

Update

Midsummer 2010



Our Mission of Love and Discipleship

FROM THE SENIOR MINISTER

I am beginning to wonder if Proverbs 29:18 is becoming the number-one-quoted passage in the Bible. The King James version puts it this way: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

The thinking is, we need vision. When the church has no vision, the church will perish. Honestly, I think many go too far with this—after all, the Church has been around for 2000 years, most of them way before modern business practices!

I do not want to dismiss the wisdom, though. We need to have vision. It is what motivates us, energizes us, directs us. But the type of vision that I think will bring lasting impact and transformation *might not be the vision that others think about.*

I am not talking about a vision of what we could do, hope to do, or dream to do. In my mind, real vision—the vision we need—is *a vision of God and His greatness, and how amazing it is to be in relationship with Him.*

We need the same vision of God that moved Isaiah to be a mighty prophet (Isaiah 6), that pushed the demoniac to go preach to the Decapolis (Mark 5), that transformed Saul to Paul (Acts 9). The song we need to hear and sing, that will propel us to be His people, is, "My God is so big, so strong and so mighty, there's nothing my God cannot do."

Think about it—isn't this the vision that moved Martin Luther, Billy Graham, Jonathan Edwards, and others? When we have this vision, then we can respond, like Joshua (in Joshua 5:14), "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

How should we respond to the vision of the greatness of God? How can we live in such a way that we reflect the greatness of God in all that we do? What is our mission?

The Servant Leadership Team and the Church Board have agreed upon a new mission for our church. I believe it is simple yet profound. I believe it is more powerful than it might appear at first glance. It comes from the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Our mission:

**We are a community of Jesus followers
who love God,
love one another,
and make disciples.**

We want to be a church that is empowered, transformed, and energized by the greatness of God to become disciples and make disciples. We want the DNA of the church to be about discipleship. In the end, when we all get to heaven, we will continue to have our vision. In the meantime, our response will be:

**We are a community of Jesus followers
who love God,
love one another,
and make disciples.**

I look forward to personally living out this vision and mission now. I am excited about unpacking it for you in the fall.

May God bless you with
His wonderful Presence,

Pastor Deryk

Deryk Richenburg

Denominational Affiliation Update

FROM THE CHURCH BOARD PRESIDENT

I would like to fill you in on a decision the Board made this spring regarding Denominational Affiliation.

Before I go on, I want to praise the work of the Denominational Affiliation Committee. This last committee prayerfully labored long and hard for well over a year, picking up the work of the previous committees, and it is without reservation that I give a resounding thanks to all who have diligently labored to bring a final report to the Board. A job well done.

In May, the Board unanimously voted to accept the final report of the Denominational Affiliation Committee, and further discussion followed as to whether to bring it as a recommendation to the congregation.

We debated long and hard over this issue, and I will cover the concerns that arose from our deliberations. After a very long meeting in May, we tabled the issue until our June meeting, during which we continued to debate. The bottom line is that we, as your elected Board, feel that this is not the time to bring this to the table for consideration. Even in this vote, we were divided by a marginal majority.

Now, I would ask for your understanding, patience, and flexibility as I unfold the series of events that led us to this decision.

The subcommittee has recommended two organizations for us to consider—one a denomination and one a network. During their deliberations, all on the committee were in favor of one organization but were strongly divided on the other organization.

Then, it came to the Board. We found that we, too, were much divided as to whether we should bring this to the church,

because of the differences within the subcommittee. This happened twice—in May and in June. Now, I will bring you back to the aforementioned matter of prayer. So much thought and prayer have gone into this issue that we cannot and should not forget this fact.

The bottom line is that we have these undisputable facts:

1. There was serious debate and uncertainty within the subcommittee.
2. There was serious debate and uncertainty within the Board—not once but two times—and we need to seriously look at that.

We all were not able to come to a common ground with this issue.

We as a Board realize that some of you have been waiting for affiliation to happen, and we have taken that into consideration; but because of a clear lack of unified direction and the differences found within the committees, we feel the Lord's leading, saying that now is not the time.

We are all concerned about change, and changes have an impact upon our life as a church. This is why I would ask you to please keep in prayer the Servant Leadership Team, your Board, the Deacons, and those others who labor and who dearly love this church and its body of believers, that we all together would seek to follow God's leading as we glorify our Lord Jesus Christ.

Joyfully serving with you,
Judy Franzen

Interim Pastoral Associate Van Hall Steps Down

What a pleasure it has been to have Van Hall with us, since last summer, as a part-time interim pastoral associate! For many of us, his return has awakened memories of his fruitful years at First Church as our beloved Associate Minister and Director of Youth Ministries. In his current role, Van's passion for the Lord—along with his pastoral skills, depth, compassion, and thought-

fulness—have served our congregation exceedingly well.

As he leaves, at the end of July, let us thank him for his great dedication and for deeply touching so many with Christ's love!



First  Church

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN WETHERSFIELD