



# WEST SIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

## All Things Together Under Christ

by Tim Tripp

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Ephesians is such an awesome read. Paul wrote to early Jew and Gentile Christians encouraging them to see each other through the lens of God's grace and Christ's sacrifice. God's grace and the blood of Jesus free everyone from their sins and impart righteousness to all bringing everyone to the position of equal in Christ. He told them that no one was a "foreigner or alien but are fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household." Not only were Jews and Gentiles no longer enemies but they were adopted into the same family through Christ. This was all a part of God's plan. Paul, speaking of God's long-range plan, said that it was always his desire "to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ," (1:10).

Just as Christians did back then, we still struggle with separation along the lines of culture, race and socio-economic status. It has been said that racial segregation is never more apparent than it is on Sunday Mornings. People still tend to group together with others like themselves and dismiss those who are different. We keep trying to put up those walls that Jesus broke down (Eph. 2:14).

I cannot speak for everyone, but I know that for me it is just easier to talk and do life with the people who share my position in life, my culture and my viewpoints. It creates awkward moments when a topic comes up in a discussion around which it seems there would be broad agreement but find that there is a passionate dissenting voice. I am comfortable with sameness.

From reading Ephesians however, it seems God values oneness over sameness. He wants one people, one church from all the people on earth. That cannot happen if we all settle for sameness. It can only happen if we wade into the messy relationships that come from engaging those from different cultures, backgrounds, political ideology, theology, socio-economic backgrounds, races and the like. This kind of thing does not happen randomly nor does it happen accidentally. It must be intentional.

When a church is made up of people who have largely the same views, same race, same political leanings and similar theology it will feel exclusive to those with differences in any of the above categories. Without any additional effort to be inclusive, it will still feel that way even if the people in the church wish that it didn't.

Ephesians seems to be saying that we should never settle for same, yet it is clear that most churches do. Churches will never achieve true diversity when members of the church have personal peer groups that are same based groups. If members are not intentional about building relationships with different, the church will never be different. If we depend on building diversity from the "different" who visit our services, then different is not likely to happen because sameness feels exclusive.

Same is easy. It happens without effort. It is what happens when you do nothing to be inclusive and seek diversity. Different takes effort and intentionality. It means seeking and building relationships with people of different viewpoints, races, socio-economic backgrounds and theological/political stances. The burden for doing that lies with all of us who are in churches where same is the norm. If being one is the goal, then same has got to go. We must intentionally take part in the quest that Paul championed of bringing all people together under one head, which is Christ. "Vive la difference!"

### **DIOS LE BENDIGA! (God Bless You!)**

by Aris Ortiz

Hello my West Side Family.

James 1:13-15 NIV When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; [14] but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. [15] Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. .... We all have and will have temptations, that is part of our daily life. Addiction is what follows if we have given in to temptation. And it can be so easy to be addicted because Satan is working hard that we can fall on his "good temptations" to make us want more and more that we end the way he wants: "Addicted". Work can be an addiction if we are not careful, (working 24/7 ) TV can be an addiction. And thinking about that, cellphone has become an addiction to so many.. (and I question myself how often I use mine ); drugs, smoking, alcohol, so many little things without knowing became first in our life so easily that we don't realize how deep we are, or how far from the reality of how we will spend eternity. That's why the call of Jesus: Matthew 11:28-30 NIV "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light ." .... Our hope is in Christ, because he is the Door, the Hope, the Way, the Salvation!

Let us keep fighting the good fight my West Side Family! Blessings to all of you!

## Gathering Times

Sunday Morning 10 Am Worship  
& Kids for Christ  
ages 1yr-5th grade

In- Person Adult/Teen Bible Study  
Wednesdays 6:30pm - Room 3 & Cornerstone

Friendship Cafe and Conversational Christianity  
Sunday Mornings at 8:45

In- person Adult Bible Study  
Sunday Mornings at 9am

## West Side News

Remember the Wedding Shower for  
Tanner and Tori (Thomas) Woodhull  
*this afternoon*, Sunday Aug. 29th, in the Rock  
from 1:30-3:30pm

They are registered at Millyn's, Target, Walmart & Amazon

### **Kids For Christ Classes will *not* meet next Sunday Sept. 5th!**

A new group of Kids For Christ Classes will begin on Sunday Sept. 12th, and will continue to meet during our Worship hour.

Classes will be as follows:

1&2 yr olds : Beth Sorrells in the nursery area

3 & 4 year olds : Jamie Bates

Kindergarten: Susan Taylor

1st and 2nd grade: Jen Rentfro

3rd - 5th grade: Janelle Miller

No Wednesday night classes other than adult and youth group (6th -12th) at this time.

Sign up for WS emails at  
[westsidear.org/subscribe](http://westsidear.org/subscribe)

## Week of: 8-22-2021

Weekly Giving: \$ 16,994

Attendance

Weekly Budget:\$ 13,820

Sunday AM - 291

YTD Giving: \$ 468,566

Wednesday PM -74

YTD Budget: \$ 469,871

## Family Illness and Recovery

Carol White's sister, Sharon, was recently hospitalized and has an infection. Continued prayers for the family are appreciated.

Amy Vanderheiden is currently undergoing physical therapy following knee surgery. She is scheduled for a different surgery on Sept. 28th. Please keep her in your prayers for overall health improvement.

Danny Davis continues to recover from recent foot surgery. Please keep him in your prayers for complete healing.

Dena Moore is recovering at home from recent foot surgery. Please keep her in your prayers for a full and swift recovery.

Trish Bailey's niece, Renee, is recovering from double mastectomy. Please keep her in your prayers for a rapid recovery and complete healing.

### Other News:

Pantry Needs:

We need to stock up on items for the Dialysis Clinic.

Needed items are Ritz Crackers (small sleeves)

Canned tuna (in water, not oil), Apples and Unsweetened Applesauce.

Please bring items and leave in the MNFTM box in the hallway.

**Share Group** Sign-Up sheets are on the Starting Point desk in the lobby. Please sign up by Sunday Sept. 12th if you wish to participate.

Love. Share. Disciple.