

# Second Helpings

DECEMBER 2020

Second Avenue United Methodist Church  
801 East Second Avenue  
Rome, GA 30161  
Phone: 706-234-6406  
Audio Worship: 706-786-6406  
2aveumc.org

## Churches Asked to be Careful and Vigilant: Georgia Back in Coronavirus Red Zone in Latest White House Report

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The White House Coronavirus Task Force has moved Georgia back into the most severe category for spread of the virus.

Citing an increase in cases, President Trump’s coronavirus task force moved Georgia back into the most severe category for spread of the virus for the first time since mid-September. The report warned of asymptomatic spread, particularly in social gatherings, as cool weather pushes people indoors and friends and families plan holiday events.

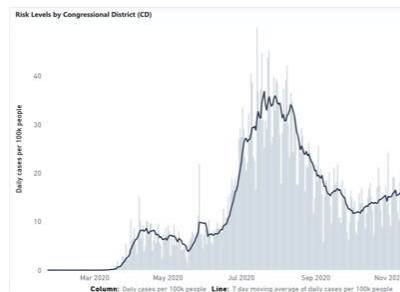
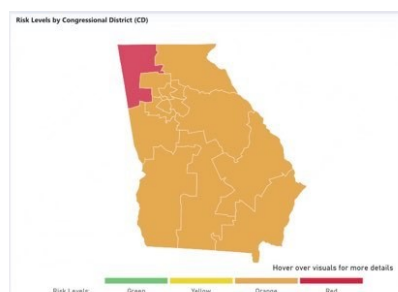
“Georgia must expand the mitigation efforts statewide as test positivity and cases are increasing,” the White House Coronavirus Task Force report, dated Sunday, said.

The seven-day rolling average of new confirmed cases in Georgia has climbed about 45% since bottoming out October 2, and current hospitalizations have started to climb after weeks of improvement, an *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* analysis of state data shows.

Georgia started this latest surge in confirmed cases at nearly double the level that preceded the summer wave. And health experts have said the cooler months ahead could be bleak in Georgia if residents do not heed warnings to wear masks, practice social distancing, wash hands, get a flu shot and avoid gatherings, particularly in poorly ventilated spaces.

Churches may want to reconsider in-person gathering or, at the very least, ramp up their vigilance and strictly adhere to safety protocols. We will continue to monitor spread of the virus and make further recommendations as needed.

—Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson and the North Georgia Conference Cabinet (11/11/2020)



globalepidemics.org

### Inside this issue:

November in Pics	2
Persons of the Week	3
Prayer List	3
Pastor's Page	4
Blessings & Gratitude	5
New Member	5
UMW News	6
Vital Signs	6
Blessing Bags	7
Special Dates	8

## Highlights from November in Pictures



All Saints Sunday Celebration with Bryce Delaney Playing bagpipes



Thanksgiving 'Altar'



Blessing Bags for Davies Shelters



New Member Susan Stroup sharing stories of Murphy-Harpst on the First Sunday in Advent

## Persons of the Week

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**December 06: Sue Duck**

7 Mt. Creek Drive SE  
Rome, GA 30161-7917

**December 20: Dottie Taylor**

4 Canterbury Ct. SE  
Rome, GA 30161-9433

**December 13: Vesper Frazier**

311 E. 2nd Ave, Apt 1  
Rome, GA 30161-3269

**December 27: Susan Stroup**

743 East Point Road  
Cedartown, GA 30125

*Please remember these friends with cards, calls, visits, and prayers.*

## Drive-In Worship...Still

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**Beginning on Sunday, December 6, the Drive-In Service meets at 11:00 a.m. each Sunday!** We will continue to meet outside each Sunday until we move back into the sanctuary. Rain or shine. Due to the rising number of cases in our church and in our community, meeting inside has been pushed back again. The new target date for resuming inside worship is Christmas Eve. Updates will be given closer to that time.

