

THE NEWSLETTER

A Ministry of Cornerstone Fellowship of Coatesville Pennsylvania

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LEARN THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT AND JOY IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING

(An inspirational message by Billy Graham)

- LOOK BEYOND THE PRESENT
- FIND BLESSING IN THE BURDEN
- BE COUNTED WORTHY TO SUFFER

Many people today are suffering as a result of natural catastrophes such as tidal waves, hurricanes, earthquakes, famines, etc., and personal and economic tragedies as well.

Nowhere does the Bible teach that Christians are to be exempt from the tribulations and natural disasters that come upon the world. It does teach that the Christian can face tribulation, crisis, calamity, and personal suffering with a supernatural power that is not available to the person outside of Christ.

Thousands of Christians have learned the secret of contentment and joy in trial. Some of the happiest Christians have drunk the full cup of trial and misfortune. Some have been lifelong sufferers. They have had every reason to sigh and complain, being denied so many privileges and pleasures that they see others enjoy, yet they have found greater cause for gratitude and joy than many who are prosperous, vigorous, and strong.

They have learned to give thanks *"always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Ephesians 5:20).

Christians can rejoice in tribulation because they have eternity's values in view. When the pressures are on, they look beyond their present predicament to the glories of Heaven. The thought of the future life with its prerogatives and joys helps to make the trials of the present seem light and transient.

The early Christians were able to experience joy in their hearts in the midst of trials, troubles, and depression. They counted suffering for Christ not as a burden or misfortune but as a great honor, as evidence that Christ counted them worthy to witness for Him through suffering. They never forgot what Christ Himself had gone through for their salvation, and to suffer for His Name's sake was regarded as a gift rather than a cross.

Jesus Christ spoke frankly to His disciples concerning the future. He hid nothing from them. No one could ever accuse Him of deception. No one could accuse Him of securing allegiance by making false promises.

In unmistakable language, He told them that discipleship meant a life of self-denial and the bearing of a cross. He asked them to count the cost carefully, lest they should turn back when they met with suffering and privation.

Jesus told His followers that the world would hate them. They would be *"like sheep among wolves"* (Matthew 10:16). They would be arrested, scourged, and brought before governors and kings. Even their loved ones would persecute them. As the world hated and persecuted Him, so it would treat His servants. He warned further, *"They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God"* (John 16:2).

Many of Christ's followers were disappointed in Him, for in spite of His warnings they expected Him to subdue their enemies and to set up a world political kingdom. When they came face to face with reality, they *"went back and walked with Him no more"* (John 6:66). But the true disciples of Jesus all suffered for their faith.

Tacitus, a Roman historian, writing of the early Christian martyrs, said, "Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle." How true were the words of Paul to the early Christians. *"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God"* (Acts 14:22).

We are told that the martyrs went rejoicing to their deaths, as if they were going to a marriage feast. They bathed their hands in the blaze kindled for them, and shouted with gladness. One early historian, witnessing their heroism, wrote, "When the day of victory dawned, the Christians marched in procession from the prison to the arena as if they were marching to heaven, with joyous countenances agitated by gladness rather than fear."

We are not surprised that the early Christians rejoiced in suffering, since they looked at it in the light of eternity. The nearer death, the nearer a life of eternal fellowship with Christ. When Ignatius was about to die for his faith in 110 A.D., he cried out, "Nearer the sword, then nearer to God. In company with wild beasts, in company with God."

The Christians of the early church believed that *"the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"* (Romans 8:18). Thus they could regard present difficulties as of little consequence and could endure them with patience and cheerfulness.

In all ages Christians have found it possible to maintain the spirit of joy in the hour of trial. In circumstances that would have felled most men, they have so completely risen above them that they actually have used the circumstances to serve and glorify Christ. Paul wrote from prison at Rome, *"I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel"* (Philippians 1:12).

In our day millions of Christians are suffering in many parts of the world. More people died for Christ in the last century than in any other century in the history of the church.

There is no doubt that the Bible teaches that every believer who is faithful to Christ must be prepared to suffer at the hands of those who are enemies of the Gospel. *"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,"* said Paul (2 Timothy 3:12).

However, Christ told His disciples that they were not to count it a stroke of affliction when they were reviled and persecuted. Rather, they were to count it as a favor and a blessing. They were to *"rejoice and be glad"* (Matthew 5:12). Just as Jesus had overcome the world, so they through His grace and strength would overcome the world. Thus they were to be of good cheer.

