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**IT COMES DOWN TO RELATIONSHIPS**

In March’s newsletter I shared about the significant decline observed in most churches across the US in recent years. Of course, this is of great concern. The one thing not addressed in the letter was the cause. What is driving these falling numbers? There are certainly a number of factors, but a very interesting one was raised just this last week by ABC6 in one of their reports.

They began their report by citing a recent Gallup Poll which discovered only 30% of Americans attend worship on a weekly basis now. Additionally, over the past 20 years or so there has been a large increase in the number of those who claim to have no religious affiliation whatsoever. These, some experts have labeled as, “Nones.” They have no religious affiliation, in other words. This group now makes up 20% of the total US population. In contrast, over the past 20 years Jews have seen a 12% rise in affiliation and Muslims a 4% increase! But these groups make up a very small percentage of the total US population.

So, says, J.P. DeGamee, founder of the non-profit organization called Communio, “[This is] a huge, hairy problem right? It’s huge if you are concerned about things far outside of faith. If you care about upward mobility, if you care about loneliness, (if) you care about longer lifespans . . . it affects all those things.”

Still, what is causing this decline? The breakdown of relationships. DeGamee focuses most intensely on the collapse of marriages in the US from the 1960s onward, but there is much to be said about the collapse of interpersonal relationships in general. A host of mental health experts have observed, for instance, that Gen Z (people between the ages of 12 and 29) is often referred to as the loneliest generation. Ironically, they are also the most connected, electronically that is. Sadly, what they predominantly experience is what psychologists call pseudo-relationship, and quite frequently – they are not face-to-face but screen to screen.

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Should we be surprised to learn that suicide is quickly becoming the number one cause of death for individuals between the ages of 18 and 35? Maybe God was on to something when in Genesis He said, “It is not good for man to be alone.”

What then is the solution? What can we (the church) offer that will help? There are multiple solutions we need to be offering. One, we must do what we can to strengthen marriages and families. Interpersonal relationships within congregations need to likewise be strengthened simply by encouraging participation in small groups. Just this morning I was speaking to a friend who shared something he had heard about men who were committed to being a part of a small group that met regularly for Bible study and fellowship. The men were emotionally healthier. They were significantly less likely to be unfaithful to their wives and significantly more likely to be engaged in the life of their church and families.

But what about those outside our walls? That’s most of our country’s populations now! Most Americans don’t have a church home! What can you and I do about that? It is up to us. Jesus said as much in Matthew 28 when He commissioned His followers to be His witnesses. For this reason, we are currently encouraging our members to be engaged in neighborhood prayer walks. Guidance sheets are available in the rear of the sanctuary on how to go about a prayer walk. Then in mid-April and May we will have two brief Saturday training events that we are encouraging our members and regular attenders to participate in. The first (**April 20th, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**) will help us focus on relationship-building with those who do not yet know Jesus, and challenge people to discern who God has for them to personally build a relationship with. The second (**May 18th, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**) will focus on identifying a personal life issue where Jesus has made a difference in our life. This is first step toward developing a personal Faith Story to share with those who need to encounter Jesus. Please, make plans to join us for these important trainings.

You know, I am concerned about the national decline in church attendance, of which we at Bellpoint have personally experienced. However, of greater concern to me is the spiritual loneliness that is so prevalent today among so many in our communities. Separation from God has eternal as well as present consequences. Isolation from God naturally leads to separation from other people and even eventually from oneself. In the past few weeks, on Sunday mornings we’ve been talking about Jesus being the One who can address the deepest spiritual longing of any soul. As you and I know Jesus Christ, we must learn how to effectively share Him with others, so that they can know Him too and enjoy a relationship with Him and His family that may begin in this world but carry on forever in the next.

In Him,

***Pastor Paul***



## Contact Us

740.369.5956

[office@bellpointchurch.com](mailto:office@bellpointchurch.com)

[bellpointchurch.com](http://bellpointchurch.com)

Pastor Paul McCullough

[pastor@bellpointchurch.com](mailto:pastor@bellpointchurch.com)

Connect with us on  
Facebook!

[facebook.com/bellpoint](https://facebook.com/bellpoint)

Church Office Hours:

Monday - Friday

8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

## Upcoming Events

April 14

Spaghetti Dinner

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

April 17

Children's Council Meeting

7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

April 20

Sisters in Faith Meeting

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

April 20

How To Share Your Faith

Workshop - Relationship

Building

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

May 18

How To Share Your Faith

Workshop - Developing a

Personal Faith Story

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

## Sunday Morning Worship Services

Traditional Service - 8:30 a.m.

Sunday School - 9:35 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Contemporary Service - 10:30 a.m.

K-4th graders, come join us in Bible Adventures during second service, 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

## Bellpoint Community Church Groups

(all groups meet at church unless otherwise stated)

- **Adult and Youth Sunday School:** Sunday Mornings, 9:35 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
- **Men's Bible Study:** Every other Monday, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Contact Pastor Paul for additional information.
- **Book Study Group:** Every other Thursday at 6:30 p.m.
- **Women's Bible Study:** Mondays, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- **Women's Bible Study:** Every other Sunday, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Contact Lori McCullough for additional information. Current Study: Jesus The One & Only by Beth Moore.
- **Teen Disciples** (6th - 12th grades): Sundays from 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- **Emerging Adults** (high school seniors through mid-30s): Second Friday of the month, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. at the Solli home. Contact Kelly Solli at 740-816-9383 for additional information.
- **Young Family:** Biweekly at the Kraick home. Contact Holly Kraick at 317-670-5725 for additional information.

## April Birthdays

<b>Apr 4</b>	Jonah Counts James Burtch
<b>Apr 7</b>	Ryan Sayer
<b>Apr 9</b>	Jason Counts
<b>Apr 12</b>	Bob Barker Melissa West Kelly Solli
<b>Apr 18</b>	Dan Masters
<b>Apr 19</b>	Jim Swearingin Stacy Sayer
<b>Apr 22</b>	Kelly Willis
<b>Apr 23</b>	Jessica Ulmer-West
<b>Apr 27</b>	Jonathan Ridge Webb

## Happy Anniversary

### **April 3**

Todd & Jennifer Westover  
Married 31 years

### **April 27**

Jim & Elva Swearingin  
Married 68 years

## **Children's Council**

- ♦ **Bible Adventures** - Kiddos in K-4, after the opening worship music during second service we head down to our room. Anyone interested in helping in any capacity can see Susan Ritchie for more details. It is not your average Children's Church, it's an Adventure!
- ♦ **Nursery Volunteers** - Thanks to all who have stepped up to play with and minister to our littlest ones! If you are not yet on the list and would like to be, please see Susan to sign up.

## **Teen Disciples**

6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grades - Meets Sundays at Church from 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**April 7:** Teen Disciples 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**April 14:** Spaghetti Dinner 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**April 21:** Teen Disciples 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**April 28:** Buckeye Valley Musical 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

## **Sisters in Faith - Mark Your Calendars!**

The Sisters in Faith are holding their organizational meeting on Saturday, April 20th at 9:00 a.m. in the fellowship hall.

Please come with some ideas of what we should do this year for outreach.

## **New Members Class**

If you are interested in joining Bellpoint Community Church, a New Members Class is forming. Typically, the class meets on three consecutive Sunday mornings during the Sunday School hour. Dates are TBA. Please contact Pastor Paul to sign up.

# Mulch Fundraiser

## Bellpoint Boy Scout Troop 284

### Order Information: **Orders due by April 12, 2024.**

Payment: Make checks out to Troop 284. Checks can be sent to the address below or collected when mulch is delivered.

Completed Form: Send completed form via mail, email, or text to:  
Scott Brooks [smbrooks164@gmail.com](mailto:smbrooks164@gmail.com)

196 Brindle Road 740-816-1317  
Ostrander, Oh 43061

#### Bagged Mulch (2.0 cu-ft Bags)

Black Mulch: \_\_\_\_\_ bags @ \$5/bag Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Brown Mulch: \_\_\_\_\_ bags @ \$5/bag Total: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Bulk Mulch:

Black Mulch: \_\_\_\_\_ yards @ \$60.00/yard Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Brown Mulch: \_\_\_\_\_ yards @ \$50.00/yard Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Order Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Delivery Information: FREE delivery in Delaware County and Marysville Area.

