



# CHRIST CHURCH PRESS

The Monthly Newsletter of Christ Church, Presbyterian  
4201 Southern Pines Drive, Evans, Georgia, 30809

Volume 11, Issue 7

July 2015

## The Pastor's Selection

### Birthdays

- 03 .....Mara Ramon-Gutierrez
- 05 ..... Sandra Brown
- 06 ..... Linda Fleming  
Betty Gene Lovingood
- 10..... John Self  
Tracy Steed
- 11.....Joe Dey
- 12.....Jenny Townsend
- 13.....Kelly Caruso
- 14..... Elizabeth Seward
- 15 .....Billy Hatcher
- 18.....Margaret Fields
- 21..... Warren Jones  
Dale McPherson
- 22 .....Will Nabholz
- 23 ..... Sheryl Alba
- 30 .....John Dunsmore

### Anniversaries

- 05 ..... Shiela & Lee Self
- 09 ..... Sarah & Brian Moore
- 11.....Joanna & Tony Miller
- 16.....Helen & Wade Caldwell
- 21..... Natalie & Ora Parish
- 25 .....Ilona & McDonald Law
- 26 ..... Tracy & Brent Steed

### Independence Day Celebration

July 4<sup>th</sup> from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m.

- ♦ Delicious BBQ
- ♦ Live Patriotic Music
- ♦ Fun Inflatable Activities

RSVP Today

[www.christchurchpres.org](http://www.christchurchpres.org)

### 6 Reasons Why Membership Matters

—Kevin DeYoung, *The Gospel Coalition*

“Why bother with church membership?”

I’ve been asked the question before. Sometimes it’s said with genuine curiosity—“So explain to me what membership is all about.” Other times it’s said with a tinge of suspicion—“So tell me again, why do you think I should become a member?”—as if joining the church automatically signed you up to tithe by direct deposit.

For many Christians membership sounds stiff, something you have at your bank or the country club, but too formal for the church. Even if it’s agreed that Christianity is not a lone ranger religion, that we need community and fellowship with other Christians, we still bristle at the thought of officially joining a church. Why all the hoops? Why box the Holy Spirit into member/non-member categories? Why bother joining a local church when I’m already a member of the universal Church?

Some Christians—because of church tradition or church baggage—may not be convinced of church membership no matter how many times “member” actually shows up in the New Testament. But many others are open to hearing the justification for something they’ve not thought much about.

Here are just a few reasons why church membership matters.

1. In joining a church you make visible your commitment to Christ and his people. Membership is one way to raise the flag of faith. You state before God and others that you are part of this local body of believers. It’s easy to talk in glowing terms about the invisible church—the body of all believers near and far, living and dead—but it’s in the visible church that God expects you to live out your faith.

Sometimes I think that we wouldn’t all be clamoring for community if we had actually experienced it. Real fellowship is hard work, because most people are a lot like us—selfish, petty, and proud. But that’s the body God calls us to.

How many of Paul’s letters were written to individuals? Only a handful, and these were mostly to pastors. The majority of his letters were written to a local body of believers. We see the same thing in Revelation. Jesus spoke to individual congregations in places like Smyrna, Sardis, and Laodicea. The New Testament knows no Christians floating around in “just me and Jesus” land. Believers belong to churches.

2. Making a commitment makes a powerful statement in a low-commitment culture. Many bowling leagues require more of their members than our churches. Where this is true, the church is a sad reflection of its culture. Ours is a consumer culture where everything is tailored to meet our needs and satisfy our preferences. When those needs aren’t met, we can always move on to the next product, or job, or spouse.

(continued on page 2)

Joining a church in such an environment makes a counter-cultural statement. It says "I am committed to this group of people and they are committed to me. I am here to give, more than get."

Even if you will only be in town for a few years, it's still not a bad idea to join a church. It lets your home church (if you are a student) know that you are being cared for, and it lets your present know that you want to be cared for here.

