

Port Orchard Church of Christ

• Jesus is Lord • Jesus is Lifted • Jesus is Lived •

Conflict Is an Opportunity for Grace

You know the feeling. The sour taste in your mouth. The heavy feeling in your heart. That unpleasant aura of conflict that everything in you wants to avoid.

It's so much easier to talk about nice things, and comment on the weather and the playoffs, than to embrace the awkward moment and actually address the elephant in the room.

We're quick to believe the lie that if we just avoid the conflict, or at least minimize it, then it will diminish over time and eventually go away. But wisdom speaks a different word. Sure, there are offenses we can forebear and personal frustrations we can get over, but interpersonal conflict doesn't go away with inattention. It festers. It deepens. It curdles.

Conflict Is Inevitable

Relational conflict is not something that should surprise us as Christians. We need not be ashamed that it exists, and that we're involved. We should expect it. The world is complicated and fallen, and we are complicated crea-

tures, and fallen. Conflicts will come. They are unavoidable.

And yes, conflict is inevitable in the church as well. Christians often have conflict with each other — true, genuine, faithful Christians. The question is not whether conflicts will come, but how we will handle them.

In the healthiest churches, the leadership doesn't announce, "There will be no conflicts here; that's not how we do things." Rather, the message will be that when conflicts do arise, we won't run from them. We won't neglect to address them head-on. We can't afford not to.

Occasion for Grace

One reason that avoiding conflict is such a problem is precisely because it worsens with negligence. It doesn't just go away.

But another reason is that it cuts us off from the most

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Welcome Guests

We are so glad that you decided to visit Port Orchard Church of Christ this morning! Since you took this step to join us for worship, we would like to extend to you a warm welcome. Wherever you are this morning, as we lift worship to God, we pray that you are able to leave feeling uplifted, convicted, or encouraged in your faith.

We seek to worship God like the first cen-

ture church did, with a sense of awe and with a fear of the Lord. Some things we do might seem old fashioned or traditional, but we want you to know that at its core, it is for the praise of God's glory.

You are not required to do anything weird or ostentatious. We hope that you feel free to join us in worshipping God to the best of your abilities. If you have any specific needs,

we have a ministry staff that would love to connect with you. Ask the people sitting around you for names of the ministry staff and to point them out!

Once again, we are so happy to have you here worshipping with us and we hope this is a chance to worship God in a deep and meaningful way.

Save the Dates!

Friday 04/19 Kids&Tweens:
5:00pm Potting Flowers for
Ghana

Sunday 04/21 Breakfast
8:30am

Monday 02/22 Ladies Meeting at
10:30am LaDonna Latham's
House

Wednes 04/17 Prayer
6:00pm

Thursday 04/18 Men's Meeting
6:30pm

Port Orchard News and Events

Sunday Preview

Special Service begins at 10:45. We hope to see you here!

Happy Birthday!

April—Jim Snead-06, Elijah Cormier-07, Jacob Hammock-10, Brandon Karn-10, Jarrod Coley-12, Rick Velasco-13, Misty Hammock-15, James Greer-17, Lori Sanders-28.

Last Sunday

Gene Gerard gave the sermon last Sunday. To listen, go to pococ.weebly.com/teachings.html

Sunday Nights

When: Starting April 14th at 6:30pm

Where: POCOC Auditorium

Topic: I Corinthians

Serving April 21, 2019:

Prayer Leader: Easter Service
Scripture Reader: Easter Service
Offering Thoughts: Easter Service
Communion Meditation: Easter Service
Servers: Brandon Zepf/Greg Warner
Ushers: Rick Velasco/Dan Gross
Greeters: Greg & Sandi Warner
Prayer Partners: Easter Service
Sound: Dale Sanders
Slides/Lighting: Isaac Benjamin

Communion Prep&CleanUp: Rick Velasco

Praise Team: Gene Gerard, Paula Hill, Lorri Celletti, Michael Celletti, Kenny Benjamin

Children's 9:30 Teacher: Easter Service

Youth Worship: Laura Fry

Preaching: Easter Service

Mountain States Children's Home

Please take home a can and get it filled by August.

Potting Flowers for Ghana

Kids and tweens are invited to meet at the building at 5:00pm on Friday, April 19th for pizza and to pot flowers for Ghana fund-raising. Please attend if you can!

Easter Plans

When: Sunday, April 21st

8:30am: Breakfast of ham, eggs, and sausage provided through the church and sides provided through potluck. *Contact Bonnie Mitchell for details.*

9:30am: Egg Scramble (We don't really have places to hide eggs outside. Kids will be divided into 3 age categories and unleashed on the grounds to gather eggs from three separate areas.)

