

**SUNDAY**

Nov. 15, 2015

# SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE

A weekly supplement to the *South Georgia Advocate*

## A metric worth measuring

### GROWING IN GRACE

REV. BEN GOSDEN

Church metrics continue to be a moving target of evaluating the health and effectiveness of our churches. I'm reminded of that fact as our conference journals recently hit mailboxes and we were bombarded by statistic upon statistic from the local churches across our conference. These numbers (we believe) offer a snapshot of how healthy (or not) our churches are. We look at things like number of new members, professions of faith, baptisms, active small groups, pastor salaries, money contributed toward apportionments, etc., etc., etc. All of these numbers and measurements are good. They each serve an important purpose (well, maybe not all of the stats, but follow me here).

Lately, however, I've been wondering if we're missing or not fully capturing an important statistic that could tell a lot about the health and faithfulness of a congregation – and the health (or lack thereof) of the disciples we're forming in our churches.

Here, I don't mean how large the membership is.

I don't mean how much money a church generates.

And I don't mean the value of our buildings.

I don't even mean how much a church pays in apportionments.

**You see, all of those numbers, while important, tell an inward-focused story of a congregation's life – how it perpetuates itself and the denomination. And we're called to be disciples and churches that focus on more than just ourselves.**

I wonder if (and how) we could begin to measure an important metric I'm calling Community Footprint. Community Footprint seeks to tell the story of how a local church is engaged with the community outside of the walls of the church building. Instead of just measuring how effective a church is at getting people inside its doors, how can we consider measuring how effective a church is at getting people engaged in ministry outside of its doors?

For example: How many people are engaged in mission outside of the church walls? *Continue reading online at [www.sgaumc.org/advocate](http://www.sgaumc.org/advocate)*

**LAST CHANCE—REGISTER TODAY FOR ENCOUNTER YOUTH RETREAT!** Set for Nov. 20-22, 2015, Encounter is a weekend retreat designed for 6th - 12th grade students where everyone will ENCOUNTER God, but each in a very unique way. This retreat will offer passionate worship, relevant Bible study and a fun time together at Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island. This year at Encounter, we will dig deeper and look closely in moving from "selfies" to "(UN)selfies." We will study God's call to love our neighbors (as much) as we love ourselves. Visit [www.sgaumc.org/encounter](http://www.sgaumc.org/encounter) today for more information and to register.

**Advent Resources:** Visit [www.sgaumc.org/adventresources](http://www.sgaumc.org/adventresources) to explore various Advent resources for your local church for the 2015 season.

**Free webinar—Local Church Treasurer 101:** Are you a new local church treasurer or financial secretary? Do you wonder about the various forms you get from the conference office? Do CRSP-DB, CRSP-DC, and UMPIP confuse you? Are you unsure if you need to do a W-2 or 1099 for your church pianist? What sort of report should you give to the church board or finance committee? Would you like to know how your statistics impact your apportionments? Get answers to all of these questions and more at the Local Church Treasurer Webinar. Dr. Derek W. McAleer, Director of Administrative Services and Conference Treasurer for the South Georgia Annual Conference, will present this webinar. He will be offering the same webinar at two different times on November 17: 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Visit [www.sgaumc.org/webinars](http://www.sgaumc.org/webinars) for more information and to register.

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**Share your story ideas, news, photos, & event information with the Conference Communications team. Email them to [kara@sgaumc.com](mailto:kara@sgaumc.com).**

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