

*Senior Adult's Newsletter*  
*April 2026*  
*Christ Covenant Church*



*CORAM DEO*

**REFRESHED & RENEWED**

*By Pastor Bruce Creswell*

I attended our **Coram Deo Pastors' Conference** here at **Christ Covenant Church** this past week. There were over 1600 of us in attendance! Many came from all over the United States, the UK, and from Europe. There are several thoughts that come to mind that I want to share with you.

Our church did a wonderful job of hosting my fellow pastors and myself. First of all, the conference being held in a church meant a lot to us pastors. It was not in a convention center, but in a place which houses the heart of the pastor, the local church. The church building is the place where we proclaim the Word, we worship corporately the Lord, and where we fellowship with each other. Saying that, the church was transformed to accommodate and encourage every pastor present. There was water and coffee stations throughout all the lobbies of the church along with mints! There were banners tastefully placed all throughout, reminding and encouraging us pastors of our calling.

The biggest ministry that stood out that impacted every pastor was the volunteers of our church at every entrance, sincerely greeting and welcoming all that came through their doors. A large number of the volunteers were you, our Seniors, tirelessly ministering a cup of cold water in our Savior's name. Can I say how proud I was each time I saw you serving and speaking words of kindness to the men! They witnessed the servant's heart in action all throughout the conference.

Everything possible was done to make each pastor welcomed and encouraged. There was an abundance of refreshments, which included doughnuts and hundreds of homemade cookies that the

ladies of our church provided. After the service on Wednesday night, hot dogs and homemade lemonade were served by a food truck. Can you imagine having to fix for 1600 pastors?! The CLC was one big, massive bookstore, a preacher's paradise. Books available at fair prices. Another blessing, each of us received free four books regarding pastoring, preaching, and feeding our own souls.



The Lord used **Christ Covenant Church** to serve His Church in a unique way and that is to strengthen many of His churches by feeding and loving on His shepherds.

Did you know that pastors need to be preached to, be instructed in the Word, to be encouraged in their hearts, and refueled in their calling? Simply put, they need to be refreshed and renewed to be the shepherds that their flock needs. Among those 1600+ pastors are many, yes, many who are facing all kinds of challenges, issues, temptations, and struggles. Many of these pastors wear many hats as a shepherd of small congregations. They don't have the necessary help needed and so they (and their wives) often pick up the slack to get the work done. Some don't have fellowship of other pastors close by for encouragement and bearing one another burdens. Some come to the conference weary and tired, and some are ready to quit. Some shepherds come from churches that are going through difficulties and trials, and just need a breath of fresh air, a break, to be reminded that he is not alone.

I know these things, because as a solo pastor for 20 years, I faced many of the same things myself. It was in those opportunities to attend pastor conferences my soul was bathed in the comfort and reassuring Word ministering to me. It was the fellowship and connecting with fellow pastors that encouraged me to labor on, to know there were other pastors who, too, were weary and so we found mutual encouragement in praying for each other. Most of all, it was an occasion to get refocused on the Great Shepherd who called me to be His under shepherd and refresh my soul.

The Lord always raises up His servants to minister to those pastors at the conference, and this week was no exception. We heard the Living Word of the Living God in exposition, in exhortations,

and in encouragement. The Spirit of God was present in the preaching and in the administering of the Word, as was evident in the voices of 1600 men lifting their voices together in praise as we worship the God who saved us and called us, a foretaste of the singing around His throne.

In closing, I am thankful for the vision and burden our Senior Pastor has for his fellow pastors to provide a haven of refreshment and renewal for them. I am thankful for **Christ Covenant Church** opening its door and for our folks whose heart felt response to serve whenever and however they can. Would you pray for those pastors who are back in their churches, for God's blessing on them in their walk, in their home and family, and for their churches as they shepherd them?

**To God Be the Glory!**



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## HYMN HISTORIES

By Peggy Dear

From 1925 to 1960 "**The Old Rugged Cross**" was America's favorite gospel hymn. Each year when a poll was taken, it finished in the number one position. The song emerged when **George Bennard** was going through some personal spiritual struggles. He decided to reflect on the meaning of the Cross, what John 3:16 was all about, and what the apostle Paul meant when he talked about entering into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.

