

Steeple to People

Missional... hmmm?

AUG 2017

You may have heard this word we've been kicking around here for a few years... missional. But you may be wondering about it, still. It's some 80 years old from the time of its coining by Professor Karl Hartenstein, a missiologist who was writing in response to the theology of Karl Barth. Its main basis is that God is active in our world and calls us into activity with him. What that suggests is that the gathering of the Church of Jesus is not the point of life as a disciple. Instead, the gathering of the church is so that it is equipped to follow through on its calling, its vocation.

This is our vocation in the fullest of terms. We, each of us, have a calling. For some it's the calling of relationship – wife, husband, sibling, parent. For some it's a calling of employment - a worker, business owner, CEO, manager. For some it's a calling to community – government, armed service, organizer, neighbor. For some it's a calling to personal formation – pastor, teacher, professor, trainer, therapist. For some it's a calling to expression – visual arts, technical arts, dance, performance. Whatever it is, within it is a call to our hearts – and that is what we're called to be more than anything else we do. This can change, however, when we become a disciple of Jesus. When we begin to talk about “missional”, we look at something becoming suddenly foundational to any of these things. Missional begins with being a disciple, and any other calling is after that.

Jesus was a construction worker. He was also a rabbi, a teacher. But more than these, he was a servant of God and gave us the example of being a servant of God regardless of his other callings. He taught us how to be human, constantly in communication with God and, at the same time, serving others immediately and consistently. He brought humanity into relationship. He taught community. It wasn't just doing good things or being nice. It was connecting us to each other.

Being Missional is about always being ready to create connection between people and people or people and God. Sometimes that requires reconciliation between people we know are in conflict. Sometimes it's just being a listening ear to someone in need or pain.

Continued

Sometimes it's providing a clear, comforting statement of the Gospel to someone who is searching. Sometimes it is starting a ministry that challenges old habits or life-styles and assists people to move into life-giving futures. Sometimes it challenges us to change our lives because the calling has become too large to ignore or to leave. But the point is that it is the mark of identity. It is being a disciple.

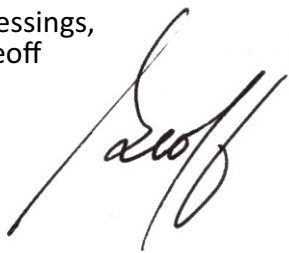
The purpose of "Church" in the Bible is described like this:

*"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."
~ Ephesians 4:11-13*

It's not just about "works of service," going on mission trips, joining non-profits or doing good things for Jesus. It's about coming into unity as a community that has faith in and personally knowing Jesus and then growing in maturity in faith – so mature that we actually look like Jesus in our character and actions. No simple thing, and something that can only be developed in community.

First Presbyterian has a striking, home-grown process of maturing in the faith that can be found for all ages in our Spiritual Formation hour on Sundays. We have the SENT Gathering where we bring in people who can teach us how to put our personal practices of faith into life-giving, even life-changing action that impacts our world. This might be being the Mom we're called to be or starting a ministry to the homeless or expressing faith in our business in more than just making ethical choices. But the direction on any of this will come through the Holy Spirit.

Blessings,
Geoff

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff', written in a cursive style.



The SENT Gathering

September 15 & 16

First Presbyterian Church Lancaster PA



**Nikki
Toyama-Szeto**

KEYNOTE

Executive
Director of
Evangelicals for
Social Action
(ESA)



**Tony
Campolo**

KEYNOTE

Sociology
Professor
Emeritus at
Eastern
University



**Chris
Hall**

KEYNOTE

President of
the Renovaré
Institute



Dave Helmuth

**WORSHIP
LEADER**

Founder of
Ad Lib Music

See. Love. Act.

The 2017 SENT Gathering brings into focus God's active work at the intersection of love and action.

A circle of pivotal keynote speakers will:

- Offer insight into how God is moving in our time
- Explore the notion that this present moment is ripe with opportunity for faith to flourish
- Help us discover how we are called by God to take part now

Register now at www.fpclive.org

Cost: \$75

(includes all seminars & workshops, lunch & dinner on Saturday)

Interim Staffing Support for Summer/Fall 2017

We are grateful for the support of the following folks who have taken on interim roles within the church to help us navigate recent staffing changes and break ground on some new frontiers of ministry.



Director of SENT - *Jen Eisenberg* has joined us to direct the SENT Gathering - our September weekend event. She has been at work on this for a few months already providing a helpful organization attention, direction and wisdom to the process. She has brought a clear vision to the design and purpose of this year's event. Her background is with InterVarsity, the para-church organization that works toward bringing

Christian fellowship and support to college campuses throughout the country. She and her husband, Jon (the VP of Advancement at Water Street Mission), and their children are regular attendees in Cherry Street Worship.

Connecting with Our College & Post-College Crowd

Ben Witmer, of our congregation, has been hired to handle a special project this summer. We have recognized that we have over 100 young adult members in our church (college age through age 30) with whom we have very little contact and very out-of-date contact information. Our desire is reach out to this population, find out how best to communicate with them, learn about how they would like to be connected to the church and develop a contemporary form of communication that serves them well and offers stronger connection both to the church and to each other. Ben is gathering a group that is tasked with laying the groundwork for this effort so that it can continued to be carried forward by the church after he returns to his studies in the fall.

