



PASTOR'S PEN

God of Love and God of Power...

Like many of my readers today, I have watched the national news, the local news, and kept track of the barrage of news and notes on my various devices because I have wanted to 1) keep close tabs on what's happening in the world, and 2) get a good sense of what our faith community is being told about the state of the world in which we live.

Indeed, based on the stories that pass before our ears and eyes each day I think people have reason to worry about the future of our nation, a solid future for their children and grandchildren, and just as important, this place we call "home" being founded on and resting in the hands of God our Maker, our Creator, the Mighty One in Whom we trust with our very lives. Many folks these days are understandably living in a state of uncertainty.

But what's happening in the world? Why are people so angry and hateful? Why do leaders of nations make dangerous threats that put the lives of millions on the line? What happened to wise, careful leadership? Where is God in all of this bedlam? Surely our Creator is not the creator of such evil and malice and stupidity! Surely God is not behind the misguided decisions of people who have clearly turned away from Him! I do not believe for one second that God is an **advocate** of all the unrest in the world today!

Yes, it's finally my turn to say, in writing, what I believe should be our course of action:

As a hope-filled Christian person, as a person who firmly believes in God's promises being fulfilled, I firmly believe that God's abiding presence, love, sadness, suffering, care, and grace has been with us in the in the midst of each and every one of these noteworthy events! God is the Great One we **all** need to turn to and depend upon... God will not leave us desolate and drowning in our own failures-- He will hold us up, set us on the right path, and take us all home!

Indeed, God has commissioned and empowered you and me to be instruments of his love and care--- beginning in our own homes- our own communities--- there are already enough lynch mobs out there; there are already enough people wasting the gifts God has given them to share with the world... **you and I know that we have been chosen for a more Holy purpose at such a time as this! And we ARE STILL equipped, empowered and encouraged by a God of Love and a God of Power!**

Pastor Mike

IF YOU WANT TO
WALK ON WATER,
YOU'VE GOT TO
GET OUT
OF THE
BOAT

Adult Sunday School

**8:45 am sharp
South Sunday School
Room**

The YRMC Cancer Center
Volunteers presents



**BREAST CANCER
INFORMATION
WORK-SHOP**

**THURSDAY,
OCTOBER 5TH 10:30 AM**

All are invited!

Hosted by:

Gila Mountain UMC
12716 N. Frontage Road
(928) 342-0345



**Sunday,
September 10th
7:30 am
Wesley Room**

**We will let the
Women eat too!**



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1

2

-CC de F Practice
5pm
-CC de F Youth
7pm

3-Adult S.S. 8:45am

-Children's Sunday
Sch 9am
-Worship 10am &
Children's Church
-CC de F Worship
11am

4



Office Closed

5

-GED class
(Spanish) 5:30pm
-Girl Scouts
4:30pm

6

-Pastor's Study
9:30am
-WWW.Word 6pm
-GED class
(Spanish) 5:30pm
-Cub Scouts
6:30pm

7

-Campesino Sin
Fronteras
4:30pm
-Desert Pearls 7pm
-CC de F Worship
7pm

8

-CC de F Practice
5pm
-CC de F Youth
7pm

9

10



-UMM Bkfst 7:30
-Adult S.S. 8:45am
-Children's Sunday
Sch 9am
-Worship 10am &
Children's Church
-11:30 Trustee Mtg
-CC de F Worship
11:30

11

-GED class
(Spanish)
5:30pm
-Cubs Pack Cmt
6:30pm

12

-GED class
(Spanish) 5:30pm
-Girl Scouts
4:30pm
-SPRC 6:30pm

13

-Pastor's Study
9:30am
-GED class
(Spanish) 5:30pm
-WWW.Word 6pm
-Cub Scouts
6:30pm

14

-Campesino Sin
Fronteras 4:30pm
-Finance Team
Mtg 6pm
-Council Mtg 7pm
-CC de F Worship
7pm

15

-CC de F Practice
5pm
-CC de F Youth
7pm

16

-UMW Mtg
Board 9am
Unit 10am

17 FOOD BANK

-Adult S.S. 8:45am
-Children's Sunday
Sch 9am
-Worship 10am &
Children's Church
-CC de F Worship
11am