But it's not just about being cared for, it's about making a decision and sticking with it—something my generation, with our oppressive number of choices, finds difficult. We prefer to date the church—have her around for special events, take her out when life feels lonely, and keep her around for a rainy day. Membership is one way to stop dating churches, and marrying one.

3. We can be overly independent. In the West, it's one of the best and worst thing about us. We are free spirits and critical thinkers. We get an idea and run with it. But whose running with us? And are any of us running in the same direction? Membership states in a formal way, "I am part of something bigger than myself. I am not just one of three hundred individuals. I am part of a body."

4. Church membership keeps us accountable. When we join a church we are offering ourselves to one another to be encouraged, rebuked, corrected, and served. We are placing ourselves under leaders and submitting to their authority (Heb. 13:7). We are saying, "I am here to stay. I want to help you grow in godliness. Will you help me to do the same?"

Mark Dever, in his book *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, writes,

Church membership is our opportunity to grasp hold of each other in responsibility and love. By identifying ourselves with a particular church, we let the pastors and other members of that local church know that we intend to be committed in attendance, giving, prayer, and service. We allow fellow believers to have great expectations of us in these areas, and we make it known that we are the responsibility of this local church. We assure the church of our commitment to Christ in serving with them, and we call for their commitment to serve and encourage as well.

5. Joining the church will help your pastor and elders be more faithful shepherds. Hebrews 13:7 says "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority." That's your part as "laypeople". Here's our part as leaders: "They keep watch over you as men who must give an account." As a pastor I take very seriously my responsibility before God to watch care for souls. At almost every elders' meeting the RCA Book of Church Order instructed us "seek to determine whether any members of the congregation are in need of special care regarding their spiritual condition and/or not making faithful use of the means of grace." This is hard enough to do in a church like ours where there is constant turnover, but it's even harder when we don't know who is really a part of this flock.

To give just one example, we try to be diligent in following up with people who haven't been at our church for a while. This is a challenge. But if you never become a member, we can't tell if you are really gone, because we might not be sure if you were ever here! It's nearly impossible for the elders to shepherd the flock when they don't know who really considers them their shepherds.

6. Joining the church gives you an opportunity to make promises. When someone becomes a member at University Reformed Church, he makes promises to pray, give, serve, attend worship, accept the spiritual guidance of the church, obey its teachings, and seek the things that make for unity, purity, and peace. We ought not to make these promises lightly. They are solemn vows. And we must hold each other to them. If you don't join the church, you miss an opportunity to publicly make these promises, inviting the elders and the rest of the body to hold you to these promises—which would be missing out on great spiritual benefit, for you, your leaders, and the whole church.

Membership matters more than most people think. If you really want to be a counter-cultural revolutionary, sign up for the membership class, meet with your elders, and join your local church.

## Welcome New Staff Member

The Session is pleased to announce the hiring of Dr. Stan Plyant as our new Director of Music as well as Director for the Augusta Youth Chorale.



Stan has over 44 years of experience in church music ministry. He comes to us from First Baptist Church in Augusta.

Stan is married to Kirsten and they have two children, both currently attending Mercer University.

Stan's first Sunday with us will be July 19th. Please warmly welcome Stan and Kirsten in the name of Christ and into our family.

## Young Adults Bible Study

All young adults (college aged and over) are invited to join us for a Bible study on Philippians each Wednesday evening from 7:30 until 9. We meet in the home of Jenny and Don Townsend located at 1538 River Island Parkway in Evans. For more information, please contact the church office at 706-210-9090 or via email to [secretary@christchurchpres.org](mailto:secretary@christchurchpres.org).

*See You There!*

# Missions Movement

## Women's Health Symposium, July 10–21, in Africa

Mission to the World, responding to a request from the African Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Kenya, is sending a team to hold a conference on women's health in Nairobi, Kenya. The focus of the symposium is the health of the whole person, spiritually and physically, integrating care of the soul and body.

