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Winter 2011

The Care and Feeding of a Pastor

When I was ten years old, I joined some of my friends in spending one summer morning jumping off the roof of a neighborhood house. I guess this was our attempt at extreme sports—1959 style! On one of my jumps, I hooked my foot in the top rung of the ladder, somersaulted through the air, and landed awkwardly and painfully. A trip to the doctor revealed that I had broken bones in both of my wrists. This was bad enough—it ruined most of summer playtime—but it was an even greater misfortune that for the first couple of weeks after the fall my mother had to feed me. This was a severe blow to my burgeoning adolescent sense of independence. But, looking back, I now think of it as pretty good theological training.

The question put to me for this article is “How do I, as a pastor and spiritual leader, feed my own spirit/faith?” Remembering my childhood experience, I have come to believe that it is not so much that “I feed myself” but that “I am fed.” I, of course, did have the responsibility of making my way to the table! The following are some of the tables from which I have found myself being fed through the course of the past forty years.

(1) There is what might be called the ordinary checklist of Christian practices: corporate worship, prayer, Bible study—personal and corporate, fellowship with God’s people; ministry with God’s people, reading substantive Christian writings and writers, meditating on the meaning of the sacraments, acts of neighbor love, openness to moments of reconciliation, giving, choosing Sabbath, receiving spiritual guidance and direction one on one and in small groups, time with family, and recreation as sheer fun resulting in re-creation.

(2) In recent years, I have attended several preaching workshops with lectures and discussion by and with Fred Craddock. I have also participated in many denominational and presbyterial events that have fed my spirit through the years.

(3) I would like to say a good word for presbytery meetings! My spirit and faith have been renewed more often than not by attending presbyterial meetings (including work on boards, committees, and commissions). I try to remember what I learned from a sermon

by Reverend William Warren: “Presbytery is not really a meeting or meetings as much as it is a web of covenant relationships.” How true this is, or, pardon me, ought to be.

(4) I, like many others, have been blessed by the new technologies. Want to listen to the best theologians in the world? do deeper Bible study? hear about God’s mission in the wider world? It’s all there on the Internet. As with books, you have to do some sifting, but it is all there.

(5) The central thing is regular corporate worship. A close friend of mine, also a pastor, recently said to me, “I never believe more or more strongly than I do at eleven o’clock on Sunday morning.” Amen. Worshipping God, for God’s sake and in community with others, seems to be—as I believe it was for the Apostle Paul—the number one item on a Christian’s job description. And fundamental to Christian worship is making one’s way to the table of the Lord as often as possible.

(6) Listening to the world. Reading the newspapers, books, magazines, watching the news, reading the net so as to remember that it is *this world* with all its brokenness, pain, injustice, and sin, that God loved so much that he gave his only begotten Son. I like the old quote attributed to the theologian Karl Barth: “Read with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other.”

(7) Finally, and this may sound a little strange but maybe not, I think I have been fed most by finally seeking not to be fed. I mean by this intentionally turning away from my own needs, which are endless, in order to focus intently on who God is and what God is doing. My spirit and faith have been fed repeatedly by this intention, or better the results of this intention.

Seven is a good number on which to stop. There is more, but I am deeply grateful to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, its congregations and people, for a lifetime together of being fed at the table of the Lord.

Article by Roy W. Hall, pastor, Scottsboro CPC, Scottsboro, AL.

Pastors and Teachers

Pastors come in various sizes and shapes, genders, and yes, even different understandings of the call. Some pastors are great biblical scholars, theologians, teachers, and creative artists. Others are not so gifted in these areas. Therefore, as we discuss the role of the pastor in relation to those who teach, I would like to do this from the need of one who teaches. What does one who teaches need from the pastor in order to function as a more effective teacher?



Communication and Availability

This role may be the most difficult one for most pastors. Being available to all people all the time is an impossibility. It is helpful if the pastor can give the teacher directions in making the contact. I would prefer a contact made by e-mail; and then, if more communication is needed, we set a time to meet for further discussion. The important thing is to be a person whom the teachers feel will listen, and a person who cares.

Support and Encouragement

A pastor expresses support and encouragement by being involved in the process of installation. The installation of teachers is usually done in a worship service, which gives the pastor an opportunity to affirm the teaching ministry with the entire congregation.

It is good to remind teachers that they are involved in much more than preparing and teaching a lesson each week. The General Assembly of our church adopted an objective of Christian education in 1960:

“...That all persons be aware of God through his self-disclosure, especially his redeeming love in Jesus Christ, and that they respond in faith and love—to the end that they may know who they are and what their human situation means, grow as children of God, rooted in the Christian community, live in the Spirit of God in every relationship, fulfill their common discipleship in the world, and abide in the Christian hope.”



This statement reminds teachers of the importance of their role to the total ministry of the church.

Resource Person

Pastors do not have to have the answer for every thing, but they do need to know how to find the answer. The teacher of an adult class may be leading a discussion about a controversial topic, or he or she may need to know the church's stance about a particular issue. The pastor may offer a commentary reading that is helpful or refer the teacher to other resources—both printed and human. It is

OK to say, “I do not know; let's research it together and come back and discuss it.” The goal of the pastor should be to enable the teacher to find the resources and not to become dependent on the pastor for continual help.

Spiritual Nurturer

Most people who teach do not have opportunity to participate in a Bible study where they can receive nurture. Before the new Christian education year begins, most teachers gather for orientation and training. This setting is an ideal time for the pastor to get to know the teachers and provide some opportunities for spiritual growth and nurture. Encourage a time of discussion regarding the spiritual growth needs of those who teach. Invite teachers to share their own disciplines or experiences. The pastor may offer a devotional booklet and suggest that teachers follow the thought and prayer each day. This may also be accomplished by using Scripture and listening and sharing it together. Follow up with the teachers throughout the year, offering additional methods of nurture.

If the pastor discerns the need, a spiritual direction group may be formed. The purpose of this group is to provide members with consistent ongoing support for their spiritual journeys as it affects and is affected by their teaching ministries.

Perhaps one of the most important roles a pastor can have with those who teach is to acknowledge his or her own gifts and limitations. When the pastor is unable to provide the assistance teachers need, it is important to seek others in the congregation who can fill this role. Your pastor may be able to help you identify those persons.

Article by Fran Vickers, Associate Pastor, Beaver Creek CPC, Knoxville, TN.

Being a Pastor to the ENTIRE Congregation

Pastors and churches are called on to do many things. However, our approach to ministry must be holistic—including all members of the congregation. It is easy to develop relationships with the adults of the congregation, but a pastor needs to make an intentional effort to cultivate relationships with the children and youth of the church as well. He or she also has a responsibility to guide the congregation in the way it ministers to its own members as well as those outside the congregation.

Pastors come face-to-face with every kind of need imaginable. While ministering to the adults, it is easy to overlook the needs of the children, especially during times of crisis. If pastors have cultivated a relationship with the children and youth (as well as the adults), it will be much easier to minister to them during such times.



This truth was brought home to me when I called on a family at the death of the lady's elderly father. As we talked about plans for the church's involvement in the services, a little girl was playing on the floor with her cat. Her mother was attempting to keep her from speaking, but she finally broke into the conversation, speaking directly to me. She said, "Look

Pastor, my cat is crying because my Papaw just died." I got the message and talked to her about her sadness and her love for her Papaw.

I now think of a church we served in the late sixties in Alabama when our church made a significant difference in the lives of children and youth. Racial tension was high, but it did not stop us from reaching out to some troubled children in a near-by all black grade school. I was so proud of a group of dedicated ladies who involved themselves with those students, both in the school and in our church. We tutored students who were in trouble and also established personal relationships with those students. Later on the youth group in that congregation pulled together a cast of about forty youth all below the age of eighteen to present Jesus Christ Superstar to our church and later on in the city's community center.

