There are many issues facing the Christian Church today and during this sequence of articles in the Marion Methodist I am presenting five. Today: The Misappropriation of “Tolerance.”

For the past twenty years or so the use of the word tolerance has slowly been twisted from its traditional definition: a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward those whose opinions, beliefs, practices, racial or ethnic origins, etc., differ from one’s own; freedom from bigotry. (Dictionary.com) to now mean: “acceptance and agreement with the values, beliefs and opinions of those who differ from one’s own.”

Jesus was clear in his teachings regarding the treatment of others: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10:27) Nowhere does he say, “People are going to be different than you so, to make sure you don’t upset them, agree with what they think and believe.”

The Lord says no such thing because that would be very dangerous and destructive for his Church, in fact it opposes his message. The Christ follower will be placed side by side with people of different world views, values and opinions and we are to make them our neighbor. That means we are to seek the best for them. According to Jesus, what is the best for them? To know him! We are good neighbors when we seek ways to introduce our neighbors to Jesus. Christ spoke of two roads, two kingdoms, two masters, two rewards and two eternities. He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). We have the power to choose two eternities. He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

Given that, we tolerate the values of the world that leads away from the truth of our faith, but we can never accept them as our own and never stop offering the truth of Christ to our neighbors. Being good neighbors who value people, tolerate their differences from the Christian way and seek to find attractive ways of inviting them to consider the gospel is the role of disciples. No longer can we allow our lack of spiritual confidence; theological or biblical literacy to drive us to fear. So many of us (yes I said us), fearful of being labeled judgmental or intolerant, have sat quietly on our faithful principles.

The result is not hard to see. Widespread acceptance of morally and spiritually dubious behaviors and philosophies has grown exponentially – even Christ’s church. Accountability to the Christian principle of a love that tolerates the lost and their values, as we find a way to bring them home to God, has given way to accepting principles and behaviors abhorrent to the Lord. Love has been redefined to mean the absence of conflict and confrontation, as if there are no moral or spiritual absolutes that are worth fighting for – and there are!

For the past weeks I have been preaching “Sharing your Faith” and we must. Christians need to ingest the truth of Christ, be strengthened and stand out. Jesus says “God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world but to save it through him.” (John 3:17) The very purpose of his coming was to point out that there are two roads in life. One is broad, lacking in faith, convictions and morals. It is a straw man with no future. In loving compassion our Jesus says: “Enter by the narrow gate … because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life.” Friends, here is where we must stand. Claiming the narrow way and inviting others to it may lead to you being labeled intolerant, judgmental even bigoted. This has always been the position of those who desire to build a personalized morality and worldview centered on their opinions and thoughts. This slippery slope has no base; it is a straw man with no future. In loving compassion our Jesus says: “Enter by the narrow gate … because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life.”

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Pastor Mike
We need new People!

Each year under the leadership of our Lead Pastor, a “Plan of Work” is created for execution by Marion Methodist. This year one of the important pieces of work we are to be about is to increase worship attendance.

A growth team has assessed our current situation and come to two very logical and obvious conclusions.

Increasing worship attendance can come from two streams:

1. Increased attendance from current attenders, friends and members.
2. Increased volume of new people coming for the first time.

Last issue in this space I addressed #1. Our current preaching series “Sharing Your Faith” and this article primarily focuses on #2.

On Sunday, October 22 you saw the video featuring four of our families. The seven-minute video produced by our growth team told the stories of how the Cihas invited the Sparrows and the Nobles invited the Knapps to worship with them at Marion Methodist and how each of the invited families has come to be very involved in worshipping and serving the Lord at Marion Methodist.

Both families came to worship at the end of a personal invitation. Friends they valued and knew, and wanted the best for them, extended themselves in Christian love. The message is hardly veiled - most people who come to worship for the first time come because someone personally invited them.

Right now, we are proclaiming “We Are On The Move” and providing several tools to assist your invitational opportunity.

First - the yard signs.

