



## ELK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

July - August 2019

### From the Pastor's Study...

If I've heard it once, I've heard it a thousand times, but recently I've heard it yet again. "Experts," who are prevalent in the evangelical tradition especially, have come out with yet another study with a lead that reads, strangely, the same way every time: "*Liberal churches* are not healthy; only ones that follow a 'conservative' line are healthy." (I italicized the key words, hoping you don't miss them.) Their own numbers tell a different story—but why let the facts get in the way of the ideological line?

The facts do indeed tell a different story. First, I've learned to take all the experts with a giant grain of salt. They generally have advised that churches drop certain styles of worship because they won't work anymore, only to find exactly the opposite was true. They advise, depending on which day you catch them, using certain programs, or not using those same programs. They are so detailed that certain hymnals or missions or evangelistic efforts are effective, only to find out, again, the opposite is true.

Second, I'm aware that in some eyes I would be described as "a 'liberal.'" If that's a political description, anybody that knows me well would tell you that's a joke. If it's a judgment on my fidelity to scripture, then the answer is the same. I stay as close to the scriptures as possible, but when there's a conflict, I reflect on how Jesus would respond, and not make it up as I go along. One of our members tells me he knows preachers who spout scripture about everything, but when they want to stray from it, they do it, and when asked when they think it's appropriate to do that, they say something like, "You just know." (I think he and I know some of the same preachers!) Well, I didn't make the Bible complicated, and I don't interpret things Jesus said through the eyes of Moses, or Paul, as wonderful and as vital for our lives as they are. It's just that the way *Jesus* sees things is what's supposed to guide us, and not Moses or even Paul. If that's the reason somebody wants to label me, then so be it. Being described as a strict follower of Jesus is a charge I can live with. (By the way, that's one more reason using political labels is useless in churches, but that's another column....).

Putting a label on people or institutions is just one way to marginalize them. That's what's going on when you see these kinds of charges. I don't let anybody from any church hierarchy or anybody in Nashville tell me what I'm supposed to be doing, and I'm sorry that Southern Baptists are seeing a downturn in baptisms, donations, missions efforts, Sunday School attendance—just about any sign they usually use to measure

church health. I take no pleasure in the misery of others, but honestly, it's their political activity, their cold attitudes on social issues, and their plain old hatred that's the main culprit.

I see something different going on at Elk Creek. Very different. Having just attended a deacons' meeting, I am encouraged yet again by our direction. Two years ago we put a new roof on the entire building, paved the parking lot, and updated the plumbing, and did so quite easily. We've added to the lakefront platform two times since then. We have just finished renovating the sanctuary (don't miss it!), improving our sound equipment for the lakefront, expanding our music program, took down trees to add necessary parking at the lake, and just completed our first partnership with other churches in a county-wide wellness effort. Over the years I have watched our Sunday School grow and grow; even the number of teachers has grown. In fact, we need to expand our parking area at the church, but we do need to leave something to work on!

I see strength in, not keeping people that don't usually worship with us at arms' length, but instead in joining in common worship with somebody from another church or a different tradition. I see strength in highlighting all the ways our volunteers make our church and our community a better place, and not looking inward. Through our giving, both locally through the Goshen Baptist Association, the Virginia Baptist Mission Board, or our national and international giving to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, proportionally, we take a back seat to nobody.

And the best, and most obvious, measure of all is the attitude I get to experience every week in church. I have only *you* to thank for that. The smiling faces and the can-do approach to our "church work" is so very uplifting for everybody, and therapeutic for me.

It's churches that turn inward that are dying. It's sad that some resort to political labels to slander others, but it's common. (Tell me, though, seriously: Can anybody see *Jesus* doing *that*?! ) So in the coming weeks and months, just so I can keep up with the rest of you, I hope to give some twists to our worship, in both services, and I hope, and indeed I know, you are all willing to come along for the ride. Keep your seat belts on!

