

From the Pastor's desk

Ending the Year on a Bible Note

I can't tell you how pleased I am that people from St. John are so open to Bible Study. Not only are the extra Bible Classes [the Walk through the Bible Classes on 2nd and 4th Tuesdays and Special Teaching Events on Sunday evenings] well attended, but people are telling me how much the benefit from my Preaching and Teaching in our weekend services. Yes, it has added a little more length to our service, but I believe the benefits far out-weigh the extra time it takes to accomplish this.

One thing I have noticed is that the number of booklets picked up for our members to study throughout the week what I will be preaching on has dropped dramatically. Only half as many booklets were picked up this quarter as compared to last. I suspect it is because Christmas is a busy time of the year for all of us, and we may have just run out of time.

Why do I make these booklets available? What is the purpose of studying the same text I will be preaching on? Just ask yourself what is the best way to water your garden? We have all seen the gully-washer rain storms and they do water our gardens. But a good bit of that water, because it comes so fast, simply runs off and really does not benefit our gardens much. We have also see those all day, gentle rains, which also waters our gardens and because of the gentle way in which those rains come, the watering of our gardens is thorough and deep.

What is the best way to saturate ourselves with the Word of God? Just have one big shot on Sunday, a kind of gully-washing sermon where we are flood with God's Word? Or the simple daily study through the week that climaxes on the weekend to saturate us with God's Word? It is obvious to me what will saturate us best! Studying the text before hand already familiarizes us with that portion of God's Word, so that I can take us to the next step in completely soaking us with the truth of God's Word.

For those of you who picked up those booklets and are doing the weekly studies, God will soak you with His Word in ways you could not imagine. For others who may not have done so I would prayerfully ask you to reconsider when the new quarter booklets come out in late January. God's wants to soak us with His Word.

Book-Ends Worship

I have heard from several people of how much they have liked the new style of our worship. It gives everyone something they like and many people are staying for the whole time and taking in both ends of worship. Some people have told me that the length and the early start time is a problem, but in every case, they admitted it was not something they could not work with. For the good of all our people at St. John, they were willing to make the sacrifice. I think that is a tremendous attitude on the part of our people. Thank you for your kind and loving consideration.

But, I would like to hear more. Please take a few minutes to fill out the following question form and jot down what you think about our book-end worship. Give the completed form to Pastor Jim, or fill it out online and email it to him at sjlcp@windstream.net. Thanks.

Book-End Worship Survey

What is it that you most like about our Book-End Worship?

What is it that you least like about our Book-End Worship?

Which part of the Book-End to our Worship do you prefer?

On a scale of 1 (being the worst) to 10 (being the best) rate your preference:

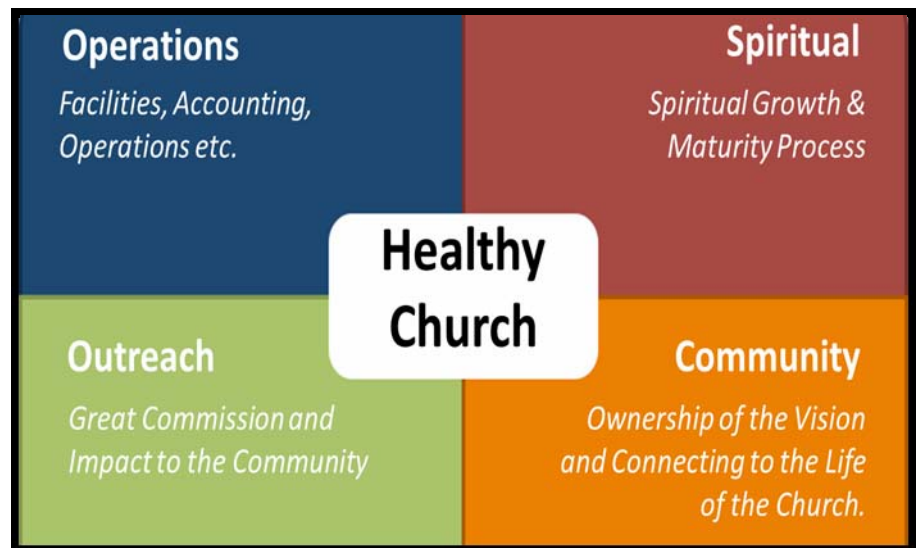
Our past “Blended” Worship.....1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9...10

Our present “Book-end” Worship1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9...10

“How to Reach People Who Aren’t Here”

According to Scripture, the church is the Body of Christ. If it is healthy, it is attractive, in the sense of drawing people to it. If it is healthy, those who are attracted are then connected to the life of the church. If it is healthy, it (and its members) will grow. It would be great if this happened naturally, but it doesn't.

