

January—March, 2018



THE MESSENGER

Dear Friends,

“We want to grow!” That’s a phrase that is heard around many, perhaps most churches. There is no surprise in that, after all I don’t think there are many churches that are intentionally trying to get smaller! I wonder, however, if we have really taken the time to think about the “what” and the “why” of church growth. So I’d like to take a moment or two and unpack these ideas a bit.

First, the “why.” Why do we want to grow? Sadly, in many churches, the answer has to do with numbers. In other words the thinking goes something like this: “We are running out of people and money so we had better do something before it’s too late.” The problem with this thinking is that it is too pragmatic, it lacks a spiritual component. While this kind of thinking might be fine for a club or social organization, it’s not for the church. The why behind church growth must rest on our desire to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the world. In other words, we have a message so wonderful that we want others to hear that message.

That still leaves the question however of “what.” What do we mean when we talk about a church growing? I think the answer lies in the idea of growing “deep” and “wide.” By deep I mean that if we want to grow then we must place a strong emphasis on spiritual growth. We must be growing deeper in our walk with God each and every day and we must make that a priority in our individual lives and in our life together as the Body of Christ.

By wide I mean the welcoming of new members through the sharing of the good news. Again, this is not numbers for numbers sake, but rather the reaching out and welcoming of a broad range of people - people who are hungry to hear some good news for a change, inviting them in, and making them a part of our fellowship.

Is this easy? In a word “no.” To do this we must examine all our actions to see if they are working to facilitate this growth. By actions I mean everything from decisions of the Session and Committees, to individual decisions we make, conversations we have, and so forth. We must ask if these actions are serving the goal of building up the Body of Christ or are they tearing it down? Are our actions helping to grow the church or reduce it?

A simple way to put this is the following question: Will this action help our church to grow deep and wide? You will be hearing more about this question in the coming weeks and months. Also you may have noticed that there are already a couple of signs posted around the church with this question. I want to keep this question front and center for our congregation as we look toward the future God has prepared for us, and I believe that it will help us to more clearly discern that future.

In closing, please allow me to take a moment and thank all of you for your Christmas gift to me and my family. I was very deeply touched by your generosity and the love you demonstrated through this gift. I hope that we will have many more holiday seasons together!

Yours in Christ,

John Pruitt

CHURCH INFORMATION

First Presbyterian Church
611 Oakhurst Street
Kernersville, NC 27284

Office: (336) 993-7358
Fax: (336) 993-5526
www.fpckernersville.org

Rev. John Pruitt
Minister

Mrs. Amy Evans
Director of Christian Education

Ms. Jane Johnson
Church Secretary

Services:

The Gathering — 6:00 p.m.
(2nd Wednesday each month)

Café Faith — 9:00 a.m.
(Sundays September — May)

Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m.



Birthdays

January

1 Jean Nitkin
1 LeRoy (Skip) Smith
6 Barb Hall
8 Lucille Dillon
24 Bradin Routh
29 Jeanne Murray
30 Betty Norman

February

1 Jean Nitkin
1 LeRoy (Skip) Smith
6 Barb Hall
8 Lucille Dillon
24 Bradin Routh
29 Jeanne Murray
30 Betty Norman

March

5 Bernie Krecklow
9 Kay Sudderth
12 Paige Evans
13 Jim Nicholson
14 Ginger Clark
14 Becky Collins
28 Faye Hodges
30 Hamp Langdon

If your birthday is missing or incorrect, please contact the church office. Thank you.

Anniversaries

January

16 George & Jeanne
Murray
19 Floyd & Konnie Conrad
22 Kerry & Ruth Kerr
30 Scott & Lynne Forrest

February

Nothing on file

March

2 Norman & Lynda Self
3 Andy & Faye Hodges

If your anniversary is missing or incorrect, please contact the church office. Thank you.

First Presbyterian Church Session Members

Class of 2018

Nancy Bolen
Bernie Krecklow

Class of 2019

Lorna Foster
Lynda Self

Class of 2020

Sam Henderson
Rich Tincher

Growing Together in Faith

As 2017 has drawn to a close, I hope each of you had time between decorating, shopping, wrapping gifts, traveling, holiday gatherings, and on and on, to spend some time reflecting on the real reason for this celebration – the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and how much that birth, some 2000 years ago has meant, and continues to mean, to each of us today. The fact that He loved us so much to experience all that we go through, and to sacrifice Himself for our sins, still brings wonder and humble gratitude to me each day. And as we look forward to 2018, we look to expand what continues to go right with

our church, and where we believe we can grow and improve.

