



First, Mocksville, completed a building project in 2015. We are still figuring out how to pay for it all, but the checks are coming in and things are going well. The very first check toward a pledge for our new building came from an unexpected source.

For a while now, and certainly for several years prior to my coming here, First, Mocksville, has made a group of people part of who they are as a church. Davie County has three different group homes and many of the residents of those homes call First, Mocksville, their church home.

What is most amazing is that our church really doesn't "do" anything to accommodate that group. Actually, beyond giving them space to meet and providing a teacher for their Sunday School class, we don't treat them any differently at all. When we have meals, they are invited. They worship with us. They attend special services and are part of our directory.

Many of our folks know them by name, and they know our folks by name too. Even the workers who bring them to church have been welcomed, but not in some way that called for fanfare. They too have been treated just like the rest of us.

While our church doesn't do much to treat them differently, I think treating them the same as everyone else is amazing.

The fact that this amazes me, even in a good way, is far more a statement about me than either these wonderfully amazing people or the church I serve that welcomes them. Why would I think any differently? Jesus was crystal clear about how we are supposed to treat our neighbors. It doesn't matter what kind of home those neighbors live in, even, and perhaps especially if that is a *group* home.

My experience tells me, unfortunately, that when people are different from the normal — even a little — not many of society's institutions know how to handle that. The church, sadly, has never been much different. That makes me even prouder of the fine folks at First, Mocksville.

Let me be clear in saying that we don't deserve an award and we need not break our own arms patting ourselves on the back here. We are merely doing what Jesus commanded us to do. Treating people like people regardless of how they look, what they are mentally capable of, or if they can get around by themselves

is not something a church deserves a trophy for.

Being Christ-like is its own reward.

I mentioned that the first gift to the building fund came from an unusual source. The day we started the campaign, one of the group home workers stopped by the office. She was bringing a check from one of her residents who is a faithful part of our family of faith. To protect his privacy we'll call him Rick. Rick had heard me talking about the kick-off of the giving campaign at church the day before and wanted to "do his part." I can't tell you how much was in his envelope — I didn't look and I don't know. But I can tell you that him giving anything was a sacrifice at a level that, if we all followed his lead, would have our building paid for.

For a couple hours, I thought about how I might thank Rick. Then it occurred to me. Just do what you'd do to anyone who gives. Treat him like everyone else ... a child of God, loved by God.

There is something special about that.

not special needs

by Shane Nixon, Senior Pastor, First, Mocksville