

SANDUSKY BAPTIST CHURCH

NEWSLETTER

PASTOR'S CORNER



THE ROCK

On August 25th I attended a seminar called “The Promising Future of Small Churches.” I have to say, it was one of the best seminars I have attended in years. I made a great discovery. It is something I have believed for some time while I have been serving as your pastor. Perhaps, it is more like an affirmation, and not just a discovery. The affirmation is this: We, Sandusky Baptist Church, are a great church that is truly on mission for Jesus Christ!

Like most seminars I have attended, there were many facts that I found interesting. Here are some facts I learned. “The National Congregations Study reported in 2017 that there are approximately 384,000 religious congregations in the U.S.” “Approximately 90% of those congregations have a membership of 250 or less.” “Over half of those congregations have a membership of 50 or less.” “The median attendance in churches is around 70.”

What does that data tell us? Well, it tells me that we are an average size congregation. And, if we are an average size congregation, then the majority of churches in America are small. And, if the majority of congregations in America are small, then it is the small church that does the majority of Kingdom of God ministry in our nation and around the world. And folks, that is us.

I believe that many of us think that it is the large church that does more for the Kingdom of God. That is false! The data just doesn't support it. It is definitely churches like Sandusky Baptist Church that advance the Kingdom of God greater, and much further. I praise God that we are a small church. Just think about what we do. Here are some facts about us.

We are committed to “equipping the saints for every good work” for the Kingdom of God. That is discipleship for all ages through regular Bible study to students and adults. We provide worship that inspires us to “worship God in spirit and in truth.” We join other churches in our area to help provide clothing for children in need. We help provide coats for children, so they can endure the harsh winters we often have. We join with other churches to help churches and people in other areas of our state. We help individuals and families who are affected by natural disasters with our hands and our “pocket books”. We help feed the hungry physically and spiritually through the “Red Truck Ministry”. We annually send a mission team to Honduras that builds schools and churches. We financially support a Honduras mission pastor and his family who starts and ministers to a number of Honduran congregations. We annually support the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoebox ministry with an ever growing number of “boxes” that are distributed to children around the world. We financially support the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, the Lynchburg Baptist Association, Interfaith Outreach of Lynchburg, and Humbly I Serve. And that is not all. We do even more.

Another important fact I learned at the seminar is that there is a growing trend in churches today. That trend is that people who are involved in churches want “engagement” and NOT “entertainment.” My response to that statement is “Hallelujah”. Society recognizes that entertainment is everywhere. There is social media, the internet, sports, music, and on and on. We live in a high tech society, for sure. But, people who are involved in churches want engagement. They want what they believe about their faith in Jesus Christ to make a difference in their community and world. That sounds like what Christianity is all about. It is about salvation, certainly. But it's about changing the world for the “gospel's sake” with everyday people around us, every day.

Churches, today, are wanting to be involved in their neighborhoods and communities. They are asking questions like, "Is our church meeting the needs of our neighborhood?" "Do we know what our neighborhood's greatest need is?" "If our church was to close, would it make a difference in our neighborhood?" I know those are some tough questions, but they are questions that every church, even our church, must address.

We have started a neighborhood Bible study. It is led by Marty and Ginny Day in their home. It meets every Sunday at 6:00 p.m. My hope is that through their group, God will "call out" some of the people in that group to start other neighborhood Bible studies in their own neighborhoods. Folks, that is one way our church can be engaged in our neighborhood.

Another way is by conducting the Neighborhood Survey that we will begin in September. By "knocking on doors", our neighborhood can connect with a "face" from our church. The main question we will ask is "What do you think is your neighborhood's greatest need is"? Why will we ask that question? Well, first, it lets our neighbor's know that we care about what they think. And also, it will help us determine how we can meet that need or needs as a church.

I have learned that "people don't care about what they know, until they know that people care." What I know is, I care about our neighbors. And, I believe our church cares about our neighbors, too. We all know that people need to know Jesus. Not just with their heads, but with their hearts. But, we don't know specifically how we can reach them because we don't know their specific needs. The survey will help us do that.

I want you to pray. I want to pray specifically. This is what I want you to pray. "Heavenly Father, I care about the people around me. Please reveal to me, what you want me to do specifically for my neighbors in order to help meet their needs for the Kingdom of God."

If you pray that prayer, please be open to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Guard against telling God what you think. Be open to what God reveals to you. Guard against doing what you think you should do, and then ask God to bless what you think is best. In other words, let Christ direct you. That is the key.

God has great things in store for our church. Why do I know that? Because we have a great track record of being a Matthew 25:35-36 church. "For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison; and you came to Me."

God uses us because we are faithful. God uses us because we are available. Folks, God sees and knows that Sandusky Baptist Church is faithful to Him and available to Him. We have proven that year after year. Oh, what great things He has in store for us now and in the future. Praise God! To Him, be all majesty, glory, and honor. Amen.



WELCOME!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest church members:

Ron Honnen joined our church by Baptism in June. Ron joins his wife, Belinda, who joined our church in April.
Ethan & Victoria Fisher also joined our church in June. Ethan is our new Student Pastor.
Martin (Marty) & Ginny Day joined our church in June. Marty & Ginny lead a neighborhood Bible Study on Sunday evenings at 6:00 p.m.
Phyllis Floyd joined our church by WatchCare in July.
Esther Alcindor & Zine Lully both joined our church in July.

