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Worship Times:
9:00am Traditional
(Online – Website)

Pleasant Grove United Methodist
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704-392-2387
www.pleasantgrovecharlotte.com

Inspiration Point

Ephesians 6:11 to 18 "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places.

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-"

God made us in three parts; spirit, soul, and body. Our spirit should be tied directly into God's Spirit, and our soul (controlling our minds our will and our emotions) should be directly submitted unto our spirits! Our bodies usually are directed by our soul (our fleshly thoughts). Most of the time, our souls are concentrating on what ever worldly things are going on around us. We argue, we fight, we cuss out those who do not agree with us and things like that! What ever things we are into for the moment, we direct our bodies to take action for or against that! Since we live in the world, we think and act like the world. We spend very little time in prayer, or in the Bible, or even associating with like-minded believers! In other words, we neglect our spiritual life almost altogether! Temptations come at us through our natural senses, and what ever of those that give us pleasure, that is what we do!

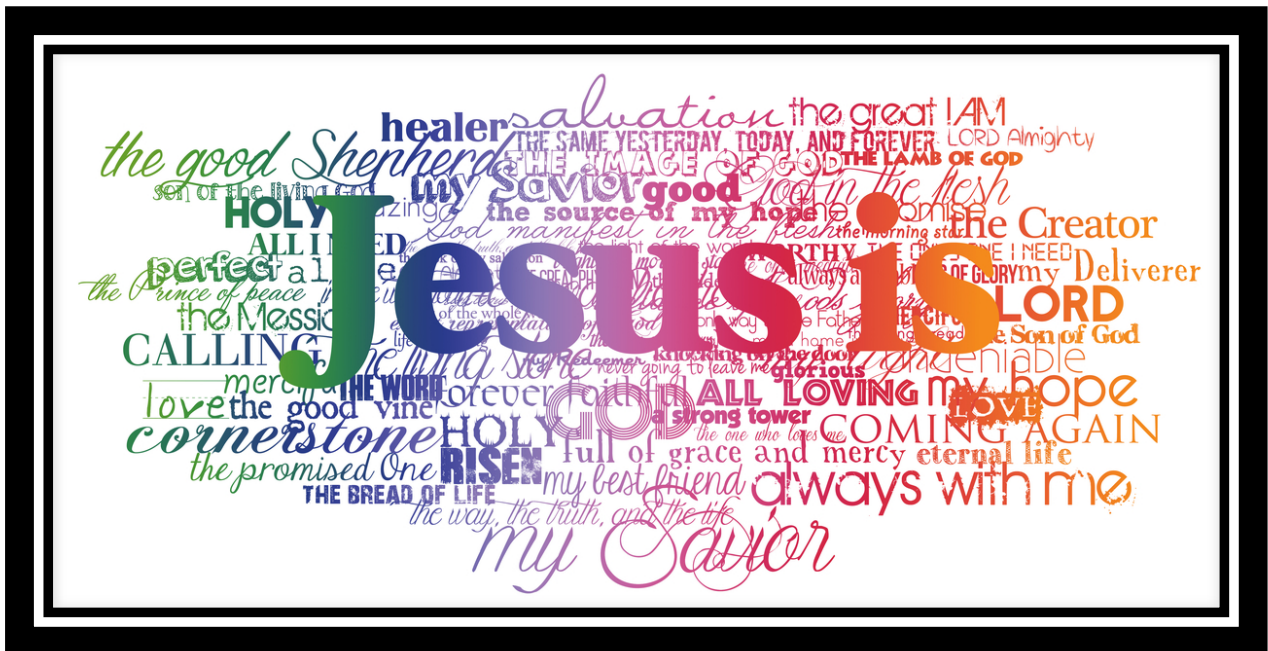
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Satan is our enemy! He really does not care about you or your family! What he cares about is to bring shame and discredit upon our Lord and God! That is what he is fighting about! But, he is going to do this by working through you! If he can get Christians to argue and fight each other about anything at all, he is accomplishing his goal! Because to do this we must walk after the flesh, and that is where he attacks us, in our flesh, through our souls! You can not take on yourself the whole armor of God when you are walking in the flesh! Your soul is not following the direction of the spirit, which should be to live a Godly and Holy life!

