

We all have work to do...right? I mean none of us have ‘arrived’ or got it all figured out. Agreed? If you don’t...you may need to look at the mirror again. Anyway, I pray that we always continue to work on learning and growing. That’s the nature of being a follower of Jesus. It’s about continuing to seek a deeper relationship with him, which includes putting things into our minds and gathering information, but it’s also growing in more holistic ways, too.

I know, personally, that it is easy to just float through life without making changes to how I interact and see the world. It’s easy not to upset the apple cart of my life when something is hard or difficult or awkward. But I also know full well that when I am willing to learn, listen and change something, life can get a lot smoother and even be a little sweeter.

Obviously I’m not perfect, but one thing I do try to do is constantly learn more about the world and life. And for me, it’s fairly easy, because I’m just curious about things. But what isn’t as easy for me is growing in relational and emotional ways and how to interact with the world. And that’s one reason I don’t like my counselor. Alright, so I honestly do really like him, but he also pushes me to understand and live in the world differently. He challenges me to do things that aren’t comfortable and that I really don’t want to do. Even things that I would consider unfair. But I’ve learned to trust him because I know the outcome will be better than what I’ve been doing in the past.

And so, my question for us here is what are we doing to continue to grow? I hope, at the very least, we’re studying our Bibles (not just reading the words, but really investing in them), we’re

praying regularly (even continually) and we’re involved in something where we hear or read others tell us more about God (in a sermon or book even). But even more than that, in our digital age, we have no excuse not to invest even more time into our growth as followers of Jesus. So, I want to challenge us to take a step beyond the basic levels of growth. Beyond just devotions and prayer time. Beyond the 15 minutes a day we might spend with him. And maybe you are, and that’s great, but often times, I know we’re lucky to squeeze in that much time.

But I pray that we’ll find ways to learn more about the things we struggle with, where we fall short and the problems we face. I pray instead of relying on our previous understanding and education on something, we continue to be open to new thoughts and ideas.

We read in Acts 17.10-11, *“That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. And the **people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul’s message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth.**”* (NLLT)

Maybe this means reading a book or two about a topic. Maybe that means researching the Bible and other resources to learn more about a passage of Scripture. Maybe that means listening to multiple sermons a week (even other local pastor’s!) Maybe it means finding a counselor or mentor who will push us to seeing how we can do things differently and get a better result. There are so many opportunities to grow right now, even if our meetings at church look a little different. If you need help with some direction, please let me know and I promise we can find

something that will help you.

But, ultimately, my prayer and hope is that through this, we can all grow closer to God and closer to those around us.

Serving Him and you,
Matthew

Current Needs

We have had some people who have stepped up to fill a few of the roles we currently need. Thank you so much for those who have. I would like to mention that we could still use some additional help in the sound booth mostly running the slideshow on Sundays. We are also still creating a list of individuals who would help with a junior church rotation during the sermon before we can move forward with it.

If you have any interest in filling a need (or letting us know of a need) please contact one of the elders.

40 Days of Community

In order to prepare for Easter this year, we will be doing a sermon series on **40 Days of Community** based off Rick Warren’s book and curriculum. The idea behind this series is to ask the question, “What on earth are **we** here for?”, taking the idea of our individual purpose in life to our communal purpose in life. Please also be praying for this time as we try to refocus our attention on being a stronger community after we’ve faced separation during the pandemic. If you are interested in doing the devotional alongside the sermons you can order them online, or let Matthew know and he’ll get you one ordered. They are \$7 apiece.

Prayer List

Tina Althiser (Judy B’s friend) – cancer
 Tammy Bowman – kidney failure and other health concerns
 Dorothy Clevenger – heart issues and cancer treatments
 Edna Derry – fall, broken shoulder
 Todd Hamm – cancer
 Dean Harris (Marion T’s uncle) – stage 4 throat cancer
 Laurie Martin – rejection and mold treatments
 Brogan Rennert – broken ankle
 Lori Rodriguez – stage 4 cirrhosis of liver
 Todd Stambaugh – stage 4 glioblastoma
 Gloria Stockman
 Judy Windsor – hospice
 Those recovering from COVID: Kim Rogers, Bader Church

Condolences:
 Linda Danner family
 Debbie Hollenback Lindsey family

Praise:
 Enjoying animal companionship

Youth Offering

We had an offering of \$135.00. This money will help pay for camp fees and activities this summer.

January Financials

	Weekly Actual	Yearly Actual	Yearly Budget
January 3rd	\$705.00	\$705.00	\$1,331.29
January 10th	\$860.00	\$1,565.00	\$2,662.58
January 17th	\$465.00	\$2,030.00	\$3,993.87
January 24th	\$865.00	\$2,895.00	\$5,325.16
January 31st	\$838.61	\$3,733.61	\$6,656.45