

June 4, 2023

# The View

*"Sirs, we wish to see Jesus." – John 12:21*

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## Welcome Visitors

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly "headquarters." The five elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask the preacher or one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate when is passed.  
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

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Remember to send in your photos for the picture board to [FolsomCOCphotos@gmail.com](mailto:FolsomCOCphotos@gmail.com) OR if you prefer, Adam, Betsy & Lisa are available to take your picture after the morning services on the next few Sundays.

## Schedule

### The Lord's Day

#### 9:30 AM Bible Classes

*Auditorium: "Love Your Bible" (Part II).*

*Young Adult Class (room 12): "A Study of Ruth, and 1 John: Trust & Love"*

#### 10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

David Posey

*Maintaining a Pure Conscience*

*Livestream at 9:30 & 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>*

#### Bible Class: 5:00 PM @ the Building

*"Praying the Psalms" (Auditorium)*

*High School Class @ 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey's home*

*Middle school class: monthly (contact David Sanderson ([david.r.sanderson@intel.com](mailto:david.r.sanderson@intel.com))*

*or Seth Reagan ([sethreagan@gmail.com](mailto:sethreagan@gmail.com))*

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

### Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

*Auditorium: Love Your Bible, Part II*

*Room 12: Young Adults Class: "A Study of Ruth, and 1 John: Trust & Love"*

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Articles published in the View reflect only the thoughts and opinions of the author alone, not necessarily the editor, the elders or any member of the church at Folsom.

# What's Our "Vibe"?

Every church has a "culture." I'm using the word "culture" in its broadest sense, meaning the collective beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors, traditions, and practices that characterize a particular group or community. These beliefs, values and attitudes shape the way people in the group think, interact, and conduct themselves. Every church has a culture and the Folsom church is no different. Every "sound" church (see II Timothy 1:13; 4:3, etc.) emphasizes the application of Bible authority in how they conduct their assemblies, the content of their classes and sermons and how they use the money they collect. But not all churches have the same "atmosphere." The most frequent comment you'll hear from people who visit a church somewhere will have something to do with its "vibe" (the atmosphere or "mood"). A poor atmosphere is usually attributed to a failure of friendliness.

A few years ago, a family of seven moved into an area in New England and attended a church in another part of the county. Like most New England churches, this church was small — a mere 15 members. The family attempted to place membership but they got the brushoff. They asked the preacher four times and each time the preacher said, "Brother Phillips (not his real name) handles that; he'll give you a call." He never called. This family would have added about 50% to this church's membership and also would have added four children to their number (the church had none attending at the time). Most churches welcome families with children. But when this family assembled for worship with the church, more than one of the 15 or so people there turned and looked at them with a "keep-your-children-quiet" scowl.

The preacher in this small church preached on matters that he felt were important, as most of us do. But what he thought was important were topics like "why women should not work outside the home"; "why it is wrong for Christians to have a Christmas tree"; "why Christian men should not serve in the military." He even preached a couple of lessons on the qualifications of elders even though there was not one man in the church who was remotely qualified to be an elder.

While we all have our opinions and may feel strongly about them, it seems odd that a preacher would spend time preaching dogmatic sermons on these matters in a small church struggling to survive. Wouldn't topics that touch on how to grow or reach the world with the gospel have made more sense?

Before giving up, the family made another attempt to attend an assembly. But when they arrived at the building at the "appointed time" on Sunday morning no one was there. The door was locked. Apparently, some people were out of town so they decided to meet at one of the members' homes; but they put no sign on the door to direct possible visitors to the meeting place. The only explanation is that they are not conscious of possible visitors. That family ended up placing membership at a church 1 ½ hours away.

These are things that happen in churches that have a "small church mentality." I didn't say they happen in all small churches, but in a church of any size that has a *small church mind-set*. They ignore visitors, provide few resources for finding the meeting place, such as a website or other means of advertising, and/or consistently preach sermons that are *unnecessarily* offensive. Yes, sermons must clearly address the sin of certain actions and lifestyle choices, such as homosexuality or drunkenness (etc.) and call out denomi-

nationalism and division. However, some churches present these topics with a spirit that can only be described as "hateful" or, at least, argumentative. Paul tells us to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) and that we are to "restore" the sinner, but with a "spirit of gentleness" (Galatians 6:1). The culture of a church is important. We are supposed to be a "city on a hill"

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(Matthew 5:14) not an enclave in a cave. We should aim to be a "magnetic fellowship" without comprising even one iota of the truth. How do we do that?