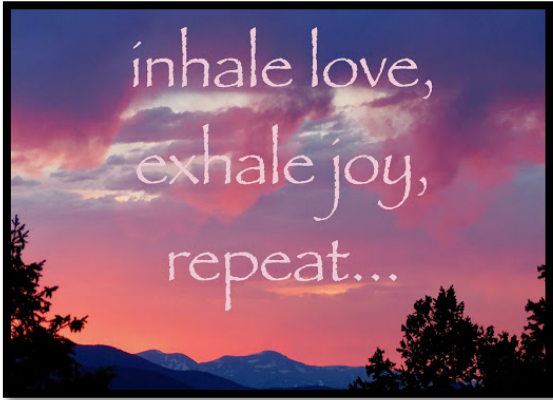
Our Mother's taught us that if we do not have something good to say, then say nothing at all! Our country is broken, and that is because we, you and I, are broken! Instead of filling our minds with good things, peaceful things, Godly things, we are filling them with political things today, and who knows what tomorrow! We need to take on the helmet of salvation to guard our minds about all these fleshly things! Have you noticed that if you closely follow the political things of today, that they become obsessive to you? I have! Those things are not healthy for us! If things do not turn out our way, we become bitter, and bitterness does not change others, it changes us. It shades our way of thinking, and influences how we react to others!

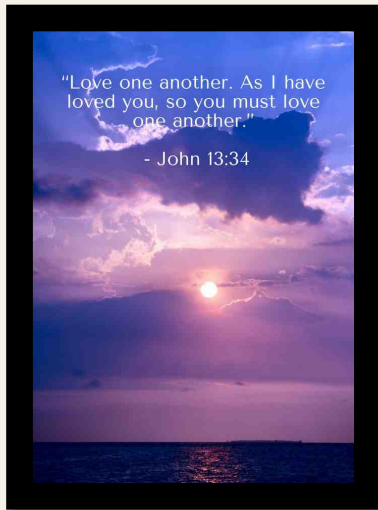
It is my intention to fill my mind with the good things of the Holy Scriptures, this way; I will have good and peaceful thoughts, and can allow the love that God has sown into me to flow out onto others! Will you join me?

Brother Phil



Welcome February!!!





February... that time of the year when our minds think about love. Along with Valentine's Day comes assorted expressions of love: the friendly love that exists between elementary school classmates who exchange valentines, the starry-eyed love that exists between pubescent middle-schoolers who are making their first forays into relationships, the expectant love of older teenagers and twenty-something's who are wondering if they have found "the one," and the committed love of those who are sure they have indeed found "the one."

With lots of help from the greeting card companies, the candy companies, and Hollywood it's easy to turn love into nothing more than sugary-sweet sentimentality infused with a splash of passion.

The Greeks had three words for love: *philia*, *eros*, and *agape*. *Philia* is an intimate affection that exists between friends. *Eros* is a sort of romantic or aesthetic love that is felt when you find an individual that is attractive to you. *Agape* is different. Whereas *philia* and *eros* are rooted in humanity, *agape* is rooted in God. *Agape* is the unmerited love, God showed us by sending Jesus Christ as suffering redeemer. When used to speak of human love, *agape* is selfless and self-giving love. We are called to *agape* love.

When I think of *agape* love, I am reminded of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement of the sixties. As King, and others, pressed toward the goal of equal rights, many people stood in their way. One such individual was a police official from Birmingham, Alabama named "Bull" Connor. "Bull" took great pleasure in turning fire hoses on King and his followers. If the fire hoses were not enough, "Bull" would instruct his subordinates to release attack dogs to chase down those fleeing the bruising power of the hoses. King and his followers had every reason to disdain "Bull" Connor. Yet at Saint James Baptist Church in Birmingham, King reminded the people that "even ole' Bull is a child of God...we love ole' Bull" (Richard Lischer, *The Preacher King*, 1995, p. 251).

We do not have to like everyone. There are some people whose actions and attitudes make them unlikable. Nonetheless, we are called to love (*agape*) everyone in Christian love. Love, at its best, is self-emptying, and self-sacrificing without expecting anything in return.

