

The Challenger

Ministerial Staff

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Reaching people, touching lives, and growing together in Christ's love.

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NO. 1

Pews vs. Chairs. 10:30 vs. 11:00 Sunday Service times. One Service vs. Two Services. Hymns vs. Praise Choruses. We have had our share of things to disagree about haven't we? Why can't we just all think the same? Or if we do have to think so differently, why can't everyone else just not say anything and quietly go along with what I know is right?

Anytime we have a church with more than one attender, we're going to have disagreements, right? The important question is, what do we do with the disagreements when they arise? On one side of the spectrum is the bulldozer who doesn't care what anyone else has to say so he refuses to listen. On the other side is the people pleaser who refuses to ever say anything that they feel passionate about for fear of being disliked. Of course, neither one is healthy. But unfortunately, there's a whole other perspective altogether. I was talking to someone one time whom I believe was quite sincere in her claim that she loved Jesus yet she never wanted to go to church. When I asked her why that was, she said, “I just can't stand how people in church can't agree with each other.” It was enough to drive her away and I have an idea she's not the only one.

So why doesn't the Holy Spirit just work in all believers in such a way that we'll all process His leading the same way all the time and therefore always come out on the same page on every issue without ever disagreeing or having to hash it out first?

I want to share something with you. Ted and I were reading a book together entitled, *Ministering to Problem People in Your Church* by Marshall Shelley. (And yes, of course it was all hypothetical. We were just reading about issues other pastors face.) In it, he was talking about a new believer named Pachomius in the AD 300's who really started questioning the lifestyle of ascetic hermits who secluded themselves from all people in an effort to pursue personal holiness. Shelley summarized Pachomius' conclusions like this:

How can you learn humility living alone? How can you learn kindness or gentleness or goodness in isolation? How can you learn patience unless someone puts yours to the test? How can you learn to love if no one else is around? In short, he concluded, developing Christian virtues demands other people – ordinary, ornery people... True love isn't even learned among friends we have chosen. God's kind of love is best learned where we can't be selective about our associates. Perhaps this is why the two institutions established by God – the family and the church – are not joined by invitation only. We have no choice about who our parents or brothers or sisters will be, yet we are expected to love them. Neither can we choose who will or will not be in the family of God; any who confess Jesus as their Lord must be welcomed. We learn agape love most effectively in our involuntary associations, away from the temptation of choosing to love only the attractive.

Or in Fred paraphrase, “We don't get stronger by bench pressing feathers. Praise God for all our differences, even when they lead to frustrating disagreements!”

In His Grip,
Pastor Fred

Church Calendar for January

1/7 - Special called business meeting during morning worship for purpose of electing new Deacons. Men up for election are: Sam Pogue and Paul Landis.
1/8 - Men's and Women's evening Bible study resumes
1/9 - Women's Morning Bible study resumes
1/9 - Men's Tuesday morning fellowship resumes
1/10 - AWANA resumes
1/10 - Before God's Throne prayer/Bible study resumes
1/15 - Church office closed observe holiday
1/21 - Sanctity of Life Sunday - New Life Pregnancy Center Spaghetti luncheon
1/21 - GriefShare 3:30pm
1/26 - Youth LIFT Tour Phoenix



Youth News

1/26 - 1/27 the Youth will be attending the LIFT Tour in Phoenix. If you are interested in going, please see Pastor Ted ASAP to reserve your spot and make arrangements.



Welcome back to regular club meetings...beginning 1/10/18. Hope your break was great, see you soon!!

SENIOR ADULT LUNCHEON

Thursday, January 25th @
11:30am - BoJo's Restaurant.



Sanctity of Life Sunday **1/21**

Immediately following morning worship the New Life Pregnancy Center will be hosting a Spaghetti luncheon diaper fundraiser. Your entry to the luncheon will be a new package of diapers.

Happy New Year

Start the New Year right!

Read through the Bible this year.

Memorize Bible verses.

Attend Bible Study:

Men's study Monday evenings 6:30

Women's Bible Study Monday evenings 7:00

Women's fellowship Tuesday morning 9:30 at the home of Patty Pate

Tuesday morning Men's fellowship 9:00

Wednesday Evening Study & Prayer 6:00pm

Youth Group 7:30pm

Sunday Morning Classes 9:15

Sunday Evening - Twice Fed 5:30 followed by Bible Study 6:00pm

Griefshare

GriefShare is a 13 week program using a video/discussion format. The program has been remarkable in the impact it has made in people's lives with practical help. Do you need help? Do you know someone who is struggling? Plan on attending *GriefShare* and bringing someone with you. For more information, please see Pastor Ted.



Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. ~Psalm 51:7



Please be in prayer for Nancy Dupree and family. James passed away in Cottonwood 1/1/2018.