

March 2019



 Omega Baptist Church

A circle of believers with Christ at the center.

BEACON

“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

A Ministry We All Have

A healthy church is one that is doing what Jesus told the church to do; “make disciples (followers) of all nations.” In order to do that, a church needs to have a balance of reaching out to those who are not yet followers of Jesus as well as teaching those who have decided to follow Jesus to “obey everything I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:18-20

Healthy steps we have taken recently include establishing a Welcome Committee that continues to make progress. At the Quarterly Business Meeting on February 17, Danielle Blomberg gave a brief update of what the committee has been doing and also what they are planning to do. It was very encouraging!

One of the steps Danielle has taken is to make a summary of **Becoming a Welcoming Church**, by Thom Rainer. It's a brief book that shares the results of his research into what helps and what doesn't help a church attract and keep guests. That summary will be placed in the mail boxes at church and made available to anyone else who asks for it.

Why does this matter? Well, some guests are seeking answers to spiritual questions. If we do a good job of welcoming, that can become a pathway where we can share the message of the Good News of Jesus with them. Good welcoming says, “We want you here,” and each time they return they have more opportunities to hear the Good News and to develop relationships with believers in the church.

“Why does this matter to me? I am all in favor of letting the Welcome Committee do it,” you might be thinking. Well, like most things in a healthy church, we have a committee that has accepted a greater responsibility in an area but we all have a responsibility to do our part. Two facts: not surprisingly, when guests feel welcomed by more than the official welcomers, they are much more likely to return. Maybe surprisingly to you, the *first ten minutes* of a guest's visit usually determines if they will return. With those two facts in mind, let me suggest three ways you can make guests feel more welcome and more likely to return.

First, just be your friendly self. I know first hand that you know how to make people feel welcome because you did it for me when I was new here. Simply say, “Hi, my name is _____. What's your name?” Then listen to their name and remember it! A good follow up question is, “What brings you here today?” Their answer will let you know where to take the rest of the conversation.

Second, because the first ten minutes are so important, put more initiative into efforts *before* the service. This is especially hard for those of us who have a part in leading the service so we need those who are not on stage that day to help. Of course we want to genuinely be welcoming after the service too but it is more critical before the service.

Third, help ease the tension of guests when their tension is at the highest. When is that? Guests are most uncomfortable after they enter the worship area. Think about it. They maybe don't know many of the people present. They aren't sure where to sit. Typically, once seated, nobody talks to them, nobody sits with them. You can help people feel welcome by sitting with them and talking with them *in the worship area*.

I know this is easier for some of us but it really is a responsibility we all have. Years ago I challenged a youth group senior higher to be more welcoming. At the beginning of the meeting that day, a guest had come in and sat near him and he said nothing to the guest. His response to my challenge was, “Pastor Rod, that's outside of my comfort zone.” I gave him the same honest guilt trip I'm going to give you now. I said, “How comfortable do you think Jesus was on the cross, dying to pay for your sin and mine? How comfortable do you think people in Hell will be? How comfortable do you think you will be at the Judgment if you see people you ignored when they visited our church lost for eternity?” I walked away at that point and let him consider what I'd said.

I can happily report that he responded well to that. He became excellent at welcoming people at church even without being part of a welcoming committee. He took evangelism training and was privileged to lead some people including some peers to faith in Jesus. He went on a short term mission trip to the Czech Republic with a group from our church. He was such a good and welcome influence that the church there asked him if he would stay for a year and help them to establish a youth ministry in their church. He did. His comfort zone expanded greatly as he stepped out in faith, motivated by the need for people to say yes to the Good News of Jesus.

The last line of Danielle's summary tells us where to start; “The first step is to grasp how incredibly important this ministry truly is.”