During this "love" month may God grant us the strength, grace, and courage to love everyone...even the "unlovable."

Christ above all,
Pastor Byron

Things that make you go Hmmm....

SPEECHLESS: Poet Scott Cairns recounts a Dan Rather interview with Mother Teresa in which he asked her what she says to God when she prays. "I don't say anything," she said. "I just listen." Rather then asked what God says to her. "He doesn't say anything," she responded. "He just listens" (*Crux*, Winter 2006).

Did You Know???



...that our United Methodist missionaries continue to face challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic? But that they continue to live into the call on their lives? Even though the work they are doing might not look exactly as they had envisioned when they began their time of missionary service?

You have probably thought about and prayed for our missionaries over the past ten months. You probably have come to the realization that these missionary servants are continuing to serve even in the face of tremendous anxiety and uncertainty. You have probably wondered how they find it within themselves to persevere and to finish the work that the Lord has set them to doing.

We thought we would take this opportunity to acquaint you with one of our missionaries and the current situation with our missionaries in general. The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries has 350 missionaries serving in 70 different countries. The highest numbers of missionaries are in Africa, North America, and Asia. The Board offered to return these missionaries to their homes but most opted to stay where they were, seeing that the needs were even greater with the onset of the pandemic. They wanted to “stay in place to be engaged in mission.”

Chanmony Ek was in South Africa four months when the COVID-19 crisis began. She was working in the Gauteng Province at the Northfield Methodist Church and the John Wesley Community Centre. She was working with a support group for family and friends of addicts, a gardening project, teaching English to preschoolers, working at a charity shop, teaching children’s Sunday school, and working with a food ministry.

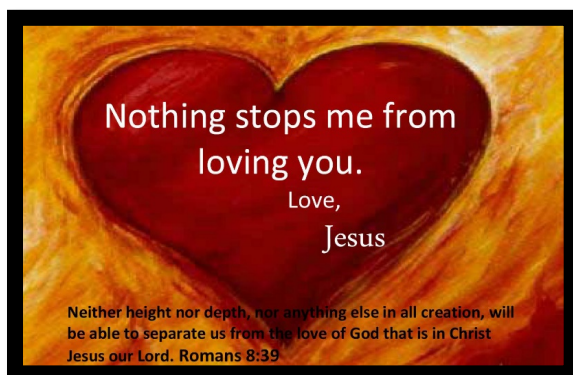
Suddenly, COVID-19 arrived in the area and a full lockdown began. As Ek went about her work in South Africa, more than 6000 miles from her home in Cambodia, the threat from the virus led to some dire thoughts, as one can understand. She thought about what might happen if she became infected with the virus so far from her home and family. To add fuel to the stress of the situation, both the John Wesley Community Centre and the Northfield Methodist Church closed. Even as so much of Ek’s work fell from view, it became abundantly clear that the food ministry became even more important. The government and Northfield, including Ek, are now working together to feed 500 homeless people staying in shelters three times each day.

Her time in South Africa was not exactly what she expected. She had not anticipated the changes in her work or the stress that came with a real threat to her health and well-being. However, Ek has been able to stay healthy and has been able to see how God can continue to work through us as we pivot our efforts when needed. Ek says, “It was a good chance for me to learn different things, especially the way that the church gets involved and helps the community. I realized that during this difficult time, it might be a good time for me to give my faith to God and the community.”

Let us all continue to remember our missionaries in our hearts and in our prayers. They continue to serve our most amazing God in some most amazing ways within some truly challenging circumstances. God Bless our Missionaries!

(The information contained in this article was found on the United Methodist Church website and was written by Jim Patterson. It first appeared on the website on January 5th, 2021. Patterson is a UM News reporter in Nashville, Tennessee.)

Happy Valentine's Day!!!



The volunteers at Pleasant News want to wish you all a very happy Valentine's Day! May you be overwhelmed with the presence of Christ in your life today and always! And may you know of His never-ending love for you in a real and heart-felt way!

Scripture of the Month

Hey Church Family!



