



"You are the salt of the earth."
Matthew 5:13



The Priority of Worship

Adam and Eve had direct communication with God in the Garden of Eden. They could hear Him talking as "*He walked in the garden in the cool of the day*" (Genesis 3:8). They hid themselves from His presence after they had disobeyed Him. This is the first recorded experience of broken fellowship and thus of a damaged worship capacity.

It is obvious from Genesis that Adam knew what it meant to love and worship God and he taught this to his children (chapter 4). It appears that animal sacrifices for human beings began when God made coats of skins with which to clothe Adam and Eve (3:21). This practice continued after they were thrust out of the garden, for we next learn of the offerings to God that their children brought.

The essence of true and false worship was illustrated at the dawn of time by Cain and Abel. Abel demonstrated his faith (Hebrews 11:4) by offering to God an animal sacrifice (Genesis 4:4). God rejected Cain's offering from his crops. Cain evidently did not follow God's instructions. Some interpret Genesis 4:7 to mean that a sacrificial animal crouched at the door of his tent and could have been used by him to make an acceptable offering to God. Cain's lack of love for God led to a lack of love for his brother, whom he murdered (4:8).

The first thing Noah did after leaving the ark, following the great Flood, was to build an altar to God to worship Him after the Flood. **Worship was the first act of the new order of mankind** after God had destroyed the old order. He offered up sacrifices of extra animals taken on board, and this pleased the Lord (8:20-22).

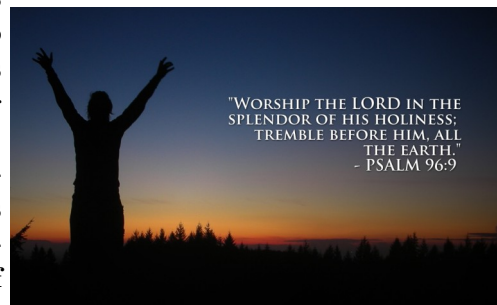
All the righteous patriarchs of ancient times—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph—expressed their love for God by offering animal sacrifices. Everywhere Abraham went he consistently built an altar and worshiped (12:7; 13:4; 18; 22:9). God told Moses that worship was to be the way by which they would know that it was to Jehovah who brought them out of Egypt (Exodus 3:12).

Moving from the era of the Hebrew clan to the era of the nation of Israel, worship became highly organized under the Aaronic priesthood following the giving of the covenant of law at Mount Sinai. The appointment of Aaron and his sons and the building of the portable tabernacle are described in Exodus 28-31 and 36-40.

Musicians were carefully appointed for worship in the Temple. References to the appointment of musical guilds by David are frequent (1 Chronicles 15:15,27; 25:1-31; 2 Chronicles 29:25-26; Nehemiah 12:45-47). When the Ark of God was moved to Jerusalem David, appointed singers and other musicians who were "skillful" in their art (1 Chronicles 15:16-22,27-28; 16:4-6,42).

In the building of the Temple, four thousand musicians were appointed to "praise the Lord with the musical instruments . . . provided for that purpose" (23:5; 25:1-31).

When the Ark of God was brought from Jerusalem to the Temple, all the Levites who were musicians were accompanied by 120 priests and "*all joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the Lord . . . [and] the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God*" (2 Chronicles 5:12-14).



The Priority of Worship

(Continued from page 1)

One of the most remarkable accounts in Scripture is **the place worship plays even in warfare**. Jeshoshaphat, a son of David and a theocratic king, defeated Moab and Ammon as he obediently trusted God by bowing before Him and having all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fall down in worship and praising God "with a very loud voice" (20:18-19). Jehoshaphat ". . . appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise Him for the splendor of His holiness as they went out at the head of the army. As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated" (vv. 21-22). Israel's foes destroyed each other in the confusion of battle, similar to the victory under Gideon (Judges 7:22).

The tabernacle was designed exclusively for worship. God was so concerned with proper worship that seven chapters—243 verses—in the book of Leviticus is given to describe in detail how God wants to be worshiped. This is astounding when you realize that God took only 31 verses in Genesis to describe the creation of the world.