Our prayer is that these will be in the yard of every household. If so, we know they will do the things we desire. They will raise awareness regarding Marion Methodist, they will generate questions in your neighborhood that should end in your inviting people that live close to you to worship. They also will generate for several of you a statement from a neighbor that has drifted away that goes like this: “I used to attend that church” which is your moment to invite them back.

Second - the T-shirts.

Wearing them to worship is fun (Though I doubt any of you bought them to avoid wearing a tie. LOL) but wearing them in the public is better. Getting asked at Fareway or Menards about your church is a huge blessing. Please step into it.

Third - the Discipleship Pathway.

Marion Methodist has a discipleship pathway that allows a person to go on our website and answer a few questions to assess where they might best start their pursuit of growing in Christ. Literally dozens of churches are copying this, so it must be appealing. Encourage your friends to take a look, or better yet, bring them to the class you attend (or plan to attend) to help them grow in Christ.

Fourth - special events at Marion Methodist.

During October alone, there was the Holiday Bazaar, the 4:12 Knockout, and a presentation by RTS ministries in Haiti, each of which would be very unthreatening to your non-Christian friends and they would have loved an invite. Coming up are Christmas Eve, our Choir Cantata, Children’s Christmas program, the Bell Choir program, the puppet shows and many more. Your friends have interest in these things and, they, not a sermon from the pastor, may be the doorway to their coming to Marion Methodist.

Fifth - the new building.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Get your friends in the car, take them out to the site, express your happiness about the project, tell them how wonderful it is to be part of a community that looks towards a magnificent future in the Lord. Heck, even tell them how you are going on expensive vacations to build a house for the living Lord, that is a huge testimony.

WARNING - the building is not the panacea of all things. It will not magically make things work or grow our testimony, that work is still ours, so for the sake of Jesus “get on the move.”

Beyond this opportune year, our prayer is that the culture of invitation will richly grow and be sustained in our congregational DNA. More testimonies of invitations will be built as you invite folks. More lives will be changed for Christ which should motivate a continual chain reaction of invitation.
As I drove by the site for our new facility today, I was excited to see a good portion of the walls for the education area and the sanctuary already in place. I thought to myself --- people can finally start to see what our new building will really look like, and how it will look and sit on the ground we own, after only having seen drawings up to this point.

I also thought to myself that this is probably going to really pique everyone’s interest and excitement, regarding the inside of the facility and what it will look like when we get ready to move in. I am sure many of you have asked yourselves questions like: What color will the walls be? What kind of furnishings will we have in the Narthex area? How many rooms are in the education area and what kind of furniture will be used in those rooms? How much if any of the furnishings we are using today, will move with us to the new facility? The Building Committee wants to answer all those questions for you as well as any others that may have come to mind.

So, to accomplish that, we will start having a series of informational meetings in the Chapel on the first Sunday of the month during the 9:45 and 11:00 AM worship services. The first meeting will be on November 5, and we will be sharing information on the Narthex area and what we envision for the layout and furnishings in that part of the new building. We hope that you will plan to attend to hear more about what we think are exciting new possibilities to accommodate fellowship among our congregation members.

Flood Bucket Collection
Marion Methodist collected 375 buckets to send to areas affected by recent hurricanes.
UMCOR Donations
Disaster Response $4,447.00
Blankets $1,468.66

Return of the Turkey Trot
November 11, 2017 at 9:00 am
Volunteers still needed.
Visit www.TROTTT.com to sign up.

REMEMBRANCE PRAYER SERVICE
As a Christian community, we have many opportunities to celebrate and worship together. One of the more poignant times is when we celebrate the life of someone near and dear to us at a funeral or memorial service. With friends and loved ones scattered throughout the country, though, it’s not always possible to attend a funeral, and oftentimes, there is no service held.

Maybe you were not able to attend a funeral for someone close to you, or it’s the anniversary of the death of a loved one, or perhaps you would like to spend some time in prayer to reflect on the loss of one dear to your heart. If so, the Remembrance Prayer service is for you!

