

March Newsletter 2008

Youth Sunday School

Right now the Youth Sunday School is getting geared up for Super Summer, coming up the week of June 7th. The cost will be \$120.00, plus what you will need for souvenirs. Before class, the youth has been discussing possible fund raisers to aid in the cost of Super Summer. The one option we will be following through with within the next month is the initiation of our "Rent-A-Teen" program. Members of the church will have the opportunity to "Rent" the teen of their choice for a day and use the teen at their will. (Have some dusting you have been avoiding? Need your gutters cleaned? Need someone to wash your dog? "Rent-A-Teen!") Based on the job of the teen, they will be reimbursed an amount that will go directly to their individual cost of Super Summer. We will make a formal announcement soon.

During Class, we have been discussing the "Who, What, Where, When, Why and How's" of being a witness for Christ. We have been discussing various options on how to introduce the topic, and how to have the optimum effect. I have challenged the teens in my class to start a testimony journal. God works in our lives daily; whether it's in a subtle manner or something a little more obvious. I am encouraging the kids to keep track of the ways God works in their lives, and to practice telling someone their personal "testimonies". The easiest way to witness to someone is to be able to tell them about how God has worked in your life, and the kids in my class are working on being able to do that.

Music and Praise

The "Praise Team" consisting of Mike Limon, Jill Smith, Effie Smith, Sue Schuster, Patty Wilcox and Charlotte Ziemer are looking forward to having two more vocalists assisting in Worship on March 9th! The two newcomers are Sandra Beckwith and Tracy Beckwith. Also the morning of March 9th, there will be a Ladies' TRIO, which consists of Sandra Beckwith, Tracy Beckwith & Jill Smith!

The Praise and Worship Team meet on Wednesday nights to rehearse for the Sunday morning Worship Services.

Search Committee

More about Mark: Here is some of the questions and some follow-up questions we asked Mark with his answers.

1. Philosophy of Pastoral Ministry

Above all else, in my preaching, ministry and life, I strive to remain true to the Word of God. Beyond that basic point, I attempt, albeit imperfectly, to be visible, approachable, open and honest to all in such a way that people might see Jesus in me. Within the local church, I endeavor to equip the body to be ministers themselves and to reach out to the community in order that the kingdom of God might grow by multiplication rather than addition.

2. Your Salvation experience

My future father-in-law asked me what would happen if I died one evening, and what I might tell God if He were to ask me why He should let me into His heaven. I admitted that I did not think that I had lived a good enough life to get into heaven and would probably go to hell. My future father-in-law informed me that salvation was not a matter of being good or bad, but had only to do with Jesus. He assured me that I could know that I could go to heaven, and we knelt and I asked Jesus to forgive me of my sin and asked Him to come into my life.

3. Your call to ministry

For years, many people would ask me if I had considered going into ministry, but I insisted that I had not been called. I worked in 4 different career fields over the span of 7 years, attempting to find God's place for me. Finally in 2005, I told my pastor that I felt like God had something to say through me. He immediately set a date for me to preach a sermon on a Sunday evening, and God confirmed in me that He wanted me to work in His ministry.

4. Doctrine of Salvation

I believe in Lordship salvation. I believe that true salvation comes when a person trusts Christ as Lord and Savior, and is evidenced when that person repents of their sin and begins to show fruit. I believe that once this salvation event happens, a person is saved forever and that no sin can separate him from the love of God.

5. Your qualifications from 1 Tim 3:1-15

I attempt to be blameless, but I am a sinner, saved by grace. I have had only one wife, to whom I remain married today. I do not drink alcohol. I am a serious person, although I know how to loosen up and have fun in such a way that would not compromise my integrity. I strive to behave in such a manner that would point non-believers to Christ rather than away from Him. I have the spiritual gift of teaching. I am not a violent man, and I try to be content in all situations. I attempt to be gentle according to 2 Timothy

2:24-26. My wife and children are Christians, and like all, are sinners saved by grace. My testimony shows how God can take a man wrangled in sin, mature him and bring him to a point that he can proclaim the Gospel. I have served as a Sunday school teacher, church treasurer, deacon and pastor.

Please comment on the following subjects, expressing your view or doctrine. You do not need to go into a lot of detail at this time. A couple sentences will do.

