

**Senior Adults Newsletter**  
**January 2024**  
**Christ Covenant Church**



***BETWEEN SEEDTIME AND HARVEST***

**SORROWFUL JOY ON DECEMBER SIXTEENTH**

**By Pastor Bruce Creswell**

Our handmade Christmas trimming decorated the school classrooms, our Christmas program was a few days away. Along with the December cold it was “beginning to look a lot like Christmas,” with houses decorated with lights and wreaths. When my sisters and I got home from school that day, Momma, in a rather serious tone of voice, had something she wanted to tell us. With our full attention she said, early that morning, that “Ma Lydie,” our great-grandmother had died in her sleep and went to heaven.

For a ten-year-old boy, it seemed so out of place for Ma Lydie to die and then for her to die so close to Christmas, December 16th, which was only nine days away. She lived on the first floor with my grandmother (we lived on the second floor). What a special person she was to my sisters and me, different from our two grandmothers. Always dressed like a great-grandmother, with her hair neatly styled, classic style dresses, right amount of jewelry, and black-laced shoes of her era. A faint scent of patchouli accented her presence. She never wore pants, tennis shoes, flip flops, or shorts! We knew she loved us and expressed it in so many ways. When I was in the first grade, for Christmas, she gave me a pocket transistor radio (the boom box of our day!). Because she would sit with “older people” we would not see her for a week or a weekend. When she was home it was cool to hang out with her or sit with her on the porch.

But why did she have to leave us so soon without notice and not being here with us for Christmas? That cold December wind seemed to linger longer than usual piercing through to my heart. But the school’s Christmas program went well with each class doing their part. Even at home, Christmas was joyous but tempered by sorrow, as we opened our gifts and ate our dinner knowing that Ma-Lydie was in Heaven.

This past Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, sorrow resurfaced as I officiated the funeral of a faithful church member, Steve Gooch, who loved the Senior Adult Class. While trying to point his daughters and grandchildren to Christ, my mind was suddenly overtaken with over twenty years of fellowship and shepherding Steve and Anna, and the girls. Several times, my eyes began to well up with tears, but I made it through the service.

As we gathered around the graveside, the trumpet played “taps,” signaling “lights out” at the end of a soldier’s day, I could see the faces of many wet with tears. Standing before the family and friends, I announced that the next trumpet that will sound, will not be “taps” but “reverie,” the “morning call.” It will be the “trumpet of the Lord” and then I read from I Thessalonians 4:13-18:

*“13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.*

*14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.*

*15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, [d] that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.*

*16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.*

*17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*

*18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.”*

Reading those words, it all came together. Amid the sorrow, joy appears! We have HOPE--Jesus is coming again, His resurrection guarantees it, we will all be caught up together, and we will ALWAYS be with the Lord!

As we move toward Christmas, many will experience sorrow and joy. We must not let our sadness ruin the joy of others, especially our children and grandchildren. Let them see as “much brightness” as they can in Jesus and let us remember in our sadness the words of the Christmas carol:

***“Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.”***

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## HYMN HISTORIES

by Peggy Dear

### JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

When Japanese troops forced **General Douglas MacArthur** out of the Philippines at the beginning of World War II, he made a promise, "I will return." Those words brought hope to American troops in the Pacific theater during the darkest days of the war.

At times it looked as if **MacArthur's** promise would never be fulfilled. **But MacArthur** did return to the Philippines. He kept his promise.

During World War II, **John Peterson**, a pilot in the U.S. Army Air Force was flying dangerous missions over Southeast Asia. He was well aware of Someone else who had made a promise that He would return. Back in the States again, **John Peterson** became a gospel songwriter after World War II, and "**JESUS IS COMING AGAIN**" was one of his earlier songs. Jesus' promise that He would return is much more certain of fulfillment than the promise **MacArthur** made. And that promise gives us hope and assurance for the future.

