



Bethesda Outlook

November 2015

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“I want. . . I need. . .”

Both Elvis and Meatloaf sang about needs and wants in a love relationship and I've mentioned before how we humans often get our needs and wants mixed up. What we want often gets translated by us into need, but there's really a marked difference between what we want and what we need.

Our needs are basically simple: ask anyone and the answer most likely will be some kind of version of food, safety, and shelter. Those are the basics of what we *need* to survive. If pressed, I'll bet most people would add relationship, love, and possibly family. There are a whole lot of things we could add (you can fill in the blank here), but in reality everything else is something we *want*, not anything we really *need*.

The line between need and want gets blurred easily and often, particularly in the church. One might say, “I need a particular style of worship to feel like I've been to church,” or “I need a particular style of worship to go to church at all.” That's not a need, however; that's a want. Much of the time, after hearing worship complaints, there's a scramble to give people what they *need*, not recognizing that it's really a *want*. And when the church starts catering to what people want, we engage in an unhealthy and destructive practice.

A recent edition of the Alban Institute's magazine, *Congregations*, included an insightful article by Elizabeth I. Steele with the title “How Responding to People's Needs Hurts the Church.” Like me, you might be asking the question, How could that hurt the church? at this point, but Steele makes her case well. Undoubtedly, a reason that we even ask how this is possible is because we've become so accustomed to catering to people who complain about anything that meeting people's needs feels like that's what should be happening. My internship supervisor used to make sarcastic remarks on how churches were being asked to “meet people's *felt needs*.” He recognized, even then, how harmful it is to the integrity of the church to cater to anyone's and everyone's whims.

In her article Steele writes: “Defining the church's ministry by responding to people's needs is a common notion, but because of the blurred line between want and need, no matter how much we speak of needs or

perceived needs, it puts the church in the position of being defined not by its faith or history but by people's wants. This trivializes the church, its mission, and its outreach.”

In a consumer society, anything can become a product, and, eventually, probably everything will—even one's faith life. This “consumer Christianity” is shown today in televangelists and others, like Joel Osteen. But God calls us to be church so that we can proclaim the Gospel, and the Gospel is what the world—and we, too—needs. Don't believe for a minute that the world *wants* to hear the message of the Gospel; even those of us who call ourselves Christians don't *want* much to do with it. Martin Luther noted that one characteristic of a theologian of the cross is someone who calls a thing what it is, and sometimes I wonder if we have lost the ability to do that as a church, as a people, and as a nation. But as theologians of the cross, it's what we do. So whether we want the Gospel of Jesus and its message or not, we need it, we have it, and you and I, my friend, are called and equipped by God to see that the Word is proclaimed with our lives. Steele notes that, when the church is thought of as a service provider for clients or recipients, then those clients feel they're free to complain whenever they're dissatisfied, which is, indeed the American way. But that isn't what we as church are called to do. We are called to do something much different; to *be* something much different.

“The signs of declining commitment noted by many pastors—lower rates of worship attendance, pledging, and other forms of participation—indicate [an] emphasis on receiving,” notes Steele, “and Christian faith has always been about giving, not receiving.” Of course, this is only one contributing factor to the decline of denominations and churches in this country.

As church, God's call is for us continually to be and become church, a community of faith, where, Steele writes, “[we] struggle together to draw closer to God and to express that closeness in how [we] live and interact with the world.”

How are we at Bethesda doing in that struggle?

Peace,
Pastor Anderson

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>Worship 10:15am All Saint's Sunday</p> <p>Comm. Table prep. 4:00pm—7:00pm</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>Ruth/Miriam Circle 2:00pm—4:00pm</p> <p>Bethesda Community Table 8:30am—8:00pm</p> <p>Girl Scout Leaders 6:30pm—9:00pm</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Comm. Table clean up 7:00am—12:00pm</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm—8:30pm</p> <p>Al-Anon Mtg. 7:00pm</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Girl Scouts 6:00pm—8:00pm</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Girl Scouts 5:00pm—8:00pm</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Thrivent Meeting 8:40am—9:30am</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Worship 10:15am</p> <p>Comm. Table prep. 4:00pm—7:00pm</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Bethesda Community Table 8:30am—8:00pm</p> <p>Sue's Bible Study 2:00pm—3:30pm</p> <p>Council Meeting 7:00pm—9:00pm</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Comm. Table clean up 7:00am—12:00pm</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>Veterans Day</p> <p>Care & Concern Ministry 10:00—Noon</p> <p>Foodie Book Group 6:30pm—8:30pm</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm—8:30pm</p> <p>Al-Anon Mtg.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Girl Scouts 6:00pm—8:00pm</p> <p>Finance Meeting @ Bldg. 3 7:00pm—9:00pm</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Worship 10:15am</p> <p>Comm. Table prep. 4:00pm—7:00pm</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Bethesda Community Table 8:30am—8:00pm</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Comm. Table clean up 7:00am—12:00pm</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm—8:30pm</p> <p>Al-Anon Mtg. 7:00pm</p>	<p>19</p> <p>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</p> <p>Girl Scouts</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Girl Scouts 5:00pm—8:00pm</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Movie Night 5:00pm—10:00pm</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Worship 10:15am</p> <p>Comm. Table prep. 4:00pm—7:00pm</p> <p>Community Thanksgiving 5:30 ~ Dinner 6:30 ~ Worship</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Bethesda Community Table 8:30am—8:00pm</p> <p>Sue's Bible Study 2:00pm—3:30pm</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Comm. Table clean up 7:00am—12:00pm</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Community Table Team meeting 11:00am-1:00pm</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm—8:30pm</p> <p>Al-Anon Mtg. 7:00pm</p>	<p>26</p>  <p>Thanksgiving</p> <p>(office closed)</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Men's Fellowship 8:00am—10:00am</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Worship 10:15am</p> <p>Comm. Table prep. 4:00pm—7:00pm</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Bethesda Community Table 8:30am—8:00pm</p>					



