

A Dozen Donuts!

Romans 12: 9-21

July 7, 2019

It was 12 years ago that we came together to begin a journey of faith that God was wanting to take us on together. 12 years! That is the longest I have been at a church in my 38 years of ministry. The longest before here was 10 years.

12 years! A dozen years!
I decided to celebrate by getting a dozen donuts!

Is there really anyone who doesn't like a donut?
There is such a variety of donuts these days that certainly there has to be one for everyone to like! At least you would be willing to eat the icing or topping.

Do you have any favorites?
How about a warm Krispy Kreme original glaze donut...the red "Hot Now" sign is lit up and how hard it is to drive by without stopping in for a fresh hot donut that almost melts in your mouth.

They are among my top 3 favorites along with an apple fritter and any donut with coconut on it!

It is always fun to walk into a Dunkin Donuts and see how they decorate their donuts along the theme of certain holidays.

I will admit I am spoiled. Not many of you know that every Sunday I have a chocolate coconut donut and coffee delivered to me on the backporch from Java Junction!

12 years of being together in ministry! What a diversity and variety of experiences we have ventured through. I wonder, how many of you have been here for these 12 years?
Let's celebrate!

In this dozen donuts I brought with me there is a variety!

As we celebrate the dozen years of ministry together I want to highlight 12 aspects of our ministry together here at Community. I will pull out a donut and share my personal thoughts and then ask you to share your brief reflections of that donut ministry. I want to ask that we allow others to share and not try to eat the whole dozen by yourself!

I have selected these dozen donuts from our bible reading. They are certainly not an exhaustive dozen but its a good place to start.

LOVE FROM THE CENTER! (vs. 9)

This is the basic, classic, glazed donut. The love I have experienced over the past dozen years from this community of faith has not been a facade or a mere religion love. It is a love that comes from the heart...a real relationship of love with Jesus. You are like a filled donut! The love of Jesus has been inserted and filled your heart. People are able to see Jesus in you!

GOOD FRIENDS WHO LOVE DEEPLY! (vs.10)

There is a deep love. This love is not a mere acquaintance kind of love. I tell anyone interested in our community of faith that we are a dysfunctional family or group of people who function really well because of our deep love for Jesus and for one another. I warn them that if they are a squeaky clean perfect person that they might have a struggle fitting in with us. Dysfunctional good friends who function so well because of the deep family love we have for one another.

STEADY/DAILY LOVE! (vs. 11)

We are not a one day a week holy club. We seek to daily live out the love of Jesus. No body likes a two day old donut. We like them fresh! I celebrate the truth that the love of Jesus is a daily expression here. The "HOT NOW" sign is on daily here. The love is steady and not sporadic.

The love we demonstrate is not reserved for some decorated holiday. We are fueled with a faith that shines as bright into the night as our church steeple.

JOYFUL HOPE! (vs. 12)

Over the dozen years we have been connected together in ministry, so many people have come to the corner of Harvey and Grandview looking for some kind of hope to hold on to. Others have shared with them to come here to find hope when they are ready to give up all hope. They are cheerfully and respectfully greeted by joyful servants. Hope is offered to the hopeless. Many come, get hope and head out on their journey of life having been restored with the hope of Jesus.

DON'T QUIT IN HARD TIMES! (vs. 12)

Are you kidding me! Hard times here? We never know who or what situation will walk on our campus, into our lives. We have witnessed patience and perseverance when it seemed like we might not be able to keep going financially. We trusted God to see us through the struggles. We realize that our ministry is tough. Yet we keep going and smiling God's love the best we can each day. Where there was fear we found courage in our faith. When we felt like giving up we found encouragement from someone. When we faced uncertainty we rallied with the boldness of the Holy Spirit. When risks had to be taken, when we had to get out of our comfort zone, we witnessed the reality of lives restored!

FAITHFUL IN PRAYER! (vs. 12)

We have no idea how many folks are praying for us. I do know that the power of prayer has sustained us. Every Monday a small group gather in my office to pray over the concerns of many as well as our own community and ministries. We challenged ourselves to pray for 2 minutes at 2p.m. each Tuesday. Are you being faithful? We have witnessed the power of prayer in lives being healed and rebuilt. We have seen financial funding come our way to keep ministries going. Faithful prayer warriors!

