

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

SINGING TO GOD

By Pastor Brian De Jong

“Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless His name, proclaim His salvation from day to day!” What could be clearer than these opening verses from Psalm 96. Every believer has a duty to sing – to sing and make melody in his heart to the Lord.

Singing is the right response when God does great things. Psalm 98 begins by saying, “O sing to the LORD a new song, For He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him.”

Not only is it good and right for us to sing to God, but our heavenly Father takes special pleasure in the songs of His children. When we extol Him in our songs, it brings a smile to His face.

Singing is a staple of Christian worship, and has been for thousands of years. Paul counseled believers in Ephesians 5:19 to be “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.”

He had very similar advice for the Colossians, writing this: “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

These verses remind us that singing in worship has both vertical and horizontal aspects. We are singing to God and we are singing to one another. We are worshipping God and we are teaching, instructing and admonishing one another.

The singing portions of our worship service are also the point where each member takes a direct part in both worship and instruction. You play an important part in the overall ministry of worship when you participate in song.

As I mentioned recently, our Session has discussed congregational singing at Grace Church. We believe it is good, but could be better. Therefore we want to encourage everyone to sing heartily during worship. Instruction and encouragement will be coming from the pulpit on an occasional basis so that we can grow in this area



of our worship.

In a day where rock bands and praise teams have eclipsed congregational singing in many churches, we wish to stand against the tide of our times. We want to recapture the beauty, simplicity and vibrancy of ordinary Christians singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs from their hearts to the Lord who has redeemed them.

Years ago I visited one of our sister congregations in Canada. Their minister was being installed, and I took part in the service that night. In a truly ecumenical spirit, there were representatives of other Reformed churches in the area who came together for that special event. What stands out in my memory about that night was how those Canadian brethren sang. They loved to sing the praises of God, and it showed in every song that night.

Do you love to sing? Are you grateful to God for His goodness to you? Will you sound forth His praises, making a joyful noise to the Lord?

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July 2012

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Mnemonics...

- *Evening Fellowship Meal, 1st*
- *Men & Boy's Rock Island Trip, 21st*

Exhortations to those who are called

by Thomas Watson

...1. Admire and adore God's free grace in calling you — that God should pass over so many, that He should pass by the wise and noble, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon you! That He should take you out of a state of vassalage, from grinding the devil's mill, and should set you above the princes of the earth, and call you to inherit the throne of glory! Fall upon your knees, break forth into a thankful triumph of praise: let your hearts be ten stringed instruments, to sound forth the memorial of God's mercy. None so deep in debt to free grace as you, and none should be so high mounted upon the pinnacle of thanksgiving. Say as the sweet singer; "*I will extol thee, O God my King, every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever*" (Psalm 145: 1, 2). Those who are patterns of mercy should be trumpets of praise. O long to be in heaven, where your thanksgivings shall be purer and shall be raised a note higher.

2. Pity those who are not yet called. Sinners in scarlet are not objects of envy, but pity; they are under "*the power of Satan*" (Acts 26:18). They tread every day on the brink of the bottomless pit; and what if death should cast them in! O pity unconverted sinners. If you pity an ox going astray, will you not pity a soul going astray from God, who has lost his way and his wits, and is upon the precipice of damnation.

Nay, not only pity sinners, but pray for them. Though they curse, do you pray.... "*When he came to himself*" (Luke 15:17). It seems the prodigal before conversion was not himself. Wicked men are going to execution, sin is the halter which strangles them, death turns them off the ladder, and hell is their burning place; and will you not pray for them, when you see them in such danger?

3. You who are effectually called, honour your high calling. "*I, therefore, beseech you, that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called*" (Ephesians 4:1). Christians must keep a decorum, they must observe what is comely. This is a seasonable advice, when many who profess to be called of God, yet by their loose and irregular walking, cast a blemish on religion, whereby the ways of God are evil spoken

of. It is Salvian's speech, "What do pagans say when they see Christians live scandalously? Surely Christ taught them no better." Will you reproach Christ, and make Him suffer again, by abusing your heavenly calling? It is one of the saddest sights to see a man lift up his hands in prayer, and with those hands oppress; to hear the same tongue praise God at one time, and at another lie and slander; to hear a man in words profess God, and in works deny Him. Oh how unworthy is this! Yours is a holy calling, and will you be unholy? ... So, though others are loose and vain, it is not fit for those who are set apart for God by effectual calling. Are not flowers sweeter than weeds? You must be now "*a peculiar people*" (I Peter 2:9); not only peculiar in regard of dignity, but deportment. Abhor all motions of sin, because it would disparage your high calling.