I wanted to start bringing you all a "Scripture of the Month" with the intent of hopefully offering you all some encouragement or maybe some small amounts of wisdom. So, I will highlight a short piece of scripture that we can ruminate on together and give some of my own personal insight. You might want to write the verse down and post it around your home so that you can be reminded of it throughout your day. You might even want to commit the "Scripture of the Month" to memory. This would be a great way to get more of God's Word deep down into your soul! Without any further delay this month's passage is **Colossians 3:12-14**:

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Here is a wonderful verse brought to us by Paul and directed towards the church at Colossae. Paul is asserting that we are the children of God "holy and beloved" and because of that we are to become more and more like Christ. He charges the church, and by extension us, to "clothe ourselves" with aspects of Jesus that define how we should treat others. We are being called to, more than anything else, love those around us as God has loved us (and forgiven us of our sins!).

Sometimes loving people and being good to them is the hardest thing I must do as a follower of Christ. People can be rude, insensitive, selfish, and generally just believe things completely different from myself. How can we be expected to show love to people and clothe ourselves with these traits while the world continues to hurt and reject us? But doesn't God forgive us just like the verse says? Haven't we hurt and denied Jesus at numerous points in our life? We serve a God of grace and love and that is a reason to rejoice! While we are rejoicing in the love we have been shown, we must not forget to extend that same love and grace to our community (and even those outside of our community). So, while we navigate this new year and these difficult days don't forget to cover yourself in the compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and most importantly the love that Jesus has given us. Don't just be those things, "clothe" yourself in them so that your very existence exudes them.

I hope this encourages you at least somewhat. I'll be back next month to share another verse God is impressing upon me and I hope to hear from each of you as to how God is speaking to you as well. With that, I'll sign off and see you next month!

In humble service,

- Colin

Ash Wednesday at The Grove



Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent. This liturgical season is a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation, and spiritual discipline. Ash Wednesday has ancient roots and can be traced back to at least the 10th century. In many churches the ashes are made by burning the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday.

Ash Wednesday emphasizes two themes: our sinfulness before God and our human mortality. Our observance of Ash Wednesday focuses on both themes, helping us realize that both have been triumphed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the ashes are placed on the forehead, words

such as these are spoken: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return," recalling God's words to Adam or "Repent, and believe the gospel," recalling the message of both John the Baptist and Jesus.

Pastor Byron is inviting our church family to take part in a very special observance of Ash Wednesday, 2021. On Wednesday, February 17th, from 1-3 PM, he will have a drive-thru imposition of the ashes in our church parking lot. Although this isn't our normal Ash Wednesday service, it still affords us all the opportunity to participate in this reflective and meditative observance. We encourage everyone to be a part of this act of faith as we continue to be safe and cautious.

Through the imposition of the ashes on the first day of Lent, we come before God recognizing our humanity, repenting of our sin, and remembering who we are and who we can be.



Way To Go, Pleasant Grove!!!

A long time ago, way back in October and November of 2020, Pleasant Grove once again reached around the globe with our love and care. In fact, we offered the children of the world 156 of our warm and wonderful hugs from right here in the heart of Oakdale. As a church family, Pleasant Grove collected 156 Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes and sent them, along with our prayers, to children who otherwise wouldn't have received a gift this year. These precious children of God also heard the Gospel story in their own language upon receiving their boxes. Now, obviously, this number is down from our usual offering. But think about it...we were able to put together 156 boxes in the middle of a pandemic!!! So, we can thank God for our opportunity to serve, our willingness to serve, and our ability to serve...but we can also look forward to doing great things to glorify and honor Him in 2021!!! It will be exciting to see how God wants to use us in a mighty way when we aren't in the crisis of a pandemic!!! Let's start thinking forward even now!!!