They were to be *"more than conquerors"* (Romans 8:37). They were to rejoice in tribulation (Romans 5:3). When beaten and threatened with worse treatment if they continued to preach Christ, Peter and John departed, *"rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name... They never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ"* (Acts 5:41-42).

As we read the book of Acts we soon realize that suffering and death intensified the joy of the early Christians. The Apostle Paul could write, *"In all our troubles my joy knows no bounds"* (1 Corinthians 7:4).

In all his sufferings and sorrows he experienced a deep, abiding joy. He wrote of being *"sorrowful, yet always rejoicing"* (1 Corinthians 6:10). With sincerity he declared that for Christ's sake he was *"delight[ed] in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties"* (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Those who keep heaven in view remain serene and cheerful in the darkest day. If the glories of heaven were more real to us, if we lived less for material things and more for things eternal and spiritual, we would be less easily disturbed by this present life.

In these days of darkness and upheaval and uncertainty, the trustful and forward-looking Christian remains optimistic and joyful, knowing that Christ must reign, and *"if we endure, we will also reign with him"* (2 Timothy 2:12).

For all throughout the world who are suffering, our Lord has these words from the Sermon on the Mount. *"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you"* (Matthew 5:11-12).

Speaking of our salvation, the Apostle Peter said, *"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the gentleness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love.*

Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:6-8).

Perhaps in your particular circumstances you are undergoing psychological suffering, which is just as real as physical suffering. It may be a suffering that you cannot express even to your dearest friend – an inward suffering, a heartrending, heartbreaking suffering. In the midst of it all there is the promise of victory. Christ has overcome the world, and you by faith can overcome the world through our Lord Jesus Christ (see 1 John 5:5).

Put your trust in Him today. Repent of your sins. Receive Him as your Savior and let His serenity, His joy, His peace, be yours in the midst of the hard realities of the life which you have to live wherever you are.

THROUGH THE BIBLE IN A YEAR

October

- 1 Isaiah 63 & 64; Proverbs 25; 1 Timothy 6
- 2 Isaiah 65 & 66
- 3 Jeremiah 1 & 2
- 4 Jeremiah 3 & 4; Proverbs 26; 2 Timothy 1
- 5 Jeremiah 5 & 6; Proverbs 27; 2 Timothy 2
- 6 Jeremiah 7 & 8; Proverbs 28; 2 Timothy 3
- 7 Jeremiah 9 & 10; Proverbs 29; 2 Timothy 4
- 8 Jeremiah 11 & 12; Proverbs 30; Titus 1
- 9 Jeremiah 13 & 14
- 10 Jeremiah 15 & 16
- 11 Jeremiah 17 & 18; Proverbs 31; Titus 2
- 12 Jeremiah 19 & 20; Ecclesiastes 1; Titus 3
- 13 Jeremiah 21 & 22; Ecclesiastes 2; Philemon
- 14 Jeremiah 23 & 24; Ecclesiastes 3; Hebrews 1
- 15 Jeremiah 25 & 26; Ecclesiastes 4; Hebrews 2
- 16 Jeremiah 27 & 28
- 17 Jeremiah 29 & 30
- 18 Jeremiah 31 & 32; Ecclesiastes 5; Hebrews 3
- 19 Jeremiah 33 & 34; Ecclesiastes 6; Hebrews 4
- 20 Jeremiah 35 & 36; Ecclesiastes 7; Hebrews 5
- 21 Jeremiah 37 & 38; Ecclesiastes 8; Hebrews 6
- 22 Jeremiah 39 & 40; Ecclesiastes 9; Hebrews 7
- 23 Jeremiah 41 & 42
- 24 Jeremiah 43 & 44
- 25 Jeremiah 45 & 46; Ecclesiastes 10; Hebrews 8
- 26 Jeremiah 47 & 48; Ecclesiastes 11; Hebrews 9
- 27 Jeremiah 49 & 50; Ecclesiastes 12; Hebrews 10
- 28 Jeremiah 51 & 52; Song of Solomon 1; Hebrews 11
- 29 Lamentations 1 & 2; Song of Solomon 2; Hebrews 12
- 30 Lamentations 3 & 4
- 31 Lamentations 5

THANK YOU

WE WANT TO SAY A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED MAKE SOULED OUT 2015 A WONDERFUL SUCCESS! DIDN'T WE HAVE FUN?! DIDN'T THE LORD BLESS US WITH A BEAUTIFUL DAY!