*Marvelous message we bring,  
Glorious carols we sing,  
Wonderful words of the King---  
Jesus is coming again.*

*Coming again, coming again,  
Maybe morning, maybe noon,  
Maybe evening and maybe soon!  
Coming again, coming again;  
Oh, what a wonderful day that will be--  
Jesus is coming again!*

*Forest and flower exclaim,  
Mountain and meadow the same,  
All earth and heaven proclaim---  
Jesus is coming again.*

*Standing before Him at last,  
Trial and trouble all past,  
Crowns at His feet we will cast---  
Jesus is coming again!*

**John Peterson 1957**

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## **ANN JUDSON. A MISSIONARY LIFE FOR BURMA**

**By Sharon James. Evangelical Press Books 2022**

This book presents a life story significant in the history of the church, especially the history of the church in America. **Ann Judson** and her husband, **Adonairam**, were among the very first missionaries sent out from America to do pioneering work in the Asian subcontinent. In 1812 as war with Britain was beginning, they journeyed east by sailing ship with a few others eventually ending up in Burma. There after some years of language studies they began Bible translation and evangelization. Their limited success in the early years should not discourage a deep appreciation for the profound groundbreaking work they did for future American missionaries.

The drama of their years is intense. They were subject to frequent illness and opposition. When war broke out between Britain and Burma, **Adoniram** was imprisoned, the work nearly stopped. Yet this brave couple, convinced of their calling and the universal need for the world to hear the gospel, persevered through incredibly difficult times and circumstances.

The hero of this book is **Ann**. Not only was she a brave and determined servant of the gospel ministry, she was also intelligent and articulate. Her writings are extensively quoted throughout the book and bring an intensely personal narrative to bear on this early missionary work. "...**Ann's** writings were among the first to stir up missionary interest at a popular level among the Protestant population of both America and the United Kingdom." P. 250

**Ann** was sick much of her time in Burma and eventually died in 1826 at age 37. She bore two children both of which died in infancy. The crude and often counterproductive medical treatments of the day contribute to the drama and to our admiration of these early missionaries.

An appendix is included with a brief account of **Adoniram's** remarriage and his continuing work in the region.

**Chris Williams**

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## **REFORMED THEOLOGY**

**By Dr. Jonathan Master**

The author is president of **Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary**.

How can a mere book review be done on doctrine so vast and godly? It can't. However, if you're looking for a concise, inspiring, refreshing review of Reformed Theology, this is it! It is only 103 pages.

Most of us know the basics of the acronym TULIP (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and Perseverance of the Saints), but this is only the tip of the doctrinal iceberg. Rather than dwell on the Tulip basics, these doctrines are woven into his excellent comments on the Five Solas, Six Covenants and the tremendous blessings of Reformed Theology.

Most of us tend to forget at least one of the Solas. The first one, Sola Scriptura, declares scripture as the final authority! It is not church tradition, or the SUBJECTIVE thinking of cultural leaders or lay people. Reformed theology and worship must be Bible based. Next is Sola Fide or only faith. Justification is by faith alone. Works, baptism, church membership, or ethnic identity are all irrelevant. Sola Gratis, only grace, is the reality of God's grace alone (Ephesians 2:8). God chooses those whom He saves. Next is Sola Christus, only Christ. The author states "where **Luther** and the other reformers disagreed with the medieval Roman Church was on how Christ reigns over the universe." Also, Christ is the head of the church, and He is the only mediator. The last is Sola Deo Gloria which states that all of life is to be understood in terms of the glory of God! We are God centered.

The Solas are followed by a wonderful chapter on scripture and God's sovereignty, beginning with a question: "How can we arrive at a true knowledge of God?" David writes in Psalm 19:7-8 "The law of the Lord is perfect, the testimony of the Lord is sure, the precepts of the Lord are right, the commandment of the Lord is pure, etc." Then, there's the perfect verse, II Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness." The Bible is historically accurate, has 100% fulfilled prophecy, internal coherence and the enormous power of changed lives. Jesus said it all in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:17-19). Further, God's promise of salvation demonstrates that God is in charge of the future as well as the present and past. The clincher is Isaiah 46: 9-10: "I am God and there is none like me." Therefore, the truth of God's sovereignty is foundational to the system of Reformed Theology.