The Israelites did not attend the tabernacle to witness a service or to be entertained. They went there to worship—and worship only. They went there to meet God. That was its purpose: "*Then have them make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them*" (Exodus 25:8).

The tabernacle was later replaced by Solomon, who built the temple in Jerusalem; but the system of worship was basically the same. Sacrifices, prayers, thanksgiving, giving, music and fellowship were used as forms of worship. After the temple was destroyed and the Jews went into captivity to the East, synagogues became houses of instruction and worship; however, only future temples were used for sacrifices.

Worship would be a means whereby they acknowledged and responded to the presence of God in their lives. Christian worship, then, is primarily and deeply indebted to Hebrew worship. Jesus and His early followers worshiped in the temple, which Herod had rebuilt, and in the synagogues. When Jesus returned to His native Nazareth, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Luke 4:16). Until its destruction in A.D. 70, the early Christians shared in the worship in the temple. After its destruction, even though the rift was growing between the Jews and the followers of Jesus, Christians continued to worship in the synagogues. It was through the medium of the Jewish communities that Paul and others began their witness to the pagan world.

The synagogue worship which developed was quite simple. Unlike the ornate temple, the synagogue was a simple building. Instead of a highly organized priesthood, the ruler of the synagogue shared the worship leadership with members of the congregation. Along with the reading of the Scriptures, an almost informal service of praise, prayer and exhortation developed. The congregation participated in the praise, the prayer, and also the recitation of the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) and the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-9), a declaration of faith. The *Amen* was the congregational response.

The early believers in Christ met in homes for worship and instruction about the Christ who had fulfilled sacrifices once for all, having made Himself the only worthy sacrifice for sin at Calvary. Thus Christians no longer offered animal sacrifices to God. When church buildings began to appear, they were constructed to facilitate programs of instruction, worship, fellowship and service.

If there is anything wrong with our worship, it is not so much that we are using the wrong liturgy or ignorant of better techniques, but that we **fail to acknowledge and respond to the presence of God**. We are more aware of fellow worshipers or those leading the service than we are of God. Unaccustomed to looking for God in our daily lives, we find it difficult to recognize Him on Sunday morning.

The covenant promise which God gave to Israel is still ours today. As He called them to be His people and promised to be their God, so He calls and promises us. As He desired that they would come to the tabernacle to commune with Him, so He desires our communion today. And what He wants from us is a **worshipful response**, not just church attendance.

— *Pastor Lars*

Treasurer's Report

The financial results of the Unified Operating Fund for the three months ended March 31, 2013 were as follows:

INCOME

Unified Receipts	\$126,012
Investment & Other Income	<u>2,195</u>
Total Income	\$128,207

EXPENSES

	<u>\$125,212</u>
Excess of Income over Expenses	<u>\$2,995</u>

As was the case last month, the Fund managed to show a surplus for the first quarter, even though Unified Receipts continue to run below the Financial Plan (down \$14,241) and the first three months of 2013 (down \$4,611). Still, weekly receipts for March were much higher than the first two months. This is an encouraging development. If the March weekly average is maintained, the first quarter receipts shortage will be made up in about four months. Thanks for your continued generosity.



The year-to-date surplus is entirely due to expenses being substantially below the Financial Plan, again mostly due to the interim nature of the senior pastor position and the music staff. On the other side of the coin, the Capital Needs budget was overspent in March (but will be ok for the year as a whole) due to the new floor surface in the children's classrooms. If you haven't seen it, please take a look while you are getting refreshments after the services.

Bob Fiscus
Treasurer

Thank You

Special thanks from Destiny, Jah'keem, Ja'nye, Alize, Minnelz, Quincy, Fransico, D'Onne, Shayna, Justin, Jared, Lamone, and Tyrone for the beautiful Easter baskets. God's spirit shines through people like you.