WANT TO DO IT AGAIN NEXT YEAR? Truly, we couldn't have done it without the help of everyone who participated, whether you worked with the children; brought or helped serve food; helped clean up; personned the prayer room, etc. **Special thanks** to Melinda Bienkowski for coordinating the food for the event; to Frank Juhas & Lew Larson for "manning the grills"; to all the kitchen staff; to Chuck Smyser for handling the t-shirt sale; to Deb Logan, Karen Leamy & Karen Farkas for organizing the BIZARRE BAZAAR. Thank you *The Raymond Lee Band, Deep Seeded, KINDRED CROSS, & The CORD*. Special **THANKS** to The Reverend Mr. Robert W. Rice for a challenging salvation message!

AND THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING! Start praying now that God will bless us with a beautiful day again next year – RAIN or SHINE.

IN GOD WE TRUST

"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible" – George Washington

We've come a long way from the old days when government and its institutions openly admitted that we needed God to have this nation work.

In our public life we either ignore God or are openly hostile to Him. Symbols that remind us of God are not allowed in public places. Our teachers may not say His name. People and TV name Him frequently, but usually as a curse.

It is not unusual for a nation to ignore God. The story of nations is a story of unbelief. Usually, as a nation prospers the people ignore God, and as it falls on bad times, the people return to God.

We ignore God and His commandments at our peril. Families, institutions, and whole cultures crumble when they ignore God. Our nation suffers with complex problems of crime, drug abuse, broken homes, teenage pregnancy, AIDS, abortion, child abuse, homelessness, economic disaster and more. All of these problems are rooted in our choice to ignore God as individuals, as a nation, and as a culture.

God is going to have the last word on our nation. God will destroy us if we continue in our sin. His desire throughout the history of nations and for our nation today is that we repent, turn to Him and truly trust Him. To trust God is to take Him at His word, accept His Son Jesus Christ, and obey His commandments.

God, in His mercy, has provided a solution to our personal and national sins. He sent His only Son Jesus to come and die for us, so that everyone who believes in Him has his sins washed clean, and becomes a permanent member of the family of God.

And when we are God's children, we learn what a relief it is to trust in God. Living by God's desires, we learn how to govern ourselves, our families and our nation.

Even committed Christians need to recommit ourselves every day to walking in the way of the Lord. If you are committed to do that, here is a prayer to get you started:

Dear Father; Forgive me and forgive our nation for trying to live without You. I accept and believe that your Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth to pay the penalty for all our sins. I repent of my sins and ask that you will help our nation to also repent. In Jesus' name. Amen

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy." Psalm 33:12,18

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

DO YOU WANT TRUE HAPPINESS?

The United States Declaration of Independence promises citizens "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Since the day it was signed many have been pursuing these promises,

especially the pursuit of happiness. But they have been looking in the wrong places.

If you want to find true happiness....

Acknowledge PERSONAL Sin

For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6)

Believe PERSONAL Promises

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3)

He was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin (1 John 3:5)

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness (1 Peter 2:24)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)

Accept PERSONAL Salvation

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved (Romans 10:9)

Realize PERSONAL Freedom From Sin

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:36)

Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and truth shall make you free (John 8:31,32)

Experience a PERSONAL Change

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5:17)

STEPS TO PEACE WITH GOD

STEP 1 - GOD'S PLAN – PEACE AND LIFE

God loves you and wants you to experience His peace and life. The Bible says, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).*

STEP 2 - OUR PROBLEM – SEPARATION

Being at peace with God is not automatic, because by nature we are separated from God by our sin. The Bible says, *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).*

STEP 3 - GOD'S REMEDY – THE CROSS

God's love bridges the gap of separation between God and you. When Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the grave, He paid the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, *Jesus Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed (1 Peter 2:24).*

STEP 4 - OUR RESPONSE – RECEIVE CHRIST

You cross the bridge into God's family when you receive Christ by personal invitation. The Bible says, *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name (John 1:12)*

HOW DID I SPEND MY YEARS?

