

UPCOMING EVENTS

All events are at the church unless otherwise indicated.

July

- GriefShare – Sundays 7/16, 7/23, 7/30 4-6pm
- Park Play Dates – Wednesdays 7/19 11-12:30pm
- Truthseeker Mission Trip – 7/16-7/22
- Care Giver Support – Thursday 7/20 6pm at Casa Maria Restaurant
- Pastor Dave's Retirement Party – Sunday 7/30 after church service

August

- Benevolent/Communion Sunday – 8/6
- GriefShare – Sundays 8/6, 8/13, 8/20, 8/27
- Care Giver Support – Thursday 8/17 6pm at Casa Maria Restaurant

Recommended Reading: *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion*, by Rebecca McLaughlin. Anyone who has had conversations defending the faith knows there are some accusations that get aimed at Christianity, rightly or wrongly. McLaughlin gives robust intellectual and biblical consideration to some of these issues – issues such as, “How can you say there is only one true faith?”, “How can you take the Bible literally?”, “Hasn't science disproved Christianity?”, “Isn't Christianity homophobic?”, “How can a loving God send people to hell?”, and many others. For someone who has thought about or would like guidance thinking through these issues, McLaughlin provides thought-provoking help.

New Website: Please check out our new website which is now live! It is still a work in progress, but hopefully you will find what you are looking for and also find it easy to navigate. The live stream of the service should now be accessible on our website, mobile app, and TV app, such as Roku or AppleTV. Find us at www.eatoncc.org.

Summer Park Play Days: Pack a sack lunch, bring your lawn chairs and picnic blankets, and come play with other Moms and kids at the church playground from 11-12:30 on the first and third Wednesdays of each month this summer. Park Play Day is 7/19.

Israel Trip: Pastor Scott and Ken Sudduth are leading a group from Eaton Community Church to the Holy Land March 1-10 of 2024 with an optional five-day extension into Egypt. There are a **few spots still left** so get your deposit and paperwork into Ken. Walk where Jesus walked, follow the Via Dolorosa, be baptized in the Jordan River, worship in a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee, visit the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane, have communion and celebrate Jesus' Resurrection at the Garden Tomb. This is truly a life changing and life enriching experience that you must take advantage of and not miss! For more information contact Ken Sudduth at ksudduth@cruiseplanners.com.

EATON COMMUNITY CHURCH WELCOMES YOU!

JULY 16, 2023

Prelude Don Reasoner

Welcome & Announcements Pastor Scott

Mission Presentation Bob and Jan Springer

Memory Verse **Job 23:10** – “But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.”

Scripture Reading Acts 20:28-38 Pastor Scott

Worship in Prayer

Call to Worship Psalm 97:2

Worship in Song:

- “Sing To The King”
- “Victory In Jesus”
- “That’s How Your Love Surrounds Me”

Children Dismissed (1st grade and under)

Worship in the Word Pastor Dave
“What’s a Leader to Do? Shepherd God’s Flock”

Worship in Song “He Was Wounded For Our Transgressions”

Benediction Pastor Dave



TO KNOW HIM



TO GROW IN HIM



TO GO WITH HIM

Truthseekers Missions Trip: Our youth group has left today for Florida and will return on Saturday. Please be in prayer for them, along with the leaders, and all they will be serving. Pray for safety as they work and travel, also that they will be able to grow in the Lord and share about Him while they are there.

CONTRIBUTIONS BUDGET FOR 2023
\$598,780

Year-To-Date		Weekly	
Budget:	\$311,584	Budget:	\$11,128
Actual:	\$287,004	Actual:	\$8,269
Difference:	\$24,580	Difference:	\$2,859

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 255

Staff

Senior Pastor.....	Dave McNeff
Pastor of Adult Ministry.....	Scott Wilson
Director of Children’s and Youth Ministry.....	Karla Bowness
Administrative Assistant.....	Kirby Lawhead
Director of Music.....	Don Reasoner

WHAT'S A LEADER TO DO: SHEPHERD GOD'S FLOCK

(Acts 20:28-38)

Date: _____

I. _____ the Church of God

II. _____ God's Flock

A. By _____ and _____

B. By _____

C. By _____

D. By _____

Other Scripture Cited: Hos 4:6; John 21:15-19; Mt 6:19-20; I Tim 1:3; II Pet 2:1-3; Mt 7:15; Eph 1:16; Phil 1:3-4; Col 1:28

Sermons available on Video, Audio and notes at eatoncc.org

WHAT'S A LEADER TO DO: SHEPHERD GOD'S FLOCK

(Acts 20:28-38)

July 16, 2023

Read Acts 20:28-38 – After years away, Paul is on his way to Jerusalem at the end of his 3rd journey. When his ship docks in Miletus, he calls the Ephesian elders to come to him. He speaks of his past ministry among them (17-21), his present expectation that the HS is leading him to imprisonment in Jerusalem (22-27). Then, as he looks to the future, he gives an impassioned set of instructions defining what it means to be an elder. What's a leader to do? In a nutshell – in simplest terms -- **Lead and Feed**.