Then one day, he said, "*I saw the Christ of the cross as if I were seeing John 3:16 leave the printed page, take form, and act out the meaning of redemption.*" He became convinced that the Cross was "*the very heart of the gospel*". And then, he said, "*The words of the finished hymn were put into my heart in answer to my own need.*"

Thus, **George Bennard's** personal struggles were the seed of one of the most popular gospel songs of the twentieth century.

### THE OLD RUGGED CROSS

*On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
The emblem of suffering and shame;  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain.*

*So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,  
'Till my trophies at last I lay down;  
I will cling to the old rugged cross,  
And exchange it some day for a crown.*

*O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,  
Has a wondrous attraction for me;  
For the dear lamb of God left his glory above  
To bear it to dark Calvary.*

*In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine  
A wondrous beauty I see;  
For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died  
To pardon and sanctify me.*

*To the old rugged cross, I will ever be true,  
It's shame and reproach gladly bear;  
Then He'll call me some day to my home far away,  
Where His glory forever I'll share.*

**GEORGE BENNARD (1873-1958)**

## **SOMETHING MORE ABOUT NUMBER FOUR**

### **ONE MAN'S REVERENCE FOR THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT**

There lived an extraordinary twenty-first century young man who achieved extraordinary things. He also had a vision (a dream) for the people of Christianity, the people of America and the world for that matter. This man believed (and encouraged millions to believe) that God's Commandment Number Four in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy could lead them on a path of spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, peaceful and productive creativity through the observance of 'sacred, holy, Fourth Commandment - **REST**. He testified to his belief by assiduously practicing the Fourth Commandment himself and by the actual fruit of his life's labor and leadership.

What was this man's life like? One thing he did was to write books; in one of his books he described his routine, (he may have referred to it as **rhythm** of his daily or weekly life).

***"He founded and led two major national organizations with over one thousand full-time employees; was responsible for raising over \$100 million annually to keep his organizations moving forward; hosted a daily national radio program and podcast; produced a steady stream of digital content; participated in over one hundred hours of open-air grueling, combative (travel intensive) debates each school semester; delivered more than seventy-five public speeches per year and lead a family with wife and two very young children. AND: observed a weekly twenty-four-hour sabbath. He believed that without his weekly Sabbath ("sacred rest") - - - everything else would begin to unravel".***

He diligently prioritized and guarded his weekly Sabbath and argued that God instituted the Sabbath centuries before writing it on stone tablets at Sinai: - - - ***"So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation". (Gen. 2: 3).*** This extraordinary young man also considered the Fourth Commandment to be a sign and a gift for man: not just a command for obedience. A sign: a reminder of covenant between God and man and a gift of sacred rest, refreshment and reflection upon what God made in six days and an example for his people to emulate. (Exodus 31: 16-17). He viewed the Sabbath as a day of 'liberation from the cacophony of this age of burnout, digital fatigue, and constant noise: not as some kind of legalism nor as a burden.

This extraordinary young man's Christian denominational affiliation was generally regarded as basically "Christian Evangelical". It's rather interesting that he preferred to observe his sacred Sabbath on Saturdays (the day of the Jewish Sabbath, or Shabbot). - (very similar to Seventh Day Adventist worship). Although He didn't advocate any changes to other traditional Christian Sunday Sabbath observance, he may have found a particular expression of reverence for himself as reflected in his investigation of the traditional Jewish Shabbot which begins in the family home on Friday evening and ends Saturday evening. The family gathers at sunset on Friday evening; the Sabbath (Shabbot) is welcomed as a guest; the table is set with special bread representing manna; candles are lit to symbolize the arrival of sacred light; a woman recites the blessing over the table; the previous week is now over and eternity has entered. Then wine is shared, sanctifying the day; the household head chants the ancient blessing declaring the Sabbath as a memorial of creation and exodus; hands are washed, echoing temple rites and the special bread is blessed and shared. A leisurely meal with psalm-singing and story-telling follows. Saturday morning is for synagogue where the Torah is read while the congregation stands: congregational worship and prayer follow. On Saturday evening a ceremony (Havdalah) observes the weeks Sabbath departure with a multi-wick lighted candle, cup of wine, aroma of spices, chants and blessings; then with the extinguishing of the candle, the family is rested, refreshed and ready to reenter the world.