Lakesha Smith
Department of Children & Families



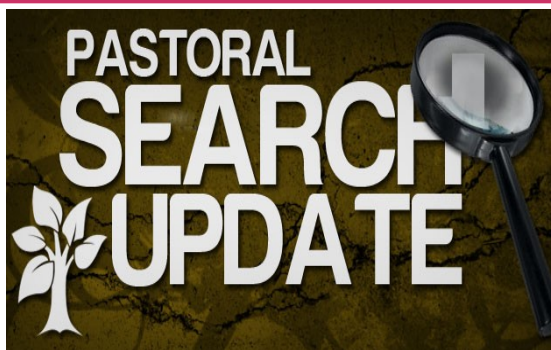
Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 5/1 Cheryll Pittera
D.J. Greer
Alexa Meachen
- 5/2 ♥ Dave & Jill Diana ♥
- 5/3 Matthew Delfino
- 5/4 Sofia Estrada
♥ Bill & Christine Austin ♥
- 5/6 Karen Sheridan
♥ Alan & Joan Bjork ♥
♥ Peter & Nancy McDonald ♥
- 5/7 Brett Gibbs
♥ Ben & Jill Miller ♥
- 5/8 Katrina Hatfield
♥ Don & Kallie Sebestyen ♥
- 5/9 Peter Drummond
- 5/10 ♥ John & Andrea Stetson ♥
- 5/11 Justin Sharp
Matthew Blair
- 5/12 Pat Swanson
Mike Testa
Sarah Ambrose
- 5/14 Dan Wiemer
- 5/15 Mindy Hatfield
♥ Arne & Linda Gustavson ♥
- 5/19 ♥ James & Liz Anderson ♥
- 5/20 Mallory Kellerman
Morgann Kellerman
- 5/21 Tim Anderson
Jeff Drummond
Olivia Malewicki
- 5/22 Wivan Sundman
- 5/23 Isobel McEwan
- 5/24 Carmen Rosa, Jr.
- 5/27 Doug Freeley
♥ Joe & Jennifer Anderson ♥
- 5/29 David Pittera
Austin Bachelder
- 5/30 Betty Paterson
Steve Domyan
Robert Lewis, IV



Pastoral Search Committee Update

The Pastoral Search Committee has spent many months reviewing dozens of profiles and resumes from pastors that were referred to us or that contacted us directly. We narrowed that number down to seven pastors that we felt would appropriately fit the profile we were looking for and proceeded to interview them as often as necessary to satisfy us that they indeed have the heart and experience needed to be our pastor. Four pastors were invited to join us for a more in-depth interview. Our goal was to eventually narrow the search down to



three prospects that the Committee felt would best fulfill our requirements for a senior pastor.

We now feel that we are coming very close to the end of that part of our search and we are preparing

to enter the next phase of the process, which is seeking discernment and guidance from the Holy Spirit about the prospects we have chosen.

The Committee is asking that you continue to pray with and for us as we listen for God's direction.

We feel blessed to be a part of this whole process and we thank you again for all your patience, support and prayers.

The Search Committee



Summer Camp Ideas

For the past few months, I have been doing a different format for my Salt Shaker articles. The names of the articles were "*The Reversible List*", "*Never-Ending Questions*" and "*Positive Thoughts*." Part of the reason why was so Blake could help me write them and they were all fun to do. There is another reason why I wrote those and I want to share that with you now.

About 11 years ago, I had the opportunity to be part of a Christian camp. It was a lot of fun! We had to plan a few months ahead and I basically spent one day at the camp doing music. The following year, I heard all about how the kids came back and remembered me. They were all hoping that I would come back. I was thinking about it and wondering why no one ever sends kids home from camp with an assignment to do dur-



ing the year and then talk about it at the next year's summer at camp. o I want to share my idea.

Using the past three articles that I wrote, they could talk about them at summer camp and find out what actions they could do during the year. When the kids go home, they can do the actions and keep a journal on how their actions affected people. When they come back to camp, they can share it with each other.

In my mind, it will help them to prepare to face the world and to be more of an inspiration.

