



The eNewsletter

April 6, 2017

A publication of Covenant Presbyterian Church, 8451 East Brainerd Road, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37421
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Looking Ahead...

April 9

Morning Worship
Congregational Meeting
Sunday School
Youth Hiking

April 10

Ladies' Monday Night
Bible Study - Titus

April 12

No Wednesday Night
Activities
Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

April 13

Ladies' Thursday Bible Study
Maundy Thursday Service

April 14

Church Office Closed -
Good Friday

April 15

Resurrection Egg Hunt
Breakfast

April 16

Morning Worship
No Sunday School

April 18

Mothers' Encouragement
Group

April 19

Wednesday Night Supper
Wednesday Night Activities
Session Meeting

April 20

Memorial Hospital Lunch

April 21

Marriage Retreat

April 22

Marriage Retreat

April 23

Morning Worship
Sunday School
Instrumental Ensemble
Rehearsal
GUBA

April 26

Wednesday Night Supper
Wednesday Night Activities

April 29

Men's Breakfast
Ladies' Teacher Leadership
Class

From the Pen of the Senior Associate Pastor...

I have a sizeable wooden carving that is displayed in a prominent place in my home. This piece struck me the moment I first saw it while visiting a crowded street market in Ecuador years ago. It depicts a satisfied and smiling shepherd with a young lamb securely resting over his shoulders.

Shepherds and sheep are very familiar images in God's redemptive story. Isaiah writes of God, "He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young." (Isaiah 40.11) Matthew notes similarly of Christ, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9.36) Hearing such descriptions, perhaps you recall images of a good shepherd similar to the statue on my fireplace hearth: Jesus standing peacefully among His flock, keeping watch and taking care. It is an image not far from some of those carefully portrayed in well-told stories: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. (Psalm 23.1-3a)

When Jesus stood among crowds and spoke of sheep, familiar images of fields and grazing sheep would have come to the minds of His hearers as well. For some, the biblical images of God gathering lambs into His arms would have crossed their minds. But, these wouldn't have been the only images that came to mind, particularly for those who heard Jesus in Jerusalem. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." (John 10.27, 28)

Standing in the temple precinct, preaching to worshipers and religious leaders, these words of Jesus about sheep would have evoked a bold awareness of sounds and activities all around them. At tables nearby, bleating sheep were being sold and carried further into the temple, where they were led through a door-gate to the place of sacrifice.

Far from the peaceful setting of a pasture, Jesus spoke of sheep in the place where they were about to be slaughtered. Unlike the shepherd among passive lambs in many of our imaginations, tending these sheep requires something more than a gentle hand and a watchful eye. These sheep needed to be saved.

So it is quite telling that Jesus *first* identifies Himself, not as the Good Shepherd, but as the door-gate for the sheep. In the ancient walls of Jerusalem, there was a door-gate on the north of the city, by which animals were brought in from the countryside for sacrifice. It was called the *Sheep Gate*. Once inside the city and within the temple courts, there was only one door where the sheep went in, and no lamb ever came back out after entering the temple. They traveled in only one direction, and there they were sacrificed for the sins of men and women. For first-century hearers of Jesus's words about sheep, such knowledge added to the shock of His statement: "Truly, I say to you, I am the door (gate) of the sheep...I am the door (gate). If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." (John 10.7, 9)

In the temple filled with sheep on their way towards death, Jesus declared there was a way out: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (John 10.11)

I readily imagine the Good Shepherd delights in the task of caring for His flock. He goes willingly to search for the one that has gone astray. He gently carries us over His shoulders and in His arms, and guides us through valleys and beside still waters. He calls us by name and smiles at our recognition of His voice.

But, He also breaks into places where there is no longer hope. He refuses to cower through the course of our rescue, though He is accosted by our sin and humiliated by our denials. He provides a way, though it costs Him everything. He is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His friends, so that lambs can get away.

~Pastor Mullinax



What's Happening?

Nursery Schedule April 9

Worship

Infants

Lewis & Anna Reid

Crawlers

Adam & Millie Sanders

Toddlers

Mindy & Macie Horton

Floater

Will & Melissa Horton

Sunday School

Infants

Sarah & Maggie Wade

Crawlers

Fiona & Sylvia Wade

Toddlers

John Southworth
& Betsy Wade

April Coordinator:

Tammy Higgins

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There is a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, April 9, following the Morning Worship Service. The purpose of this meeting is to vote on the Senior Pastor Search Committee nominees.

YOUTH HIKING

The High School and Middle School Youth and their families are invited to go hiking in Collegedale on Sunday, April 9, at 12:30 p.m. Please bring a sack lunch and a drink. Meet in the Lobby for further instructions.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12

There are no Wednesday Night Activities on Wednesday, April 12, due to the Maundy Thursday Service on April 13.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

We will observe Maundy Thursday, April 13, at 7:00 p.m. *Maundy* originates from the Latin word *mandatum* meaning a command or mandate, referring to Christ's command given the night before His crucifixion that His disciples should love one another (John 13.34). That night, as they celebrated Passover, the disciples were told by Jesus the bread of Passover would now represent His body and the cup His blood. We will celebrate our Lord's Supper and participate in a tenebrae service denoting the growing *darkness* that would encompass the next two days before His glorious resurrection.

OFFICE CLOSED

The Church Office is closed on Friday, April 14. Please note, no eNewsletter will be sent Thursday, April 13.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please make the following updates to your CPC Membership Directory.

Nicole Lewin

Cell..... 423.602.1045

Luke & Cara Chandler

1430 Smolian Place Apt. 2
Birmingham AL 35205

Jason & Stacy Collins

200 Hidden Oaks Drive
Flintstone GA 30725

Jack & Ardeth West

394 Dylan Drive
Ringgold GA 30736

RESURRECTION EGG HUNT

BREAKFAST

Our annual Resurrection Egg Hunt Breakfast is Saturday, April 15. A pancake breakfast is served from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. A story explaining the reason we celebrate Easter begins at 9:30 a.m., followed by the egg hunt at 10:00 a.m. for children ages 2 through 5th grade. Bring a basket only, as the eggs are provided. For more information, please contact Holly Lehmann.

SUNDAY SCHOOL, APRIL 16

Sunday School Classes are not meeting after the Easter Service.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

For all of those planning their summer activities, Music Camp is June 5-9 with the program on Sunday, June 11.