



The eNewsletter

June 21, 2018

A publication of Covenant Presbyterian Church, 8451 East Brainerd Road, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37421
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From the Pen of the Pastor Emeritus...

Looking Ahead...

June 22

Men's Proverbs Study
The Edge Camp Ends

June 24

Morning Worship
Sunday School

June 26

Ladies' Tuesday Morning
Bible Study
Ladies' Oasis Fellowship
Group

June 27

MS Boys' Bible Study
Ladies' Wednesday Night
Bible Study
Prayer Group
Youth DAB Night

June 28

Swim Day at the May's
Youth and Family Skate Night

June 29

Men's Proverb Study

July 1

Lord's Supper Celebrated
Sunday School

July 3

Ladies' Tuesday Morning
Bible Study

July 4

Office Closed - Fourth of July

July 5

Swim Day at the May's

July 6

Men's Proverbs Study
Mother's Encouragement
Fri-Yay Funday
Middle School Bowling Party

July 8

Morning Worship
Sunday School
Missions Committee Meeting

July 10

Ladies' Tuesday Morning
Bible Study

July 11

MS Boys' Bible Study
Ladies' Wednesday Night
Bible Study
Prayer Group
6th Grade Parents meeting

As a student at Covenant College in the 60s, I joined others on snowy days riding large serving trays "borrowed" from the dining hall to sled down the hill directly behind Carter Hall. Since the hill ended in trees with no flat area to slow one's progress, it was a risky (and some might say foolish) thing to do. But we were young, and no one really considered the dangers involved. It was indeed a *slippery slope*.

The General Assembly (the highest court of the PCA) met in Atlanta last week. My overwhelming impression of the business conducted by the court was both appreciation and frustration with the GA's fear of slippery slopes. I sincerely appreciate the GA's fear of slippery slopes, but at the same time, I am frustrated by its concern to take steps that I believe are biblically justifiable even while many believe they are opening the door to our denomination hurtling into trees where Scripture clearly teaches us not to land.

With great courage our denomination has taken steps to acknowledge the PCA's history of benign neglect in the area of racial relationships. It seems to me that we have great progress in searching for ways to embrace as part of our denomination those who are not Caucasians. For example, during a women's breakfast, Linda had a conversation with Joan Nabors, the African-American wife of Randy Nabors. Joan observed that thirty-five years ago she was the only African-American wife in attendance at GA. Thank God that is no longer the case. While the GA remains overwhelming Caucasian, there are now several elders and wives who are men and women of color. Last year, Alexander Jun, a Ruling Elder of Korean descent from California, was elected moderator. This year, Irwyn Ince, an African-American Teaching Elder from Maryland was elected moderator. These men were not

tokens. They were elected overwhelmingly by the GA because of their proven leadership abilities and obvious qualifications. I rejoice in their election, and am grateful for the encouragement this offers for those who are still a small minority of the membership of the PCA. For while 12% of the PCA is Korean, the percentage of African-Americans and Latinos is far smaller.

On the other hand, more than 50% of the members of the PCA congregations are women. The PCA properly holds to the biblical teaching that only men can serve in the office of elder, be they teaching or ruling elders. But here's where fear of the *slippery slope* impacts the decisions of the GA.

Our Tennessee Valley Presbytery sent an overture to the GA asking that Covenant College be allowed to have women serve on its Board of Trustees. I have been a Trustee of CC since 1985. I strongly supported this overture, which would have allowed women to occupy less than half of the seats on the Board. Several years ago the GA declared that agency boards "exercise ruling authority in the Church." I believe this statement is in error, if it is meant to suggest that the board of CC exercises ecclesiastical authority. The board does not exercise ecclesiastical authority. It does not celebrate the sacraments, preach, or exercise church discipline. The board of CC has authority, but its authority is far different from the authority of a Presbytery or Session. I believe that women can serve on the board of CC in the same way that we recently elected women to serve on our Search Committee. The authority of our Search Committee was subject to the authority of our Session, serving as the Pulpit Committee, which had the final authority to recommend a candidate for Senior Pastor to the congregation.

