



The Link Newsletter

Sandy Creek Baptist Association of Churches

March, 2020



Rev. Eric Davidson, Associational Missionary
Mrs. Nancy Evans, Administrative Assistant
205 N Steele St., Sanford, NC 27330

Telephone: 919-776-9423 FAX: 919-776-8490
Email: sandycreekasn@windstream.net
Web: www.sandycreekba.com

Monday—Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Other Hours by Appointment

“Strengthening Churches to BE the Church: Equip, Encourage, Empower”

What hell shows

According to a Pew Research survey, only 60 % of main-line Protestant Christians believe in hell. Even some theologians have moved away from the concept of everlasting torment, saying it’s morally incompatible with a loving god.

Admittedly, hell is a tough topic, but we can’t afford to ignore it. Jesus didn’t; in fact, He talked more about hell than heaven. Why? He doesn’t want us to experience total separation from God the Father. After taking our place on the cross, Jesus proclaimed ultimate victory over death, satan and hell.

Rather than being incompatible with love, hell magnifies God’s love by showing what He was willing to endure for us. Hell, which is utter darkness, allows us to realize what Jesus, our true Light, has rescued us *from*. It also motivates us to share the good news of the Gospel – that “the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people” (Titus 2:11, ESV)!

Of rocks and repentance

Before recently closing to tourists, Australia’s majestic Uluru (formerly called Ayers Rock) was popular with climbers. Many took home illegal souvenirs, sometimes later mailing them back to park rangers after experiencing what they considered bad luck.

So many pilfered mementos were returned, often with notes of apology, that rangers called them “sorry rocks.” The returns merely created more work for park staff, who urged visitors not to take specimens in the first place.

“Sorry rocks” is a fitting images for our sins, which the Bible describes as weights and entanglements (Hebrews 12:1, NLT) tells us “*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.*” As sinners, we can’t remove those heavy burdens on our own. But through Christ’s redeeming work on our behalf, we can “return” the rocks of wrongdoing. When we repent and seek forgiveness, God promises to “remember [our] sins no more” Hebrews 8:12, NLT) tells us “*And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.*”

“THAT’S WORTH CELEBRATING!”

We want to be more intentional about CELEBRATING what God is doing! This is the first of many more “celebrations” to come.

Our first celebration was shared with me by Steve Moore, pastor at Emmaus Baptist Church. In part, he wrote:

“I wanted to say thank you for helping to get the word out from the association office about the need in helping supply shoe boxes for Kentucky. The response from the churches has been tremendous, At first I just had to commit this to the Lord; I knew there was no way our church alone could provide the 900 boxes needed for the schools we are responsible for. We got a new school this year that has never been visited and it has 700 students. I prayed and said Lord you will have to do this... and He has and more!!! Praise the Lord for so many folks who have a heart for missions!!

Thanks again for your help. Steve”

WAY TO GO CHURCHES for stepping-up and meeting this need!!!



If you have something worth celebrating, *please share this, in writing, with the Association office and your “That’s Worth Celebrating” will be in our next newsletter.*

What are the 40 days before Easter called?

40 days prior to Easter, Christians follow Lent, which is supposed to be 40 days of prayer, penance and fasting. The last week of this 40 day period is called Holy Week. During Holy Week, Holy Thursday commemorates when the Last Supper was held. Good Friday commemorates Jesus' crucifixion and death. Evangelical Christians celebrate Easter Sunday, because that is the day our Savior Jesus Christ rose from the grave.

Why is the number 40 significant in the Bible?

The number 40 may signify the 40 days Jesus Christ was in desert and the 40 years Israelite wandered in the desert.

“15 Reasons Why Committed Christians Do Not Attend Church” is an article written by Scott Ball, the Director of Services and a Lead Guide with The Malphurs Group.

Ball Wrote,

“There is a growing body of research revealing that many long-time Christian people are deciding not to attend church services any longer.

We are familiar with the term the “nones” in reference to people with no religious affiliation. However, there is a growing number of “dones,” committed Christians who have given up on church.

Some suggest that people who quit church are not true Christians or they are not being faithful to God. That many or may not be true. Certainly, there are those whom (for whatever reason) have walked away from God and have, therefore, left the Church.

