



CHRIST CHURCH PRESS

The Monthly Newsletter of Christ Church, Presbyterian
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March 2017

The Pastor's Selection

Birthdays

- 01.....Charles Kimbrell
Richard Turner
- 04 Paul Caruso
- 05Lynn Black
Laura Doss
- 06 Andrew Norkus
- 08 Leanora Parish
- 12.....Thelma Nunziato
- 17.....Anne Bowen
Charlie Rector
- 19..... Hamilton McDaniel
- 20Virginia Lammie
- 21.....Roseanna Marble
Carol Mauldin
- 22Carl Fliermans
- 23Patty Marter
- 24.....David Dyer
- 25Maria Russell
- 27.....Kay Lovingood
- 29Ed Evans
- 31.....Kayla Almon
Jonathan Kimbrell

It's a Wonderful Time to Be Christian

Five Reasons for Optimism in America

—Garrett Kell, *Desiring God*

America is facing turbulent times. Political unrest is unceasing. The racial divide is deepening. Fear and frustration swirl frantically.

This leads to only one logical conclusion: It's a wonderful time to be a Christian.

Christians are uniquely equipped to thrive in tumultuous times, not because we are great, but because our God is. As we consider the darkness of our days, I'd like to share five reasons I think it is a wonderful time to be a Christian in America.

1. People are intrigued by real Christians.

Whether it be through media stories, political reports, or comedy sets, "evangelical Christians" are characterized as whiny, entitled children. We are perceived as bigoted hate-mongers looking down on others while blinded to our own shortcomings. We are seen as outdated, overrated, and irrelevant.

Yet, when someone meets an actual Christian these days, they often are intrigued.

Our convictions are peculiar, but the gentleness and respect with which we hold them is refreshing (1 Peter 3:15). We don't demonize those we disagree with, but treat them with charity, as we want them to treat us (Matthew 7:12). We engage with humility because we know that we too are imperfect and need God to change us as well.

Our community is also peculiar. When they observe the church, they find a people who are not naturally united. We come from different cultures, vote for different candidates, march for different causes, and often have little in common – except Jesus. When people spend time with us, they perceive a love marked by patience, charity, and heavenly-mindedness.

Now, not everyone will like real Christians when they meet them. But God's word promises that He will use our love to change people's opinion of us and (more importantly) of our God:

Keep your conduct among [non-believers], so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:12)

If Christians will engage their neighbors with courageous, humble, honest, servant-hearted love, people will be pleasantly surprised.

2. Christians have the answer for racial reconciliation.

The rock of racial unrest has been rolled over in our country. Out from the darkness have crawled sorrowful reminders that our progress is incomplete. The anger and apathy that swirls around our brokenness tempts many to despair.

Yet Christians know Jesus provides a better way. On the one hand, we cannot simply say Jesus is enough and expect peace. The issues are far too complex and wounds too deep for a superficial balm. The hard work of praying, fasting, listening, learning, confessing, repenting, forgiving, and changing is required.

White brothers and sisters ought to show love by learning about the deep roots of social, institutional, and communal injustices that affect many today. Read the Scriptures alongside historical books that recount the black experience in America. Talk about what you are reading with African-American friends and include other minority friends in the discussion. Don't be defensive or quick to make excuses. Listen. Learn. Repent of sin that is exposed. Empathy is developed when education occurs in the context of relationships.

(continued on page 2)

Anniversaries

- 01.... Carole & Enrique Romero
Maria & Ed Russell
- 06Sue & Ron Moncrief
- 09Charlotte & Mel Jewett
- 17.....Dessa & John Edwards

Black brothers and sisters, I encourage you toward a resilient faith. Many of your forefathers endured oppression, were denied membership in white churches, and grew despite a lack of access to theological education. We need to see that resilience now. Systems of injustice will not be corrected overnight, which means that testing will continue. But as tests come, please ensure that your hearts are being purified and not petrified. White Christians are not your enemy. Jesus says they are family. The Lord calls us to “hope” all things, including the best in fellow believers, even when we hurt, confuse, or disappoint each other. On the other hand, we must say Jesus is enough, for He Himself is our peace.

[Jesus] is our peace, Who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility. (Ephesians 2:14)

We have already been reconciled in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:16-20). While laboring to apply this reconciliation takes hard work, we must remember that He has made us one – even if we don't feel like it (Ephesians 4:1-3). The peace Jesus provides is strong enough to hold back the gates of hell and weather the storm we face today.

The world does not have an answer like Jesus. They have no power and no lasting solutions. But we have an opportunity to show them the unity that Jesus prayed for and purchased with His blood (John 17:20-21).

At the cross alone, fear mongering, finger pointing, and apathetic indifference are put to death, and real reconciliation comes to life.

3. God has brought unreached peoples to us.

For centuries, the American church has been praying, raising money, and sending workers to take the good news of Jesus to people who have not heard. This work is important and must continue, but we can't overlook what God is doing in our own backyard.

