

Last Sunday we began a new sermon series on the book of Revelation. I am super excited about it, but it's also a book that brings a fair amount of controversy with it. But as I've prepared for this sermon series, something I've struggled with over the past several years came back up for me.

And it's a struggle because of the way I've tried to engage those around me in recent years compared to how the conservative church has often engaged in the culture lately.

And what I've been trying to do more in engaging the world, especially those who hold science as the answer to all of our problems, is by being a little more open with my personal agendas and viewpoints. And, for me, that's difficult because I don't like to admit where I might be wrong or where my thoughts fall short. I like to hold fast to the things that I was taught and the things I've believed to be true for a long time (most of my life even). But, I've found, in order to engage some of these individuals, I've had to be more open-minded and hold onto some things a little more loosely.

Now, don't get me wrong, there are truths that I will hold on to no matter what. Jesus' divinity, his work on the cross and God's plan for our world are some of those. However, there's only a few now that I truly believe are absolutely essential. The rest, I've found, need to be open to debate.

And the reason is because the debates are about people. They're about relationships. They're about meeting people where they are and bringing them closer to Jesus. And if that means I need to adjust my thinking of how I've viewed something for a decade or three, then that's what I want to do.

And what I've found is that when I'm willing to budge just a little, I can engage in a few more conversations. As unfair as it might be, and I get frustrated at times with this, when I dig my heels into something that might not be essential to faith in Jesus, the more others dig their heels in. And it becomes a tug of war contest where there is ultimately no winner.

Paul writes about this attitude in 1 Corinthians 9.19-23, "Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." In the end, his goal is the gospel. His goal is that others share in its blessing. And sometimes we fight so hard to be right that we push people away unintentionally.

And like I said, I struggle with this. My intentions are the same as Paul, that others can more clearly and easily see Jesus, even if my efforts don't always express that well.

But I pray that's how we approach all that we do as well. That we can meet people where they are, not forcing our rules or ideas or thoughts onto them, but showing them the love that Jesus has for them to draw them into that relationship with God.

Serving Him and you,
Matthew

Worship and Prayer

Over the rest of the year, the Ministerial will be hosting Worship and Prayer nights at the old Oak Ridge Café on Broadway St. The goal is simply to gather as a Christian community to worship our one God as well as seek his presence to heal and move forward in this year well. We hope to have them the last Sunday of every month. The next one is **Sunday, May 30th at 6:00pm**.

VBS Planning

We are looking into what VBS might look like this year and would like some input. We are planning a meeting on **Wednesday, May 5th at 4:30pm**. Please keep this event in your prayers as we navigate what it'll look like in 2021! The current dates for VBS are June 7th to 11th.

Graduation Sunday

On **Sunday, May 16th** we plan to have a time to honor and recognize our graduates (8th grade and High School) at our 9am service. This is a significant achievement that we want to recognize.

National Day of Prayer

The Ministerial is hosting a time of prayer and worship as we join others across the nation in prayer. On **Thursday, May 6th at 7am, noon and 7pm** we will be meeting at the Town Square to pray for the needs of our community and our nation together. Feel free to join us at one or all of those times.

Prayer List

Tina Althiser (Judy B's friend) – cancer
 Denny Belville – unable to operate
 Jeff Benefield – health issues
 Tammy Bowman – kidney failure and other health concerns
 Dorothy Clevenger – cancer surgery
 Salinas Gilson – health issues, benign cyst
 Todd Hamm – cancer
 Dean Harris (Marion T's uncle) – limited time
 Rita Jones – congestive heart
 Joyce Palmer – successful surgery
 Sharon Ratcliff - health
 Lori Rodriguez – stage 4 cirrhosis of liver
 Derek Sorrells – procedure
 Todd Stambaugh – stage 4 glioblastoma
 Tim Stower – COVID recovery
 Sara Trone – cyst removed
 Stanley Westlake - stroke
 Judy Windsor – hospice

Condolences:
 Joe Kirkham family
 Evelyn Coil family
 Gloria (Sandy S's friend) family
 Tim Gilliland family

Praises:
 Visiting nursery home
 Mia Mummert came home

April Financials

Date	Weekly Actual	Yearly Actual	Yearly Budget
April 4	\$1,305.00	\$11,926.37	\$18,638.06
April 11	\$1,025.00	\$12,951.37	\$19,969.35
April 18	\$810.00	\$13,761.37	\$21,300.64
April 25	\$1,215.00	\$14,976.37	\$22,631.93

The Astoria Christian

Vol. 45 No. 5 May 5th , 2021

The Astoria Christian (USPS 352-870) is published monthly by Astoria Christian Church, 219 W. State St, PO Box 677, Astoria, IL 61501. Periodicals postage paid at Astoria, IL.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Astoria Christian, PO Box 677, Astoria, IL 61501

You Are Welcome At
Our Services!

Sunday

Morning Worship.....9 a.m.
Sunday School.....10:30 a.m.

Wednesday

Family Night.....6:00 p.m.

Events:

Sun, May 9th- 6 pm Board Meeting

Tues, May 11th- 6:30 pm Man Up

Sun, May 16th – 9am Graduation
Sunday (to honor graduates)

Sun, May 16th – 5pm Youth Group

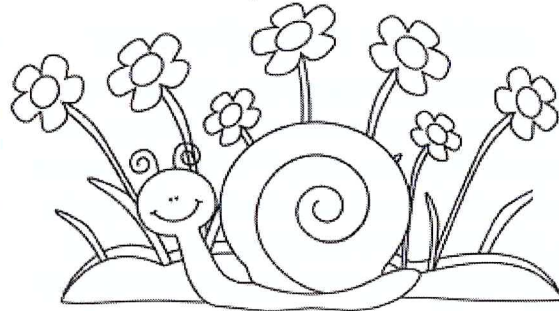
Mon, May 17th- 6 pm Camp
Fellowship @ Summum

Thurs, May 20th- 7 pm 8th Grade
Promotion

Sun, May 23rd- 2 pm High School
Graduation

Sun, May 30th – Youth Offering

*All events are subject to change. Please
keep up to date by checking the bulletin,
Facebook page or website



Astoria Christian Church

H A P P Y

Mother's Day

