



FPC This Week



From the Pastor's Blog *Overcoming*

I have always found the word "overcome" uncomfortable and even a bit intimidating. "Overcome" can mean to prevail over, master, or conquer. It can also mean exhausted, or made helpless, like one who is overcome by grief, anger, or other emotions. Finally, it can mean one who is victorious. So the word "overcoming" brings with it the idea of one who is in the process of doing one of the actions mentioned above.

Our Christian faith is all about overcoming our own selfish desires, the negative influences of individuals, or, within our culture, overcoming disappointment and pain. Well, I think you get my point. Overcoming is an important aspect of our faith and requires an ability to adapt to change.

Change can be perceived as pleasant or painful; it can be viewed as easy or difficult, impersonal or very personal. So overcoming our personal views or perceptions about changes must take place before change can succeed; worship could be viewed as an example of this.

Worship is always expressed in a particular cultural context. It is influenced by local and regional beliefs, personal connections, tradition and history, even the ages of those who worship. Language is a solid example. The early Israelites worshiped in a form of Hebrew, the first Jewish Christians in Aramaic, early Gentile Christians worshiped in Koine Greek. In later years the language of worship for the Christian church would be Latin, and remained so until the Reformation. Each proceeding group would make changes and redefine some of the elements of worship in a way that reflected its own needs. We can see the same process in everything from physical structures, to musical instruments, to the types of music played and sung. If worship does not relate to a particular culture or time, it will become meaningless. This does not mean that culture, or the age of those who worship, should be the driving force in defining the content of worship – in fact the opposite is true. It just means the church must learn to utilize the culture to express the timeless message of the gospel.

When we as Christians run around trying to pit our faith against our culture, we are perceived as condemning by those we are trying to reach for Jesus. When we try to live just within our circle of Christian friends, we ignore the people we say we want to reach for the Kingdom of God. When we offer a watered down version of the gospel, full of fluffy words and promises, with no call of repentance and personal change, we confuse those we are trying to reach. We look as if we have surrendered to the culture we live in and send the message that it is better to be grounded in the "real world" instead of having a real faith.

However, when we understand change always occurs, yet also understand that we are proclaiming Jesus, the one who can transform a culture and those who are affected by it, we find the balance we need to overcome. There's that word again.

Relating Christian worship to our changing culture is like trying to swim with a nuclear submarine. Our real challenge is to express the timeless message of the gospel of Jesus Christ and biblical worship in forms that are meaningful to people who are submerged in the constant flow of cultural change. ...cont'd. on Pg. 2

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

This Sunday, February 23:

Sexton: Mike Franco

Coffee Hour: Don and Barb Estes

Nursery: Deidra Ricci

Young Children's Worship: Hilary Hartlaub

Hospitality: Brian and Darien Petit, Judy Graves, Mike Franco, Tim and Stacie Schultz, Dave Kolator

Last Sunday, February 16:

Sexton: Phil Thow

Coffee Hour: Inner Life

Nursery: Deidra Ricci and Kim Aleicho

Young Children's Worship: Brian Ross

Hospitality: Brain and Darien Petit, Ross Family, Charlotte Ricci, Don Fennessey, John Wicks

**Special thanks to Inner Life for
arranging the luncheon and
Congregational Meeting.**

SAVE THE DATES!



● On February 19, the men's Bible Study begins ***The Battle Plan for Prayer*** by the Kendrick brothers, 6:30pm in the Hometime Room.



● Family Fun and Game Night is February 21 at 5:30pm at FPC.



● Daylight Saving Time begins March 8 (Spring forward an hour!)



● Palm Sunday is April 5

● Easter Sunday is April 12

Pastor's Blog, cont'd...

We are not promoting a specific cultural position or need. We are called to challenge our culture and those who are overwhelmed with the changes it continues to produce. We can only do this with the life transforming power of the "good news of Jesus." Christians and the church are not here just to survive, we are called to thrive, to be in the world and yet not of the world. As Jesus reminds us, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33 ESV)

Welcome to change, to tension, to struggle, and to purpose. Welcome to overcoming. Now press on.

You can also read Pastor Mike's blog in this Saturday's edition of *The Newport News*.

Sermon Connect

Pastor Mike created Sermon Connect in a simple format so that it could be used for discussion between friends, in a small group, or over coffee. It can be a wonderful tool to engage people who have questions about God!

This past Sunday, Pastor Mike preached on 1 John 2:18-28 on ***Last Hour Warnings***. John knew he was in a battle for truth with the false teachers of his day. He also understood that if the false teachers gained the upper hand, the church would lose its spiritual power and go the way of the world.

How are the following issues examples of what we find in today's church culture?

- 1) Churches/people who leave or secede from the church and from the truth of the gospel
- 2) False teachers who preach a false gospel apart from the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus

John, in his letter, encourages believers to hold fast to the truth, remain in Him and not be shamed.

For thought: Many Christians lean on their experiences more than the truth and authority of the Scriptures. Experiences need to align with Scripture. The Gnostics were famous for preaching a false gospel based on depriving the body and a gospel of experience over truth. How do we sometimes lean more on our experience and feelings than the truth and authority of God through His Word?

