

CROSS



WORDS

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Gather
& Grow
WUCC GROWING TO SERVE

Each of you should use
whatever gift you have
received to serve others, as
faithful stewards of God's
grace in its various forms.

1 Peter 4:10

Looking Up WITH PASTOR TROY

Building A Confident Church

Because the real church is the people, not the building, the Bible doesn't really say much about building programs. But the Bible does command followers of Jesus Christ to build the church. For instance, the Bible calls the church--the community of God's people--God's building (1 Cor 3:9). First Corinthians 14:12 contains a command to all followers of Jesus Christ to strive to build up the church. My job description as a pastor in Ephesians 4:12 is to equip church members to serve in ministry so that the church might be built up. So, building a church is a biblical concept, but this kind of building has very little to do with bricks, drywall or carpeting. Instead, building the church has to do with the community of people. Let's look at how to build a confident church. We're going to talk about five bricks that are each absolutely necessary to build a confident church.

1. Our Leadership (1 Thess 5:12-13).

The first brick is CONFIDENCE IN OUR LEADERSHIP.

Here Paul's talking to the entire congregation--all the members--about their attitude toward the leadership. In some ways the Thessalonian church isn't much different than churches are today. Here we find a group of people in v. 12 who "work hard," those men and women who sacrifice their energy, their time, and their money to make the church's ministry happen. Those who were working hard were probably feeling underappreciated, and the rest of the congregation was taking them for granted. Effective leadership and effective following translate into harmonious relationships. Ineffective leadership or disrespectful following translates into friction, tension, and conflict. So how can we build confident leadership? We build a confident church by nurturing respectful relationships with our spiritual leaders.

2. Our Ministry (1 Thess 5:14-15).

The second brick to build with is **CONFIDENCE IN OUR MINISTRY**.

Once again, Paul uses the collective term "brothers" to show us that he's addressing the entire congregation. The entire congregation is to "warn the idle." The word "warn" here means "to admonish" and it usually refers to cautioning people about destructive and immoral behavior. Now not everyone needs "admonishing," so Paul describes the group who needs this as the "idle." This word "idle" was originally a military word that described someone who was out of formation or who abandoned their post, what we would call AWOL. The entire church is also told to help the weak. The word "help" here means to prop something up that's about to collapse, to support.

Then Paul says to be patient with everyone, because he knows that we tend to become very impatient with "won't do," "want to," and "can't do" kinds of people. In v. 15 Paul reiterates the teachings of Jesus about non-retaliation, that no matter what evil is done against us, the follower of Jesus never has an excuse to respond to evil with evil. The "eye for an eye" philosophy makes pretty good legislation, but it's a terrible way to try to live your life if you're a follower of Jesus Christ. A spirit of retaliation can destroy a church, splintering the members into various factions, motivating people to have secret meetings, file lawsuits, and in some rare cases resort to violence. The follower of Jesus is to always seek the good, not echo the evil. These two verses describe our ministry, our second brick, and here we find a second way to build a confident church. We build a confident church by getting personally involved in people's lives.

3. Our Devotion (1 Thess 5:16-18).

Now the third brick is the brick of **DEVOTION**.

What these three commands all have in common is that they're all God focused. Something else to mention is that all three are in the plural, which means Paul is addressing the entire congregation, not just solitary individuals. All three of these commands are described as God's will for us. We build a confident church by enthusiastically embracing God's will in our circumstances. A joyful resolve despite our circumstances, a praying spirit that constantly seeks God, and a thankful attitude in the midst of all of life's circumstances makes us people of devotion. This kind of enthusiastic embrace of God's purpose for our lives builds a strong sense of community.

4. Our Direction (1 Thess 5:19-22).

The fourth brick I want to talk about is confidence in **OUR DIRECTION**.

The command in v. 19 is to not quench the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is pictured as a fire, and some in the congregation were tempted to spray the fire hose on what God's Spirit was doing. So, Paul commands us not to douse the Spirit's fire, to not become so organized and structured that the work of God's Spirit is quenched. So how can we build confidence in our direction? We build a confident church by biblically discerning God's guidance.

5. Our Prospects (1 Thess 5:23-28).

This brings us to our final brick, which is confidence in **OUR PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE**.

This is followed by Paul's final greetings, a request to pray for him, to greet each other warmly, and to publicly read this letter since it's part of scripture. Here we find though how to have confidence in our prospects. We build a confident church by trusting in God's faithfulness for our spiritual progress. If it depended on us--our faithfulness, our dependability, our resolve--we'd never make it. Let's face it, C. S. Lewis was right to call humans "half-hearted creatures" whose passions aren't nearly passionate enough. We get excited and motivated in spurts, but between those spurts are long periods of apathy. So, if our progress in spiritual life depended on us our prospects wouldn't be very good. But since our progress depends on God's faithfulness--evidenced in the fact that we already believe in Jesus--then our prospects are great. Just as surely that Jesus Christ will one day come again, so also, we can be sure that we'll be ready because God is faithfully sanctifying us through and through.



Five bricks to build a confident church. The bricks of leadership, ministry, devotion, direction, and prospects. Historically this congregation has usually been strong in these areas. We've had times where we've struggled, but by and large the last 100+ years have been characterized by confidence in each of these areas. But yesterday's strength is no guarantee for today's strength. Now that our physical building has been built and we're comfortable in our surroundings, it would be tempting for us to confuse this facility with the real church. More and more we're tempted to speak of the church in terms of drywall, parking, and carpet.

