



First Presbyterian Times January, 2015

First Presbyterian Church
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Out of My Mind ~ for January 2015 ponderings from Pastor John

The New Year for First Presbyterian Church of Rolla promises to be a good one ... and an interesting one.

I have high confidence that sometime in the first half of the year, perhaps sooner, your new, installed, Pastor will arrive among you. This will be a time of celebration and anticipation.

What I don't hear from you is what I have not heard from any of the churches I've served as a transitional pastor over the past 15 years or so. So, you are not unusual in this. What I have not heard is this: "We are as ready as we can be from our year and a half of work in preparation, and we will *continue* to work on our relationships, organization and outreach, so as to succeed, long-term, with our new pastor."

I have written and spoken about the goal of our interim work is to enable, so far as possible, a durable, effective and felicitous relationship with your long-term [think 'installed] Pastor.

So, I ask you this: what do you understand is your continuing work? If what comes to your mind, and it would be perfectly natural if it did ... is something like: "Well, I'll continue to do what I'm currently doing ... attending worship, working for the church on committees and such, giving, and enjoying the caring relationships that we've developed."

A summary truth in social systems [like our church community] is: "If you want more of what you've got, keep doing what you are doing."

This cuts both ways. I find that you all are doing some very fine things ... so, keep doing them! You are a truly welcoming church; you are a generous church; you are a hard-working church ... all good!

However, I know that you all are not content with the slow growth you are experiencing. So, keep doing what you are currently doing, and you will get more of the same.

I do hear from some of you that the 'Installed Pastor' will be a magic bullet of some

sort ... a sort of spiritual fertilizer, the equivalent of a Church version of Miracle Grow. I deliberately wrote that to sound a bit silly, because I believe it is ... natural, but not particularly rational. Now, your new pastor will bring a set of skills, a person and personality that is different from me or Gary or Pastor Jennings, and difference in style and taste, which will be occasion for learning and appreciation.

However, if you all are 'the same' with your new pastor, you all will experience much the same. ["Keep doing what you are doing, to achieve more of what you already have."]

Let me try to answer your unasked question. The church-growth model, from which FPCR grew is a mid-20th Century model. Some call it "The Field of Dreams Church." Remember the Kevin Costner movie, *Field of Dreams*? ... *Build it and they will come!* ... As much as we yearn for a come-back of the old experiences, I do not believe that will ever happen.

I have been working to 'fertilize,' so to speak, a new kind of growth among you all. It is a 180 degree shift in focus, from the inward: we will welcome them! To: we will reach out to join our Lord Jesus where He is working to draw people to Himself.

Evangelism is certainly an expression of this. Building new relationships beyond your current web, which for many of us is mostly already comprised of church folk. Getting comfortable with taking the initiative, rather than waiting for someone to approach first. "Build it and they will come ..."

So, I'll ask again:

What do you understand as your continuing work, as your new pastor arrives among you?

I'm praying and hoping that you are getting some glimpses of *being the mission of Jesus* and reaching out in that call and power in new ways.

I'll close with an invitation. I've put together some useful perspectives and practices that will help produce the future with your new pastor, which you all have been working toward, and hoping for. We will tackle those perspectives, practices and processes on Saturday, January 24th, from 10 to 3. If you want to be involved in achieving the future you all desire for this dear church, come and participate in this event. [It's not just for new Ordered Ministers and Trustees, though I want all of them participating that day, certainly.]

your temporary shepherd, John

Work for our common good; love openly; and, get to know God better this month!

Reader Board

Note from Pastor John

Our Reader Board needs a passionate communicator to put up community focused messages! We routinely change the message early in the week, and all the paraphernalia are easily accessible.

So, if you are interested in making this important aspect of our visibility part of your ministry, please let Betti Jo or any member of the Membership Committee know!

Poem/Song

by Mary Kwantes

Jesu Baby, my sins lay thee in a manger in a stall.
Jesu Savior here I pray thee; here in grateful joy I fall.

Jesu tickled in thy straw bed, soon for sins be pricked with thorns.
Hear the angels singing o'er head; men will give you jeers of scorn.

Jesus Baby son of woman, Savior Son of God's great love,
Know our suffering and our groaning; grant our prayers from heaven above.