The doctrine of Divine Election is well described with the examples of Abraham, Moses, Jacob and Esau and others. John 6:36-40 describes election: "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out". We need to understand who God is and who we are as sinners. God must be the one who chooses and saves.

The term Reformed Theology and Covenant Theology are used interchangeably for a reason. J. I. Packer said: "The gospel of God is not properly understood until it is viewed in a covenantal frame." The 6 different Covenants are often overlooked, but a sampling of their meaning follows. The First one begins in Genesis with Adam and is called a **Covenant of Works**, and it contained warnings and blessings. The second one is the **Noahic Covenant** after the floods when God promised not to destroy the earth again with water, hence the rainbow. The third one is the **Abrahamic Covenant** in which God promised to Abraham to make His name great and through him to bless all the families of the earth. This was fulfilled in Christ (Galatians 3:14). The fourth is the **Sinai Covenant** which unfolds in Exodus with the people of Moses, and God promises to redeem His people. Fifth is the **Davidic Covenant** which is focused on an offspring or seed of David becoming Messiah. Sixth is the **New Covenant** as described in Jeremiah 31: 31-34 and then expanded in Hebrews 8:8.

The author summarizes by saying: "In Christ, He not only provides the promised blessing, the perfect sacrifice, and the external King who also transforms the hearts of His people and perfect forgiveness for sin." Powerful! Understanding the continuity of the covenants is a pre-requisite to fully understanding Reformed Theology.

Chapter 4, 'Blessings of Reformed Theology', is extremely refreshing. The first topic, "The Security of Scripture", reveals the answer to the question, "Who is God?" He's clearly explained by Reformed Theology which always guides us back to the Bible instead of the cultural subjective process. The second topic, "The Comfort of God's Sovereignty" offers these eternal statements: "The sovereignty of God covers all aspects of our lives." "We are not in control, but God is" (Matthew 10:29-31). "All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me", said Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20). This statement sums it up: He is glorifying Himself, bringing His children to conformity with Christ and building Christ's church.

The topic, "The Wonder of God's Election" makes it crystal clear that depraved mankind would never choose God, but God will choose us! The golden chain in Romans 8:30 (predestination, calling, justification, glorification) is highlighted because of the unbreakable bond between predestination and glorification with God leaving no work unfinished or incomplete.

The topic "Clarity of the Covenant" reminds us that we need to study and understand the 6 Covenants so that we fully appreciate the blessings that come to us by God's grace (God's Riches at Christ's Expense). The Covenants provide great continuity of blessings to God's people from all generations.

So is Reformed Theology an unique blessing? Absolutely! And, needs to be fully embraced. TULIP, THE FIVE SOLAS, SIX COVENANTS, and SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD are all foundational to our obedience to God Our worship begins with a call to worship and ends with a benediction; thus God gets the first and last word!

Ponder these words by C. H. Spurgeon: "What the sun is to the day, what the moon is to the night, what the dew is to the flower, such is Jesus Christ to us."

This book is available in the Book Nook.

**Submitted by Hugh Wise**  
**January 2024**

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### **JANUARY SENIOR LADIES' LUNCHEON**

The Ladies' Luncheon will be held on **Friday, January 5th, at 11:30 at Trio's Restaurant. Note that this is the First Friday**, a change from our normal schedule. The address is 10709 McMullen Creek Pkwy. Please contact **Dot Branson (704-575-5955)** if you plan to attend. Hope to see you there!

