



# CHRIST CHURCH PRESS

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

Volume 12, Issue 1

January 2017

## Pastor's Selection

### Birthdays

- 02 ..... Anne Gojda  
Ed Russell
- 03 ..... David Robeson
- 05 ..... Matthew Russell
- 06 ..... Kira Smith
- 07..... Bob Pentecost
- 10..... Emily Adams  
Adam Doss
- 11..... Wade Caldwell
- 12..... Bill Kemp  
Chris Lammie
- 13..... Scott Doss
- 14..... Gene Gojda  
Liam Boyd
- 17..... Susan Crenshaw  
Ken Moody
- 20 ..... Janice Britt
- 21..... Delylah Avery
- 24..... Teal Bailey  
Sue Moncrief
- 25 ..... Bob Rihl
- 26 ..... Sam Bailey
- 27..... Silas Jewett
- 30 ..... Richard Deal

### Anniversaries

- 08 ..... Erin & Chris Lammie
- 26 .... Linda & Robert Pentecost

*And He who was seated on the throne said,  
"Behold, I am making all things new."  
Also He said, "Write this down, for these  
words are trustworthy and true."*

*Revelation 21:5*

### Lord, Deliver Me from Distraction

*—Jon Bloom*

Since the fall of man, people have had trouble staying focused, but we live today in an age of unprecedented distraction. Since you're already reading this on some electronic device, I don't need to elaborate.

Lots of experts are talking about the negative effects this is having on us. Many of us feel it: the buzzing brain, the attention atrophy, the diminishing tolerance for reading, especially reading books.

We're becoming conditioned to distraction, and it's harming our ability to listen and think carefully, to be still, to pray, and to meditate. Which means it is a spiritual danger, an evil from which we need God's deliverance (Matthew 6:13).

#### The Causes of Distraction

Distraction, at least the dangerous kind I'm referring to, is shifting our attention from something of greater importance to something of lesser importance.

Our fundamental and most dangerous problem in distraction is in being distracted from God – our tendency to shift our attention orientation from the greatest Object in existence to countless lesser ones. The Bible calls this idolatry.

This fundamental attention shift disorders us in pervasive ways. We find our tendency to be distracted from the more important to the less important cascading down detrimentally affecting our relationships and responsibilities. So at the deepest level, we are distractible because of our fallen, selfish nature; we have evil inside us.

But not all our distraction problems are due to our resident evil. Some are simply the result of the futility infecting creation (Romans 8:20-23). This futility can infect our biology as well as our environments. All of us have faulty brains and bodies, and so some of us battle distraction more than others due to factors like ADHD and other mental or physical illnesses. Environmental factors like poor nutrition, unhealthy family systems, and cultural/technological forces (such as the constant stream of media) can also affect our ability to focus.

All these factors mix together in most cases, making it nearly impossible to tell how much sin, fallen biology, or environment is to blame for our distraction. But if we ask God, he will deliver us from evil, whatever the cause, by using these powerful foes to our advantage, helping us see what our hearts love, and pressing us by his grace into greater levels of humble faith and self-control.

#### A Heart Revealer

When we are regularly distracted by something, we need to take note. Our attention often runs to what's important to us. So distraction can reveal what we love. This happened to Jesus's friend, Martha.

*(continued on page 2)*

Martha was busy in the kitchen while Jesus taught in her home. When Martha complained that her sister, Mary, wasn't helping because she was sitting at Jesus's feet, Jesus replied,

"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:41-42)

Martha was distracted from Jesus. By what? By serving her guests. Why? Because she was anxious. Anxious about what? Anxious about feeding everyone, and in all likelihood anxious about what everyone would think of her and her household if she didn't do it well.

But Martha didn't recognize her distraction until Jesus helped her see her heart. She thought she was doing the right thing by serving everyone. But Jesus pointed out to Martha that her values were disordered. She had shifted her attention from the greater importance to the lesser.

So in our busyness, we must ask, what is the real distraction? What does our heart desire? Are we choosing "the good portion," seeking the great "one thing" (Psalm 27:4), or something less?

