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# The Bell Tower

The Newsletter of Angier United Methodist Church

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## From the Pastor...

# What's Right with the Church

The institutional Church is an easy target these days. Some of which, admittedly, we may rightly deserve. Even those inside the Church often have a "lover's quarrel" with the Church because there are moments when we need to be reminded that we are not who we ought to be.

While we could enumerate what's wrong with the Church, I'd like to list a few things that (in my opinion) are right with the Church - more specifically, with the local Body of Christ known as Angier UMC.

**Our hospitality.** In my years of ministry, I have come to the conclusion that what goes on in the fellowship hall kitchen is as important as what goes on in the pulpit and pews. What a remarkable thing it is to share "comfort food" with one another and gather at the table for fellowship.

**Our dedicated servants.** I'm intentionally trying to avoid the word "volunteer." In the Bible, God never calls people to volunteer or "help out." He calls them to give up their lives and serve others. We have so many people who willingly give their time and energy in service - not only on Sunday mornings but throughout the week. We are truly blessed by those who serve in many capacities (teachers, cooks, ushers, ministry teams, singers/musicians, chairpersons, nursery workers, clean-up & grounds crews - the list could go on, but I don't have enough space!).

**Our thriving educational opportunities.** We have about 24 persons enrolled in *Christian Believer*. We also have about 10 persons attending our Wednesday night study. In the past few weeks, we have experienced a sense of renewal in our Sunday school classes. On September 27, we set a record Sunday school attendance of 70 - nearly 2/3 of our worship attendance!

**Our children's and youth programs.** It is often said that children and youth are "the

future of the church." I believe this to be false because 1) the Bible says that Christ is the future of the church, and 2) our children and youth are *already here*. They have gifts and ideas and energy. We celebrate their presence and are grateful for the adults who lead them and the parents who entrust them to us!

**Our spirited worship.** Whether singing modern worship songs with our gifted praise team, or raising our voices to hymns led by our talented organist and choir, we offer great worship that seeks to be relevant and connect to our daily life.

**Our willingness to not settle for the status quo.** Christian author and pastor Erwin McManus says that some churches would rather have godless security than Spirit-led change. I am grateful for the overall sense of honoring the past *and* looking to the future—which may bring change in the way the unchanging message is presented. But our hope is in the risen Christ—who is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

There may be other items and areas that I may have overlooked. This is not an exhaustive list. I invite you to add to it. What do *you* think is right with the church?

Pastor Duane

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