Statisticians tell us that the average life span is now around 75 years. If you are under 30 then you think that is a long time. If you are around 50 or 60, you are beginning to realize that is not really very long at all. A few years ago someone went to the trouble to

research what people do with their time. If we live to be 75, most of us will have spent:

- >> 3 years, 24 hours a day, acquiring an education – grade school, high school, college.
- >> 7 years eating, 24 hours a day – some more, some less, obviously
- >> 14 years, day and night, working.
- >> 5 years riding in automobiles or airplanes, etc.
- >> 5 years talking with each other – again some more and some less
- >> 1 year sick or recovering from sickness
- >> 24 years of our life sleeping!
- >> 3 years reading books, magazines, and newspapers
- >> 12 years amusing ourselves – watching TV, going to the movies, fishing, etc.

That makes 74 years. As I looked at these statistics I began thinking. Let us suppose that you spent every Sunday of your life, for 75 years - through infancy, childhood, adulthood, old age – worshiping during two church services each Lord's Day. If you did, how much time would you have spent worshiping God?

Figure it out – the answer is less than 11 months. Let's double it because you have always attended two Bible classes each week. If you have never missed a Bible class in all your life, that still just totals 11 months or a total of 22 months combined with worship.

Think about that – 5 years in an automobile and just 22 months in church! Twelve years amusing ourselves in front of a TV, and just 22 months worshiping God Almighty and studying His word. And that is if you have always attended and never missed! That tells us a little bit about the brevity of time and our priorities in life.

IT'S TIME TO GET OUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT – ETERNITY DEPENDS ON IT!

A COVENANT COMMUNITY

Cornerstone's ELDERS have designated the Sundays in October for Covenant Renewal. Each year, all of the members & friends of our congregation are invited to renew their vows with God and each other by signing the covenant. As the "Lord's free people" (these words are taken from the covenant of the Gainsborough congregation - they were written in 1606), we voluntarily sign the covenant to acknowledge that we are bound to each other and to God by the obligations explained in the document.

By signing the covenant, we indicate that we understand the obligations that come with being part of the family of God that meets at Cornerstone. Further, we acknowledge our need for each other if we are to walk in the ways in which He leads. We renew our commitment to God and each other by signing the covenant annually. This annual covenant renewal recalls those obligations to our minds and reaffirms their importance in our lives. On Sundays, October 4, 11, 18, & 25 we invite you to enter, or reenter, into covenant with all the people of this congregation by signing, or re-signing, the church covenant.

What a wonderful example of what it means to be followers of Christ and members of His family.

THANKSGIVING DINNER

As we did last year, families and friends of Cornerstone are invited to share Thanksgiving Day dinner with others who may not have family near. We will gather at Cornerstone for a traditional Thanksgiving Day celebration. More details will be announced later, but set aside the date NOW – Thursday, November 26th.

WORLD MISSION OFFERING

At Cornerstone, each year, we offer the opportunity for you to give over-and-above your regular tithes & offerings gifts to the **World Mission Offering**. Our church uses the World Mission Offering funds to support the work that God is doing through international missionaries in more than 30 countries around the world and partner churches in more than 40 additional countries. Our giving helps people **>>come to Christ, >>grow in Christ, and >>change their world with and for Christ.**

If you would like to contribute to this special offering, please use the envelopes found on the table at the back of the worship center. Please mark your check WMO. And thank you for taking the gospel around the world.

CARVING YOUR PUMPKIN

This year, as you carve your pumpkin, read the following prayer and follow the steps outlined – then read the Bible verses together. When you finish carving, pray the Pumpkin Prayer together with others in your family!

Dear Jesus, as I carve my pumpkin, help me pray this prayer:

Open my mind so I can learn about You; (cut the top off the pumpkin) Psalm 100:3 - "Know that the LORD... is God."

Take all my sin and forgive the wrong that I do. (clean out the inside) 1 John 1:9 - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us."

Open my eyes so Your love I will see; (cut eyes shaped like hearts) Psalm 119:18 - "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your love."

I'm sorry for times I've turned up my nose at what You've given to me. (cut a nose in the shape of the cross) Psalm 51:10 - "Create in me a clean heart, O God."

Open my ears so Your Word I will hear; (cut ears shaped like the Bible) Isaiah 55:3 - "Incline your ear, and come to Me."