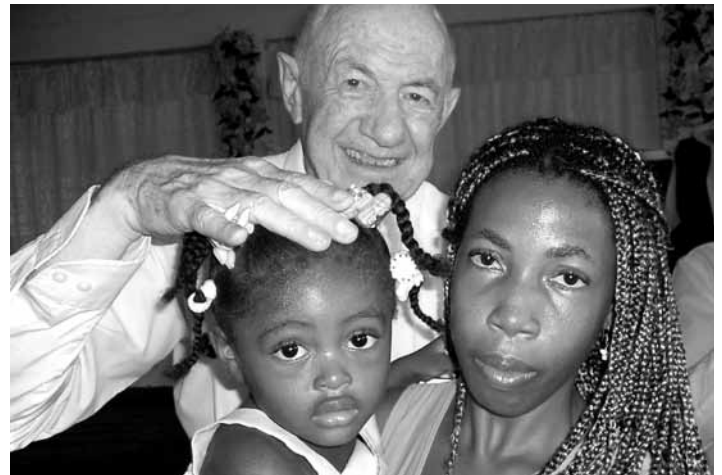
In another congregation in Alabama we provided a light breakfast on Saturday mornings for children and youth. Afterward they went to a near-by donut shop, picked up

dozens of donuts and delivered them to members of the congregation who had ordered them in advance. For their services they accepted gifts for the group's on-going mission work that usually took us to Choctaw Presbytery's Camp Israel Folsom in Oklahoma.

Later on in a congregation in Oklahoma our church was located within walking distance of an elementary school. With several dedicated workers we were able to establish relationships with 30-40 students every Wednesday after school. My richest memory of that experience was when I would wait for the students to "break out" of school and come to the flag pole where I was waiting. When all were assembled, we would start our walk to the church, which became a race for some. However, there was always a small group that walked close to me. I often thought of how Jesus gathered the children around him. When we got to the church, refreshments were first, then devotional time, then tutoring time. It was a great experience.

In most every congregation I have served we have started classes for adult inquirers. I have intentionally included children and teens if they will come, and if they do it is a great opportunity to look at the involvement of the children and youth in the entire life of the church. Never make the mistake of believing they are not capable of dialogue in that kind of setting. In one instance the pictures they drew during the class time were so interesting we collected them and I used them during children's time in worship.

I remember times when neighborhood kids would come into the church, sit down in my office and just talk. I always counted it a privilege and an honor to spend time with them. Spending time with children is probably the one most significant thing a minister and congregation can do. Children have so much to offer and so much to give to the work of Jesus Christ, our Lord.



Article by Norlan Scudder, Consultant to Leadership Referral Services, Missions Ministry Team.

Sabbath-Keeping and Spiritual Renewal

As I write this, another Sabbath has come to a close. Like every Sabbath that I have truly remembered “to keep holy,” this one has been a day of peace and surrender, even though it might not sound that way at first. After all, I am a pastor, and everybody knows we work on Sundays. (Let’s face it, some people say it’s the only day we really work!) “Pastors can’t be ‘off’ then... That’s when the church is at its busiest,” I’ve even heard seasoned pastors say in reference to Sabbath-keeping. But pastor, pew-sitter, or person on the street, having a day off for our own needs and desires is not the intention of Sabbath. Sabbath belongs to God, and God commands that we give it to God, no matter who we are or to what work we’ve been called. And so I try...

In the custom of our Jewish brothers and sisters, I observe Sabbath from sundown to sundown. Since Saturday evening of the Sabbath that just ended, I have:

- enjoyed a quiet dinner with my husband;
- wrapped up Sunday’s sermon;
- gone to bed at a “decent” hour;
- risen early on Sunday morning to allow God to reconstruct most of what I thought I would preach;
- driven a little over 100 miles round trip to church;
- taught junior high boys in Sunday school;
- led the people of God in worship;
- visited with family over a leisurely lunch;
- napped in the afternoon sun;
- joined with members of my church family to make Advent preparations;
- facilitated our adult Bible study;
- and returned home.

Before I kept the Sabbath, I would have most definitely looked at this day full of activities, and said, “I have worked all day. Thank God, tomorrow is my day off.” But in the years since surrendering body, mind, and spirit to God’s

command to “remember” and “keep” this day holy, something wonderful has happened within me that changes the way I see the world and my place in it—at least during this twenty-four hour period.

Like most spiritual experiences, these changes are hard to explain simply with words. At first, I just wanted what so many of us want in our lives: a day off the treadmill, a day with a valid excuse for not having to do all of the myriad activities of a much too busy life. It sounded too good to be true, but there was God’s Word, in (surprise!) a course in modern Judaism, reminding me that not only was it true, it was expected of me.

