

December 2017 - January 2018 Newsletter



From the Pastor...

by Martin H. Martin

I hope that you are anticipating a joyous holiday season. I hope that mostly because of the things we celebrate this time of year. We celebrate at Thanksgiving the bounty of God's provision. We celebrate at Christmas the incarnation of our God and Savior. Most of us will in some way take a break, spend time with loved ones, gather for worship and enjoy the good things God has given. All of those things give us more than enough reason to pause, rejoice and give praise to God.

But I also enjoy the break as an opportunity to rest, because I know January is coming! And this January may be the busiest I have ever seen in my eighteen years at Fellowship; and it's about to get busy not just for me, but for all of you! I'll explain...

First of all, let me recap how fast and how far we have come at FPC in the last few years. Some of you will remember that in the fall of 2013, we kicked off a capital campaign to finance the construction of a new sanctuary. At that time our old sanctuary had seating for 150 and we were averaging about 120 on a Sunday. We were able to secure a \$550,000 loan and broke ground on the new building in April of 2015; and in February 2016 (less than two years ago), we moved into the new sanctuary. At that time our average attendance was around 130 people on Sunday morning. We were in no way pessimistic about what the Lord was going to do, but most of us thought the addition of the new sanctuary would hold us for a while.

We have rejoiced to see, but did not expect, the way in which the Lord has grown us since then. Attendance began to increase sharply at the turn of the year. By the summer, average attendance was around 200 with attendance well into the 200s on a regular basis. Looking at that from a different angle: the current sanctuary is rated for about 280 people; so at 220 (which is not uncommon), we are about 80% full! If you remove the choir loft from the equation, it is closer to 90%!

But the sanctuary is not our biggest challenge at the moment. The greater need now is for fellowship, classroom and office space. We have added two part-time staff positions, added an adult Sunday

school class and needed a room large enough to accommodate 30 people in our latest inquirers class. At our church dinner this past weekend we were unable to fit everybody into the fellowship hall, so people had "spilled over" to eat in numerous classrooms. And if you help serve at fellowship events, you know that our kitchen is already being stretched beyond its capacities. All of that is to say that we are in a position of having to address the need for more space *years* before we thought would be necessary – praise the Lord for such a problem!

Here is how we need for you to be involved right now in this process: In talking to a builder it has become apparent that we need to first look at the big picture of where we think the Lord might be taking FPC in the next twenty-five years, and revisit our master site planning accordingly. The Officers feel very strongly this needs to be an endeavor of the whole congregation, not just a planning or building committee. To do that, in the months of January and February we will be holding a series of meetings, each consisting of about ten adults, to collect input on a "Church Survey". We will evaluate every area of the church's ministry, not just in the next year or two but decades down the road, with a view to determining what facilities will be needed to support that ministry. Of course there are some things that we need immediately, but we want to also consider what God might be doing at FPC long after we are gone. So what specifically are we asking you to do?

First, sign up in December for one of the meetings to be held in January and February. These will meet at different times, some providing childcare, so that you can all provide your input. Please do not try instead to bend the ear of a "proxy", an Officer or some other member you know will attend a meeting, as a way of trying to provide input or exert influence. You need to attend a meeting because you will benefit from hearing the discussion and thoughts of others; and others will benefit from hearing your perspective in your own words. We are holding these meetings for you, so please sign up.

Second, and more importantly, pray for and pursue the core ministry of the Church: to bear witness to Christ, worship Him as His people, and make disciples in His name. There is much ministry to do regardless of what happens with new buildings and how quickly! It was happening before we built our most recent addition and will continue regardless of how long it might take to realize any new facilities. Look for opportunities to use your gifts, be flexible when the crowds mean someone is "in your space" and labor together as Christ's people in the work of His kingdom.

~Grace and peace, *Pastor Marty*



Lessons & Carols:

Sunday, December 10, 6:00 pm

(Followed by a Christmas Reception)

Our traditional service of **Lessons & Carols**

(Scripture readings, choir anthems and congregational carols)

will be held **Sunday, December 10, at 6:00 PM**, followed by a

Christmas Reception*

(heavy hors d'oeuvres & Christmas cookies/ desserts).

***Please sign-up to bring a tray of hors d'oeuvres or a Christmas dessert; sign-up sheet is in the narthex.**

Sunday Morning, December 24:

10:00 am: Sunday School

11:00 am: Morning Worship



Sunday, December 24, 5:00 pm:

Christmas Eve with the Family!

(Christmas Eve Service)

Invite your friends and neighbors!

It's Time to Sign Up for a Church Survey Meeting!

After a great deal of feedback from the congregation, the Session has scheduled the following times to meet with small groups of the congregation, to hear your input on immediate needs and long-term vision for Fellowship Presbyterian Church.

