

Senior Adults Newsletter
July 2025
Christ Covenant Church



BETWEEN SEEDTIME AND HARVEST

NIGHT WATCHES
By Pastor Bruce Creswell

Sleeping through the entire night has always been something taken for granted. I could fall asleep in a matter of minutes and wake up at 5am each morning with no alarm clock! So, it was hard for me to understand why other people didn't enjoy such a good night's sleep. Well, such is not the case anymore! I still go to bed at the regular time and get up at 5 am but now waking up once or twice each night is becoming the norm for me too! My eyes would close but my mind was awake and busy in thought.

At first, simply forcing myself to sleep, I thought, would send me back to the twilight zone. But no matter the amount of effort put forward, it didn't work; if anything, I was more awake and frustrated!

I thought going to bed later would let me sleep through the night. Again, to no avail, I was still waking up and then sleeping later in the morning.

Then in my reading I came across **Psalms 77:6, "Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in the night."** Yes, that's it! Why not use these nightly awakenings, which I call "night watches," to meditate on Scripture, to praise the Lord in song (recalling the hymns), and to pray.

It is not automatic; it still takes deliberate discipline to focus on these different acts of worship. Praising the Lord with a hymn and thinking through each verse refreshes my mind. Singing (in my mind, not vocally) the hymns, gospel songs, and psalms reminds me of who He is, His nature, His attributes, and His sovereign control.

Sometimes I recall the Scripture from my morning devotion and meditate on their truths to my heart, with applications that I had not considered before. The downside is that I don't always remember them when I do wake up!

These night watches allow for another opportunity to pray! Rehearsing the day's activities, I see the grace and leadership of the Lord unfolded in its scheduled events and unannounced interruptions. Sometimes my prayer turns into an old-fashioned praise meeting, rehearsing His faithfulness and His blessings over the years. Other times I pray for those in the hospital, homebound, and our church.

Singing, meditating, or praying does not put me to sleep. However, my soul is quieted and the peace of God reigns and at some point, I go back to sleep. These nightly watches do not occur every night, probably between 3 to 4 times a week. When they do, I **“remember my song in the night...”** and knowing the Lord hears even in those early hours, for as the Psalmist reminds us, that **“He who keepeth Israel neither slumber nor sleep...”** (Psalm 121:4)

HYMN HISTORIES

By Peggy Dear

PRAISE, MY SOUL, THE KING OF HEAVEN

In 1834 the British clergyman **Henry Francis Lyte** published a collection of 280 hymns based on the book of Psalms. He called it The Spirit of the Psalms because these hymns were not strictly translations (like the old psalters still in use at the time) or even paraphrases (like much of **Isaac Watts's** work), but texts loosely inspired by the Psalms. This hymn was included as a development of Psalm 103. There are many points of comparison.

The psalmist urges us not to forget the Lord's benefits; **Lyte** lists those benefits----"ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven." And as the psalmist indicates that God is "slow to chide," **Lyte** also adds that he is also "swift to bless."

Queen Elizabeth II chose this hymn to be sung at her wedding in 1947. It is an apt song for any occasion, as we join our voices in this great "Alleluia."

PRAISE, MY SOUL, THE KING OF HEAVEN

*Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,
To His feet thy tribute bring:
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Evermore His praises sing.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise the everlasting King.*

*Praise Him for His grace and favor
To our fathers in distress.
Praise Him, still the same as ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless,
Alleluia! Alleluia! Glorious in His faithfulness.*

*Fatherlike, He tends and spares us:
well our feeble frame He knows.
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Widely yet His mercy flows.*

*Angels in the height, adore Him.
Ye behold Him face to face:
Saints triumphant, bow before Him,
Gathered in from every race,
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise with us the God of grace.*

HENRY FRANCIS LYTE (1793-1847)

Book Review

BAVINCK A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY

By James Eglinton. Baker Academic, 2020

This is a biography of **Herman Bavinck (1854–1921)** who was an important theologian and politician in Holland in his lifetime. I had heard the name previously but became interested when **Rev. Kevin** did a podcast interview with the author. I was also drawn to this man because he wrote and taught during the latter half of the 19th century in which the prevailing Christian faith in Europe and America was declining in numbers and influence because of the assault of science and critical theory. Why did it happen? Is there hope for revival in western culture?