Backpack Buddies 2021



As we turn the calendar page over to reveal a new year, we thought we would update you on our Backpack Buddies Ministry. We continue to operate with a “pick-up” distribution on Friday mornings from 10-12. We are currently serving 17 students within 9 families. Without fail, we hear weekly that what we are doing, how we are helping, is making a difference in the lives of these families. Pleasant Grove Presbyterian Church continues to partner with us. These brothers and sisters in Christ were able to supply each of our BPB families with a grocery store gift card for Thanksgiving. Then, as Christmas quickly approached, our own church family was able to give each family a grocery store gift card to help with either a nice holiday meal, or a restocking of the pantry with some of the basics. Not only did we receive enough in monetary donations to cover the Christmas gift cards, but our monthly donations of food items continue to be strong. We are well stocked for the next couple of months. However, there are just a few items that we find ourselves needing. If you are able, would you please consider donating **canned chili beans, chicken salad kits, tuna salad kits, and cups of instant macaroni and cheese?** Donations of these items would be most helpful and would get us remarkably close to the finish line for the 2020-2021 school year. As always, we appreciate your support of the children of our community. With God’s help we can and do make a difference!



After School Care Additions



Greetings from our After School Care Program!!! We hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We had a great time during our Winter break. We played, made crafts, planned and enjoyed parties, and delivered fruit and candy goody bags to some sweet members of our church. Before our break ended, Mountain Island Charter School made the decision to pivot to remote learning until January 19th as a precaution because many families traveled to be with family and friends during the holidays. We are trying to accommodate our parents as much as possible. We know that families need help with childcare while the schools remain remote, but parents need to return to work. We hope everyone will stay safe and healthy. We can’t wait to get back to normal...visiting, shopping, traveling, and hugging!!!



The Recipe Box



You know you are in the South when you can build a meal around the greens and the peas! And we all know that January is the month that we usually highlight this simple meal. Who would have ever thought that the lowly collard greens would become the trendy side-dish that it is; appearing on many menus in some very swanky restaurants??? However, I came across this recipe recently and just had to share it with you, even though we are already into February. But before I do...a little bit about my history with this beloved side dish of the South!

Growing up, we always had the traditional meal on New Year's Day...collard greens, black-eyed peas, corn bread, and some sort of pork. The reason for this meal on New Year's Day is that it is said to bring you good luck in your finances in the coming year. Well, I didn't care how many times my parents preached this to me...as a child, you couldn't get me to eat a bite of the collard greens!!! As I grew up, and my financial well-being became more of a concern to me, I started to poke one small (and I mean really small) bite into my mouth on New Year's Day and chase it quickly with a slug of sweet tea. I guess we now know why I have never won the lottery!!! As the years went by, however, I grew to have a greater tolerance for this beloved, home-grown, centerpiece of the New Year's Day table. I still haven't begun to routinely prepare collard greens for my family, but that all may be changing with the discovery of this delicious recipe!



New Year's Day, 2021, I was served these wonderful collard greens, and believe it or not, I had two big helpings. They are absolutely delicious, and Scott is excited to hear me say that I will be making them for us in the very near future. I know that most of you probably already have your tried-and-true family favorite recipe for making collards, but I do encourage you to give this recipe a try. I don't think you will be disappointed! They may take a couple of hours to simmer, but they only require a few minutes of hands-on prep time. They can be made ahead of time and they reheat beautifully. In fact, many would say that they are better on the second or third day. If you want to amp up the smoky flavor, you can add a teaspoon of smoked paprika to the broth. Do not skip the apple cider vinegar! This may seem strange, but the vinegar adds a welcome tangy note that brightens the dish and balances out the savory, salty flavors. If you are looking to spice it up even more, you can add a tablespoon of red pepper flakes or serve the finished dish with hot pepper vinegar or hot sauce as an addition at the table.

And so, from the recipe files of "Southern Living", I give you...

Southern-Style Collard Greens

- 12 slices hickory-smoked bacon, finely chopped
- 2 medium-sized sweet onions, finely chopped
- ¾ pound smoked ham, chopped
- 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 (32 oz.) cartons chicken broth
- 3 (1 pound) packages fresh collard greens, washed and trimmed
- 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¾ teaspoon pepper

Cook bacon over medium heat in a 10-quart stockpot for 10-12 minutes or until almost crisp. Add onion to stockpot, and sauté 8 minutes. Add garlic and ham and sauté one minute. Stir in broth, collard greens, apple cider vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper. Cook two hours or until desired tenderness.

(submitted by Sherri Brown)



Getting Food to Those in Need



Once again, as a church family we came together to help those in need at the beginning of a new year. For the 2nd year in a row Pastor Byron encouraged us all to participate in a Reverse Advent Offering. The usual Advent calendar contains a small gift, trinket, or piece of candy for us. This Advent calendar does a little role reversal for the month of December. Each day we were given the opportunity to GIVE instead of receiving!