## Prayer List

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**Congregation**

Carl Alexander  
Susan Autry  
Bob Baker  
Erma Braden  
Herb Brown  
Jim & Gerrie Burton  
Danny Carver  
Giles Chapman  
Nancy Davis  
Ronnie Farmer  
Phil Franssen  
Carolyn Garwood  
Gibbons Family  
Margaret Gibson  
Charles Griffin  
Mardelle Lynch  
Bill Pharr  
Edith Swint  
Vivian VanLandingham  
Carol Vogt  
Darlene Wallace  
LuAnn Williams

**Friends & Family**

Katherine Ammons  
Terri Black  
Linda Brown  
Tony & Laurie Clark  
Daria Giebler  
Patty Harvey  
Destiny Erica Head  
Ronald Hicks  
Khloe Hill  
Sue Hurley  
JoAnn Jacks  
Larry Jacks  
Janie Jolley  
Garrett Jones  
Pat Jones  
Milton Kahn  
Bill & Peggy Lanier  
Jayme & Kristy Laney  
Lisa McDaniel  
Mason McKenzie  
Military Personnel  
John Morris & Family

Stephanie Kiser Nation  
Sherry Nolan  
Diane Norrod  
Julie Ousley  
Andy Peabody  
Michael Powell  
Deborah Reynolds  
Ruiz-Baleon Family  
Nancy, Edwin, & Allison Sims  
Dan Smith  
David Stevens  
Jonathan & Charlotte Sturtz  
Paul Sturtz  
Bonnie Thomas  
President Trump  
Julie & Addie Turner  
Urquhart Family  
Antonio Valles  
Tyson Wait  
Mary Whilllock  
Sunny Wilkerson  
Jim Williams and Family  
Kennedy Williams

## Pastor's Page



One thing good with this pandemic is that we are not buying as much, we are not eating out much, and we are not partying much. And I hope that means we had some extra time on our hands. I don't know about you, but at the Kim-Soh household, we are way ahead of our schedule for Christmas. We decorated our house this past week; we decked the halls with boughs of evergreens, Christmas smoke men came out one by one. The Christmas pyramid was lit, Christmas houses displayed, and, of course, the Christmas tree was up way ahead of schedule. We have many fancy Christmas decorations and ornaments, some quite expensive and rare. We have been collecting them since 1990 as we traveled to different parts of the world.

But my all time favorite Christmas ornament is very simple, humble, and not of very good quality. It is what our first-born, Leigh who is now 9, made when she was just a toddler. It is the very first ornament she made with her own hands. I am sure her preschool teacher helped a lot. It's an imprint of her palm with white acrylic paint on a blue glass ball- each finger is decorated as a snowman, with a hat, two black dots for eyes and an orange nose. And it says on top, "Love never melts." On the tag attached, it says, "These aren't just five snowmen. As anyone can see. I made them with my fingers which are a part of me. Now each year when we trim the tree, we'll look back and recall Christmas time 2014, when my hand was just this small." Of course I love it; despite its imperfection, unpretentiousness, and simplicity, to me it reflects the glory of life God has gifted to our family.

The season of Advent, as we prepare the coming of the Messiah, we see something very similar—unpretentiousness, simplicity, humbly revealing God's glory. We just came through the most divisive election in our history where power and wealth were put to the test. Billions of dollars were spent on campaigns and all kinds of promises were made. But our Messiah, our Lord and savior Jesus, was nothing like that. He alienated the rich and powerful and instead befriended the poor and powerless. He made very few campaign promises, nothing about lowering taxes or increasing jobs or eradicating a pandemic. He didn't even promise to make Israel great again! Instead he spoke about welcoming the stranger, feeding the hungry, loving the unlovable, clothing the naked and caring for the sick. His campaign slogan was "Deny yourself and take up your cross"! He embodied and demonstrated his words and taught us, "God's love never melts."

