

BETWEEN SEEDTIME AND HARVEST

**Senior Adults Newsletter
Christ Covenant Church
November 2020**



GRACE TO YOU

by
Pastor Bruce Creswell

THANKFUL

Yes, this year has been different than any other I can remember. The whole Covid19 virus has become a catalyst of change, a harbinger of fear, and a robber of joy. But it has not snuffed out the goodness of God, denied the presence of God, or shortened the power of God!

Recently, the question has been, "How is Thursday School going?" From the outset, the Lord's goodness has abounded. Our desire has been to provide connection and teaching for our folks who could gather together and for those who are not able to meet in person. Having the sanctuary available with livestreaming has made it possible for our folks to gather safely. The level of enthusiasm in seeing one another and assembling to study the Word has been refreshing and encouraging. At first the time seemed to be a bit odd, to meet from 4pm to 5pm. With no church or school scheduling conflicts, it has turned out to be a good time. Practically, it allows our folks to avoid rush hour traffic and get back home for dinner.

We are very thankful for all the help before and during our meeting. The sound and taping are always ready under the careful supervision of Communications Manager, Mimi Brady, and Sound Coordinators - Asher Pope and Andy Caldwell. The Operations Department sees to it that our white board, podium, and music stand are in their place. It means a lot to be able to walk in and begin our class with everything ready and not have to be concerned with them.

Thursday School follows the same format we used in Sunday School. Along with greetings, announcements, and prayer requests, we sing. The sanctuary is bigger than our classroom so we can be physically distant from each other. But with good sister Pam Eash ministering on the piano, and Chris Williams leading us in singing (with our masks), we make a joyful noise to the Lord.

With the help of J. Oswald Sander's book, *The Incomparable Christ*, we are studying the uniqueness of the God-Man. The study is not so much a mere biography as it is seeing the different stages of the uniqueness of the life of Christ. Amazingly, the background information on His life highlights both the humanity and deity of His life.

Attendance over the past 5 weeks of Thursday School has been good so far, with numbers at about 60 each week. We have had several newcomers to the class, folks that are new to the church and found out about our class. Interestingly, one person just moved from Atlanta in June and had not been out to church until attending Thursday School in September. Many of our own folks who have not been out since the spring, have felt comfortable attending the class. Being able to livestream the class to our folks who are not able to join us brings me joy, as we still can connect with each other.

(Continued on Page 2)

Looking back, with Thanksgiving, I am reminded of Nahum 1:7 which reminds us, that, *"The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who take refuge in him."* In this day of trouble--the Covid19 virus, we have witnessed the goodness of the LORD in providing Thursday School to those He knows and cares for.

Lord willing, we will continue with Thursday School until we are able to meet on Sundays.

Let me close by inviting you to attend Thursday School in the Sanctuary at 4:00pm. If you unable to attend, you can watch it live online or watch it later, at your convenience. Class notes and the weekly hymn are available online prior to Thursday School each week, too.

MONTHLY LUNCHEON

November 13th

Social time 11:45 am / Lunch 12:00 pm

Lower CLC Youth Space

Speaker: Tom Groelsema, Executive Pastor

The luncheon will be prepared by our own Mary Newton and her able assistants.

To reserve your spot, RSVP by the Friday prior on the SignUp Genius or directly to Jenny Blackmon, ministry admin. A \$3 donation per person to cover food costs is appreciated.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0444AAAF2EA2FC1-november3>

HYMN HISTORY

Submitted by Peggy Dear

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

The song "Count Your Blessings" was written by Johnson Oatman Jr. His father, Johnson Oatman Sr., a prominent businessman in the small town of Lumberton, New Jersey, was the best singer in church and probably in the whole community.

Johnson Oatman Jr. worked in his father's business all his life. He also became ordained as a Methodist preacher, so he often preached in one of the small Methodist churches in the area. But he could never sing like his father could sing.

However, when he was thirty-six years old, Oatman counted his blessings and discovered another talent. He could write songs, and for the next three decades he wrote four or five new gospel songs each week. He did not want any money for them but his publisher insisted, so Oatman finally agreed to accept one dollar per song.

When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

*Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God has done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.*

Are you burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by.

When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings, money cannot buy
Your reward in Heaven, nor your home on high.

So amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end,

Johnson Oatman, Jr. (1856-1922)



Book Review

By Chris Williams

Johnathan Edwards – A Life
by George Marsden, Yale Press 2003

This book is surprisingly interesting on several levels. It is about church history and also about the years just prior to the American Revolution. It also is about philosophy and the way in which the church reacted to the rationalist/scientific philosophy coming out of the Renaissance.

Marsden is a sympathetic author who appreciates Johnathan Edwards (1703-1758) and, I think, agrees with his view of the Bible. In other words, Marsden is a Christian.

It is long at about 500 pages, but some sections go quickly, others are slow as Marsden discusses Edwards' philosophical writings. To get the historical events, you could skip over those areas. Of course, I read it all since I enjoy such discussions.

The 18th century is often misunderstood by historians. Marsden notes in the introduction (p9):

“Most strikingly, the standard narratives fail to account for why levels of religious practice came to be much higher in the United States than in other modernized nations. They also do little to explain why evangelical Christianity flourished in America and why its revivalist style became one of America's leading exports.”

Marsden is an excellent writer and deserves all the praise he gets. The style is relatively easy to read, and he explains difficult things with clarity. If the book is difficult, it is because the times and issues were complicated; and that is no excuse for us to ignore the persons and times. I had done just that in my reluctance to read about this time in history, figuring it was dry and uninteresting. But Marsden changed my mind.

In the life of Edwards, we see the transition of America's religious life to unilaterally Christian/Calvinistic/Reformed to a broad mix of views beginning with the movement to Arminianism. Edwards saw this coming and wrote much to counter it.

Then there was the Great Awakening in the 1740s. As it sparked much controversy in America and internationally, Edwards sought, through his widely read treatises, to bring the church to understand if the emotional displays in the awakening were genuine or not.

The era was also important in the lead up to our American Revolution. Fear of Indian actions in western New England and the failure of the British deal with it successfully in 1775 brought doubt they would be able to protect the expanding colony.

Also factoring into the turmoil of the era was the relation of church and state. Edwards little understood what was happening, but the old Puritan domination of church and local governments was eroding and giving way to the conviction that governments should not be in the business of telling its citizens what to believe concerning life and Godliness.

Marsden has much to say as he interprets the life of Edwards. He says in the last chapter about his enduring legacy:

“Living as he did at a time and in a place when there was a substantial culture overlap between the late medieval-Reformation outlook, preserved largely intact in Edwards' Puritan heritage, and the world of the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment, Edwards saw the immense challenges to a rigorous God-centeredness in the modern era... Edwards thus addressed one of the greatest mysteries facing traditional theism in the post-Newtonian universe: how can the creator of such and unimaginably vast universe be in intimate communication with creatures so infinitely inferior to himself?” (P504)

Edwards is to be admired, as is his biographer.

SENIOR MEN'S MONTHLY LUNCH

Submitted by Dave Ruths

Having reviewed today's impacts of restaurant protocols and individually varying perceptions (our "realities") of the COVID19 threat, we have decided to temporarily pause during November and December, with hopes of more clear sailing for our gatherings in the New Year.

We will announce that situation either in the January 2021 Newsletter or a little later by special e-mail. May the Lord keep each of us in His peace and joy as we walk with Him according to HIS LOVING PLAN!



Submitted by Nancy O'Neil

I held my breath...is it still here? We turned the corner in Flat Rock, NC having driven a couple hours with son Stephen at the wheel while my husband and I had taken in all the autumn mountain setting on the drive. The sun shone brightly all the way, and the leaves had changed to golden red, all under a magnificent blue sky. It was cool, in the 50's, and we had come prepared with jeans and sweaters. Yet it felt the same, so familiar and exciting.

There it was ...the sign welcoming us to Bonclarken where we have been many times before on our Sunday School retreats. Yes, they were expecting us, and no, we would not be in Founders Hall this time but rather assigned to #2 Faith Cottage Apartments for the weekend. It was very close by.

That weekend we walked and deeply drank in all, remembering our blessed retreats in the past

organized by Dave and Lucille Ruths. They had dispensed our keys to our rooms and provided the schedule for the days there. We could almost hear the sound of our group robustly singing, and Pastor Creswell leading us. He always said, "Hit it Sister," and Pam would beautifully play the piano while we all joined in singing hymns from our well-worn Senior Hymn Book. Sometimes the Joy singers sang, and then it would be time for the "opening of God's Word" by one of our beloved pastor's for blessed teaching. From Founders Hall to the dining room was a short walk through the parking lot. There was the grassy slope where the Bocce games had been cheered on, the steps where we all repositioned ourselves for Sang Lee's photograph, and the lower lake looking clear and colorful in the fresh air. The food was great while we chatted with the many folks around us.