Question. What is it to walk worthy of our heavenly calling?

Answer. It is to walk regularly, to tread with an even foot, and walk according to the rules and axioms of the Word. A true saint is for canonical obedience, he follows the canon of Scripture. "*As many as walk according to this canon*" (Galatians 6:16). When we leave men's inventions, and cleave to God's institutions; when we walk after the Word, as Israel after the pillar of fire; this is walking worthy of our heavenly calling.

To walk worthy of our calling is to walk singularly. "*Noah was upright in his generation*" (Genesis 7:1). When others walked with the devil, Noah walked with God. We are forbidden to run with the multitude (Exodus 23:2). ... in religion it is good to be singular. Melanchthon was the glory of the age he lived in. Athanasius was singularly holy; he appeared for God when the stream of the times ran another way. It is better to be a pattern of holiness, than a partner in wickedness. It is better to go to heaven with a few, than to hell in the crowd. We must walk in an opposite course to the men of the world.

Watson Concluded...

To walk worthy of our calling is to walk cheerfully. *“Rejoice in the Lord evermore”* (Philippians 4:4). Too much drooping of spirit disparages our high calling, and makes others suspect a godly life to be melancholy. Christ loves to see us rejoicing in Him. Causinus, in his hieroglyphics, speaks of a dove, whose wings being perfumed with sweet ointments, drew the other doves after her. Cheerfulness is a perfume to draw others to godliness. Religion does not banish all joy. As there is a seriousness without sourness, so there is a cheerful liveliness without lightness. When the prodigal was converted *“they began to be merry”* (Luke 15:24). Who should be cheerful, if not the people of God? They are no sooner born of the Spirit, but they are heirs to a crown. God is their portion, and heaven is their mansion, and shall they not rejoice?

To walk worthy of our calling is to walk wisely. Walking wisely implies three things.

(a) To walk warily. *“The wise man’s eyes are in his head”* (Ecclesiastes 2:14). Others watch for our halting, therefore we had need look to our standing. We must beware, ... of all that is unbecoming, lest thereby we open the mouth of others with a fresh cry against religion. If our piety will not convert men, our prudence may silence them.

(b) To walk courteously. The spirit of the gospel is full of meekness and candour. *“Be courteous”* (1 Peter 3:8). Take heed of a morose, supercilious behaviour. Religion does not take away civility, but refines it. *“Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the children of Heth”* (Genesis 23:7). Though they were of a heathenish race, yet Abraham gave them a civil respect. St. Paul was of an affable temper. *“I am made all things to men, that I might by all means save some”* (1 Corinthians 9:22). In lesser matters the apostle yielded to others, that by his obliging manner he might win upon them.

(c) To walk magnanimously. Though we must be humble, yet not base. ... What is sinfully imposed

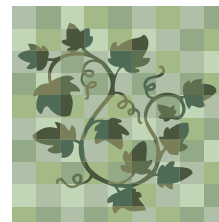
ought to be zealously opposed. Conscience is God’s diocese, where none has right to visit, but He who is the Bishop of our souls (1 Peter 2: 25). We must not be like hot iron, which may be beaten into any form. ... This prudential walking comports with our high calling, and does not a little adorn the gospel of Christ.

To walk worthy of our calling is to walk influentially — to do good to others, and to be rich in acts of mercy (Hebrews 13:16). Good works honour religion. As Mary poured the ointment on Christ, so by good works we pour ointments on the head of the gospel, and make it give forth a fragrant smell. Good works, though they are not causes of salvation, yet they are evidences. When with our Saviour we go about doing good, and send abroad the refreshing influence of our liberality, we walk worthy of our high calling.