When we all arrived at Christmas Eve, we had a box full of food and had read through the book of Luke, in effect reading through the life of Christ...and together we came up with 37 boxes of food! These food boxes have been delivered to the food pantry at Huntersville UMC and will now be used to minister to those in need. Thanks to Kaylan and Karen Brown for coordinating the delivery of our boxes. This was an awesome effort considering the times in which we are living! It will be exciting to see what God asks us to do, and what He can accomplish through us, during this New Year!



Helping Our Homeless Neighbors



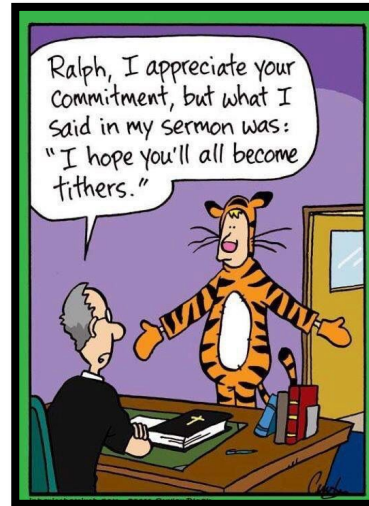
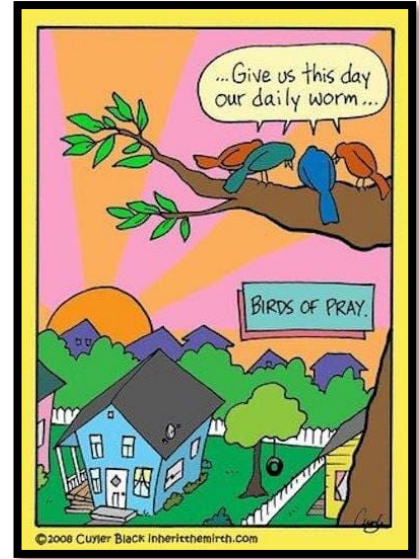
Urban Ministry Center and the Men's Shelter of Charlotte have recently combined under one name; *Roof Above*. In the past, our church family has participated in the Room in the Inn Ministry in partnership with Urban Ministry Center. With the events of 2020, the entire Room in the Inn program did not operate. Because of Covid-19, *Roof Above* has had to pivot in the services that they are offering to our homeless neighbors. The Statesville Avenue Overnight Shelter has been reactivated and will be serving Homeless men with overnight stays and basic hygiene services through our cold winter months. In an effort to support our homeless neighbors at the Statesville Avenue Overnight Shelter we will be collecting some basic supplies for their use.

Items to be donated:

- NEW wash cloths
- Shaving cream
- Disposable razors
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Shampoo
- Body wash
- Hand sanitizer
- NEW face masks (disposable or reusable)

Drop-off bins for your donations will be placed in the Gathering Room of the Family Life Center as well as in the church office building. We will be collecting these items through Thursday, February 11th. Thanks, in advance, for coming together in support of those in need. Together we can surely make a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

"Just For Giggles"



“The Following Gifts Have Been Made In Memory Or In Honor Of”

