

February 10, 2021



Equipping Christ-Followers

Randy Shepley

As I mentioned two week's ago in *First News*, I have been spending significant time reflecting on our mission as First Baptist Church of Newport News. We use 3 E's to describe our mission together as a community of Jesus-Followers:

Embracing God, Equipping Christ-followers, Engaging Our World

This week, I have pondered what it means to Equip Christ-followers. Equipping Christ-followers means we are intentionally training one another to become like Jesus in every area of life. Simply put, we are to live like Jesus in our relationships. Whether we are thinking of our spouse, parents, children, siblings, work colleagues, neighbors, antagonists, persons we come into contact with as we shop, pump gas, or drive, or the persons we converse with over social media, we are to embody the life and character of Christ in every relationship.

We are to speak like Jesus with our words. The words we speak must build others up, rather than tear them down. The words we speak must convey truth, rather than what we want to be true. The words we speak must carry love and grace, rather than bitterness and resentment. Words matter. Following Jesus is not merely about speaking the truth. As Paul reminds us, we are called to "speak the truth in love..."

We are to think like Jesus with our minds. We are called to put on the mind of Christ in Romans 12:2 when Paul tells us to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Paul goes even further in Philippians 5 when he tells the church in Philippi that "their attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" and then he proceeds to offer a beautiful hymn espousing the humble sacrifice and servanthood of Jesus. Equipping Christ-followers means preparing one another to

think like Jesus and to have a daily attitude that mirrors Jesus. The truth is attitudes are contagious. We are called to have a mind and attitude of contagious Christ-likeness.

Finally, we equip one another to love like Jesus. This is the ultimate goal of following Jesus: to love as God loves.

Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live a life of love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:1-2

Imitating God is our calling, which means we must imitate God's love for others. How do we love our families? How do we love our work colleagues, customers, and contractors? How do we love persons who hurt us? How do we love persons who are different from us by their primary spoken language, skin color, belief system, or political affiliation? Saying we love people who are different from us is not what Jesus calls his followers to do. Following Jesus is not lip-service; its life service rooted in love.

How are you growing in following Jesus with your life, words, thoughts, and love? Certainly, this call of Jesus is the greatest gift and challenge we will ever embrace. We should not be surprised: He promised us that following Him would demand the totality of our lives. He also promised us that in fully surrendering our lives to Him for renovation, we will find what our lives are truly for.... "For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Even in these challenging pandemic days, I am praying for your growth in living, speaking, thinking, and loving like Jesus. I ask you to pray for my growth as well, for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Pastor Randy



Ash Wednesday is a significant time in the Christian church. It is a day of prayer and reflection that falls on the first day of Lent, the six weeks of penitence before Easter. Ash Wednesday and the additional days of Lent are marked with somberness as Christians reflect on their own mortality, their sinfulness, and the daily surrender of one's old self and coming to new life in Christ. Ash Wednesday, the first step of this Lenten journey, invites us to acknowledge our mortality and our sinfulness by the imposition of ashes as a tangible reminder that "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).

We invite you to join us on **Wednesday, February 17**, for two events observing this day...

Drive-up imposition of Ashes: From 12-1PM and 5-6PM, drive up to the driveway in front of the sanctuary entrance to receive the imposition of ashes and a member of our ministerial staff will come to your vehicle to place the ashes on either your forehead or the back of your hand. The ashes will be placed using a clean cotton swab and masks will be worn. After the ashes have been placed, the minister will pray a brief prayer with you. If you are unable to attend the drive through during either of the time slots, supplies and instructions will be made available as mentioned in the paragraph below.

Ash Wednesday Service: At 7PM, join us on [Facebook Live](#) for a unique worship experience. We will spend time in prayer, reflection, lament, and have a pastor-guided moment where you and your family observe the imposition of ashes together. We believe this experience will be deeply moving and meaningful for you and your family. The supplies needed for this service will be available for pick-up on Tuesday, February 16 and Wednesday, February 17 from outside the main office entry.

Red Cross Blood Drive

March 3rd, 1-6 p.m.

Payne Fellowship Hall

Help the Red Cross help others by supporting in one of three ways:

1. **Donate blood.** You can sign up online by clicking [here](#) or calling 1-800-Red-Cross and let them know you would like to donate at First Baptist Church Newport News on March 3. All donors will receive a COVID antibody test and the results will be emailed to them within 2 days.
2. **Be one of two volunteers** needed from our church to sign in and register donors as they arrive. **We only need one more volunteer!** You can sign up to volunteer by clicking the link above or calling 1-800-Red-Cross.
3. **Pray** for those volunteering, donating, and receiving

Their goal is to receive 30 successful collections. Let's help them reach that goal!
Contact the church office for more information.

Food Pantry Donations

Thank you for your kindness and generosity in donating to our Souper Bowl this week! We collected several carts full of groceries and monetary donations to help those in our community who need food assistance.

Mobile Food Bank

The Virginia Peninsula Mobile Food Bank will be using our parking lot on Thursday, February 11 from 1:30-3 p.m. If you or someone you know needs food arrive at the church parking lot at least thirty minutes early. If you are interested in volunteering with the Virginia Peninsula Food Bank click [here](#) to sign up!

Weekly Worship Opportunities

Join us for worship online February 14 at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.! Randy Shepley will be preaching. If you have any technical difficulties watching the services on Facebook Live, please send us a direct message on Facebook so we can help troubleshoot the issue.

The following is a list of weekly events that can be accessed on the First Baptist Church of Newport News Facebook page, youth events that can be accessed on their Instagram page-@fbcnn youth, and young adult events that meet using Microsoft Teams. (The 10:30 Sunday worship service will also be uploaded to the website, fbcnn.org, each Monday, and can be accessed by clicking on the Resources tab.)

- **Sundays:** 8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship Service
9:30 a.m. Youth Sunday Bible Study
9:30 a.m. Children's Sunday School Grades 1-5
10:00 a.m. Preschool & Kindergarten
Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship Service
12:30 p.m. Hispanic Worship
- **Mondays:** 7:30 p.m. The Bridge Young Adults
- **Tuesdays:** 8:00 p.m. Young Adult Couples

[FBCNN Facebook Live Videos](#)

If you missed Sunday's service and do not have a Facebook account, you can click [here for 8:30](#) or [here for 10:30](#) to watch it on our Vimeo page.

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