If you are preparing to do a Bible camp, I hope you will keep my ideas in mind and have a real fun time!

Snoopi Botten

Children's Ministry

Thank you to everyone who helped out with our Annual Easter Outreach Event!

Last Friend's Night Out for this school year will be Tuesday, May 14th when we'll have a **GAME NIGHT!**

Last Children's Sunday school for this school year will be Sunday, June 9th.



**VBS
STAFF
LUNCHEON**

Sunday
June 2nd
12:00 noon

9 am to 12:15 pm

Ages 4 thru 6th grade

COST: \$30 (\$25 sibling/\$20 2nd sibling/\$75 max. family)

Registration forms available online at www.coveaston.org

REGISTER NOW
(WE FILL UP EVERY YEAR!)

Bookkeeper Retiring

Bobbie Morgan, who has first been the Treasurer/Bookkeeper and later the Bookkeeper for the past 19 years here at Covenant, has informed me she will be retiring on June 30.

Bobbie has done an outstanding job during the years we have worked together. Her work was consistently thorough and accurate (great qualities for a bookkeeper) and done with a cheerful attitude. Fortunately, Bobbie is only retiring as the bookkeeper and will continue as the Chair of the Pastoral Search Committee, will be active in the Women's Ministry, as well as maintaining her full-time job at Strathmoor Electric.



Bobbie's sister, Brenda Adriani, an experienced accountant, will be the new Church Bookkeeper as of July 1.

Covenant to Care

On behalf of the Covenant to Care program, I thank everyone who so generously gave baby items and gift cards for the abandoned 8 month-old little girl. Our Department of Children & Families contact, Lakesha, was quite overwhelmed with the response. This was her first time working with a church and she really couldn't believe our generosity. So, thank you all.

Linda Fiscus

Hopeline Pregnancy Resource

**JOB
OPPORTUNITY**

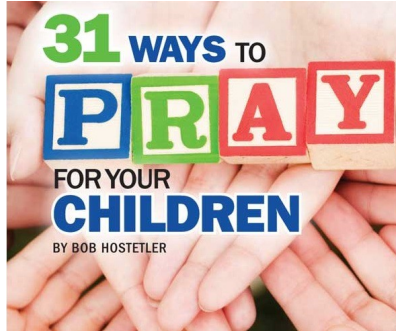
Compassionate nurse needed for pregnancy tests, prenatal education, options counseling, preparing patients for limited diagnostic ultrasound and follow up care, in a faith-based organization in our Bridgeport office. Immediate part-time position available. Spanish is a plus. Send resume and cover letter to: patti@hopelineprc.com.

Hospice at Home™

On Thursday, May 16, at 7:00 pm Hospice at Home™, a program of Visiting Nurse Services of Connecticut, Inc., will hold its Annual Memorial Service to celebrate the lives of all those special people we have served throughout the year. This year's Memorial Service will be held at the Trumbull Congregational Church, 3115 Reservoir Avenue in Trumbull. We invite all those who would like to attend, particularly those who have suffered the loss of a loved one through death, to join us in this service of remembrance and thanksgiving. You need not have any connection with Hospice at Home™ in order to attend. A reception will follow the service.