However, many genuine believers are shifting their church attendance patterns. The purpose of this article is to address 15 common reasons committed Christians provide for why they do not attend church services.

1. I can get better preaching from a podcast.

There is a solid chance that this objection is valid. Do not take this personally. You might be an effective preacher, but like every other profession or skill—there is always someone better. As leaders, when we make our preaching the centerpiece of church engagement, we set ourselves up for failure. We have to build communities that prioritize relational disciple-making above dynamic preaching. A celebrity pastor’s podcast cannot challenge real-life relationships.

2. I can worship on my own.

Just like there will always be better preaching found on a podcast, there will always be better worship music found on Spotify. However, the sad truth is that a lot of church worship services are lazy and poorly executed. I once worked with a church and one of the members said, “Old and tired; that describes our church service.” If your weekend services have stopped being laser-focused on launching people into a week of living in awe and obedience of God, it might be time to take a fresh look at what’s happening on Sundays. For many, Sunday may be their only day off. If your church has been doing the “same old routine” and there is nothing fresh, new, or inviting—do not be surprised if people stop coming.

3. I can study the Bible on my own.

Barna Research suggests that the majority of adults do not believe that active participation in church is necessary for their spiritual life. For this reason, The Malphurs Group works with churches in our Strategic Envisioning Process to clearly define a Discipleship Pathway, which helps your congregation see how engagement in the church helps them gain momentum in their spiritual growth. Churches have (rightly) focused on personal Bible study and prayer. However, an emphasis on communal study and prayer must remain. There is no Christianity in the Bible that exists apart from the Christian community.

4. I have Christian friends that are my “church.”

An increasing number of Christians feel like their need for a “church” is being satisfied by having a few close Christian friends. These Christians often feel like this close-knit group is closer to the early church in Acts than anything that is happening in a building. Unfortunately, these believers miss vast swathes of essential elements to church, things that were true even in the earliest days. There are no called leaders—this existed from day one. These small groups of friends have no regular teaching of the work or dedicated time for worship. These groups likely are not serving their neighbors. Ironically, these small groups are even less likely than churches to be evangelistic. People should not deceive themselves; a handful of Christian friends is not a substitute for a church family.

5. I have to work on Sundays.

Unfortunately, an increasing number of people have to work on Sunday. As a result, churches need to find ways to engage Christians with unconventional work schedules rather than shame them. Consider, how can a person be a fully engaged member of your church if they have to work many or most Sunday mornings? Blue laws are gone, and many people can’t control their work schedule. Be gracious, and thoughtfully consider how to navigate this new dynamic.

6. I have family obligations on the weekends.

The world has changed. In the last decade, youth sports have risen to new popularity. In days past, leagues never scheduled games on Sundays. Today, Sundays are a popular choice for tournaments, games, and competitions. As a result, families find themselves having to choose between church attendance and sports. Even for “faithful” Christian families, parents have a difficult time making this choice. For the spiritually immature or ambivalent, the choice is simple: sports. Youth sports are not the only new claim on Sunday mornings. It is safe to say, though, that family rhythms are shifting. If this is true, how is your church intentionally addressing this issue? How can you engage a family in spiritual growth that is committed to youth sports? Have you written them off as a “lost cause”?

7. I feel like church is boring.

What initially attracted a person to the church may no longer connect with them. Sunday morning is not about entertaining the masses, but neither should it be boring. Evaluate who is sitting in the congregation and make sure leadership is planning a service that is engaging their attention. For long-time members and attenders, make sure they don’t get lost in the familiarity of the crowd. For newcomers, ensure that your service keeps them in mind and engages them in a way that they want to come back.

8. I don’t feel like there is a place for my child or teenager.

Youth and children are the future of the church (and the present!). Many families base their attendance on whether or not a church has a good children’s or student ministry. If a parent feels like their kid is bored and doesn’t want to come back, parents are unlikely to return. We can judge these parents as spiritually immature. But the reality is that they are spiritually immature. They are acting their spiritual age! We can resent

Continued on next page.

that, or we can embrace & engage with them where they are. How are you doing with serving your children? Evaluate your children's ministry, not only looking at your content, but also your environments, volunteers, and safety.