We are blessed you have chosen Sandusky Baptist Church as your new church home!

Hey everyone!

I can't believe summer is over! What a blessing these past 3 months have been serving this church as the student pastor. Over this past summer we have seen some pretty cool changes. A new name, a new student ministry space, and of course, there's me. These changes have not been made without thoughtful and intentional ideas. My last letter I explained the reason for the name change, "Be Student Ministry". This newsletter is centered on our newly renovated "Student Ministry Space". Do you remember being a teenager? Did you have to share a room with a sibling, or did you have your own room all to yourself? Either way, most people love to have a place to call their own. You probably love going home after a long day and just relax, right? Well students are no different! Students want a place to call their own, even outside the home. Students always find a place to hang out. Skate park, tracks, pool, downtown, anywhere can be a hangout spot for them, as long as it is an open environment where they feel welcomed, and at ease. My first day at SBC I knew immediately that if this ministry was to grow at all, it needed a place where students could actually be happy to come to. The "Student Ministry Space" is a place where students can feel welcomed and accepted. It's a place where our current students will tell their friends, "You've got to check this out!" Though the room still has some minor things to fix, we have made huge strides in providing students with their own space that they can be proud of, and happy to call home.

I pray these changes will lead to something bigger at SBC. In the end, change is what causes growth. If you ever want to kill a church, ministry, business, or anything at all, just says these magical words, "We've always done it this way!" Those 6 words will lead you to a halt in advancing God's kingdom. When we look back at Jesus' ministry, the reason why he was hated so much was because he did things differently. He went against what was "always done". Jesus doesn't care about what you have done before, he cares about what you are doing now, because the things that worked 5, 10, 15, 20, 100 years ago, simply don't work now. People change their hair all the time, people get new technology. Sports rules are constantly changing. We like different styles, we eat different foods. The world around us is constantly changing. What they like and what they don't like can change in an instant. Now, I'm not saying we need to be like the world, not at all. But I think that if the world can attract people with its strategies, the church should be leading the charge of those strategies as a means to reclaim and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through those strategies. If Satan can use these things to take people away from Jesus, twisting truth and bending the Word, why can't we do that with what He says and uses? Take what the devil says, what he does, and reclaim it in the name of the Lord!

Of course this is way easier said than done. Why? Because of our preferences. We like to think that life is all about us, and if something goes against our preferences, it's not for us. I once heard a conversation where a man came up to his pastor very upset. The man said, "Pastor, I didn't really like worship today." To which the pastor appropriately responded, "That's okay, we weren't worshipping you." You see we tend to think that when we come to church that we're supposed to experience church the way we want to experience it. But the fact of the matter is that we gather to worship God and follow in His leading for a service. I have no apologies with saying I will gladly upset everyone at SBC because their preferences weren't met because I was being obedient to the spirit. Because at that point, you no longer have an issue with me, you have an issue with God. But that's a different conversation for another day! Y'all, change is good. When Jesus came, He changed EVERYTHING! The people of that day had preferences that Jesus did not meet, He changed the way things were done. And the world was better for it. I encourage you, "what are some preferences that you are holding onto that may be leading to be useless for the kingdom of God?" What are you holding onto that if you just simply let go, God could use you in ways you never knew you were capable of?

Love you all, and I'm praying for every one of you.

Ethan Fisher
Student Pastor

CALENDAR



SEPTEMBER

- 1 Cindy Clark
Amy Clark
- 2 Yvonne Sligh
- 4 David Hawks, Sr.
- 10 Caleb Clark
- 17 David Wilson
- 20 Margaret Daniel
- 25 Gary Magann
- 29 Carolina Smith
- 30 Ryan Proffitt
Jimmie Viar

OCTOBER

- 1 Matthew Marsh
- 3 Nikki Smith
- 13 Pat Boley
Ada Jackson
- 16 Ida Crawley
- 24 Mike Baber

Operation Christmas Child

We are collecting items for the 2018 OCC Shoeboxes. Items are listed on the display in the sanctuary. Please pick a reminder sticker from the display as these are items that are greatly needed to help us fill the 175 shoeboxes. We will have a packing party on Saturday, November 3rd at 10:00 a.m. Lunch will be provided. Dedication of the Shoeboxes will be on Sunday, November 11th.

SERENADE

CALLING ALL SINGERS!!!

The adult choir has begun practicing the Christmas Cantata "PEACE HAS COME".

This is a beautiful arrangement of pieces you will recognize and some arrangements that are original to this work.

If you're interested in worshipping with us, we practice Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

Musically,

Sarah Stephen

SEPTEMBER 3rd

Labor Day
Office Closed

SEPTEMBER 1st & 8th

Neighborhood Survey
Training
10:00 a.m.

SEPTEMBER 9th-15th

Week of Prayer
Alma Hunt Offering
For Virginia Missions

SEPTEMBER 16th

Deacon Meeting
12:00 p.m.

OCTOBER 9th

WMU Meeting
10:00 a.m.

OCTOBER 21st

Coats 4 Kids Kickoff
Coats sizes 4-18, hats,
scarves, gloves for
boys & girls

OCTOBER 31st

Halloween

November 3rd

Operation Christmas
Child Packing Party
10:00 a.m.