Open my mouth to tell others You're near. (cut the mouth in the shape of a fish) Psalm 118:17 - "I shall... declare the works of the LORD."

Let Your light shine in all I say and do! Amen. (place a candle inside and light it) Matthew 5:16 - "[Jesus said,] 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.'

Ask God to fill you up so He can shine brightly through you. Share your faith with your friends and neighbors as you tell them about your special pumpkin!

TRICK OR TREAT

October is the time of year when we hear the words "trick or treat." And children everywhere are hoping for the treats that are given out on Halloween. But, spiritually speaking, there is someone who wants to trick you – children, youth and adult alike. He's called the devil, and he is doing all he can to ruin the world. Sometimes he seems to be winning. You can tell when you watch the news – you can see where he has been and whom he has fooled. He is a really good liar. Here are some of his most popular lies:

1. The devil wants you to think following Jesus is stupid. "You'll

have no fun doing that," he says.

But Jesus says in John 10:10 in the Bible that He came so you could have a life that is full.

2. The devil says: "Wait until you are an adult before you make up your mind about following Jesus."

The Bible says that Jesus wants children to come to Him, and to come right away because today is the day of salvation (Luke 18:16 & 2 Corinthians 6:2).

3. The devil says: "Make up your own rules. Whatever you want to do is just fine as long as it benefits you."

The Bible says that how you live really matters to God. If you live for yourself you are headed for big trouble. But if you live to please God, He gives you eternal life (Galatians 6:7,8).

4. The devil says: "This life is all there is. Get all you can before you die."

The Bible says that God loves you so much He offers you life that will never end if you will accept what Jesus did for you (John 3:16).

5. The devil says: "You don't have a chance. I'm stronger and smarter than you and I can get you to do anything I want. You're helpless."

The Bible says that God will never leave you to fight the devil on your own (1 John 2:14).

The devil hates you and will use even your family and friends to trick you. **But Jesus loves you** more than you can imagine. He loves you so much He came to earth from His home in heaven to take the punishment for our sins. The Bible says that all who believe in Him are saved from the devil and given eternal life. In the whole world, there is no TREAT bigger than God's love for you.

You can win against the devil by inviting Jesus into your heart, learning more and more about Him and what He wants you to do with your life.

BENEFIT CONCERT

On Saturday, October 24, at 7pm, THE **RAYMOND LEE BAND AND KINDRED CROSS** will be performing a live concert at Cornerstone Fellowship. The concert is **FREE**, but a freewill offering will be taken to benefit Operation Christmas Child.

Please save this date and come to enjoy a wonderful evening of music while helping this worthy cause. Special thanks to The Raymond Lee Band & KINDRED CROSS for donating their time and talent!

LOOKING AHEAD

UPWARD BASKETBALL & CHEERLEADING comes back to Cornerstone this fall/winter. Registrations and evaluations will be held Monday & Tuesday, November 9 & 10, with practices beginning the week of January 11th and a game schedule from January through March 2016. UPWARD's first game day is scheduled for Saturday, January 23rd, with the Closing Celebration scheduled for Saturday, March 12th.

Upward Sports is dedicated to introduce children, grades K-6, to Jesus Christ by creating opportunities to serve through sports. For more information, or to register your children/grandchildren, please see Peter Jensen. Please sign up to help with evaluations that will be held on November 9 & 10.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT - Sunday, December 6 – You are invited to come to Cornerstone's annual Christmas Concert. This year we will again share in the JOY of the Christmas season through this service of word and song. You won't want to miss this highlight of the Advent/Christmas season.

MARK THE DATE – Sunday December 6 at 4pm.

Please invite your friends, family and neighbors to join you for this special Christmas program. Following the program will be a time of refreshment and fellowship. Come one, come ALL! Watch for FREE tickets to be available for you to use in inviting your friends!

SWAG NIGHT - Ladies & Men -- are you looking forward to SWAG night? The date is Monday, December 7. Come to the church to create your own holiday swag. Bring your greens, ribbons, decorations, etc., (there will also be some supplies available to share) and enjoy this evening of fellowship and creation. We had a GREAT time last year. Plan on coming this year. It's OK to bring a friend. Watch for the sign up sheet so we have an idea of how many to set up for.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING AT HIBERNIA MANSION, Friday, December 4, at 6:30pm. Join others from Cornerstone as we Christmas Carol for those visiting Hibernia Mansion.

