



The Connection

We are called to share Jesus in creative and intentional ways, through:
Connecting with God and His Church, *Growing* in Faith and Love,
and *Serving* Our Community and World.

April 2024

A Monthly Newsletter of Turner Christian Church

Volume 19; Issue 4



Dear Church... from Pastor Matt

This month I am starting a new Sunday class called “A Christian’s Guide to the Church.” Originally I was going to call it “A Beginner’s Guide to the Church,” but I changed it because I realized that even Christians who have been in the church for a long time struggle to understand what the church really is, and what it means to be part of the church. The reason we struggle to understand the church is because it runs so counter to the culture we are a part of. The world really makes no room for a community like the one Jesus preached and then built through the Apostles. It is so much more than we think it is.

Since not everyone can take this class (after all, there are two other excellent classes too!) I want to use my articles during this quarter to share some of the key insights from the class about what it means to be part of the church. Today I want to look at the way we refer to the church and how that shapes our thinking. Unfortunately, we talk about the church in ways that do not square with the New Testament.

We use the word church to mean different things, depending on the article we choose. “A church” means a particular gathering of Christians. Turner Christian Church is “a church.” We also talk about “the church.” What is “the church?” That depends on who you’re asking. We use the phrase “the church” today to refer to all Christians in a particular place. We might talk about “the American church” or “the church in the Northwest.” In these cases, we are not referring to actual institutions—the “American Church” is not a church. What we really mean is, “Christian culture in America” or “the Christian movement in the North-west.” The Bible does not talk about the church this way.

In the Bible, there are two levels of the church: there are *churches*—local congregations of believers who connect, grow and serve together—and The Church—the whole body of Christ, including every believer in every place, past and present. There is nothing in

between. The New Testament does sometimes refer to “the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria” (Acts 9:31) or “the church of God at Corinth” or “the church of the Thessalonians,” both of which were networks of house churches throughout the city, but in each of these cases the Bible is not talking about a disconnected Christian “culture”—these are connected congregations who know and communicate with each other. In each case, “the church in X” refers to the network of *churches* in that area.

This may seem like nit-picking, but the difference is important. We live in an individualistic culture, and we like to think that I can satisfy the New Testament design simply by being an individual Christian in “the American church.” We think that participating in “Christian culture,” listening to “Christian music,” watching “Christian media” makes me part of the church. Unfortunately, this mentality has weakened our actual churches because it weakens our connection to our own congregation. Our beliefs become a muddle of what we’ve heard on youtube and read in blogs, we find our community in fanpages on Facebook and Twitter, and we treat our local church as just another branch of the “American church,” like our local McDonald’s.

I was reading a book by Preston Sprinkle about Christian politics, and he argued that Christians should approach social problems like gun violence by “being the church.” I would have totally agreed with him, except for what he meant by “being the church:” his example was a pair of Christians who started a non-profit to coordinate businesses, churches and government agencies. Now, I’m sure that the non-profit is fantastic—but it’s not *the church*. How can you be the church without being a church? In the Bible, a church is a group of Christians who know each other, who submit to each other, who support each other. That is the only kind of church you can actually find acting on earth.

(Continued on page 4)

I've been thinking... "About Faithfulness"

From Pastor Rachel

I've been thinking about faithfulness.

I came to this congregation almost 3 years ago, while covid mandates were still in place. I came to this congregation and witnessed the small miracle of a faithful church still finding ways to offer children's programming. In a season where most churches were unable to offer anything, TCC had amazing volunteers putting together Jr. Worship each Sunday.

They weren't meeting in a classroom but were in the fellowship hall where they could spread out on a few tables. Some Sundays there were a small handful of kids, and some Sundays there were none. The volunteers were prepared either way.

When there weren't children, the volunteers stayed patient. They would pack up their supplies, and often assure me that they could re-use the lesson they had prepared. I cannot speak highly enough of these servants of the Lord, who were faithful to the children that God brought them, and faithful when the children did not come.

My first summer there were multiple Sundays without children.

