



Clergy Reports (January 2024)

Pastor Reggie

What an amazing year we experienced in 2023! To put the year into perspective, we began in January with a great deal of hope in the future of this church, and we began prayerfully with a simple objective. Modeled after John Wesley's **Three Simple Rules**, we adopted a path where we would focus on those things as we navigated the year-Do No Harm, Do Good, Stay in Love With God. Looking back, I believe that everything we did as a church this past year we did with that at the forefront.

In reviewing the Key Indicators Report for the 12 months of 2023, we met or exceeded most of our expectations, and came close to many others. I am extremely proud of the number of new members/partners that decided they too wanted to become a part of our church, and how we pretty much maintained our worship attendance as compared to 2022. I am extremely proud of our attendance growth in the NewSong Service, and also extremely proud of the fact that we have taken on more new members in our Traditional Services than we anticipated! The spirit and joy that we have in worship is so great!

When you think back to the things we have done this year in ministry, preaching, teaching, spiritual growth and fellowship groups, not to mention the various mission projects and partnerships that we have participated in, it might make you stop and say, "How in the world did we do all of that?". I will tell you how. It was by the Grace of God, and making the commitment that this church has to honor God with all we do. I have seen that over and over. Reminds me of the song, "**I Shall Not Be Moved**" (**Like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved**). No matter what impediments we may have faced, or may have to face, like that tree, we have not moved from the mission that was established at the beginning of the year-**Follow Jesus, Build Real Relationships, Grow in Real Discipleship and Experience Real Transformation**. As we have moved through all of our sermon series, all of our programming, all of our missional opportunities, and all of everything else we do, we have not moved from our belief that we are required to Love God and Love Others.

I am so proud to be a part of this church. Exceedingly proud, and extremely grateful. I know we are showing the world that we are focused on what the church of Jesus Christ should be, because that's all that matters!

Pastor Thea

After an incredible year witnessing God's grace moving in this place, I continue to be inspired to dream about what the future might hold, for this community, for the body of Christ and for the witness of believers now and into the future. Together, might we bear the truth about the redemptive power of Jesus? Together, can we share the light of Christ to those so desperately in need? Together, how will we lead the next generation into faithful community, impactful service and surrendered dependence? Answering these questions with tangible acts, taking risks and evaluated rewards are what I am most hopeful for in 2024.

2023 did not disappoint when it comes to increased presence and participation at NewSong Worship. NewSong welcomed 15 new committed partners, including two deciding to declare their commitment on Christmas Eve, solidifying the reason we gather together on such a special day: the power of hope in community. All our Sunday teams have increased in participants too! From band members, to hosts, AV teams and connections, more people are making a commitment to do more than come and receive, but also serve regularly as active participants in this community. We have also seen an increase in youth & student participation, both attending on Sunday morning, stepping up to serve in the band, leading as hosts, and dreaming about future worship experiences. With these teens poised to lead our church in the next twenty years, I am compelled to create space for them now to take an active leadership role. Their relevant insight is invited to help ensure the church is something they still want to be a part of now and as adults too.

As we move into 2024, weekly worship attendance remains a marker of significance. And, with regular worship attendance moving to once every 3-4 weeks for most new church partners, I want to strive to capture the total number of people we are encountering in a month. While it may not change our average weekly numbers, it may give better insight to how many people we are engaging monthly and how large our reach truly is with this service. We will continue to offer interactive aspects of worship, recognizing that less and less content spaces are one-sided. Many people today crave and expect interactive options, like live questions and answers and space for follow up conversations. We will also bring back table conversations later this spring to enhance connection and interactions during worship.

Thank you for your continued commitment and involvement. I welcome feedback, insight and ideas on how we can continue to expand our reach beyond ourselves, to the world not yet here with relevant, interactive and transformational experiences. Let's get coffee or lunch soon to discuss your dreams too!

Pastor John

Jesse Cole, founder of the Savannah Bananas, is fanatical about his fans. Everything he does is for them and about them. As I have been reading his book Fans First, I have seen firsthand that it's not always the first idea that is the best. Sometimes, it's the second or third idea that is the game changer.

With this there have already been meetings and discussions that are making great movement toward all of our Age Level Ministries. Men's Ministry Leadership has already met this year, as well as meetings with the Women's Ministry and our OWLS (Older Wiser Loving Seniors) Ministry. All are looking to be more active in 2024, which will bring new life to all of our communities. These include monthly meet-ups for the Women's Ministry and get-togethers for men every other Month. Our OWLS Ministry is really excited to expand activities from the successful Senior Luncheon that we had in December and dream big for more ways to connect.

In our Students and PearlandKids Ministry, we pivoted a lot last year as we have lived into who we are as a church. We tried new things and learned a lot. As we move into this year, we look forward to focusing on our students and kids and learning more about what it means to put them first in our ministries.

As I have shared, Family Ministry believes that the Discipleship of our students and kids is essential. Because of this, we seek to ensure that every parent has the opportunity to know what we are focusing on each week. Our weekly communication emails include the theme, scripture, and overarching view of what we are covering each week. We have received positive feedback from parents as they appreciate the weekly information and updates regarding children and student ministries. We continue to focus on connecting and reaching people and sharing Christ with them.

We finished 2023 in a place that will springboard us into this year, and we look forward to all that 2024 has in store for our children and students.

Students have multiple opportunities for discipleship and fellowship as we start confirmation on January 21 and are gearing up for the Mid-Winter Retreat at Lakeview Methodist Camp.