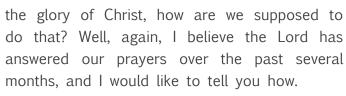


"Equipping the Saints"

Pastor's Letter

Several months ago, I asked for you to join me in prayer for the direction of the church. What we needed was greater clarity from the Lord for how we might implement our vision for the Kirk. With our vision being the equipping of the saints for the work of service for



In part, our answer came through our most recent sermon series entitled, "Where Are We Going?" During that series, we heard teaching on how our Lord has commanded and called us to be a church given to four main areas: (1) ever delighting ourselves in the Lord, (2) connecting with one another, (3) growing in our sanctification, and (4) multiplying by investing our lives in others. These four main areas provided for us more than a general

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framework of the Christian life, but a direction for us as a church for the implementation of our vision. How so?

Running through the four main areas, how may we even speak about equipping if we are not like that tree planted by streams of living water, delighting ourselves in all that He offers of Himself in His word? We must be delighting ourselves first in Him. Moreover, how may we seek to join together in the work of service of the saints if we do not know the saints... (continued on next page)

personally nor are we spending time regularly with them? We must be connected to them. Further, how are we even to speak of ourselves being the saints if we are not growing spiritually in our own sanctification? Nor may we consider ourselves committed to the vision of equipping the saints for the glory of Christ if we are not seeking to make disciples for Him among the nations! No, in all of our vision we must always be delighting, connecting, growing, and multiplying. So, in part, I see our prayers being answered through this understanding of direction.

At the same time, I also see our prayers being answered in some new initiatives our Session has enacted. You may have caught wind of some of them already, but let me officially announce them to you. First, we are overhauling and expanding our adult Sunday School class program with the goal of having more than 80% of our congregation participating regularly. We have too much to gain in terms of fellowship, equipment, and growing in our own delight not to want to maximize this ministry. To learn more, see Philip's Sunday School article (page 9).

Second, you may have already noticed the enhancement of our music ministry. I am going to let Ty Donaldson talk more about this in his article, but we have asked Ty to aid us in the incorporation of the musical gifts within our congregation for the greater accompaniment of our corporate singing. See Ty's article for more (next page).

Third, we have relaunched a pastoral internship program. Some of you will remember how from the early days as a church, we were blessed with pretty amazing young men who were aspiring to be pastors. We could name Bernie van Eyke, Kevin Collins, and Marc Herrington among the few that have served.

These men not only gleaned for themselves valuable lessons for future ministry, but they also greatly aided us in our present ministry by teaching, leading in worship, and ministering to the saints. The Session believes that it is time to reinitiate this program for those same reasons and also to reach out to even more people.

To this end, we have already taken on Dan Opazo as a pastoral intern who is reaching out to the military. In addition to the thousands of soldiers nearby at the base, and the stupefying fact that the military has a paid apprenticeship program in place to assist in training for ministry, we see and appreciate the calling Dan is sensing to ministry. We would also see the potential of adding another pastoral intern who could assist us with the ministry to our young adults, be it our Campus & Career and/or even a new Young Couples ministry. We plan to offer and renew these internships annually on an individual basis.

With all this in mind, it is hard not to see the Lord providing the clarity on the direction we have for our church! And yet, it is this last initiative with which I would like to leave you. As several of these initiatives will require special resources, this last one will especially need the Lord's providential care, not only in terms of finances but the right personnel, the spacing, and the blessing of their labors. So, I would ask again, would you all join with me in prayer? I am asking the Lord to raise up for us likeminded men who sense a call to ministry, for more than fifty thousand dollars to offset a portion of their part-time work, and for housing for a new intern starting in January. Would you all join with me in those prayers? �



Our church exists "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). The use of our gifts is one of the ways we are equipped and in turn are able to equip others. Specifically, we are going to talk about the use of musical gifts. Our leaders seek to equip by encouraging liberality in the use of the gifts of our church's members. We should then have music in our church that encourages the use of those gifts God has given our church, and employ them for the praise and glory of God within our services. The employment of those gifts should be done in a way that is instrumentally beautiful, vocally stirring, and presented in a way that arouses the praise of our congregation to our great God. I'd like to frame out how we as a church could use music to exemplify all four aspects of our church's vision.