Bavinck was in the front line of the battle for Biblical authority at a time when science had seemingly made it irrelevant. Science was saying mankind was not created by God but evolved from common animals. And scholars were doing destructive analysis of the Bible and confidently asserting that it was not genuine; not inspired by God but was the product of superstition and misunderstanding of things we now, being more enlightened than the ancients, analyze with perfect scientific objectivity.

Bavinck was associated with **Abraham Kuyper**. Together they sought to call the broad culture away from apostasy and back to Biblical faith. They saw their “Neo-Calvinism” to “...bring the truth of God, revealed in Christ, to mastery over every domain of the human life.” (p164), a profound legacy that remains today.

Perhaps the climax of the anti-Bible movement and the culmination of a total materialistic view of reality is embodied in the person of **Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844-1900). **Nietzsche** can be called the philosopher of evolution taking **Darwin’s** idea of biological development and extending it to religion, society and philosophy. The fruit of this extreme change in culture lead, in my opinion, to World Wars 1 and 2 and produced the bloodiest fifty years in the history of the world. **Nietzsche** directly influenced the thoughts and actions of **Adolph Hitler**. Truly this was a destruction not only of vast numbers of humans but of the foundations of western culture in Christianity. **Bavinck** who lived through WWI seems to agree: “...it was no surprise that a growing rejection of the way of the Prince of Peace, which was deemed to ‘no longer apply to our age’ had plunged Europe into violence.” (p275).

The good news is that after WWII there has been change; the church has finally figured out how to push back against materialism, evolution and critical theory. Excellent scholars have arisen, by God’s grace and have written with penetrating intelligence to demonstrate how Christianity is not only true in history but how science is incapable of answering any questions of life, death and eternity.

Bavinck is enjoying renewed interest in these days as his works have been translated into English from Dutch. His most notable work is his four volume “Reformed Dogmatics,” which costs some \$150.

I will pass on that purchase though I took a quick look at the RTS library.

I should add that this biography seems to assume a prior knowledge of **Bavinck** and his works; in that regard it was more difficult to read. Yet the style of writing is easy. **Eglinton** uses terminology whose meaning is unclear. He could have made the book far more accessible by simply defining what **Bavinck** meant by words such as scientific theology and dogmatics. Dogmatics is what we would call systematic theology today. The word science is usually associated with experimentation in a laboratory and thus produces confusion when used in connection with Biblical studies. By the way, in the opening section of "Reformed Dogmatics," **Bavinck** clearly defines what he means by these terms.

Bavinck is a hero of the faith and knowing about his struggles and appreciating how he resisted the onslaught of Renaissance humanism is encouraging to me in the ongoing battle.

Submitted by **Chris Williams**, July 2025

Book Review

RELIGION AND REPUBLIC

by **Miles Smith**

Protestant Christianity was "baked" into our culture during the 1790-1850 period covered by this well-researched book which literally defined America. Strategic aspects of guiding factors of the young republic's relationship to religion are described in great detail.

Thomas Jefferson, certainly an American icon, proved to be an adversary to the Christian church. He was only 33 when he helped author the Declaration of Independence but did not believe in divine inspiration. He loathed the churchy institutions yet followed the teachings of Jesus. Pages of doctrine he did not believe were torn out of his Bible and discarded. He and **Thomas Paine** were both deist and hindered somewhat the influence of Christianity. Fortunately, the states had much independence and exerted the most influence on the culture. His famous letter of 1803 to the **Danbury Baptists** which discussed separation of powers is covered in detail.

Legislation's focal point was the Declaration of Independence and 53 of the 55 signers were members of a Christian church. However, the following years had legislation which clearly discriminated against some. New York, for example, banned Catholics and Jews from public office. North Carolina banned those from public office who did not believe in Protestant Christianity. Tennessee banned atheists from public office. Many states had blasphemy laws applicable to all those over 14. You could face 3 years in prison if you disagreed with the doctrine of Trinity. Mormons, Jews and Catholics were the ones most frequently targeted. An oath to Christianity was frequently required for many positions. Northern opposition to slavery was strong, but the South was still in darkness on this vital issue.

Court power was vested mostly with the states and was extremely friendly toward Protestant Christianity to the extent the author described the relationship to be like a marriage. The first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, **John Marshall**, had a sterling career and was aided by Supreme

Court Justice **James Iredell** of North Carolina. Christianity was widely believed to be part of the common law! In 1815 South Carolina ruled in a landmark decision that Episcopalians had a right to own land. Unfortunately, the basic rights of Mormons, Catholics and Jews were restrictive. After the Civil War, America moved slowly toward a secular state, especially with the Darwinist theories.

