

THE BULLETIN

A Successful Church

What is a successful church? How does it look like? How many members should a church have to be counted as successful? How many programs? How big of a budget? Actually, it's measured according to its members spiritual maturity. Well, how do we measure that? I'm so glad you asked! When talking about the way one can recognize the spiritual condition of a person, in Matthew 7:20, Jesus said: "Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them." The measurement is not knowledge, gifts, talents, money, health, age, or blessings; but fruit.

In Galatians 4:19, Paul told the Galatians churches: "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." Once the repentant believer is baptized, the Holy Spirit lives in him and starts the process from being a baby in Christ to think and live like Christ. In order to achieve that, I need to let the Holy Spirit guide my life. Romans 8:14 says: "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God" (the meaning of "children" here is not merely being born of God, but those who are imitating Him, those who are becoming like the Father).

We will always have babies in Christ in a growing church; but something is wrong when those babies are the ones who have spent years in the church. It's easy to see when I let the Holy Spirit guide my life, because He puts to death my old self and shows me -through my senses and extremities- His amazing fruit: "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22b-23a).

The church is the body of Christ, so the goal is to be able to match the actions of the body with the mandates of the Head, and each one of us needs to do our part. Please don't use this article to point your finger toward others. I'm pointing my finger toward the mirror. No, not a mirror where I can see the reflection of others, but my own reflection. Let's not be immature "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ." (Ephesians 4:15).

Elmer Pacheco

The Manchester church of Christ

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Our Deacons:

Tony Casella- Finance
Fred Hillhouse- Facilities
Doug Paul- Education
Stuart Peacock- Worship
Pete Steffensen- Facilities
David Skerry- Benevolence & Outreach


GIVE THE DEVIL
AN INCH AND
HE'LL BE YOUR
RULER



Our Family News

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household," Ephesians 2:19, NAS95.

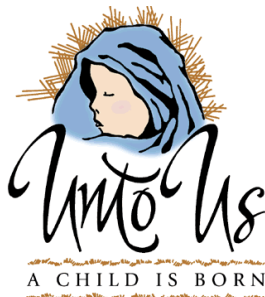
If you're a visitor to our church, welcome! If you have questions, we welcome them; please don't hesitate to ask Park Linscomb our minister (the really tall guy) or any other church member.

THIS AND THAT

Calendar change: Due to so few people being available to come, we WON'T be having a Christmas Eve service on

Thursday, though we will have a "Christmas Eve Eve" service on Wednesday Dec. 23. Earlier last week we thought that Wednesday services for Dec. 23 would be canceled in favor of a service on Christmas Eve—*that has changed.*

Caroling will be Sunday December 20th. We will be leaving the building as a group at



2:50pm. So please start arriving around 2:40. We have a few places we will be traveling to! Our plan is to end around 5.

Wes Plybon's grandfather (Deb Plybon's father) died this Wednesday. Please pray for the family.

WHAT CAN YOU LOOK FORWARD TO THIS WEDNESDAY FOR DINNER?...stroganoff, rice pilaf, salad, veggie, and dessert. Come join in a warm meal and warmer fellowship on Wednesday evenings.

DVDs of our Evangelism Rehabilitation Seminar (by Doug Hamilton) are available in the foyer. If you didn't get a chance to go, or if you'd like to have it to refresh yourself, please pick up a set (3).

A congregational game night is being planned for January. Don't let the depths of the winter get you down; plan on coming to enjoy a chance to have fellowship and fun together as the family of God. Look for details soon.

THANK YOU SO MUCH...

Everyone who came to Monday Night for the Master. So much was done.

The Teens who came to work on Monday evening to start on the Youth Rally in April.

PRAYER LIST:

Good Works: Bible studies in progress, the Gander Brook Center for Christian Leadership, our website, MNFM, food pantry, Penny Ranger's evangelistic efforts online



Health: Jim Cordaro's mom, Marge Simon, Jennifer Dutch, Lynn Millette, Louise Linscomb, Brian Day, Peggy Mailloux, Penny's niece Chelsea, Mary Jane Parker, Dave Seguin, Gary Chase Jr., Natalie Cleavitt, David Lovering, Linda Tetrault and her brother Bob, John Matthew and Anni

Struggles: Wes Plybon's family (death of grandfather), Deniza Chase's niece and her children, Randy Stevens, Mark Brown & Emma, Jim Kenison, and brethren who have forsaken the assembly.

Leadership: Ministers, Elders, Deacons, Teachers, Parents

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

DATE	ACTIVITY	WHERE
Dec. 12	Adult Christmas party	Skerry home
Dec. 19	Teen Christmas party	King's home
Dec. 20	Caroling	mtg at the building
Dec. 23	Christmas Eve Eve Services	the church building

A Word of Encouragement

"For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it." Hebrews 2:1, NAS95.

CHRISTMAS AND PROMISES

God's greatest promise to mankind is almost as old as the world itself.