We walked around the lake a couple different times noticing a cluster of peaceful ducks that would come near if you had a handful of dry bread crumbs. The gazebo waited for us to visit and snap a picture. It was fun to introduce son Stephen to the whole campus. He immediately loved and appreciated it too. He had taken a break from Vail Christian School where he is headmaster to fly and visit his Dad for the weekend.

The time flew by very fast, but we were able to drive to Sky Top Orchard and bring back Apple Butter and freshly picked Pink Lady Apples. We remembered Season's Restaurant for an elegant meal and stopped at the Flat Rock Bakery. The weekend we were there, many people wanted Hubba Bubba Barbecue and were dining at outside picnic tables.

It was a joy to be there and know you would have liked it as well. I can only say Thank You to the Lord for his blessing and wanted to share it with you. Bonclarken is still there despite Covid19, and Lord willing, we may be able to retreat there once again.

It was a time of Spiritual Refreshment:

Listen , O Heavens, and I will speak; hear, O earth the words of my mouth. Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants.

I will proclaim the name of the Lord.
Oh, praise the greatness of our God!

Deuteronomy 32: 1-3

LEARNING TO BE CONTENT

Submitted by Jane Yancey

NOTE: I posted this article on Facebook. One of our class members suggested I include it in the newsletter "for the encouragement of the whole class."

Philippians 4:11 – “. . . *for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.*” This was written by the Apostle Paul. During this pandemic, I have remained a “stay-at-home.” Some people have questioned how I can do that without going into depression and wanting to go back to the “way things were.” So, I thought this would be a good way to express myself.

I have three wonderful children who are super protective of me – one is a nurse practitioner, and one is a teacher, and their professions are front line in this pandemic. Am I concerned about their over-protectiveness? No – it only shows how much they love me.

Here are things I have been unable to do in the pandemic (like many people, I might add):

- I can't go shopping – I haven't been inside a store since early March.
- I haven't had a haircut since early February – who cares? I'm not going anywhere!
- I haven't had a manicure/pedicure since early February – my nails are healthier being natural!
- I haven't had my monthly cleaning lady during the pandemic – sure, she's better than I am, and I can't do it all at once, but I putter along little by little.
- I haven't had anyone in the house with the exception of my daughter (who always wears a mask) and two urgent repair people – one had to do with replacing the water pressure monitor and he only had to come inside the garage door; the other was for the carbon monoxide/smoke alarm system that had to be replaced because it had died.
- The piano tuner keeps calling and I keep telling him I have not had people in my house yet.
- I can't go to lunches with my neighbors and church friends.
- Melody Makers can't assemble for singing.
- I can't teach Bible Study at the clubhouse because it is closed for social activities.

Things I can do:

- The best thing that has come out of this is the Zoom meetings I have every Sunday afternoon with my children. They look forward to it as much as I do. It is such a blessing and feels like we are all sitting in my living room for a couple of hours. Separated by many miles, my children are closer than ever.
- I am able to go to church and Sunday School via live-stream and have even live-streamed a couple of funerals.
- I continue to do the monthly newsletters for both my community and my Sunday School class.
- I have a few neighbor ladies join me on my driveway with appropriately spaced chairs once a week for coffee and conversation. Everyone brings their own beverage, and we spend a couple hours catching up with one another.
- I also see neighbors walking by and many wave at me when they see me in my office. Sometimes I am able to walk some in the neighborhood, too.
- I have only bought gas once since March! Occasionally, I will drive to my daughter's, mainly to keep the car up. We will usually sit outside, socially distanced, and visit.
- After postponing my medical and dental appointments for several months, I have now been to my appointments, complete with mask, Clorox wipes, and kept my distance.
- I am doing more cooking than I have done in a long, long time. My daughter keeps me supplied with groceries, mostly delivering them to the counter in the garage.
- I am doing lots of reading.
- I can call friends to see how they are doing. Thank goodness for phones, emails, and texts!
- I can keep to a regular schedule. I think that is very important in living your life.

So, how do I manage? I believe everyone is responsible for their own happiness. I have a lot to be thankful for and will do whatever is necessary on my part to get over this pandemic.