2 - Kate Kurfess	24 - Wolfgang Lill
3 - Donna Veveris	25 - Betty Henderson
15 - Trina Klingensmith	27 - Lance Anstice
18 - Larry Fischer	28 - Matthew Currier
22 - Marti Harper	

Facilities and Grounds

Facilities and grounds Committee requests getting support with work still left to be done in the buildings and on the grounds. The last work party on the Saturday before Rally Sunday was very lightly attended. As a result, so many of the things to do and items on the long list posted on the bulletin board near the exit door of the Fellowship Hall remain undone.

The committee has set up, called and worked at work parties since the start of the year and is now asking for more church member support of the work load. A list of things to be done is printed here for members to see if they can accomplish some of the remaining items. This is not all of the things to do but at the very top of the list and most needed are:

- Weeding and cleaning debris from flower beds and grass areas
- Cleaning of the parking lot of debris especially after windstorms
- Prune bushes and trees (see Cliff or Joan)
- Deep cleaning of the kitchen & behind refrigerators & freezers (see Joy Halladay)
- Clean all building windows
- Paint the shed at the rental house
- Spot cleaning of the Fellowship Hall carpet
- Clean off office roof, gutters and downspouts
- Other items needing doing (see committee members for information and supplies)

The long list will be updated at the next committee meeting on November 2. Meetings are the first Monday evening of each month. The updated list will be on the wall in the Fellowship Hall.



Interim Pastor
Pr. Kathleen Anderson

Office Administrator
Jean Leavens
425-778-6390

Treasurer:
Sue Rasmussen
425-357-6272

Musician:
Vic Peters
206-789-1699

Altar Care:
Joy DeGraff
425-778-5040

Council ~ 2014-15

President:
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Katherine Dedrick
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425-778-0309

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425-275-3590



Gratitude

By Kirby Unti, NWWA Bishop
(From *The Spirit*, November 2015)

Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. - 2 Corinthians 4:15

I am a “Wannabe Mr. Fix It”. I hold in high regard people who, no matter what it is, possess the knack to figure it out. I have learned I am really good at taking things apart but not so good at putting them back together again. Back in the good old days I took great pride in maintaining the Mimeograph. We seldom had to call on the technician. Nowadays I just watch in awe when the Copier Technician shows up. They get tired of me peering over their shoulders and asking questions.

For years I was able to maintain my own cars. My handy dandy Sears Testing Unit and Timing Light made it doable. The advance of technology soon put my back yard garage out of business.

I had to resort to taking my car to a mechanic who had the gall to charge me \$90.00 an hour to do one thing I once could do on my own. One day I was complaining bitterly to my father about how much I had to pay. He stopped me cold in my tracks with the question, “Just who do you think you are? Do you think you are the only person who deserves to earn a living wage? Rather than whining about what you have to pay why don’t you feel good knowing that not only do you help the mechanic to put food on the table for his family, you are helping all of the employees that work there.”

My father had an uncanny way of reminding me of my rightful place in the universe. Equally important he taught me how life-giving it is to learn to be grateful. I have to tell you this one painful incident really turned me around and I began to understand my money and possessions in a whole new way.

“Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.” -2 Corinthians 4:15

Being willing to give of our resources and possessions with joy can become an act of grace. It has the power to stir up in our lives the wonderful experience of gratitude.

When I began to look back over my father’s life I realized this is how he lived it.

Again I remember resenting him when he sold our family home to a young family just starting out for what I thought was under market value. When I pressed him on the issue he went on to tell me the story of how my parents were able to buy our family home. My grandparents loaned them a portion of the down payment and the realtor went without charging a commission. My dad was just paying it forward.

He said, “I will get far more joy out of knowing I helped a young family get a start than the few thousand dollars that placed it below market value.”

We are living in a culture where money holds so many of us hostage. Maybe we need to see it the way my dad did. A gift first received which becomes a gift of gratitude when given away with a measure of grace.