For the four days of the conference, the Kenyan women will rotate through the medical clinic, receive teaching from the Book of Ruth on redemption and attend various sessions addressing how being a follower of Jesus affects every area of their life. The Kenyan women have asked for teachings based on this reference point of ultimate truth, grace, mercy and love. They want teaching on: a woman's value and identity in Christ; how to approach addiction; sexual abuse; the impact of social media on children; how to be salt and light in the world.

There will be approximately 100 key women leaders from all seven presbyteries across Kenya traveling to Nairobi for the conference. The prayer and vision is that these women will return home strengthened, encouraged and equipped to do the same in their congregations with overflow into their communities.

Jenny Townsend, a member of Christ Church and a missionary for many years in Niger, Africa, will serve on that team as a nurse, counselor and teacher. To receive her updates for prayer by email, contact Jenny or the church missions committee. To support this mission financially, you may direct your giving through Christ Church to MTW, account 17548, or go to [MTW.org](http://MTW.org) for online giving.

Let us join in prayer with Jenny and the team for our Lord's blessing and protection for this ministry effort.

## Children's Chatter: Let's Talk About...

### VBS

What an incredible week! 53 Children came and celebrated the coming of the King. Parents took pleasure in seeing what their children had experienced and the food, fun, singing and fellowship was enjoyed by all. All praise and glory to God for providing wonderful children eager to learn. Many thanks to the volunteers that faithfully came and showed the love of Jesus to these little ones.

### Nursery Needs

Our nurseries are in need of volunteers to step forward in service. Both the Baby and Toddler nurseries have vacancies that must be filled in order to fill our mission to the next generation as well as to our Lord. Many hands make light work and one Sunday a month in the nursery would help so much. Please contact Monica Boyd for Baby Nursery (Nursery I) and Helen Caldwell for Toddler Nursery (Nursery II).

### Service Opportunity

Children's Ministry is looking for four people willing to step out in faith and teach our next generation. Two teams of two: every other Sunday would be committed to teaching our class of four-year-olds. These are bright, inquisitive, full of curiosity and ready to learn precious covenant children. We are looking to begin a Sunday school class in September (Promotion Sunday, September 14) for these particular children. The curriculum chosen is easy to teach, complete with all materials provided and easily assembled. The need is for four members to come forward and reach out to these precious children. Please prayerfully seek God's guidance to realize if you are one of the four He is calling. Please contact Fay Deal by July 17 if you are interested or have questions about this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our next generation, 803-278-1176 or [runningdeal@gmail.com](mailto:runningdeal@gmail.com).

## Trail Life Tracks



On June 13<sup>th</sup>, our troop went to the McDuffie Public Fishing Area for a fishing derby. For some it was the first time they had gone fishing. Here are pictures of our successful anglers. We're looking forward to the next fishing derby this fall.

Please continue to pray for the Trail Life USA national team, as well as the troop here at Christ Church. You can help by being a part of our troop committee or making a designated donation to support the troop activities. We've had a few new families join the troop just this summer, so if you know of a boy who would want to become a Trailman, please have him contact Troopmaster, John Norkus (706-373-2173, [thenorkusfamily@comcast.net](mailto:thenorkusfamily@comcast.net)). Walk worthy!



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## July

**Each Sunday's Schedule:** 9:45 a.m. Sunday School • 11 a.m. Worship • 6:00 p.m. Worship

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
			7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 7:30 p.m. Young Adults Bible Study 8:15 p.m. Brass Ensemble	6 p.m. Young Families Bible Study		5 p.m. Independence Day Celebration
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
5 p.m. Prayer Meeting		7 p.m. Diaconate Meeting	7:30 p.m. Young Adults Bible Study		7 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast	9 a.m. Trail Life Program Planning Meeting
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
12:30 p.m. Fellowship Luncheon 5 p.m. Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m. Youth Gathering	7 p.m. Session Meeting		7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 7:30 p.m. Young Adults Bible Study	6 p.m. Young Families Bible Study	7 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
5 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 5 p.m. Prayer Meeting			7:30 p.m. Young Adults Bible Study		7 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
5 p.m. Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m. Youth Gathering			7:30 p.m. Young Adults Bible Study		7 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast	