

"Hot Off the Press"

First Presbyterian Church Newsletter



June 2017

www.fpcgatesville.org

~ Pulpit Ponderings ~

A few days ago, a church member asked me, "Now that we are one, just what is an evangelical?" In my bumbling attempt to answer that question, I thought I would begin a tutorial on just what evangelism is and what being an evangelical is all about. So, here is my attempt to do just that.

"Evangelicalism"¹ is a worldwide, trans-denominational movement within Protestant Christianity which maintains the belief that the essence of the gospel consists of the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ's atonement.^{2,3} Evangelicals believe in the authority of the Bible as God's revelation to humanity, and in spreading the Christian message.

Its origins are usually traced back to the 1730s with English Methodism, the Moravian Church (in particular the theology of its bishop Nicolaus Zinzendorf and his community at Herrnhut), and German Lutheran Pietism. While all these phenomena contributed greatly, John Wesley and other early Methodists were at the root of sparking this new movement during the First Great Awakening. Today, Evangelicals are found across many Protestant branches, as well as in various denominations not subsumed to a specific branch.⁴ Among the leaders and major figures of the Evangelical Protestant movement were John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Billy Graham, Harold John Ockenga, John Stott and Martyn Lloyd-Jones. The movement gained great momentum during the 18th and 19th centuries with the Great Awakenings in the United Kingdom and North America.

The Americas, Africa, and Asia are home to the majority of Evangelicals. The United States has the largest concentration of Evangelicals in the world; its community forms a quarter of the population, is politically important and based mostly in the Bible Belt.⁵ (*NOTE: While this may be true, ECO is predominantly on the East and West coasts, though the numbers are growing in the South.*) In the United Kingdom, Evangelicals are mostly represented in the Methodist Church, Baptist, low church Anglicans and now among Presbyterians.

Evangelicalism, a major part of popular Protestantism,⁶ is among the most dynamic religious movements in the contemporary world, alongside resurgent Islam.⁷ While on the rise globally, the developing world is particularly influenced by its spread.

Now with all that said, we must remember that we are Presbyterians and not of the charismatic ilk. We, as members of ECO, are now members of an evangelical Presbyterian denomination. We must be aware that as a Presbyterian church, ECO still adheres to Reformed theology and Presbyterian polity.

The beliefs of ECO are expressed in a statement of *Essential Tenets*⁸ which affirm that the Old and New Testaments are infallible and authoritative, containing everything necessary for faith and life.⁹ In common with other Christians, ECO believes in the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation—the “*two central Christian mysteries*” – and that the only hope of salvation and adoption as children of God is God’s grace in Jesus Christ.¹⁰ Reflecting its Reformed heritage, ECO believes that, as a consequence of the Fall of Man, humans lost free will and are incapable of turning towards God. Salvation is only made possible by the irresistible grace of God, who chose the elect before the world was created.¹¹

The Essential Tenets explain that within the church God’s grace is received through the preaching of the Word of God, the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and church discipline.¹² ECO practices open communion.¹³ The offices of teaching elder, deacon, and ruling elder correspond to Christ’s three-fold office of prophet, priest, and king. Because it believes that both men and women are called to all ministries in the church, ECO ordains women. All church members are to embody the three-fold offices in their daily lives by sharing and enacting the Gospel and extending the lordship of Jesus Christ.¹⁴ According to the Essential Tenets, progressive sanctification is an expected characteristic of a Christian life. This includes a life of prayer, regular self-examination (especially guided by the Ten Commandments), and sincere confession of sin. According to the Essential Tenets, Christians are to maintain lives of chastity either through celibacy or marriage between a man and a woman.¹⁵

While ECO recognizes the Bible as the primary authority governing matters of faith and doctrine, the Essential Tenets affirm the *Book of Confessions* (editions prior to the revision of the Heidelberg Catechism) as a faithful explanation of scriptural truth and a subordinate standard of doctrine.¹⁶ The *Book of Confessions*, inherited from the Presbyterian Church (USA), includes the following creeds, confessions, and catechisms:

- Nicene Creed
- Apostles’ Creed
- Scots Confession
- Heidelberg Catechism
- Second Helvetic Confession
- Westminster Confession of Faith with the Shorter and Larger Catechisms
- Barmen Declaration
- Confession of 1967
- A Brief Statement of Faith (written in 1983 for the creation of the Presbyterian Church (USA))

Lastly, I want to affirm that whatever the future holds for FPCG, I strongly believe that I know the members of this congregation well enough to say that the personality of this church and its grace, love, compassion, and service for God will never change. I praise God that His presence is always felt and seen here. God bless each of you now and forever.

