

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye over you . . . Psalm 32:8



CULTURE CHANGE !

Did I just say CHANGE? Some people love change - some people loathe change!

One of the things I have been pondering of late is that our future change in location (rumors are that we may move to what is presently the Orrstown Bank Administrative Center at North Pointe in the fall of 2019) may introduce us to a culture change.

What is culture, you ask? Well, it's a lot of things. What we look like. How we talk. What's important to us. What we believe. Even what we eat!

I was introduced to a heavy dose of culture change through our adoption process - going to the nation of Ukraine, a former Soviet Union satellite country, four times over the course of about six months. We probably spent 8 weeks in a land and a culture that was not our own - was far different - than what we had been used to.

In Ukraine, so many things were different, and foreign. Obviously, the language. Even the alphabet is different! They use the 'Cyrillic alphabet.' Someone once said in a movie, the letters of their alphabet are like the symbols on a calculator that no one ever uses!

The people dressed differently, perhaps more stylishly than we Americans do. Their diet was different, not so much meat, more potatoes and cabbage and vegetables. Their native arts are different; they like embroidering very much, and ethnic dances that are physically very athletic. Even how they dry clothes - very few people have dryers (they use so much electricity), and most people dry them on old fashioned drying racks to this day.

Then, when we got home, we discovered the Ukrainian culture had moved right in with us. We struggled to bridge the cultural gap, using programs like 'google translate' to try to understand each other. Debbie began to become a short order cook, because the Ukrainian taste buds and stomachs are apparently different than ours. And on and on!

So, culture. Even in the different corners of America, there are many different cultures, different kinds of people. We are a melting pot. And in some cases, we are many pots who co-exist side by side, but which don't melt or meld together all that much. I remember Matthew sharing how when his job transferred him to the big state of TEXAS, everything was big - and different. The people were big. They ate a lot of meat. They drove BIG cars (mostly trucks and SUVs). Many men, I suppose, seemed big, brash, and bold - cowboys and rednecks.

Why do I bring all this up? It's because I am imagining, that after we move to the new North Pointe campus to continue our history and heritage of making disciples, we will encounter a new and broader culture amongst the 'new people' that come through the doors to check us out. And, we need to be ready to meet, receive, love, and care for those people who may look and act a little different than what we've been used to, as a rather well hidden gem of a quiet country church!

Our initial human reaction to people who are a little different (the reaction of the nature of the flesh) can be a little off. Rather than walking across the room to greet people who are different, we can keep our distance. We can stare at them. We can turn to our well-established neighbor in church and begin to talk about them; 'hey, did you see that weird looking kid over there - the one with the sandals and green hair?' (Jesus most likely wore sandals, by the way!)

Moving will examine and test many of our spiritual skills. Like hospitality. And welcoming. And loving the lost sheep who live around here.

If we go way back in Salem's history, I suspect that our church family was fairly - I don't know how to say it - **homogenous**, maybe. People who shared much in common. Family background, maybe roots going back to Germany. Maybe roots in farming, or in Franklin County. Probably had a shared appreciation of quite traditional church architecture; steeples, bells in the bell tower, pews, altar rails. And Salem attracted many like minded people, who were seeking a traditional, smaller, country church.

Now we have been given the unique opportunity, and blessing, of expanding our reach. Kind of like the 'Prayer of Jabez' that was so popular years ago:

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.



The leadership of our church family, both staff, and board, have been praying for years for the Lord to show us how we can continue to be faithful and fruitful and **make disciples** among the rapidly diverging culture in which we live. And his surprise answer - seems to be to move us to a spot where we can much more readily engage and attract the culture - such as it is today.



The unreached and un-churched people today don't seem to be looking for quiet, traditional country churches so much anymore. They seem to connect with churches that don't represent the 'last gasp of the past' but the 'fresh breath of the spirit'; looking for what the Lord is doing today. Perhaps that is why the First Church of God (Grand Pointe) has exploded with new growth - they are able to encounter the culture in ways that are appropriate and relevant to the young people and families who are seeking a deeper connection with the Lord. Sometimes, to make disciples, we have to GO to where they can be found!

So, as we think about our future, part of our labors will be preparation - to understand, love, and welcome the kind of people who need a church family to care for them. They may come in looking a little different, they may have different ideas, but if we can show them we care, that they are welcome with us, perhaps they will become family, and like the rest of us, grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our mission is to seek and to save the lost in the world today; that is the mission the Lord Jesus has entrusted into our hands. So, let's begin to pray that the Lord would show us how to do that very well, as we contemplate our 'big move'!

If you think about it, and if you read the Gospels, you will see that Jesus regularly welcomed people who were very different . . . the untouchables, the lonely, the despised, the 'sinners', the ones no one else was willing to care for. He didn't look for people who were just like himself. This is our task as well.

I recognize that in making this move, many of us will be sacrificing some things that we truly love. And yet, if the Lord can use our church, and our relocation, to help to save lost souls from eternal condemnation, won't that be a good compensation for those things that we have lost? That will be . . . treasure in heaven.

Let's continue in prayer over this season of preparation

Pastor Art

NEW AND NOTABLE

Faith Promise Missions Program . . . the total pledged toward our \$ 75,000 annual missions giving goal for 2018 to date is about \$ 60,000. We will have one more opportunity to receive and return a commitment card this weekend, November 26, as we share together in an 'afterglow' message following our three week missions conference about our role as followers of Jesus Christ.



