



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.

February 2024

A Monthly Newsletter of Turner Christian Church

Volume 19; Issue 2



Dear Church... from Pastor Matt

Over the past few months I've been using the newsletter to talk about the kind of church we are. As a "Christian church," we defined ourselves by our unity in Christ, not our doctrinal agreement. Today I want to highlight one of the most important aspects of being a church united by our love for Jesus rather than our doctrinal agreements. Uniting around Jesus is more difficult than uniting around doctrine because it requires us to love each other in the midst of conflict. Whereas a doctrinal church has to be committed to certain propositions, a Christian church has to be committed to loving the people with whom they disagree. A doctrinal church fails when its congregation fails to agree on theology. A Christian church fails when we fail to unite *in spite* of our disagreements. In place of a creed or a statement of faith, we have a commitment to love, compassion, forbearance, patience, and seeking reconciliation. That is incredibly hard. Resolving conflict is difficult. Bearing with flawed, imperfect people is difficult. Sticking around when community gets messy is difficult. But it is so important.

The first reason committing to patience, forbearance and reconciliation is important is because the Bible commands us to do it--frequently. If, like me, you were raised in doctrine-based churches, it may surprise you to find out how often the Bible talks about this:

- *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)*

- *Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. . . .Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. (Romans 12:10, 16)*
- *Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. (Hebrews 13:1)*
- *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. (1 Peter 1:22-23)*
- *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another. (Romans 13:8-10)*
- *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:5-6)*
- *Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. (2 Corinthians 13:11)*
- *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. (Philippians 2:1-2)*
- *Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. (1 Peter 3:8)*

(Continued on page 4)

I've been thinking... About My Chorus!

From Pastor Rachel

Listen, I have an expressive face. At chorus practice recently I was in a really bad mood and couldn't snap out of it. My position in the chorus -literally front and center-meant that my director spent three hours looking at my storm-cloud of a face trying to direct me to smile.

At our next rehearsal, I found that I had been reassigned to a different position. Rather than being front and center, I was moved to a more obscure position farther back and slightly to the side. I was horrified.

Being at the center was validating. I've always been slightly insecure about my voice and my vocal abilities. I felt like I was breaking free of that in the front and center. So I did not react well (internally) to being moved. My very first thought was one of embarrassment, and my second thought was, "I will be so amazing that they will want me back where they had me before!" I was determined to stand out.

But the thing about a chorus is that you are not *supposed* to stand out. You blend in. Your voice needs to match the tone and tenor of those around you. Your face needs to be communicating the same message, your body moving in a similar way. Standing out means you are doing it wrong. And I found that when I was no longer front and center, that I finally started to blend. Rather than feeling like the focal point, I suddenly felt like one-of-the-many... and I was a better singer for it.

Because my focus was no longer on myself, and it had moved to the group.

Sadly, I am human and this is all recent. Next week I could backslide into missing the point. It takes practice to see the group beyond the individual. It takes practice to live a life with a communal perspective. It takes practice to fully bring your own voice and to blend.

If you and I were talking over this over coffee, you would get to see my expressive face. Between long sips of my favorite beverage I would roll my eyes at my own immaturity. I would laugh at my own indignant reaction to being moved. And then I would say something like, "But I really felt that way! And that was kind of a wake-up call. I needed to experience being moved to realize how self-centered I was being about singing."

I wonder what your reaction would be. Maybe you would share a recent experience you had that was humbling. Maybe you would share an area of your life where you're struggling to see the people around you because of your own goals. Maybe you would encourage me in my transition, asking follow-up questions, or pressing in to encourage me to keep growing.

Because you and I, we need each other. We need those moments where we encourage, validate, and convict one another. We need time listening to each other. We need our together-ness, so that we can blend-our individual gifts and talents, experience and interests, strengths and weaknesses-all coming together so that we move as one body. The individuals strengthening, convicting, encouraging and mutually submitting to the whole body of Christ. And we do this not for audience applause, or to bring glory to ourselves... but to honor, love, and serve Christ, who is the head of the church.

Where might God be inviting you to blend?