BREAKFAST WITH THE WISE MEN - Saturday, December 12, at 9am. Children up through 5th grade are invited to come to the church to enjoy breakfast with our special guests, **Balthazar, Gaspar and Melchior**.

PUNK ROCK CHRISTMAS PARTY - Wednesday, December 16, at 7pm. Come to the church for a **GREAT TIME** of worshipping and caroling. **EVERYONE SHOULD COME!!!!**

CHRISTMAS EVE - Thursday, December 24 – **PLAN NOW** to attend both Christmas Eve services – 6pm Family Service; 11pm Candlelight Communion.

YOUTH NEWS

DON'T FORGET!!

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP (grades 6-12) - WEDNESDAYS, 7-8:30 pm weekly (following the Mid-Week Worship Celebration)! Come and experience it! Bring your friends!!

YOUTH SPIRITUAL GROWTH GROUP - THURSDAYS at 7pm (EVERY YOUTH is invited!)

YOUTH BIBLE FELLOWSHIP - for Jr & Sr High - 9:30 am Sunday mornings

Worship Celebrations - Sundays at 8:15 and 10:45 am and Wednesdays at 6:30pm

PLEASE HELP US OUT!

EMPTY INKJET PRINTER CARTRIDGES

Please donate your empty inkjet printer cartridges to the youth group to be recycled. A container is placed in the **coat room** to receive your donations. **KEEP THOSE CARTRIDGES COMING!** We appreciate every bit of help we receive.

EVENTS:

Wednesday, December 16 - **PUNK ROCK CHRISTMAS PARTY**
Thursday, December 31 - **NEW YEAR'S EVE BASH**

CHILDREN'S NEWS

COOL KIDS - Children, 4 years old up through grade 3 are invited to participate in COOL Kids on Sunday mornings at both the 8:15 and 10:45 celebration services. Following the praise time and the reading of scripture in the Worship Center, kids are dismissed to ROOM 108. COOL Kids (**C**hildren **O**f **O**ur **L**ord Kids) helps kids learn to celebrate Christ in a way they enjoy and become excited about.

EVENTS:

Sunday, November 1 - **THE FALL FEST** for children up through 5th grade, 5-7pm. Come to the church for a fun evening.

Saturday, December 12 - **BREAKFAST WITH THE WISE MEN**

A LETTER TO AMERICA FROM FRANKLIN GRAHAM

"In the Bible we read that Nehemiah was discouraged and distressed because the walls of Jerusalem had been broken down and its gates had been burned with fire. He sat down and wept and mourned for his nation – and he cried out to the God of Heaven. God heard his prayers and used him to lead the people to rebuild those broken-down walls. They were greatly outnumbered by their enemies and facing opposition and vicious threats. They responded by praying and seeking God, and they went to work rebuilding what had been torn down, even holding their weapons in their hands to protect themselves while they worked. In a miraculously short time – 52 days – they rebuilt the walls and hope was restored.

America's walls of biblical morality are crumbling. Many people are distressed over the direction our nation is taking. Christianity and our religious freedoms are under siege. Progressives and secularists want to see God removed from everything and to burn every gate of protection.

We can't sit idle. Like Nehemiah we need to take a bold stand. We need to cry out to God on behalf of our nation. Nehemiah confessed the sins and failures of the people, *"including myself and my father's family,"* and repented. He prayed, *"We have acted very wickedly toward you"* (Nehemiah 1:6-7).

It is going to take the church of Jesus Christ standing up for righteousness, shoulder to shoulder, to make a difference in this country. I do not believe that Republicans or Democrats or any other party can turn this nation around, but I do have hope. God hears the prayers of His people, and walls can be rebuilt.

I will be devoting my time in 2016 to go to every state in our country – all 50 – to hold a prayer rally, to preach the Gospel, and to challenge believers to take a stand and take action. We are calling it The **Decision America Tour** and we will begin announcing dates for specific cities on the tour in October. Be watching for that. My purpose for going is to call the church and Christians to **pray**, to **vote**, and to **engage**.

During the Decision America Tour, I want to urge Christians not only to vote but also to engage by running for political office at all levels – local, state, and federal. We need Christian judges, Christian assembly members, and Christian mayors. We need Christian clerks of court, school board members, governors, and, of course, senators and representatives.