God has brought unreached peoples to us.

Though policies surrounding immigration are debated, the reality of immigration is not. Tens of millions of legal and illegal immigrants have settled in the United States. Many have fled war-torn countries and are seeking a fresh start. Many are seeking hope which cannot be found in Allah or any other supposed god.

Regardless of your political views, if you are a Christian, your theological convictions should spur you to action. What would happen if Christians opened their homes and their lives to the strangers who live next to them? Showing Christlike hospitality to Muslim neighbors is essential for them to understand the true message of Christianity.

I do not say this lightly – we are positioned to fulfill the Great Commission.

Dispersed peoples and advances in technology have opened unparalleled opportunities to advance the gospel. While we are able, we must steward this opportunity and make disciples among the nations, and by His grace, many are in our backyard.

4. Persecution is purifying us.

Jesus promised that following Him would be costly. He warned, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20). Ostracism and affliction have marked the church since its beginnings. Yet, the United States has been largely spared this common experience of believers.

Many minority groups have tragically endured oppression, but as a whole, the church in America has known freedom to worship Jesus. In fact, public worship has not only been allowable, but advantageous. Churchgoing opened doors for business, made one appear trustworthy, and was required for social acceptability.

But the tide is changing. And as it does, Christians are experiencing increasing pressure from the world to conform or be conformed. This pressure will expose some so-called “Christians” as imposters, but for true believers, it will produce maturity.

Pressure from the world pushes Christians deeper into Christ. As this happens, we will be pruned and purified. We are forced to search His word to explain our convictions (1 Peter 3:15). The importance of prayer becomes undeniable. Political power is exposed as a mirage. Sin's offerings are less desirable. Our affections are reoriented toward heaven.

In His mercy, God uses persecution to purify our profession of faith to the point that we can honestly say, “Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides You” (Psalm 73:25). Persecution should never be sought, but when it comes, we can trust that God will use it for our good.

5. We are closer to seeing Jesus than ever before.

The hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. (Romans 13:11)

Every generation since Christ's ascension has clung to this promise. As time has passed, it has only become truer. Whether Christ will return in our day is yet to be seen, but the horizon is brightening as the day is darkening. The believer sees this hope with unveiled eyes and senses the sweetness of approaching glory.

Until now, many of us have gone days or weeks without even giving thought to the Lord's return. Our love for the world has drowned out the need to hope in the world to come.

Yet, in God's kindness, today is a new day. As we grow in our love for Christ, our hearts will be oriented toward heaven. We will find the chatter of the world emptier and the promises of heaven fuller.

The Lord's return cannot leave us unaffected. Let it move you to prayer for perseverance (Mark 14:38). May it press you to risk all to reach the unreached (Matthew 24:14). Ready yourself for your heavenly bridegroom, and let His coming keep you sober, knowing it could interrupt your next breath (Luke 12:40).

It is a wonderful time to be a Christian. God is working among all nations, including ours. Let us not despair or be deceived, but lift our eyes in hope to Him Who is coming soon.

Ministry through Music

Monday, March 6, at 7:00 p.m. is the upcoming music celebration in our Sanctuary with Rodrigo Rodriguez, a classically trained Christian guitarist. This will be a wonderful time to invite your friends and neighbors. For more information and to listen to Rodrigo, you might check out his website at <http://rodrigorodriguez.net>. Rodrigo will also be here Sunday morning, March 5, to play a few selections giving us a "taste" for Monday evening.



LAST CALL if you are interested in singing celebratory Easter music with the Christ Church Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra. We continue to rehearse each Wednesday evening and you are cordially invited. Our extra rehearsal, highlighting Easter music is scheduled on Saturday morning, March 4, at 9:30. Contact me, Stan Pylant, for further information (music@christchurchpres.org). Our Evensong: An Easter Celebration, will be Sunday evening, April 16.

"The Lord God is my strength and my song; He has given me victory." Isaiah 12:2b, NLT

Trail Life Trek



As part of our Respect for Life, Trail Life USA Troop GA-2215 hosted a baby shower along with the newly formed American Heritage Girls troop for one of our families who recently adopted a Down's Syndrome infant. In addition to blessing this family, the boys learned about how Down's Syndrome children are special, were created by God that way, and how the adoption process works.

We closed the meeting with Galatians 4:4-6, "But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are His sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit Who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'"

Boys can join at any time during the year. You can use the contact link on the church website or contact John Norkus, Troopmaster (706-373-2173, thenorkusfamily@comcast.net) for more information.