In his book, our extraordinary young man recognized a dual significance for the Christian Sunday Sabbath and the Jewish Saturday Sabbath: both command a Biblical one entire day of sacred rest every week. The Christian Sabbath primarily celebrates the risen prophesied Messiah on Sunday (the first day of the week): The Jewish Shabbot celebrates the salvation from Egypt, wilderness preservation and promise of future peace. (the seventh day of the week). Both Sabbath and Shabbot are responses to the fourth commandment to **REST**. As God rested after six days of creation, man is to rest after six days of creative work. - - - The people of God are commanded, for their own good and, actually as a gift, to cease; to stop from all their labor: to **STOP IN THE NAME OF GOD** - - - which is the title of the book written by that extraordinary young man. His heart's burden was that the Christian Sabbath in America had (or has) deteriorated from being a **HOLY DAY** two hundred years ago to becoming a **HOLIDAY** for most of the people today! In his book, he skillfully reasons why the Sabbath rest is beneficial for man: maintaining spiritual, physical, mental and emotional health and productivity. He explains how the regular practice of a full-day Sabbath holy rest was critical and essential for him; without which he could never have accomplished all that he had accomplished. His book concludes with his vision of how the nation would benefit if God's Sabbath was observed universally. (The subtitle of his book is "**WHY HONORING THE SABBATH WILL TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE**").

His name was **CHARLIE KIRK**, founder and CEO of **Turning Point U.S.A** and **Turning Point Action: "the most influential political youth organizations in America"**. Today, his organizations draw and inspire millions of young people, (and private and political leaders) toward a return to Christian, conservative and patriotic values and action. Faithful adherence to God's Fourth Commandment to rest: To **STOP IN THE NAME OF GOD** for one entire day out of every seven was **Charlie Kirk's** most essential activity (which he regarded as a gift from his maker) without which, **Charlie** said and wrote, he could never have been effective during the other six days.

Because of his views and open activism about religion, politics and Christian morality, and his phenomenal success, irrational hatred toward him swelled up and he was tragically assassinated during a public debate on September 10, 2025; just a month before his thirty-second birthday. The President of the United States and members of the Federal Government attended and spoke at his memorial service.

**Submitted by Steve Sperry April 2026**



## **THE BOYS IN THE LIGHT**

**AN EXTRAORDINARY WORLD WAR II STORY OF SURVIVAL, FAITH, AND BROTHERHOOD**

**By Nina Willner, Dutton 2025**

When I was in my teens I read William Shirer's eleven-hundred-page account of the "Rise and Fall of the Third Reich." It was a life changing experience for me, but only later did I come to realize the book was a powerful testimony of the depravity of mankind, "(...and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...)" But out of the horrific time of brutality and murder there were some accounts that are uplifting and encouraging. This book is one of those.

**Pastor Bruce** called me and said I had to read this book which he just finished and write a review on it. So here it is.

This is the story of two groups of men, one in America, and one in Germany who by God's preserving providence found each other on the battlefield of the Second World War. It is a harrowing account of the two Jewish youths in Germany as they were swept up in the Nazi extermination machine yet were spared as they became slave labor for Hitler's war effort. The description of the camps, starvation and death are hard to read especially if you have never read about this, and yet, though the author does not pull punches she does not dwell on these matters but moves the narrative along quickly.

The American account traces several young men from diverse occupations and regions who entered the Army at the declaration of war after Pearl Harbor. They come together in Company D, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armor Division. This division was led by General Maurice Rose and was called "Spear Head" because they lead the Americans as they swept eastward after D-Day. After the "Battle of the Bulge," they moved into Germany. There they encountered the two Jewish young men who had escaped from a forced labor unit. They were in striped prison garb with weak emaciated bodies, desperately fleeing west toward hoped for freedom.

What happened next was amazing and the account brought tears. I will only say that the two Jewish young men proved useful in the remaining battles.

The leader of Company D, Elmer Hovland, began as a private, but because of his extraordinary gift of leadership he attained a battlefield commission to the level of First Lieutenant. The man was a serious Christian who kept the Bible with him and lead from a genuine love for his men and in dependence on God. The men of Company D expressed great affection for him through harrowing battles. Each of the characters in this narrative bears unique and interesting lives and stories.