I know we all had a rough year and some of you more so than others. In this season, I want you to remember that God's love for you never melts. Nothing can take away that love found in the manger and on the cross. I wish you a meaningful Christmas! A Christmas in which you embody and demonstrate God's incarnate, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Blessings,  
Rev. Millie

## December Sermon Scriptures

**December 06** Mark 1:1-8 | "Clean Up" | Second Sunday of Advent | 11:00 a.m.

**December 13** Psalm 126 | "Joy in the Midst of a Pandemic" | Third Sunday of Advent | 11:00 a.m.

**December 20** Luke 1:26-38 | "Waiting on the Threshold" | Fourth Sunday of Advent | 11:00 a.m.

**December 24** Luke 2:1-20 | "The Light of the World" | Christmas Eve | 5:00 p.m.

**December 27** John 1:1-14 | "Emmanuel in Life" | 11:00 a.m.

## Blessings and Gratitude

Dear Friends in Mission,

**Thank you!** The dear people you just helped with your gift to UMCOR may never been the opportunity to meet you, but if they did, I am certain their response would be—*Thank you!*

Since 1940, UMCOR has served as the humanitarian agency of The United Methodist Church, providing disaster response and relief to areas impacted by natural and mad-made disasters around the world. And through your financial support, you are serving within a vital network of interactive relationships as UMCOR responds to increasingly-frequent and destructive storms—sharing 100% of donated funds with those in need!

Grace and Peace,  
Roland Fernandes, General Secretary  
Global Ministries | The United Methodist Church

Dear Church Family,

It is a blessing to share with you in Christmas blessings to children here and elsewhere. As our son George expressed when he was four years old, “Some and some make a lot.” That has been a great line for us to remember all these years. My ‘some’ and your ‘some’ have already made a lot. We will all continue praising God that we are able to accomplish so much in that way.

Love,  
Lynda & Tom Climer

## Welcome New Member

Susan Stroup (re)joined our church family on Sunday, November 22. Susan is a deaconess and will be participating in the life of our church as a deaconess. Please see the description below of what this ministry entails.

### Deaconess & Home Missioner Ministry

Deaconesses and Home Missioners are laywomen and laymen who are called by God to be in a lifetime relationship in The United Methodist Church for engagement with a full-time vocation in ministries of love, justice, and service. Together we form a covenant community that is rooted in Scripture, informed by history, driven by mission, ecumenical in scope, and global in outreach.

The Deaconess and Home Missioner call to ministries of love, justice, and service is defined in Paragraph 1913.1 of the United Methodist Book of Discipline, which states:

Deaconesses and home missioners function through diverse forms of service directed toward the world to make Jesus Christ known in the fullness of his ministry and mission, which mandate that his followers:

- a. Alleviate suffering;
- b. Eradicate causes of injustice and all that robs life of dignity and worth;
- c. Facilitate the development of full human potential; and
- d. Share in building global community through the church universal.

## United Methodist Women News

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Thanks to all who have so generously given this month to support the Ruth & Naomi House breakfast program. We were able to send \$290 for November! Well done!

Please continue to support this local mission project by mailing or bringing your checks to the church, designated Ruth & Naomi House.

Many thanks and Merry Christmas,  
Cindy Smith, UMW President



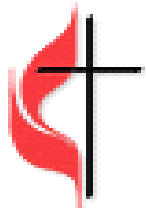
## International Mission Giving Opportunity

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We need your help! One of the Methodist pastors of Venezuela Now wants to make it possible for 40 children to have Christmas. He has a plan to provide clothing and a Christmas celebration for them. He estimates the cost will be \$20 per child. This would be such a blessing for these children who have very little. Would you like to be a part of this opportunity? You can give online at [www.venezuelanow.org](http://www.venezuelanow.org) or write a check to Second Avenue UMC and add Venezuela Now in the memo.

## Vital Signs

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Financial giving in November: \$18,121  
Budgeted amount needed as of November: \$216,639  
Budgeted amount given as of November: \$197,647  
(Shortfall of -\$18,992!)