Delight: Have you ever wondered why God has given the church gifts? More directly, have you ever thought about why God has specifically given you the gifts you have? We are able to delight more in Christ by the use of the gifts he has given and inversely we are able to grow in the use of those gifts as we delight more in him. God has given to his church gifts so that He might be glorified in our worship.

Connect: You are probably thinking, "I don't have musical gifts. I can't carry a tune in a bucket, and I couldn't read music if my life depended on it! This article is not for me. Next!" Do not turn the page just yet, because you'll miss how it "connects" with you...See what I did there? One of the most amazing parts of joining together in song as we worship together, is that we have the ability to sing out with one unified voice.

I recently attended a large church with a contemporary style of music complete with a dark sanctuary, lights, smoke, and speakers all around that drown out the voices of the congregation. I had a conversation with someone in that church about how we sing together on Wednesday nights in our small groups. They were mortified! They were not used to hearing each other's voices being raised together in song to God. That was a scary thought to them. I'm so thankful our church has a fellowship and connection as we sing loud and confidently to God when we gather to worship.

Grow: I often think of the ministry of John Newton to William Cowper. Newton saw that Cowper had a gift to bring to the edification and equipping of the church through song writing. Cowper's songs were not only a balm to his own perpetual melancholic state, but have also been sung as anthems in Christ's church for centuries. This type of creativity should be encouraged in church members. There are few greater pieces of equipment for the growth of God's people than the song that is brought forth from the soul of a broken and contrite heart. To use the words of Cowper, "The bud may have a bitter taste, sweet will be the flower."

Multiply: The final layer is through the ability to play and... (continued on page 7)

4

Military Ministry

BY DAN OPAZO

As the Session discussed multiplication and growth, one of the exciting initiatives they felt led to pursue was outreach to the military. Our church has historically had connections to the military bases in the Savannah area. We have longed prayed for an opportunity to pursue military members and families. The military

outreach initiative is also connected to the internship initiative that Pete discussed previously. A major part of my internship is to minister to the military members and families

stationed in Savannah. The primary means of outreach are two Bible studies on base. The first has 12 soldiers who regularly attend a Friday Bible study. The second is a recently opened door to start a post-wide Bible study at the chapel on base. The Garrison Chaplain is very supportive of a new Bible study and an added blessing is the military will provide a

We are praying for the Lord to continue to open more opportunities through one-on-one meetings, more Bible studies, and hospitality to pursue those whom the Lord may be calling to himself. Having a person whose primary task is to minister to the military members and their families is a wonderful opportunity we previously did not have the

free lunch to those who attend!

resources to pursue. I am thankful for this opportunity and delighted that the Session has a burden for the military.

This new initiative not only reaches out but in as we have lots of military families at the Kirk. We have just started making care packages for our church members who are currently deployed. If you would like to learn how to help serve this new ministry, please contact me.



Finally, continue to pray for the hearts of soldiers to be open to receiving the gospel. Pray for the Bible Studies that meet twice a week. Pray for the families in the Kirk who currently have husbands and fathers deployed. This, as all ministries, is dependent most on the prayers of the Saints. ❖



2023 Fall

Deacons Report

BY GREG STEWART

The Lord has so blessed the Kirk over the years (and especially in the last several years) to provide many ways to grow, expand and deepen our ministry at the Kirk. For the first time in the Kirk's history, we occupy a property of our own and have paid down our mortgage debt completely. We have renovated three buildings, replaced our sanctuary's HVAC system and have commissioned professionally drawn plans for another future expansion. We have expanded our ministry by adding a fulltime assistant pastor and several part-time positions. We have expanded our commitment to support missions at home and abroad. We've made strides in expanding our ministry to our children and youth by promoting various youth events and building a playground.

These are all examples of great blessings that the Lord has provided for our church. All of these opportunities the Lord has given us came with substantial financial costs - all of those costs were beyond our normal annual budget. But our Lord, in His goodness, has been faithful to not only meet those financial needs, but to exceed them far beyond any expectations we may have had. We look to the Lord to continue to provide for us and to continue to guide us by His provision.

Knowing that the Lord provides for us far more abundantly than we could hope, we look in faith to Him to continue to provide for our church abundantly, and we want to please Him by using and multiplying the gifts He gives us, not simply burying them to keep them safe. This means that we need to be prepared to not only plan for how we will spend the ordinary monthly operating expenses of the

Kirk to the glory of God, but also how we may be able to put the financial gifts that are beyond the limits of our typical annual budget to work for the glory of God.

To this end, the Diaconate proposes to establish a document that will supplement our annual operating budget. This document will record current opportunities that the officers of the Church (Session and Diaconate) are tracking as priorities for spending beyond the limits of our stated annual budget. It is a simple list of known approaching financial needs as well as spending opportunities that the officers of the church believe that the Lord is leading us to invest finances in to expand our ministry. Each item on this list will also include an estimated associated cost. The list will also include a priority ranking for each item on the list. The purpose of these priority rankings is not to preclude any spending toward any of the lower-ranked items on the list, but rather, is to keep before us any longterm financial plans that we may have, so that they will not be neglected.

The intention of this list is that it would be a "living document." In other words, while we would not want to reprioritize the list so easily and so often that its purpose is circumvented, we recognize that priorities change with time and circumstances, and we would not want to be so rigid in keeping to the list the we miss opportunities to faithfully invest as things develop. We hold to our plans loosely, knowing that we: "do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that" and that, "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the... (continued on page 8) 2023 Fall



BY LINDA BREEN

One of the ways we want you to connect with the Missions Committee is by understanding how we select missionaries to support. The Missions Committee, reporting to the Session, meets regularly to review current missions, support local ministries, and connect their activities with the Kirk congregation.

When presented with the responsibility of recommending allocation of the church's time and money to a new mission, we begin with prayer for wisdom and discernment. The committee has adopted an acronym of criteria to be met for consideration of a mission:

- · Work of the Mission
- · Accountability of the Mission
- Like-mindedness (theologically)
- Kinship (known by our church)

This has proven very helpful in the decision to pursue or decline early in the process. If we decide to become acquainted with the mission, we set up a phone conversation (a "first date" if you will) with committee members and the applicant. After that an invitation is extended for a visit to The Kirk. This can include Sunday School and/or Grillin' on the Grounds presentations and time of fellowship. We support their travel expenses and accommodations for the person or family while here. Finally, the committee members meet to prayerfully discuss whether the mission or ministry truly fits our WALK measurement and

whether they are a good fit for the church as a whole.

The recommendations of the committee, for commitment of time, expenses and adopting of new missions are reviewed with the Session for approval. We encourage your prayers and involvement with our missionaries. This may be a way you can grow in your faith by supporting one of our missionaries. During his recent visit, Jonah challenged us to connect. Pick a missionary or see a missionary letter that touches you. Send an email, ask a question, encourage them, let them know you are praying for them.

Your missions committee members: Dan & Linda Breen, Doug & Cyndi Mullins, John Nichols, Philip Ryan, David Sage, and Daniel Spidle. Until next time, keep praying! �

Music Matters

(CONTINUED FROM PG. 3)

practice together. It is an act of fellowship as we become more connected to those with whom we sing and play. It is a form of teamwork as we learn a song with one another which is synonymous with the way we are able to work together in our sanctification - edifying and building each other up. It is a practical arm of discipleship as we learn, teach, and worship together. The greatest gifts God has given us are each other. Thus, it is a great act of worship to use the gifts He has given us individually to aid others in their sanctification.

If you have musical gifts or think you would like to find out if you do - reach out to either me or Chris Sather! ❖

Pastor Pete's recent sermons on the subjects of Delight, Connect, and Grow have touched my heart and I hope yours also. Our ladies ministries provide multiple opportunities to do all of these, but I want to emphasize "Connect" in this article.

Our fall ladies Bible study started on August 29th with

meetings at 10 am and 7:00 pm. The morning class is led by Kate Dyer, Audrey Gillies, and Leigh Gardner. A huge welcome to Leigh for joining our teaching team. The evening study is led by Wendy Nichols. We use a study written by Nancy Guthrie, *Blessed*, which is a study of Revelation. Perhaps your reaction is, "YIKES... I've never understood Revelation!" So ladies, here is your opportunity to understand at the very least, the central message of this book. As Nancy says, "We need to see this world and our lives in this world, through the perspective of heaven." Please "connect" by joining us for this twelve-week study.

Deacons Reports

(CONTINUED FROM PG. 5)

purpose of the LORD that will stand." We see this list as an important tool to supplement our annual budget and believe that it will 1) help direct us to be more specific as we pray for the future of our church, 2) help maintain unity among the officers of the church by helping us focus collectively on our goals, and 3) help us to identify opportunities for directed giving in the future. ❖



BY KATE DYER

Of course, in October, we look forward to our Fall Festival which is always a hit! The Fall Festival is scheduled for Saturday, October 28th from 4-7PM. Once again, Lauren Sather has graciously agreed to orchestrate this event. Let's jump in and help her with this.

Finally, in December, WIK (Women In the Kirk) will host our Christmas Luncheon. This is scheduled for December 9th from 11:00-1:00 pm. Please plan to join us for this annual event and mix and mingle with our wonderful ladies.

These fellowship opportunities are essential to the growth and connection of our women's ministry. By gathering in Bible study, at social events, and at the Christmas luncheon, we are not just socializing but doing life together. How will we be able to connect during the difficult times of life if we cannot connect in the ordinary moments of life? When Luke records the rhythm of the early Christians he says, "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). Notice that part of the rhythm was to "fellowship." They delighted in being with one another. Let us commit to grow together in connecting and delighting in our fellowship with one another and the Lord. &

FALL 2023



An Update on Our Groups

BY PHILIP RYAN

One of the areas we want to connect as a congregation is our Small Group ministries. When Pete preached his sermon on "connecting," he provided a handout listing all of our Small Groups with where they meet and who to contact about joining one. If you want to find out how to locate a Small Group, you can easily find them in our app. Go to Messages at the top, then Discover, and search for Small Groups. You can also reach out to me for more information on how to get connected with a Small Group.

Pete presented many new initiatives from the Session. One of them is an overhaul and expansion of our adult Sunday school class. Our goal is to have 80% of our congregation participation. We have already started new classes: the Marriage Class and the Campus & Career Class, and our discussing starting another class. These changes are more than just starting new classes, we are changing how the classes are taught. Beginning in January, we will have a roster of classes available from which each Sunday school can select what they want to learn for the next month. The Sunday school teacher will then be invited to teach for that month and then the class can

select another teacher after that. We believe this will provide variety for the classes as well has help the teachers. The teachers will be able to present on a subject they are passionate about and have done a lot of work in creating. These

classes will vary in their content as well. Some will still be more lecture based but others will led discussions

You might be wondering why Sunday school was selected as a "new initiative" when we already do it? The Session believes that one of our best opportunities for discipleship is through Sunday school. If we are committed to sanctifying the Lord's Day, Sunday school is another opportunity for us to avail ourselves of the means of grace through word and fellowship. We want as many opportunities as possible for us to be in the Word or learning theology or being equipped with how to live the Christian life. Sunday school can cover all of those topics and more. Further, changing the way we structure the classes and teachers will create more opportunities for us to connect with one another. We will increase the amount of classes while the size of each may decrease. This will allow the people in the classes to get to know one another better.

This new Sunday school initiative will only be accomplished through prayer. Would you join with me in praying for more teachers, classroom space, finances, and even another intern who could assist with teaching and leading a class. �

10 KIRK QUARTERLY



How to Grow Spiritually

BY PHILIP RYAN

What were the first churches like? Where did they meet? How did they worship? One of the great Puritans, Thomas Manton, wrote, "The families of the Patriarchs were all the churches God had in the world for the time." You may be confused because surely the Church is something we find in the New Testament not in the Old. However, the Reformed have always viewed the church as being from the beginning. The Heidelberg Catechism puts it this way in Q&A 54: "Q. What do you believe concerning 'the holy catholic church'? A. I believe that the Son of God, through his Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a community chosen for eternal life and united in true faith. And of this community I am and always will be a living member." Now this is referring to the invisible church brought together by election, but it still captures the truth that God has always had a specific people through whom he has worked out his redemptive mission in the world.

Family Worship provides an opportunity for fathers and mothers to fulfill a biblical command to raise their children in the "discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Paul places this command specifically on fathers, but mothers are not only beneficiaries

of this worship, but it will not happen unless both are agreed in its importance and usefulness. You may read the passage from Ephesians and say, "I do this all the time. We regular discuss the Christian faith with our kids." Wonderful, I am glad you do. I would suggest that while that is helpful more may be done to equip our children with instruction in our faith. We see intentional instruction in the account of the first Passover. The Lord has already instructed Moses on how to prepare the meal and the significance of what is about to happen. He then turns his attention to the instruction of Israel's children, "And when your children say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?' you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes." And the people bowed low and worshiped" (Ex. 12:26-27). See how the Lord provides the anticipated question, "What does this rite mean to you?" and the answer, "It is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord..." This is called catechesis, or oral instruction, based on questions and answers.

What are the benefits to doing family worship? First, it strengthens spiritual life. Daily reading the Bible, praying, and singing together can be a wonderful means of grace to the daily grind of life. It further reinforces your family identity as Christian. Your kids will see that being a Christian is not something for Sundays only but everyday. It is who you are even when no one else is around. Second, it strengthens your family life. Many young families feel the pressures of children activities, church, work, and family responsibilities. Family worship shows the importance of coming together as a family. It should be an opportunity to rest... (continued on next page)

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and be refreshed. It provides opportunities for the family to connect and encourage one another in prayer and the word.

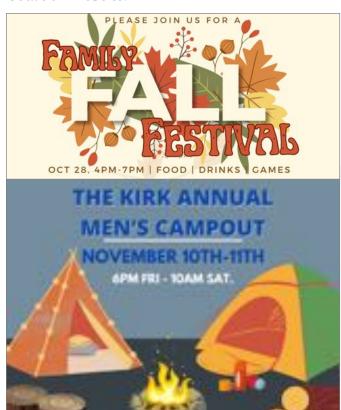
Third, it is proactively instructive. The practice of catechesis is not very popular these days. Instructing your children in our Reformed faith may seem odd to you. However, they are being catechized all the time. Those outside the church have an agenda, ideas, philosophies that all seek to instruct and form you and your children. Formally training them with attention to the deep riches of our theology, will equip them to be good thinkers, know what they believe, and the ability to engage with others with opposing worldviews.

Finally, family worship is evangelistic. Our Westminster Confession of Faith speaks to the timing of baptism and salvation, "The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered" (WCF 28.6). Our covenant children have received the sign of the new covenant even as we wait for the Lord to work in their hearts. Daily family worship provides ample opportunities for your children to be evangelized. You cannot read through a gospel and not have your children ask about sin, grace, salvation, the atonement, and the resurrection. If you wish your children to hear the gospel, what better way to make sure they hear it then sharing it with them every evening at the dinner table or living room couch?

The biggest objections to family worship are usually practical: when, where, what, and how? Let us look at "when" first. The simple answer is whenever is best for the family. We have several homeschool families at the Kirk. They often might find it easier to do in the morning. For others it will have to be in the

evening. The next question is "Where?" Again, wherever it is best for your family.

I shared in Sunday School that we do not do family worship in the living room. We've tried a few times and every time it is a disaster. We do family worship immediately following dinner at the kitchen table. We remove all the plates, wipe down the table, and take out our Bibles, hymnal, and memory verses. As for the "what" of family worship, I would recommend, if you have never done this before, to start in a gospel preferably Mark. Mark is short and punchy. Finally, you want to know how to bring this altogether. I recommend the following format for family worship: read the Bible, catechesis and/or memory verses, sing a hymn or psalm, and close with prayer. I also encourage you to check out a great article by Jason Helopoulos titled "Worship with Your Family in 5, 15, or 30 Minutes." You can find it on the Gospel Coalition website. *





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