

NOVEMBER 2009

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"God Made Me a Pastor..."

By: Steve Ratliff Senior Pastor

"God made me a pastor because He couldn't trust me to do anything else." I forget where I came across this quote years ago, but it expresses my own conviction. I think God made me a pastor to keep me tethered to Himself through studying and teaching the Word and through the relationships I'd have in the body of Christ. The weekly, seasonal, and yearly disciplines of being a pastor keep me seeking God in ways that I probably wouldn't otherwise. I can't prove this, but I believe it to be true. I don't actually think that the life of a pastor would be spiritually desirable for most people. And I certainly don't think that the calling of a pastor is spiritually superior to other callings. I just think that God made me a pastor because He couldn't trust me to do anything else.

Being a pastor here at Faith keeps me convinced that God exists and that He works powerfully in the lives of people even today. Many of you are open and transparent about the ways that God is convicting you of sins and failures and transforming you into the image of Christ. Your transparency makes me want to be honest before God and others in radical ways.



Brian and I have been very encouraged by your response to the messages from the Sermon on the Mount. It's a real privilege to teach in a church in which people are eager to hear and apply the Word in their lives. Your eagerness to follow God's Word stimulates us to study and teach faithfully. It's significant that the "hard teachings" of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are nourishing to you. That is evidence of the Spirit's work in our midst.

Thanks for the feedback on our corporate experience with *lectio divina* on October 15th. Many of you communicated that you experienced God through the simplicity of reading and listening for the voice of God in Psalm 139.

Service of Believer's Baptism. Our next service of believer's baptism will be THIS Sunday, November 15th, at 2 p.m. If

you want a snapshot of what God is doing here at Faith, come to this service. You'll hear how God has led people to Himself through a variety of different people and circumstances.

Congregational Meeting. On Monday, November 16th at 7 p.m. we will have our quarterly Congregational Meeting. At this meeting we will be receiving 14 people into membership. We will also adopt a budget for 2010. Our elders, deacons, and other ministry leaders have spent considerable time this fall crafting a budget that we believe reflects God's priorities for next year. Copies of the proposed budget are available on the office counter on Sunday morning.

Thanksgiving Service. We'll be having a Thanksgiving service on Sunday night, November 22nd at 6 p.m. This will be an opportunity to express our thanks to God through music, Scripture, prayer, and testimony.

Advent Sermon Series. This Advent season Brian and I will be doing a sermon series based on the life of Mary (Jesus' mother). We will teach from familiar texts, but the emphasis will be on what Mary's experience teaches us about our relationship with God. Mary was the first person in the New Testament to believe the Gospel. Mary was also the first person to suffer for the Gospel. Mary had the unique role as the *mother* of the Messiah who (like everyone else) had to learn to *follow* the Messiah. In her song (which we call the *Magnificat*) Mary says that "from this time on all generations will count me blessed" (Luke 1:48). This Advent season we will join previous generations in acknowledging the blessedness of Mary. The first Sunday of Advent is November 29th.

Compassion Fund. Last month I mentioned that our Compassion Fund (used to help with financial needs within the church

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Be sure to pick up one of our new Fall Church Directories!

God made me... continued from page 1

and in the community) was depleted. In response \$1045 was given to this fund. Thanks for your generosity. It's a wonderful thing to be able to help people with financial needs in the

name of Jesus. Please know that those who have been helped by this fund are very grateful for the help.

Keeping Our Children Safe by: Chris Barker, Children's Pastor

On any given Sunday morning the children's wing is a hopping place. Fifty volunteers currently serve around 170 children between the ages of 0 and 12 each week. In addition to that there are a regular stream of visitors and guests.

With those kinds of numbers security needs to be taken seriously. The system we currently use is outdated. Over the next couple of weeks we will be rolling out a new security plan. With that will come some significant changes.

On December 6th we'll begin electronically checking in our children. We have signed up with KidCheck (www.kidcheck.com) to take advantage of their excellent check-in program. You will begin to see the new stations in place as early as this Sunday. Children will need to be checked in and out of the system each time they take part in Children's Ministry Programming. Some action points that you can do to get ready for this transition include:

- Visit www.kidcheck.com to get a feel for how this system

will work.

- All parents and volunteers should sign up for a free parent account at <https://go.kidcheck.com>.
- Subscribe to receive emails from www.faithmanhattan.org/cmreport.

I will be communicating more thoroughly about the upcoming changes through the children's ministry blog mentioned above (www.faithmanhattan.org/cmreport). Stayed tuned for more information and feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

Stewardship Principle for November



Giving a tithe to the Lord's work is a way of putting God first in your life.

The Law stipulated giving a tenth of one's produce, livestock, and income to the Lord. This tithe was given from the firstfruits instead of the leftovers as a way to express love for God and "fear of the Lord." The Law specifically taught giving a tithe as well as other offerings to the Lord.

The new covenant no longer stipulates a tithe but rather emphasizes sacrificial giving to the Lord. Since the tithe was the most basic level of giving in the old covenant and since the new covenant deepens our capacity to honor God, the tithe

should be seen as the "starting blocks" instead of the "finish line" of giving.

