



The eNewsletter

January 21, 2016

A publication of Covenant Presbyterian Church, 8451 East Brainerd Road, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37421
423.899.5377 www.covenantchattanooga.org

From the Pen of the Senior Associate Pastor...

Looking Ahead...

- January 22**
Men's Retreat
- January 23**
Men's Retreat
- January 24**
Morning Worship
Sunday School
- January 27**
Wednesday Night Supper
Wednesday Night Activities
- January 28**
Ladies' Thursday Bible Study
- January 30**
Youth Bowling Party
Martinez Wedding Reception
- January 31**
Morning Worship
Sunday School
Church Wide Prayer Meeting
- February 1**
Ladies' Monday Night Bible Study
- February 2**
Mother's Encouragement Group
Women's Council Meeting
- February 3**
Wednesday Night Supper
Wednesday Night Activities
Session Meeting
- February 4**
Ladies' Thursday Bible Study
- February 5**
Valentine Dinner
- February 6**
Men's Breakfast
- February 7**
Morning Worship
Sunday School
Youth Super Bowl Party
- February 10**
Wednesday Night Supper
Wednesday Night Activities
- February 13**
Youth Babysitting Service Project

Can victories come from defeat? This question has visited my thoughts since Clemson, though playing well, lost in the recent national collegiate football championship game. (I've been a Tiger fan from the womb!)

Jesus' disciples were feeling exhausted, confused, and defeated. They had been through more in two weeks than most can say of a lifetime. Undoubtedly, they were still processing all that had taken place, recalling words, rehearsing experiences - everything they knew was forever altered by the three years they spent with Jesus. They were fishermen, tax collectors, and physicians who became students, friends, and followers of a rabbi who set something terrible and wonderful in motion. Even if they did not yet have their minds around it, there was an awareness that they had stood on holy ground. They saw Him perform miracles. They saw Him worshipped and despised. They saw Him killed and buried. They saw the dead body. And, then they saw Him alive - twice.

Early in the morning (John 21), possibly out of habit, possibly out of a need to be in waters familiar to their time with the one they just lost, the disciples went fishing. As they were fishing, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize who it was. From the shore He called out, "Have you any fish?" "No," they answered. "Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."

Perhaps since they had spent all other fish catching options, perhaps because the advice seemed familiar (cf. Luke 5), they listened to the one on the shore. And when they did, they were unable to haul in the net because of the great catch.

Immediately one of them cried out in recognition: "It is the Lord!" As soon as Peter heard it, he jumped into the water and swam to the shore. (Sorry ... but, images of Forrest Gump doing something similar while calling out, "Lt. Dan! Lt. Dan!" come to mind.) The other disciples hurriedly followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish. When they came ashore, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it and some bread. And Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast."

Whether it is the first or the one hundredth time hearing John's retelling of the appearance of the resurrected Jesus, it is a story that saturates us with anticipation. It is a story in which to rightfully get caught up. Once again in the midst of the one who called them to follow, the disciples approach the fire, their hearts burning within them as they stand beside the Lord. And in this third appearance of the one they saw dead and buried, Jesus invites them to eat with Him. Humbled by this privileged view of God's glory, the realization that something was at work far beyond them, the disciples were silenced before the risen Christ. John recounts the common sentiment among them. His words seem to bow before Jesus's invitation to nearness: "None of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' For they knew it was the Lord" (v. 12).

There was a time when I found myself pressing to add my voice to that fireside quietness. Daring to, and rebelliously demanding answers, "Who are you?" And "What do you want from me?" Struggling with the God whose persistence and pursuit I found exhausting, whose very will required me to repeatedly relinquish my own.

Certainly, there are triumphant defeats that rival the best victories. Along our sojourn of surrendering to God, the battle seems an unavoidable illustration. And there is truth to the thought that surrendering to God is a struggle that begins again each day as if nothing had yet been accomplished. But, it is in this great surrendering that we find not toil but triumph, not struggle but release.

In the presence of the one that moved mountains of sin and unawareness and brought them to the feet of God, the disciples found reason to surrender. Might we also be humbled by the God who refuses to leave despite the words we might shout in protest, despite our refusals to surrender. Might we be awed by the one who says, "Follow me!" and expects us to trust that He will not leave or forsake us. And might we marvel at the God who, carrying in His body the scars of defeat, invites us to His nearness that is our victory.

~Pastor Mullinax



What's Happening?

Nursery Schedule January 24

Worship

Infants

Jay & Susan Helton

Creepers

Kansas Bradley
& Karen Saxton

Toddlers

Josh & Renee Ray

Floater

Meg Ferrel

Sunday School

Infants

Jared & Sarah McCurry

Creepers

Heather Morrison
& Lucy Cleveland

Toddlers

Patty Liner
& Ellen Heider

January Coordinator:

Tammy Higgins

BABY SHOWER

A baby shower in honor of Joy Rogers is on Sunday, February 7, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Perseverers Classroom. Joy is registered at Target and Babies R Us.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Pastor Pirschel finishes his combined Sunday School class, *A Conversation on Corporate Worship*, in the Sanctuary on January 24. Refreshments are available in Schum Fellowship Hall, but please do not bring food into the Sanctuary.

CHURCH WIDE PRAYER MEETING

Spend some time in prayer with your church family. On Sunday, January 31, come pray together in Schum Fellowship Hall from 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

PRAYER CALENDAR

The updated Prayer Calendar is available for pickup at the Welcome Center.

MEN'S RETREAT

The retreat starts tomorrow, January 22, 6:30 p.m. at Camp Vesper Point. If you did not receive directions and instructions, or if you have any further questions, please contact Tony DeMarco at 949.235.0635.

VALENTINE DINNER

The 4th Annual Valentine Dinner and Cake Auction, benefitting the 2017 choir mission trip to Belarus, will be held Friday, February 5, at 6:30 p.m. Please register, space is limited and fills up fast. Please contact Jeremy Gaines with any questions, jgaines@covenantchattanooga.com.

BIRTHDAY/ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR

The February birthday and anniversary calendar is available for pick up at the Welcome Center.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please make the following changes in your CPC Membership Directory:

Britt Johnson

1777 Stanbridge Avenue
Roseville, MN 55113

Tom & Frances Lowe

6744 Willow Brook Drive
Chattanooga TN 37421

Nick & Diane Lazor

(No landline)

Cell phone (husband).....423.503.3670

Cell phone (wife).....423.503.0587

YOUTH BOWLING

All High School and Middle School Youth are invited to go bowling at Pin Strikes, for \$10, on Saturday, January 30, from 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

YOUTH SUPER BOWL PARTY

All High School and Middle School Youth are invited to Chris and Reba Gregory's home for a Super Bowl Party, February 7, from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPERS

Wednesday Night Suppers are served from 5:30 p.m. until 6:40 p.m. The suggested donation for adults is \$4 and \$2.50 for children ages 5 to 11. Children 4 and under eat for free, and the maximum family donation is \$15.

For the month of January, the following shepherding groups have clean-up duty: J. Gaines, J. Brown, M. Griggs, T. Wright, T. Lowe, and T. Gaither. We will contact you weekly by email to see if you are available to help.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MENU

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| January 27 | Chili (Red and White) with Cornbread |
| February 3 | Jambalaya Pasta (Mac 'n Cheese for kids) |
| February 10 | Breakfast |
| February 17 | Baked Chicken and Cheesy Grits |
| February 24 | Pork Enchiladas |