On the 3rd Sunday of each month a Remembrance Prayer Service is held in the Chapel at 11am. Come for a time of prayer, scripture and quiet reflection as you remember and honor the life of one you know and love.

The next Remembrance Prayer Service will be Sunday, November 19 at 11:00 am.

New Member Class – Sunday, November 5, 2017
Have you been attending Marion Methodist for a few months, or maybe a few years? And have you decided it’s time to become an official member of our church?

Then please join us for our new New Member Class on Sunday, November 5 at 12:15pm. We’ll start with lunch in Room 106, then move to Room 104 for the class. We’ll finish the afternoon with the Membership Service in the Chapel at 3:15pm.

If you’re interested in being part of this class or have questions, please contact Karen Schmitz at 377-4856 or kschmitz@marionmethodist.org.

Child care will be available upon request.

Meal Schedule:
11/8 - Taco Bell
11/15 - Firehouse Subs

Powerhouse meets every Wednesday. From 5:45 pm to 6:15 pm we have a Family Meal (Free Will Offering) and from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm for activities for all ages.

Preschoolers: Kids may forget what you say - but they remember what they discover on their own. Get them Hands On with God's Word. (Room 205)

Kindergarten - 5th Grade: Meet a Jesus that is real and relevant in your everyday life! Discover Jesus in you. (Room 303/305)

4:12 Youth Group: Junior High Worship 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm (Sanctuary). High School Worship 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm (Sanctuary). Games will be in the alley

Adult Classes: Come for a midweek boost. Check out classes at www.marionmethodist.org

Nursery: Offered in the Nursery room located near the elevators
Our Congregation Shares Its Concern & Christian Love...

DEATHS:
October 16: Charles “Chip” Dickerson, son of Jim and Cheryl Dickerson
October 17: Gaylord Nelson, husband of Fern Nelson, father of Wes (Beth) Nelson
October 19: Marcella Sharp

BIRTHS:

WEDDINGS: October 21: Jacob Richmond and Allie Meis

The Marion Methodist newsletter deadline schedule
Articles for our Marion Methodist need to be submitted by due date at 12:00 PM. You may email them to: jwildman@marionmethodist.org with newsletter in the subject line. Please send any information or images as an attachment. If you do not have access to a computer, you may call or bring to the office items to be published. We ask that you honor the deadlines listed below:

Date Arrived in Mail Date Articles Due
11/17 11/8
12/1 11/22
12/15 12/6
12/29 12/20

Pantry Partners for Marion Food Pantry
We help folks in need by supplying items for the Marion Churches Food Pantry. You may bring the following items to church any time during each month. Please put your contributions in one of the grocery carts located in the Narthex or at the 8th Avenue glass doors, or in the Mission Depot in Fellowship Hall or the Church Office.

November: Cake Mix

December: Pudding and Gelatin Mixes

January: Macaroni and Cheese
February: Canned Fruit
March: Peanut Butter
April: Macaroni and Cheese

Watch a FREE Live Stream of Dave Ramsey’s Smart Money Event

Over the last 25 years, millions of lives have been changed through Dave Ramsey’s Financial Peace University. This November, Dave will be live streaming his Smart Money event to churches and Financial Peace University classes across the country. We are excited to announce that we will be a host site for this event. The best part? It’s absolutely free for you to attend!

Dave and Rachel Cruze will take the stage on November 7 in Phoenix, and we will stream the event in real time. We’d love for you to join us and learn the steps you and your family can take to live like no one else. Sign up today to be a part of this amazing event at www.MarionMethodist.org/news/daveramsey.

We look forward to seeing you on November 7!

“WE ARE ON THE MOVE” Yard signs
The FREE “We are on the Move” Yard signs are popping up all over the metro area. Do you have yours yet? If not, pick them up today in the church office or main church building. Let’s invite our community to know that we love the Lord and his church at Marion Methodist is on the move!

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