



*From the Pastor:*

Dear Friends,

Every year our denomination asks for various statistics from local congregations in order to publish them amongst our sister churches, as well as to study them for various patterns and insights.

Statistics don't always tell a story, however, they do present us with some interesting facts.

Last year our church grew by 23 members. Sadly, we lost six members to the heavenly city. We baptized five people.

Our church took in a little over \$200,000 in donations.

Our Sunday school hour had over 60 participants, including nine teachers.

What should we think of these statistics?

First, we should see the Lord's faithfulness. He sustained our congregation during a time of pastoral transition. A class full of new members was waiting to join the church. And our Lord sustained his church financially through a period of uncertainty.

Another significant consideration is that the Lord is the one who grows his church, and he does so through his simple tools given to us in the Holy Scriptures. Every new member who united with our congregation this year said they were looking for a God-honoring, word-centered and Christ-saturated congregation. If we are faithful to the marching orders that are Lord gives us in his Word, our church will continue to grow with the growth that only God can give us.

One of the missing areas in this denominational report, I think, is a brief narrative section that allows the Session to describe what we believe is true of our congregational life at this particular time.

Our Session would happily report that our congregation is thriving in many ways. Our worshipping community is faithful, active, joyful, growing and we can note this by watching people come early and stay late at the events of the church.

May the Lord continue to bless our life together as we march toward Zion!

**Update from Connie Bennett - Trinidad Missions Trip**

Connie returned safely on Sunday night. She writes, "The trip was a rollercoaster, but God is working in Trinidad! I look forward to sharing." Many thanks to everyone for their prayers and generosity in giving toward the financial costs of the trip. All needs, including unexpected expenses due to travel delays, were all met by the Lord's people!

### MEN'S LUNCH

Join us for lunch at Southbound Sandwich Works on S. Church St at Noon on Monday, February 1 to discuss Chapter 1 of Masculine Mandate. No prior reading is necessary! If you would like a copy of the book, please see Pastor Crotts.

### WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Please plan to attend a women's fellowship luncheon Saturday, March 19 at Two for Tea at 11:30! More details to come.

### LADIES MONTHLY BOOK STUDY

Please join us on Tuesday evening, February 9 at 7 PM as we resume our book study.

### UPDATE FROM GENE PARKS

I came home on Sunday afternoon. Thank all of you for your prayers for me, God has truly been with me in these past days. Be of good cheer! Gene

# TRUST

in the Lord with all  
thine heart and he  
shall direct thy paths  
PROVERBS 3:5-6

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT FIRST ARP

#### January

- 27 Ladies Weekly Bible Study - CANCELED
- 31 Fifth Sunday Hymn Sing and Social

#### February

- 1 Men's Lunch
- 2 Ladies Weekly Bible Study
- 7 Lord's Supper
- 9 Ladies Monthly Book Study
- 10 Ladies Weekly Bible Study
- 14 Congregational Luncheon
- 17 Ladies Weekly Bible Study
- 18 Stated Session Meeting
- 23 Young at Heart

#### March

- 2 Ladies Weekly Bible Study
- 5 1st Saturday Workday
- 6 Lord's Supper
- 7 Men's Lunch
- 8 Ladies Monthly Book Study-PM
- 9 Ladies Weekly Bible Study
- 13 Daylight Savings Time
- 16 Ladies Weekly Bible Study
- 17 Stated Session Meeting
- 20 Palm Sunday
- 22 Young at Heart
- 24 Maundy Thursday Service
- 27 Easter Sunday

### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

#### BIRTHDAYS

Sarah Ickes	2/1
Donald Childrey	2/2
Dylan Jones	2/2
Harold Boswell	2/4
Janice Richardson	2/4
John Robinson	2/7
George McKinney	2/10
Margaret Owens	2/10
Abigail Newton	2/13
Jan Burwell	2/15
Karen Hoke	2/17
Lynn Limon	2/18
Al Wright	2/18
Alex Jones	2/22
John Greeson	2/23
Karen Jones	2/27
Mary Lou McKinney	2/27
Jim Christopher	2/28
Tim Bessette	2/29

#### ANNIVERSARIES

John & Cathy Young (37)	2/3
Gene & Helen Parks (64)	2/8
Ossie & Jennifer Spaulding (20)	2/14

### MUSIC MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

Any member who would like to serve the Lord in the music ministry of the church, contact Ed Limon.

Handbell practice resumes on February 2 at 6:15 PM.

#### Nursery:

Jan 31: Nicole Newton / Bryan Ickes  
Feb 7: Nicole Newton / Carol Erb

#### Counter:

Jan 31: John Robinson  
Feb 7: Jay Snow

#### Deacon Duty:

Jan 31: Glenn Owens  
Feb 7: Stephen Robinson

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