What is the purpose of the Church?

By Rev. Greg Creasy

What is the purpose of the Church? It is more than just a gathering place for believers on Sunday. It is more than a hub of Christian activity. The scripture is clear in giving us an answer to this question. In fact, Jesus himself commissioned the church with a specific purpose. He said, *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19 , NIV). In these words, Jesus gives the church clear direction…our purpose is to "make disciples". Of the four verbs that shape the backbone of this sentence, only "*make disciples*" is in the imperative. All the other words support and undergird this imperative. We are to make disciples by going, baptizing and teaching. The purpose of the church is to be proactive in its outreach to various communities and cultures (going)…to offer opportunity for the public identification with Christ and His people (baptizing)…and it all culminates in teaching obedience to the commands of Jesus, including, of course, His ultimate mandate…to produce more disciples.

At Pea Ridge Baptist, we continue to be faithful to the call of Jesus Christ to make disciples. We are guided by the simple mission "To Know Christ and Make Him Known!" This fuels the life of our congregation…allowing all who attend to grow as a disciple. This is a continual process for each of us. We never reach the point of being able to say, "I have become a complete, mature disciple of Jesus Christ." You will always have room to grow as a disciple and will have ample opportunity to become more like Jesus Christ.

Here are some happenings at Pea Ridge that are helping to make and build disciples.

Worship

We are taking a step of faith in our worship beginning October 7th. We will be expanding our Sunday morning worship with the addition of another worship time. We want a place for everyone who drives onto our parking lot to be able to take part in an inspiring time of worship. Our parking lot has consistently been full in the past few months and our service numbers have been reaching 80% capacity in our sanctuary. The additional service will give us room to welcome everyone who comes. Both services will be exactly the same and will be about one hour in length. Here is the new Sunday morning schedule:

*Early Worship @ 9:00 AM ** Sunday School @ 10: 15 AM ** Late Worship @ 11: 15 AM*

There will be childcare and children's church for both services. I encourage you to pick the service time that will work best with your schedule. And I would also call on each of you to <u>find a place to serve</u> in this new structure. I am excited about this step of faith for our congregation.

As we offer this opportunity to publicly identify with Jesus Christ, I pray that we will be drawn closer to Christ and become more aware of all that He is calling us to do.

Teaching

We have several new classes that will be offered on Sunday evenings beginning September 9th. You will find a complete list of these in this newsletter. I challenge each of you to find a class where you can grow and learn. We also have a new Sunday school class that will begin September 9th as well. A class for Single Moms will provide a place for spiritual growth and deepened personal relationships (look for more information in this newsletter).

Invite your family and friends to be part of our growing community of disciples. We are working for the kingdom of God…for His glory and honor. May God grant us wisdom and discernment as we seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ!

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