The Congregational Meeting inspired FPC, reminding us of the great work that God has done in the past year and will continue to do this coming year. FPC experienced the hiring of a new pastor, new staff and the development of more ministries, along with the addition of new members. The fall and Christmas seasons, Christmas in Newport, and Sunday School have all been indications of new growth. Pastor Mike and the session encouraged us to look forward to specific opportunities this year, such as Easter, a time to invite neighbors and friends, and the summer, a time for visitors to Newport! May God continue to bless FPC. We give all the praise to Him for what He is doing!

FAMILY AND KIDS MINISTRIES

Bring your favorite game to share!

FAMILY NIGHT

FAMILY FUN AND GAME NIGHT
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21,
5:30pm at FPC.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

It's a perfect opportunity to get to know people in the church.

Come for a fun evening of pizza, games for the adults, and plenty of play time for the kids! It's a perfect opportunity to get to know people in the church. Bring a salad, dessert or drinks to go with the pizza.

Please contact Barbara Ross to find out what to bring,

barb.ross1015@yahoo.com or 904-742-9626.

Don't forget that the reading challenge ends on February 21! If your kids read 5 books from the church library, they will be awarded a small prize.

If you have any questions or want to share your kids progress, Barbara Ross would love to hear from you: barb.ross1015@yahoo.com or 904-742-9626.

We look forward to hearing about it this month!



The Sunday School class on the Westminster short catechism is off to a fantastic start! Pastor Mike and Rosanne Franco teach this class that prepares our youth to take communion and be members who profess their faith in Jesus Christ. The class meets at 9:15am on the second floor of the CE building.



Join us for Sunday School at 9:15am!

A discussion-based Bible study of 1 John, paralleling Pastor Mike's sermon series, is facilitated by John Wicks.

Where: The Lynch Room, 2nd floor above the Fellowship Hall (look for the sign on the stairs)

A Bible study on the book of Philippians, to be followed by a study of Ephesians, is led by Don Estes.

Where: The Hometime Room, main level off of the Fellowship Hall



Adult Bible Studies

For FPC Men:

Calling all Men Prayer Warriors. On February 19, the men's Bible Study begins a study of the book *The Battle Plan for Prayer* by the Kendrick brothers. The men's Bible Study meets on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 6:30pm in the Hometime Room.

Promise Keepers meet for optional breakfast at Chelsea's, 1015 Aquidneck Ave at 7:00 Saturday mornings, followed by a time of Bible study, discussion and prayer in the Hometime room at 8:00am. Contact Don Fennessey at fenns@hotmail.com

For Women:

Darkness and Light: A Study of 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Mondays 6pm at the Kolator home. Contact Alice Thomas at thomasesar@aol.com for more info.

For All: The Friday night group meets the second and fourth Friday of the month, rotating at members' homes. We are studying Genesis. Contact Tim Schultz @ 919-699-7576.

**SHARE YOUR HEART
IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH:
SIGN UP
FOR COFFEE HOUR!**

Many people like to pair up with a friend to host Coffee Hour! You can sign up in the Fellowship Hall, where there are more detailed instructions on how to serve during this important time to connect with new and familiar faces on Sunday morning. Questions? Contact Tim Schultz at 919-699-7576.

Sermons of Pastor Mike's current series on 1 John are online at <https://fpcnewport.org/listen-online/1-john-walk-in-the-light/>



Do you receive the **Enews** to your email? If you have access to the internet, you can also read it on the FPC website at

<https://fpcnewport.org/e-news/>

The print is clear, and you can enlarge the size to make it more legible. A page turner on the bottom left corner allows you to turn to each **Enews** page as though you are reading a magazine. It's eye-catching, as well as a practical format for everyone.



Social Media

Our Facebook page (facebook.com/fpcnewport) is updated several times a week with current information and spiritual encouragement.



Find us through Instagram at [fpcnewport](https://www.instagram.com/fpcnewport).



Church Office Hours
M-Wed, 9am - 1pm
401-847-1749



Prayer Updates:

- Please pray for Carol Smith, who has had a recent hospital stay and is at home recovering.
- For our young people, as they participate in the communicant class, and for our new Sunday School classes and small group Bible studies, that God's Word would be understood with clarity and applied in truth.
- Praise that Barbara Estes is doing better and able to come to church!
- **For our military and their families, stateside and deployed overseas.**
- For our pastor, elders, deacons, staff, musicians and volunteers.
- **For Dick and Cindy Price** as Dick continues to recover from his 2nd stem cell transplant. For updates, contact Deidra Ricci at pamperdee@cox.net

If you have a prayer request that you would like to be added to the ENews, please send it to irene@fpcnewport.org. Your prayer care and needs are of the highest importance!

We do our very best to include all the news you can use in the **Enews**. Here are the guidelines to share information in the **Enews** and the **Church Bulletin**. We appreciate your help in keeping our family, friends and the community up to date!

- **ENews Submissions:** Should be submitted to irene@fpcnewport.org by the Thursday prior.
- **Church Bulletin Submissions:** Should be submitted to secretary@fpcnewport.org no later than the Tuesday prior to when they will appear in the Sunday bulletin.
- **Please include in all submissions:**
 - Name of event/class/announcement
 - Start date/end date
 - Start time/end time
 - **Location** (room within the church)/Name and street address if outside the church
 - **A direct point of contact** to the person(s) in charge via email and/or phone.
 - Any other relevant details specific to the event/class/announcement

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