So I did what I thought

I was supposed to do—I told God I was giving up what I knew was work on Sundays: cleaning, shopping, running errands, doing chores of every kind, etc. And not just for me, but for me “and my house” which made our children so very happy. (Yeah! Mom’s finally stopped yelling for a day!) Seriously though, as the rhythm of our lives changed, Sabbath became the most precious time of each week. And God showed me time and time again that there was always time for the things that really mattered in life.

And the things that matter most in my life? Serving God, loving my family, loving and living among God’s people. None of these is ever work, whether I do it on Sabbath or any other day of the week. But what makes the Sabbath particularly sweet is that in everything I do or don’t do on this “set apart” day, there is only one purpose, and that purpose has nothing to do with me. From start to finish, it all has to do with God, and as a spiritual leader, that’s a truth in which I can’t rest in enough.

May the joy, the rest, the holiness of Sabbath-keeping be yours.



Detecting the Divine

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do." —Luke 10:21 (NIV)

The minister is the resident theologian of the congregation he or she pastors. However, the pastor is not a know-it-all, but someone who is always open to the adventurous Spirit of God. Someone has suggested that Christians are called to be "Detectives of Divinity." I like that term. Pastors have a challenge to detect the Divine in their midst. That's why when Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God, he often turned to children and invited followers to become like them. It seemed that he saw the Divine more clearly revealed in the little ones who often are the weakest and most unlikely ones to help ministers, theologians that they are, see God.

When I have been at my best as a "Detective of Divinity," this is what I have experienced with children that has nudged me a little closer to grasping the meaning of kingdom living.

When Alex was two years old, he visited the meeting of the General Assembly with his grandmother and me. He was standing in the pew next to me as we were worshiping in the beautiful sanctuary of the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, TN. The congregation was quiet; the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper were spoken. The elders went forth to serve the people. The organ piped out a sacred sacramental hymn. Then, in the solemn moment of breaking bread and drinking from the cup, Alex began to sing, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so...." I thought to myself, "Tell him to hush!" And then I was privileged to detect the Divine. I said not a word. He sang the chorus aloud twice. And I worshiped.... That's what Communion is, I thought. We come to the table because we know that Jesus loves us. That's all we need to know!

One morning during worship at the small-member, rural church I pastored, we were singing a hymn. I looked up to catch a glimpse of Kate. She had gotten loose from her father in the back and made it to the center aisle. As we sang, I watched Kate walk slowly and deliberately toward the front of the sanctuary. She never once took her

eyes off the communion table and the lighted candles and cross atop it. It was as if she were mesmerized. I decided to meet her at the table as the congregation continued to sing. She stopped in front of the table; I squatted beside her to see from her special vantage point. It was only then that I detected the Divine. Just for a moment, I discovered what all of my years of theological training never taught me. Somehow it had been hidden, but it was revealed in Kate who helped me to see that worship is simply standing in awe of God. Nothing more, nothing less.

After worship one Sunday morning, I was greeting persons as they exited the sanctuary. Our church had put down a new hardwood-type floor in the narthex. I noticed that one of our older and graceful ladies was leaning down to talk with five-year-old Adam. I thought what a remarkable gesture to bend down to talk to a child. However, she suddenly lost her footing and landed hard on her hind side. It was obvious that the fall was not nearly as painful as the embarrassment. And then a moment of detecting the Divine. Adam, jumped up and plopped down hard on his back side and announced, "See, I can do that too!"

We all laughed away whatever pain had visited the two of them. Kingdom living means entering into others' pain and sharing it with them.