## End of Year Giving

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Dear Second Avenue Friends,

Thank you for your financial generosity this year. In these final weeks of 2020, as you consider your giving to the church, please note that contributions must be received in the church office or postmarked on or before December 31 in order to be included on your giving statement for 2020. Contributions received after that date will appear on your giving statement for 2021.

Blessings,  
Greg Gaston, 2020 Finance Committee Chair

## Action Ministries Announces Upcoming Merger with Hope Atlanta

Action Ministries, Inc. announced that the organization plans to merge with Hope Atlanta, another non-profit dedicated to fighting homelessness and food insecurity. The merger is expected to be complete in January 2021, and will result in the formation of a new organization combining the resources of Hope Atlanta and Action Ministries. The North Georgia Conference celebrates all that Action Ministries has accomplished in its more than 50-year history, and all that the newly formed organization will accomplish through this merger. The Conference will work to develop a Statement of Relationship with the new organization in the coming months. Action Ministries, Inc. was founded in 1963 by The United Methodist Church as Urban Action, but it has long operated as a separate non-profit with an extensive network of community partners. Action Ministries is operated by an independent Board of Directors.

Find [answers to questions in this FAQ](#). The North Georgia Conference will continue to share information and updates as they are available.



## Blessing Bags for the Homeless

Dear Church Partner,

As the weather is changing, we will be doing more outreach to our unsheltered neighbors. There are some ways that you and your church can support us this season with tangible items. We are looking to our partners like you to work alongside us. Attached you will find the blessing bag information. It would be wonderful to have these bags beginning the week of Thanksgiving. We will continue to need them throughout the winter, ending in March. If your church wants to partner with us, please let us know so we can count on you. Thanks for all the ways you help The Davies Shelters serve here in Rome!

Grace and peace,

Devon Smyth, Executive Director

770-714-2361-cell / 706-802-6300-office

### HOPE Alliance Comfort Bag Info sheet

A couple of tips for packing. Use gallon size Ziploc bags.

You can do all of the items listed below or you can pick your five favorites and pack those.

We are so thankful for your participation in blessing someone in our community!

- Peanut Butter Crackers
- Granola & Protein Bars
- Canned or Pouch Meat (with easy open tab)
- Kleenex
- Band-Aids
- Hand Sanitizer
- Baby Wipes
- Feminine Products
- Toothpaste & Toothbrush
- Bottled Water
- Hats
- Gloves
- Deodorant
- Hair Combs
- Soap
- Shampoo

## Second Avenue United Methodist Church

801 East Second Avenue  
Rome, GA 30161  
Phone: 706-234-6406; Audio Worship: 706-786-6406  
Email: 2ndave@bellsouth.net

We're on the Web:  
[2aveumc.org](http://2aveumc.org)

### December Birthdays

12/01	Sophia Kim-Soh
12/03	Lib Rogers
12/05	Jim Burton
12/07	Theo Kislat
12/09	LuAnn Williams
12/11	Darlene Wallace
12/15	Iva Chapman
12/17	Randy Embree
12/17	Mike Jackson
12/19	Jesse Barton
12/22	Anne Whitefield
12/25	Jean Christian
12/26	Bill Underwood
12/29	Brennan Baker
12/31	Maddie Gibson

### December Anniversaries

12/08	Jody & Martha Rogers
12/10	Dennis & Kathy Urquhart
12/11	Beth & Mike Colombo
12/26	Jamie & Mike Jackson

Our Vision: 'Knowing Christ &  
Making Christ Known'

**Audio Worship Available 24/7! Call 706-786-6406 any time.**

"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever. To him who alone does great wonders, His love endures forever. Who by his understanding made the heavens, His love endures forever, who spread out the earth upon the waters, His love endures forever."

—Psalm 136:1-5

**Giles M. Chapman  
23 S. Ivy Ridge Road SE  
Rome, GA 30161-3912**

November 2, 2020

Rev. Dr. Millie Kim  
801 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Rome, GA 30161

Dear Dr. Kim:

About 18 years ago I was an active and participating member of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue UMC. I was a serious and dedicated Lay Leader, Lay Speaker, a member of the Administrative Council and chairman of the then Pastor Parrish Relations committee. So, I had the pulse of the church and was very attentive of the church mission as well as the needs of the congregation/community. The need to be a disciple and reach out to others was as clear then as it is now. People, situations and times changed; however, the needs remain the same.

