



ABC Newsletter

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Last month I referred to Karl Vaters article in Christianity Today giving reasons why his church no longer does “come and watch events.” So what could we do instead?

Atwater Baptist Church



When somebody does come to church for the first time, most likely they are less interested in a big show or production than they are looking for “**more authentic, applicable and challenging in their life.**”

Here are five suggestions that people are following to make a difference in our community. They are worth our consideration for the future of Atwater Baptist.

Helping to serve.

Things some of us are already doing! Helping at a food distribution, working in a literacy program, helping someone move, or cleaning up a park—invite others! They learn by doing and sharing that our church really cares for others in Jesus’ name. Not just sitting in a pew.

Helping to give.

Things like Christmas gifts for needy families, filling baby bottles with money for our local clinic, offering divorce recovery workshops, or grief support groups, many of us get involved. church members, guests or entirely unchurched! “*When unchurched people join us in giving to causes that don’t line the church’s pockets, they start trusting us a little more – and they’re open to trusting Jesus.*”

Coming to have fun!

Decorating ornaments before our Christmas Eve service, hunting for Easter Eggs, or having a potluck lunch and blow-up games after our water baptism services, we celebrate big events in the life of the church in visible ways.

On those Sundays when we know we’ll have more guests than usual, we give them ways to celebrate, connect and participate as much as possible. This also encourages them to stick around instead of running to their car as soon as the church service is over.

When they stick around, they connect. When they connect, they’re more open to come back and hear about Jesus again.

4. Come and Learn

You don’t have to be a Christian for biblical principles to work in your life. When the church can offer people some practical, real-life solutions with the Bible as the source, people will come back for more.

This can happen with parenting classes, financial stewardship (like the Dave Ramsey class we’ll be offering soon) and more.

A Word of Caution About Points 1-4

While all four previous points have value, they also carry an inherent danger. We need to be careful not to replace the message of salvation with self-help or feel-good solutions.

If all we’re doing is making people more comfortable in their separation from God, we haven’t helped them, we’ve hurt them.

Which is why the next point is the most important one of all

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5. Come and Worship (Or Join Us As We Worship)

You can't really worship a God you don't have a relationship with. But you can be with us as we worship. And you can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit as we do.

On Christmas Eve, Good Friday, Easter and other big days, we don't have a special production. We use our regular team (who do a *great* job!). And we worship the way we always worship – but we do it with an awareness that there are more first-timers than usual.

No church should water down our worship just because we have guests with us.

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When a person comes to a church, they should see our faith at its deepest and best. Not a sanitized-for-your-convenience version that doesn't have enough depth and meaning to make a difference.

Do What Works

If your church does 'come and watch' events well, keep doing them. But if they don't work for you – like they don't for us – there are other great ways to connect with people and open an onramp to the gospel for them.

You don't have to do what works for us. Do what works for you, your church and the people Jesus has called you to reach.

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Blessings, Pastor John



Praise God, we unanimously voted Rev. John Doty to be our leader. We are all very excited about the turn of events leading to this occasion, and are looking to the future with great anticipation.

I want to thank our Fellowship Committee for the delicious pot luck provided for the Pastor and Vernetta, great decorations too. Also it was great to see so many attend even though the afternoon was so hot, great going.

As usual this summer brought lots of high temperatures and of course our air conditioner problems, so far we were able to keep the temperature okay in the sanctuary, thank God for AC technicians.

Richard Maddox, Moderator



WORSHIP COMMITTEE

I hope you all enjoyed our Independence BBQ. Thanks to Carter Luxon for his improvisation skills when the BBQ didn't work. We all had a great time.

