



The eNewsletter

December 14, 2017

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

From the Pen of Senior Associate Pastor...

Looking Ahead...

December 16

High School Youth
Christmas Party

December 17

Morning Worship
Sunday School
Youth Praise Team Rehearsal

December 19

Mother's Encouragement
Group

December 20

Caroling & Dessert

December 21

Memorial Hospital Lunch

December 23

Youth Service Project

December 24

Morning Worship
Lessons & Carols

December 25

Office Closed - Christmas

December 26

Office Closed - Christmas

December 31

Morning Worship
Sunday School
Youth Praise Team Rehearsal

January 1

Office Closed - New Years

January 3

Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal
Session Meeting

January 6

Men's Breakfast

January 7

Lord's Supper Celebrated
Sunday School
Youth Praise Team Rehearsal

January 8

Ladies' Monday Night Luke
Bible Study
Ladies' Monday Night I Peter
Bible Study

January 9

Women's Council Meeting

January 10

Wednesday Night Activities
Resume

Wondering what good gift to give that special someone this Christmas? The possibilities seem exhaustless...and sometimes, so does the angst over finding just the right gift.

In Matthew 7 and Luke 11, Jesus indicates that like an earthly parent, God longs to gift us what is good in response to the asking, seeking, and knocking of prayer. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" (Luke 11.11, 12)

In the face of such a grand promise, what are we to do when we experience the opposite? What do we do when we receive a snake instead of a fish, and a scorpion instead of an egg? When a friend's spouse files for divorce while he's fought for his marriage? Isn't the *good* thing for the marriage to be restored? Another friend watches helplessly as the paramedics attempt to resuscitate her lifeless child. She had prayed for his life. Wouldn't the *good* thing have been for her baby to live?

All of us have experienced the pain of unanswered prayer - experiences in which prayers for God's protection, God's healing, or God's intervention has gone unanswered. Most of us have experienced the force of the answer "no" as we have pleaded and prayed for God to say "yes" to our appeal, to answer the negative aspect of whatever situation we are facing with a positive outcome.

Given our experience with unanswered prayer, what is the *good gift* promised by Jesus that the Father longs to give to His children? Matthew and Luke present parallel teachings on this promise of prayer except that what Matthew implies, Luke makes explicit. In Matthew's account Jesus tells His disciples that "your Father in heaven (will) give good gifts to those who ask Him!" In Luke's account, Jesus defines what is "good and tells us that God will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him."

How are we to understand the Holy Spirit as God's abundant answer (gift) to our prayers - even those prayers that go unanswered? Well, what God promises to us through the answer of the Holy Spirit is His presence with us in and through all the circumstances of life. The Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, the one who comes alongside of us. The promise of God's presence with us sustains us, even when God says "no" to specific requests. The Holy Spirit is our reassurance in the face of unanswered prayers that God indeed listens to us, hears our concerns, and gifts us with His abundant presence.

This *good gift* (the Holy Spirit) hovered over the chaotic waters and created the world filled with beauty and blessing. This same *good gift* raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and raises us to newness of life. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the depository of hope that we too can rise from the ashes of the most crushing events and circumstances. In the face of unanswered prayers, God longs to give to each one of us the supernatural power that comes from the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, today and in lives right now!

God doesn't always answer our prayers the way we would want Him to answer them. Sometimes, we feel we are being given a scorpion instead of an egg, or a snake instead of a fish. Perhaps as we wrestle with unanswered prayers for healing, for help, and for deliverance, God's grand promise to send the Holy Spirit is the only answer we could hope for: the good gift of God's abiding presence, the power to live a resurrected life, and the promise of God's creative work to make something beautiful from the uncertainties of our lives.

~Pastor Mullinax



What's Happening?

Nursery Schedule December 17

Front Desk
Kim Collins

Worship

Infants
Mollee Brown
& Jim Hildebrand

Crawlers
Josh & Diana Perrel

Toddlers
Heidie Armao
& Lynda Brown

Sunday School

Infants
Connie Hildebrand
& Fiona Wade

Crawlers
Sarah & Betsy Wade

Toddlers
Craig & Susan Miller

HIGH SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY

High School Youth are invited to a Progressive Dinner Christmas Party on Saturday, December 16. Bring a \$5 white elephant gift. Please meet in the church parking lot at 5:45 p.m. for initial instructions. Please plan to pick up your youth at church at 9:30 p.m.

CAROLING AND DESSERTS

The entire church family is welcome to join together at the church on Wednesday, December 20, at 5:30 p.m. We will break up into small groups to go caroling in various neighborhoods and at local retirement homes. Bring a dessert to share with everyone as we will meet back at the church for desserts and hot drinks after caroling.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Come celebrate the birth of our Savior on Christmas Eve, December 24, at 5:30 p.m. with a service of Lessons and Carols.

CHRISTMAS CARD STAMPS

Please remember to save those Christmas card stamps. Deposit them in the mailbox by Pastor Mullinax's office. These used stamps are processed and re-sold with all proceeds going to finance Sunday School curriculum in Latin America.

PESEVERERS CLASS

The Peseverers Class is beginning a study of I John on January 7, 2018 led by Dr. Lamar Allen. John's letter is powerful and important. In his own words the Apostle John states that the primary purpose of his letter is to reassure believers. He says, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life" (I John 5.13). Join us for good fellowship and a detailed study of God's Word.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please make the following updates to your CPC Membership Directory.

Carolyn Martin
6705 Ballard Drive
Apt 149
Chattanooga TN 37421

Caleb and Brittany Ray
6436 Vinings Lane
Ooltewah TN 37363

ADDRESS CHANGE

Please keep us informed of any address, phone, or email changes. We are about to print new directories and we desire to be as current as possible. Email changes to cpcoffice@covenantchattanooga.org.

YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS

All end-of-the-year contributions need to be in the Church Office or postmarked no later than December 31 to be counted as tax-deductible contributions for 2017.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPERS

Wednesday Night Suppers will resume on Wednesday, January 10.

OFFICE CLOSED

The church office is closed the following days for Christmas:

Monday, December 25 - Closed
Tuesday, December 26 - Closed

NO ENEWSLETTER

No eNewsletter will be sent the following days:

Thursday, December 28
Thursday, January 4

BUDGET REPORT

Thru December 10:

Budget:	\$1,532,761
Actual:	\$1,313,522
Shortfall:	\$219,239

Needed by December 31 to make budget: \$311,205.