



Sterling Wood *loves*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | STERLING WOOD CHURCH | FEBRUARY 2018 – VOLUME 17

LIVING A LIFE FILLED WITH LOVE FOR GOD & OTHERS

Sterling Wood Church welcomed Pastor Phil with open arms. You knew his time with us was only temporary, but you didn't hold back. You still loved him and his family completely and well.

Pastor Phil's last Sunday was Jan 21. He encouraged us to "Do Whatever It Takes" for the Lord and His kingdom. He also challenged us to move out of our comfort zone to get in action around our mission and vision. He believed staying laser focused on mission and vision are critical in moving the church forward. During his brief time with SWC, he opened his life and heart to us and our church did the same.

After the service, we hosted a wonderful Farewell Party, where many friends shared laughs and memories, for

him and his family. Thanks to Andrew Potter, Sharon Griffith and all the Transition Team and members who organized and participated in the event.

In the midst of all the transition, the church continues to minister to the community by handing out Caring Cards to Harvey victims during home visits with North Channel Assistance Ministries, working tirelessly on the Youth Building repair, and serving over 100 ladies a fabulous brunch sponsored by LIFT Ladies Ministry. Yes, Sterling Wood, you have **loved** well this month!

Church Events

- Feb 4 –Men's Breakfast
- Feb 7 –AWANA Cards for Nursing Home
- Feb 8 –Mom to Mom
- Feb 11 –Newcomers Cls
- Feb 14 –AWANA Hugs & Kisses night
- Feb 18 –Youth Auction/Baptism
- Feb 24 – Prayer Clock
- Feb 25 –Youth Building Grand Opening/SHAPE class
- Feb 28 –AWANA Western Night

25 FEB 12p

GRAND
RE-OPENING

YOUTH BUILDING

Rare Faith Ladies Brunch

Rare Faith was both challenging and encouraging amidst the lovely tables at the Ladies Brunch.

The Ladies Brunch, 1/27/18 hosted 96 ladies at many tables with themes as varied as the ladies themselves. From beach settings to snowmen, each table reflected the hostess' own style and story. The tables all touted a verse from the Bible with

special significance to the table designer.

The guest speaker, a childhood friend of Mrs. Sherrill Ubernosky, Janet Pender, shared numerous life experiences and Biblical exposition of the life of Caleb and Joshua.

Her confident, yet down to earth style easily connected with the audience. A special thanks goes to Sherrill Ubernosky and her team for organizing this lovely event, but also to the men who served so selflessly.

Proverbs 17:17a
"A friend loves at all times."



Valentine's Day is coming soon. Don't you want to give your spouse a romantic weekend to get away from it all and learn new ways to grow as a couple? You are never too old to learn something new about the one you love.

Well, we have the perfect Valentine's gift for you. Purchase a gift certificate for \$40 to the Marriage Retreat. The gift certificate covers the cost of the

deposit and saves a place for you. Don't waste money on flowers that fade or candy that adds pounds. Invest in your closest relationship. It's sure to pay many dividends in the future. Space is limited so don't delay. The cost of the retreat covers an overnight stay in a nice hotel, morning and evening snacks, breakfast, couple's gift bags, written materials, and more.



New To Our Family

Introducing Dr. Richard Steel. Dr. Steel has offered to preach each Sunday, and, also lead Wednesday night prayer as Interim Pastor until our new Senior Pastor is hired. Dr. Steel comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. His kind, disarming demeanor and many years in ministry are sure to be a welcome addition to our staff and church. Please join us as we welcome him to Sterling Wood Church.



Pastor's Pen

Growth in Transition.

The summer of 2017 was a very difficult time for our Youth Ministry. In the middle of a transitional period for the church, as a whole, Sterling Wood was forced to do away with the full-time student/youth pastor position. Attendance in Sunday School and Wednesday night service had dwindled to single digits on some nights. This, along with the uncertainty of a new leader, left me and the rest of the youth leadership team apprehensive about the future of the ministry. However, we were absolutely certain that God was ready to move in our ministry.

As a team, we agreed to pull together and run the ministry under Melanie's direction. We planned new and fun events and saw more students coming to build community and hear what God has for them. As we followed God's direction for the youth ministry, we began to see our average attendance grow to **triple** the amount that we began with. However, just as we were building momentum and ready to jump into a new school year, Hurricane Harvey came through and devastated our community. Harvey definitely provided opportunities for the church and the Youth Ministry to reach the lost and be "Jesus with skin."

Unfortunately, the physical and emotional impact of the devastation was felt by all and our Youth Building was impacted as well. After the first day of demolition it was abundantly clear, we needed to completely rebuild. All this, while still looking for a part time youth pastor.

I was offered the interim part-time in November of 2017. I was obviously apprehensive about taking on a role with such huge responsibility in a part-time capacity. Nonetheless, after discussion with my wife and other trusted advisors, I accepted and was immediately excited by the opportunity in front of us. We began with a renewed emphasis on community and set out to improve communication with students and parents. We also implemented more exciting



and applicable material for both Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. We were even able to go on a worship retreat where God spoke to students as they humbled themselves in worship. It is amazing how God has blessed our ministry with growth and increased excitement church-wide. This experience proves that He can use anything to further His Kingdom.

As we move forward in a new direction and continue to complete the renovation in the youth room, I can't help but say thank you! Thank you to the Sterling Wood staff and family for the support, of all kinds, as we move forward and rebuild. Thank you to the youth team for their hard work and time spent in self-less service. And of course, thank you to my beautiful wife for her support as I further divide my time between work, ministry, and family.

We currently plan to reopen the youth building and reveal the new direction for the ministry at the end of February. Through everything I am left focusing on Proverbs 24:16.

For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity.

The world is looking for us to fall and use hard times to make us question God and His goodness. If we rely on God we have hope, even when we fail completely. Moving forward, Sterling Wood's youth ministry will be given the constant challenge to rely on God in order to RISE above the world's temptations and expectations. I would like to levy that challenge to the church as well. In our fallen world calamity is always coming for us, we must decide if we will fall with the wicked or rise, dependent on God.

Pastor Andrew