Here is matter of consolation to you who are effectually called. God has magnified rich grace toward you. You are called to great honour to be co-partners with the angels, and co-heirs with Christ; this should revive you in the worst of times. Let men reproach and miscall you; set God’s calling of you against man’s miscalling. Let men persecute you to death: they do but give you a pass, and send you to heaven the sooner. How may this cure the trembling of the heart! What, though the sea roar, though the earth be unquiet, though the stars are shaken out of their places, you need not fear. You are called, and therefore are sure to be crowned.

Taken from The Divine Cordial by Thomas Watson, “Exhortations to those who are called.”

“Cheerfulness is a perfume to draw others to godliness.”



July Birthdays



Congratulations!



- Matt De Troye graduated from the De Troye Homeschool and will be attending UW Sheboygan this fall, working toward a degree in Mechanical Engineering.

- Caitlin Ver Velde graduated from SCCHS and plans to attend Trinity Christian College.

- Robby Taggart graduated from North High School and plans to attend UW Whitewater in the fall.

- Josh Arndt graduated from Northeast Wisconsin Technical College with a degree as a Surgical Technologist.

- Dan Doro has graduated from Lakeshore Technical College with a degree in Criminal Justice.

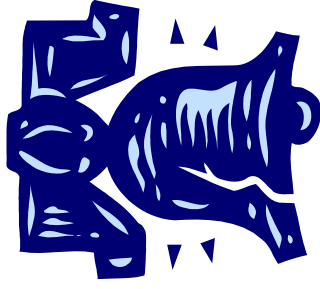
- Marshall VerVelde graduated from Trinity Christian College with a degree in Business and is currently working for Ver Velde Masonry.



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July 2012

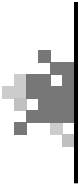
Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Evening Fellowship Meal	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Missions Sunday	9 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	10 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	11	12	13	14
15	16 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	17	18	19	20	21 Men & Boy's Adventure to Rock Island in Door County
22	23 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i> Vacation Bible School 9 a.m.- 12 p.m.	24 VBS 9 a.m.- 12 p.m.	25 VBS 9 a.m.- 12 p.m.	26 VBS 9 a.m.- 12 p.m.	27 VBS 9 a.m.- 12 p.m. VBS Program, 6:30 p.m.	28
29 Lord's Supper, (a.m.)	30 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	31				



Continued...



Concluded...



The Scottish Sleuths & The Case of The Hidden Hero

Come help our Scottish Super Sleuths, Angus McTavish and Professor Dabney Thornwell solve a biblical case of the “Hidden Hero” in the Book of Esther!

VBS Meeting Place:

Grace OPC (920) 565-2160
4930 Green Valley Lane
Sheboygan

Dates: July 23rd-27th, 2012

Times: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Ages: 4 years old through 6th grade



Vacation Bible School 2012

Women!

You are invited to the Monday a.m. Bible Study. In September we will be studying Galatians. We are almost finished with Luke. We meet 6:30-8:00 a.m. at the church all Mondays except the first.





