

At our Session meeting in October we asked Elders to take a few minutes to reflect on the question - "How has Newport Church helped you to grow in your faith?" These are their responses.

"I have found the mission statement of Newport being inclusive has taken me toward a non-judgmental posture.

- 1. My faith has grown in participation in deputation, teaching Sunday school, hiking, biking & fellowship with all age groups.*
- 2. Having all the "Loose" Clergy giving many living examples of education, bible study, & ACE classes.*
- 3. Being called to serve as a Deacon, Elder & Stephen Ministry & Pastor nominating Committee.*
- 4. Reflection on prayer and listening."*

"Unexpected and overwhelming gratitude. People reaching out through the help of the Deacons at a couple of challenging times for my family. Help both financially and through prepared meals goes a long way so people can focus on the real challenge they are facing. We've received a monetary gift through the Deacon's fund to help with medical bills, Also meals while we faced medical issues. How has this helped me grow in my faith? God's love is displayed when people show true acts of beauty and kindness. It is very apparent at Newport and one of things I really enjoy about it."

"The Saints who attend NPC show their faith in their everyday lives. Those Saints have always been, and continue to be, models for my faith life."

"When I first started attending, I didn't know the seed was planted. My wife was Christian, and I thought it would be a good idea if some authority other than us encouraged our kids to be decent, caring human beings. I soon discovered that the seed was in fact planted, but never germinated. It was Newport Presbyterian's unique theology that caused me to realize that the "Church" family was big enough even for me. I didn't have to go out & convince the world that their beliefs weren't good enough for them, so they needed to adopt mine. All I needed to do was embrace Christ's message of humility, humanity, pacifism, love, compassion and especially hospitality."

"I am reminded regularly of the needs of others and how God responds in so many ways to help carry us through those needs. I also see many acts of kindness and generosity from a group of people responding from their hearts."

"I have grown with regard to parenting skills by watching other parents with similar belief systems and backgrounds; discussing issues and strategies with them, and through the church's acceptance of children in worship and worship leadership opportunities."

“Newport has seen me through essentially all of my faith journey since I was much younger. It’s the only church I have ever really known, and its theology has been the main force in my faith growth.”

“Newport has always been an important part of my faith journey. It has taught and reminds me of the importance of children in worship and is a source of great friendships and good times.”

“In many ways, but probably the main one is in helping me raise my family in a more faithful way and becoming more comfortable talking about my faith. I may not be as articulate speaking about it as some, but it no longer makes me break out in a sweat either. I’ve learned that while we are all on this faith journey together, we can all be at various points along the path. And that is ok at NPC.”

“Newport has given me a sense of calm; a sense that I have reached the place to exist with God. I feel my conscience and my surroundings are in peace with each other, leaving me free to engage with life and with others with a clear mind and purpose.”

“A community of loving people – accepting and affirming & non-judgmental. Celebrating community. Preaching that affirms the love of God, challenges us to live as followers – non-judgmental. A dynamic community involved in worship, fellowship and mission.”

“Newport has helped me to be more tolerant and appreciate of others in our community/country. I have become more aware of my inner thoughts and have been able to modify them to a more Godly thought pattern. I have been able to read religious articles and portions of the bible each night at bedtime.”

“In many ways – to be more tolerant of others and myself, more appreciative of the congregation, happier in my personal life, and more at peace in the conduct of daily affairs. Thank God for Newport!”

“I appreciate the way Newport challenges me on issues that are difficult and at the same time helps to draw us close to God & one another, even in the midst of differing theological points of view. I also grow when people share their own stories of faith in worship and at meetings.”

“Providing a community that allows for/encourages inclusive theology and engagement in healthy dialogue, helps to make my faith real for today.”

“Growth in faith needs annual, monthly, weekly, daily and more often practices. Newport provides all of these for me.”

“Newport Church has helped me to grow in my faith through participating in Adult Education Classes. I like the Faith Stories and God Stories classes because they have allowed me to read the stories and then hear other interpretations and insights and to reflect these on my connection with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. This gives me a chance to take these inspirations and thoughts and to see things in different ways.”