III. Lead the Church of God -- The last couple of weeks we've looked at the mindset of leadership – willingly; the manner – humbly; the method – by example; and the motivation – it's precious to God to whom we will answer. It's a priceless privilege to be called to such a mission.

Today we see the 2nd major task of leaders – to shepherd God's flock. They are: v 28 “to care for the church of God.” “To care for” (ποιμαίνω) is the word shepherd or pastor. That's not only who they are; that's what they do! All elders – lay elders and paid alike – are to shepherd God's flock – very serious business! Hos 4:6: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” It's the God-given mission of every elder to ensure that people are not living destructive lives bc they don't know what the Word says. This is holy ground. So how do leaders shepherd their flock?

IV. Shepherd God's Flock

E. By Preaching and Teaching – “Care for (pastor) the church of God.” That starts with feeding. Without that, the rest doesn't matter. How do you feed sheep? You get them to a place of abundant grass. How do you feed the flock of God? You give them the Word of God as clearly, accurately, thoroughly and passionately as possible. The Word is essential to Xn living! Without that people lead meaningless, empty, and usually chaotic lives. Hos 4:6: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

How will they get knowledge? How did Paul do that? He taught the Word – not his opinion, not the latest fad in psychology or the most recent cultural trend. What he did was “declare” and “teach” the Word (v. 20), testified to the need for repentance (21), proclaimed the kingdom (25), declared the whole counsel of God (27), admonished everyone with tears (31). He gave them God's Word in every way he could and in every place he could. He tells them at the end, ³² And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace. It is always the Word for Paul – first, last and always!

Recall Peter's grace-filled restoration in **John 21**? Three times Jesus asks, “Do you love me.” Three times Peter says, “Lord, you know I have great brotherly affection for you” – too ashamed to claim unconditional agape love. Yet 3 times the Lord said, “Then feed my lambs, tend my sheep and feed my sheep.” Peter was back on task with a clear mission. Everything he'd learned from Jesus he was to teach to others. So, elders are to teach the flock. The Word keeps people from destruction for lack of knowledge.

Give them “the whole counsel of God” – that's easy, and hard! We must tell them of heaven, and we must tell them of hell. We must tell them of joy and we must tell them of suffering. We

must tell them of the love of their brothers in Christ and the hatred of the world. We must tell them of God's grace and we must tell them of God's judgment. **The whole counsel of God.**

R. C. Sproul writes, "*I worry that when I stand before Christ, He is going to say, 'R.C. what did you keep back? What did you fear to preach? How much of My counsel did you declare to the people under your care? It was your task when I consecrated you to hold nothing back, to proclaim the whole counsel of God.' I do that by expository preaching, setting forth the text of Scripture. That prevents a pastor from riding his own hobbyhorse; it's what the apostles did. Paul preached it all. He didn't just preach the love of God. He also preached God's mercy, grace, and wrath. He called people to repentance.*" That's the job description for every leader.

And why did Paul stick to the Word? It is able ^{32b)} to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." Paul is saying, "*You want to be built up in the faith – and to build up an inheritance in eternity?*" Then you need the Word. Human wisdom sees only here and now. That's important. But 1,000 years from now this 80-year period will look very small. And 1,000,000 years even smaller. You need a forever inheritance! The Word will help you invest in eternity at least as hard as you are investing in the stock market. **The word focuses on eternity.**

Simple illustration: When John D. Rockefeller died, someone asked his executor, "*How much did he leave behind?*" The man replied, "*All of it. He left it all behind.*" But we don't have to do that. We can send some on ahead. **Mt 6:19-20:** "*Do not lay up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰⁾ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.*" **Without the Word you'd never know you can create an eternal account.** So faithful leaders teach the Word that shows us how to live now and prepare for later as well.

F. By Protecting – The 2nd job of leaders: ²⁹⁾ I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰⁾ and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹⁾ Therefore be alert." Within 5 years, all that Paul warned about in this passionate meeting had occurred. From jail in Rome, Paul wrote in **I Tim 1:** ³⁾ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine." The flock was being led astray.

Sheep are notoriously helpless. No sharp teeth, no claws, no speed and no sense. They will watch a wolf devour a brother, not realizing – they are next. **Paul sees the Ephesians in that light.** They need protection from false teachers. Peter describes them: **II Pet 2:1-3:** "*But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. ²⁾ And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³⁾ And in their greed they will exploit you with false words.*"

Look at the list. They deny Christ – He's a nice example of loving enemies, but no Savior. They say a God who sends His own Son to a cruel cross is guilty of cosmic child abuse. And they live among us, claiming the name evangelical! They live lives of sensuality, excess and ease. They are greedy – exploiting the unwary in their appeals for money to support their excessive lifestyle. Sound like anyone you know – like the majority of TV preachers. And other places, too. When Jesus is not preached, when it's all about the money, when there is no

mention of sin or judgment or hell. They can say Jesus and God all day long, but they are fierce wolves in sheep's clothing speaking twisted things and taking many with them. And they are “**from among your own selves.**” The danger is far greater within our own ranks than from the LGBTQ or Transgender lobby on the outside.