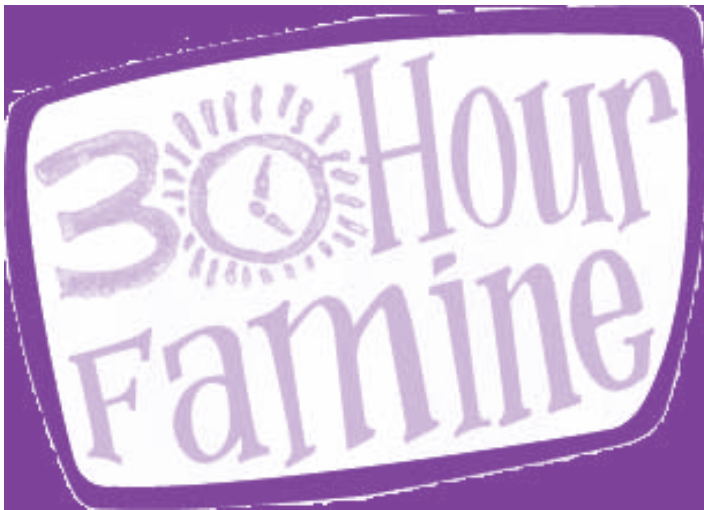
These are only a few of the moments of detecting the Divine in and through children. You have probably had such opportunities yourself. They remind ministers that we are learners who can also feast on God's grace as we live and relate to the little ones in our congregations—the

ones we would least suspect of being agents of God's wisdom to the likes of the learned ones of the "cloth."

As you continue to minister to and with God's people and through God's church, remember that Sherlock Holmes has nothing on you. You are a "Detective of Divinity" who, if you look hard enough and in the most unlikely faces, you will sooner or later be found by God!



Photo: Robert Heflin



they were allowed to drink juice and water. Activities during the event included volunteering at Second Harvest Food Bank, taking a prayer walk, participating in TRIBE games (which are part of World Vision's 30 Hour Famine curriculum), enjoying free time, a candlelight prayer service, and building and sleeping in cardboard boxes.



Photo: Bob Watkins

The night of October 16th started out like any other night: People ate dinner with their families, walked their dogs, watched their favorite television shows, did their homework, brushed their teeth and got into their warm beds. But at Donelson Cumberland Presbyterian Church, seven hungry teens and one adult were braving the unusually chilly evening to experience what it is like to be homeless as part of their 30 Hour Famine.

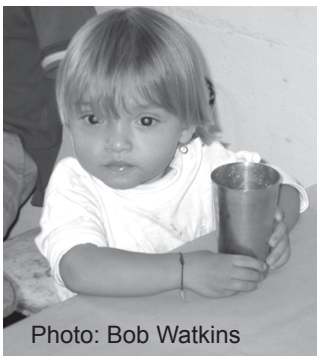


Photo: Bob Watkins

World Vision's 30 Hour Famine is a well-known program that allows teenagers all over the world not only to experience hunger, but to raise money for and awareness of

the problems facing the poorest people in our world.

World Vision uses the funds this activity generates to teach communities how to grow food, raise animals, and get clean water, as well as offering medical assistance and much more. In the months leading up to the famine, the teens were to find sponsors to support them in their fast; the goal was to raise \$495. From 7 a.m. on Saturday until about 1 p.m. Sunday, the youth fasted. However,



When all was said and done, the youth raised just over \$700 for hungry people in their community and



the world, and about 400 pounds of food for Second Harvest Food Bank. When asked about the famine, the teens said it was awesome to experience, even for a day, what is everyday reality for so many people. They can't wait for the next 30 Hour Famine, but as for sleeping outside, they said they could wait awhile before doing that again!

Article by Holly Venum, Youth Pastor, Donelson CPC, Nashville, TN.

World Vision sponsors the *30 Hour Famine*, which is scheduled for **February 25-26 & April 29-30, 2011**, depending on which date best fits into a congregation's schedule (or choose your own date). Young people solicit sponsorship for a 30 hour fast as they gather to study and experience the meaning of hunger and God's call for us to help feed those in need. For additional information call 1-800-7-FAMINE or access www.30hourfamine.org.

Youth Notes

Cumberland Presbyterian Youth Conference 2011: "Live Out Loud!"

The goal of the 2011 CPYC is to challenge youth to live out loud in word, action, love, faith and integrity" from 1 Timothy 4:12. CPYC is an annual event for high school youth and adult leaders from the two Cumberland Presbyterian denominations. This event brings persons together for worship, Bible study, community life, recreation and much more. It will be **July 10-15, 2011**.



The Cumberland Presbyterian Youth Ministry Website

Powered by Youth Ministry Today, the new CPC Youth Ministry Website will bring you up to date information on youth events, youth ministry training opportunities, missions and service links, relevant and timely articles by fellow youth ministers, resources and ideas you can use, and much, much more!