Unfortunately, even numerical growth doesn't necessarily indicate health, because many can be attracted without becoming connected or growing individually. A healthy church is one which has defined its purposes and direction, and then put in place the every-day, behind-the-scenes processes that move it toward that purpose. A balanced scorecard includes the following areas:



For each of these categories, it's important to consider:

- Is any aspect of your church's purpose left to just happen on its own?
- Are your processes documented and understood by those who should be using them?
- Can the results of your processes be measured? Are they being measured?
- Do you know how to develop, implement, troubleshoot and improve ministry processes?

If processes are being tracked and measured, what is being done with those numbers? Example: Your church offers a 'Preparation for Parenting Class' and reports that 42 people attended. Those attendance records

will help you plan how many infant nursery rooms you will need 6-9 months from now. This is called Level 1 ministry.

Level 2 ministries is being proactive and analytical, searching for the less obvious trends and opportunities to connect. This is where we discover that the real ministry opportunities are with people who are not there, rather than those who are. Example: Six months after the class, how many of those couples have not enrolled a child in the nursery? This provides an opportunity for you to discover who may be struggling with the new demands of parenting and reach out to them.

So, what people are we not reaching? How can we reach people who are **NOT** here? This is where Pastor Jim has given some thought and prayer about “reaching the lost sheep of the house of St. John.” Who are these people? They are people who years ago were part of our family and for one reason or another stopped coming to our family events. When Jesus walked this earth, He often talked about that the fact that He has come to call back home “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Well, Pastor Jim thinks it is time we put our efforts and energy in calling back home “the lost sheep of the house of St. John.”

Watch for more information coming and an opportunity to help Pastor Jim seek out some of our lost sheep.

Walk Through the Bible Study – January 10th

Our next class will not be until January 10th from 1:30 until 3:00 p.m. and again from 7:00 until 8:30 pm, Pastor Jim will continue teaching on the Book of Genesis - Part 2. You will learn about four very special people: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph and how they were used by God even though they were very human. Bottom line: God can and does use us even though we too come with many faults and issues. Since no one is perfect, God can only use imperfect people – just like us.

Sunday Evening Teaching Events in the New Year

“Indescribable” – January 15th

On Sunday, January 15th Pastor Jim will show the DVD “Indescribable.” The Psalmist says, “The Heavens declare the Glory of God.” Hear Rev. Louis Giglio describe our God of unfathomable size and power. This God, who knows the names of every star also knows your name and mine and has orchestrated the most stunning rescue imaginable in His Son, Jesus Christ. Come and be amazed.

“How Great is Our God?” – February 19th

On Sunday, February 19th, Pastor Jim will show the second DVD “How Great IS Our God?” The Bible tells us that our life is really a miracle of creation and the Creator knows us personally by name. This God is big enough to breath out the stars, and yet intricate enough to fashion together the trillions of cells that make up who you are. Hear Rev. Louis Giglio talk about our God who is intimately acquainted with you and promises to carry you through life.