### **JANUARY SENIOR MEN'S LUNCHEON**

The CCC "Senior Men's Lunch will be **Friday January 19, 11:30pm, at Park Place Restaurant 10517 Park Rd.** Join us for a good time gathered for great food and fellowship and a devotional with your Christian brothers . Arrival by 11:20 helps us order at 11:30. I look forward to seeing you all!

### **SAVE THE DATE: "INTERNATIONAL EATS", FEBRUARY 17TH** **Church-Wide Outreach Event**

The next church-wide outreach event is Saturday, February 17th. The Creswell / Miller pastoral communities will be hosting the event this time. The congregation will be encouraged to invite friends to the CLC and experience foods from around the world. There will be a gospel presentation, music, and savory & sweet appetizers from different continents.

Our Senior Adult community will be volunteering to oversee, as well as make and serve appetizers. This will be a great opportunity for our community to reach out to our church and visitors. More details will be forthcoming.



Becky Hargett	Jan 02
Janice Barnett	Jan 04
Joe Underwood	Jan 07
Dan Hayes	Jan 08
Sylvia Walls	Jan 08
Leslie Allison	Jan 09
Nicholas Bonevac	Jan 09
Fred Depp	Jan 09
Tom Ertel	Jan 09
Peggy Elkin	Jan 11
Jane Erwin	Jan 11
Tom Walls	Jan 11
Susan Woodall	Jan 11
Jacque McClintock	Jan 12
Barbara Anne Price	Jan 12
Paul Neal	Jan 13
Jerry Cauble	Jan 14
Alice Dokter	Jan 14
Carol Bieganousky	Jan 15
Bill Clington	Jan 15
Anne Murray	Jan 15
Patti Prieb	Jan 15
Jane Gissendaner	Jan 16
Margie Engle	Jan 17
Donna Whitehead	Jan 17
Jane Williams	Jan 17
Mo Up De Graff	Jan 18
Judy Moore	Jan 19
Dottie Toney	Jan 20
Sam Murray	Jan 21
David Henry	Jan 22
Lisa Kelly	Jan 23
Mary Jo Culver	Jan 26
Nancy Pietrus	Jan 26
Curtis Whalen	Jan 28
Dot Branson	Jan 29
Jim Parrish Jr.	Jan 29

Jim & Kass Goebel	1/2
Rick & Cameron Ely	1/4
Fred & Lisa Kinney	1/7
Bill & Karen Clington	1/8
Gary & Toni Wilhite	1/14
Cal & Elaine Deaner	1/20
Hugh & Fran Wise	1/20
Johnny & Jackie Greene	1/28
Tom & Brooke Ertel	1/31

### JANUARY EVENTS

**Sunday School, Resumes Jan. 7**

WC201/Choir Room

**Senior Adults Luncheon**

Friday, January 12, CLC 5&6

**Ladies Luncheon**, -- January 5, 11:30am

Trios Restaurant, McMullen Creek

**Men's Luncheon** – January 19, 11:30 am

Park Place Restaurant

**Prayer Meetings**, Tuesdays,

7:00 – 8:30 pm, WC105

**Pastor of Senior Adults and Visitation**

N. Bruce Creswell

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**Christ Covenant Church**

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## SENIOR ADULT LUNCHEON

Friday, January 12, 2024

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

Speaker: **Johannes Damaschke, Pastoral Intern**

Menu: TBA

Cost: \$7 per person

You're invited! Please join the senior adult community for a time of fellowship, good food, and interesting speakers. **RSVPs are due by January 5<sup>th</sup>, the Friday prior to the luncheon.** Please RSVP via the SignUp Genius link or by calling ministry admin., **Jenny Blackmon, 704-708-6104.** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0444AAAF2EA2FC1-46948361-sradult>  
**SignUp Genius Tip:** Click on the;"**Register**"; button, which is on the right side of form; then, scroll to bottom and select;"**Submit**". This will open up the screen to allow name, # attending, and email address to be entered. Creating an account is not necessary.

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## *2023 Senior Adult Christmas Dinner*







*Happy New Year Everyone!*