9. I don't feel like going to church makes a difference in my life.

Our faith is ultimately about transformation—from death to life, from glory to glory. People want to be engaged in a church where issues in their everyday life are addressed. Issues such as raising a family, marriage, parenting illness, financial needs, and job stress are top-of-mind for many individuals. If your church isn't speaking into the ways that a relationship with Jesus can transform everyday life, people will eventually leave.

10. I don't know of any "good" churches near me.

Depending on where a person lives, this could be a reality; however, churches vary in their delivery, style, and leadership. No one will find a "perfect church" that has everything that they prefer. You can't control your visitor's perceived expectations; however, you can remain steadfast in your teaching, committed to the gospel, and ministering in a style that fits your community, experience, and strengths of your leadership.

11. I'm not sure I believe the same things anymore.

In our post-Christian society, many views have become more nuanced. A long-time Christian may have doubts about a literal seven-day creation, or a literal world-wide flood. If you have created an environment in your church (intentionally or unintentionally) where people cannot ask questions, doubt, or hold varying positions on non-salvation issues, people will leave your church. I know this is a tricky subject. Many churches fear the "slippery slope." I'm certainly not suggesting that you compromise Biblical authority in any way. However, I am encouraging you to consider where you draw lines. Have you decided to "make your stand" on a trivial issue like wearing suits on Sunday, or only reading the KJV? The impact of your positions on important things is hazarded by the force of your opposition to trivial matters. Every church has to make their own decisions on what's important and what is not. All I'm asking you to do is be mindful of the lines you draw, and decide if it's worth a person's eternity because you won't let them in the door unless they believe in the historicity of Noah.

12. I'm offended by the church's position on sexuality.

Many people view the church as the morality police. Being a godly person has nothing to do with a list of rules, but a relationship with God. Yet obsession over rules is one of the reasons why committed Christians do not attend church. If your visitors feel like you can only be a part of the church if you follow a rigid set of rules, you are walking a line of legalism (or have already crossed it). The challenge for churches is that they must hold fast to the Bible's sexual standards while embracing people regardless of their past. It's cliché to say, "Love the sinner, hate the sin." But it's true, yet most churches don't live this out. Many congregations judge the sinner and hate the sin. Don't compromise Biblical standards on sexuality. At the same time, don't compromise on God's unrelenting love, care, and kindness for the most wicked sinner.

13. I've been hurt by church members.

Not many people enjoy conflict. But no one likes it when conflict keeps brewing and never comes to a resolution. Many pastors and other church leaders fail at conflict resolution in the church. Unfortunately, many Christians get so wounded in church conflicts that they leave the church altogether. In fact, I would guess that this might be the biggest reason why committed Christians leave the church. Truthfully, I have my own "battle scars." When church people wound you deeply, it's easy to want to throw in the towel. To overcome this objection, we must consistently reinforce that Christians are fallible. We are on a journey of becoming more like Jesus, but we aren't there yet. We are going to hurt people, and others will hurt us. Leaders can mitigate these challenges by stepping into conflicts and engaging in the ministry of reconciliation. Far too often, leaders let church members "duke it out" and ignore the casualties.

14. I don't trust church leadership.

Churches, like any other organization or business, have a set of processes and systems. Individuals from the congregation will sometimes disagree with facets of this system; however, many times, the church is at fault for running improperly. Conflict, poor leadership from the pulpit, and personal agendas trumping the church's vision and mission are vital reasons for faulty administration. Moreover, committed Christians will sometimes leave the church because they view the leaders as hypocritical. Moral failures, narcissistic or abusive leadership, and low accountability are all reasons why a person might distrust leaders. Unfortunately, their lack of trust is well-deserved. The best way to overcome this challenge is to prevent it in the first place, and always seek to earn trust. Be a high-accountability church. Lead with integrity.

15. I don't feel like there is a place for me to lead.

If the same old people hold the same positions every year, this criticism may be legitimate. Young Christians don't care about having a title, but they do want to have influence. Be intentional about inviting new and young leaders into positions of responsibility. Build a leadership pipeline so that you can have a growing number of more and better leaders in the church. When people are engaged in serving, they are the least likely to leave. If you want committed Christians to stay in the church, you must move as many people in your congregation as possible from sitting to serving.