In His Strength,
Pastor Rodney



YOUTH-MINISTRY



So I was thinking...

about the book of Hebrews. Over the few weeks of cancelled bible studies, subzero weather and snow days, I wasn't sure what to do with myself. Normally with bible study we have a week of homework and then we meet to watch a video, engage in discussion and then start a new week of homework. This gives me a focus and a clear plan. With the cancellations I was suddenly lost, so I read the book of Hebrews. It was, after all, the book that went with our bible study. You would think after reading it all the way through eight times I would have noticed a few things, but I really didn't. I wanted to, which is one of the reasons I kept reading it, but nothing really stood out. No "Ah-Hah" moments.

Then after finally being able to meet for our study and doing my homework once again, I was working in chapter nine of Hebrews when this light bulb seemed to go off over my head. Just like in the cartoons. Over the years I have learned about controlling my thoughts and about letting go of my past mistakes and the sin that seems to follow me where ever I go. I've learned about pursuing holiness and humility and all that it means to be a Jesus follower. I have by no means perfected or even come close to being adequate at it, but I am making progress. And yet, with all the learning and with all the time reading the book of Hebrews, I missed fully understanding something: our conscience.

Did you know the book of Hebrews talks about our conscience? I guess I didn't. And after reading it eight times, you'd think I should. Our conscience is a funny thing. Maybe not funny, haha, but peculiar. You can learn to tune it out. You can ignore it and you can even learn to oppose it and feel no guilt. I don't recommend that, because once you decide you need to listen to it again, it's really difficult to turn it back on. Sometimes I wonder if our conscience is controlled by the Holy Spirit. It makes sense to me. Especially after you read Hebrews 9. We've all heard or read about the sacrifices and the high priests and the holy of Holies. But did you know that even with all of those strict rituals they didn't clear the sinner's conscience? So all that work and blood and you would still carry the weight of all your sins in your head! Verses 7 – 9 says, "But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. (8) The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. (9) This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the **gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.**" So the sacrifices made things right with God regarding commitment of sin, but they did not offer freedom of the mind. Freedom from the weight of carrying our sins around inside our heads.

The best part comes next. Verses 11-18 are really good, but to save room I'm only quoting verse 14. "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, **cleanse our conscience** from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God."

FREEDOM!! Freedom from carrying the weight of our sins inside us! Jesus died so we wouldn't have to. His death didn't just conquer eternal death and damnation. His death gave us freedom to live this life with a clear and CLEAN conscience. A freedom the Jewish ancestors never experienced. Isn't that wonderful? Like I said, I knew all of this, but it was still a lightbulb moment. And if I needed to "see" it and feel the awe, then maybe someone else does too. So, if you know Jesus as your personal savior but seem to be carrying around the burden of your sins, you don't have to anymore! You can lay them at the foot of the cross and let Jesus' completed work take care of the payment. It can be hard, but we serve a living God who is able to do more than we ask or can even imagine! You can experience freedom.

...until next time, Rebecca Anderson

SPOT 68 Retreat at OBC, March 29-30, Friday 5:30 pm - Saturday 10:00 am



GRAD Night will be Sunday, May 5. Mark your calendars!

Moms' Night Out!

Sunday, March 31, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

FREE Project: Homemade Pies 

Discussion: "Feeding Your Family" Panel

Please invite the moms in your life that could use an evening of fun, friendship & encouragement!

All moms with kids at home welcome!
Contact Laura Blomberg with questions: 715-767-5400



Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 10

Missionary Update from Emilie Blomberg

During the month of March, Emilie's team of 7 will be working with Calvary Chapel in Cusco, Peru. Calvary is a church plant which also has a café used as a platform for evangelization. Emilie's team will help with evangelization, college campus outreach, children's ministry, worship, and some building construction and maintenance. You can follow her missionary journey through her blog, emilieblomberg.theworldrace.org, to hear stories of what God is doing.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

We would LOVE to have you join us on Sunday mornings at 9:00 for a special hour of learning from God's Word and applying it to our lives!

There are classes for children of all ages (nursery - jr. high), as well as these adult classes:

Bridge (young adults) & High School class, currently studying apologetics with Arnie Blomberg & Rick Anderson; a study of Revelation with Stan Carlson; and "How Great Thou Art" with Ameris Grapa, a visual and hands-on class to build your Bible knowledge.



"Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge."

Psalm 62:8

"All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

March Birthdays

- 1 John Pearson
- 2 Elaine Ulrich, Kali Heikkinen, Zach Mattson
- 3 Genevieve Stolhammer
- 4 Jeremy Esterholm, Brianna Johnson
- 5 Dave Root, Joyce Summers, Victoria Hamm
- 6 Debby Blomberg, Claire DeCleene
- 7 Tim Blomberg
- 8 Grayson Swan, Jean Scott
- 9 Sunday Retzlaff
- 10 Randy Hueckman, David Swan
- 11 Jenny Mattson, James Cook
- 12 Deanny Ulrich
- 13 Lyle Blomberg, Olivia Blomberg, Don Kraegenbrink
- 17 Jerod Blomberg, Eric Mattson, Tim Swan
- 18 Deb Davis, Jeremy Marschke
- 19 Liz Carlson, Lillian Dickinson, Carter Scheithauer
- 20 Desi Haskins, Ahnalie Berg
- 21 Danny Gustafson, Jessica Borchardt, Tamra Swan
- 22 Amy Blomberg
- 23 Spencer Nelson
- 24 Darla Schubring, Joseph Selander, Pam Pearson
- 25 Meredith Hueckman
- 26 Cory Mattson
- 27 Rob Freiboth, Ann Mattson, Kaarin Lind
- 28 Ruby Wildberg
- 29 Crosby Adams, Abigail Adams
- 30 Bev Polzin
- 31 Dionne Sorenson



Happy Birthday!

Although the enemy of our soul knows our weak points, we know our strength — Jesus!

As we stick close to Him, we can draw on His strength!



"In Your strength I can crush an army; with my God I can scale any wall."

2 Samuel 22:30

"Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength.

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted;

but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;

they shall mount up with wings like eagles;

they shall run and not be weary;

they shall walk and not faint."

Isaiah 40:28-31



"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

Isaiah 41:10

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Philippians 4:13

Please contact us if:

- You or someone in your family has an address change
 - You no longer want to be on our Beacon mailing list
 - You would rather receive your Beacon by email
- Email: info@ogemabaptistchurch.org

OGEMA BAPTIST CHURCH

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Sunday School for all ages - 9:00 am
Sunday Worship - 10:15 am
Wednesday Student & Ladies' Ministries - 6:30 pm
Wednesday Adult Prayer Meeting - 7:00 pm



Whatever your age or stage in life,
YOU are WELCOME here!

“The LORD is my rock,
my fortress, and my deliverer,
my God, my mountain where I seek refuge,
my shield, the horn of my salvation,
my stronghold, my refuge,
and my Savior.”
2 Samuel 22:2-3

Missionary Spotlight John and Lori DeCleene Missionary Mobilizers, Converge

“John and Lori DeCleene, successful missionaries to the Philippines for more than 30 years, are now working with Converge International Ministries as Monthly Deployment Advisors. In this role, they advise and coach newly appointed Converge missionaries during the period when appointees complete their many requirements to reach their field of service.”

“Converge International Ministries is seeking to double its missionary force in the next decade. Many will serve among unreached and unengaged people groups that do not have a church or a gospel witness. John & Lori provide personalized monthly guidance and support as coaches, mentors and encouragers to help appointees reach the field faster—so more people can meet, know and follow Jesus.”

“We consider it a privilege to assist appointees as they complete necessary steps and build their prayer and support teams. We have already seen that they are achieving their goals sooner because God has allowed us to walk beside them. The Lord has used you to greatly encourage us. Serving together with you, John and Lori DeCleene”

Pray that more men and women hear God's call to serve unreached, unengaged people groups.

Pray God will lead more missionaries to serve with Converge.

Pray for the DeCleenes, and for the missionaries in the field, sharing the Gospel and growing God's Kingdom.

Mobilizing missionaries to reach the field faster and healthier.

START. STRENGTHEN. SEND.

*Information from Converge International Ministries, and a DeCleene prayer letter.