Membership News

Mary Kwantes

The Body of Believers is a concept that includes connection between the members and that each member senses a function or calling from God to serve Him in this world. For the most part we serve God by serving each other. We connect with each other by greeting each other, asking about each other's lives, seeking to help if there is need... the Biblical "cup of cold water" praying for those in need, and finally listening for the voice of God when we pray and seeking new ways to serve and connect. Membership committee seeks over and over to do this in our congregation. We talk about members, visitors, frequent attendees, their needs, and how we can serve God by serving these people.

We plan meals and activities together which allow for that deeper connection that does not always happen briefly after worship. Our diligent commitment to fellowship time is sometimes discouraging when week after week we must "seek" volunteers to make coffee and drinks. We are in need of more ideas that serve you and volunteers to help with the commitments we have made. Please consider attending one of our fellowship meals. Especially consider attending one of our outreach activities when we ask the community into our church and serve them, usually with FOOD, or perhaps invite a student to lunch.

This commitment is more challenging than writing a check or bringing in canned goods. It invades our personal space and time, but it can be so rewarding, as when new folks walk into church or Fired Up! Consider coming and inviting a neighbor. Our congregation is doing a good

job of greeting visitors and making them welcome, but this year consider in your resolutions to put an evangelistic commitment into your Kingdom work. "The harvest is ready but the laborers are few."

Having said that, our January First Friday meal is to be on January 2 at Los Arcos at 5:30. The Family game night is tentatively scheduled for January 18 at 5:30 with our snow out date as January 25. Bring a favorite game and a snack to share. Pizza and drinks will be provided. If you cannot attend consider a donation to help with pizza costs. (At our October new member/visitor pizza party we fed 5 college-age folks, one entire family from Block Party contact, and one frequent visitor)

We loved the Chili Contest so much we are doing it again on February 8 at 5 pm. Singing and maybe square dancing will be included and we will invite preschool families.

Yarning for God

Susan Murray

The Yarning for God group made their first delivery to Russell House. It contained 18 hats, 6 scarves, 4 sets of mittens, 3 quilts, 3 blankets, and 1 cowl set. These will be distributed to the women and children who are at the domestic violence shelter. The group will continue to make more hand-made items. All are welcome to join us after worship in the Fellowship Hall or on the 2nd & 4th Mondays in the Sadler Lounge at 7:00 p.m. for fellowship and crafting. The items made by any technique are welcome and you can donate items made at home. We also accept donations of yarn.

January Birthday and Anniversaries

Happy Birthday to Melba Read, Pat Look, Mary Williams, Katherine Cook-Russell, Dixie Finley, Jan Roberts, Angela Isaac, Jonathan Blake, Tricia Lewis, Carlene May, Morgan Romine, Bob May, Carol Bennett, and Eban Fox.

Happy Anniversary to Leslie and Steve Skelton, Bill and Sharlene Morgan, Kay and David Barr, and Cheryl and Lenn Koederitz.

From the Office

Betti Jo Pyatt, Office Manager

The Flower Chart and sign-up sheets for Worship Leader, Fellowship, and Sound booth have been posted for 2015. Please review and sign-up where you can help out this year.

Any officers whose terms have expired and no longer need your church keys, please return them to Betti Jo in the office to sign out to the new officers.

I will have the new list of 2015 committees available soon after their January meetings to learn what roles they will have and get them distributed and posted.

2015 Ordered Ministers Roster

Elders: Jonathan Kimball, Rob Heberer, Mary Kwantes, Marilyn Schmidt, Ming Leu, Britt Whitaker, Susan Murray, Eleanor Van Horn, and Christine Rueff.

Cynthia Hobart – Clerk of Session

Deacons: Carrie Aswegan, Kathleen Dean, Bill Neely, Jr., Lee Bennett, Bob Yenser, Marian Pruitt, Jay Turner, Sophia Leu, and Amy Whitaker.

Trustees: Ray Evans, Darryl Alofs, Bud Pumfrey, Larry Roberts, Kathi Turner and Ray Fox.

I pray everyone has a happy, healthy, safe, and prosperous New Year and 2015.

....God Bless