## **A Fight That Builds Humble Faith**

Distraction is a frequent reminder of our frailty and limits, that we indeed are not God. And since we are given to such unjustifiable, and frankly ridiculous, levels of pride, this is very good for us. Distraction humbles us and forces us to ask God for the help we so desperately need.

And it can build our faith. God is not nearly as interested in our efficiency as he is in our faith. Do you remember how he allowed enemies to harass Nehemiah and his Jerusalem wall-builders, slowing down the work (Nehemiah 4)? Similarly, God allows us to battle inefficient distraction to build our dependent faith in him. That's what God is building in all the inefficiencies of our lives.

If we see the Spirit-given graces of humility and faith growing in us through our struggles against distraction, we will count it among the "all things" we give thanks for (Ephesians 5:20, KJV).

## **Building the Muscle of Self-Control**

God also uses distraction to strengthen our self-control. Christian self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). And like nearly all the Spirit's fruit of sanctification in us, they are cultivated through the primary, decisive gift of the Spirit and our secondary, but indispensable intentional hard work.

It's helpful to remember that we strengthen self-control similar to how we strengthen muscle: through resistance. Muscles do not grow stronger without pushing against resistance. Neither does self-control. There's no getting around the hard work of applying ourselves and figuring out what works best for us. But if we prayerfully and faithfully apply ourselves, the Spirit will empower our efforts and we will see our capacity for self-control increase.

Now, just as with physical strength and ability, some are graced with greater ability to focus than others. If you're one of those people, then good stewardship of this gift looks different than it does for less gifted people. Like a gifted athlete, you are made to excel. Seek to maximize it, for "to whom much [is] given, of him much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

If you're a person who, for whatever reason, has a more difficult struggle with distraction, you need not feel condemned (Romans 8:1). For you, good stewardship looks like fighting distraction as best you can. Push yourself. You may not be able to do what others can do, but God will only hold you accountable for the measure of grace given to you (Romans 12:6).

## **Whatever It Takes**

It's right for us to see certain distractions as evils in themselves. Every one is a time-tax we pay, a tax for which there is no refund. Time spent simply means we have less to spend. Every distracted minute is an unrecoverable minute, now frozen in the permanent past. It is right to seek to make the best use of our time in these evil days (Ephesians 5:16).

And yet, we also do not need to be more paralyzed by this than by any other struggle with sin or futility. Our Father wants us to grow in the grace of faith-fueled focus, and will, through Christ, cause our difficult struggles against distraction to work for our good (Romans 8:28). He will, through his Spirit, use them to free us from idolatry and pride and to help us grow in self-control. So, in confident faith we can approach his throne of grace with this prayer:

Whatever it takes, Lord, increase my resolve to pursue only what you call me to do, and deliver me from the fragmenting effect of fruitless distraction.

## Ministry through Music

Kirsten and I are grateful for each of you that come together as a people known as Christ Church, Pres. We look forward to sharing and journeying together with you through the New Year. We want to thank you for our end of the year gift. Actually we already consider each of you as a gift to us.

All musical groups begin rehearsing in January. The Sanctuary Choir resumes rehearsals on Wednesday, January 4, the Children's Choir and The Augusta Youth Chorale resume rehearsals on Sunday, January 8. The Brass Ensemble will resume Wednesday, January 11. All groups will begin preparing music for upcoming worship services and special events. So, if you have any questions or interest in participating within the music ministry at Christ Church, please contact me for more information: [music@christchurchpres.org](mailto:music@christchurchpres.org) or 706-210-9090.

Future music celebrations of note: Rodrigo Rodriguez, a classically trained Christian guitarist will join us Monday, March 6, at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Our Evensong: An Easter Celebration, will be Sunday evening, April 16. Interested in singing celebratory Easter music with the Christ Church Choir and Orchestra? You are cordially invited. Besides our regular Wednesday evening rehearsals, a few extra rehearsals will be scheduled on a few Saturday mornings to aid in learning the music. Come sing with us, we would love to have you. Contact me for further information.