Indeed, the world has changed. But is your church adapting to the ever-changing issues? How healthy is your church?

As you evaluate these 15 reasons why committed Christians do not attend church, consider which reasons you contribute to. Take a good look at your church and see whether you are an encouragement for church attendance or a hindrance, then allow the Spirit to guide you and your church leaders to make adjustments where necessary.

May we continue to build bridges not barriers!!!

#BetterTogether
Eric



CHURCHES	January	YTD
Antioch	\$ -	\$ -
Bear Creek	\$ -	\$ -
Bennett	\$ -	\$ -
Bethany	\$ -	\$ -
Bonlee	\$ -	\$ -
Brookdale	\$ -	\$ -
Brush Creek	\$ -	\$ -
Centro Familiar Cristiano	\$ -	\$ -
Cool Springs	\$ -	\$ -
CoolWater Cowboy	\$ 180.00	\$ 180.00
Cornerstone	\$ -	\$ -
Cumnock	\$ 208.33	\$ 208.33
East Sanford	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00
Emmaus	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 2,300.00
Fall Creek	\$ -	\$ -
Fellowship	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Flat Springs	\$ 1,125.00	\$ 1,125.00
Filipino American	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Grace Hill	\$ -	\$ -
Goldston	\$ -	\$ -
Good News	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
Gum Springs	\$ -	\$ -
Hickory Grove	\$ -	\$ -
Hickory Mountain	\$ -	\$ -
Hunt Springs	\$ 66.00	\$ 66.00
Jonesboro Heights	\$ -	\$ -
Joy	\$ -	\$ -
Juniper Springs	\$ 2,250.00	\$ 2,250.00
Kingdom Builders of Christ	\$ -	\$ -
Loves Creek	\$ 143.75	\$ 143.75
Mays Chapel	\$ -	\$ -
Moncure	\$ 782.25	\$ 782.25
Moons Chapel	\$ -	\$ -
Mount Olive	\$ -	\$ -
New Life Praise	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
New Salem	\$ -	\$ -
Oakley	\$ 2,421.52	\$ 2,421.52
Pittsboro Baptist	\$ 454.18	\$ 454.18
Pleasant Hill	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Primera Iglesia Bautista	\$ -	\$ -
Rives Chapel	\$ -	\$ -
Roca Fuerte	\$ -	\$ -
Rock Springs	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
Rocky River	\$ 1,056.75	\$ 1,056.75
Sandy Branch	\$ 1,324.98	\$ 1,324.98
Sanford, First	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00
Shepherd's Flock	\$ 62.62	\$ 62.62
Siler City First	\$ 208.33	\$ 208.33
Tramway	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
Tyson Creek	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
TOTAL CHURCH INCOME	\$ 17,858.71	\$ 17,858.71
Other Income	\$ -	\$ -
INTEREST INCOME	\$ 6.70	\$ 6.70
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 17,865.41	\$ 17,865.41
Expenses This Month	\$ 13,066.39	
Expenses To Date	\$ 13,066.39	
Budget Requirements Per Month	\$ 13,412.80	
Budget Requirements To Date	\$ 13,412.80	
SCBA FUNDS	1/31/2020	
Capital Bank - Checking	\$ 34,154.32	
Capital Bank - Restricted	\$ 18,853.37	
BUDGET 2020	\$ 160,953.62	

SCBA WMU: Here comes Spring and with it the long awaited blooming blossoms bringing beauty at close of winter. Other events and opportunities for ministry fill the month of March.

Just a reminder that March 1-8 is the official week of North American Emphasis and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® (AAEO®). This year's theme, *IT'S ALL ABOUT THE GOSPEL*, is based on 1 Corinthians 15: 3-4. Using the promotional materials available at either AnnieArmstrong.com/StateWMU or AnnieArmstrong.com/Resources throughout the month is a great way to enhance the participation, extend the focus on prayer for NAMB missionaries, and the learning experience for your church. Your gifts to AAEO® fund the needs of student missionaries as they train and serve all over North America.