I applaud your efforts to help 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Methodist, its history of more than 100 years, to once again work toward achieving its mission. Perseverance and sincere commitment are the keys to success. Hopefully your recently initiated program of Neighboring will renew the evangelistic energy and discipleship needed to bring God's word to others.

Enclosed is a sermon I delivered to the church as Lay Speaker and Lay Leader many years ago. I share the thoughts expressed that day in an attempt to be of assistance to the congregation and your efforts to renew and inspire God's people. I have learned that there are important places to be. Those places are: In someone's thoughts. In someone's prayers. In someone's heart. In God's hands.

I assure you and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue UMC congregation that I may not be present, but you remain in my thoughts, my prayers, and my heart. May God strengthen and speed your collective success.

Yours in Christ Jesus,



Giles Chapman

Encl.

## Without the Outside, There Is No Inside

The last time I was in this pulpit to deliver the message I asked the congregation to answer the question: Why Am I Here? We talked and thought about the need to and how to invite the seeker to the Sanctuary but we did not explore in depth why disciples are called by God to do more than sit in the sanctuary pew and be present for a committee meeting. The bottom line is that Disciples are called to be fruitful. I've heard it said, "I'm not called to be effective; I am called to be faithful." Most everyone understands the truth of the statement because all of our individual Christian ministry is called to faithfulness. The problem with the statement, however, is that it promotes the idea that one has no responsibility for **fruitfulness**, which sounds similar to avoidance of accountability. We all are accountable to God and His purposes. We also know that we are asked to serve the church with our "presence" and have heard these words: I am called to a "ministry of attendance presence". This term suggests that we are not called to expend energy and time in helping "seekers" as well as the congregation discovering a vision, or a mission. This is also a dangerous mindset that stifles the sharing and expanding of God's kingdom. It has the power to turn us into pseudo-counselors whose goal is simply to be with people rather than equipping them, encouraging their growth in faith, and the use of their spiritual gifts for fruitful ministry. When a church is fruitful, it is led by a pastor and lay persons that believe and are convinced that the church is fruitful and has a mission and a ministry that matters to its community. The vow to support the church through prayer, presence, gifts, service and witness is not a multiple choice vow. We are expected to and

David Brinkley

Christ in their own lives but fail to see it broadly applied to the lives of those that are outside and don't have the knowledge of God or hope. Someone can just walk into this church and become an active part in it, but I am strongly convinced that they are far more likely to do so when asked. You want them to join you in something you believe to be vitally important. I have searched the Bible over and nowhere does it say that we are to gauge our effectiveness on the number of members we get into the church. We are, however, called to make disciples. Disciples, true disciples reach out to the seekers, and the marginal on the "Outside" in genuine hospitality, offering a guiding hand and supporting encouragement for the journey along the path of faith.

This church is over 100 years old. Just because we need to understand where we are in our life cycle as a congregation and assessing our strengths and weaknesses, the data/information derived must not be used to squelch the message of HOPE found in Christ's words, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rv. 21:5). It must not become an excuse for avoiding the call to leadership of a fruitful ministry. Hear the words of Paul as found in Romans 12:8: "If you are a leader, exert yourself to lead". The church is searching for leaders that exemplify: 1) **Character** which includes matters of spiritual authenticity, maturity, integrity, and wholeness; 2) **Competence** which includes deep faith, matters of biblical and theological knowledge, life-long learning, ministry skills in either preaching/teaching, relationship building skills, the ability to empower the leadership of others, judgment, and accountability; and 3) **Contribution** which captures those characteristics for vital leadership such as assisting the steward of the church's mission, working with a congregation to discern God's mission for them and guiding the implementation of the mission so that the

congregation bears fruit through experiencing God's presence, transforming lives, growing disciples, and serving others.