***Standing on His Promises and, As Always,
In His Grip ...Shalom Aleichem (Peace Be Unto You) ...***

Your Most Obedient and Humble Servant,

Pastor Buddy

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” – Matthew 28:19 (NIV).

Footnotes:

1. Primarily in the United States, where Protestants are usually placed in one of two categories – Mainline or Evangelical.
2. The Concise Oxford Dictionary. Oxford University Press. 1978.
3. Operation World
4. Christianity report
5. How Many Evangelicals Are There?, Wheaton College: Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals
6. A flexible term; defined as all forms of Protestantism with the notable exception of the historical denominations deriving from the Protestant Reformation.
7. Religion in Global Civil Society by Santa Barbara Mark Juergensmeyer Professor of Sociology and Director of the Global and International Studies Program University of California
8. Essential Tenets and Confessional Standards. ECO:A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.

9. Ibid., p. 2.
10. Ibid., pp. 1–4.
11. Ibid., p. 4.
12. ECO Polity and Discipline, ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, p. 5.
13. Ibid., pp. 4–5.
14. Ibid., p. 5.
15. Ibid., pp. 2,7.
16. Ibid., p. 6.

~ **Mediation Update** ~

Beloved Brothers and Sisters of First Church, the time is now upon us to meet with the leaders of Grace Presbytery to discuss our church property. Members of your Session and I will meet with representatives of Grace Presbytery which consist of presbytery leaders, clergy, and elders of Grace, in Waco, 9am at the Baylor Law School. The mediator is the Honorable Jeff Kaplan, Federal Magistrate (Retired). Please be in prayer for all concerned during the day as we only want what is best for the church.

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and He will make your paths straight” – Proverbs 3:5-6*

~ **Famous Quotes** ~

Charles Spurgeon and D.L. Moody are two of my favorite evangelical preachers and I want to share some of their famous quotes with you, so for the unforeseeable future I will offer these tidbits.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon became a Christian at the age of 15 and at the age of 19 became a pastor at the largest Baptist church in London. It did not take long for him to become one of the most famous preachers around. He was soon preaching to crowds of over 10,000 and his preaching was published and circulated to thousands every week. He later formed a pastor college and continued writing numerous famous books that are still read today.

“Friendship is one of the sweetest joys of life. Many might have failed beneath the bitterness of their trial had they not found a friend.”

“Care more for a grain of faith than a ton of excitement.”

“Your emptiness is but the preparation for your being filled, and your casting down is but the making ready for your lifting up.”

“We are not responsible to God for the souls that are saved, but we are responsible for the Gospel that is preached, and for the way in which we preach it.”

Dwight Lyman Moody, more commonly known as D.L. Moody was born to a farmer’s family in 1837. He only attended school until grade 5 and left the busy farm life at age 17. In Boston, his uncle hired him as a shoe salesman, but he could only keep his job if he attended church regularly. He had high hopes of earning great money in shoe sales. His Sunday school teacher visited him at his Uncle’s store where he led D.L. to Christ. Soon he moved to Chicago in pursuit of that shoe sales career. It was there that he was called to ministry through the YMCA where his desire was to begin a Sunday school for the children. He is known for his work with the youth of the city in his Mission Sunday school. In 1864, he founded and pastored the Illinois Street Church, now known as The Moody Church. He expanded into more evangelist ministries, including a great Civil War outreach to both Union and Confederate troops. D.L. Moody was a great leader and trainer of missionaries in America. Long after his death in 1899 his ministry continues through the Moody Bible Institute. He was not a man of few words. The Lord gave him great speech and his quotes are repeated by many even today.

“Real true faith is man’s weakness leaning on God’s strength”

"But, a man said to me, no one has come back, and we don't know what is in the future. It is all dark, and how can we be sure? Thank God! Christ came down from heaven, and I would rather have Him coming as he does right from the bosom of the Father, than anyone else. We can rely on what Christ says, and He says, 'He that believeth on Me shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' Not that we are going to have it when we die, but right here to-day."