Those who have not established the discipline of giving a tithe might not think such generous giving to be possible. And yet many have found God faithful to supply their needs when they have stepped out in faith to give sacrificially. Giving a tithe to the Lord's work is a way of putting God first in your life. Seeing God's faithfulness as we tithe increases our faith to give even more generously and sacrificially.

"You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow . . . the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first-born of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always." Deuteronomy 14:22-23

Financial Update

	<u>October</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
General Giving (non-designated)	\$59,124.11	\$570,971.68
Other (missionary support, etc.)	3084.77	43,354.70
Total Receipts	\$62,208.88	\$614,326.38



The 2009 Operating Budget monthly need for non-designated giving is \$61,237.68. Thank you for your generous giving to Faith!

Worship Notes by: Micah Peacock, Worship Pastor

A warm thank you for the encouragement I have received; I am blessed to be a part of this body. Sharing life with you all has been fun, challenging, insightful, and real. I could not hope for more! I feel that my understanding of what it means to live a life of worship has deepened, and I pray yours has, as well.

A couple of events worth mentioning:

For the volunteers - I will be holding another charting session on November 14 (Saturday) at 1:00 p.m. here at the church. If you haven't had the opportunity to attend a previous session, I strongly encourage you to try to make this one as I'll soon be switching to a different method of charting the music we'll be doing on Sunday morning.

For everyone - On Dec. 6 (Sunday) here at Faith, we'll be hosting a concert with a close friend of mine named Stephen Miller and his band. Over the last few years, I have written, recorded, and toured with Stephen. His new album, "People of Redemption," as well as other previous material is available on iTunes and at www.myspace.com/stephenmiller. He and his band will be sharing some of their music and will also give us an opportunity to join with them in the support of Compassion International and its efforts to care for children in need around the globe. This is church-wide event, so grab

the family and friends and come out to the church at 7:00 p.m. for some great music and fellowship, and the opportunity to partner with Compassion in 'being' the Church. The event is free to attend (although we will likely collect a 'love-offering' for the guys in support of their ministry).

The Advent season is approaching. This season celebrates the monumental and joyous event of the coming of the Messiah. In the midst of the festivities, traditions, and celebrations, let's be committed to honoring the birth of Christ with the same kind of servant-mindedness with which He lived. This time of year is so often accompanied by warm feelings and fond memories, and what a blessing that is! But, there is also a reality that pain, isolation, and brokenness are just as likely to be surfaced during a time such as this. So, let's focus on the coming of the King - the fact that He came to repair a broken world. Let's take the heart behind our "Season of Service" and extend it through the coming months; we are needed.

"Where there is pain, let us bring grace. Where there is suffering, bring serenity. For those afraid, let us be brave. Where there is misery, let us bring them relief. And surely we can change something."

The Library — Come check us out! by: Kathy Pauls

Visit our library these next few weeks as our Thanksgiving books on display will be replaced with Christmas ones. Many of these books have beautiful illustrations. Check one out to share with your family as you discuss the holiness of this special season.



Life Group Intersession: *Just Walk Across the Room* by: Brian Anderson

This past fall we transitioned from year-long small groups to semester-based Life Groups. Life Groups (which include Sunday morning groups, men's and women's groups as well as groups that meet in homes and Alpha) now run for approximately twelve weeks at the end of which people have the choice of recommitting for another semester (if the group is continuing), trying a new group, or taking a break from a group for awhile.

The end of the fall Life Group semester will occur the first week of December. The following week on December 8th, Faith will host the Alpha Dinner Party. Our desire is that Life Groups would participate in the dinner party by praying, serving, or inviting friends to attend. Winter Life Groups will then start the week of January 24th. You will be able to sign up for the Life Group of your choice starting in early January.

During the intersession between Life Group semesters, we are planning to offer different electives. This coming intersession we will be offering *Just Walk Across the Room*. This course will certainly give you some "tools" that will help you articulate your faith in Jesus more effectively, but even

more it will help you see how impacting someone's eternity might be a lot simpler than you ever imagined. It might be as simple as taking a "walk across a room" and saying hello to another person that leads to such a life changing transformation. In living out our faith it is critical to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. This course will help you learn to partner with the Holy Spirit - to walk when he says walk, to talk when he says to talk, and to fall silent when he suggests you've said enough. The course will both equip and inspire you to take some simple steps to offer care, compassion and inclusiveness to people who need to know God.

Matt Floersch will facilitate this course which will meet on four Sundays (Dec. 13, 20, Jan. 10, 17) from 9:30-10:30 am. Please sign up only if you know that you will be able to attend at least three of the four sessions. Each person will need to purchase a participant's guide (\$5). Though the purchase of the book, *Just Walk Across the Room*, is not required, it is highly encouraged (\$10). To register for the course please sign up on your Connections Card on Sunday. If you have questions, please contact Brian Anderson (brian@faithmanhattan.org).



Evangelical Free Church

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SAVE THESE DATES:

- **Baptism Service: Sunday, Nov. 15th 2 p.m.**
- **Congregational Meeting: Monday, Nov. 16th 7 p.m.**
- **Thanksgiving Service: Sunday, Nov. 22nd 6 p.m.**
- **Stephen Miller Concert: Sunday, Dec 6th 7 p.m.**