But the church is the people, not the building. So, as we face our future as a congregation, my prayer is that God would help us nurture respectful relationships between leaders and members, that God would help each of us get personally involved in people's lives, enthusiastically embrace God's will, biblically discern God's guidance, and trust in God's faithfulness for our growth.

Happy building and happy May,
Love to all!

Pastor Troy and Mindy



Surprise Package!!! Mother's Day Raffle

*Be sure to get your tickets from
a member of the Mission's Committee
for the drawing on Mother's Day.*

\$1 per ticket/6 for \$5

WUCC Youth



Join us for our: **FOOD PANTRY CHALLENGE**

Our May challenge is
Betty Crocker Suddenly Salad!



Our next food pantry work day is
Wednesday, May 10th, from 2-4pm.
Let us know if you can help!



STAY INFORMED

www.warrenucc.net

We are on
Facebook & Instagram



YOUTH NEWS

WITH TAKARRA

Firstly, I would just like to thank Julie Korporal, Jane Trickle, Sarah Thiele, Troy Drayer, and Terry Miller, who all helped with the youth during Sunday service and Wednesday nights during the month of April. I would also like to thank all the youth and parents who came to the skate party and made it so much fun. It was so enjoyable getting to know all the youth and parents better while spending time with my family. More information on our next youth gathering will be coming soon as well as more information on a youth fundraiser. This fundraiser would allow us to offer discounted rates to parents at our youth gatherings. The fundraiser would also raise money so that we could have more fun parties for our kids. The kids and I will be working on a special Mother's Day gift to give to all our lovely moms on Mother's Day.

We took a small break from our reading through the Old Testament to talk about Christ and the story of easter. We learned that Palm Sunday signifies Jesus's arrival to Jerusalem. We played pin the tail on the donkey and the floor is lava with palm branches. We also discussed how Jesus used his last day in the service of others. We read John 13:15-21. "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." The kids wrote down ways they can serve others on paper feet in remembrance of how Jesus spent his last day washing feet in service of others. For easter we all made easter reefs while I explained to them the story of Jesus's death and resurrection. We played games and opened our easter bags the rest of the time. After easter we learned about Joseph, and we all got to recreate his colorful coat of many colors. We talked about how Joseph forgave his brothers and how we should also try to forgive those who hurt us. We also talked about bullying and how we need to be careful about what we say and do to others because it can leave people with scars that sometimes last forever. To show the kids what I meant I asked them to say mean things to a piece of paper. Each time they said something mean, I crumpled the paper until the paper was completely crumbled. Next, I asked the kids to apologize to the paper and slowly I unfolded the paper a little bit at a time. As soon as our paper was flatted out again, I exclaimed "you see, even though we apologized as best we could, the paper still doesn't look like it did when we started. If you look closely, you can see it is still a little crinkled and scared. This is just like when we hurt others and apologize. Apologizing doesn't always take all their pain away; this is why we should be carful with what we say and do."

To those who gave birth this year to their first child—we celebrate with you.

To those who lost a child this year – we mourn with you.

To those who are in the trenches with little ones every day and wear the badge of food stains – we appreciate you.

To those who experienced loss this year through miscarriage, failed adoptions, or running away—we mourn with you.

To those who walk the hard path of infertility, fraught with pokes, prods, tears, and disappointment – we walk with you. Forgive us when we say foolish things. We don't mean to make this harder than it is.

To those who are foster moms, mentor moms, and spiritual moms – we need you.

To those who have warm and close relationships with your children – we celebrate with you.

To those who have disappointment, heart ache, and distance with your children – we sit with you.

To those who lost their mothers this year – we grieve with you.

To those who experienced abuse at the hands of your own mother – we acknowledge your experience.

To those who lived through driving tests, medical tests, and the overall testing of motherhood – we are better for having you in our midst.

To those who will have emptier nests in the upcoming year – we grieve and rejoice with you.

And to those who are pregnant with new life, both expected and surprising –we anticipate with you.

This Mother's Day, we walk with you. Mothering is not for the faint of heart and we have real warriors in our midst. We remember you.



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May

2023

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

	1 Jerry & Diane Brooks	2	3 Refresh & Youth Group 6:30pm	4	5	6
7 Sunday Service Communion 9:30am Owen Stucky	8	9	10 Refresh & Youth Group 6:30pm Food Pantry Work Day	11 Sierra Tolen	12	13
14 Sunday Service 9:30am Mother's Day Raffle Blake Stucky	15	16 AB Board Meeting 6:30pm	17 Refresh & Youth Group 6:30pm	18	19	20 Bob Jackson
21 Sunday Service 9:30am	22 Terry Miller Kevin Thiele	23 Julie Korporal	24 Refresh & Youth Group 6:30pm	25 Logan Stucky Sarah Jones	26	27
28 Sunday Service 9:30am	29 	30	31 Refresh & Youth Group 6:30pm Richard Brubaker			



Do you want to help with the Youth?

We are always in need of volunteers to help with our youth. Please contact Takarra if you would like to sign up to help!



WARREN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



JUNIOR CHURCH IS AVAILABLE SUNDAY MORNINGS FOLLOWING THE CHILDREN'S MESSAGE.

COME SEE US EVERY SUNDAY!



YOUTH AGES: PRE-K-5TH EVERY WEDNESDAY NIGHT 6-7PM 202 EAST 2ND ST., WARREN

JOIN THE FUN!



4:12

Stay tuned for the next activity to be announced!