A WORD FROM THE PASTOR: Creed or Chaos

In 1949 the British author Dorothy Sayers wrote, “The reason why churches are discredited today is not that they are too bigoted about theology, but that they have run away from theology.” If Sayers’s words were true in 1949, they are even more true in 2020.

Over the past several decades many denominations in the United States have moved away from teaching orthodox Christian doctrine. Instead they have embraced a “lowest common denominator” approach to Christianity and have even sought to “revise” Christian teaching so that it will fit with modern values. Some mainline protestant denominations no longer affirm the central truths of the protestant reformation such as the infallibility of Scripture or salvation through Christ alone. Back in 2006, one mainline American denomination decided that the Biblical language for the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—needed updating and encouraged members to experiment with new titles for God such as “Rainbow, Arch, and Dove.”

All of this running away from theology (to borrow a phrase from Sayers) has been done in the name of attracting people to the church. Some people believed that if the Christian faith were watered down, it would become more appealing to the world. In reality, the exact opposite has been true: The churches and denominations that have abandoned orthodox doctrine have been rapidly dying; meanwhile, studies show that the churches and denominations that are experiencing growth are those that affirm orthodox Christian theology. As it turns out, when the church becomes exactly like the world, then it no longer has something left to offer the world.

Dorothy Sayers argued that the reason people find churches dull today is not because churches have taught too much doctrine, but because they have neglected doctrine. Recent research would suggest that she was right. In American churches today there is a troubling lack of theological knowledge when it comes to even the most basic Christian doctrines. According to the 2020 State of Theology Survey conducted by Ligonier Ministries, 30% of Evangelical Christians believe that “Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God.” 42% of Evangelical Christians believe that “God accepts the worship of all religions.” 46% of Evangelicals believe that “Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature.” These statistics reflect the disturbing reality that even among those who claim to believe the Bible there is a huge amount of theological confusion.

What is the solution to these problems? The church in America today needs to refocus its attention on the great doctrines of the Christian faith. The statistics above suggest that believers need to be reminded of what we believe and why we believe it. Furthermore, the quality that is going to attract non-believers to churches will be the courage and clarity of our convictions. You might say that if the church wants to be most relevant, it should stop focusing on being relevant and instead focus on proclaiming the truth. After all, it is this truth that the lost so desperately need and that the world cannot offer to them.

This fall at Highview we are working through a sermon series on the Apostles’ Creed. The Apostles’ Creed is one of the oldest and most universally recognized creeds in the history of the Christian church. It states some of the core doctrines that have made Christianity unique for two thousand years. I hope you will join us every Sunday as we remind ourselves what we believe and why we believe it.

- Pastor Stephen
### Session Notes – September 10, 2020

3. Elected Dick and Barbara Natrop to serve as elder commissioners at the October 9th meeting of Presbytery.
4. Received an update from Tim Samuels and Chad Sutkay on the work of the ministry expansion team.
5. A coffee hour will be sponsored by the Mission Committee on October 11, 2020.
6. The Men’s Retreat will take place on November 6-7, 2020.
7. Next Session meeting will be on October 15, 2020.
8. Closed in a time of prayer.

### Youth Ministry

Another school year has begun and many of our youth ministry activities are back up and running. Here is what is happening with our various programs:

**HS/MS Youth Group:** We are three weeks into our Eschatology 101 series. The first week we simply talked through what eschatology is, some of the different facets of it, and why it is an important topic to study. In a world that is full of unrest and uncertainty it is essential for Christians to know where to place their hope. We have now spent two weeks looking at personal eschatology, focusing in on death and seeking to answer questions like “what is death?” and “what happens when we die?” While death isn’t normally on someone’s top ten list of things to talk about, if we have a proper understanding of death, we do not need to live in fear of it. I am excited to continue these discussions with our students.

**ES Youth Group:** The elementary youth group will meet for the first time on Saturday, October 3rd from 9:30-11:30am. We will be starting our own spin off of Pastor Stephen’s “Ask Anything” series by answering the questions our kids have about God, the Bible, or living out their faith!

**Sunday School:** Our 5-8th grade class and 9-12th grade class are up and running. Tim Samuels is continuing to lead our 5th-8th grade class through their curriculum G2R (Genesis to Revelation), working through each book of the Bible. I teach the 9-12th grade class using the “So What?” curriculum, seeking to relate faith to life. We are about to finish our unit on identity and purpose, and will then move on to a study of the book of Romans. The elementary school class is continuing with their virtual content for the time being.

**Children’s Church:** We have resumed Children’s Church! Our goal is to be able to offer it every other Sunday for the rest of the fall. The next lesson will be on Sunday, October 11th during 10:15 service. We are continuing working our way through the Old Testament using the Gospel Story Bible.

**Homework Club:** Starting Thursday, October 1st, we will be starting a homework club (still working on a better name haha). This will be on Thursdays from 2-5pm and open to all of our youth as well as kids in the community. The goal is to provide a space for kids to work on their homework/virtual schooling as well as some math/science tutoring for kids that may need it. (You don’t want
me helping your child with English homework!) While I hope many of our kids take advantage of it, I also hope this will serve as outreach for the unchurched youth in our community.

Stay up to date with Highview Youth Ministry by following our page on Facebook or @hepcyouth on Instagram!

-Katie

**NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Leadership Nomination Process** - At our annual meeting this year we revised our leadership structure and process for nominating elders, deacons, and trustees. Moving forward, we will no longer be using a nominating committee to identify and raise up new leaders. Instead, the Session will invite members of the congregation to submit recommendations for potential new elders. The Session will prayerfully consider these recommendations each year and when appropriate, nominate new elders for ordination. These nominations will be voted on by the congregation at the annual meeting. Similarly, the deacons will nominate new deacons, and the trustees will nominate new trustees. During the month of October, you will find copies of a leadership recommendation form in the narthex. If you would like to recommend someone for one of these positions, please use one of these forms and return the form to the church office by October 31st.

**Creative Day:** Creative Day is back! With the fall schedule back in swing at Highview, we will be holding our first fall creative day. Come join us for all or part of the day on Saturday, October 10th (9AM to 7PM). Bring your project, snacks or lunch, and a mask. We will have tables set up 6 feet apart to keep social distance as well as sanitized. Any questions? Feel free to reach out to Carol McKeown or Debbie Hawver.

**Blood Drive:** The next blood drive is Monday, October 19th from 2-6:30. Please make an appointment as soon as possible at redcross.org. Please see Barbara Natrop with questions. Thank you!

**Angel Tree:** Sunday, October 25th, will mark the start of our Angel Tree Christmas program. We will continue this program as we have in the past with only a few changes so we can practice social distancing and keep everyone as safe as possible. Instead of having our small tree with angels on it, we will put up some tables in the narthex and have the angels spread out on them. You will still need to sign out the angel you have chosen and pick up a sheet with our GUIDELINES for purchase and wrapping of your gift just as we always have. Kerri and I will be there to help you with that.

The Covid-19 virus has caused us to make some changes in our lives and some of you are not comfortable coming to church at this time and we respect your decision. Therefore, if you wish to participate in this ministry you may call me and I will choose an angel for you. My phone number is 262-965-2224. I am also considering coming to church one morning and one afternoon that first week so you can come and choose an angel when there are very few people at church. Another option would be that if you want to join us but are uncomfortable shopping, you could make a monetary contribution and we will see that someone shops for you.

Please watch the Sunday bulletins for more information. It is our endeavor to keep this ministry going and to keep it as safe as possible. – Dorothy Maule
# OCTOBER 2020

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