10:45am: Special Service

Thank you for all of your donations! We DO have everything we need now!

Our Prayer List

Healing:

Brad Peterson, Baby Maddy Read, Clyde Griffin, Rachel Karn, Those Suffering from Colds and Allergies

Encouragement:

Family of Baby Zane, Barbara Chasteen (ankle), Family of Baby Tommy, Bobette Dehlin's Family, Randy Knox and Family, LaDonna Latham & Family, All Children in the Memory Verse/Bible Reading Program, Tiny Village Team, Our Congregation

Other:

Northwest Mission, For those who fear the possible Tiny Cabin Village, Our families, nation, President Trump and leaders. Our ministries, Deacons & Congregation.



April 14, 2019

Worship: 68

Class: No Data

Offering: \$2,858.00

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significant opportunities for grace. This is the way God does his deepest work in a world like ours. Not when things are peachy keen, not when all seems right with the world, not when times are easy. It's the toughest times, the hardest conversations, the most painful relational tensions, when the light of his grace shines brightest, and transforms us most into his Son's likeness.

The highpoints of the history of God's people are accounts not of fleeing conflict, but moving toward it in hope, believing God will be at work in the tension, pain, and mess. Such is the story of the prophets — Moses with the stubborn people he refused to give up on; Elijah at Carmel squaring off against Baal; the embattled Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel brought into increasing conflict, seemingly at every oracle, with a hard-hearted people they were commissioned to serve.

And so it was with the apostles. When tensions emerged in the fledgling church between Hebrews and Greeks, they dealt with disunity quickly and did not let it fester. God had a gift to give these young believers in Acts 6 — seven newly appointed leaders to serve the people's needs — and it came not through shying away from conflict, but through straightforwardly tackling their troubles. And when conflict arose again along the same fault lines, this time over circumcision, the apostle Paul didn't avoid or neglect it, but traveled to Jerusalem to address it in person ([Acts 15:2](#)).

For Gospel Advance

Then, when Peter's lapse in judgment at Antioch separated him from Gentile believers, "fearing the circumcision party" ([Galatians 2:12](#)), again Paul moved toward the con-

flict, not away. "I opposed him to his face," he said ([Galatians 2:11](#)), and with it, Peter and the gospel witness in Antioch were restored.

The life of Paul, we might say, became a series of one conflict after another — and each one a catalyst for the ongoing progress of grace. He wrote to the Philippians about "the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have" ([Philippians 1:30](#)) — a conflict, which he says, "really served to advance the gospel" ([Philippians 1:12](#)).

And he recounted to the Thessalonians how not cowering from conflict was essential to the gospel coming to them. "Though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict" ([1 Thessalonians 2:2](#)). His thirteen letters are a tribute to the fact that he wasn't afraid to address emerging conflict and see what good God had in store for his people in it.

The Pattern of Christ

And of course, our most compelling emblem of not shying away from conflict, but turning to take it head-on, is the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame ([Hebrews 12:2](#)).

The trajectory of Jesus's life was toward need, and inevitably toward conflict, not away. He set his face like flint to go to Jerusalem, to the great conflict at Calvary, to rescue us from our greatest conflict, eternal separation from God because of the rebellion of our sin against him.

And so being saved by him, we Christians, "little christs," learn increasingly to follow in his steps, em-

powered by his Spirit, to move toward conflict, toward need, toward pain, toward tension, looking past the imposing awkwardness and difficulty that lies before us to the promise of joy on the other side.

The Lord's Servant in Conflict

Which doesn't mean we become bull-headed and pugnacious and develop a penchant for a good fight. Rather, our gospel-thickened skin frees us to lean in — with kindness, patience, and gentleness — to the caldrons of conflict that would otherwise send us running. We take on the heart and posture of "the Lord's servant" who "must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness" ([2 Timothy 2:24–25](#)).

And as we consider that hard and scary conversation that needs to happen — to gently remove the speck from our brother's eye, to address the elephant in the room — we acknowledge our weakness. In ourselves, we are unable to address this conflict with intentionality and kindness. But this we couple with a prayer for his strength. And we move forward in faith, knowing that if tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword cannot separate us from the love of Christ ([Romans 8:35](#)), then neither can conflict. No matter how tense. No matter how intimidating.

For the Christian, conflict is not something to avoid or ignore. It is an opportunity for the triumph of grace.

-David Mathis

Executive Editor, [desiringGod.org](#)

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/conflict-is-an-opportunity-for-grace>