- ✓ Southern Baptist Convention; state, local and international: I agree with the model of the autonomy of the local church while maintaining the integrity of the larger body. Associational cooperation has been instrumental in my career.
- ✓ Baptist Faith and Message: I concur with what was written in the 2000 work. In short, "That they constitute a consensus of opinion of some Baptist body, large or small, for the general instruction and guidance of our own people and others concerning those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us. They are not intended to add anything to the simple conditions of salvation revealed in the New Testament..."
- ✓ Church administration: I believe that the pastor and staff should be trusted to carry out the day-to-day business of the church and to handle any emergent situations that should arise. I believe that major decisions (which may or may not have the recommendation of any particular committee) should be made by the body. I believe that the church should follow its constitution, by-laws and written policies in order to avoid compromising the integrity of its staff and members.
- ✓ Church polity: Autonomy of the church from associational, state and national conventions allows each church to seek God's direction and utilize the gifts that He has given them to further His kingdom. Congregational leadership provides for a body to recognize those gifts and to put into action God's plan independent of any board or governing body.
- ✓ Social drinking: While the Bible does condemn not social drinking but drunkenness, I choose not to drink at all, and challenge the leadership of any church to do the same so as not to cause a brother to stumble. (1 Corinthians 8:12-13)
- ✓ Abortion: I am opposed to abortion, including in cases of rape and incest.
- ✓ Calvinism: I concur with 2 points of Calvinism – Total Depravity and Preservation of the Saints – but reject the other 3 points.
- ✓ Preaching, your preaching methods: I enjoy preaching, and am improving in my delivery. I have preached topical sermons, but as I have grown as a pastor I have found expository preaching to be more effective.

- ✓ Giving: As tithing is a command and not a request of God, I believe that a church has the right to ask, instruct and expect its members to give a tithe (10%). Offerings should be given by those whom the Lord has blessed to be in a position to do so. (2 Chronicles 31:11-12, Malachi 3:8-10, Ezra 2:69)
- ✓ Debt: Debt should be avoided whenever possible, however it is sometimes necessary to seek financial help to carry out God's work. (Deuteronomy 15:4-6)
- ✓ Divorce and remarriage: God hates divorce, and it therefore has consequences that reach beyond the husband and wife, and affects the children. Forgiveness is available, but that forgiveness does not eliminate the consequences. (Malachi 2:16, Matthew 5:31-32, John 4:7-42) On remarriage in general: I believe that the body of Christ should make every effort to minister to those who have experienced remarriage after a divorce, and that the church should not exclude them from membership.

On those who are remarried after a divorce serving in the church: I believe that the scriptures do not prohibit this practice, but that these positions should be decided on a case by case basis.

On officiating weddings in which the bride or groom is divorced: I have come to the conclusion that the performing a remarriage after a divorce should be considered on a case by cases basis. Because of confidentiality issues, the pastor, with the possible help of the deacons, should make the decision as to whether or not he should perform the ceremony or if it should be performed in the church that he serves.

- ✓ Missions: Mission work is not optional but required. Jesus commanded that the Gospel be taken to all nations. (Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8)
- ✓ Evangelism: I believe we are all commanded to be evangelists, and that the most effective evangelists are those who live, work and socialize with the unsaved on a day-to-day basis and profess Christ in word and in deed.
- ✓ Your strengths and weaknesses: My strengths are equipping people with the tools required for their place in ministry. I have been told that I am approachable and meet people where they are in a gentle manner. God has used me in His work with youth as well. My weaknesses are organizational skills and procrastination. These two weaknesses, as well as many others, are areas in my life in which God is maturing me. I thought long and hard about how to answer to my weaknesses, and again attempted to be open and honest in my response.

One example in which I feel the lack of organization has hindered my ministry is in my sermon preparation as it pertains to preaching a series of messages. I realize that there are certain Sundays in which a series that I might be in the

middle of would have to be interrupted in order to bring a special service. I know that this is not totally unacceptable, but feel that more foresight might have made some of my sermon series more effective.

Procrastination has spilled into my professional life in areas such as bulletin and insert preparation.

Recently I have begun to set deadlines for myself that would help me to be more accountable, and with the Lord's help, this process has been effective for me.