Sabbath received ultimate protection and was respected per the 4th commandment. Mail service on Sunday was stopped, and the Pennsylvania court banned the postmaster from communion if the post office was opened on Sunday.

The world was influenced by America's zeal for the Lord, in spite of limited connections with far-away lands. We were a young nation with only 20 ships in our fleet and only 20 staffers in our State Department. Yet, America led the fight for freedom and our missionaries were very impactful. Our presidents, especially **John Q. Adams**, steered clear of any European conflicts. Our victory over the Muslim Barbary pirates in Tripoli (1804) enhanced our image in the world, and our victory in New Orleans in 1805 was duly recognized. Mexico barred Protestant Christianity. Nevertheless, the young republic and God's Kingdom were making tremendous strides.

Indian history in this period was sad and misguided. Some Cherokees actively sought Christianity while others resisted. Georgia was the culprit in leading the movement for Indian removal, but the initial driving force was **Thomas Jefferson** who favored the Indian Removal Act as federal policy. Later, **Andy Jackson** led the way, and the Indian Removal Act passed in 1830, resulting in the tragic "Trail of Tears" where at least 4000 Indians died! Contractors who were paid to provide food and services for the journey simply took the money and ignored their contractual duties.

Education on a collegiate level in the south began with University of Georgia's founding in 1785, followed by the University of North Carolina in 1789 and South Carolina in 1800. (Some Tarheels believe UNC was founded first. ...Editor: All Tarheels that attend UNC **know** that it was founded first!) Readers will enjoy the mention of UNC founders **Sam McCorkle** and **Joseph Caldwell** and their Presbyterian influence. Chapel services were mandatory in most colleges and copies of sermons were distributed to the locals. In 1835 South Carolina completely overhauled the curriculum and fired all the professors. Nine years later 4 of the 7 professors were ordained Protestant ministers. Public education was a cooperative effort between state, church and parents. Godless education was not acceptable.

Christianity had strong roots like an oak in this 60-year period. In 1891 the Supreme Court declared America a Christian nation in a largely symbolic move only.

This most informative book is written on a PhD level well above my pay grade, but I did learn a number of new facts.

Sadly, women's rights were completely excluded, as was the norm for the time. Fourteen years after **Susan B. Anthony's** death in 1906 women were finally granted the right to vote.

So, our heritage is certainly not without blemish, but it is still one to be cherished in spite of the good, bad, and ugly aspects.

This book is available in the Book Nook.

Submitted by Hugh Wise
July 2025

Book Review

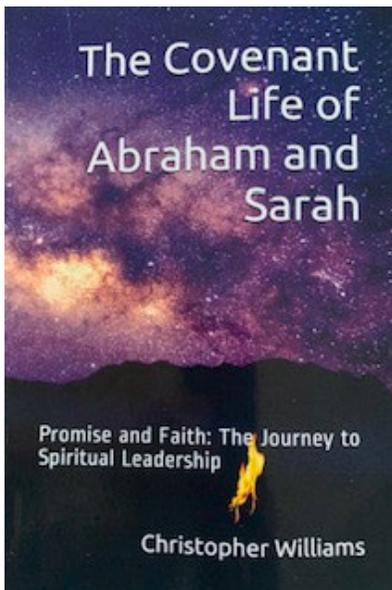
COVENANTS MADE SIMPLE

Jonty Rhodes

&

THE COVENANT LIFE OF ABRAHAM AND SARAH

Chris Williams



Jonty Rhodes and **Chris Williams** have each written a book on the Covenants. **Jonty**, our supported worker in Leeds, England, wrote **Covenants Made Simple**. He skillfully (and simply) explains the Adamic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and the New Covenant. **Jonty's** last chapter is "**Covenant Life**."

Our own **Chris Williams** has written a book entitled **The Covenant Life of Abraham and Sarah**. He skillfully exegetes Genesis 11 – 25 explaining on a deeper level the Abrahamic Covenant, the Covenant of Grace. **Chris** uses copious New Testament references regarding Abraham and Sarah to explain the ongoing progress of redemption unfolding in the "**Covenant Life**" of Abraham and Sarah. It is detailed with incredible insights.

We highly recommend

The Covenant Life of Abraham and Sarah

by our own

Christopher Williams

as well as

Covenants Made Simple

by **Jonty Rhodes**.