First, as stated above, we stick to the truth, regardless of whether it is pleasing to some or not. Preachers and teachers are not called to be palatable, but to be clear. But if someone rejects what we are teaching, we need to make sure that it is the truth that they are rejecting not our *opinion* about the truth.

Second, we need to take the spirit of Romans 16 seriously. Romans 16 is all about greeting others, summarized in v. 16, "Greet one another with a holy kiss, the churches of Christ greet you." A person who attends with us, whether a visitor or one of our members, should never be standing by him/herself. Each of us should take it upon ourselves to reach out to that person.

(continued on page 3)

## “Vibe” (continued from page 2)

Third, our “culture” must be cultivated. It seems most people who come to the Folsom church find us to be friendly and supportive and sound. We hope they appreciate our steadfast commitment to the truth and our aim that every member here seeks to be conformed to Jesus. But we can’t take that for granted. Establishing a “magnetic fellowship” that draws others, first to Christ and then to the church, is hard work.

It’s hard to believe, but it seems true: some churches do not want to grow. The church I talked about in the opening paragraphs is an example. When I was working with a smaller church I got on the “bandwagon” and began talking up the importance of evangelism. After a sermon along this line, one long-time member said, as she was walking out, “we’re doing OK as we are.” I just looked at her in disbelief; I had no words. Like people who grow up in a small town and get upset when the first traffic light is installed, people in these churches want to keep the church small.

But why?

I’m sure most people in these churches don’t even realize that their attitude is sabotaging growth. Perhaps they are worried that new people bring new problems (sometimes they do) or they are concerned that false doctrine may creep in (sometimes it does). So, the best way to prevent it, the thinking goes, is to circle the wagons and view every visitor as a threat. I assume we would all agree that such an attitude is far from the mind of Christ.

There’s another small-minded attitude that I’ve come across now and then. Someone once said that they were concerned about a certain family placing membership because “they are \_\_\_\_\_ [liberal, institutional, one-cup, etc].” My thinking on that is very simple: tell them to come on in and we’ll teach them the truth. We can’t do that if they stay where they are. Jesus said “*Those who are not sick do not need a physician*” (Matthew 9:12). There are some exceptions (see Romans 16:17) but, generally, we should welcome those who are not perfectly “straight” on every issue. Bring them in and we’ll teach them — and we may learn a thing or two in the process.

The size of the church should not determine its culture. I’ve been in small churches that had a great “vibe” and I’ve been in large churches where the people are not very friendly and come in at the last minute and leave as soon as possible after every service. A strong church is one that is constantly aware of the needs of visitors and does everything it can to welcome them and make them feel comfortable without, of course, sugarcoating the truth. A strong church loves kids and caters to their spiritual needs. A strong church exhibits strong leadership, even in the absence of elders.

As a larger church, let’s make sure we never fall into the trap of cultivating a “small-church mentality.” It can happen very easily when we become comfortable with the status quo.

DAVID POSEY



### Classes Next Quarter: Begins July 2nd

There will be **two adult classes and one young adult class** next quarter:

**(1) Auditorium: “Jesus at work in the Gospels.** How did Jesus spend His time? How did He interact with people when He was not performing miracles? What lessons can we draw from His examples?”

**(2) Room 15/16 – Relationships I: “Building a Great Marriage.”** If interested, you must **sign-up for this class**. The class is open to anyone who is interested in improving their marriage. **However, there is**

**limited classroom space** so we will give priority to those who have been married fewer years over those married longer.

**If you are interested in attending, text or email David Posey at (530) 558-5057 or [dpaulposey@mac.com](mailto:dpaulposey@mac.com).**

**Young adult class:** “Jesus: making the best use of the time” Ephesians 5:15-17.

Also, remember that the **Junior High, High School, Young Adult, and the two adult classes will only meet on Sundays during the summer quarter. On Wednesdays everyone from 6th grade up will be in the auditorium for a special summer program focused on singing (more to come on that.**

If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask one of the elders.