- ✓ What are your gifts: My spiritual gifts are teaching, service and pastoring.
- ✓ The Family: I concur with the following passage from the Baptist Faith and Message: "God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society." I further feel that the family holds the primary responsibility for the Christian teaching of children.
- ✓ Your Family: My family is second on my list of priorities, even above the church. My priorities are as follows: 1. God 2. Family 3. Church
- ✓ Homosexuality: Homosexuality is a choice, and is sinful. However, as mentioned before, all sin is forgivable by God. Homosexuals are not to hold leadership or teaching positions in the church, but are welcome to be present in all worship services and bible studies.
- ✓ Goals as a Pastor: To lead the lost to Jesus Christ, and to lead Christians into a deeper relationship with Him.
- ✓ Goals as a husband and father: To lead my family spiritually and to show unconditional love to my wife and children.
- ✓ Your vision for the church as a pastor: To show the world the love of Jesus Christ through word and deed. To serve the community, state, nation and world in such a way that encourages others to turn to Jesus.
- ✓ Bible translations: I use the New King James Version for personal study and to preach from. I also use several different versions and paraphrases for sermon preparation. I do not use Today's New International Version. (*note by Tom Beckwith: Today's New International Version is a gender neutral Bible*) I will at times quote from other versions from the pulpit if I feel that one is more effective in conveying God's message.
- ✓ Speaking in tongues: This gift is for the personal prayer closet and should not be practiced in the church unless interpretation is available. (1 Corinthians 14:4-6)

- ✓ End times: I believe that Jesus Christ will return. I lean toward the doctrines of pre-millennialism and the pre-tribulation rapture of the church.
- ✓ Part that your wife plays in your ministry: My wife and I are a team, and will minister to our church and community together. At the same time, my wife is a member of the church and expectations of her should be no different than those of any other member.
- ✓ Ordination & License: I have not been ordained as a pastor. I have been ordained as a deacon and licensed for ministry by First Southern Baptist Church of Dodge City.
- ✓ Discipling new Christians: High priority should be given to this task. We are commanded to "...make disciples of all nations..." not merely to ask them to pray a prayer and be baptized. (Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8)
- ✓ Women's leadership roles: I hold to the belief that women can hold most positions in the church, with the exception of deacon and senior pastor. (1 Timothy 2:11-12, 1 Timothy 3:11-12)
- ✓ Purpose of the local church: I concur with the purposes of worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship and ministry as discussed in The Purpose Driven Church by Rick Warren. Implementation of those purposes, however, may vary from church to church.
- ✓ Your role in the community: I strive not only to be seen in the community and be a recognizable figure, but to be open and approachable in order to establish relationships that will allow people to see that those who call themselves "saved" are not all "holier-than-thou."
- ✓ Continuing education: I was recently accepted to Liberty Theological Seminary and registered for the first of many seminary classes through the Distance Learning Program. I hope to complete my Masters of Divinity degree by 2014.

Missions

It's that time of year again. Daylight savings time, birds chirping, trees leafing, the celebration of Easter and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for the North American Missions Board.

The offering was named for Annie Armstrong (1850-1938), a woman who was committed to missions and organized people to give to Home Missions (today is North American Missions) through the Women's Missionary Union.

The goal this year is a \$2000. Please consider how God can use you and what He wants you to give to the Offering.

Keep in mind what you money can buy when you give to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering:

- \$1 A hot meal at the Open Door Soup Kitchen in Barre, Vermont.
- \$5 Snacks for Kids Club ministry at an apartment complex for one week.
- \$10 A can of paint for a World Changers project
- \$15 A textbook for an ESL project
- \$20 100 Gospel of John booklets to be given out at special ministry events.
- \$50 Hot chocolate reception to introduce college students to Christ
- \$100 Supplies for a brand new Sunday School at a mission church
- \$250 Newspaper ads promoting the first worship service of a new church start
- \$500 Materials and supplies for a new church to hold their first Vacation Bible School

Thank you for supporting missions!!

Women

CHURCH CHICKS (All Ladies!!)

We will meet Friday, March 28 for a Fellowship/Beth Moore Bible Study called LOVING WELL. More details to follow. Question? See Cindy Walker or Effie Smith