

Clay's Corner

For as long as I can remember, one of the major subjects within the church has been growth. Over the years, I've listened to folks discuss this subject, dissect its meanings and implement programs to "make it happen." After all, Jesus's Great Commission was all about Church growth and from the very beginning of the church, after Peter's first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost, scripture says that the Lord was adding to their numbers daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)

And for as long as I've been preaching, even for some time before, I've always felt that if God was not willing that anyone would perish but that all would attain eternal life, as Peter states in 2 Peter 3:9, that He would not put a new soul in a congregation that was not able to nurture and care for that soul. As such, I've seen many churches struggle to reach out to the communities in which they exist but never really make much headway in their harvesting efforts.

So now, I said that to say this, in a recent series of meetings among the men of our congregation we began to look at ways to grow our congregation. And while some will understandably argue that growth can be defined two ways, either personal growth or numerical growth, I can testify to you there are some facts we must deal with about growth that are going to defy the standard thought processes concerning this word, growth.

Space will not allow me to enter into a long dissertation on this subject in this format. But, I will say that in the coming weeks and months, both in our adult classes and our weekly sermons, we are going to focus more and more into what it means to grow and how that growth is best accomplished. We will be studying God's Word deeply and ask some very difficult questions that are going to challenge a lot of mindsets about what growth really means.

Now, I mentioned earlier that there are some facts about growth we must deal with as we begin this effort of growing our congregation; I am going to mention just a couple of them here to give you an idea of the enormous task ahead of us.

Did you know, of all churches that have been in existence for 40 years, fewer than 2% of them survive to see their 50th anniversary? Of those that do see their 50-year anniversary, most have never had more than 50 members at any given time? Which leads to the question, when it comes to growth is bigger really better or is smaller better?

Most churches never grow larger than 50 members because they never define, much less understand, what their Biblical purpose for existing truly is. In the very near future, we are going to look at scripture to determine what our purpose is, how we can define that purpose, and then simplify it into a simple purpose statement that will ultimately give us the right heading as we start our journey to becoming all that we are meant to be in Christ Jesus. And we are going to do this together. Everyone will have a part and be a part of developing our Mission/Purpose statement. To get us started I want you to answer some questions for me. Please take the time to write your answers down and hand them to me at your leisure.

Here they are:

1. Why does the church exist?
2. What are we to be as a church?
3. What are we to do as a church?
4. How are we to do it?

God Bless us all as we start this new journey of growing in Christ Jesus!

PRAYER LIST

- **Monty Allen** (Susan Barnick's friend's brother—cancer)
- **Pauline Alvarez** (recovering from knee surgery)
- **Cheryl Anstead and Stormy** (Cheryl Pitts's friends—health)
- **Lauren Babb** (health, recovering from surgery)
- **Larry Barnett** (Jacob White's friends—recovering from bike accident)
- **Brooke Bertling** (Haley Ratliff's friend—breast cancer)
- **Sonny Bransom** (recovering from hip replacement)
- **Dawn Clarke** (Shirley Kuchynka's daughter)
- **Betty Cox** (Brent Barnick's sister—homebound, rheumatoid arthritis)
- **Eric Davis and Rose**
- **Bill Ellison**
- **Leon Giesecke** (Jan Moerbe's father—throat cancer)
- **Chestly Gobar, Jordyn and Lucy**
- **Tomas Gomez** (Debbie Fougerat's employee—recovering from surgery)
- **Herb Hahn** (health)
- **Eddie Hunt** (Debbie Jalufka's father—Alzheimer's)
- **Sandra Jetton** (health)
- **John Jobe** (Clay and Mary Mason's friend—health, stroke)
- **Debbie Jalufka** (Clay and Mary Mason's friend—health)
- **Dixie** (Debbie Faires's mother—Alzheimer's)
- **Jason, Lizzie and Luke Klinger** (Sarah Weaver's cousins—Luke, 4 mos old, cancer)
- **Guy Lowe** (Clay Mason's friend—health)
- **Jay Mason and family**
- **Emory Meier** (Cheryl Pitts's father—health)
- **Orvan Muelker** (Kathy Winegeart's father—health)
- **Claudia Morris** (Perry Winegeart's sister—health)
- **David Pearson** (Eric Davis's friend—brain tumor)
- **Stacey Placker and Meagan Miller** (Lexi Miller's mother and sister)
- **Bryson Rosales** (kindergartner in Shiner—upcoming brain surgery on April 18 for epilepsy)
- **Sid Roberts** (Faireses' friend—health)
- **Paris, Lexus & Maelyn Robertson** (Johnsons' friends—Maelyn born 10 weeks premature)
- **Alex and Tiffany Rodriguez** (Chestly Gobar's friends—Alex suffered stroke)
- **Ruth** (Joyce Faires's sister-in-law)
- **Jocelyn Seals** (Hallettsville—cancer)
- **David Taylor** (Cody Chrismon's uncle—cancer)
- **Maria Vasquez** (Joyce Faires's neighbor—health)
- **Buddy Watson** (Victoria Johnson's cousin—health)

If you have any announcements or prayer requests you wish to have included in the bulletin or to sign up for weekly e-mail updates, please contact Victoria Johnson: 325-518-9205, victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org.