So many things get twisted, like Tony Compolo: “*My purpose in writing the book [Speaking My Mind] was to communicate loud and clear that I felt that evangelical Christianity had been hijacked. When did it become anti-feminist? When did evangelical Christianity become anti-gay? When did it become supportive of capital punishment? Pro-war? When did it become so negative towards other religious groups?*” Know what? He’s asking the wrong question. The question is when did evangelicalism leave its heritage of the Word to follow people who write books like Speaking My Mind instead of speaking God’s mind as revealed in the Word?

Years ago, when Wm Booth was asked what he regarded as the chief dangers ahead for the 20th century, he replied tersely: “*Religion without the Holy Spirit, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God and heaven without hell.*” He nailed it. Mt 7:15, “**Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.**” Elders must protect against false teaching. It’s insidious, persistent, enticing and ever-changing. The remedy – just *like spotting counterfeit money. Know the real thing.*

G. By Pastoring – Leaders are to “**care for (pastor) the church of God.**” That means feeding, but also more. Shepherds care for hurt sheep; discipline wandering sheep; and seek sheep who go astray. So God’s leaders must care for all needs – physical, emotional and spiritual. We are to comfort the grieving, counsel the confused and hurting, confront the straying, visit the sick, and meet any physical needs we can.

In our church this involves many things – the meal ministry, calling those who are laid up, hurting or shut-in, counseling those in need of spiritual direction, distributing benevolent funds, confronting habitual sin, providing Bible studies and service ministries. The list goes on and on. And I’m sure we can be better at all of them as we continue to grow in faith and in love. Leaders facilitate loving care of both body and soul for all the flock of God.

A little boy was excited about his family’s move at first, but then came to Mom teary-eyed saying he didn’t want to move. Mom said, “**But I thought you couldn’t wait to move.**” The boy said, “**Yes, but what about my friends?**” Mom pulled him close and said, “**Honey you’ll make lots of new friends at your new school. You’ll see.**” The boy pulled away, “**No Mom. It’s not that. What will my friends here do without me?**” Wouldn’t it be great if we all felt that way – leaders and all? Wouldn’t that be great? Instead of waiting for someone to do for me, thinking what I can do for them – cuz what would they do without me? That’s pastoring God’s flock – and we want to do it right.

H. By Praying – Prayer is the one indispensable to leading. Look at Paul:
³⁶ **And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.** ³⁷ **And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him.**” Paul prayed while with them; Paul prayed for them. Eph 1:16: “**I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.**” This was Paul’s pattern for all his converts. Phil 1:3-4: “**I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy.**” The best thing Paul ever did for God’s flock was to pray for them.

That need never changes. When we gather as staff, elders and deacons, we spend most of the time praying for you. **A leader who does not pray daily for the flock ought to step down.** Pretty simple, isn't it? Leaders pray for the flock. To not pray for the flock is to disqualify oneself from leadership.

T. S. Money was a great lay leader among the Presbyterians in Scotland. When asked why he never married would say, "*Well, it's like this, you see. I would rather go thru life wanting what I don't have, than having what I don't want.*" **Obviously not a risk taker!** But he prayed. Kept a Rogues' Gallery of pictures of men he'd prayed for. And he had wonderful stories of what God had done in their lives. One morning his housekeeper came in to find T.S. sprawled across his bed. Fully dressed, his day underway. But when they removed his body, they discovered he'd fallen on top of his prayer list – **went to heaven praying for more rogues.** That's a good way to go, isn't it? **Start a prayer here and end it at the Father's throne!**

Truth is, we're all rogues, aren't we? That's why we must all continuously pray for each other – leaders leading, but all following this critical path.

Conc – So there is how a leader feeds the flock – by preaching/teaching, protecting, pastoring and praying. What a magnificent privilege – helping others come to Christ with the goal that **"we may present everyone mature in Christ"** (Col 1:28). That must be the heart of every leader among us.

John Calvin was the greatest theologian of the Reformation, but he was also its greatest pastor. Here's how he summarized the work of pastors/elders, whether lay elders or paid: "**Let the pastors boldly dare all things by the word of God, of which they are constituted administrators. Let them constrain all the power, glory, and excellence of the world to give place to and to obey the divine majesty of this word. Let them enjoin everyone by it, from the highest to the lowest. Let them edify the body of Christ. Let them devastate Satan's reign. Let them pasture the sheep, kill the wolves, instruct and exhort the rebellious. Let them bind and loose, thunder and lightning, if necessary, but let them do all according to the word of God.**" **May it be so always at 1561 Benjamin Drive.** Let's pray.