Further reading: Ephesians 4:15-16, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27





Little Lamb Christian Preschool

A Note from Our Director, Bethany Robinson

As we eagerly step into the month of February, there is a sense of excitement in the air for me. This is because February offers us a unique opportunity to focus on two of the greatest values in our lives—the love for God and the love for one another. And what better way to explore and celebrate these values than through the lens of Valentine's Day? In our preschool, we have woven these thoughts and ideas into every aspect of our curriculum for this month. Our overarching theme is construction, where we will not only build physical structures but also construct a foundation of love and understanding.

One of the highlights of this month is the special visit from someone very dear to me—my grandpa. He is the same man who built the church sanctuary, and now he will be joining us to teach the children how to build garden boxes. This connection to the past and the passing down of knowledge from one generation to the next fills my heart with immense joy. By involving my grandpa in our preschool activities, we create a beautiful tapestry of knowledge and experience that enriches the learning environment. The children will not only gain practical skills in construction but also learn the value of patience, perseverance, and craftsmanship from someone who has dedicated their life to building.

These garden boxes that we will be building hold significance beyond their physical presence. They will serve as a reminder of the love and effort that goes into nurturing and caring for something meaningful. As we move into the spring months, we have planned for Mary Page to visit our preschool and teach us about the wonders of gardening. The garden boxes will become a platform for hands-on learning, allowing the children to witness the beauty and growth that can arise from their own efforts.

In this month of love and construction, we aim to instill in our preschoolers the importance of loving God and loving others. Through activities, discussions, and lessons, we will explore what it means to show kindness, compassion, and empathy towards one another. We want to create an environment where every child feels loved, valued, and accepted for who they are. As we embark on this journey through February, we hope to embrace the opportunity to learn and grow in love. It's our goal that the construction projects serve as reminders that love is not only an abstract concept but also something tangible and transformative.

With Our *Sympathy*

Gerald "Jerry" George Carter
passed away and went home to the Lord on January 7, 2024. A Memorial Service was held at Turner Christian Church on January 27, 2024.

Mary "Sharon" Hansen
passed away and went home to the Lord on January 23, 2024. A Memorial Service will be held at Turner Christian Church on February 10, 2024 at 1:00 pm.

New Members

Porcia Aegeuter
Transferred her membership to Turner Christian Church on January 7, 2024.

Alice Breyer
Transferred her membership to Turner Christian Church on January 28, 2024.

Dear Church, (continued from front page)

Here's a few more I didn't have room for. I encourage you to look them up: 1 Corinthians 16:14; Galatians 5:13–15; Ephesians 4:1–4, 11–3, 16; Philippians 4:2; Colossians 2:2–4; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; James 2:8–11; 1 Peter 4:8; 2 Peter 1:5–8; 1 John 3:10–11, 14, 23; 4:7–12, 19–21; 2 John 5; 3 John 5–8)

There is a second reason why committing to patience, forbearance and reconciliation is important: as hard as it is to practice these virtues, we all **desperately** want to receive them. How badly do we want people to be patient with us? To bear with our faults and mistakes? To reconcile with us instead of just walking away? How much do we all want to be part of a community that is deeply committed to each other, so that I can trust my brothers and sisters to stick around when I am at my worst? The only way that works is if I am willing to stick around when my brothers and sisters are at their worst.

As a church, we are free to disagree on many beliefs, but we are also united in many beliefs:

- We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. He is our Lord and Savior.
- We believe in loving God with our whole heart, soul and strength.
- We believe in loving our neighbors as ourselves.
- We believe in the forgiveness of sins—for ourselves, and for those who sin against us.
- We believe in harmony, humility, and patience.
- We believe in honoring others above ourselves.
- We believe in making peace.
- We believe in striving for reconciliation.
- We believe in bearing with those who are weak, broken, or in error.
- We believe in extended to others the patience and compassion that we crave for ourselves.
- We believe in committing to the unity of the congregation, especially when it is hard.

I am proud to be part of a church that shares these beliefs. I am excited about what a church like this can become!

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

Ash Wednesday is a day set aside by Christians for reflection and repentance. This year we will observe Ash Wednesday with a morning service and open house. The Sanctuary will be open from 6:45 am to 8:00 am for anyone who wants to receive ashes. From 7:15 am to 7:45 am we will also hold a service of readings and repentance for those who want to participate in the full service.



