

## February Newsletter

Christendom is over. Gone are the days where we as the church provide good preaching, teaching, pastoral care, programs and worship and people just show up. Some of us are reminiscing, “Wow. Things aren’t like they used to be when everyone was a part of a church. Why aren’t people coming to church?” and the conversation stops there. Others are thinking this is an awesome time to reassess what in the world we are supposed to be about as the church. This is what we are wrestling with at The Gate- “where should we focus our energies and efforts?” Should we host more fun events so that our people can invite their unchurched friends to what we have going on? Should we have more service events? Should we move to a store front? Well, I consulted the Lord about it and this is what I’m hearing from Him, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” You may recognize those words from the last chapter of Matthew. Here’s what I am learning- when you make a church strategy about anything other than following that command, you’re making it about something other than what Jesus wants. We need to make disciples who make disciples. We need to not only teach people Jesus’ commands, but we need to teach people to *obey* Jesus’ commands. How much of what we are teaching as church leaders are we truly helping our people to obey? What percentage of what we teach people are they obeying? Are *we* obeying what we are teaching as pastors and church leaders? “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength...love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:37-39). “What you have heard from me, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also,” (2 Tim. 2:2). Jesus took on flesh, died the death you and I deserved and rose again to give us abundant life now and eternal life in the world to come. You are forgiven and set free from sin, death and the power of Satan. Wow! That’s good news! You now have God’s authority and His power to set others free by the word of the Gospel and by the Holy Spirit. Love people and proclaim the gospel! Start a prayer gathering or Bible study in the lunchroom at your school. Start a Bible study at your office before work. Throw a party for your neighbors and ask that God would help open doors for spiritual conversations. Go for it! You have God’s permission. Don’t let anyone hold you back. “If you make disciples, you always get the church. But if you make a church, you rarely get disciples,” (Mike Breen, “Building A Discipling Culture”).

### **Prayer Updates**

- For Camila, who is still undergoing cancer treatments.
- For Cindy and Linda, who continue to struggle with health concerns.
- For Owyn, who is awaiting tests for his heart.
- That God would give us at The Gate a united vision and mission and courage to share Jesus with our friends, families, neighbors, and coworkers.
- That God would light a fire in Christians all over our country that more and more people would come to believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- For all those being encouraged in the 2:47 Network to plant churches and for its executive director, Eric Wenger.

- For the Iowa District West and all of its congregations as we together seek to bring the reign of God to western Iowa. And praise God for Mark Gerken and all his awesome work in the district.
- For St. Paul, our mother church, and all of her members, that we would continue to work together to reach the lost and disciple the found in Ankeny.
- Thanksgiving for Olive Garcia, whom God has brought into his family through the waters of baptism January 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Thanksgiving for the kind and generous support of the people of St. John's Lutheran in Burt, IA and Trinity Lutheran in Algona!
- For our youth as they get ready and raise funds for the National Youth Gathering this summer.

Thank you for your prayers and support!

