

A Message From Our Shepherds

**Presented By: Terry Dalrymple
Shepherd - Ann Arbor Church of Christ**

We want to thank you for being here and it is our prayer that you will be blessed by being with us this morning. The Shepherds would like to share with you the future direction we see in some key areas for our church family.

Before we get into this, however, we think it is important to share just a little background. God is blessing this congregation in so many ways and one of the main blessings is that we have a diverse church family. We have a diversity of age, race and backgrounds. Also, many new families and people have joined with those of us who have attended the Ann Arbor Church of Christ for many years to create a pool of spiritual gifts and talents that we know God can use to do great things for His Kingdom and to very effectively share the love and truth of Jesus Christ. But for us to grow to our full potential, both spiritually and numerically, it will take all of us, long time members and new ones. God wants to use all of you and your gifts to bring glory to His name. All of you are important.

But all of this is built on a foundation. Of course, Jesus Christ is the cornerstone and for the blessings we have we must first give thanks and glory to God the Father. But, we also must thank those who came before and gave us the heritage and tradition of the churches of Christ. Our fellowship has a great heritage that came mainly from a very simple but so profound principle of going to the Bible, God's word, and trying to follow it and the principles laid out in it. The Shepherds are, and we hope you are also, grateful for that heritage and we continue to have a deep respect for it.

Having said that, the Shepherds also feels that our understanding of certain aspects of scripture can change and we can still follow the Bible and stay true to God's eternal principles. We also feel we can add to some of our fellowship's traditions to more effectively serve God without invalidating those traditions or our

respect for them and continue to follow their most important aspects.

So with that background, and after much prayer and discussion, the Shepherds would like to inform you that in the future we will be adding some instrumental music to our worship services along with acapella singing and we will be further expanding the areas in which women can serve.

We are making this announcement today simply because we want to communicate clearly what we are planning in the future. As of today, there is no set timeline for when we will introduce these things or exactly how they will be done. As those details are developed, we will be having future announcements. Right now the worship committee and many talented members are using our Saturday night worship experiences to try things out and to practice so that

when they are introduced to our worship services they are done well. All of us want to honor God with our best. We would encourage all of you who can to attend these spiritually uplifting events.

Finally, we would like to communicate why we will be introducing these changes going forward.

There are two reasons:

Number one, we want to reach as many people as possible with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Based on feedback we have gathered, and other studies, one of the key ways to bring more people in is to enhance the musical portion of our worship services.

Number two, we want to create an atmosphere and the opportunities where all of our members can use their talents and gifts to worship God and follow His word.

That is what, with God's help, we are trying to achieve.

For those of you who may have questions about what we are announcing today, we want to offer you a couple of things and we encourage you take advantage of them. First, we have at the Information Desk a couple audio CDs. One is a sermon Jon Keith, one of the Shepherds, gave some time back on women's roles in the church and one is a sermon by Rick Atchley, a church of Christ minister, on musical instruments in worship. These two sermons, lay out the scriptural basis for the additions we are announcing today. Of course, if you want to meet and discuss this with the Shepherds please just let one of us know.

Thank you and please continue to pray for our church family.