18

-GED class
(Spanish)
5:30pm

19

-GED class
(Spanish) 5:30pm
-Girl Scouts
4:30pm

20

-Pastor's Study
9:30am
-GED class
(Spanish) 5:30pm
-WWW.Word 6pm
-Cub Scouts
6:30pm

21

-Campesino Sin
Fronteras 4:30pm
-Desert Pearls 7pm
-CC de F Worship
7pm

22

-CC de F Practice
5pm
-CC de F Youth
7pm

23

24



-Adult S.S. 8:45am
-Children's Sunday
Sch 9am
-Worship 10am &
Children's Church
-CC de F Worship
11am

25

-GED class
(Spanish)
5:30pm

26

-GED class
(Spanish) 5:30pm
-Girl Scouts
4:30pm

27

-Pastor's
Study 9:30am
-GED class
(Spanish) 3:30pm
-WWW.Word 6pm
-Cub Scouts
6:30pm

28

-Campesino Sin
Fronteras 4:30
-Outreach Mtg 7pm
-CC de F Worship
7pm

29

-CC de F Practice
5pm
-CC de F Youth
7pm

30



September

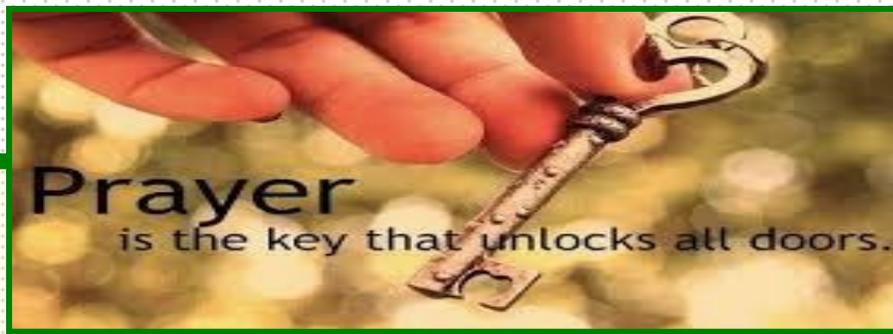
- 9-03 Margaret Hurd
- 9-04 Amy Naylor
- 9-06 Dallas Nibe
- 9-08 Arland Tangeman
- 9-11 Beth Prather
- 9-12 John Shannon
- 9-14 Emily Naylor
- 9-15 Vicky Moreno
- 9-15 Jim Loaris
- 9-20 Rita Anderson
- 9-22 Jackie Clark
- 9-23 Dean Robertson
- 9-24 Mike Albright
- 9-25 Carla Hupp



Happy Anniversary
to
Dick & Jackie Clark
September 22



<u>September 3</u>	Beth Prather
<u>October 1</u>	Pat Moore
<u>November 5</u>	Pat Teeter
<u>December 3</u>	Kathy Sabin
<u>December 24</u>	Pat Teeter
<u>January 7</u>	Beth Prather



Friends and Family

Pastor Neil Leftwich	Lauren Hightower	Dave Clemmon
Marv Vasher	Bonnie Perkins	Lucas Perkins
Baby Jonas & Fam	Baby Hope & Fam	Penelope Brown & Fam
Stanton Gardenhire	Kay (Shay)	The Vaughn Family
L. Karelis Family	Dylon Coz	Tim Eisenmann

Hospital, Homebound and Long Term

Cambria Flint	Ron Snowbarger	Dot Love
Amelia Brown	Irene Smith	Nancy Carrazco
Nataly Perez	Mary Helen Solis	Wanda LaSalle
Ed Connors	Michael Gleason	Tristan Sexton
Howard Trapp	Jerry Neiderer	Ruth Davis
Kathy Woelm	Robert Graham	Velda Conrad
Charlie Duran	Steve Brandt	Grace Pearson
David Heaton	Mike Saign	Dorothy Irwin
Jessica Coz	Kenny Webb	Paula Webb
Mike Mitchell	Kathy Eckert	Tony Moreno
Beth Starrett	Kevin Harless	Jaylynn King
Trudie McConnell	Patricia Gabriel	Freida (Sneller)
Jim Waters	Bill Lutes	J.P. Martin
John & Elaine Burke	Stephen Burke	Jake & Pat Moore
Paula Cox	Neil Knutson	Lou Miller
Steven Maple	Leonard DeLeon	Jack & Beth Prather
Jennifer Frazier	Connie Johnson	Sandi Christenson
Mitch & Jane Mitchler	Jeanne Dempster	Fred & Judy Hancewicz

Families of: Brian Brocket Frank Irr Joanne Jett Doug Lathrop

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Please include these churches from our Conference in your prayers:

Prescott Valley UMC

Prescott UMC

Trinity UMC, Phoenix



Stuffing in July?

Yes, stuffing the backpacks for our local students in need - that is what our local hospital sponsored in July. Three of us from 1st Church worked alongside other volunteers from within the Yuma community in an assembly line fashion to stuff backpacks with school supplies. Thousands of backpacks go to our local schools to help students be prepared and feel confident as they start a brand new school year. What a blessing to be part of this effort! Hope you can join us next July!

- Outreach Team



Church Office:

Greeting people, answering phones and so many more opportunities here!

Sunday School Substitutes:

Teach a lesson in Children's Church once every eight weeks.

Coffee Fellowship: Pick a Sunday to share your love and special treats by setting up and providing refreshments (& clean-up) for the social time following worship service. Sign up in the Wesley Room.

Worship Leader & Greeters:

Reading of the scriptures is great way to become more involved in Sunday services or welcoming all who come to worship with us, then this is the job for you!

Details, Details...: There are so many ways that you can be of service here at 1st Church! Maybe you noticed that somewhere on the church campus needs a little extra TLC. Light duty jobs will always be available for you to use your elbow grease on.

To Volunteers:

Call Laura at the church office at 928-783-3674.

Welcoming Special Needs Family



[By Jason Wert](#)

July 6th, 2011

What would you do if, while you were praying during a church service, somebody tapped your shoulder and you turn to see your special needs child being wheeled out of the sanctuary?

That's exactly what Kelly Helms says happened to her at North Carolina's Elevation Church on Easter Sunday. We know Ms. Helms's experience

because she took her story to the media. Almost immediately, Mrs. Helms received a deluge of criticism. Many critics wondered why Helms ignored the "biblical way" to resolve conflict. Most critics speculated about her motivations. A columnist for Ministry Matters even wrote "[In Elevation's Defense](#)."

As the father of a child with autism, I have a good guess about why Ms. Helms took her story to the press.

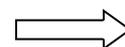
The American church has a "dirty little secret": thousands of special needs families have been made to feel like Old Testament lepers— forbidden from entering the temple to worship God with their brethren.

But the only way I could know for sure Ms. Helms's motivations for going to the press was by speaking to her. So I tracked down her phone number and had a lengthy conversation with her—discovering that my guess was on the mark. "I wanted them to change their policy or spread the word that special needs families would be treated this way at their church," Mrs. Helms told me. Or as she wrote John Bishop, Matthews Campus Pastor at Elevation Church, in an e-mail: "I expect action to avoid this kind of segregation in the church from ever causing another mother, or God forbid their child, from feeling the way Elevation made us feel on Easter Sunday."

I reached out to Elevation Church for a response to Mrs. Helms' claims but they did not respond prior to this article's deadline. However, in an e-mail to Mrs. Helms, Pastor Bishop wrote this about Elevation's policy:

"We have talked at length about our practice of removing people from the auditorium on many occasions, and we are always figuring out ways to do so with grace. It is not a decision that we are planning on changing as we believe it is our responsibility to provide as close to a distraction-free environment as possible for people to hear the gospel message. However, I believe that we already have alternatives that could work."

I cringed when I read the word "alternatives." What that word says to me is this: "You're not the kind of people we want seen inside our sanctuary."



Why do I think this? Because that's been my family's experience at many of the churches that we've attended.

Now, I admit that I, too, am guilty of helping perpetuate the church's "dirty little secret." In the past, when churches treated my family like second-class citizens, I didn't go to the press. On the occasions when pastors have told me that they didn't believe that God wanted my family at their churches (usually right after my autistic son came for a visit) I didn't speak out or name names on social media or at [my blog](#). And when churches (yes, plural) told us that the only way we could continue attending their church was if we sat in the children's church with our son, I remained quiet in public no matter how enraged I felt inside.

Why didn't I speak out? I tried to follow the pattern of biblical conflict resolution that critics of Mrs. Helms say she ignored. I went to the people who wronged us. But when you follow that pattern, there's nowhere to go above the elders and the pastor. When they're the ones pushing the policy of discrimination against special needs families, all that's left is to take it to God and leave the churches. And if you leave without saying a word, the next special needs family who walks through their doors will be treated the same way.

Mrs. Helms didn't want to see another family wrongly treated. That's why, after spending six weeks trying to get Elevation to clarify or change their policy, she contacted the press.

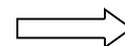
Mrs. Helms and my family are not alone. There are tens of thousands of special needs families across the country who have left churches feeling humiliated. Many stop attending church because they're tired of being treated as a burden. (My family had decided to quit attending church until we discovered Crosspoint Church in Nashville. Our experience at Crosspoint affirmed our faith that there are churches that warmly welcome special needs families.)

There are a variety of valid reasons why churches aren't prepared to handle special needs children and their families. These reasons range from a lack of staff to a lack of funding to simply never having had to face the situation.

But I can think of four easy things you could be which could help you avoid a situation like what happened at Elevation.

1. Be Prepared

It might sound simplistic but "being prepared" is not just a rule for Boy Scouts and Army Rangers. Many churches have never talked about what they would do if a special needs child walked through their door. Sure, they may have talked about how they handle a deliberate disruption in their service but a special needs child making a squeal or two during a service is no more distracting than the person whose cell phone rings, who isn't escorted out of the sanctuary as a consequence. Make a point to discuss in church staff meetings how you (or a volunteer) should handle a family that comes in with a special needs child. If you walk into the situation without a plan, you're more likely to make a mistake that will hurt the family and could possibly end up a PR nightmare.



2. Be honest

Of all the churches our family has had to leave because they weren't ready for a special needs child, one has a pastor for whom I have great respect. Why? He sat down with me and simply said his children's ministry team wasn't prepared to handle a child like my son. He said we were welcome to attend but that we'd likely end up in the children's area with our son and that's not healthy for our family. He had a list of area churches ready for families like ours and offered to make an introduction.

Some may take issue with that response...but to me this pastor was showing the simple respect of honesty. If you're not ready, we know it. He knew it as well, and wasn't going to insult us by pretending somehow it was our fault they were not prepared.

So if you know you're not ready, I promise there are neighboring churches that are ready. Find them. See if they're willing to work with you to help these families.

Then don't just hand out a sheet of paper with names on it. Offer to make the introduction.

Call the other church and have someone on their team reach out to that family. That little bit of consideration will go a LONG way with most families of special needs children.

3. Be realistic

Again, this seems simplistic but special needs children have special needs. Most will not act like a "normal child" in all situations. They may have sensory issues and get upset at the sight of Jell-O because they're afraid of things that are "wiggly." They may fixate on a toy and get upset if someone takes it. They're not being selfish; that toy makes them feel safe in an uncertain place. If they are unable to speak clearly, they'll get frustrated because you don't understand what they're trying to tell you. If you're realistic enough to know these children may not react in a "normal" way, you're more likely to show grace than to get angry. The last thing these kids need to see is you furious with them when they're just trying to tell you they're thirsty.

4. Be Jesus

Jesus welcomed everyone seeking Him. These special needs families are looking for churches that will do the same. Don't sound the alarm and kick in "Special Needs Family Operation Plan A" the moment you see them walk through the door. Talk to them. Offer them coffee if you have it. Treat them as a person first and THEN deal with the special needs of their family.

Disarming their fears at the beginning goes a long way to making someone feel welcome. These four ideas are by no means an extensive list; rather a starting point for you to consider the ways your church would respond to a child with special needs. By the way, I'm not excusing the parents of special needs children from any responsibility for their children in a church setting. They should be ready to answer questions or show staff how to care for their child. Most parents are more than willing to do that. But your church needs to be ready when they do.

And there are thousands like the Helms family in North Carolina praying your church will step up and do it.