The hope of God is clearly that the covenant people, **YOU**, will widen the circle. This theology of God's expanding realm underpins Jesus' commandment: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age". (Matt 28:19-20) Although Christ never used the term fruitful in the Great Commission, it is evident that his desire was for his disciples of then and now, to share the fruit of God's promises with others.

**Created by God. Loved by God and Forgiven by God.**

When I look out to and over the congregation, as I have for the past few years, I have not seen young people age 18-30 in many of the church pews or at our church functions. As I read and study to learn the cause or causes of this scarcity I find that this age group is seeking something that they have been unable to find in a lot of churches of various denominations. I learn that this age group feels disconnected, somewhat isolated and without relationships to God, or religion. Many of them have grown up with instantaneous media, the internet, consumer infomercials and Facebook rather than Face to Face relationships or physical interaction of God loving mentors to guide them---no heart to heart exchanges or answering of hard questions that challenge ones religion or faith. Many of these young people don't have a network of older adults to help them succeed. Instead of turning to parents or older adults for advice they consult peers. As a result we hear **You Lost Me**. The Bible's influence on this generation is up in the air. There is a sense across the board, of benign apathy toward Christianity. The guardians of evangelical Christianity in the

public sphere are facing significantly diminished influence within the next generation.

Here is the silver lining, if there is one. A culture of skepticism is a culture of questions, and questions can lead to conversations, relationships and truth. For example, these young people's questions about the Bible are an opportunity to talk about the Bible and the Christian lifestyle as well as the hopes and struggles. That's great. Because, for some, faith was never very deep; they were "in the building" but never really committed. They may continue to describe themselves as Christians but are no longer particularly committed to their faith or especially to church going. We have a moral and spiritual obligation to nurture our nonparticipating and indifferent members and to lead them into an active church relationship. Spiritual growth is the process by which we grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ but only if we keep on walking with him. Discipleship combines belief and actions that result in a life transformed into the likeness of Christ as a "follower". The word follow implies that something is done with more than your mouth; it also implies your hands reaching out to and your feet taking you to others. Following Jesus involves a growth in belief and a growth in action. But just like the rest of human life belief and action don't always grow or change at the same time or rate.

It appears that young people are struggling to find HOPE to find MEANING and an authentic opportunity to take ACTION for improvement of society. Perception may not be accurate; but to them perception is reality in the world of today. They grew up in a frantic world that pursued "more, bigger, faster, cheaper" resulting in putting "what, why, and who love at the end of the priority list rather than at the beginning." They worked to earn a diploma/college degree and then had to compete with the older generation job seekers in a

downturned economy that not only had a diploma/degree but also had job experience for any new job that became available. So they used their educational training in the fast food industry and service industries for minimum wages or returned home to once again live with mom and dad. No hope, no independence and a declining interest in the church and/or what it was offering. Many churches were experiencing declining memberships, tighter budgets and were fighting for survival to save the local church. These same churches quit listening for needs other than their own which resulted in reduced and restricted active outreach to others. Beloved allow me to share a fact with you: **“Without the Outside, there is no Inside”**. Since 1960 the institutional church has been undergoing silent and subtle changes. Very few if any people were vigilantly attentive to or much less well informed about those changes. They just continued to do what they had always done and thinking they were doing fine. I wasn't here in the 1960s but I would guess that this church and its congregation were very pleased and comfortable with their membership and contributions with little vision of tomorrow or what was looming on the horizon. You knew that you were going to have a pastor and church services would continue; life would go on. You did everything humanly possible to make church “easy”. You kept the services short and entertaining, discipleship and evangelism optional and the expectations or standards of excellence low. Sometimes people do the minimum just to stay comfortable and get by, but not for long. It was probably thought that you could attract by offering Jesus with minimal commitment. But what ended up was the production of nominal Christians whose unchanged lives have deterred others from being interested. Cite me an example of where Jesus did that. From the book of Matthew to the book of Revelations I did not see or read of an example of Jesus doing “just

enough to get by". I did not see or read of Jesus doing the minimum. Did you? Jesus took advantage of the prayerful opportunities. He talked to his heavenly father, he inspired others and lead them to reach out to those on the outside and brought them to the inside. We have those same opportunities. In addition we have the comfort and support of the Lord as found in these words from Psalm 37:23-24 "If the Lord delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, the Lord upholds him with His hand."