"There are three kinds of faith in Christ:

- 1. Struggling faith, like a man in deep water desperately swimming.*
- 2. Clinging faith, like a man hanging to the side of a boat.*
- 3. Resting faith, like a man safely within the boat (and able to reach out with a hand to help someone else get in)."*

"Faith is the foundation of all society. We have only to look around and see this."

~ Announcements for June 2017 ~

ELDER & GREETER FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE: Elder Claire Ashby

THE LORD'S SUPPER will be observed during Sunday's worship service, **June 4**. All who have joined with Jesus Christ through their baptism as well as children who have been instructed by their parents are welcome to participate.

LADIES' EVENING BIBLE STUDY is Wednesday evening, **June 7** at 7pm in the Fellowship Hall.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN The Ladies will meet at 10:30 AM, Tuesday, **June 13**, in the Fellowship Hall for Bible study and lunch TBD. All ladies are welcome.

MEN'S BREAKFAST will be held **June 14** at 8am at Rancher's Steak House, Wednesday. All are welcome - bring a friend/neighbor.

SESSION MEETING will be 7pm, **June 21** in the Fellowship Hall.

ANNUAL CHURCH TRIP TO MO-RANCH CONFERENCE CENTER: The Annual Church Trip to the Mo-Ranch Conference Center and Church Camp at the Guadalupe River area of Hunt, Texas is planned for **June 30-July 2**. A Saturday evening devotional will be observed by all attendees and a Sunday morning worship service at the outdoor chapel will be presided over by Pastor Wheat and Reverend Dr. Stephen Davey. Please pray for safe traveling for all concerned throughout the weekend.

LITURGISTS (LAY READERS): Pastor Buddy is always looking for a few good men and women who will assist in the worship service as lay readers. If you can breathe and read this is a great way to contribute to the worship of God. Just pick a Sunday, sign up, and everything you need for the reading is provided for you.

BIRTHDAY FUND: Several years ago, the Birthday Fund was established to raise funds to use in our community mission outreach. Each birthday celebrant is to donate a dollar for each year celebrated. Recently the funds have been used to assist people getting back on their feet after a tragic fire, the American Cancer Society, and for Senior Night; therefore, the funds are very low because our birthday folks have forgotten to donate. Please consider donating to this gracious fund when you celebrate your birthday. If you desire, you may designate your donation to support special missions by noting that on the check.

~ *First Presbyterian Church* ~

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www.fpcgatesville.org

Office Hours: 9 AM - 5 PM, Monday through Thursday

Mission Statement

*Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the . . .
Beauty of liturgical worship
Love of Family gathered and called by God
Desire to Serve people who are in need.*

Church Leadership

Minister: The Entire Congregation

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. D.D. "Buddy" Wheat, Jr.

Email: pastorbuddy@embarqmail.com

Cell: 254-223-2999

Music Director/Organist: Elder Sue Ashby

Clerk of Session: Elder Linda Davis

Church Treasurer: Elder Richard Ashby

Church Secretary: Carol Kacy

Session of Ruling Elders:

Class of 2017: Jack Barcroft, David Byrom, Linda Davis

Class of 2018: Claire Ashby, Gail Johnson, Bonnie Wolfe

Class of 2019: Sue Ashby, Kendra Gustin, Jyane Pearson

Scheduled Monthly Events

Sunday School	9:45 AM
Sunday Worship Service	11:00 AM
Sacrament of Communion:	1st Sunday of the Month
Penny Sunday:	2nd Sunday of the Month
Fellowship Luncheon:	3rd Sunday of the Month
Women's Circle (Bible Study & Lunch):	2nd Tues, 10:30 AM
Men's Breakfast:	2nd Wed, 7:30 AM
Women's Evening Circle (Bible Study):	1st Wed, 7:00 PM
Choir Practice:	Wed, 6:00 PM
Session Meeting:	3rd Wed, 7:00 PM
Prayer Meeting:	Thu, 9:30 AM

~ *Session Committee Chairpersons for 2016* ~

Committee

Chairperson

Administration and Stewardship

David Byrom

Worship

Gail Johnson

Christian Education

Kendra Gustin

Mission and Evangelism

Claire Ashby

Congregational Life & Membership

Jyane Pearson

Facilities/Property

Jack Barcroft

Pastoral Care

Bonnie Wolfe

NOTE: Please feel free to contact any chairperson with questions, assistance, recommendations, or critic. Also, if you would like to serve on any committee(s), please let the chairperson know your desire.