How can you do this? Reading on in Philippians, we read in chapter 4, verse 13, Paul saying, *'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'* Lean on the Lord, stay-at-home as much as you can, wear a mask when you are out, social distance, and wash your hands often. We can overcome this pandemic if we all work together!

Annual Christmas Dinner-Save the Date!

Friday, December 4, 5pm, CLC 1-6

Caterer: Tara Dabbs

BARLAAN SCHOLARSHIP FUND RESULTS

Thank you for your generous giving to the Barlaan Scholarship Fund. A total of \$3,195 was donated in memory of Mark Barlaan by the Senior Adult Class to assist Jameson and Grace with their college expenses. The Barlaan Go Fund Me page has a total of \$13,395 raised (which includes the class donation) for the family. Please continue to pray for them.



November 11

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE DEADLINE

Articles for the December newsletter are due to Jane Yancey no later than November 20th. Please send them to her at jane@yancey.com



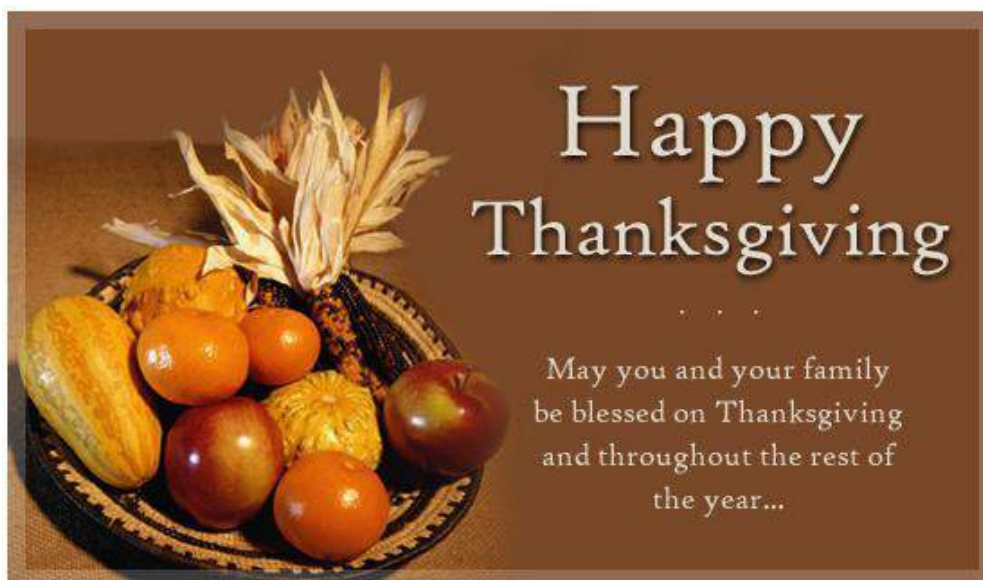
NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2 – Tara Dabbs
5 – Susan Reinken
6 – Jane Gray
6 – Charlie Maurer
8 – Dale Yurkovich
9 – Debbie Linton
9 – Janie Up De Graff
11 – Pam Eash
12 – Patty Marion
13 – Renee Seal
14 – Bob Guinn
14 – Ruth Mangum
15 – Steve Thompson
17 – Mary Newton
17 – Barbara Smith
18 – Barbara Dustin
20 – Margie Ross
23 – Carolyn Dellinger
26 – Betty Williams
27 – Sabra Romeo



NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARY

30 – Norm and Dee Petty



Coram Deo Sunday School Class:

Sundays: 9:00 AM, WC 201 (Choir Room)

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A PRAYER OF THANKS

Lenora McWhorter

We give thanks to you, oh God,
for the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ.
We give thanks for the price He paid
So that we could have eternal life.

We thank you for the sun by day
and the stars that light the night.
For the seasons that never fail to change
and that darkness gives way to light.

We thank you Lord, for daily bread
and for your mercy and your grace.
We thank you for the air we breathe
and the blessings You send by faith.

We thank you, Lord, for joy and sorrow,
for our tears and for our smiles.
We thank you for family and friends
and all those who are part of our lives.

We thank you for what you protect us from
and for the things you bring us through,
even the dangers we cannot see
or when we don't know what to do.

We give you praise, oh Lord, our God,
and we give thanks for everything.
For life and health and well being
and all the good the year will bring.