Supporting Our Youth - *Justin Inners* is a seminary trained young man who's been working as a volunteer with our Student Ministries for over a year. He is a skilled youth worker who has held full-time youthwork positions in other congregations. He has stepped into helping our youth program continue and even expand a bit this summer. He and his wife and children are regular attendees in Cherry Street Worship and we're glad they're a part of our community. We're especially glad that he's lending his knowledge and abilities to leading the youth ministry of our church for the summer.

Early Sunday Worship Service Returns to 8:30 - Our 8:45 Sunday morning worship service has returned to 8:30am as of July 16. The Elders approved a six-month experiment to explore whether a simple change of timing might enhance attendance in Adult Formation classes, provide a more natural interchange of people from different services mixing with each other between services and generally support developing a greater sense of community. Some of this happened but it was felt that overall, after talking with class attendees, choir members, teachers and worshippers, that the earlier time slot was still the best. So, we have closed out experiment with the decision to return to 8:30am for early Sunday worship.

Call for Church Officers - Who should lead our church? Who should help care for those in need in our congregation? Who should watch over and maintain the use of our building and also give guidance on where to invest God's resources for the future? We are seeking to raise up the next class of elders, deacons and trustees. Please consider prayerfully who you might recommend taking on one of these roles (you can include yourself, too) and let one of the pastors know. You are not signing them up for anything. You're just bringing them to the attention of our church leadership so that we can discuss the work clearly with them and allow them to make a decision. Please let us know your suggestions by August 20th. Thanks!

Peace

Be it of heart or be it of mind
The search for the Lord's Will
Can never be only one of a kind
Many directions each day we take
Many decisions each day we make
How can we know which is right
Shield us from darkness and pursue God's True Light
Then don't forget the power of prayer
For we all are His children, under His care
We must not think of it only in times of war
God's peace is in reach, always not far
Seeking for peace? You might ask
A description is no easy task
When sitting in silence, as I am right now
With Bible in hand, that might be how

Dedicated to Don Hackett, my friend and yours
Henry C. Stouffer, Jr.



All Church Picnic - AUG 26 **Overlook Park Pavilion - 5pm** 2040 Lititz Pike, Lancaster

Join us for fellowship and fun! Bring your favorite covered dish/picnic fare to share. Hess' BBQ will be supplied, along with plates/cups/silverware. Bouncy castle for kids, Bocce courts and playground adjacent.

A Fruitful Week at Summer Kids Choral Camp

Ashley D'Onofrio, Stephan Englehart and their friend, Jonathan Shoff, directed FPC's third Summer Kids Choral Camp at the end of June. Twenty 2nd to 5th grade children became a choir as they played and sang together. Anne Meeder, Eileen Laurence, and Timothy Sidebothom were among our musical guests introducing the choir to the joys of music. The week ended with a very fun and moving concert in partnership with the Wheatland Chorale in which both choirs performed songs separately and jointly. Dave Patterson remarked after his experience of this event, that introduced 14 families to our church, that FPC had done a "good thing" that evening. I agree with Dave that this is what we do when we are at our best. Thank you to FPC members in the Chorale, Ashley, Stephan and Mark Williams for their good work. Thank you also to several donors who gave scholarships that enable kids to afford camp. And special thanks to Cheryl Buesking, Liz Beattie and Chris Paul for their volunteer support as 'grand-parent' shepherds of this wonderful group of children. This year will be difficult to top!

Music Excellence Award at Ross Elementary

For the third year in a row, FPC has granted the top performing 5th grade girl and boy at George Ross Elementary School with the Music Excellence Award. Each student receives two tickets to the Fulton Theater. The award is presented at the 5th Grade graduation ceremony by Dan Snyder who gets to tell the history of music appreciation at FPC and reports how proud our church is of children who strive for musical brilliance. This year's recipients were Lily Houck and Jose Rivera. Thanks to those who help provide scholarship funding for this honor.

GIVING OVER & ABOVE

BLUE CHALLENGES

FOR AUGUST

AUG 6 & 13 Heads Up Lancaster

Heads Up is a non-profit network of educators and artists that develop relationships with youth through innovative educational partnerships. Through school-based programs (both during and after school) and summer programs, professional artists, teachers and Artist Mentors engage students in visual arts, music, dance, design and educational programs designed to expose and empower their God-given talents and passions.

AUG 20 InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship is a vibrant campus ministry that establishes and advances witnessing communities of students and faculty. They minister to students and faculty through small group Bible studies, large group gatherings on campus, leadership training, thoughtful discipleship and life-changing conferences and events.

AUG 27 Campus Ministries @ MU

Campus Ministries at Millersville University focuses on the need for students to connect (and for many, re-connect) to the Christian faith holistically. By providing both environments and opportunities for students to explore, experience, engage, and express, they endeavor to cultivate an atmosphere of spiritual development that produces life-long Christian faith.



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