

# Notes From Cheryl - March 2026

We can't keep waiting for new people to come to us as the church. Evangelism is not passive, waiting for them to come, being polite when they arrive, helping them to join our organization, and then trying to get them to come back if they quit attending worship or giving money. This hands-off style of evangelism is not working – and has not worked for more than 50 years!

This quote is from a book called *Get Their Name: Grow Your Church by Building New Relationships*, by Bob Farr, Doug Anderson, and Kay Kotan. In it they say, "We in the church have gone from being outwardly focused to being inwardly centered. This static and inward passivity won't work in a secular world where the gospel must be actively demonstrated to be communicated."

If our church is to have a future, we must reconnect to our mission statement: Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Lent provides an ideal opportunity to invite others within your immediate circle (your pond) to church. This is our central task as the church! Of children born in the past 10 to 20 years, fewer than 10 percent will be connected to God through church – and if Protestant, the vast majority will not be in a mainline Protestant church (such as United Methodist).

1 Peter 3:15 says, "Whenever anybody asks you to speak of your hope, be ready to defend it." Hope is a this-worldly activity because it signals our attempt to become more Christ-like, so it requires actively loving God and our neighbor. It also pushes us toward the other-worldly hope of eternal life.

If the Holy Spirit is working on you, calling you to be more involved in church on your journey to become more Christlike, pray for guidance because our church desperately

needs to be looking toward the future to get new faces connected to God. Not because we need more money or people in the pews, but because of the hope of eternal life and transformation of the world that people need in the here and now.

Here are some goals I've been thinking about to work in the near future: improve our online presence (social media, website is already looking good), improve our online worship experience (working technology, relevant messages. We also need to take it upon ourselves to keep an eye out for new people in worship and at other activities open to all generations. Make it a point to introduce yourself and make sure the newcomers feel welcome. Here's an opportunity: Palm Sunday (March 29) – we will have a wonderful celebration followed by a potluck dinner and Easter Egg hunt. Invite the young families in your sphere of influence. Or pray that the Holy Spirit lays on your heart someone you know who needs to be connected to God through the church.