My second summer there was one Sunday without children. By that time God had provided us a core base of regular families. And that fall we were able to launch two classes, instead of one.

My third summer, anticipating lower attendance during the travel months, we went down to one class for 8 weeks. We barely made it through. The number of kids across

an expanded age range made the class both a surprising joy and a challenge! We realized we had passed the days when one class would work for us.

A few weeks ago, we transitioned to four classes, each with a class list of 6-10 children. We are already having conversations around what adding a fifth class would look like.

I've been thinking about the prayers of those volunteers three years ago. I've been thinking about them poring over a lesson, praying that God would bring children. I've been thinking about their prayers for the children that came, and their prayers that God would grow their program.

I've been thinking about the prayers of the volunteers before them. And the prayers of the parents that their children would have more church friends.

I've been thinking that my ministry here is built on the prayers of a lot of faithful saints.

We don't know what next month or next year looks like in Jr. Worship. But we know that God has heard the heartfelt prayers of His children. He has brought us kids to invest in and disciple.

And, like the covid-era volunteers, we will be faithful to those that God brings.

May God continue to bless and guide this ministry. May every aspect of it glorify Him.

And may you be encouraged to be faithful to whatever God has called you to, trusting that it will bear fruit in due season.



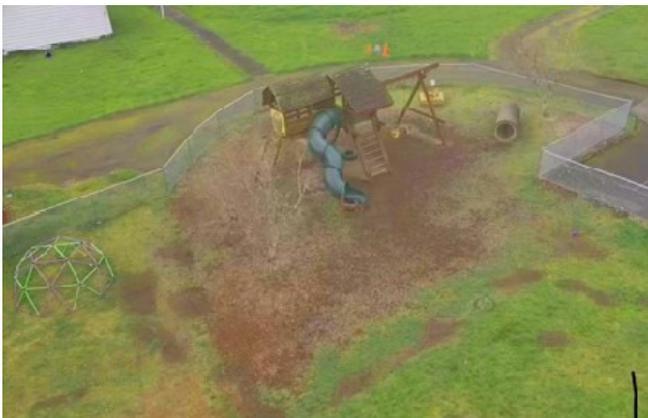
Little Lamb Christian Preschool A Note from Our Director, Bethany Robinson

March brought a sense of adventure and exploration to our preschool as we delved into the theme of hiking throughout the month. Our little ones eagerly practiced for an upcoming hiking field trip by embarking on nature walks around our school premises and venturing over to the tabernacle. One of the memorable activities was a listening nature walk, where our preschoolers embraced the beauty of silence and attentively listened to the sounds of nature around them, sparking their curiosity and wonder. Another engaging experience was the five senses nature walk, where each child collected a nature item representing one of their senses, fostering a deeper connection with the natural world. During our nature explorations, we emphasized the importance of gentle foraging, teaching the children to respect nature by only picking up items that had fallen to the ground naturally.

Our final nature walk took us on a meaningful journey through holy week, with stops along the way to discuss the stories of Jesus and the events leading up to Easter. As we approached the Easter season, our preschoolers joyfully celebrated with an Easter party, embracing the

message of hope and renewal that comes with Jesus's resurrection. Witnessing their young minds absorb the stories of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection with awe and innocence (some for the first time) has been a heartwarming experience for me.

Registration for next year is already upon us and I can't help but look back at the students' physical, emotional, spiritual, and educational development. To have a front row seat to their little lives brings me so much joy. As we look to the future, we are committed to creating an environment where growth and transformation are cherished and embraced and we couldn't do this without you! We extend our heartfelt thanks to members of our church community for their generosity in enhancing our outdoor play area with new bark chips. This improvement will provide a safe and engaging space for our students to play and interact. We invite you to come and see the new bark chips for yourself, and experience the change they bring to our outdoor play area. If you're unable to visit, below are some pictures to give you a glimpse of this exciting transformation.



In Sympathy

Lauretta Peterson passed away and went home to the Lord on March 19, 2024. A Celebration of Life will be held at Turner Christian Church on April 27, 2024 at 10:30 am.