We will be singing hymns and songs again after the Ice Cream Social,
August 13th

Eileen Gasaway, Worship Committee



THE BIRTH OF THE HYMN "PRECIOUS LORD"

Back in 1932, I was a fairly new husband. My wife, Nettie and I were living in a little apartment on Chicago's south side. One hot August afternoon I had to go to St. Louis where I was to be the featured soloist at a large revival meeting. I didn't want to go; Nettie was in the last month of pregnancy with our first child, but a lot of people were expecting me in St. Louis. I kissed Nettie goodbye, clattered downstairs to our Model A and, in a fresh Lake Michigan breeze, chugged out of Chicago on Route 66.

However, outside the city, I discovered that in my anxiety at leaving, I had forgotten my music case. I wheeled around and headed back. I found Nettie sleeping peacefully. I hesitated by her bed; something was strongly telling me to stay. But eager to get on my way, and not wanting to disturb Nettie, I shrugged off the feeling and quietly slipped out of the room with my music.

The next night, in the steaming St. Louis heat, the crowd called on me to sing again and again. When I finally sat down, a messenger boy ran up with a Western Union telegram. I ripped open the envelope....

Pasted on the yellow sheet were the words: YOUR WIFE JUST DIED. People were happily singing and clapping around me, but I could hardly keep from crying out. I rushed to a phone and called home. All I could hear on the other end was "Nettie is dead. Nettie is dead."

When I got back, I learned that Nettie had given birth to a boy. I swung between grief and joy. Yet that same night, the baby died. I buried Nettie and our little boy together, in the same casket. Then I fell apart. For days, I closeted myself. I felt that God had done me an injustice. I didn't want to serve Him anymore or write gospel songs I just wanted to go back to that jazz world I once knew so well. But then, as I hunched alone in that dark apartment those first sad days, I thought back to the afternoon I went to St. Louis. Something kept telling me to stay with Nettie. Was that something God? Oh, if I had paid more attention to Him that day, I would have stayed and been with Nettie when she died. From that moment on I vowed to listen more closely to Him. But still I was lost in grief. Everyone was kind to me, especially one friend. The following Saturday evening he took me up to Maloney's Poro College, a neighborhood music school. It was quiet; the late evening sun crept through the curtained windows. I sat down at the piano, and my hands began to browse over the keys. Something happened to me then. I felt at peace. I felt as though I could reach out and touch God. I found myself playing a melody.

Once in my head they just seemed to fall into place: 'Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand, I am tired, I am weak, I am worn, through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light, take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.'

The Lord gave me these words and melody, He also healed my spirit. I learned that when we are in our deepest grief, when we feel farthest from God, this is when He is closest, and when we are most open to His restoring power. And so I go on living for God willingly and joyfully, until that day comes when He will take me and gently lead me home. -Tommy Dorsey

For those too young to know who he is, Tommy Dorsey was a well-known band leader in the 1930's and 40's. Did you know that Tommy Dorsey wrote this song? I surely didn't. What a wonderful story of how God CAN heal the brokenhearted! Our God is truly an awesome God!

Agape, Bonnie

Regular Meeting Times this Month

Sundays:

9:00 AM NLCC Worship

9:30 AM Sunday School

11:00 AM ABC Morning Worship

6:00 PM NLCC Youth Group

Tuesdays

8:00 p.m. Phoenix Group

Thursdays:

9:30 AM Prayer

Fridays

7:00 PM—9:30 PM Phoenix Group

Special Dates this Month.