### Delivery on weekends of **Apr 26 - 28 and May 3 - 5.**

Our Scouts attending High Adventure Summer Camp this year are offering to spread mulch for donations.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Delivery Weekend Preference: \_\_\_\_\_

Delivery Location: \_\_\_\_\_

If you need mulch delivered not on a date listed above send an email to the address listed below and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

**Spreading For Donation Circle: YES / NO**

Questions: Notify Scott Brooks @ 740-816-1317 or [smbrooks164@gmail.com](mailto:smbrooks164@gmail.com)

## Prayer Requests

- \* **Tornado Victims** – prayers for those recovering and rebuilding after the recent tornadoes, including Marty Webb’s friends whose business was destroyed
- \* **Trisha** – she and her family lost everything in a house fire
- \* **Vicky Spellman** – prayers for comfort and healing
- \* **Steve Mayes** – prostate cancer (Webb)
- \* **Bill Fisher** – broken femur and trauma from a recent assault (Barker)
- \* **Scott** – a family friend’s 18-year-old daughter was abducted (McCullough)
- \* **Mary Anne & Duane** – health and recovery (Jaudzems)
- \* **Gail Aumend** – heart issues
- \* **Michelle Shelly** – receiving treatment for thyroid cancer
- \* **Buzz** – experiencing health issues and lost his job (Spellman)
- \* **Trisha** – kidney issues
- \* **Corinne** – she and her husband are experiencing health issues (Webb)
- \* **Janet Artz** – ovarian cancer (Kidd)
- \* **Avah’s Aunt** – colon cancer
- \* **Ron** – recurrence of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma
- \* **Vicki** – battling lung cancer
- \* **Lanie** – undergoing radiation



## Prayer Chain

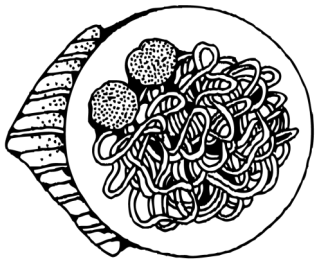
Are you looking for a way to serve Bellpoint Community Church and our community? Prayer is a powerful way to make an important difference in someone’s life. The Prayer Chain is always looking for new members for this vital ministry, so please call the church office if you are interested.

If you hear of a concern or praise there are multiple ways to share the information with our Prayer Chain:

- ♦ Complete a paper prayer request located on the back of each chair and drop in an offering bag or one of the clear boxes in the entrances to the fellowship hall and sanctuary.
- ♦ Contact Brooke Williams, the church office manager, by phone at 740-369-5956 or by email at [office@bellpointchurch.com](mailto:office@bellpointchurch.com).
- ♦ Post to the online prayer wall at [bellpointchurch.com/prayer-wall](http://bellpointchurch.com/prayer-wall).

## Friendship Table

Don't forget about our Friendship Table on the **second** and **fourth** Sundays each month! Enjoy some coffee, juice or milk, and a donut, etc. during Sunday School or before the worship services. Please keep all food and beverages in the Fellowship Hall or in your Sunday School room (if your teacher is okay with it). There will be a sign-up sheet available if you'd like to sign up to provide for the Friendship Table in the upcoming months. It is intended to be just a light snack, not a full breakfast, so anyone could do it!



## Spaghetti Dinner

Support our Youth Mission Trip by joining us for a Spaghetti Dinner on **Sunday, April 14th at 5:00 p.m.** There is no set admission - donations are accepted and encouraged!

## The Peal

If you do not have access to the internet or email, or simply prefer to have a hard copy mailed to you each month, please contact Brooke Williams, the church office manager at 740-369-5956 or by email at [office@bellpointchurch.com](mailto:office@bellpointchurch.com).

## Just a Reminder...

Please email all articles, pictures, and content for the May Peal to Rachel Kapraly at [peal@bellpointchurch.com](mailto:peal@bellpointchurch.com) by Wednesday, April 24th.

Thank you in advance for your assistance!