PRAYER UPDATES

Leon Giesecke, Jan Moerbe's father, remains in the rehab facility where they are giving him palliative care.

Buddy Watson, Victoria Johnson's cousin, was hospitalized for a week in Nashville, Tenn., but is home now. He had a sinus infection that moved into a heart valve and then spread to his lungs. He has a PICC line to receive antibiotics via IV for four weeks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Baby Shower

You're invited to a baby shower honoring **Edwin & Sarah Weaver TODAY at 2 p.m.** in the church annex. Edwin and Sarah are registered at Wal-Mart and Target. Please search for "Edwin Weaver" when looking for the registry.

Men's Meeting

The men have their next monthly meeting on **Sunday, April 17 at 8 a.m.** Church committees are being restructured at this meeting. If you would like to be on a committee, please plan to attend the meeting, or express your interest in serving to one of the men, if you are unable to attend.

The new committees will be: Worship & Education, Benevolence, Facilities, and Finance.

Youth & Family Cookout

Please join us for a youth a family cookout on **Sunday, April 17 from 12:30-3 p.m.** at Palmetto State Park. Hot dogs and drinks will be provided. Please bring a side to share. The park entrance fee is \$3 for adults. Children 12 and under are free.

2016 VBS: Team P.O.S.S.I.B.L.E.

This year's VBS will be Sunday, June 12 through Wednesday, June 15. Please sign up in the foyer if you are interested in helping. A planning meeting will be scheduled soon.

Tuesday Morning Men's Prayer Breakfast

All men are invited to the annex each Tuesday morning at **6:20 a.m.** for a time of breakfast, prayer and fellowship.

Ladies Bible Class

Ladies Bible Class will meet on **Tuesday at 10 a.m. at Jan Moerbe's house.** We are continuing our *War Room* Bible Study.

Wednesday Evening Meal & Bible Study

Please join us **this Wednesday at 5:15 p.m.** for dinner in the annex. This week's entrée is tacos and tostadas. Anyone who is able is asked to bring sides or desserts to share, but everyone is invited! If you cannot bring a dish, please do not let that be a deterrent to joining us for dinner. Classes for all ages follow at 6 p.m.

Sunday Night Small Group

There is a small group that meets each Sunday evening from 6-7 p.m. for Bible class in the annex. Everyone is welcome to attend. The Lord's Supper is available for anyone who was unable to partake on Sunday morning.

Stockdale Ladies Day 2016

Stockdale Bilingual Church of Christ is hosting its 2016 Ladies Day on **Saturday, April 23 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** This year's theme is "Relax and Soar" and the speakers are Tracy Clapp and Carolyn Richter. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and lunch is provided. Please see the flyer on the large bulletin board.

Peach Valley Bar-B-Q Fundraiser

Peach Valley Christian Youth Camp is hosting its Annual Bar-B-Q Fundraiser on **Saturday, April 30 at 11:30 a.m.** A silent auction will follow. Plates include BBQ chicken with sides and dessert. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for children under 12. The church is asked to prepare desserts for the event. More details to follow.

Wednesday Meal Prep Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to help prepare the entrée for our Wednesday evening meals. Please sign up in the foyer. Contact Victoria Johnson if you have any questions.

Directory Update

In your church directory, please correct Louie Jetton's cell phone number to 361-648-7057.

Notice: Annual Meeting of Members on Sunday, April 24, 2016 immediately following morning worship service.

YOUTH ZONE

MONDAY, APRIL 4
TRACK & FIELD
SHINER JR HIGH @ DISTRICT MEET (GANADO)
APRIL 6-7
TRACK & FIELD



GONZALES HS @ DISTRICT MEET (CUERO)
THURSDAY, APRIL 7
SHINER SOFTBALL
MARINERS V. D-BACKS, 6 P.M. (FIELD #5)

Hunter Babb—Indians, Shiner Tee Ball
Callie Chrismon—Mariners, Shiner Softball
Jacy Chrismon—Shiner Jr High Track & Field



FRIDAY, APRIL 8
SHINER TEE BALL
INDIANS V. DODGERS, 6 P.M. (FIELD #2)
SATURDAY, APRIL 9
TENNIS
GONZALES JV @ DISTRICT TOURNAMENT
GONZALES SOFTBALL
REVS @ ALLEN'S BT, 6 P.M. (GONZALES FIELD 1)



Rea'Anna Flores—REVS, Gonzales Major League Softball
Coach Kevin Johnson—Gonzales Jr High Track & Field
Hannah Rowland—Gonzales HS Track & Field