3 Biblical Virtues to Pray for Your Kids

1. **Salvation.** "Lord, let salvation spring up within my children, that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory" (Isaiah 45:8, 2 Timothy 2:10).
2. **Growth in grace.** "I pray that my children may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).
3. **Love.** "Grant, Lord, that my children may learn to live a life of love, through the Spirit who dwells in them (Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:2).
4. **Honesty and integrity.** "May integrity and honesty be their virtue and their protection" (Psalm 25:21).
5. **Self-control.** "Father, help my children not to be like many others around them, but let them be alert and self-controlled in all they do" (1 Thessalonians 5:6).
6. **Love for God's Word.** "May my children grow to find Your Word more precious than much pure gold and sweeter than honey from the comb" (Psalm 19:10).
7. **Justice.** "God, help my children to love justice as You do and act justly in all they do" (Psalm 11:7; Micah 6:8).
8. **Mercy.** "May my children always be merciful, just as their Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36).
9. **Respect (for self, others, authority).** "Father, grant that my children may show proper respect to everyone as Your Word commands" (1 Peter 2:17).
10. **Biblical self-esteem.** "Help my children develop a strong self-esteem that is rooted in the realization that they are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:10).
11. **Faithfulness.** "Let love and faithfulness never leave my children, but bind these twin virtues around their necks and write them on the tablet of their hearts" (Proverbs 3:3).
12. **Courage.** "May my children always be strong and courageous in their character and in their actions" (Deuteronomy 31:6).
13. **Purity.** "Create in them a pure heart, O God, and let that purity of heart be shown in their actions" (Psalm 51:10).
14. **Kindness.** "Lord, may my children always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else" (1 Thessalonians 5:15).
15. **Generosity.** "Grant that my children may be generous and willing to share, and so lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age" (1 Timothy 6:18-19).
16. **Peace-loving.** "Father, let my children make every effort to do what leads to peace" (Romans 14:19).
17. **Joy.** "May my children be filled with the joy given by the Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 1:6).
18. **Perseverance.** "Lord, teach my children perseverance in all they do, and help them especially to run with perseverance the race marked out for them" (Hebrews 12:1).
19. **Humility.** "God, please cultivate in my children the ability to show true humility toward all" (Titus 3:2).
20. **Compassion.** "Lord, please clothe my children with the virtue of compassion" (Colossians 3:12).
21. **Responsibility.** "Grant that my children may learn responsibility, for each one should carry his own load" (Galatians 6:5).
22. **Contentment.** "Father, teach my children the secret of being content in any and every situation, through Him who gives them strength" (Philippians 4:12-13).
23. **Faith.** "I pray that faith will find root and grow in my children's hearts, that by faith they may gain what has been promised to them" (Luke 17:5-6; Hebrews 11:1-40).
24. **A servant's heart.** "God, please help my children develop servants' hearts, that they may serve wholeheartedly, as if they were serving the Lord, not men" (Ephesians 6:7).
25. **Hope.** "May the God of hope grant that my children may overflow with hope and hopefulness by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).
26. **Willingness and ability to work.** "Teach my children, Lord, to value work and to work at it with all their heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Colossians 3:23).
27. **Passion for God.** "Lord, please instill in my children a soul that 'followeth hard after Thee' (Psalm 63:8, KJV), one that clings passionately to You."
28. **Self-discipline.** "Father, I pray that my children may acquire a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair" (Proverbs 1:3).
29. **Prayerfulness.** "Grant, Lord, that my children's lives may be marked by prayerfulness, that they may learn to pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Ephesians 6:18).
30. **Gratitude.** "Help my children to live lives that are always overflowing with thankfulness and always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 2:7).
31. **A heart for missions.** "Lord, please help my children to develop a desire to see Your glory declared among the nations, your marvelous deeds among all peoples" (Psalm 96:3).



Excerpted from *Pray Magazine*, issue four. Bob Hostetler is the author of the award-winning *Don't Check Your Brains at the Door* (co-authored by Josh McDowell) and *They Call Me A.W.O.L.* He lives near Hamilton, Ohio with his wife, Robin, and has two adult children, and 4 grandchildren.

MAY



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Rooted in Christ - Reaching Out to the World

May Worship

TWO SERVICES EACH SUNDAY – 9:00 am and 10:45 am

May	5	<i>The Church & Spirituality: Balance, Part I</i> Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18; Acts 2:42-47 Holy Communion	Pastor Lars
May	12	<i>The Church & Spirituality: Balance, Part II</i> Dialogue Sermon Matthew 6:1-8; 16-18; Acts 2:42-47	Pastor Lars & Pastor Cary
May	19	<i>The Challenge of Change, Part I</i> Hebrews 11:25; Malachi 3:6	Pastor Lars
May	26	<i>Open to Change, Part II</i> Luke 5:36-39 (The Parables of the New Patch and New Wine)	Pastor Lars