Most importantly on this tour, I am calling on those who follow the Name of Jesus Christ to do as God's Word says: *"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

The only hope for America is to have hearts changed – and Christ can do that. On the 50-state Decision America Tour, I will be preaching the only message that has the power to bring real and lasting change – the Gospel. In every state next year, I will preach that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, took our sins to the cross, shed His blood, and died on the cross to pay the penalty for the sins of mankind, and God raised Him to life. I will be giving an invitation for people to repent of sin and turn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of their lives.

We need your help with the Decision America Tour. Going to all

50 states is expensive, and it will probably be the busiest and most challenging year of my life, but I believe it is something God is calling us to do. We need your prayers.

The success of the Decision America Tour depends on prayer. Just as Nehemiah's people were threatened, this effort will be under attack. But just as Nehemiah found, it is worth it. I don't believe Christians should be shrinking back. America is at a crossroads, and I believe we should take every opportunity to stand up for the things of God and His Word.

The strategy that the Lord gave Nehemiah was for each family to begin repairing the portion of the wall nearest their own home. And in our day we can begin rebuilding the wall around our own homes as well. How? Start in your own community to pray that our nation would turn back to God – praying every day can make a huge impact. Support the Decision America Tour with your prayers. Support Christians running for office in your city and state. Make a difference right where you are.

May God richly bless you – *Franklin Graham*

ONE OF GOD'S "DON'TS"

Fretting means getting ourselves "out of joint" mentally or spiritually. It is one thing to say, "Do not fret," but something very different to have such a nature that you find yourself unable to fret. It's easy to say, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" (Psalm 37:7) until our own little world is turned upside down and we are forced to live in confusion and agony like so many other people. Is it possible to "rest in the Lord" then? If this "Do not" doesn't work there, then it will not work anywhere. This "Do not" must work during our days of difficulty and uncertainty, as well as our peaceful days, or it will never work. And if it will not work in your particular case, it will not work for anyone else. Resting in the Lord is not dependent on your external circumstances at all, but on your relationship with the Living God Himself.

Worrying always results in sin. We tend to think that a little anxiety and worry are simply an indication of how wise we really are, yet it is actually a much better indication of just how wicked we are. Fretting rises from our determination to have our own way. Our Lord never worried and was never anxious, because His purpose was never to accomplish His own plans but to fulfill God's plans. Fretting is wickedness for a child of God.

Have you been propping up that foolish soul of yours with the idea that your circumstances are too much for God to handle? Set all your opinions and speculations aside and "abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1). Deliberately tell God that you will not fret about whatever concerns you. All our fretting and worrying is caused by planning without God.

–Oswald Chambers

WHY DOESN'T GOD ANSWER ME?

If you are struggling with feelings of doubt and disappointment with God, Psalm 77 has something to say to you. Many psalms were written to help people struggling with doubt. Psalm 77 is not an idealistic presentation of why we don't need to doubt. It is the story of a man who is nearly driven to despair because it seems that God refuses to respond to his prayers. This psalm shows how we as believers – and yes, sometimes doubters – can move from despair to a renewed and deepened faith in God.

Psalm 77 opens with a distressed cry: "I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted. I remembered you, God, and I groaned;

I meditated, and my spirit grew faint” (Psalm 77:1-3).

We don't know what problem Asaph was dealing with, but he cried out to God about it. He begged and groaned and pleaded to the point of exhaustion – his spirit was faint. Sorrow and disappointment threatened to crush him. Though he tried to focus on the Lord's goodness, he simply could not find comfort.

He continued: “You've kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak” (Psalm 77:4). He tried to sleep, but his eyelids would not stay closed. He was so disturbed that he couldn't even describe his problem to others. Asaph is in the throes of grief, and there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel. In his desperation, he holds nothing back. His words are blunt and to the point.

The psalmist is peering over the brink into unbelief. He has concluded that God can change – only a small step from believing something terrifying: God is not really God.

Afer all, if God can change, then He is nothing more than a manlike being with godlike powers. God's unchanging character is essential to the psalmist's understanding of who God is. If God can change, if He can be unloving and unjust, then God is not really God.

But Psalm 77 takes a turn at verse 11: “I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds” (Psalm 77:11-12).