Friday, February 16—Monday February 19

We're going to camp! Middle schoolers will get to spend the holiday weekend at Grove Christian Camp, just outside of Cottage Grove. Surrounded by trees and with activities like ping-pong, Gaga ball, worship and campfire—it's sure to be a great weekend. Please contact Pastor Rachel for more information and registration.



**Sunday,
February 25, 2024
at 6:00 pm**

Sign up for the TCC Talent Show! We'd love to get to know you better by seeing the talents God has given you! Sign up to participate in the Talent Show! If not, please come and support our church family by enjoying the show!

To sign up, please use the form in the foyer or use the church app.



In just six short months, we will be setting up to pack 1200 Shoeboxes at our Fourth Annual Community Packing Party in Salem. It's so true that "there is so much to do and so little time." Let me explain.

I guess the first point to make is to reiterate that we will be packing 1200 Shoeboxes. That's a lot! When we break that down into our six age/gender categories, that's 200 of each thing for each group. As in 200 soccer balls for all the 10-14 year old boys. Two hundred sewing kits for all the 10-14 year old girls. Two hundred big stuffed animals for all the 2-4 year old girls and 200 more for all the same age boys. You get the picture. And looking at the big picture, it can seem overwhelming.

However, if we break it down into smaller, more doable pieces, it all works out and is not overwhelming at all. So if somebody committed to buying and donating 200 combs in the next six months, an entire group of kids would get a comb. If four other people committed to buying and donating fifty washcloths each in the next six months, an entire group of kids would each get a washcloth.

We're looking for individuals, small groups, Bible Study groups, churches, schools, businesses, etc. who can see the vision of reaching children everywhere with the Good News of Jesus Christ. We are asking them to prayerfully consider partnering with us to gather all of the needed supplies to thoughtfully and lovingly fill 1200 Shoeboxes with material gifts so that 1200 kids and their friends and families will have the opportunity to receive The Greatest Gift ever.

My second and final point for today would just be to remind you all that this is a year round effort of behalf of many volunteers in many places. Your prayers for this ministry are very much appreciated. There is a huge mission field out there and without God's hand and intervention, it would not be possible to reach the yet unreached.

Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for your continuing support. I would love to connect with any of you who have questions, want more information, or want to get involved in any way.



Bowlers and cheerleaders are invited! The church bus will leave from the church at 1:00 pm for Northgate Bowl in Salem. There will be a \$5.00 charge (pay at Northgate Bowl) for each person bowling (shoes and ball included). Remember to bring socks!

THE UNITY PROJECT 2024

THE ART OF LISTENING

*Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak
and slow to become angry. (James 1:19)*

Listening is essential to every relationship. Most of us assume we already know how to listen, but good intentional listening does not come naturally to us. This year's Unity Project is all about learning how to listen as a way to strengthen your relationships and navigate potential problems or conflicts.

This event is great for all the relationships in your life--come with your spouse, co-workers, small group, elder board, whoever! We hope to see you there!

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
**ANDREW
ARTHUR**
FOUNDING PARTNER
GENESIS CHRISTIAN MEDIATION



Ladies Movie & Prayer Night!



**All Ladies are Invited to an Evening
of Fun, Fellowship and Prayer!**

We will watch the movie "Mary Poppins Returns."

**After the movie we will share in a time of prayer for
our church and community. Invite a friend to come
with you and bring a snack to share!**

Office Hours:

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

Staff:

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

Call us:

503-743-2119

Look us up at:

www.TurnerChristianChurch.com
Facebook:/turnerchristian/OR

Sunday Schedule:

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

**Saturday,
February 24, 2024
10:00 am—2:00 pm**

WHAT IS THE UNITY PROJECT?

The Unity Project exists to equip and encourage Christians to live up to the vision of Jesus: that his disciples would be known by their love for each other.

We are not a "unity movement"--we are not trying to merge denominations or make Christians agree on points of doctrine. We are a unity project: an ongoing conversation about how we as Christians can love each other

You can join the conversation by following us on Facebook, attending our annual gatherings (on the last Saturday of February), or checking out content from our previous gatherings. You can even put on a Unity Project of your own!