Missions Matters

The Missions Committee invites you to join us as we launch our first Community Service Team. We will be visiting the Icebox Urban Farm campus in Harrisburg on Saturday, March 11th, to assist with farm chores, planting, and any general maintenance they may need. This visit is open to all ages and children are welcomed and happily included in Icebox activities. Please be sure to wear clothes that can get dirty and bring gloves and gardening tools if you have them. If you have a green thumb and happen to have some extra vegetable seedlings, donations are always welcome! Our work time is scheduled from 9:00 a.m. until noon, and the Icebox ladies will feed anyone who would like to stay for lunch. Please contact the church office (706-210-9090) or Dessa Edwards (706-627-9430) if you are planning to attend. A head count is needed by Wednesday, March 8th. The Icebox Urban Farm is located at 1736 Fenwick Street in Augusta. This is a residential area, so please be courteous of the members of the community when parking—don't block driveways or make streets impassable. Thanks! We're looking forward to getting dirty and shining His light with you!

Bible & Missions Conference Report - We praise the Lord for all that was accomplished during our 2017 Bible and Missions Conference, with Bible teacher and missionary Dr. Joel McCall of Equipping Leaders International. Thanks to all who helped achieve our three major objectives: to glorify our Triune God, to inform & challenge the local church, and to encourage our missionaries. Challenging missionary reports were heard from the Burnham family, Mary Elizabeth Goodell, Steven (in harm's way), Mark & Susan Walters, and Bruce & Barbara Wannamacher.

Missionary Moments, short videos from missionaries on the field, were shown throughout the weekend, and were well received. Soon many of them will be available through the church website. The conference concluded with reports on local ministry activities and opportunities for church members. Pray for our next conference February 9-11, 2018, with Bible teacher, Dr. Sanders Wilson, retired Sr. Pastor of Second Presbyterian in Memphis, TN.

Missions Prayer Bands will meet again on Sunday, March 12, at 5:00 p.m. in Covenant Hall. This will be an exciting time of prayer for our supported missionaries and missions. Each month will include missionary reports and/or videos. We are excited to have Greg and Julianne Allen, New Tribes Mission, kickoff this special ministry. For more information, please contact Ken Moody at 706-854-7977 or via e-mail to kjmcfm@gmail.com.

Vacation Bible School • June 12-16 • 9 a.m. until noon

From the Casebook of Angus McTavish: "The Case of the Puzzling Parables"

They are back! Our fearsome Scottish sleuths Angus McTavish and Professor Dabney Thornwell return for another mystery. Last year they led our Bible investigators in solving the "Case of the Baffling Beginnings" and now there is another Bible case to investigate. All Christ Church members are invited to help us solve "The Case of the Puzzling Parables." There is work for all to do!

Volunteers are needed for that week: before, during, and after. Everyone can play a part in teaching God's Word to our children and reaching out to other children in our community. Whatever your talent, you can be a part of exposing children to the Word of God! Contact Fay Deal (803-278-1176 or runningdeal@gmail.com) to volunteer.

Clue: What do dirt, jewels, and money have in common?

"That you may tell the next generation that this is God, our God forever and ever, He will guide us forever." Psalm 48:13-14

Christ Church Press

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Address Service Requested



March

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	4
			7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	6:00 p.m. Young Couples & Young Families Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Missions Committee Meeting	6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer 6:30 p.m. Youth Outing: Putt Putt & Laser Tag for 7 th - 12 th grades.	9:00 a.m. Church Workday with picnic lunch 9:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal: Easter Music
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
4:30 p.m. AYC Rehearsal 5:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting	7:00 p.m. American Heritage Girls 7:00 p.m. Rodrigo Rodriguez in Concert 7:00 p.m. Trail Life	10:00 a.m. Women's Daytime Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study, Evans 7:00 p.m. Diaconate Meeting	6:15 p.m. Brass Ensemble Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	6:45 p.m. Women's Evening Bible Study	6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer	9:00 a.m. Community Service Team at Icebox Urban Farm
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
4:30 p.m. AYC Rehearsal 5:00 p.m. Missions Prayer Bands	6:30 Session Prayer & Meeting 7:00 p.m. American Heritage Girls 7:00 p.m. Trail Life	7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study, Augusta	6:15 p.m. Brass Ensemble Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	6:00 p.m. Young Couples & Young Families Bible Study	6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
4:30 p.m. AYC Rehearsal 5:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting 5:00 p.m. Grounded Foster Care Informational Meeting 7:30 p.m. Youth Gathering: 7 th - 12 th grades	12:00 p.m. Augusta University Singers Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. American Heritage Girls 7:00 p.m. Trail Life	10:00 a.m. Women's Daytime Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study, Evans	12:00 p.m. Augusta University Singers Rehearsal 6:15 p.m. Brass Ensemble Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	6:45 p.m. Women's Evening Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Augusta University Singers Concert	6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
4:30 p.m. AYC Away 5:00 p.m. Prayer Meeting 7:15 p.m. Jones Family Farewell	7:00 p.m. American Heritage Girls 7:00 p.m. Trail Life	7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study, Augusta	6:15 p.m. Brass Ensemble Rehearsal 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal		6:30 a.m. Men's Prayer	