Our monthly Gathering continues to celebrate Christ's message through different individuals and the journey they share. We pray this ministry will continue to grow and prosper and the attendance will continue to rise with invitations to neighbors, both by word of mouth or by social media communication. Feel the monthly fellowship opportunity we have following the message has also brought our congregation closer with great conversations around each table.

Our Sunday morning education hour attendance has increased, but we desire to see even more growth. If we outgrow the space, we can always hold class in the Fellowship Hall, but the more people we have, the more viewpoints that can be shared, and the more our hearts and minds can be expanded.

Our annual Mission trip is on its 10th consecutive year. This group continues to invite others on our journey and to share all the blessings Christ continues to share with us. It has grown into an intergenerational group in that most of the participants are over the age of 18. Plans are in motion for where Christ is leading us this year.

I look forward to working with the Egg ministry in their 28th year. We hope to continue to grow our volunteer base from outside our congregation to participate and share in service to our community and in deepening relationships beyond our walls. Hopefully this will encourage visitors to come on Sundays as well.

We will be unveiling new programs and ministries in 2018 to help both the community and those who worship at First Presbyterian. Programs such as Pennies for Hunger, the Blessings Box and Dollar Mission Fund each will help feed recipients both spiritually and physically.

Most of all, we want our congregation to grow - to grow spiritually, to grow in learning more about the relationship we each have with Christ, in desire to assist with outreach and missions and to grow in the desire to share God's word and love. When we devote ourselves to the journey God calls us on, the growth in numbers at First Presbyterian will occur as well. A church filled with diversity of age, race and knowledge. It will take ALL of us, not just Rev. Pruitt, to represent what our church stands for, outside the church walls, to make us a destination for those looking for a church home, to have a closer relationship with Christ. I know what we mean to each other, so now let's show it to the outside community. Make what we have to offer so great, so contagious, that all who encounter us desire to have what we have, and to part of our faith community.

With Christ's Peace,

Amy Evans
Director of Christian Education

Worship Service Schedules

January 2018

Greeters

7 Anne Waddell
Dale Watts
14 Norman Self
Lynda Self
21 *Comm* Joy Lynn Budkey
Jim Ingram
28 Rusty Sudderth
Bernie Krecklow

Ushers

7 Millie Vernon
14 Millie Vernon
21 *Comm* Millie Vernon
28 Millie Vernon

Lay Reader

7 Nancy Bolen
14 Sam Henderson
21 *Comm* Tom Parker
28 Donna Myers

Element Preparation

21 *Comm* Kay Sudderth
Priscilla Henderson

Assisting Elders

21 *Comm* Rusty Sudderth
Nancy Bolen
Becky Collins
Rich Tincher
Ellen Watts

February 2018

Greeters/Ushers

4 Lorna Foster
Faye Hodges
11 *Comm* Anne Waddell
Dale Watts
18 Norman Self
Lynda Self
25 Faye Hodges
Millie Vernon

Lay Reader

4 Dee Barham
11 *Comm* Dottie Roudabush
18 Kerry Kerr
25 Marge Birmingham

Element Preparation

11 *Comm* Bernie Krecklow
Dottie Roudabush

Assisting Elders

11 *Comm* Sam Henderson
Priscilla Henderson
Kerry Kerr
Bob Myers
Nancy Sharp

March 2018

Greeters/Ushers

4 Bernie Krecklow
Rich Tincher
11 *Comm* Joy Lynn Budkey
Jim Ingram
18 Sam Henderson
Priscilla Henderson
25 Lorna Foster
Faye Hodges
29 Maundy
Thursday
Comm TBA
TBA

Lay Reader

4 Sam Henderson
11 *Comm* Nancy Bolen
18 Kitty Thach
25 Rich Tincher
29 Maundy
Thursday
Comm TBA

Element Preparation

11 *Comm* Dee Barham
Nancy Bolen
29 Maundy
Thursday
Comm TBA
TBA

Assisting Elders

11 *Comm* Lynda Self
Rusty Sudderth
Rich Tincher
Millie Vernon
Ellen Watts
29 Maundy
Thursday
Comm TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA