

The Shepherd's Staff
Support for the Journey



Quarterly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Church

*A Baptist Reformed Fellowship
meeting at*

8441 Hunnicut Rd.

Dallas, TX 75228

Pastor Jeff Gregory

Worship Pastor Wayne Conrad

Ministers: the congregation

gsccdallas@gmail.com

www.gsccdallas.org

www.sermonaudio.com/gsc

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. John 10:11

Spring 2020 Issue

Volume 2, Number 1

March 24, 2020

The Priority of the Local Church

Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). The word "church" here means an assembly, a gathering of people. Jesus' purpose in coming to earth was not only to save individuals from sin but to form a body of believers on earth who would join together to worship, to learn, and to fellowship. The purpose of evangelism is to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ so they can become disciples who grow and serve in the context of a local church. Our great joy and solemn responsibility as Christian believers is to join together on a

weekly basis to share our mutual faith in the Lord Jesus. Hebrews 10:25 tells us we should not neglect meeting together. The disruption that the corona virus pandemic has brought about in the gathering of many churches is painful to our lives as Christians. We will use technology to stay connected to some degree and pray that the Lord will enable us all to re-join together soon. "...to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen." Eph. 3:21

In Uncertain Times...

...let's remember Q & A Number 1 from the Heidelberg Catechism:

Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong— body and soul, in life and in death— to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.

He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.

Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

News...

Change in the Church Meeting Place

Our church was blessed to have its own small building on Virginia Street in old East Dallas for about 40 years. But as the neighborhood changed what little parking there was on the street disappeared. We felt it was time to move to a building with parking. A contract was written on a traditional church building a mile and half to the south, but after we sold our building the contract was canceled because of a dispute over its ownership by the present and a past congregation. Therefore, since Feb. 6 of last year we have been meeting at Pastor Jeff and Brother Wayne's house in far east Dallas.

So we are experiencing the kind of gathering the early church had in the beginning and the way it continues to meet in many places around the world, often in persecuted countries.

Here's an example from the New Testament: *Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house* (Col 4:15).

One of the blessings of our new meeting place is that we have a fellowship lunch together every Sunday after the service in our newly renovated garage-turned-into-a-library – which makes an excellent fellowship hall. Here we are one Sunday:



Missions Update

Our church has a long history of *hearty support* for world missions. Our founding pastor, Nick Britton (in 1974), had been a missionary himself in the West Indies. In the last year we added two new missionary units to the already existing 16 missionaries that we have been helping support. The new ones are:

- 1) Keith and Carmen McFaul in Paris, **France**, doing church planting.
- 2) India Inland Missions (the Pillai family) outside New Delhi, **India**. They have a new ministry to widows.

The Lord is enabling us to continue helping support the preaching of the Gospel and the planting of churches in many places around the globe.

*Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!* Psalm 67:3

What's Pastor Jeff up to on Mondays?

For more than two months Pastor Jeff has been traveling every other Monday evening to the Straight Street Ministries in Cedar

Hill. There he teaches Bible lessons on the person of the Lord Jesus to the men. He prepares a 4-page interactive handout to help the men learn and remember the lessons. The lessons are appreciated and have been well received. Here's a picture of their building which can house ten men. Outside is our friend Myron Richardson, who was a resident there for several months.



Internet Enhancements to our Church's Ministry

1) New YouTube channel

Go to YouTube and type in the search bar: *Good Shepherd Baptist Reformed Fellowship*

We plan to add various resources to help keep us as a church body electronically connected.

2) Church website: gscdallas.org

Check out our website: contributions can now be made by clicking on the "Online Giving" on the home pages.

Other enhancements are in progress.

The Apostle Paul's Longing *Thoughts for our current situation*

Paul writes in Romans 1:9-12:

"...without ceasing I mention you 10 always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— 12 that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine."

For a long time Paul had nourished a strong desire to visit Rome and visit the Christians there face-to-face. He had prayed long and hard for this to come to pass. He wanted to "see" them with his own eyes, to hug their necks and give them a holy kiss, and pour out his heart and soul to them by teaching them the Word of God. He wanted to watch the expressions on their faces, answer their questions, and rejoice with them in fellowship meals.

We understand something of Paul's longing, do we not? Since we have suddenly been cut off from face-to-face fellowship in our local church gatherings because of the corona virus situation, we now realize in a more profound way the preciousness of our local church gatherings.

We pray for the restoration of our person-to-person worship gatherings for ourselves and for all the churches of Christ around the world.

Simplified, yet Enhanced Church Name Adjustment

We have started calling our church "Good Shepherd Church" – more simplified and shorter.

And we have started using the sub-title: *"A Baptist Reformed Fellowship"*

We are a **Baptist** church because we believe in believer's baptism by immersion as the New Testament teaching and model as to *who* is to be baptized and *how* they are to be baptized. This distinguishes us from other Christian churches whose statements of belief and practice include baptizing infants (a practice nowhere to be found in the Bible).

We are a **Reformed** church because we hold to the great doctrines of grace that were re-discovered during the Reformation in the 16th century. We believe, for example, in the Five "Solas" that summarize Reformation teaching:

The Scriptures Alone
Christ Alone
Grace Alone
Faith Alone

The Glory of God Alone

We are a **Fellowship** – another word for “church” which focuses on our spiritual family relationship as brothers and sisters who join together because of our mutual faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Church Motto



*Making and Becoming Authentic
Worshippers*

Holding Fast to Our Confession

Hebrew 4:14 states: *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.*

In these uncertain times we are living in with the corona virus pandemic, if there's one thing we need to do as Christians, it is this: “Hold fast to our confession.” To “hold fast” means to hold on tightly, not to let it go. Keep it; maintain it at all costs.

What do we as a local church confess, that is, what do we believe, what do we declare? What are the truths that we hold to?

Below is an example of a confession from the scriptures that we declared last Sunday, March 22, in our worship service:

Let Us Confess Our Faith in God the King:

Yahweh is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. Yahweh is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

The Lord, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

Yahweh, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts testifies: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.”

After Jesus, the Son, had provided

purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. He is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

This confession of faith was in conjunction with the sermon for that Sunday based on Psalm 145, “A Psalm for Uncertain Times.” Hear the sermon at this link:

sermonaudio.com/sermon/324202241537067

The Lord's Supper - Holy Communion

One of the principal acts of worship as we gather on the Lord's Day is the ministry of the Lord's Table. Luke, writing in Acts 20:7 about the gathering of the saints in Troas where Paul met with the believers, records:

7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread...

We see that the purpose the church met was “to break bread,” that I, to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Luke doesn't even say “we gathered together to hear the apostle Paul.”

One reason we partake of the Lord's Supper every Sunday is because of what the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 10:16: *16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?*

The word “participation” that Paul uses here is the Greek word, “koinonia,” which also means “fellowship” or “communion.” In the Lord's Supper we experience the risen Christ's fellowship in a unique way. We look forward to the day when we can reconvene to celebrate the Lord's Table together. May it not be long!