

from the shepherds

November 2010

Brothers and Sisters,

It's been an interesting 10 months for me, to say the least, as one of your newest shepherds. I've made some phone calls and personal visits, but not nearly enough of my time has been spent "shepherding." I'm happy to report that this is changing as we — your shepherds — recognize the priority of knowing and helping each member of our church family in their walk with Christ.

One of the things we're focused on is the relationship of membership and **ministry**. The Bible tells us that God adds to the church (Acts 2:47), yet many "members" seem to see the church as just another human organization with rules to keep, dues to pay, meetings to attend, etc. It's important to understand what the Bible clearly teaches: membership without ministry is unbiblical (Eph. 2:10, I Cor 12:12 ff). Study this for yourself and see if you come to the same conclusion that we have: we're saved to serve. If you're not serving in one of our ministries, *it's time to get involved*.

We also believe that each of us needs to be in the Word regularly. Sadly, our weekly attendance numbers show that only about half of the folks who attend the worship gathering stay for **Bible communities**. Those numbers are pretty typical for church attendance (worship service vs. Bible class attendance), but are we willing to settle for average? Your shepherds have a goal of closing the attendance gap between the gathering and communities. Our current study of *The Story* is a great opportunity for you to dive into the Word each week. If you're not teaching or already attending a Bible community, *will you start attending today?*

While we're focusing on our individual relationships with each of you, we also want to help you focus on your relationships with others. Are you interested in developing genuine relationships where enduring friendships are formed? Could your faith be strengthened as you are prayed for and as you pray for others? The "one another" passages truly come to life in **life groups** (pardon the pun!). *We can help you plug into a life group in your area.*

Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Matt. 9:37). Truly those words have never been timelier than now. We are so blessed to have a phenomenal ministry team led by Cary and Lori, Tim and Kala, and Gordy and Lindsay. On behalf of your shepherds, I encourage you to join your ministers and us as God Himself is leading the work here at West Orange. As Christians, we are part of life's greatest adventure if only we'll engage. *Let's all "step up our game"* because the time is short and God is still on an urgent mission to seek and save the lost.

Your brother in Christ,



Jerry Jaskot



...And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:47

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

I Corinthians 12:12-27