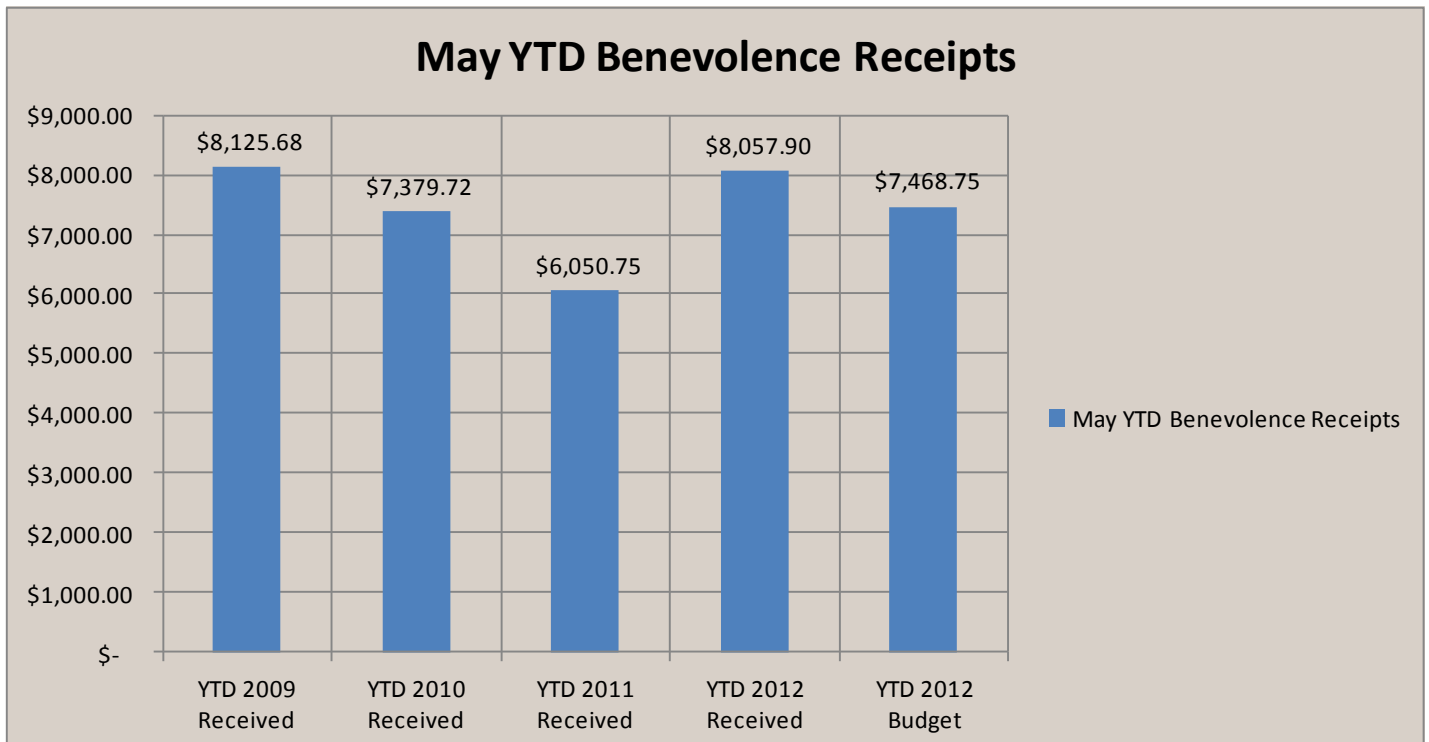
Comments on Finance

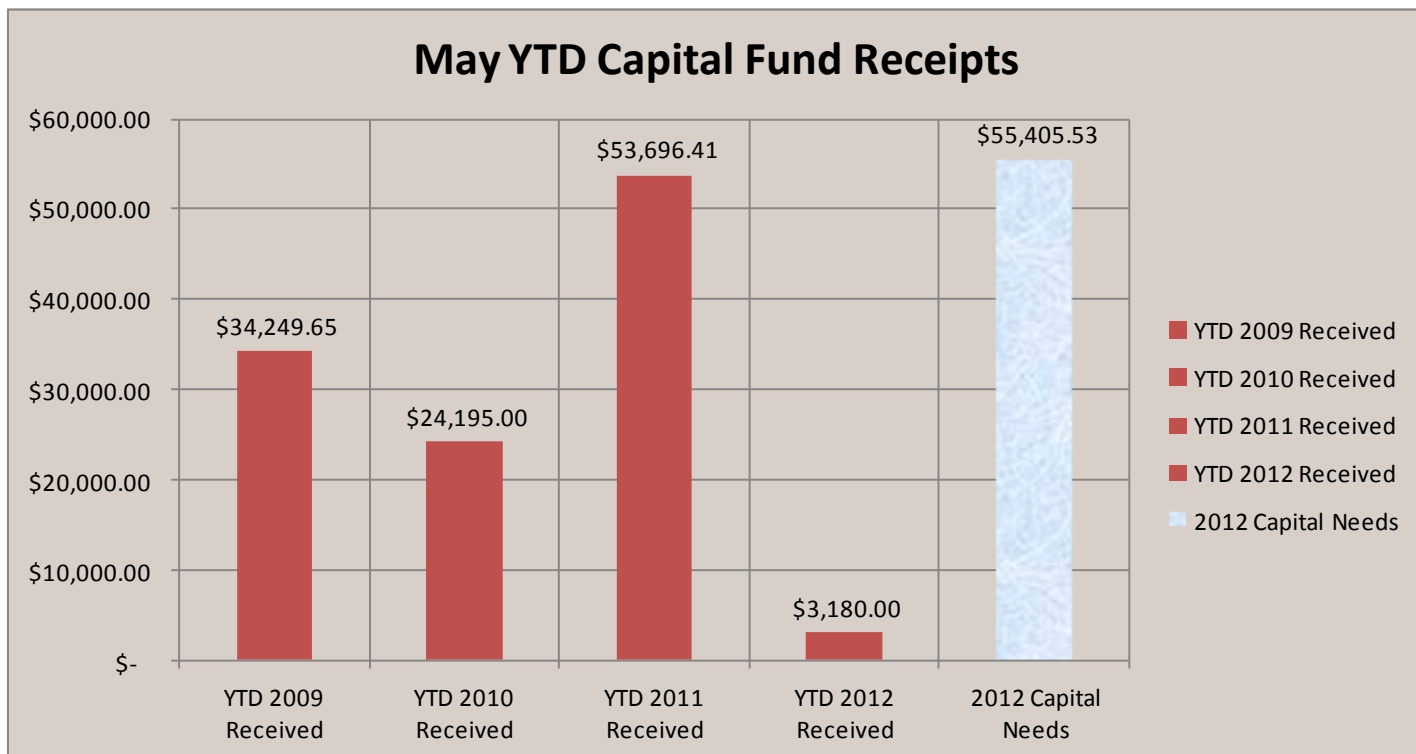
by Joel Moody

General Fund receipts for May totaled \$13,173.75 as compared to the budget of \$12,538.39, while General Fund disbursements for May totaled \$14,658.72. May year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$68,501.41 as compared to the budget of \$68,961.09 (a shortfall of \$459.68), while May year to date disbursements of \$63,265.36 were \$5,695.73 below budget. Through the end of May, the General Fund has increased by \$5,328.59. The increase in the General Fund was due to a shortfall in disbursements as compared to the budget. Year to date General Fund receipts for May were 9.3% above last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 2.1% above the prior year.

May Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$3,180.00. The outstanding Promissory Notes balance was \$59,000.00 as of the end of May 2012. During the current year, \$53,000.00 is scheduled to mature on these notes. How can you help to meet this outstanding need? Although there is not a scheduled offering for the Capital Fund, the need is still there to pay off the obligations that we

have committed to as a local church body. Please refer to the Capital Fund Graph that shows the historical giving through May for the years indicated in the graph as well as the 2012 Total Capital Fund needs for the year in the last column. You may contribute to the Capital Fund by marking your gift for the Capital Fund and placing it in the offering plate. (Since there is not a scheduled offering for this need, you must mark your gift as Capital Fund in order for your gift to go towards this need.)





Our Ongoing Obligations

by Pastor Brian De Jong

It is now four years since the dust has settled from our building project. Everything is finished and the mortgage is paid off – so we’re done, right?

The Session has recently discussed our financial situation related to our capital fund, and thought it would be good to inform the congregation of a few facts. It is our hope that you will prayerfully consider this situation, and respond with godliness to the need.

Though we have finished paying off our mortgage to the bank, there are still promissory notes that are unpaid. The total amount is \$59,000, with \$53,000 of those set to “come due” this year. These were monies lent to the church by members of our congregation at a competitive rate of interest.

While some of these notes may be continued at that same interest rate, we would like to be able to pay these off and be finished with our building program financing.

Through the first half of this year, we have

received roughly \$3000 in gifts to the capital fund. If we wish to pay down all of those notes maturing in 2012, we would need \$50,000 to come in during July through December.

Our treasurer Joel also reminds us that we need to look toward the future. Our sanctuary is quite full on most Sunday mornings. If we need to modify and/or expand our sanctuary, we will need capital to do so. So not only should we finish paying off our obligations from the first phase of building expansion, but we should be saving up toward our next phase.

