

new life news

Monthly Newsletter of New Life Church of Christ

September 2019

A photograph of several bright yellow sunflowers with dark brown centers, resting on a light-colored surface. A piece of light brown, textured fabric or ribbon is draped across the scene, partially overlapping the sunflowers.

September Events

September 2

Labor Day – Office Closed

September 4

Comfort & Joy Sewing @ 9:00a

September 8

Celebration Milestones @ 9:00a

September 15, 22, & 29

Sonshine Singers Practices 4:00p

September 18

Comfort & Joy Sewing @ 5:30p

September 19

Senior Moments Event @ 12:00p

Oikos is a Greek word that is usually translated in the New Testament as “household” or “family”. Generally it refers to those living in the same household including blood relatives, those related by marriage, servants, slaves, and any others who might be living together in a household. **In our modern terms, an *oikos* is your sphere of influence consisting of friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors.** It is the group of people that we interact with regularly. You might say that our *oikos* is our community.

For those of us who have given our life to God through the blood of Jesus, our *oikos* has another name: the Church. As the apostle Paul puts it in Ephesians 2:19, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household [*oikos*].” The church is our family, our household, our community.

As part of this household of God, we each have benefits and responsibilities. On the benefit side, we have the support, encouragement, and concern of the rest of God’s people. This is to say nothing of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of our sins, and the gift of eternal life in the presence of God! On the responsibility side, God calls us to support and encourage and love our fellow family members. We are called to give with generosity and to gather with the Church. He also tells us to recruit those who are outside the family, to come and join us. **In this month’s newsletter the articles by Chris and Kyle and Jason explore some of these things in more detail. - Steve**

On August 15 a group called “Thumbs Up” came to spend an evening with several of our church’s members in the gym. **Thumbs Up is a group of families that are tied together by the common interest of having a family member with special needs.** The group meets once a month to share some food together, talk and enjoy one another’s company. They provide opportunities for the families involved to get to know one another better and to support one another.

Our congregation invited this group to come and spend the evening with us. We were blessed with the opportunity of serving them food, visiting with them, doing crafts, and playing BINGO. There was even a little dancing! **What happened on August 15 was an awesome thing in many ways.** It brought people together that wouldn’t usually be spending time together. It gave caretakers one evening to be served rather than having to be the ones serving. The Lord used the opportunity to bring people together. It was an experience in community.

Community is a word thrown around a lot that has lost a lot of meaning for many people. But at its very heart community carries the idea of people experiencing life together. And seeing fifty or so people – some old and some young, some with special needs and some without, some who liked to do crafts and some who liked to play ball, and one that really, really liked to dance – come together to share an hour and half of life together was an amazing thing. **The top priority of the night was serving others and putting them before self. It happened.** The experience of community was encouraging and I’d say that those who participated, whether they were of the group serving or being served, were blessed in some way by it.

~Kyle

In Acts chapter 6, many in the early church were upset that the widows were being neglected, so the apostles came up with an idea. They gathered all the disciples together and appointed seven men to make sure this was being taken care of. **Acts is full of stories of how Jesus envisioned his church and what a wonderful movement it was. Community was key in the hearts of these people.** They had close relationships with God and each other. They thrived and grew in numbers and in the Holy Spirit. I believe we as the church in 2019, can accomplish these same things because of the Holy Spirit. **I want to tie all this specifically to our children’s ministry here at church. We have a great group of volunteers who understand how important these early years are for children, but our group can grow.** We have so many different areas that we could use your help in, so we are working together as a family to help raise our children in Christ. Children’s ministry has been so rewarding for me and I promise you, you will feel the power of the Holy Spirit at some point through an interaction with these kiddos. So, **I pray if the Holy Spirit lays it on your heart to hold a baby, to sing a song with some toddlers, to tell some bible stories to preschoolers, to talk about the bible with elementary kids, or to simply check in kids, that you will act on it.** See you soon!

~Jason



Greetings in Christ! **Each Tuesday evening, the praise team practices the songs that we will be singing on Sunday.** But before the first song is rehearsed, **we have been studying the book of Acts in our devotional time.** This time of studying has become a real highlight of my week, and I always look forward to our time of discussion of what Scripture is teaching each of us as Christ-followers.

As we have been studying the first church recorded in Acts, I've been struck by the real sense of family that the church displayed. They were truly brothers and sisters brought together by the blood of Jesus Christ. In Acts 2:42 we read that the family of God, *"devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer"* (CSB). This is the practice that every church should be following today, but I want to really focus on the fellowship of the congregation in Jerusalem. **We read in the following verses, how this fellowship looked. Verse 45 reads, "They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need." Isn't that amazing!?!?** Those who had property and possessions saw their family in need and wanted to care for them. That is real love, that is! Jesus taught in Matthew 7:12, *"whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them."* The Golden Rule is sometimes referred to as a cliché, but when you see it in action for real, it is far from that. **The early church cared for and took care of each other like they would want if they were in a similar situation. Wouldn't it be great to see the church today be "family" like this?**

Later in Acts 2:46 we read, *"Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts."* They spent time together learning from the Apostles in the temple, but they also spent time together eating meals and enjoying life together. **It is difficult to be the community of Christ when we only see each other for an hour or two on Sunday mornings.** The time to worship and study God's Word together is valuable, but if we really want to be the family of God we need more time to grow together.