So, the slippery slope continued unchecked; people began to lose their vision and became confused or at a minimum less passionate about their church's mission. If they had a mission it was just something on paper to meet some administrative/bureaucratic requirement in order to complete a checklist. Young people began to reflect that going to church with Christian friends was optional and not a requirement. The unexpressed thoughts were: "I used to be very involved in my church but I don't fit there anymore." "Church meant a lot to me when I was younger but I have no interest right now." Today they tend to find their personal history with faith amusing, or perhaps distressing, but they aren't generally angry about their past. Frustrated and disillusioned yes, --- especially with Christians. Hostile, no.

Lukewarm would certainly describe many of the 18-29 year olds. They think of themselves as spiritual but have little orthodoxy, meaningful accountability, or faith vitality in their lives. "I'm spiritual, just not religious." The dropout phenomenon is most accurately described as a generation of Christians who are disengaging from institutional forms of church. Given their access to all kinds of information and a wide variety of worldviews many young adults no longer believe that the local church and Christianity provide the only or best avenues to spiritual growth and maturation. They are deeply skeptical

about the relevance of these structures in their lives. If a church has no clearly defined mission and no strong commitment or purpose why should this generation be anything but skeptical? How do they know what you truly care about and consistently act upon? What they want is an authentic relationship with God and with those in the church, but their main focus will be anyone who cares about the things they believe Jesus calls them to care about, whether they label themselves Christian or whether they label themselves Methodist. The fact is that numerous young people remain energized to pursue God-honoring lives. They want to inform and transform the culture that surrounds them rather than withdrawing from it. But many do not know how. They, like many of you are caught between the church as it is and what they believe or want it to be. They see church folks afraid of doubt and questions. They see church folks preferring simple answers to difficult questions and that's not plausible. As a result we may lose many of those young people that seek opportunity and understanding. We all, regardless of age, yearn to make sense out of life; we want what is offered by the church to be true to the way it really is. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans "Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another." (Romans 14:13)

There is a new generation rising. Without visible and tangible expression, words like transformation, grace, radical discipleship, and "spiritual evangelism" will be considered just another meaningless sales pitch better known as hype. They see how shallow phrases and methodology are incongruent with the Jesus of Scripture who asked everything from his followers. They know the difference between talking the talk and walking the walk. They are bored with Sunday morning productions and long to experience

authenticity. They have no need for evangelical SWAT teams swooping down on them in the chaos of unanswered questions and the calamity of doubt. If we want to help someone grow, we will have to help them in a way that fits their needs and their wiring. Young people are asking and want to know: What's your church or any church got that I can't get anywhere else? What nurturing answer can you give them that says more than we are "warm and friendly"?

God never grows two people the same way. God is a hand-crafter, not a mass producer. He doesn't do "one size fits all". Now it is your turn. Young people are watching and waiting for you to become a significant partner in changing lives--- theirs as well as yours. "Life is not about what we are, it's about what we choose to become." God is creating new opportunities in you that spill over into the lives of others and allows you to become a reservoir of the Spirit's fruit. Your part is to live close to God, open to all He is doing in you. Hear and act upon these scripture passages (Prov. 22:6) "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray." and from (Rev. 21:5) "Behold, I make all things new."

God may direct us to say to young people (18-30) and to ourselves with honesty and conviction: **When you walk through a day in trusting dependence on God you have an opportunity to bring your attention back to him whenever it wanders away. God looks for persistence---rather than perfection in your walk with him.**

**"In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps."**

(Proverbs 16:9) Amen.