Souper Bowl of Caring

This hunger-relief program is designated for Sunday, **February 6, 2011**, coinciding with the National Football League's Super Bowl Sunday. This program's goal is to serve God through helping others. The program is shared with the hope that congregations will participate. Go to www.souperbowl.org for additional information.



Youth Sunday

February 20, 2011, is designated as Youth Sunday in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Congregations are invited to celebrate young people as an integral part of the church's life and ministry and to experience the leadership and witness of youth on this special day. A mailing containing detailed information and suggestions for celebrating Youth Sunday was mailed to each congregation in October. If for some reason your congregation did not receive a copy, contact Susan Groce, scg@cumberland.org or 901-276-4572, ext. 218.

Young Adult Ministry Update

Having long recognized the need for a stronger connection with young adults, the United Board for Christian Discipleship established the Young Adult Ministry Team (YAMT). This council includes representatives from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

The YAMT will promote, provide, and facilitate opportunities for young adults by creating a community of service and fellowship through service projects, mission opportunities, spiritual growth, fund-raising, and networking in order to foster a sustainable relationship among young adults and the denomination as a whole.

At their initial meeting in November 2010, members set a timeline

of 6-12 months to lay the foundation for this new ministry. They will meet again in June of 2011.

Members include: Philip Anderson (WTN), Rachel Betty (Nashville), Whitney Brown (ETN.), Paige Duggins (Red River), Darius Holden (Decatur), Jeff Ingram (WTN.), Christopher Jerrolds (WTN.), Marisa Knight (Trinity), Noah Quinton (Covenant), Dustin Taylor (Arkansas), Rev. Nathan Wheeler (Nashville), Angela Wilson (Huntsville), Staff: Susan Groce, Coordinator of Ministries with Youth and Young Adults.

If you have suggestions or concerns to share with this group, feel free to contact any of the members, or e-mail Susan Groce (scg@cumberland.org).



Events/Announcements

Cumberland Presbyterian Youth Conference

July 10-15, 2011

Miniversities

March and April 2011 (See enclosed brochure.)

Visit our website

www.cumberland.org/bce
for updates!



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Elder Training

Many congregations elect elders near the end of the year. When a newly ordained elder assumes these responsibilities, it is helpful to provide training. It's also a good idea to help long-time elders refresh their knowledge. As you look for ways to accomplish this training, you might find one or more of the following resources helpful.

Developmet of Church Officers in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, by Chris Joiner. This resource is available in loose-leaf notebook format. It includes sections on the call to ministry, ministry of the elder, ministry of the deacon, photo-copiable resources, and a leader's guide. \$19.95.

Designs for Church Officer Training, by Hester M. and Paul W. Allen, is for use by persons responsible for the pre-ordination and continued training of elders and deacons. It includes chapters on the duties of elders and

deacons, strengthening personal faith, the organizing and work of the session and diaconate, team building, planning, and dealing with conflict. \$12.95.

"Session as Spiritual Leaders" will help elders discover leadership styles and gifts, examine how groups work in addressing concerns, embrace the responsibilities and opportunities given, expand creativity potentials, gain a vision for session meetings that enhance spiritual development, and affirm God's presence and blessings.

"Ministry Yet to Do!" will help sessions to develop a sense of team work, explore a biblical call to vision, be open to the possibilities of God's call, and do practical planning for their congregations for the next three years.

To receive a copy of any of these materials, contact the the Discipleship Ministry Team at 901-276-4572 or e-mail education@cumberland.org.

2011: Year of the Clergy

The Pastoral Development Ministry Team is inviting people to express appreciation for their pastor by submitting a short paragraph about why they love their pastor at ilovemypastor@cumberland.org, or posting a comment on www.pastoral-development.blog.spot.com.

Please share with us why you appreciate your pastor. The Pastoral Development Ministry Team will send a certifi-

cate of appreciation to your pastor including your quote.

When submitting your comments, please:

- Be specific and to the point. Limit your comments to between 50 and 100 words.
- Include your pastor's first and last name, your church, town, and your full name.
- Include a picture of your pastor, if possible.