Real family is longed for by so many today. People search for a place to belong on social media and many sources that are not uplifting. **But we, as brothers and sisters in Christ, we can bring community and belonging to enjoy ourselves, but also impact a world that is desperate for something real. I pray that we will continue to learn the lessons from the early church.**

~Chris

September Birthdays

- 1 – David Roseberry
- 2 – Sheri Noe
- 5 – Hunter Ward
- 6 – Tom Carroll
- 8 – Michelle Fluty, Bob McConkie
- 10 – Pat Frontz
- 11 – Jacob Hamilton
- 15 – Jessica Brown
- 16 – Anneliese Litt
- 17 – Rachel Maglott
- 19 – Stella Slone
- 22 – Scott Shaffer
- 24 – James Twedt
- 25 – Brenda Johnson, Steve Liming
- 26 – Alec Armstrong, Mason Armstrong
- 27 – Amber Litt
- 28 – Hunter Benick, Carolyn McGugin
- 30 – Cole Fletcher

SOUTH INDIA CHURCH OF CHRIST MISSION

When Arthur and Ruth Morris arrived in Madras, India, from Indiana in 1950, they had their young son, David, with them, very little belongings, and no one to meet them at the pier. Today, through the work of the Holy Spirit, The South India Church of Christ Mission is a thriving work with these service arms.

The Congregations of SICCM

The 1,115 existing today are a testament to the work of our partners in South India.

Those congregations have these traits in common.

- Congregations are of believers baptized for the remission of sins.
- They have at least three families involved in weekly Sunday worship.
- They must show evidence of its study of the New Testament and the Bible.
- They are mentored by an established Church of Christ.
- They have weekly communion as the New Testament example given by Jesus.
- They have fellowship with other Christian churches and Christian believers.

The College

The purpose of Southern Asia Christian College, ever since its earliest days as the Rural Training Institute back in 1953, has been to train the local leadership of Christ's church. The College moved to the next higher level of academic accreditation when it was granted the right to offer graduate studies to its students in 2009. The College is offering the "integrated Bachelor of Divinity" degree. It is the same as completing a B.A. in Christian Ministry and also a M.A. in Christian Ministry in a 5 year degree program. We continue to work with the Mission leadership and with the currently enrolled students as well as College alumni of the 1980's onwards to recruit new students through recommendation by the student's congregation and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Medical Facilities

When Arthur and Ruth Morris moved to Madrapakkam, one of the first huts was the medical hut. It only took weeks of living in the village to discover how much disease was present in these villages: malaria, cholera, fevers, tuberculosis, and pneumonia. What they soon found out that the most common disease was leprosy. As Dr. Paul Brand, a pioneering surgeon with a vision to eradicate leprosy said: "About 5% of the people have leprosy." This turned out to be accurate, with leprosy among the poorest of the poor outcastes and high caste people equally. The eradication of leprosy took 30 years. After eradicating leprosy, Christian Hospital was downsized to a "First Responder" clinic for the surrounding villages, a role it continues until today. Current plans are to continue a First Responder clinic and to add a phlebotomy training clinic to provide those services to meet area needs.

Emergency Services

India is a long stretch of tapering land increasingly surrounded by sea and ocean. The more south you get, the more the subcontinent looks and acts like Florida or the Gulf states of the USA. The Arabian Sea is to the west and the Bay of Bengal to the east. In south India, storms in both bring the yearly monsoon, which is the rain water for the year. If the monsoon is too little, the people of India face drought. If the monsoon is too much, there is flooding. And if there is an earthquake in the Pacific, there are tsunami waves. Over the past 65 years, since Arthur and Ruth Morris moved to the village of Madrapakkam, Disaster Response has built up ways to meet the needs of disaster survivors even when resources are scarce. The backbone of the Disaster Response ministry is local congregations and volunteers willing to travel to the disaster scene. There, first aid and boiling of water can help the survivors in the earliest stages of recovery. After that, the trauma of the disaster takes time and prayer for the survivor to recover. Meanwhile, they have to get clothes and kitchen pots-and-pans and bedding. Above all, the self-help group of survivors with experienced volunteers assisting helps to overcome the shock and to get the survivors back into a condition where they can take care of themselves, and be available to help other survivors when the next disaster strikes. Only God knows when that will be, but there will be more. At the moment, though, the Disaster Response ministry has its hands full with the 2014 flood recovery.

Current Situation

The political situation is very concerning in India today with the pro-Buddhist parties gaining ascendancy through elections threatening Muslims and Christians of India. Be praying for God's Protection for our brothers and sisters there. Also, be praying for our current SICCM leaders, David and Philomina Morris, and our brothers and sisters in Christ during these uncertain times.