

Privileged to Serve

Morning Worship

Announcements: Byran Hatcher

Song Leader: Chad Futrell

Opening Prayer: Barry Hatcher

Lord's Table:
Presiding: Kyle Pool

Assisting: Ron Austin
 Dave Carver

Sermon: Byran Hatcher

Closing Prayer: Ricardo Alvillar

Those serving Wednesday

Song Leader: Chad Futrell

Opening Prayer: Chad Futrell

Teacher: Chad Futrell

Announcements: Byran Hatcher

Closing Prayer: Phil Byrd

Pantry Item
Canned fruit

Sermon Notes
Observations and Reflections

March 12, 2023

Welcome!

Cape Fear
Church of Christ

3808 Village Dr
Fayetteville, NC
28304

Phone:
(910) 425-1108

Website:
capefearcoc.org
Find us on
Facebook!

Service Times

Sunday:
B. C. 9:00am
Worship 10:00am

Wednesday Night:
B. C. 7:00pm

Ladies' Class:
Tuesdays 10:00am

Elders
Wade Hedgepeth
Byran Hatcher

Volume 40 Issue 11

The
Cape Fear Crier

“Cry aloud and shout...for great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel.” Isaiah 12:6

Are We Lowering The Bar?

When I was in high school I ran the hurdles in track. One day before practice we were waiting for the coaches and we were having fun at the high jump pit. After everyone jumped over the bar it was raised a few inches and we all jumped again to see who could get over the bar. What I came to realize was even the slightest touch of the bar would cause it to come down. Don't touch the bar!

I have come to see a close parallel of the high jump to today's religious community and especially within the Lord's church. Even though we should ever be striving for higher standing and going on to maturity ([Heb. 6:1-2](#)) in the Lord, we have been “lowering the bar” to accommodate practices that we simply do not want to address. We sometimes boast of being the first century church, but are we? I wonder if we are even like the church of fifty to a hundred years ago. We seem to forget that even though society may change, God's will (word) for His followers remains unchangeable! It is that word that *will* judge us ([John 12:48](#))! The church today has devolved into what I have chosen to call “A Happy Family Syndrome.” The thought of offending someone has become the governing factor in so many of our practices and decisions. We have become careful to avoid any number of topics. Space only allows for a few.

Same-sex marriage has been declared legal and binding by the highest court of the land. So, what do the majority of elders and preachers do? Generally speaking, they act as if it really is of no concern. Oh, they may speak of the evil of it before the congregation, but to what avail? Telling a Christian that sodomy is an abomination to God is similar to telling a Christian that baptism is required for salvation. A Christian already knows as much. Instead of taking a stand against such enactments, they simply lower the bar.

Church discipline is almost non-existent. (One could say it took a downward turn after the Donahue show*) There are no longer attempt to carry out loving discipline in our congregations. Fear of reprisal may be a factor. Instead, being a “big happy family” has taken

precedence over following the standard - God’s Holy Word, the Bible. Quantity has become of much greater concern than quality. Church oversight has lost sight of Reprove, Rebuke and Exhort ([2 Tim. 4:2](#)). Unhappy folks are simply invited to go where they will be happy, no matter the reason for their state of mind! The bar comes down further!

The *oversight of the church* ([Acts 20:28](#)) has been passed from elders to the one in the pulpit in many congregations. “Problems” are placed in the preacher’s hands for resolution which hardly ever happens. Paul said “*a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*” ([Gal. 5:9](#)). In any event, it is impossible to find scripture to support this type of organization. Again, we see the bar being lowered.

[First Timothy 2:9-10](#) discusses the subject of modesty. “*In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.*” We have lowered the bar to accommodate “anything goes” and in some cases “less than anything goes” so that the dress code is passé, and if a congregation has one it is frowned upon.

Earnestly contending for the faith ([Jude 3](#)) is yet another area where the bar has been lowered (maybe removed altogether). Over and over again we see those who sit in secure surroundings discussing the sectarian community and how they are abusing or misusing the scriptures, but they never go and face those they criticize. When and how do we relate to *marriage, divorce and remarriage* among the elect? We just do not go there! Civil laws have eased the process and church leaders are simply unwilling to stand up and be counted. We just lower the bar.

Then there is the neglect in *attendance, service, study* and doing what is expected of one claiming to be a Christian. Apathy and complacency are taking their toll in our congregations. Sermons are often innocuous making the hearers feel good and comfortable rather than being encouraged to do better and be active in the work of the Lord! Zeal for the Lord’s work is lacking. We just lower the bar.

Then, there is that area having to do with *seeking the lost*. We like to preach baptism, but fail to go and teach candidates worthy of baptism. We are more inclined to preach baptism as it conflicts with sectarian use, but we never face them. Debates went away in previous generations. We like to quote [Mark 16:16](#) skipping over verse 15. We avoid [Matthew 18:18-20](#) as it puts us where we just do not want to be! Why do we choose to ignore Paul’s many examples (cf. [Acts 20:18-21](#) for example)? We just lower the bar.

So, where does the bar hang in the Lord’s church of today? Does it reflect the high standard the Lord requires? How might we fare if He were to rate us as He did the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 1-3? Might He say, “I have somewhat against thee?” Most likely, we need to examine our practices and correct as appropriate. But will we?

* Please see an elder or teacher about this event! - BTH

By the Numbers

Attendance 3/5/23
Bible Class: 63
A.M. Worship: 82
Wed. B. C.: 28

Family News and Notes

John Patchell’s niece is struggling with her lupus. **Kim Perkins** had successful surgery at UNC. **Solomon Harrington, Geraldine Harrington’s** son, is struggling with some health problems, but he has gotten some better. **Nazreen Sahib**, coworker of **Jennifer Hatcher**, has stage 4 cancer. **John Williams** is slowly recovering from knee surgeries and a broken leg. **Chuck Perkins’** coworker, **Mark Thibeault** is not doing well at this time. **Linda Williams’** mother, **Mary Pipkens** and her brothers, **Wayne** and **Harry**, are in need of prayer because of serious health concerns. **Frances Salaz** is going through chemo. **Linda Hernandez** has a significant heart problem. She will be having surgery this week. Let’s remember one another in prayer.

Pray for our world leaders at this time. Active military: Pray for all active duty military members; they could be called to a conflict area at a moment’s notice. Remember to pray for their families as well. We have 5 active duty members here at Cape Fear.

Also remember: **Margaret Langston, Vicky Carver, Deborah Ross**, and the **Davis** family. Please pray for those in Bible Studies - teachers and students!

Bible Reading Plan

Mar 12	Mar 13	Mar 14	Mar 15	Mar 16	Mar 17	Mar 18
Deu 3-4	Deu 5-6	Deu 7-8	Deu 9-10	Deu 11-12	Deu 13-14	Deu 15-16
Ps 71	Ps 72	Ps 73	Ps 74	Ps 75	Ps 76	Ps 77

Events

Silver Linings: Friday @11am. Bring your lunch. All are welcome!