Only a virtual half-beat after Adam and Eve had committed the sin that ruined the world God was giving guilty mankind not only the consequences of their foolishness (the curses), but also the promise of rectification and rescue in His first prophecy about a Savior to come: Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." God was promising to provide victory over sin, the tempter, and death (sin's consequences).

But, of course, keeping promises is always more difficult than making them.

Instead of learning from our sin and doing better, mankind's behavior deteriorated to the point that every thought and intention was only evil (Gen. 6:5). In all honesty, it should have been curtains for mankind. It would have been easy for God to just point to man's gross disobedience as justification for canceling His promise. But God found Noah to be righteous, rescued him through the flood, and continued to work on this great promise.

To fulfill His promise, God chose the nation of Israel through Abraham. He guided them through years of slavery in Egypt and a miraculous liberation through 10 plagues and the Red Sea; and then He personally spoke His Law to them from Mt. Sinai. But despite the miraculous rescue and daily provision, Israel only complained, rebelled, and grumbled. They tried the Lord to the point that He was almost ready to wash His hands of them more than once. But in His great patience He continued to stay faithful to His promise.

As part of His plan, God brought Israel into the land of promise, and gave them farms, cities, and vineyards, that they had not built or planted. Still, they proved stubbornly idolatrous, sinful, unfaithful, and disloyal to the covenant. They rejected God's kingship and asked for kings like the nations—which proved to only make things worse, not better. Even so, God confirmed His promise,

Isaiah 9:6, 7 *"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."*

Still, Judah and Israel increased their idolatry, immorality and breaking of the covenant until God severely punished them by allowing their enemies to defeat them and carry them into slavery and exile.

Now apart from Israel's stiff-necked sinfulness, the Gentile world wasn't doing any better. They'd been eagerly rushing headlong to walk the broad way to destruction, Romans 1:18-32. Yet still God continued to bring His promise to fulfillment. Why would God feel any obligation to keep His promise to this rabble? Why should He have to fight so hard to give us a gift?

During and after Israel's exile, Satan—as he always has been—worked hard to scuttle God's plans to redeem mankind through villains like Haman, Antiochus Epiphanes, and king Herod. But God, faithful to His plan, found heroes and heroines to derail the villains and continue His plan to the fulfillment of His promise.

Until the fullness of time arrived (Gal. 4:4)...

- Luke 2:10, 11 *"But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*
- Luke 4:21 *"And [Jesus] began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'"*
- Matthew 20:28 *"just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*
- Romans 5:6 *"For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."*
- And 2 Corinthians 5:21 *"[God] made [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

You see, Jesus in the manger was the faithful, enduring, patient, wonder-filled, hard-won, and costly outcome of God's long-ago promise, linking Genesis with the Gospels through the book of Revelation. How faithful and loving is our God?! And how confident can we be that the hope of the resurrection and of eternal life in Heaven is an assured expectation of His faithful people?!

So, enjoy the Christmas season—but for more than the gifts, more than the wonderful family time, more than the decorations and traditions. Enjoy it, because it is a shining reminder of how faithful our Father in Heaven is to all His promises.

Park Linscomb

Our Congregational Calendar for Dec. 13 through Dec. 26

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
13 Worship 9:30 BC 11am 6pm @ bldg Kara D. BD	14	15	16 Bible classes 7pm Julie C. BD	17 Gage D. BD	18	19 Teen Christmas Party
20 Worship 9:30 BC 11am 6pm @ bldg	21	22	23 "Christmas Eve" Service, 9pm	24	25 Christmas Day	26

Bible Reading Schedule for this Week			Service Schedule for Dec. 13 and Dec. 16, 2015		
Sunday	Dec 13	Job 4	Call to Worship	Gerry Millette	
Monday	Dec 14	Job 5-6	Song Leader	Stuart Peacock	Doug Paul
Tuesday	Dec 15	Job 7-8	Scripture	Dave Skerry	
Wednesday	Dec 16	Acts 8	Lord's Supper	Fred Hillhouse	
Thursday	Dec 17	Job 9-10	Closing Prayer	Mark Casella	
Friday	Dec 18	Job 11-12	Worship Tech	George Abood	
Saturday	Dec 19	Job 13	Coordinator	Stuart Peacock	
			Devo		Dave Skerry



The Calendar for January is in the foyer! Please grab one and bring it home!

Lunch! We will be eating at the Goldenrod Restaurant TODAY! at 12!

Join us for some lunch and some ice cream!

The Teen Christmas Party is December 19th from 6-9 at the King's house! We are very excited for this event this year and have a few things planned out! Please bring a Yankee Swap gift. Here is the catch. You are in search of a Unique Christmas Ornament that is under 10 dollars! Go find something crazy! Also bring 5 dollars for pizza and bring a snack or drink if you wish!

We will be caroling December 20th! Meet at the building at 2:40 and we will leave the building as a group at 2:50.

Youth Rally is coming up fast! We will be having a meeting as a whole church in January. I am still working out a schedule for that. We will also have work days coming up for the Youth Rally and Commercials so be on the lookout for these!

Be on the look out! We will have a Congregational Game Night coming up on January 9th!

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