Wednesday, August 8

9:00 a.m. Senior Brown Bag

Wednesday, August 9

9:00 a.m. USDA Commodities

Sunday, August 13

5:00 p.m. Ice Cream Social & Hymn Sing

Tuesday, August 15

7:00 p.m. Diaconate Meeting

Monday, August 21

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE

Tuesday, August 22

9:00 a.m. Senior Brown Bag



AUGUST

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

NewsLetter
DEADLINE

Monday August 21st

		1 7:00 p.m. Phoenix Group	2	3 9:30 a.m. Prayer	4 7:00 p.m. Phoenix Group	5
6 9:00 a.m. NLCC Worship 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11:00 a.m. ABC Worship	7	8 9:00 a.m. Brown Bag Distribution 7:00 p.m. Phoenix Group	9 9:00 a.m. USDA Commodities	10 9:30 a.m. Prayer	11 7:00 p.m. Phoenix Group	12
13 9:00 a.m. NLCC Worship 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11:00 a.m. ABC Worship	14 5:00 p.m. Ice Cream Social and Hymn Sing	15 7:00 p.m. Diaconate Mtg 7:00 p.m. Phoenix Group	16	17 9:30 a.m. Prayer	18 7:00 p.m. Phoenix Group	19
20 9:00 a.m. NLCC Worship 9:30 a.m. Sunday Schc 11:00 a.m. ABC Worshi	21 DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER ARTICLES	22 9:00 a.m. Brown Bag istribution :00 p.m. enix Group	23	24 9:30 a.m. Prayer	25 7:00 p.m. Phoenix Group	26
27 9:00 a.m. NLCC Worship 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11:00 a.m. ABC Worship	28	29 7:00 p.m. Phoenix Group	30	31 9:30 a.m. Prayer		

August Birthdays

- 2 Lucy Gasaway
- 4 Vella Maddix
- 15 Eileen Gasaway
- 15 Chelsea Chapline
- 16 Thomas Chapline

August Anniversaries

- 3 Richard & Jeri Maddox



We have finished our "One Great Hour of Sharing Offering." Praise the Lord and thank you for giving. We met our goal and some extra checks came in and we'll put it with the new projects.

Summer is here and we will have some more needs. More news to follow.

Ruth Ann Gasaway



Our church sponsors a Food Pantry in conjunction with Love, Inc. in Merced. Occasionally, we get calls from Love, Inc. to provide a week's worth of food for certain families that are in need, usually in the Atwater area. In the past few months, we have supplied families four times with food, both perishable and shelf-stable. The latest was a family of 3 adults in which the son and father are disabled and the mother just lost her job. She needed help until her Unemployment Benefits would start. She was very appreciative of the food we brought her. We would not be able to do this without your help. Thank you.

I would like to thank the members of the search committee and the church as a whole for the unanimous vote to call me (and Vernetta) as Pastor of Atwater Baptist Church. It was a delightful weekend "meet and greet" dinner as well as reception following the vote. We look forward to serving the Lord together, because we definitely all have a great future together. ABC has something to offer...the Lord Jesus! Amen. —*Pastor John*



PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

We were very happy to be able to recommend Pastor John Doty for your consideration for our next permanent pastor. We found he met all the criteria we had and matched the priorities we identified as important for our church.

Sunday, July 16th, after the church service, we met as a congregation to formally vote on Pastor John Doty. We voted unanimously to have John Doty as our permanent pastor. Pastor John agreed to accept the appointment. We are looking forward to having John as our new leader and we will see what changes will be coming for our church. Please continue to pray for John and Vernetta as they start a new relationship with us.

I would like to commend the members of the Pastoral Search Committee for their hard work and patience in these long months. The members are Nancy Castleberry, Dawna McCreary, Morris Puku, and Richard Maddox. *Eileen Gasaway.*

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**United In Christ,
Growing in Grace
Reaching Out in Love**



Christian Ed.

We had a great VBS. We shared with New Life and had a great time. Hope next time we have more people involved.

Our Bible Studies are taking the summer off. Hope you plan to attend again this fall. We will start up in September.

Our Sunday School is going great. Eileen continues to lead us. Join with us as we study the Old Testament.

We are getting to know our new Pastor and his wife. Come and get to know him as he shares with us.

Jeri Maddox, Christian Ed.

Remember In Prayer

Hanna Hoyt, Marie Pimentel, Helen Swickard, Dora Wilcox, Morgan Yarbrough, Eileen Gasaway, Pat Yarbrough, Gladys Alexander

Our Military families, leaders, and president

Our Missionaries:

Rev. Lauran Bethell,
Steve & Cari Wendel.

**Visit our church web site
www.atwaterbaptist.com
for a more complete
prayer list.**