Jerry Campbell passed away and went home to the Lord on March 22, 2024. A Memorial Service will be held at Turner Christian Church on April 6, 2024 at 12:00 Noon with lunch served after the service.

Irene Douglass passed away and went home to the Lord on April 1, 2024. She would have celebrated her 100th birthday on April 6th and the Open House Celebration that was planned at Turner Retirement Homes Dining Hall will still go on from 2:00–4:00 pm, with a special Service of Remembrance at 3:00 pm.

Baptisms and New Members

Tyler Foley was baptized into Christ on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024.

Kim Clokey was baptized into Christ on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024.

Kyle, Brooke and Hunter Brinlee became members of Turner Christian Church and were welcomed into the fellowship of TCC on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024.

Missions of Hope International Worship Event with Keith & Kathy Ham At Amity Christian Church April 14, 2024 at 3:00 pm

Keith and Kathy Ham have served as missionaries in Kenya for over 20 years. They are currently serving in the Mathare slums of Nairobi, Kenya with Missions of Hope International. TCC has helped support the Hams in their missionary work for many years.

This is a great opportunity to visit with the Hams and celebrate what God is doing through MoHI! Worship will be led by the Amity/Dayton worship teams.

(Matt Holmes' Article, continued from page 1)

It cannot be avoided: the only way to “be the church” in the Biblical sense is to “be (in) a church.” *Being the church* means being a distinct community of people who love Jesus and love each other because we all love Jesus. Being the church means submitting together to Jesus Christ. *Being the church* means gathering together for worship; it means learning and growing together; it means serving together; it means bearing with each other; it means forgiving each other. It does not mean acting out in the world as an individual person. That’s being a Christian (which is also important, but not the same thing).

Turner Christian Church is *a* church—an imperfect group of misfits who submit to Jesus together. We do our best to live out the commands of Jesus together. We are not huge, we do not have overpowering cultural influence—but the Bible says nothing of overwhelming cultural influence. It tells us to form communities of Christians, and to hold each other tightly, and to be a community shaped by the radical love of Jesus. That’s our job. And I am excited to be doing it with you!

Seniors Events in April

Luncheon

The Senior Ministry Team is planning a Tomato Soup and Grilled Cheese Sandwich Luncheon on Hans Christian Anderson's birthday, April 2, 2024 at 11:30. The lunch will be followed by the movie depicting Han's life starring Danny Kaye.

Bowling

The TCCSBT (Turner Christian Church Senior Bowling "Team") and Cheerleaders group is growing! Come join the fun! We plan to have a bowling outing every other month. April 12 is our next trip. The bus leaves the church at 1:00 or meet us at Northgate Bowl at 1:30 The cost is \$5.00 for bowlers and FREE for cheerleaders. Please sign up in the foyer or church office.



April 19th & 20th

To “remain in Jesus” is an invitation to be deeply connected to him, and to choose heartfelt surrender of things (thoughts, attitudes, behaviors) that cause our lives to be less healthy and whole than Christ intends for those He loves.

The women’s retreat of 2024 invites us to consider how we can remain connected to Jesus and bear fruit in various aspects of our lives.

- Group times of worship & prayer
- Workshops on how we can “remain in Christ” with our...social media, finances, boundaries, and mental health
- Learning how to “bear fruit” through...Scripture, discussion, a theme-related craft, and a service project for the Eugene Mission

COST: \$65/adults; \$35/college students

- Includes lodging, meals, and program
- Check-in starts at 3 pm on Friday
- Dinner available from 5-6:30 pm
- Program begins at 7 pm Friday night
- Meals: Friday dinner, Sat. breakfast & lunch
- Program ends at 3:30 pm Saturday

Free Time: hang out, name-tag decorating, mini-golf, necklace making, treasure hunt, board games, People Bingo

For more information & to register:

<https://www.nwchristiannetwork.com/women-s-retreat>

Hosted by the Northwest Christian Network on the grounds of the Oregon Christian Convention – 5605 Jubilee Dr SE, Turner, OR 97392

What's Happening This Month

Spring Sunday Classes!

