

## From The Pastor's Desk

Dear Central Members and Friends,

Grace & Shalom!! I wanted to take a moment in this weekly update to encourage you to reflect on all God is doing in our ministry and in your life!! One of the unique attributes of God's love toward us is that he bestowed the gift of free-will on us. This means He doesn't force His will on us but allows us to determine our love for Him by the way we behave toward Him and also, our treatment of others. If God forced His love on us it would take away our freedom to accept Him as Lord and Savior. The fact that He loves us so much that He gives us the freedom to determine if we truly love Him is amazing. Now, our conduct and behavior outside of church is the real proof in our lives as to how much we love Him. We need to monitor closely how our conduct matches what we say; it is easy to say I love God but it is much more challenging to obey God, which demonstrates your love for Him!!

**The power of the above statement is reflected in our 2018 Church Theme "Relationships Matter." Do we really behave like "Relationships Matter," especially during the time period when things are inconvenient for you? Do relationships matter to you when the individual makes things inconvenient for you?? There was nothing personally convenient about Jesus's death, but He intentionally died to make things convenient for us long term.**

**What personal sacrifices are you making in 2018 to demonstrate that relationships matter? "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13:34-35)**

I pray and sincerely hope that you have been engaged in "Modeling Grace" and demonstrating, even when it is inconvenient, that "relationships matter" during the first 4 months of 2018. The only way we can become all that God desires of us as a church is to work together, forgive each other, model grace and demonstrate that relationships matter. **Our community will richly benefit from this behavior by us and God will be pleased as well.**

One of my favorite quotes by D.L. Moody summarizing all that is on my heart at this moment. "Character is what you are in the dark. Faith makes all things possible.....love makes all things easy. The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible."

I am amazed at God's grace toward us as a Church when I reflect on all that He has helped us to accomplish these last 4 months despite the challenges many of our members have endured. We are on the verge of celebrating our 100-year anniversary as a Church and this is a significant milestone that has only been made possible by a journey of faith and the Grace of God.

Let's demonstrate to the Tri-Cities how much we love each other and how grateful we are for all that God has done for us as church. Satan will be highly disappointed with us and let's always keep him disappointed!!

Please allow me to close by saying thank you for all you have done and continue to do at Central to bring God glory!!!

Your Brother In Christ!!

**Pastor Perry Stuckey**