The narrative continues after Germany's surrender and traces the lives through ensuing years. It is surprising to me that the Company D men did not keep contact with the Jewish boys after the war; but eventually... Well, you will have to read the book to find out what happened. Worth the effort!

The author of this book is the daughter of one of the Jewish boys that survived and went on to become an American Army officer. She is a good writer; the narrative is clear and fast moving. It is also worth noting that she writes as having personally heard the accounts from the actual men involved and thus produces a very personal and empathetic account.

As with **Bruce**, I highly recommend this to you all. But if you want to borrow the book you will need to see him as I am returning it.

**Submitted by Chris Williams April 2026**

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### **Solista Retirement Home Volunteer Opportunity**

**We are looking for volunteers to help with our activity on **Thursday, April 16 at 2pm**. No experience needed, just a willingness to help, dialogue with residents, and have fun.**

**Please contact **Craig Gaitan** to volunteer, or for more information, at [craiggaitan@yahoo.com](mailto:craiggaitan@yahoo.com); 614-312-3619.**

## Book Review

### THE CROSS IN FOUR WORDS

by Kevin DeYoung, Richard Coekin, Vannick Christos Wahab

This book of 91 pages is co-authored by **Pastor Kevin**, **Pastor Coekin** of Dundonald Church in London and **Pastor Wahab**, also of London. The latter two authors are part of the co-mission planting network in London.

The first sentence in the foreword states: “The preaching and ministry of the early Christians was dominated by one theme: **Christ Crucified**. Today’s culture regards Christ crucified as a stumbling block, and the message as being ‘insane’. Yet, Christians understand the event as the turning point of history and is central to Christianity.

Even Christians sometimes fail to realize the full impact of Christ crucified. Therefore, this easy but profound read addresses the issue by discussing four words: **FREEDOM, FORGIVENESS, JUSTICE and PURPOSE**. This book review will provide a general overview of two of the four words, and the other two will be greatly appreciated by reading the entire book (only \$7 from the book nook).

Will your mistakes always be with you? Thanks to the digital world, social media, enslaved minds, that’s what the world says! But, Paul tells us in I Corinthians about a “new beginning” because Christ, the Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed much as the Passover lamb in Exodus was sacrificed, and became the forerunner of a greater sacrifice thousands of years later. The Exodus was a new beginning for the Jews who were slaves for 430 years. They found freedom! No more bricks! Today in our culture much is said about sexual freedom or lifestyle freedom, but real **FREEDOM** is the ability to be the person you **OUGHT** to be.)

Consequently, the goal of **FREEDOM** is worship. Remember the Egyptians had a god for everything (the Nile, frogs, crops, fertility, livestock). But the **PASSOVER** was the forerunner to the crucifixion years later. Both are **FREEDOM - GIVING**. Following Jesus equates to true biblical **FREEDOM**.

Bondage to the fear of death is also removed by God’s gift of amazing grace. When we connect the dots from the Passover to Christ crucified, we readily see not only the new self, our identify, plus the fear of dying is removed.

Further, we are freed forever, there is no debt to be paid, we have been purchased by His blood and now we belong to Him. We are free to worship and serve Him.

Biblical **FREEDOM** is priceless is the point Kevin makes so well, and the perspective of **FREEDOM** for the Christian is 180 degrees different from the world’s view.

The **JUSTICE** segment begins with Isaiah 53 and a prophecy about the cross and a servant who would take punishment for the guilty. In today’s world sin is offensive and many attempt to shift the blame. **Kevin** refers to our previous president (2020) who said he had no reason to repent of his sin while the previous president (2016) defined sin as whatever was out of line with his own values. King David, who sinned horizontally against Bathsheba, Joab, Uriah, and his people, and vertically against

God confesses in Psalm 51, "Against you only have I sinned". God has to judge sinners to maintain his sovereignty so there is tension and **JUSTICE** has to be applied. Isaiah 53 clearly identifies the

problem and the solution: "All we like sheep have gone astray" and then "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Therefore, **JUSTICE** has been satisfied and the swap has worked, and there is nothing left to pay! (The heart of the gospel).

God not only forgives our sins, but also gives us His own righteousness which **Kevin** describes as the highest expression of **JUSTICE**. We should all strive to fully comprehend how good the good news really is.