Submitted by Mike and Jean Robbins July 2025

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

9:00AM in WC211 & 201

- June 1- August 17 Summer Series**: “Finishing Our Course with Joy”
- August 24 - Fall Sunday School Kick-Off

Included in our study, we look at: Having our affairs in order, having: A Will, Power of Attorney, and Health Care Power of Attorney.

Pastor Derek Wells will speak on Burial and Cremation, Gaylene Scheide and Terry Dixon will speak on the Care Givers Support Group starting in September, and I will speak on planning our funeral. Those topics may not be exciting but are something that we need to know and prepare ourselves and our family for.

****Books for Summer Series****

Available in the Book Nook now or order at your favorite online bookstore.

1. “How to Finish the Christian Life”, Don & George Sweeting (check your bookshelf first)
2. “Finishing Well & the Glory of God”, John Dunlop, M.D.
3. Optional: “Finding Grace in the Face of Dementia”, John Dunlop, M.D.

SENIOR ADULT’S FALL RETREAT BONCLARKEN CONFERENCE CENTER, FLAT ROCK, NC OCTOBER 7-10, 20

Meet new friends and get re-acquainted with old friends as we enjoy time in the mountains with each other and the Lord.

RETREAT COST:

Single person package rate: \$570
Double package rate: \$350 per person
Couples package rate: \$698

Package price includes room, 3 breakfasts, 3 dinners, and retreat incidental costs. Lunches on your own.

TO REGISTER:

Make checks payable to Christ Covenant Church, write Senior Adult Retreat on the memo line and mail or give to Lucille Ruths (Retreat Registrar). **Full payment due by August 17.**

TWO ROOMS LEFT AS OF JUNE 29!

QUESTIONS?

Contact Lucille at 704-846-4074.

July Senior Ladies Luncheon

The Ladies' Luncheon will be on Friday, July 11, at 11:15 at Trio's Restaurant (10709 McMullen Creek Pkwy - off Hwy. 51). Please let Dot Branson (704-575-5955) know that you plan to join us for great food and sweet fellowship.

June Senior Men's Luncheon

The CCC "Senior Men's Lunch" will be 11:00 am July 18th at Park Place Restaurant 10517 Park Rd. Join us for a good, encouraging time gathered with your Christian brothers for great food and fellowship and Pastor Mo's devotional. Arriving a little earlier helps us get parked and order by 11:15

100FOLD MINISTERIES SERVICE PROJECT, JUNE 12, 2025

For the second year in a row Christ Covenant Seniors have volunteered to assist 100Fold Ministries with an overseas Ministry project. The objective is to take the gospel to a large and very restrictive country. 100Fold is a group of technology specialists who believe that mobile technology has a transformative role to play in making the gospel of Christ accessible to every individual on Earth. They help their Great Commission ministry partners use mobile technology to deliver the gospel and discipleship materials individually and safely. Our role was duplicating SD cards in the local languages as well as English. These SD cards are inserted into users cell phones so they have access to the Gospel with minimal danger of being discovered and punished or tortured. Of course, where this is most beneficial is in countries where Christianity is forbidden.