Suddenly there is a radical shift in Asaph's approach to the crisis of doubt. His fear and despair vanish and he has a new sense of confidence and peace which he expresses to God.

The psalmist steps back from the precipice, turns around, and moves in the opposite direction.

This monumental shift does not come because Asaph's doubts are finally vanquished.

His decision to believe in God's love and justice is not emotional or intellectual; it's a determination made purely with his will. He makes a choice to step back from unbelief, and that choice saves him.
– Ray Stedman

God is so faithful. How can you not want everybody to know him? We are not ever whole and healthy until Christ comes. The reality is that we have to realize at some point in our lives that Jesus is everything and that we have to give Him away! Jesus is bigger and better. So we give Him away.

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Hope is an optimistic attitude of mind based on an expectation of positive outcomes related to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large.

The word HOPE is used a lot in the Bible. In 1 Corinthians 13:13 it says, “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” Love may be number one, but hope did make the big three.

For Christians, hope is more than just keeping our fingers crossed for good luck. Hope is a sense of optimism and anticipation about the life God gives us.

The opposite of hope is despair. If you look at what is happening in our world right now, there are many reasons to despair. So many of our fellow Americans have forgotten God or have outright rejected Him.

But the people we should most admire are those who have had terrible things happen to them; yet they get through those difficult times and maintain hope for a better day tomorrow by trusting in God.

Have you ever wondered that if God is good, as the Bible teaches, and all powerful, as the Bible teaches, then why does He allow bad things to happen? Why pain? Why disease? Why suffering? Why war?

In our finite way of thinking there is no totally satisfactory answer to that question.

But Christians should always have hope because we know in the end, God wins. Even in death we are not like those who have no hope. Our hope and our faith are in the words of the Bible.

Isaiah 40:31 says this: “Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who HOPE in the Lord shall renew their strength.” *afa Journal September 2015*

DEVOTIONAL BOOK

We are pleased to announce that our own Rob Rice (The Reverend Mr. Robert W. Rice) has recently published a book of devotionals on Philippians, Colossians and the 23rd Psalm. The book entitled, *Drawing Closer* comes out of Rob's call to draw others closer to God.

If you would like a copy of Rob's book, please see Terri or contact Rob at pastor.rwrice@gmail.com. Rob is offering the book for a donation to help defray the publishing costs.

CONGRATULATIONS, Rob!

THE BIBLE PROMISE BOOK

Whatever the need of the moment, the answer is to be found in Scripture, if we take the time to search for it. Whatever we're feeling, whatever we're suffering, whatever we're hoping – the BIBLE has something to say to us. This month, what does the Bible say about **TRUST**! Take your Bible and look up each passage. As we work on our faith-walk, the Bible will give us **help** and **hope**.

Psalm 46:1-2

Proverbs 3:5-6

Psalm 84:11-12

Luke 12:32

Psalm 37:3-5

Matthew 6:31-32

1 Peter 5:7

Psalm 40:4

Psalm 125:1

Obviously these are only a few of the passages that speak about TRUST. For more, check your Bible's concordance.



FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

(Search for the words in **BOLD** print.

When a phrase is **BOLD AND UNDERLINED** those words will be found together in the puzzle grid.
And, while you're at it, why not memorize this wonderful Scripture.)

I will **praise** thee; for I am **fearfully** and **wonderfully made: marvellous** are thy **works**; and that my soul **knoweth** right well. My **substance** was **not hid from thee**, when I was made in **secret**, and **curiously wrought** in the lowest parts of the **earth**. Thine **eyes** did see my substance, yet being **unperfect**, and in thy **book** all my **members** were **written**, which in continuance were **fashioned**, when as yet there was none of them. How **precious** also are thy **thoughts** unto me, O God! How **great** is the sum of them! If I should **count** them, they are more in **number** than the **sand**: when I **awake**, I am still with thee. **Search** me, O God, and know my **heart: try me**, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any **wicked** way in me, and **lead me** in the way **everlasting**. Psalm 139:14-18, 23-24

W	S	U	O	L	L	E	V	R	A	M	I	L	M	K
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E	W	C	U	R	I	O	U	S	L	Y	W	S	G	A
E	K	A	W	A	Q	F	A	S	H	I	O	N	E	D

October is Covenant Renewal Month

Remember to sign the church covenant . Copies will be in the lobby October 4, 11, 18 and 25.

