes off the rails, leading to great frustration and angst.

First, your church's purpose is not to make you happy.

This sounds so simple that it runs the risk of being simplistic. This appears so obvious that it's a waste of ink. Yet, in our misunderstanding of church purpose, we live as if this is the guiding light for interpreting our church experience. Since so many of us expect our churches to make us happy, allow me to speak directly to followers of Jesus:

- Your church is not the source of your frustration with life.
- Your church is not to blame for your political frustrations.
- Your church is not selling out to the government by insisting on safe COVID protocols.
- Your church is not out to get you and make your life miserable.
- Your church leaders are not likely trying to tear your church apart.
- Your pastor is not likely trying to make a political statement in every line of every sermon.
- Your church and pastor cannot make everything OK for you.
- Your church and pastor cannot resolve your anger, frustration and ongoing chronic stress.
- Your church and pastor are not God, and their role is not to make you happy.



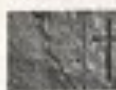
Mark Tidsworth

"Your church is not out to get you and make your life miserable."



How much wealth does America need before we'll address homelessness?

OPINION



LGBTQ inclusion and clergy sexual abuse treated equally in SBC expulsions

NEWS

CURATED



Ravi Zacharias's Denomination Revokes Ordination



Disinformation Fuels A White Evangelical Movement. It Led

1 Virginia Pastor To Quit



Southern Baptists divided over politics, race, LGBTQ policy



Rush Limbaugh, who shaped conservative Christian politics

on the radio, has died

Deep down, we know our churches are not the source of our unhappiness. It's just that our churches and their leadership are such convenient whipping posts, people and organizations can project our unhappiness onto expecting they will willingly accept it as part of their role. Well, it's not their role, and they shouldn't accept it. Your church's purpose is not to make you happy nor to accept your anger about that fact without pushing back.

Second, your church's purpose is to help you become like Jesus.

Again, at the risk of appearing simplistic, the need to state the obvious is driving me on. This is what we can and should expect from our churches and their leadership. Our pastors, church staff and lay leaders are called to constantly, consistently and unequivocally call us toward transformation. When we are greater reflections of Jesus as a result of participating with our churches, then our churches are succeeding in achieving their purpose. When we reflect the way of Jesus less than we did before, perhaps we are failing at being church together.

When we know, believe and accept the church's purpose, then we are not resentful toward our churches when we are challenged. When the issue of racism appears in a sermon, we recognize that our faith calls us to love others. When the COVID restrictions our church practices grind on our nerves, we recognize we are being called to love our neighbors. When our church leadership doesn't overtly support our political views with the power of their positions, we recognize the gospel transcends partisan politics.

In summary, when we recognize the purpose of church is to transform us into greater reflections of Jesus, we are not offended by being challenged. We expect to be challenged, recognizing we will not grow into God's hopes and dreams without letting go of our former selves for the new emerging selves who are more centered in Christ.

Even more, when we believe this way, we drop our expectations that our

"When we recognize the purpose of church is to transform us into greater reflections of Jesus, we are not offended

church's purpose is to make us happy, freeing ourselves from illusions and entering into more robust faith experience. May God help us, and may we help each other get these two insights straight about church purpose.

**by being
challenged.”**

Your church's purpose is not to make you happy. Your church's purpose is to help you become like Jesus.

Expect the former and live disappointed. Expect the latter and live with deep satisfaction and significance.

Mark Tidsworth is founder and team leader for Pinnacle Leadership Associates. He has served as a pastor, new church developer, interim pastor, renewal pastor, therapist, nonprofit director, business owner, leadership coach, congregational consultant, leadership trainer and author. Ordained in the Baptist tradition, Mark is an ecumenical Christian minister based in Chapin, S.C.

OPINION: VIEWS EXPRESSED IN BAPTIST NEWS GLOBAL COLUMNS AND COMMENTARIES ARE SOLELY THOSE OF THE AUTHORS.

TAGS: Church Conflict · purpose · Church Leadership · Mark Tidsworth

MORE BY

MARK TIDSWORTH »

April Birthdays!

6th Heather Sturgill

8th Chere Hile

14th Susan Kolze

23rd Dave Abbott

23rd Jillian Carroll

24th Doug Goudy



Want to have an item in an upcoming issue of Tower Times? (Birthday, article, announcement, etc?) Send us an email at office@stjohnsuccdayton.org or call us at 937-224-1747!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

May 23rd, 2021

10:30am



Provided the pandemic continues to decline, we plan to have a grand “re-opening” service on Pentecost Sunday! We’re planning to celebrate the birthday of Christ’s Church by re-launching St. John’s in-person worship with some faith, fun, and fellowship! Mark your calendars and watch for more information in next month’s Tower Times!