Alona Weddine

Linda Avery

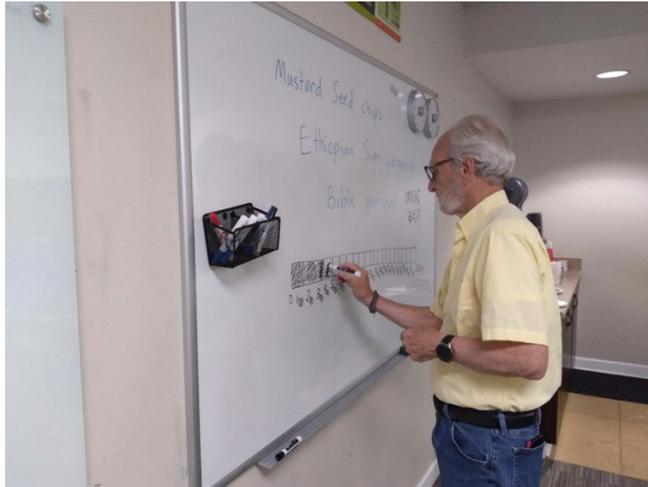


Donna Robart

Alice Guthman

Ken Bodwell

Carrol Mantell



Michael Woodall



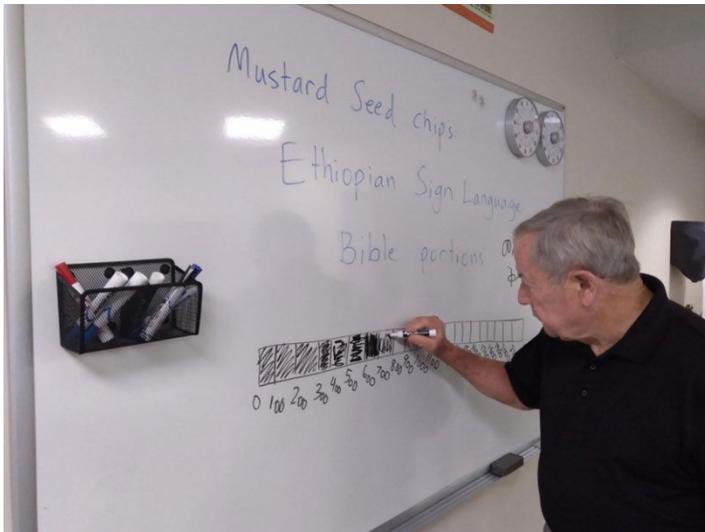
Becky and Darrell Hargett



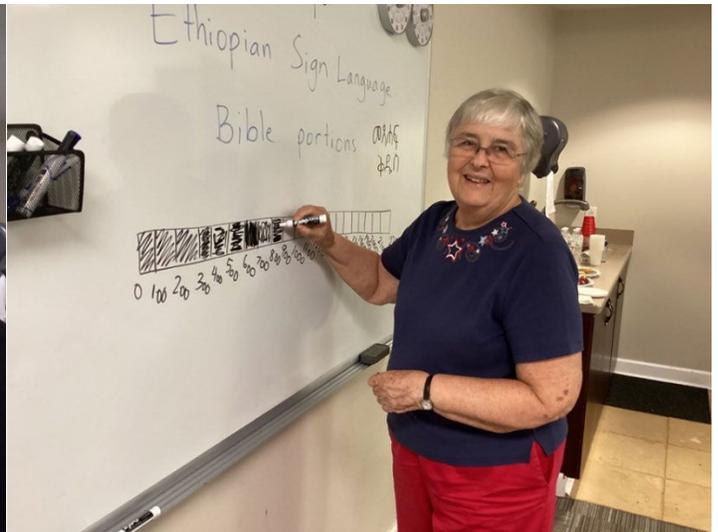
Alice Guthman



Liz Parker



Ken Bodwell



Carrol Mantell

In Congress, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.



Richard Pietrus	July 01
Patsy Rider	July 01
Rosemary Adams	July 07
Jan Conti	July 07
Carol Faber	July 08
Yvonne Musterman	July 08
Tom Cox	July 09
Helen Smith	July 10
Jan King	July 12
Dick Anderson	July 14
Velma Bernhard	July 15
Wendy Klipp	July 15
David McArthur	July 15
Tim Russell	July 15
Patrick Hogan	July 16
Dan O'Neil	July 18
Carol Marzahn	July 20
Maxine Pangle	July 20
Martha Walkup	July 20
Karen Grindstaff	July 24
Ken Webb	July 24
Hugh Wise	July 24
Jimmy Price	July 25
Faith Glaser	July 27
Nancy O'Neil	July 27
Bill Scott II	July 27
Gay-Ellen Fisher	July 28
Tom Johnson	July 28
Bruce Hansen	July 31

John & Vivi Wickberg	July 04
David & Angela Pacey	July 15
Jim & Patti Prieb	July 20
Steve & Patsy Rider	July 20
Dan & Nancy O'Neil	July 20
Mo & Janie Up De Graff	July 22
Myron & Mary Guthrie	July 23
Bob & Karen Hott	July 24
Jimmy & Jane Price	July 25
Tom & Anne Hopkins	July 26
Buddy & Liz Parker	July 27
Mark & Laura Costello	July 29

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Christ Covenant Church
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 Matthews, NC

JULY SENIOR ACTIVITIES

*****NO SENIORS LUNCHEON IN JULY*****

*****Prayer Mtg: Every Tues., 7:00-8:30 pm,
 WC107**

*****Ladies Luncheon, Friday, June 11,
 11:00am Trios Restaurant, Pineville.**

*****Men's Luncheon, Fri, June 18, 11:15am,
 Park Place Rest. Pineville.**