HELP THE NEEDY WITH INVENTIVE HOSPITALITY! (v.13)

There is a difference between hospitality and social entertaining. Entertaining focuses on the host. We focus on Jesus. When you entertain guests you want the place to look squeaky clean and the food well catered. We have stains of ministry on our carpet. We enjoy home cooked meals of the simple kind. Holy hospitality often happens in the messy areas of life with some of God's messy servants.

As long as the donuts are in the box they look nice and neat. But once they are taken out of the box the mess of crumbs and icing starts.

How do most young kids like to eat a chocolate frosted donut with sprinkles? I know my 3 year old grandson demonstrated it for me the last time I was visiting. He took the donut and proceeded to take bites from the top. Once he completed the circle he offered the rest of the donut to me. No thanks BUDDY!

We are inventive in our meeting the needs of others. We don't eat the icing and hand them the half eaten donut. We offer our best efforts. We have outreach ministries that are known all over the county. We have great donuts!!! Food pantry, clothes closet, haircuts, manicures, project access, Back porch bible study/ dinner. Bike week parking is the best! We meet the needs with our best efforts.

LAUGHTER AND TEARS! (vs. 15)

Laughter fills the halls, the kitchen, unloading the food truck, ministries and sanctuary! We know that a good laugh is good for the soul! We get excited for one another when they share a celebration in their lives. People find Jesus. Lives are reaffirmed in their love for Him in baptism.

We have also shed many tears together over the 12 years. Family and loved ones who have passed on. We also find this is a transitional community. Folks wander in and get connected and the next thing we know their restored life takes them on the road again or better yet, back home to a family they had been separated from for a while.

MAKE FRIENDS WITH NOBODIES! (vs. 16)

"Come as you are, no matter who you are!" Any church can say they welcome all. I would challenge the squeaky box of donut churches to let some of our donuts in their box! We go out of our way to be friends with folks who feel they have no friends. Many have shared how this box of donuts has made them feel at home with a family.

"Come as you are, no matter who you are!"

FORGIVING! (vs. 17)

Confusion is our key word for a situation that needs a talking through. We share with all our volunteers and folks who seek to connect with us that if they feel angry about what someone has said or done to them not to retaliate but to share with me about the "confusion" they are experiencing. We will sit down with the confused donuts and talk it out. I have marveled at the power of forgiveness. I have appreciated the people who have forgiven me in my moments of stupidity.

DISCOVER BEAUTY IN EVERYONE! (vs. 17)

During the recent college baseball World Series the commentators were talking about Erik Bakich. He is the head coach for the University of Michigan. He purposely recruits players to faithfully reflect the people of the U.S. He goes to inner cities and seeks to recruit some of his players. He sees the beauty of skill in the unexpected and the ones others often overlook. His team does reflect the diversity of not only skin color, but also economic backgrounds, families and education.

When you look into Community's box of donuts we truly reflect our community. We have such a variety of people from all over the geographical, economical, relational and spiritual aspects of life. It is good! We celebrate each other and we learn from each other. Because of that we become a better donut!

LIVE GENEROUSLY! (vs. 20)

Hardly a day goes by that you don't see someone on our campus wearing a "Live generously" t-shirt. I am so excited to see how we don't just have discussion groups about injustice and coming against the evils of society. We clothe, feed, visit, give hope, release captives and restore lives for Jesus. We are not a talk about it...we live it! We are willing to be the change we desire to see in our community and in the lives of those who come into our box of donuts!

BAKER'S DOZEN!

The 13th donut.

The 13th year we begin together in ministry.

What does God have for us?

Will we continue to be the **donut disciples** HE has called and equipped us to be?

I am excited about this 13th donut!

Who knows what flavor it will be!

What I do know is if we continue to see Jesus in others and they are able to see Jesus in us we will be the box of donuts God desires...that God personally deliver.

I celebrate with you our dozen of donuts!