NEW AND NOTABLE (Continued)

This weekend: Message: *"Let's Not Forget Our Mission"*, or *"The Dangers of Becoming Distracted."* We are those who cooperate with God, to share our faith - and lovingly bring people one step at a time closer to Christ. We are those who share the gospel - and don't get distracted by other events. And yet, becoming distracted is such a concern for people today. So much going on. So many venues. So many sources of information - so much to choose from. Pastor Art will share some experiences of distracted driving (multiple accidents on Route 81), and how even churches can become distracted from the work they are supposed to be doing. Some interesting lessons from the Titanic as well . . .

Women's Ministry Craft Event: Frames. The women are invited to gather on **Saturday** morning, **December 2**, from 9 to 11 AM, and enjoy fellowship, refreshments, and create a fabulous craft with frames to take home for your holiday enjoyment. The event costs just \$ 5, and you can contact Susie Troup (597-4601) or June Stotler (369-3851) to indicate your plan to attend.

Youth Fundraiser: Paint Night. On **Monday** evening, **December 4th**, the One Way Youth Ministry is inviting you to join them for an evening of learning to paint, with art teacher Susan Shaffer, of the Joyful Arts Studio. The class will run from 6 to 8 PM, and the cost is \$ 40 per person, including all materials. We need you to sign up on or before this Sunday, November 26th. Get in touch with Slugg for more details!

NEW AND NOTABLE (Continued)

Adoption Celebration! Several years ago, we began an Orphan's Ministry aimed at helping forgotten children find families. Well, it's happening! On the afternoon of **Sunday, December 17th**, all are invited to a celebration of the adoption of Bethany Elisabeth into the Reardon family. It will be held in Salem's Community Center from 1 - 3 PM that afternoon. Look for an insert in your bulletin this weekend giving all the details!

Children's Christmas Program: Our annual children's program which helps us to see the birth of Jesus through children's eyes will be **Sunday, December 17th** at 6:30 PM.

Christmas Eve Schedule: Christmas eve occurs on **Sunday, December 24th** this year. There will be just two services that day, a morning worship service at 10 AM, and an evening 'Christmas Eve Service' at 7 PM. Come to one or both as you are led!

New Partners in Ministry: On Sunday, November 12, we welcomed some awesome new friends into the life of ministry at Salem: Paul and Mary Jane Kelly (neighbors of Pastor Jason and Julie), Scott Szabo (husband of Kay), and Rob and Beth Mertz (who have three handsome boys). Let's make them feel welcome and wanted at Salem!

New Children's Ministry Area: Honestly, we couldn't wait a few more years to renew, refresh, and revitalize our children's ministry area. Under the leadership of Amy and Tom Elliot, and with the help of Slugg and Mindy Kissinger, and Bill Nye, and others, we have a new look in the lower level of the church. Thanks all for the hard work - and the great creativity we see down there!



SALEM PRAYER CORNER . . . Please be in prayer for

✠ Ministry Needs:

- Salem relocation to North Pointe
- Care Ministry - Sandy Ibaugh
- Renewal of Children's Ministry area
- Teachers and Helpers for Children's Ministry

✠ Our Nation

- Response to many seasonal hurricanes
- Renewal of national purpose
- Recovery of patriotic spirit and unity
- Collaboration of political parties

✠ Hospital, or recovery

- Dezirae Rohrer - undergoing more tests
- Ella Moats - recovery from brain surgery
- Betty Davis, at home recovering now
- Jen Ross, recovering from plastic surgery

- Mike Hotchkiss, Back surgery TBD

✠ Suffering from pain, discomfort, illness, treatment

- Dorothy Rice: treatment for kidney cancer
- Earl Ross, treatment for prostate cancer
- Frank Gaugler, chronic blood disorder
- Janet Extine (Roy's niece) cancer, bad
- Julianna Shubert, relocating to Florida
- Bob Paxton - compression fracture spine
- Ray Bricker, Parkinsons

✠ Grieving

- Family of Essie Knouse
- Family of Doris Guyer
- Family of Betty Sellers
- Kim Myers, loss of father, Dick Hoffman

LAST WORDS: CHANGE

Change. This is a word that can really rattle us. With so much in the world changing all around us, can't we have at least one thing that remains the same - one thing that is dependable - our church?

That would be nice - if we could have a safe, unchanging place somewhere.

It turns out we do. But, it's not a building. It's not a property. It's a relationship. Our relationship with Jesus. That is something dependable and consistent. Our relationship with Jesus can be the one unchanging thing. Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today, and always. Jesus, who says 'I will never leave or forsake you.'

In a world where everything is changing (and even how and where we do church must change, to be able to be relevant and attractive to those who are perishing), isn't it nice to know there is One on whom we can depend, who will never change, even the Lord Jesus Christ?

God's Word has a number of recurring themes. One of them is this: Fear Not. We don't need to be filled with fear at the prospect of change. Because God, God's Spirit, and God's Holy Son, will be with us wherever we go. That is God's promise to us, as His children.

So, let's trust Him. And have confidence. And move ahead. And look forward to another long season of vibrant ministry, of lives touched, redeemed, and changed, through the ministry of this church, Salem.

May He bless us, along the way!

Pastor Art