God has been very gracious to us thus far, and we are confident He will continue to do so. As a congregation you have been ready and willing to give sacrificially to meet these past needs. It is our hope that God will again use you to bless our congregation as we continue to serve Him in Sheboygan!

Men & Boy's Adventure

Early on Saturday morning, July 21st we will leave the church parking lot to travel to the very top of the Door County peninsula. We will take a ferry to Washington Island, and then a second ferry to Rock Island.

Rock Island State Park is a unique place of beauty. There are good hiking trails, a lighthouse, a swimming beach and a picnic area. We will eat a picnic lunch on the island. Mid-afternoon we will catch the ferry back to Washington Island, and start backtracking until we get home to Sheboygan.

The cost is \$23 for adults and \$12 for boys 6-11 yrs old.

If you have questions, talk with Pastor Brian. This is open to all men and all boys within the church – not just fathers and sons.



Date Nut Bars

- ★ 1 pkg. dates— 8 oz. or greater
- ★ 1 cup water
- ★ 1 cup sugar

Boil until mixture thickens— use a hand mixer to blend ingredients until it is a soft puree. Set aside.

- ★ 2 1/2 cups quick oats
- ★ 2 cups flour
- ★ 1 cup brown sugar
- ★ 1 cup melted butter
- ★ 1 tsp. salt
- ★ 1 tsp. baking soda in 2 Tbsp. boiling water
- ★ 1 cup chopped nuts

Combine all ingredients. Pat 1/2 of the mixture into a 9x13 lightly greased pan. Pour the date mixture over bottom crust. Sprinkle the rest of the crust mixture over the date filling. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

Kate Nagle



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You
give them
their food in
due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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Spurgeon

Corner

*“In summer and in winter
it shall be.”
(Zechariah 14:8)*

The streams of living water which flow from Jerusalem are not dried up by the parching heats of sultry midsummer any more than they were frozen by the cold winds of blustering winter. Rejoice, O my soul, that thou art spared to testify of the faithfulness of the Lord. The seasons change and thou changeest, but thy Lord abides evermore the same, and the streams of his love are as deep, as broad and as full as ever. The heats of business cares and scorching trials make me need the cooling influences of the river of His grace; I may go at once and drink to the full from the inexhaustible fountain, for in summer and in winter it pours forth its flood. The upper springs are never scanty, and blessed be the name of the Lord, the nether springs cannot fail either. Elijah found Cherith dry up, but Jehovah was still the same God of providence. Job said his brethren were like deceitful brooks, but he found his God an overflowing river of consolation. The Nile is the great confidence of Egypt, but its floods are variable; our Lord is evermore the same. By turning the course of the Euphrates, Cyrus took the city of Babylon, but no power, human or infernal, can divert the current of divine grace. The tracks of ancient rivers have been found all dry and desolate, but the streams which take their rise on the mountains of divine sovereignty and infinite love shall ever be full to the brim. Generations melt away, but the course of grace is unaltered. The river of God may sing with greater truth than the brook in the poem—

“Men may come, and men may go,
But I go on forever.”

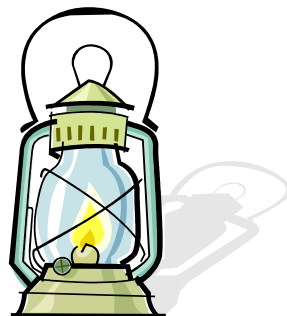
How happy art thou, my soul, to be led beside such still waters! never wander to other streams, lest thou hear the Lord’s rebuke, “What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt to drink of the muddy river?”

Morning, July 1, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon



Camp Westminster

It is not too late to reserve a spot at Camp Westminster being held July 30-August 3. Get to know other believers from our presbytery as together we enjoy the Rev. John Hartley’s talks on *Pilgrims Toward Dawn - Living by Faith in the Season of Unseen Things* and the many enjoyable



conference grounds activities. Want to come for just a day? Lodge somewhere off of the grounds? No problem. Whatever you plan be sure to inform camp registrars Joe & Judy Lewandowski