We will have meetings on **Monday, Tuesday & Thursday evenings** as well as **Saturday mornings & afternoons**. Notice that **childcare** will be provided for the **Monday evening** and **Saturday afternoon meetings only**. Specific dates and times are listed on the **sign-up sheets located in the sanctuary narthex**. The **deadline to sign-up is December 17**; meetings will be filled on a first-to-sign-up basis.

Remember, this is your chance to have your input heard and considered in the Site Planning process! Continue to pray that the Lord would use these times to make us of one mind in Christ and to guide the work of His church in the decades to come.

Family and Youth Update:

by Michael Grasso

Greetings all!

Things are going well with the youth ministry! We are going through the first four commandments in Sunday School and plan on doing a brief series on apologetics after this. In the first four commandments we are learning about what it means to truly love God. In the apologetics series we will learn how to talk with unbelieving friends at school about the gospel and how to defend the faith in light of the intellectual challenges from unbelievers.

We are also planning to have a White Elephant Christmas Party (and supper!) on Saturday, December 9th; Craig and Sheri Bouvier have graciously volunteered to host this event in their home. The limit for the price of the presents for the party is \$10. On January 12th we are going to go to a Swamp Rabbits Hockey game. The game is at 7:00 pm; the cost is \$15.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me!

~Michael Grasso

Saturday, December 9, 5:30 pm, 
Supper & White Elephant Christmas Party!
at the home of Craig & Sheri Bouvier

**Saturday, January 12: Greenville Swamp Rabbits
Hockey Game, 7:00 pm; cost is \$15.**

For additional information, Please contact Michael Grasso
(migrasso2011@gmail.com or (678) 552-7872).

Wednesday Supper & Activities Resumes January 10:

**5:30 PM: Supper—cost: \$3.50/ adult (ages 11 & up);
\$2.50/child (ages 10 & under), \$15 max/family; sign-up required.**

Menu: Pizza (cheese, pepperoni or supreme), tossed salad & dessert

6:30 PM: Devotional & Prayer Time (adults); Catechism (children)

CHURCH NOTES:

The sacrament of the **Lord's Supper** will be celebrated
December 3 and January 7, during morning worship
and **Sunday, January 21**, in the evening.

The office will be closed **December 25—January 1**
for Christmas and New Year's holidays. 

There is a **Session meeting** scheduled on **Monday, January 8, at 6:00 PM.**

The adult choir rehearses Sundays, 4:30 PM; for more information please
contact Michael Weaver (michael_weaver@earthlink.net; 908-5713).

There is a **Diaconate meeting** scheduled for **Thursday, January 4, at 6:00 PM.**

Men's Discipleship Series, led by Pastor Martin,
will resume **Tuesday, January 9, 6:30—7:30 am.**

Ladies' Precepts Bible Study (an inductive study of the gospel of John)
will begin **Tuesday, January 23, 9:45—11:15 am**; childcare available.

Calvary Presbytery will meet **Saturday, January 27,
9:00 AM**, at Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church..

**Sunday, January 14, Following Evening Worship:
Crock Pot Supper!**

Fill a crock pot with your favorite main dish recipe
(stews, chili, soups, etc.) or bring a side (fruit/ veggie tray) or dessert.

February/ March Newsletter Deadline for all announcements, schedules,
activities, menus, or articles is **Monday, January 15.**

Serving in December:

Elder of the Month: Dave Lesley

Deacon of the Month: John Way

Serving in January:

Elder of the Month: Jeff Wayne, Sr.

Deacon of the Month: Dave Frengel

Ushers: Dave Frengel, John Way & Bill Wilder
Nursery Coordinators: Erika Grasso & Jane Stillman Safety Coordinator: Wally Burns

The **PCA Christmas Offering**, which is used "to assist PCA retired and disabled pastors, missionaries, church lay workers, their widows and dependent children who may have financial needs," will be received **December 3—31.**

Remember to mark your checks or envelopes "PCA Christmas Offering".

Attention All Ladies!

You are cordially invited to our

Ladies' Christmas Fellowship!
(Bible Study followed by an Ornament Exchange)

Thursday, December 14,
7:00 - 8:30 pm
(at the church)

Our Bible study, led by Barbara Wilder, will
focus on The Trinity and Christ's Incarnation.

Please bring a **Christmas Ornament** (\$10 or less)
to exchange and a **plate of Christmas treats**
to share with the group!



Hope to see you there!

Operation Christmas Child Update: We received 201 gift-filled shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child this year! Pray that the gospel of Jesus Christ will be shared with each child and family and that they would look in faith to Christ as their Lord and Savior. ~Thank you!