IN MEMORY

Gail Moore

The Glen Reynolds Family

Kappy Canfield

The Glen Reynolds Family – Family Life Center

Terry Kelly – Family Life Center

David McCallum

David and Lynette Primm

Kelly Roberts

The Glen Reynolds Family

Sandy Elliott

Hazel Sanders

David and Lynette Primm

Nancy Brown

The Glen Reynolds Family

Bill Watts

The Glen Reynolds Family

Horace Nixon

The Glen Reynolds Family – Family Life Center

Vivian Kiser

The Glen Reynolds Family

Judy Maples

The Glen Reynolds Family

Troy Wilson

The Glen Reynolds Family

Willie Williams

David and Lynette Primm – Family Life Center

William and Martha Brown – Family Life Center

Terry Kelly – Family Life Center

Laura Chapman – Family Life Center

Debbie and Ed Tucker – Family Life Center

Michael and Teresa Barnette – Family Life Center

3 Cross Construction Steel Erectors – Family Life Center

Sonny and Angie Ross – Family Life Center

Joanne Green – Family Life Center

Seaside North POA – Family Life Center

Shelly Primm – Family Life Center

Hoyt Johnston – Family Life Center

Emily Adkins – Family Life Center

James “Jack” and Vivian Cochran

The Cochran Family

Bob and Troy Wilson

Tim and Terri Honeycutt – Family Life Center

Virginia Pennington

Hazel Sanders

Patrick Jasper

Steve and Karen Dellinger

IN HONOR

Church Staff – Byron, Colin, Kay and Lindsay

Anonymous

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!!!



The members of Circle #6 would like to thank the church family for their support of our December Ham Sale. Even though we were not able to have our traditional Ham Dinner, we were still able to get some delicious country ham into the hands that wanted it and bring in some much-needed funds as well! In a truly short amount of time, we were able to sell 130 packages of ham that netted us about \$450. These funds will now be used in various mission/outreach efforts here at our own church and then beyond the confines of our campus. Isn't it just an awesome and inspiring thing when God uses something as simple as "country ham" to provide for those in need of food, homes, help, and hope? Thanks again for your enthusiastic support!



Troop 882 Gives Back

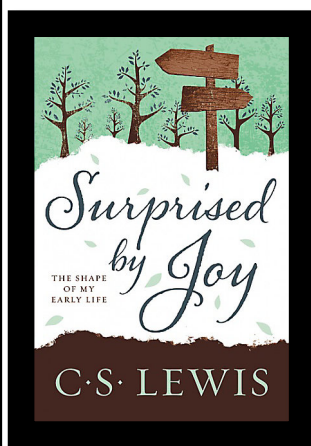


'Twas the week before Christmas and all through the church...

Well, you know how the famous poem goes! But in 2020 it was the week before Christmas, and it wasn't Santa that showed up on our campus! But it was the next best thing! Girl Scout Troop #882 showed up in a big way! Troop #882 meets several times a month on our church campus. Throughout the pandemic they have been meeting virtually, as have so many of our regular activities. But meeting virtually certainly didn't slow down their working for good in the world! The Troop had already experienced a successful cookie sale and knew that they wanted to give back to their community. They decided to support one of the mission/outreach efforts here at Pleasant Grove, namely our Backpack Buddies Ministry. However, the girls wanted to take their generosity to the next level. Not only did they commit some of their proceeds from the cookie sale, but they also each individually committed to donate to the cause as well! As you can see from the photos, the donation was significant! These items will go a long way toward meeting the needs of our BPB families who find themselves in a food-insecure situation. Thanks so much to Girl Scout Troop #882! Your compassion and caring are an inspiration to us all!



Recommended Reading



This month's reading suggestion is Surprised by Joy: The Shape of my Early Life by British writer, scholar, lay theologian, broadcaster, Christian apologist, and bestselling author, C.S. Lewis. Clive Staples Lewis was one of the intellectual giants of the twentieth century and one of the most influential writers of his day. He was a Fellow and Tutor in English Literature at Oxford University and was unanimously elected to the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University. He is the author of more than thirty books, which allowed him to reach a massive audience. His works continue to attract many new readers each and every year, even today. His books include Mere Christianity, The Screwtape Letters, The Great Divorce, and The Chronicles of Narnia.

In Surprised by Joy, Lewis takes his readers on a spiritual journey through his early life and eventual embrace of the Christian faith. He begins with his childhood in Belfast, works through his boarding school years and his youthful atheism in England, spends time reflecting on his World War I experience, and ends at

Oxford, where he "gave in and admitted that God was God...perhaps that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." As he recounts his lifelong search for "Joy", Lewis demonstrates its role in guiding him to God.

Surprised by Joy is a partial autobiography. However, the book contains less detail concerning specific events than the typical autobiography. This is the case because his purpose in writing this work wasn't primarily historical. His desire was to describe the events leading to his accidental discovery and ensuing search for the phenomenon he labeled "Joy". The word "Joy" was the best translation he could make of the German idea of Sehnsucht, longing. This "Joy" was a longing so intense for something so good and so high up, it couldn't be explained with words. As the book draws to a close, he covers the end of his search as he moves from atheism to theism, and then from theism to Christianity. He then discovers the true nature and purpose of "Joy" and its place in his own life. The book isn't completely devoid of history and information about his life. He welcomes the reader into his early years with a measure of humor that is sometimes mixed with pain.