Mickey

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

### **July**

Mission Project:	CBF Global Mission Offering
10th & 24th	Book Study at the Church 7:00 p.m.
11th	Ladies Fellowship at Jo Canova's 9:00 a.m. (see note below)
13th	Church Security Planning 10:00 a.m. (For anyone interested)
14th	Church Business Meeting (all welcome)

### **August**

Mission Project:	To Be Determined
1st	Ladies Fellowship (Time and Place TBD)
14th & 28th	Book Study at the Church 7:00 p.m.

## **BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES**

### **July**

Brown, Brad & Doty	02
Weeks, Jerry	05
Strevig, Gerald	07
Woods, Frances	07
Good, David	10
Burghardt, Amity	14
Hawkins, Kathy	15

Duerson, James & Dorothy	16
Talley, Jerry	18
Wyckoff, Gerry	19
Ashwood, Connie `	26

### **August**

Chewning, Doug & Mary Frances	07
Jenkins, Penny	09
Scanlon, Patrick	12
Edmonds, Lynn	14
Hale, Pamela	14
Keene, Linda	14
Wyckoff, Gerry & Bunnie	14
Canova, Jay and Jo	16
Vancampen, Wanda	25
Croce, Larry & Susan	27
Rapp, Caitlin	28
Edmonds, Lynn & Larry	29

Elk Creek Family,

Please respond to any of our deacons or Lee Stahl, treasurer, if you are interested in using an online offering site to make contributions to the church. Lee has made inquiries, and all of the sites will deduct fees and a percentage of donations. Depending on the site, the setup and monthly fees for the church vary. Please reply by the July 14th quarterly business meeting.

Thanks,  
Linda Mason, Secretary  
Larry Edmonds, Chairman  
James Duerson  
Tom Pitcher

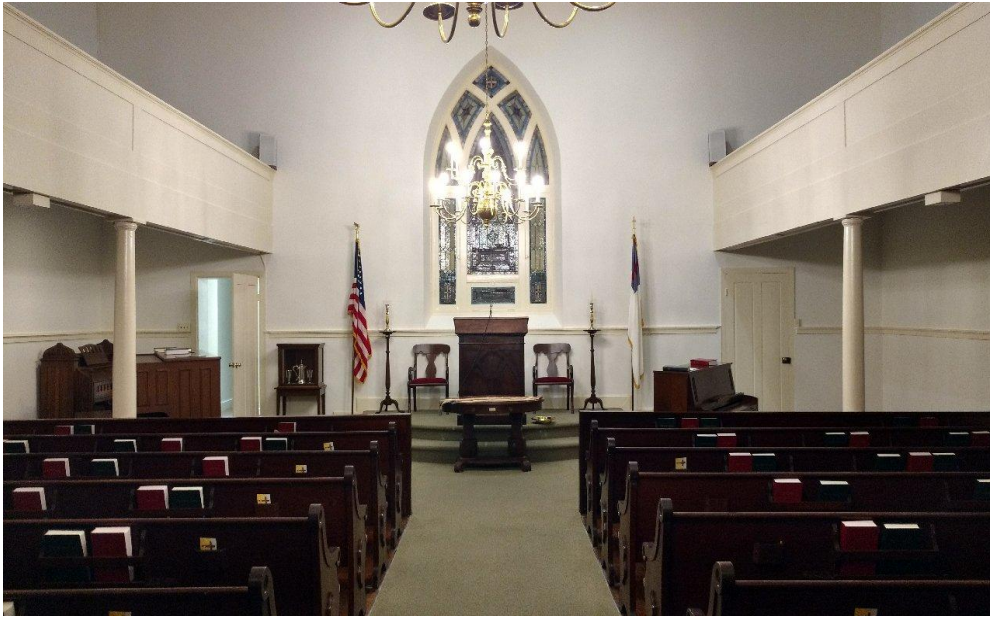
Ladies,

You are invited for fellowship and devotional time at the home of Jo Canova, 138 Wolftrap Court, (Lighthouse Point) Bumpass, VA on Thursday, July 11th at 9:00 a.m. We will have breakfast together followed by a devotional led by Debby Burt. Please bring a small dish to share. We welcome all to join us.

## Refurbishment of Sanctuary



Open for Worship



Church Picnic 2019













Welcome to our new band member Rick Teller



*Together in Christ,*

*Alana Frazier*