



*Volume 8 Issue 8*

# *West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church*



*August 2021*

*Thoughtfully Reformed - Redemptively Relevant*

## *Membership is Loyalty*

Church membership is not optional. Admittedly, there is no verse in the Bible that specifically commands us to sign on the dotted line and join a church. But the clear teaching of Scripture is that we are to be members in the local fellowship of believers, in every sense of the word.

The apostle Paul had that unified fellowship in mind when he wrote Ephesians 2:19: “*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household.*” In essence, we’re now part of a family—God’s family.

And unity within God’s heavenly household requires loyalty, both to Him and to His people. The consumerist attitude that’s taken hold in the church today isn’t interested in loyalty. It leads people to see fellowship as a means to selfish ends—they will meet with other believers, but only when it suits their needs and pleases their interests.

When you come to church the question shouldn’t be, What can I get out of my church? but, How can God use me to serve others here? Will there be other believers in the congregation who need you, whether it’s for help, support, or encouragement?

The obvious answer is yes. There is no shortage of spiritual, physical, and emotional needs in your church. You won’t have to look hard to find a multitude of ways you can be useful to your congregation. It’s the same attitude you’d hope to cultivate within your own family—what are the needs around you and how can you be useful in meeting those needs? Bring that loyal, Christlike attitude with you to church—you’re not there to be served, but to serve.

By God’s grace and His perfect design, He has equipped each of us with a variety of spiritual gifts for use in the church (Ephesians 4:11-12). The Lord has fitted each of us with specific talents and abilities that tie into His purposes for our lives.

Every believer has a role within the Body of Christ, and that body cannot function unless everyone is working together (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Hands can’t suddenly become ears; eyes can’t replace feet. And you’ll never find a stray finger or tongue that functions better on its own than it does with the rest of the body. The Lord didn’t save us to be solo acts—we’re meant to work in concert and harmony together as one great choir.

How is that possible apart from involvement in the local church? You may have other believers scattered throughout your life, whether at home, at work, or elsewhere. But God’s design is for you to be an active, useful member of your local church body, working side by side with other useful, self-sacrificing believers to accomplish His will in your lives and in your community. That starts with being a loyal member of your local church. ~ *Dr. John MacArthur—July 30, 2021*



# *West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church*



## *I'm a Member. Now What?*

Faithful participation in a local body of believers is a vital part of the Christian life. It brings us into fellowship with other believers, submits us to the authority of the Lord through His church, makes us useful to God and His people, and shapes our identity in Christ and our testimony to the outside world.

Of course, church membership is not just a personal matter. Clearly, the issues are corporate as well. The ordinances given to the local church—baptism, communion—lose their significance outside the group setting. As believers pull away from participating in local, corporate worship, they miss out on profound blessings that can be experienced only in that setting.

There are many people today who would call themselves Christians who have never been baptized; many others have little to no interest in celebrating the Lord's Table. And for the countless professing believers who have adopted the consumer mindset regarding church, it's likely that neither baptism nor communion will ever be a priority for them.

It's become such a problem that many churches have deprioritized the biblical ordinances, relegating them to unpopular midweek services or ignoring them altogether. They would rather reject the clear commands of Scripture than risk offending an unbeliever or making anyone uncomfortable with unfamiliar church practices.

That's tragic! Baptism is perhaps the clearest expression and testimony we have to the life-changing power of Christ. And communion unites the church in celebration of the sacrifice He made on our behalf. They're not optional rituals—they're vivid examples to the power and work of the Lord, ordained and instituted by God for the growth, unity, and testimony of His church.

And even in churches where baptism and communion are administered, they're often directed as expressions of personal faith rather than corporate identity. They don't celebrate the commonality of the church, as we're baptized into one body and gathered at the foot of the cross to share in Christ's sacrifice. They're erroneously observed as individual acts, with individual significance and individual results.

Just as believers need to fight against the temptation to withdraw from the church, we also need to fight the tendency to isolate ourselves within the congregation. We can't reject our corporate identity in Christ—we're united in love, faith, and purpose. Baptism and communion are public expressions of that unity. ~ **Dr. John MacArthur—August 2, 2021**

## *What Does It Mean to Call God "Father?"*

One of the most well-known statements of the Christian faith is the Lord's Prayer, which begins with the words "*Our Father which art in heaven.*" This is part of the universal treasury of Christendom. When I hear Christians in a private gathering praying individually, almost every single person begins their prayer by addressing God as Father. There's nothing more common among us than to address God as our Father. So central is this to our Christian experience that in the nineteenth century, there were some who said the basic essence of the whole Christian religion can be reduced to two points: the universal brotherhood of man and the universal fatherhood of God. In that context I am afraid we have missed one of the most radical teachings of Jesus.



# *West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church*



## *What Does It Mean to Call God “Father?”*

*Continued from Page 2*

A few years ago, a German scholar was doing research in New Testament literature and discovered that in the entire history of Judaism—in all existing books of the Old Testament and all existing books of extrabiblical Jewish writings dating from the beginning of Judaism until the tenth century A.D. in Italy—there is not a single reference of a Jewish person addressing God directly in the first person as Father.

There were appropriate forms of address that were used by Jewish people in the Old Testament, and the children were trained to address God in proper phrases of respect. All these titles were memorized, and the term Father was not among them. The first Jewish rabbi to call God “*Father*” directly was Jesus of Nazareth. It was a radical departure from tradition, and in fact, in every recorded prayer we have from the lips of Jesus save one, He calls God “*Father*.” It was for that reason that many of Jesus’ enemies sought to destroy Him; He assumed to have this intimate, personal relationship with the sovereign God of heaven and the creator of all things, and He dared to speak in such intimate terms with God. What’s even more radical is that Jesus says to His people, “*When you pray, you say, ‘Our Father.’*” He has given to us the right and privilege to come into the presence of the majesty of God and address Him as Father because indeed He is our Father. He has adopted us into His family and made us coheirs with His only begotten Son (Romans 8:17). ~ **Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.**

## *Who Is Lord: Christ or Caesar?*

Someday, we will be like Him. That’s our hope. But it’s not a hope that we put on the shelf, and it’s not a hope that sends us into a cave. It’s a hope that sends us into the world with confidence. We can be confident in God, confident in His Word, confident in Christ, confident in the gospel, and confident in hope. In the AD 90s, Domitian ruled as emperor over Rome. His cruelty rivaled that of Nero. He insisted that he be worshiped as a god. Christians, of course, could not participate in the rituals of this emperor cult. That left them vulnerable, and that vulnerability led to persecution. It is likely that John’s exile to the island of Patmos directly resulted from Domitian’s edicts. John refused to bow.

John wrote Revelation during this time, many scholars believe. Also around this time, an early church figure named Clement, serving as bishop at Rome, sent a letter to the church at Corinth. Clement opens his letter by referring to “*the sudden and successive calamitous events.*” Persecution rolled over the church like wave after relentless wave. Clement wrote to comfort them and to exhort them to stand firm. Near the middle of his letter, he simply reminds the believers at Corinth that Christ is our leader and we are His soldiers.

Domitian’s edict and the persecution that followed served to press an urgent question to the church. This question was there at the very beginning. It was there at the events surrounding the incarnation when Herod ruled. It was there when the soldier drew his sword in the garden of Gethsemane, and it was there all along the excruciating and agonizing road to the cross. The question never left the early decades of the church or even the early centuries of the church. The question was this: Caesar or Christ?

Domitian’s edict made that question palpable, even visceral. Statues of him were sent all over the empire. On appointed days, feasts were held, and all of the populace had to pass before the cast image of Domitian and bow before him as god. It was very clear: Caesar or Christ?



# *West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church*



## *Who Is Lord: Christ or Caesar?*

*Continued from Page 3*

The truth is that question is always there. It is always before us, before the church in every age of the past. The question is before us in our time today, and it will be in front of the church in the ages to come. Who is Lord? When the Apostles and the believers in the pages of the New Testament answered that Christ is Lord and Caesar is not, ramifications followed. That decision had consequences. They did not let the temporal consequences overshadow the eternal ones. The author of Hebrews reminds the believers that they had “*endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated*” (Hebrews 10:32–33).

Then he declares in 10:35: “*Do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.*”

When the question is put to us, Caesar or Christ, may we be among those who don’t shrink back. May we take our stand alongside the first-century church and the church through the centuries. May we not throw away our confidence.

From this singular point of the lordship of Christ came the church’s confidence. And also from this point came the church’s convictions. Chris Larson, my colleague at Ligonier Ministries, recently made the statement, “The future belongs to Christians of conviction.” This is a time for conviction. This is a time for confidence. ~ **Dr. Stephen J. Nichols**

## *Faith and the Power of God*

The healing of the demon possessed boy (Matthew 17:14–20) at first glance seems to be only one more in a series of miraculous healings recorded by Matthew. What makes this one unique is Jesus’ emphasis on the role of faith. It is true that faith is prominent in the miracles recorded in chapter 9, but in chapter 17 it is the lack of faith that is emphasized by Jesus.

That God is not dependent on human faith for accomplishing His work is clear from the accounts of other miracles recorded by Matthew. The transfiguration of Jesus immediately prior to the healing of the boy is a prime example. It was a spectacular miracle; yet no human faith was involved. This is also true in the feeding of the five thousand (Matthew 14:13–21) and the four thousand (15:32–38). So the **first** thing we need to learn about faith and the power of God is that He is not dependent on our faith to do His work. God will not be hostage to our lack of faith.

The **second** thing we need to learn, however, is that God often requires our faith in the carrying out of His purposes. We see this in the healing of the demon possessed boy. Mark, in his account, brings this out sharply in Jesus’ conversation with the boy’s father. The father, in great distress, said to Jesus: “*But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us*” (Mark 9:22). He had already experienced the failure of the disciples, so he was not sure if Jesus could help. His faith at this point may be described as no more than an uncertain hope that Jesus could do what the disciples could not do.



# *West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church*



## *Faith and the Power of God* *Continued from Page 4*

Jesus responded to the father: *“If you can! All things are possible for one who believes”* (v. 23). Biblical faith may be described in different ways depending on the situation. The description of faith in Hebrews 11:1 as *“the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen,”* was appropriate for the Jewish recipients of the letter, who were facing severe opposition and needed to be encouraged as to the certainty of their hope in Christ.

For the father of the boy, faith would mean believing that Jesus could heal his son. We are often like the father. We may face what seems to be an intractable situation, and because we have prayed a long time without an answer, we begin to doubt that God can answer our prayer. But we must believe that with God nothing is impossible.

Sarah, the wife of Abraham, doubted that God could give them a son in their advanced age, to which God replied, *“Is anything too hard for the Lord?”* (Genesis 18:14). Centuries later, the prophet Jeremiah wavered in his faith when God told him to buy a field in the face of the Chaldeans’ invasion (Jeremiah 32:6-26). Again God’s response was: *“Is anything too hard for me?”* (v. 27). To have faith in God, even in the face of unanswered prayer or a seemingly impossible situation, means we continue to believe that He can do what seems impossible to us.

The importance of faith is further emphasized in Jesus’ answer to the disciples’ question: *“Why could we not cast it out?”* (Matthew 17:19). He said it was because of their little faith. We are not told in what way their faith was deficient. We do know that Jesus had previously given them authority over demons to cast them out (Matthew 10:1–8), so why was their faith so weak at this time? Perhaps it was because the demon did not respond immediately to their command, and so they began to doubt the power of Jesus. Or perhaps they presumed that because they had been successful before, they would be at that time. So we see that faith not only involves a firm reliance on Jesus’ power and ability, but also a complete renunciation of any confidence in our own.

In Matthew 17 we see an example of it in action, in connection with a mundane event — the paying of the temple tax. Jesus, as the Son of God, was under no obligation to pay the tax. Yet in order to give no offense, He sent Peter to catch a fish in whose mouth was the required shekel. This brief account raises some questions: How did the shekel get into the mouth of the fish? How did Peter just “happen” to catch that fish and not another one nearby? It is possible that Jesus performed a miracle and created the coin out of nothing in the mouth of the fish.

It is more likely, however, that it was a work of providence. Someone “accidentally” dropped a shekel into the sea. A particular fish grabbed it, and it stuck in its mouth. The fish swam to the exact spot where Peter cast his net and the fish was caught. None of these events was miraculous; yet all of them were necessary to accomplish Jesus’ purpose, and Jesus was in control of each one of them. God’s power is as much at work in His providence as in His miracles. So as we struggle with our own faith, or lack of it, in the difficult situations of life, let us believe that God is able, whether through miracles or providence, to care for us. ~ *Dr. Jerry Bridges*



# *West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church*



## *The Antidote to Anemic Worship*

Evangelical Christians have been especially attentive to worship in recent years, sparking a renaissance of thought and conversation on what worship really is and how it should be done. Even if this renewed interest has unfortunately resulted in what some have called the “worship wars” in some churches, it seems that what A.W. Tozer once called the “missing jewel” of evangelical worship is being recovered.

Nevertheless, if most evangelicals would quickly agree that worship is central to the life of the church, there would be no consensus to an unavoidable question: What is central to Christian worship? Historically, the more liturgical churches have argued that the sacraments or ordinances form the heart of Christian worship. These churches argue that the elements of the Lord’s Supper and the water of baptism most powerfully present the gospel. Among evangelicals, some see evangelism as the heart of worship and therefore plan every facet of the service—songs, prayers, the sermon—with the evangelistic invitation in mind.

Though most evangelicals mention the preaching of the Word as a necessary or customary part of worship, the prevailing model of worship in evangelical churches is increasingly defined by music, along with innovations such as drama and video presentations. When preaching the Word retreats, a host of entertaining innovations will take its place.

Traditional norms of worship are now subordinated to a demand for relevance and creativity. A media-driven culture of images has replaced the word-centered culture that gave birth to the Reformation churches. In some sense, the image-driven culture of modern evangelicalism is an embrace of the very practices rejected by the Reformers in their quest for true biblical worship.

Music fills the space of most evangelical worship, and much of this music comes in the form of contemporary choruses marked by precious little theological content. Beyond the popularity of the chorus as a musical form, many evangelical churches seem intensely concerned to replicate studio-quality musical presentations.

In terms of musical style, the more traditional churches feature large choirs—often with orchestras—and may even sing the established hymns of the faith. Professional staff and an army of volunteers spend much of the week in rehearsals and practice sessions.

All this is not lost on the congregation. Some Christians shop for churches that offer the worship style and experience that fit their expectations. Those dissatisfied with what they find at one church can quickly move to another, sometimes using the language of self-expression to explain that the new church “meets our needs” or “allows us to worship.”

A concern for true biblical worship was at the very heart of the Reformation. But even Martin Luther, who wrote hymns and required his preachers to be trained in song, would not recognize this modern preoccupation with music above all else as legitimate or healthy. Why? Because the Reformers were convinced that the heart of true biblical worship is the preaching of the Word of God.



# *West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church*



## *The Antidote to Anemic Worship* *Continued from Page 6*

Thanks be to God, evangelism does take place in Christian worship. Confronted by the presentation of the gospel and the preaching of the Word, sinners are drawn to Christ in faith and the offer of salvation is presented to all. Likewise, the Lord's Supper and baptism are honored as ordinances by the Lord's own command, and each finds its place in true worship. But music is not the central act of Christian worship, and neither is evangelism or even the ordinances. The heart of Christian worship is the authentic preaching of the Word of God.

Expository preaching is central, irreducible, and nonnegotiable to the Bible's mission of authentic worship that pleases God.

The centrality of preaching is the theme of both testaments of Scripture. In Nehemiah 8, we find the people demanding that Ezra the scribe bring the book of the law to the assembly. Interestingly, the text explains that Ezra and those assisting him read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading" (Nehemiah 8:8). This remarkable text presents a portrait of expository preaching. Once the text was read, it was carefully explained to the congregation. Ezra did not stage an event or orchestrate a spectacle—he simply and carefully proclaimed the Word of God.

This text is a sobering indictment of much of contemporary Christianity. According to the text, a demand for biblical preaching erupted within the hearts of the people. They gathered as a congregation and summoned the preacher. This reflects an intense hunger and thirst for the preaching of the Word of God. Where is this desire evident among today's evangelicals?

In far too many churches, the Bible is nearly silent. The public reading of Scripture has been dropped from many services and the sermon has been sidelined, reduced to a brief devotional appended to the music. Many preachers accept this as a necessary concession to the age of entertainment. Some hope to put in a brief message of encouragement or exhortation before the conclusion of the service.

The anemia of evangelical worship—all the music and energy aside—is directly attributable to the absence of genuine expository preaching. Such preaching would confront the congregation with nothing less than the living and active Word of God. That confrontation will shape the congregation as the Holy Spirit accompanies the Word, opens eyes, and applies that Word to human hearts. ~ **Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr.**

## *God's Covenant People*

God's covenant commitment to His people, made in successive promise-bonds, forms the scaffolding within which He builds His church; its shape and growth are determined by it. But like a medieval cathedral, the church is built over centuries; and like a great book, its story is divided into chapters.