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Nursery Schedule June 24

Front Desk

Bethany Firth

Worship

Infants

Judy Foster
& Camille Ambrose

Crawlers

Ellen Donovan
& Volunteer Needed

Toddlers

Heather Morrison
& Meg Ferrel

Sunday School

Infants

Eva Herberich
& Fiona Wade

Crawlers

Sarah & Betsy Wade

Toddlers

Catherine Coffey
& Maggie Wade

The TVP's overture was defeated by a vote of approximately 450 in favor and 750 against. I believe that most who voted against this overture did so out of an understandable fear of the *slippery slope*. The concern of many was that by opening the board of CC to women we were taking the first step to having women serve as elders. While I understand and appreciate that fear, I find it misplaced. A woman elected to the board would not be exercising ecclesiastical authority. While disappointed by the GA's decision, I'm not discouraged. I genuinely appreciate the concerns of the majority. But I don't believe that we should be led by our fears. We should be guided by Scripture, and I don't believe that Scripture denies to women the right to exercise authority in areas that are not directly ecclesiastical in nature. Scripture does not allow a woman to exercise the ecclesiastical authority of an elder, but no where does it suggest that women cannot exercise authority in non-ecclesiastical areas.

While I understand and appreciate the concern of many at GA, I was deeply disappointed by its decision. But I am not discouraged. This issue will not go away. It will come up again. And perhaps, in the meantime we will find ourselves discussing this issue and moving in the direction of allowing women to serve in roles of leadership that are not ecclesiastical in nature. I do not believe that in doing so we will be sliding down a slope that ends of crashing into the trees below.

~Pastor Caines

What's Happening?

YOUTH AND FAMILY

SKATE NIGHT

CPC Youth and their families are invited to meet at Hamilton Skate Place on Thursday, June 28 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Thursday nights are Christian Music Skate Night. Contact Abby at cpcyouth@covenantchattanooga.org for details.

YOUTH DAB NIGHT

High School and Middle School Youth are invited to DAB Night, aka Dine & Ball Night, on Wednesday, June 27, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The night will consist of indoor/outdoor games, fellowship, food, and a time of worship/teaching!

MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS' BIBLE STUDY

This summer a Bible Study is available for Middle School boys. The study will take place at CPC on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m., beginning Wednesday, June 27. The study will be led by Jeremiah Hill, Duncan Joyner, and Carl Simakoff.

SPECIAL CHOIR OPPORTUNITIES

Ladies, from middle school through 99, you are encouraged to join a special Ladies' Choir as they signing praises to God on Sunday, July 15. You don't have to be able to read music or have a great voice. Rehearsal is on Wednesday, July 11 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Men, you are encouraged to join a special Men's Choir on Sunday, July 22, with rehearsal on Wednesday, July 18 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Contact Jeremy Gaines with any questions.

HONORING THE SACRIFICE

Be sure to get your tickets for the *Honoring the Sacrifice Foundation American Heroes Dinner* on July 13, at 7:00 p.m. at the Chattanooga Convention Center. Former U.S. Navy Seal Rob O'Neill is the featured speaker. For tickets and more information, please visit www.honoringthesacrifice.org.

LADIES' WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Ladies, you are invited to a Bible Study on Wednesday evenings during the summer (June 20 through August 8) at 7:00 p.m. in the Frederick Room. Emily Calloway will be teaching on *Good News for Weary Women: Escaping the Bondage of To-Do Lists, Steps, and Bad Advice* by Elyse Fitzpatrick.

LADIES' OASIS FELLOWSHIP GROUP

All high school young ladies and women of all ages, you are invited to join in Schum Fellowship Hall on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m., starting June 26 through mid August. Come hear the Word, encourage your sisters in faith, pray with each other, and look to God as he provides an oasis for us in the Bible. Contact Diane Lazor for more information.

SWIM DAY

Swim Day at the May's pool is Thursdays, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This invitation is open to anyone at CPC each week until August 16. Parents, please remember that you are personally responsible for the supervision of your children and cleanup.

FOURTH OF JULY

The Church Office is closed Wednesday, July 4. There will be no eNewsletter on Thursday, July 5.