*"Let the godly sing for joy to the LORD; it is fitting for the pure to praise Him. Praise the LORD with melodies on the lyre; make music for Him on the ten-stringed harp. Sing a new song of praise to Him; play skillfully on the harp, and sing with joy" (Ps 33:1-3 NLT).*

Stan Pylant, *Director of Music*

## Nursery News

Happy new year from Nursery 1 and Nursery 2. Last year saw wonderful growth in the number of babies and children in both nurseries. We are still growing with new babies arriving and more toddlers on the scene. Since more numbers mean more volunteers needed, we are asking for you to prayerfully consider volunteering for one Sunday a month in either of our nurseries. We are truly blessed to have five paid workers who are dedicated to our covenant children. However, we also need members to participate in this ministry. We are in need of someone to fill slots for morning worship and, as our workers are not responsible for evening services, we are in need of a volunteer for Nursery 2 the first Sunday evening of each month. Regarding the months that have five Sundays, we have open slots in both nurseries.

As members of Christ Church, Presbyterian, we make vows as our covenant children are baptized that we will support parents in raising these children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Part of this responsibility is in volunteering in these areas to show love and to develop a relationship with these children. Nothing is more important than passing on the story of our Savior to the next generation, and teaching by example is essential. As we make our resolutions for 2017, won't you consider volunteering in one of our nurseries, please?

## Student Stuff

**Happy New Year!!!** It is crazy that another year has passed and now it is 2017! January is the month that everyone picks their New Year's resolution. It is also a chance for some to hit the "restart" button and plan for a better or more successful year. The world's top five Resolutions are: 1. Stay fit and healthy; 2. Lose weight; 3. Enjoy life to the fullest; 4. Spend less and save more; and 5. Spend more time with friends and family. I'm sure these resolutions have been ours in the past, but what about our spiritual resolutions? I will be the first to tell you that I am inconsistent with my daily study and/or my daily prayer. It is so hard to grow spiritually, if you rely only on Sunday school and a church service once a week. How many times have you started a study and never finished it? I have, and I'm not proud of it either. My New Year's resolution is to be consistent with my daily walk with Christ Jesus, my Lord, that I may be ready for any trial that is thrown my way. Think about your daily walk with Christ. I want to challenge you to make a similar resolution; that your relationship with God grows strong and that your faith is deepened through your daily walk with Christ. Mark your calendar and plan to join us for Youth Gatherings on January 8 and 22, and a bonfire at the church on the 20<sup>th</sup>. For more information, please contact Chris Nabholz, *Interim Youth Director*, at [youth@christchurchpres.org](mailto:youth@christchurchpres.org).

## Our Great Commission Update & Conference News

With the great praise and thanksgiving for the generosity of our church family, we were able to send each missionary family an additional month's support as a Christmas gift from Christ Church, Presbyterian. We thank all who participated in giving approximately \$4,500 to our Christmas Missionary Love-Gift.

Mark your calendars and pray for our Annual Bible & Missionary Conference which is scheduled for February 17-19. Dr. Joel McCall of Equipping Leaders International, Inc. (ELI), a former pastor and current missionary, will be our Bible teacher and mission speaker along with five of our church missionaries. Look for more details next month.

# Christ Church Press

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*Address Service Requested*



## January

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 	2	3 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study, Evans	4 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	5	6 6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer	7
8 4:30 p.m. AYC Rehearsal 5:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m. Youth Gathering	9 6:30 p.m. Session Prayer & Meeting 7:00 p.m. Trail Life	10 10:00 a.m. Women's Daytime Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study, Augusta 7:00 p.m. Diaconate Meeting	11 6:15 p.m. Brass Ensemble Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	12 6:45 p.m. Women's Evening Bible Study	13 6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer	14
15 4:30 p.m. AYC Rehearsal 5:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting	16	17 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study, Evans	18 6:15 p.m. Brass Ensemble Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	19 6:00 p.m. Young Couples Connect Bible Study	20 6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer 5:30 p.m. Youth Bonfire	21
22 4:30 p.m. AYC Rehearsal 5:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m. Youth Gathering	23 7:00 p.m. Trail Life	24 10:00 a.m. Women's Daytime Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study, Augusta	25 6:15 p.m. Brass Ensemble Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	26 6:45 p.m. Women's Evening Bible Study	27 6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer	28
29 4:30 p.m. AYC Off Campus 5:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting	30 7:00 p.m. Trail Life	31				