The word covenant (Hebrew berith, Greek diathēkē) first occurs in the context of the judgment-flood from which only Noah and his family were saved: "I will establish my covenant with you," God promised (Genesis 6:18). While God brought judgment-curse on the earth (vv. 11–13), by contrast He promised to bless Noah and his seed (9:1).



# *West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church*



## *God's Covenant People* *Continued from Page 7*

“Establish” here reflects an earlier promise-bond. God’s command to Noah to *“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”* (v. 1) echoes His command to Adam (1:28) and hints at an earlier covenant. Certainly, the Lord’s bond with Adam included essential covenant ingredients: His commitment to Adam would lead to blessing for faith and obedience (1:28; 2:3), but mistrust and disobedience would result in judgment-curse (2:17; 3:17).

This “new” covenant with Noah, however, was soon despised at Babel. The blessing was forfeited; now the curse fell on disobedience. Yet, mercifully, God came again, establishing another “new” covenant-bond with Abraham. The promised Deliverer-Seed (3:15) would come specifically through his seed and would bring blessing to the nations (12:1–3). This was confirmed in a dramatic night scene. In symbolic form, God passed through two lines of dismembered animals, indicating His commitment unto death to His “new” covenant promise (15:1–21). Abraham believed, and despite sometimes stumbling, he obeyed. Blessings followed.

But then came Egypt, slavery, and bondage. Once more, God revealed Himself specifically as the same covenant-making and covenant-keeping God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who comes to help His people (Exodus 3:6, 13–17; 6:2–9). He inaugurated a new epoch, through another “new” covenant. He redeemed His people and called them to trust and obey Him, warning them that faithlessness and disobedience would again lead only to judgment-curse (Deuteronomy 28:1–68). Later, He would promise David that the Deliverer-Seed would come specifically from his line (2 Samuel 7; Ps. 89:19–37). When He came, a final “new covenant” would be established (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Hebrews 8:8–12; 10:15–17). Jesus is the Deliverer-Seed who forges “the new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:20). Thus, from Adam to Christ, this unified series of divine covenants created a single family tree (Luke 4:23–38).

It is sometimes said that now everything has changed: “covenant” virtually disappears. It is rarely mentioned again outside of the letter to the Hebrews. But this is to miss the point. For when Jesus speaks about the *“new covenant in my blood,”* He means that He Himself is the covenant. The Lord had already hinted at this: *“Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights. ... I will give you as a covenant for the people”* (Isaiah 42:1, 6–7). The final “new covenant” is no longer a promise waiting to be fulfilled but a person who embodies its fulfillment. God’s covenant word is now the Word made flesh (John 1:14).

Thus, from Adam through Noah, from Abraham through Moses, and from David to Christ, God’s people have been defined, united, and shaped through an ever-renewed and developed covenant bond. This is why the fathers of the church spoke about *ecclesia ab Adam* (the church from Adam) or *ecclesia ab Abel* (the church from Abel)—one people, in different epochs, living at different covenant stages of the unveiling of God’s promise, and, from the fall of Adam and Eve, always sinners who *“found favor in the eyes of the Lord”* (Genesis 6:), always justified by faith alone, not by works, always trusting the promise of God, always conscious that they were one family.

Moses and Paul (and therefore we) belong to one family. *“To them”* (the old covenant people), Paul says, *“belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises”* (Romans 9:4). The same is true for Paul (and for us) in the new covenant—only more so: we are the sons of God by adoption (8:14–17); we are being changed from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18); by the Spirit the commandments of the law are fulfilled in us (Romans 8:3–4); we are the true circumcision who worship in the Spirit (Philippians 3:3); and we trust in the One in whom all the promises of God have found their “yes” (2 Corinthians 1:20). We live in different epochs, but we are one people, one family.





# *West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church*



## *God's Covenant People* *Continued from Page 8*

This unity is expressed very clearly in Hebrews' description of Moses, who *"By faith ... refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God. ... He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the riches of Egypt"* (Hebrews 11:25–26). Throughout the covenant ages, there is one faith, one Christ, one people.

Hebrews 3:1–6 puts it this way: in both the old and the new covenant epochs, believers have belonged to the same household and the same family. They have occupied the same house, even though changes have taken place. And now Moses the servant has given way to Jesus the Son. Restrictions have been lifted (we are no longer heirs who are underage). Now, believers live in the fullness of grace and truth and cry, *"Abba, Father!"* (Galatians 4:1–7). But the ancestral home remains one and the same.