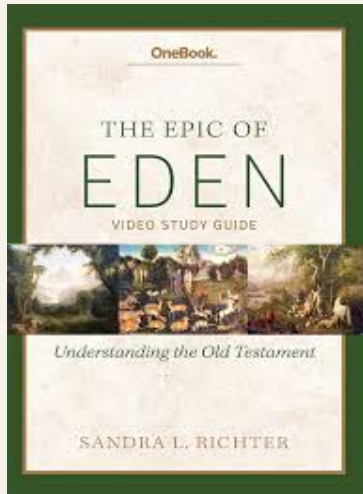
As Christians, it is important for us to know of the journeys that others have taken in finding a guiding, transforming faith. It is in this practice that we can all find parallels and differences with others, leading us to understand more of this magnificent and loving God. We have probably all heard it said that "we all have a God-shaped hole in our hearts and souls that can only be filled by The One True God." It seems that Lewis was on to this very thought early on in his life as he came to understand the longing in his own heart for that which escapes description and can only be known in the heart and soul.

Surprised by Joy can be found at your local library, at your local bookstore, and online through booksellers such as Amazon and ChristianBook. It is also available in digital download format as well as an audiobook. We encourage you to read this classic work by one of the giants of the Christian faith and hope that you will continue to grow in your own faith journey in the process. Happy Reading!!!



You are Invited to Join a Bible Study with Jana Alexander

The Epic of Eden, by Sandra Richter



Does your knowledge of the Old Testament feel like a grab bag of people, books, events, and ideas? How many times have you resolved to really understand the Old Testament? To finally make sense of it? In The Epic of Eden video study, Dr. Sandra Richter clearly and powerfully communicates a history of God's redeeming grace, weaving together a story that runs from the Eden of the Garden to the garden of the New Jerusalem. Through text and video teaching, Dr. Richter uses this 12-week study to bring a new dimension to the history of the ancient Near East, orienting any study group in time, geography, culture, redemption, and relevance to today – all without diminishing her reader's faith or dumbing down the scripture. Legendary Bible stories take on a new life as Dr. Richter clearly articulates their part of a larger pattern, revealing an even deeper significance for the tales individually. The Epic of Eden video study is ideal for serious church groups wanting a meaty study of Biblical text, as would anyone eager for a strategic grasp of the good, the bad, and the ugly of the Old Testament and how it relates to God's activity in the present.

Study begins on Monday, January 18 – April 4 (12 weeks)
6:30 PM via Zoom

If you would like to join in, please notify the church office or Jana Alexander (janaalexander09@gmail.com) so that we can be sure to send you the Zoom link.

You will need the study guide (\$23) for the group meetings and for your personal reflection and study. You can order the book from Amazon.com or we can order it for you. However, never let the cost of a study guide prevent your discipleship...there are scholarships available to cover the cost of your book. It is never too late to join in with this Bible study group. We would welcome your participation!

God So Loved the World

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)



The puzzle is based on John 3:16-17

M L I Z D Q X P T H R O U G H
V D J P Q W T W V L R C I D A
C Y U L I F E O K D D E D B V
I T S H B N R W L Z K O H M V
S H Z N D G G J L G B S E N D
J G O D B M A M R Y F N U L O
S Z E N K D L V M R A W O N
R A J M C P K V E F Q H X V O
Y I V L G C S P L H E O J E U
B W E E B O M E Y I V E O D U
P O J S U N R R K M P V R W Z
X R C V T D P I P F P E R S H
S L S G C E X S Z N I R Z D T
V D B Q G M F H E T E R N A L
U G Y W P N V B E L I E V E S

LOVED
THROUGH
PERISH

GOD
SEND
ETERNAL

SON
WHOEVER
GAVE

CONDEMN
LIFE
HIM

BELIEVES
SAVE
WORLD