

Falls Fellowship

Some Characteristics of Healthy Churches



As I have worked with multiple churches for more than fifty years some common characteristics have emerged that for me define a healthy church.

1. Healthy churches worship Jesus Christ. That may seem obvious. But for some churches, worship seems to be more about maintaining traditions established by the congregation than glorifying Jesus Christ.

Worship is about Jesus Christ and not about church members. All acts of worship should be evaluated according to their ability to glorify Jesus Christ. It may be comforting to follow a tradition and say, "We've always done it this way" but we worship a living Savior who comes among his people as the living Lord and not as a lifeless relic. More than

Continued on page 3

Missions Corner

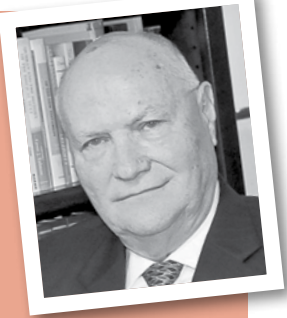
May God bless our church as we continue our missions and outreach projects during the Christmas season! 2 Corinthians 9: 6-7 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each

one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Important Dates to Remember:
Sunday, December 3: **LAST

Continued on page 2

Come Home for Christmas



Christmas was

marked by symbols, traditions and predictable routines when I was a child. Each had its place in the celebration of the season for our family and today each one evokes pleasant and vivid memories.

Holly was wrapped around the entrance from the living room to the dining room. It was fresh and, therefore, had to be replenished several times during the season. A large bough was suspended from the chandelier above the dining room table. The Christmas tree, brought fresh from the woods by my father and me, stood before the double windows in the living room dressed in ornaments and lights that were so old they had to be gently placed on the tree. Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, shepherds and various farm animals formed a manger scene on the coffee table in front of the sofa. Nearby was a Bible

See Home on page 4

Missions Corner continued ...

DAY** Raleigh Rescue Mission Giving Tree (local missions)

Sunday, December 3 and Sunday, December 10: Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (international missions) collections

Wednesday, December 6: Christmas Caroling at Hillside Nursing Home

Wednesday, December 13: Service Project Volunteer – Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC



December Missions Projects:

Raleigh Rescue Mission. Christmas Blessings Gift Program, providing Christmas gifts for local families that are homeless during the holidays. If you selected a tag from the tree, please bring your donated gift(s) wrapped in a holiday gift bag to church on Sunday December 3rd.

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. We hope you enjoyed the Lottie Moon's teacake last Sunday! Your giving to LMCO enables missionaries to be sent to make disciples and multiply churches among unreached peoples and places for the glory of God. ALL of the LMCO goes directly to the international field. This funding is used by missionaries ministering in

foreign countries and many of them, minister in lands that are not friendly to the Gospel. Please use the special envelopes in the pews or in your offering box on either Sunday December 3 or Sunday December 10th to help further international missions work. Help FBC meet our goal of raising \$2,000 for the LMCO this year.

Hillside Nursing Home. Join the FBC Choir and Girl Scout Troop as we spread Christmas cheer to the elderly! Our annual Christmas caroling event at the nursing home will be on Wednesday December 6 from 7-8 pm. Join us for fellowship and a home-cooked dinner at FBC at 5:45 pm. At 6:45 pm, we will depart for Hillside located at 968 Wait Avenue Wake Forest, NC, sing and play games with the residents from 7-8 pm.

Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. Join your church member friends in volunteering your time to help the needy this holiday season! For our holiday service project, we will be packing food for needy families from 6-8 pm on Wednesday December 13th at the Raleigh location: 1924 Capital Blvd. Raleigh, NC. Please use the sign-up sheet in the vestibule. This event is for adults and children ages 10+.

Missions at Falls

We have promoted missions at Falls in 2017 through our monetary gifts. We recognized the work of our International Mission Board and gave \$1,820 during Christmas 2016 to the Lottie Moon offering. The money was sent in 2017. We supported the work of the North American Mission Board through giving \$335. We assisted our Baptist Men in their disaster relief work in the multiple places ravaged by hurricanes. We received \$3,690 for that work. We emphasized the work of the Baptist Children's Homes and had a special speaker, Jim Dyer, tell us about the work of the Homes. Jim grew up in the Baptist Home in Kinston. We received \$1265 for the work of the Homes. In addition, we contributed \$2,400 to the Baptist Convention, \$500 to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, \$300 to the Wycliff Ministries, \$300 to the Heck Jones Offering to support the Woman's Missionary Union, and \$1,000 to the Raleigh Baptist Association. Our total missions giving this year is thus far \$11,610.00. This does not in-

Continued on page 4

Event Calendar

December 6 – Caroling at Hillside Nursing Center

December 10 – Called Church Conference –
vote on 2018 budget

December 11 – Deacons' Meeting 7 PM

December 13 – Volunteering at Food Bank
6–8 PM

December 16 – Church Christmas Dinner, 6 PM

December 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight
Communion Service, 5 PM

January 1 – New Year's Day Covered Dish
Luncheon, Noon

Continued from page 1

Healthy Congregations continued ...

any other activity, worship defines a church.