What a privilege it is to belong to this millennia-old covenant family. If the Corinthians could be told that *"Paul ... Apollos ... Cephas ... the world ... are yours"* (1 Corinthians 3:22), then we can surely add, *"and Abraham ... Elijah ... Isaiah ... Daniel ... are also ours,"* because we *"are Christ's, and Christ is God's."* So, whenever we read the Old and New Testaments, we are looking at our family album. Learning about church history is simply visiting our relatives. Assembling for worship is going to the weekly family reunion where we *"come to ... innumerable angels ... the assembly of the firstborn."* More than that, we come *"to the spirits of the righteous made perfect"*—some of whom once sat beside us in church. And all this because through faith we, like them—including those who lived under the old covenant—have come *"to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant"* (Hebrews 12:22–24). You belong to a *"megachurch."* The congregation is much bigger than you thought.

This covenant perspective thrills our hearts because we realize that we have been caught up into Christ's grand, ages-long project. It gives us a sense of identity—we know our roots. It also brings us a sense of stability—we know that the gates of Hades will never prevail against God's covenant people. Dr. Sproul expresses all this so well in his hymn *"Saints of Zion"*:

*From Abel's favored off'ring to Jesus' holy cross,  
The church of God's own choosing has triumphed over loss.  
Then come, O saints of Zion in sweet communion wed;  
The bride awaits her glory: Lord Jesus Christ, her head.  
By faith our fathers labored: in faith they lived and died.  
From Abraham to David, faith stood when it was tried.  
This covenant of grace divine, by Christ's own blood was bought;  
The promises of blessing shall never come to naught.  
By martyr's death the holy seed was sown in grief and pain,  
That holy seed will flourish till Christ shall come again.  
The church of God triumphant shall in that final day.  
Have all her sons and daughters home from the well-fought fray.*

Article written by: **Dr. Sinclair B. Ferguson** – *Ligonier Ministries teaching fellow and Chancellor's Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary*



# West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church



*Thoughtfully Reformed - Redemptively Relevant*

If you have an August birthday or anniversary that is not posted here or is listed in error, please e-mail Walt at [gwlcf10415@gmail.com](mailto:gwlcf10415@gmail.com).

## *Birthdays and Anniversaries Corner August 2021*

### Birthdays

*Ben S. (8)  
Carrie P. (24)*

*Ezra P. (26)  
Marlin H. (27)*

### Anniversaries

*Mike and Cheryl P. (9)*

## *Being Christ to Your Neighbor*

The book of Acts records a curious phenomenon: “*And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles... . Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word*” (8:1, 4, ESV).

Christians must participate in the ministry of the church, and every Christian must endeavor “to be Christ to his neighbor.” To be Christ to your neighbor is not to be your neighbor’s lord and savior. Rather, it is to be Christ’s representative to your neighbor. We are to represent the mercy and ministry of Jesus to all who are around us.

We do not need volunteers driven by guilty manipulation or looking for merits to be redeemed. Christ has taken our guilt and supplied all the merit we need. We need volunteers because in the least of His brothers, Jesus is hungry, Jesus is thirsty, Jesus is homeless, Jesus is sick, and Jesus is imprisoned. We need volunteers who love Jesus in the afflictions of His least brethren.



***West Suffolk Baptist Church  
Leadership***

The West Suffolk Epistle is a monthly publication of West Suffolk Baptist Church.

**Office:** 1001 Kenyon Court, Suffolk, VA 23435

**E-Mail:** [pastorscofield@gmail.com](mailto:pastorscofield@gmail.com)

**Website:** <https://www.graceforsuffolk.org>

**Phone/Fax:** 757-539-0363

**Teaching Pastor/Elder:** Pastor Ben Scofield

**Teaching Elders:** Scott Thomas and Mike Prince

**Deacons:** Marlin Halsey, John McPhatter and John Hurst

**Editor:** Walt Lawrence, [gwlcf10415@gmail.com](mailto:gwlcf10415@gmail.com)

Please submit information to the editor by the second Sunday of each month preceding publication by e-mail, in person or at the church office. The editor reserves the right to edit for content or space. May the Father be glorified in every word.

**Disclaimer:** The views and opinions from the contributors to this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of West Suffolk Baptist Church or it’s leadership.