Spring Sunday Discipleship Classes will start on Sunday, April 7th. Classes that will be offered:

A Christian's Guide to the Church (Ephesians),

led by Matt Holmes,

A Guide to Celtic Prayer,

led by Frank Loyd

New Testament for Everyone Bible Study,

led by Carol George.

Children's Classes and Nursery Care are Available

Teens are invited to join Pastor Matt's Class

Thursday Evening Worship Service

Launches April 11th, 6:00—7:30 pm

Identical to the Sunday morning worship service; providing opportunities for those unable to attend on Sundays.

The April Ladies Movie & Prayer Night

. . .has been rescheduled to meet on April 12th at 6:30 pm, due to scheduling conflicts.

Little Lamb Christian Preschool Open House

Wednesday, April 17th from 4—7 pm

Youth Group Game Night

April 21st • 6:00—7:30 pm

Worship Reset

Sunday, April 28th at 6:00 pm

In the midst of life's chaos, join us for an evening dedicated to resetting your harried spirit. Allow the worship of the one true God wash away your weariness and revive your soul. Let this event be the sanctuary where you press "pause", realign and find the refreshment needed to run this race of life with renewed strength and endurance. Come, renew your heart, mind and soul.



Ok, Church, we're ready!! For what, you ask? Well, we're ready for the donations to start pouring in for our annual Community Packing Party. We now have an awesome space that will not only allow ample storage for all of our donations, but also a workspace to prep all of the wonderful donations.

If you remember a few years ago, God blessed and multiplied your generous giving and we packed over 600 Shoeboxes here at TCC. The "problem" with that was that there was no longer a room in the building that could contain your giving. We then switched our focus to a bigger plan and began a Community Packing Party which takes place in Salem each August. We started the Party with 600 Shoeboxes the first year and then packed 1200 Shoeboxes each of the past two years. The storage of the donated inventory for this event has been scattered all over two counties and the work parties to prepare the inventory for the Party has at times been a logistical hardship.

Now, thanks to the ministry—and mission—minded Administration and Boards of TRH, we have a wonderful space to store and prep all of the goodies that we'll be sending out in the Shoeboxes. We are so grateful to have use of the Davis Hall basement, aka The Shoebox Work Shoppe. Thank you, Tim and all who were able to share our vision, for your acceptance and support of Operation Christmas Child.

We are excited to be able to welcome you into our space and into this ministry of getting the Gospel to kids all over this Earth. We will still collect donations in the receptacles in the TCC lobby. We will still gladly accept your monetary donations through the TCC offering. We are hoping to soon have a regular work day scheduled at The Shoebox Work Shoppe where you can stop in and say hi or lend a hand with some of the prep work. We remove tags from each stuffed animal, open all the Hot Wheels packaging, separate notebook paper out into sheet protectors, assemble hair accessory bags and pencil pouches, and many, many more tasks to make the Packing Party run more smoothly. I would love to talk with you more individually if you're interested in helping with any or all of this.

Thank you again for all you've done in support of this ministry in years past. Thank you for considering how you can continue to support this ministry this year and beyond.

—Ann Stoker

(Note: You can start donations with School supplies—Pencils, pens, scissors, erasers, 6" rulers, pencil sharpeners, and index cards!)

Office Hours:

Monday—Thursday: 8:00am—2:00pm
Friday: 8:00am—11:00 am

Call us:

503-743-2119

Look us up at:

www.TurnerChristianChurch.com
Facebook:/turnerchristian/OR

Staff:

Matthew Holmes.....Senior Minister—matt@turnerchristianchurch.com
Rachel White.....Associate Minister—rachel@turnerchristianchurch.com
Bethany Robinson...Preschool Director—littlelamb@turnerchristianchurch.com
Jerry Sygney.....Office Administrator—office@turnerchristianchurch.com

Sunday Schedule:

Worship Service at 10:30 am
Online Worship at 10:30 am