2. Healthy churches have programs that reveal the love, grace and mercy of Christ. For example, reaching people through evangelism and missions must be driven by the love that we experience from Christ. Without the driving force of Christ's love, evangelism and missions are about numbers: we do these things only to attract more people. We must be compelled by the love of Christ. Moreover, guiding church programs by the love of Christ means placing high priority on ministering to those who need physical and material help as well as spiritual. Read Matthew 25: 31-46, the great "Inasmuch" passage, and be reminded that our judgment before Christ is based on what we have done for others in his name.

3. Healthy churches know the vision that God has for them and they measure all that they do by the vision. Falls BC is not called to be like any other church. We are called to be the church that fulfills God's vision for us. A pastor friend told me that he received the newsletter of a very large church located in a city in another state and he led his church to do what that mega-church was doing. When he told me that, I had two thoughts: one, he is a lazy pastor, stealing the ideas from another church and, two, he completely misses God's vision for his church.

4. Healthy churches make disciples of members. Healthy churches understand their responsibility to help members grow as disciples of Christ. They use

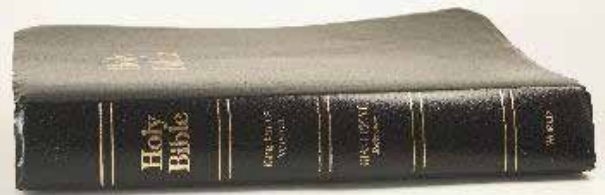


multiple methods to teach discipleship such as Bible teaching programs, small groups and mission activities. Healthy churches take literally the Great Commission where Jesus says to "go" and "teach them."

5. Healthy churches emphasize community. They have practical ways of helping people grow in their relationship with each other as they grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Community involves ministering to each other in Jesus' name. Making disciples is following the Great Commission. Building community is following the Great Commandment (Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 22:37-40).

I will continue this article in the next newsletter.

— Dr. Tom Jenkins



December Birthdays

- 3 Mindy Barham
- 4 Cheryl Jenkins
- 9 Parker Jenks
- 15 Mark Young
- 15 Taylor Bub
- 20 Barbara Barham
- 20 Phil Jackson
- 21 Rebecca Davenport
- 24 Sarah Tart
- 28 Nikki Creech



Deacons

- Linwood Barham, Chairman 919-418-1162
- Frank Powell, Vice Chairman 919-604-1285
- Julie Allen, Secretary 919-274-7160
- Tommy Brown 843-446-6540
- Alan Watkins 919-793-5548
- Brandon Long 252-903-4662



Home continued ...

opened to the Christmas story found in Luke's Gospel.

There were the sounds and aromas of Christmas. Mother baked special treats. If I close my eyes and think about them, I can smell her chocolate chip cookies even today. The record player (this was before the revolution of the digital age) sent Christmas music throughout the house. I still have some of those 331/3 LPs. (If you don't know what that is, ask your grandfather).

The memories of Christmas for many people are closely tied to memories of home. Those memories are so powerful that millions of people will go home for Christmas to reunite with family and attempt to reclaim both the memories and innocence of childhood.

The glad news of Christmas is that we can return home. Perhaps not to the house where we grew up or to the biological family which nurtured us, but we can return to the place that is a symbol of our eternal home, the place where we worship, our church. There we can sing the joyful songs of Jesus' birth with the members of our church family. There we can listen again to the old,

old story of God's loving us and sending a little baby 2000 years ago to save us from the death of sin and birth us into life everlasting. Perhaps it's been a while since you joined your spiritual family at Falls. Life's choices have taken you to other places; unavoidable circumstances have encumbered your attendance. It's time to return. We will listen to the reading of the story of Christmas at Falls and sing the songs of the season, and light the candles of the advent wreath and listen to the music of Christmas sung by our choir and played on our new organ. We want you to be with us and share in our excitement of the season and, with us, feel the joy found in the angel's announcement, "Glory to God in the highest and peace among men." Come home for Christmas.

— Dr. Tom Jenkins

Missions continued from page 2 ...

clude the many boxes we gave to Operation Christmas Child which were sent to children in foreign countries, our Christmas Tree Gifts for the Rescue Mission, and the generosity of our members in giving lovingly and quietly to directly support people in need and humanitarian projects that we have supported.

Our giving says we are a missions-minded church, as we should be. Generosity in missions promotes vision and stability in a church. When our focus is on the worldwide mission of Jesus Christ, there's no time to grumble among ourselves.



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