The Cross is not just about suffering or about a good man who died a sad death. The cross deals with our sinfulness, our atonement, the resurrection, Jesus being enough, the absence of condemnation, and our **FREEDOM** through His **JUSTICE**.

**Praise God for the cross.**

**Submitted by Hugh Wise April 2026**



## **SENIOR ADULTS' APRIL LUNCHEON**

**Friday, April 17, 2026 (3rd Friday!), CLC**

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

**Speaker:** Clay Anderson, Director of Youth Ministries

**Menu:** Sub Sandwiches, Potato Salad, Dessert, tea or water

**Cost:** \$7 per person (*place in basket at luncheon*)

**You're invited! Please join the senior adult community for a time of fellowship, good food, and interesting speakers. *RSVPs are due by Sunday, April 12.***

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0444AAAF2EA2FC1-63112527-april#/>

*Though April showers may come your way.  
They bring the flowers that bloom in May.  
So if it's raining have no regrets  
Because it isn't raining rain you know, it's raining violets  
And where you see clouds upon the hills  
You soon will see crowds of daffodils  
So keep on looking for a blue bird  
And list'ning for his song  
Whenever April showers come along.  
Al Jolson (1921)*

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**Editors Note:**

*Due to the Easter Holy Week church services most of our Senior Adult activities and church services have altered dates in April as compared to other months. Please note the possible changed weeks of the month, changed days of the week, and changed times for all activities and services listed in this newsletter as well as the church bulletin and the Courier.*

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**April Senior Ladies Luncheon**

Our Ladies' Luncheon will be **Friday, April 10th, at 11:15** at Trio's. The address is 10709 McMullen Creek Pkwy. (off Hwy. 51). Please let Dot Branson (704-575-5955) know that you will join us for great food and sweet fellowship.

**April Senior Men's Luncheon**

The CCC "Senior Men's Lunch" will be **Thursday, April 23 @ 11 AM** (arriving a little earlier helps us get parked and order by 11:15), 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.

**JOY SINGERS**

**SENIOR ADULT CHOIR**

**April Rehearsal Schedule**

*April 6 - No rehearsal. Easter break*

*April 13, 20, 27 - Rehearsals*

*All rehearsals begin at 1:30 pm*

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**WOMENS MONDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY**  
**WITH CAROLYN CARPENTER**

Carolyn Carpenter will be leading a Monday morning mini study in May for women entitled "Encounters with God." It is free and will meet from 10:00am -11:30am May 4, 11, and 18.

Register here: (and to see details)  
<https://christcovenant.org/may-short-study/>

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Judy Aylestock	Apr 05
Marv Eash	Apr 05
Vivi Wickberg	Apr 07
Mimi Compton	Apr 09
Teresa Yurkovich	Apr 10
John Wickberg	Apr 13
Laura Costello	Apr 14
Lanier Ellis	Apr 14
Darrell Kirkley	Apr 15
Ilse Cauble	Apr 17
Hilda Torres	Apr 17
Chris Hillesheim	Apr 19
Alona Weddine	Apr 19
Sarah Mills	Apr 21
Karen Henry	Apr 25
Marguerite Hogan	Apr 27

Steve & Patty Marion	April 04
David & Lynn McArthur	April 05

**APRIL SENIOR ADULT ACTIVITIES**

Sunday School, Sundays, 9:00 am

**April 5: Happy Easter! No Sunday School**

**April 12: Sunday School; plus**

**Church Picnic after church**

**April 16: Solista Service Project**

**April 19 & 26: Combined Sunday School in Sanctuary**

**In May, Paul Engle will complete his lessons on the Odyssey of Paul.**

Prayer Meetings, Tuesdays, 7:00 – 8:30 pm, WC107

**Lunches**

Ladies Luncheon, -- Friday, April 10, 11:15am  
Trios Restaurant, McMullen Creek

**April 17: Senior Adults' Luncheon**  
**(3<sup>rd</sup> Friday) 11:45 am, CLC 5&6**

Men's Luncheon, Thursday, April 23, 11am  
(4<sup>th</sup> Thursday) Park Place Restaurant,  
Pineville

**Save the Date:**  
**Fall Retreat @ Bonclarken,**  
**October 13-17, 2026**

**Pastor of Senior Adults and Visitation**  
**N. Bruce Creswell**

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