On March 3, Caregiver Appreciation Day, take the opportunity to encourage and bless those who minister to others in what can be all-consuming as to time and energy. Saint Patrick's Day, celebrated on the 17th, is in honor of the missionary who brought Christianity to the Irish people in the 400's AD. Perhaps you are searching for a mission trip that fits your gifts and God's call. Visit www.wmunc.org/missiontrips for details. These are just a few of the possibilities.

For years the women across SCBA have collected items for the RED BOX ministry serving women in NC prisons. The following is an excerpt from one prisoner's thank you note: *I want to thank the women of NC Baptist churches for all your hard work and love that went into the Christmas Red Boxes. This touched my heart and calmed the storm inside of me... May God bless the hands involved in this ministry...* Even seemingly small gestures make a big difference. Thank you all for being part of this ministry.

We must guard our hearts and be sure we "don't settle for a mediocre faith" (Feb. MM, Pg. 22). The dictionary defines this word as "of only moderate quality, not very good." My personal definition in this context is "way less than our heavenly Father has and desires for His children." Don't settle for a mediocre faith whether you are 25, 85, or 105!

It is written: "And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' So the Lord said, 'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it will obey you'" (Luke 17: 5-6).

SCBA WMU Director: Susan Ferguson, (919) 548-0115, fergusonst@earthlink.net



SPECIAL DATES FOR MARCH

- First Sunday in Lent, *March 1, 2020*
- World Day of Prayer, *March 6, 2020*
- Second Sunday in Lent, *March 8, 2020*
- Daylight-Saving Time begins, *March 8, 2020*
- Third Sunday in Lent, *March 15, 2020*
- First day of spring, *March 19, 2020*
- Fourth Sunday in Lent, *March 22, 2020*
- Fifth Sunday in Lent, *March 29, 2020*



**Reach Out Crisis
Pregnancy Center**

403 Carthage St
Sanford, NC 3770
919.292.2657
reachoutcpc@gmail.com

“For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD.”
Psalm 117:2 NIV

Thank you for your loving support and continued support of Reach Out Crisis

Pregnancy Center. Every day we get to give blessings by way of material needs, prayers and sharing the love of Christ with others. We also get to receive blessings by way of donations that continually flow into the Center; whether it is packs of diapers, formula, or monetary gifts – WE ARE BLESSED!

Prayer requests: Pray that the Lord will bring those in need to the Center. Pray for more opportunities to share the Gospel.

Needs: baby socks, diapers (size 1 & 4) and hooded baby towels

Updates..... Please like our new Facebook page at *Reach Out Crisis Pregnancy Center Sanford.* (You will see the new logo as it is above on the new page.)

Thank you for your continued support!

“Together for LIFE,
Dianna Andrews, Executive Director



We are here!!!

A great **BIG** thank you to those of you that came out January 11th, to help us move some of our office equipment to the new location, (205 N. Steele St., Sanford).

There is still much to be done at the 2807 Sandy Creek Church Rd. site. So, if you call or come by and I am not at the Steele St. site, I will probably be working at the old office site.

If you wish to visit our new office, please use the 205 Steele Street entrance, and ring the door bell.

Our phone number will be the same, 919.776.9423.

March—Calendar of Events-		
8		Daylight savings time begins-turn clocks up 1 hour
9	6:00pm	Executive Council Mtg. at East Sanford
11		Mission Development Team Mtg.
17	12 Noon	Pastor's Luncheon at Best Food, Siler City
19	12 Noon	Pastor's Luncheon at Golden Corral, Sanford
April—Calendar of Events-		
7	2:30-4:30pm	SCBA Sisterhood mtg. at New SCBA Office
12	EASTER	SCBA Office Closed
27		SCBA Spring Gathering Place TBA



Senior Worship Rally
May 12, 2020

WHERE: Best Food Cafeteria
(HWY 64) Siler City

The Jubilee Choir will be singing at 11:00am.

SPEAKERS: Testimonies from Jubilee Choir members and others. If you would like— come prepared to share an encouraging word about our LORD.

Everyone will go through the Cafeteria line afterward for lunch.

Each person will take care of their own lunch ticket.

The deadline for articles or event fliers to be turned in to the office, for THE LINK Newsletter is the 15th of the month prior to the published month.