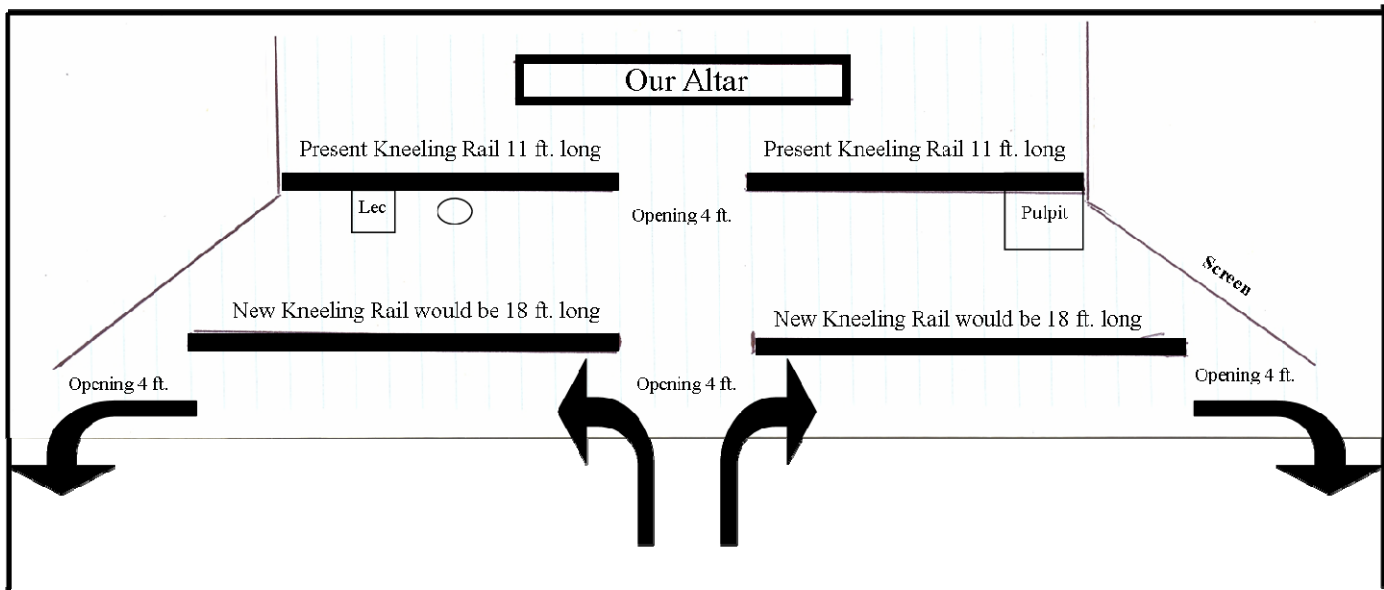
Project for the New Year

One of the few spots in our building that is **NOT** handicapped accessible is our Communion Table. That’s why at the last Board of Directors meeting a proposal was discussed that would move our present communion rails down on main floor, making them completely accessible for everyone, regardless their physical limitations. See drawing on the next page.

What would need to be done?

1. All items would have to be moved from their present locations;
2. Lectern, Baptismal Font and Pulpit would be moved back to last step in sanctuary;
3. We will need to construct additional lengths of kneeling rail to match and to make up for the extra 7 feet, or we would construct a whole new railing;
4. Additional kneeling pads would also have to be made, or new ones be purchased for the whole length;
5. Communion will be served alternating from one side to the other; people would line up using the center isle, be admitted to that side of the communion rail, and after the blessing leave using the side isle to return to one's seats.

Proposed Move of Kneeling Rail (Not drawn to scale)



Michael Creutz' New Job Description

A new job description for Michael Creutz was approved at the last Board of Director's Meeting (12-20-2011). Pastor Jim said "he hopes this new direction will generate greater acceptance and perceived benefit in Michael's ministry at St. John. Bottom line, we want to make the best use of Michael's talents and abilities for the benefit and increase to God's Kingdom."

1. Ministry with Seniors

Creutz will form a task force of 6-10 retired and/or nearly retired individuals for the purpose of planning and coordinating events/activities for seniors. These events/activities can include:

- Monthly Lunch Gatherings
- Service Opportunities--like the Nativity Refurbishing
- Special Trips (i.e. Plays, Festival of Lights, Concerts, Zoo, etc)
- Educational Events
 - Financial Planning and Budgeting
 - Using Technology
 - Understanding Medicare
 - Health Issues

- Grand-Parenting
- Family Issues
- Special Prayer/Bible Study Groups
- This Senior Ministry Task Force will seek to support our current Senior Exercise Program without interfering with this successful program. Coordination with the leaders of this program will be maintained, in order to not duplicate efforts.
- This portion of his responsibilities will fill about 40% of his work-load.

2. St. John Ministries

- Seek after the “lost sheep of St. John”
 - Assisting Pastor and the Elders
 - Coordinate the Matthew Party Initiative
- Assist Pastor with Hospital and Pastoral Care Visitation
- Coordinate the Contemporary portion of the Bookends Worship Service
 - Plan the service with Pastor
 - Lead worship while recruiting, training and equipping other vocalists and instrumentalists.
- Provide Leadership in Confirmation and The Next Step ministries.
 - Weekly Classes and Activities
 - Special Events
 - Gatherings
- Provide leadership in the use of technology for ministry
- Coordinate efforts to partner in ministry with our Preschool and its’ Director.
- This portion of his responsibilities will fill about 60% of his work-load.

Reporting:

As staff, Creutz will report to Pastor and be directed by him. All plans, activities and content, will be approved by Pastor Jim. Concerns should be communicated to Pastor Jim and he will discuss them with Creutz. Monthly reports will be made through Pastor Jim to the Board of Directors, in order for the Board to serve as both an accountability and encouragement group for the overall ministry of the staff at St. John.