

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

WHAT OUR COUNTRY NEEDS MOST

By Pastor Brian De Jong

One of my favorite figures in the Old Testament is King Josiah. Coming to the throne at the tender age of 8, this young king led an unprecedented reformation of the land. He purged Israel of all vestiges of idolatry. When the book of the law was found, and then read in his hearing, Josiah wept and tore his clothes.

In the remainder of his life, he accelerated his reforms. He reinstated the Passover and he continued cleansing Jerusalem, the temple and the land. After his death, a curious thing happened. Very quickly the nation reverted to its bad habits. The idolatry was restored and the people went whoring after other gods. Bad king followed bad king until Nebuchadnezzar came to take them off to exile.

The epilogue of Josiah's life is this: as much good as he did, the hearts of the people were not fundamentally changed. When his godly influence was removed, they went back to doing what they wanted to do all along – idolatry!

Our nation has just celebrated another birthday. In our patriotic zeal we sing and we pray, "God bless America." But what does America need most? What is the priority issue?

A growing majority of Americans are unhappy with our leadership. The President's approval ratings have plunged this year and show little signs of lasting recovery. Congress is vilified by an even greater majority of voters. We are tempted to think, "What if..."

What if we could elect good leaders that would stand up against the cultural

rot of our age? What if we had a Christian president who would uphold God's word and govern according to righteousness and justice? What if most senators and representatives cared about truth and fought for it, regardless of the cost? Isn't that what we need most?



Let me preface my answer by saying that I'll gladly vote for good candidates who show evidence of being godly leaders. If a candidate honestly upholds the Bible and wants to govern our country by Biblical principles, he's got my support! Good leaders would be good for our country.

But that is not what our country needs most. Though I would love a "President Josiah," his work would be short-lived if it were not accompanied by a widespread change of heart among the citizenry.

What we need most is radical heart-surgery by God on the people of this nation. The heart of this nation is a heart of stone – a heart that hates God and His holy ways. A heart that scorns His name and refuses to allow high school students to pray the Lord's prayer in their graduation ceremonies.

We need a heart of flesh to be implanted in this nation – a heart that is humble before God and who weeps before His holy word. We need a nation that will seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is near. A nation that will hate and forsake its sin because it is displeasing in God's sight. We need nation-wide repentance from the least child to the greatest leader. May God grant us what we need, and not what we deserve!

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July 2014

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Mnemonics...

- *Baby Shower, 9th*
- *Church Picnic, 31st*

A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts

Chapter 10, Sections 4-5

by Richard Steele

SECTION 4

Reason to bless God for freedom from distractions.

See hence what cause you have to bless God for freedom from distractions, and be sure you do it. Those that have an habitual ability against these snares, bless the Lord for it! it is he that keeps the heart in tune, not you. We, like little children, can break the strings, and put our hearts out of tune; but it is the Lord that sets and keeps us in order. You little know the anxiety, and fear, and trouble, that these cost many a poor christian; they strive, they mourn, they doubt, they are ready to throw up all; these vultures do gnaw upon their very hearts; no comfort, no joy of the Holy Ghost, no peace within, and all through the continual assaults hereof. And by the mercy of God only, thou art well and free. Thou canst continue instant in prayer, thou canst come to heaven's gates, and get thy errand heard, thy business dispatched, and little distraction in it. Give the Lord praise, lest he leave thee to thyself, and then thy case will be more miserable than theirs. Thankfulness keeps the mercy which ingratitude forfeits. And we are freeholders of these blessings; but it is because we hold of his free grace and mercy.

Yea, those that are often pestered with them, and yet sometimes freed, bless the Lord for that. It is as much your duty to praise God when you are freed, as to bewail it when you have failed. It is the comparison of a good divine: if a man have planted many trees in his orchard, and the caterpillars or cankers have consumed them all but one or two, how glad will he be of them that are left, and make much of them! the rest are killed, and these only remain. Even so thy duties of religion, which thou hast planted, and expectedst they should bring thee some good fruit; but, alas ! these caterpillars have consumed them, unless it be here and there a prayer, here and there a sermon, that have escaped. bless the Lord for these! you have often prayed for such a mercy, now you have it; let praises wear what prayers have won. It is sad to consider, what a beg-

garly spirit we are of: if we want any thing, heaven and earth shall ring for us; but we are graves, wherein the gifts of God are buried without any resurrection. Where is the heart that is pregnant with praises, that cries out to his friend, O help me to praise the Lord! Divide our Hves, and the one half of them is made up of mercies, and the other half of sins; and yet divide our prayers, and hardly the tenth part is spent in praises. Alas! thanks is a tacit begging. Let God gain the glory, and thou shalt not lose the advantage. "The God of Israel is he that giveth strength to the people, blessed be God." Psalm 68:35. Conclude with the psalmist, "Not unto me, Lord, not unto me, but unto thy name give glory." Think not, when thou hast attended on the Lord without distractions, I have acquitted myself well, but mercy hath acquitted itself well. He that justly pays his debt shall be trusted again.

SECTION 5

Religion is an inward, difficult, and serious business.

You see here in the last place, that religion is an inward, a difficult, and a serious business. "He is not a Jew, that is one outwardly but he is a Jew, that is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." Rom. 2:28, 29. To be watchful and holy within, that is a christian; to have the vanities of the heart cut off, that is circumcision; to carry it so in an ordinance, that you may be praised of God, that is religion; while others are quarrelling about shadows in God's ordinances, beware lest you lose the substance thereof.

There is in religion a body and a soul. The religion of the body, is but the body of religion; the religion of the soul, is the soul of religion. And as the separation of the body and the soul is the death of a man, so the divorcing asunder the form and power of godliness is the death of godliness. As it is injury to macerate and destroy the body to cure and save the soul, so it is a crime to damn and lose the soul, to please and pamper the body. Even so it is injurious to

Wandering Concluded...

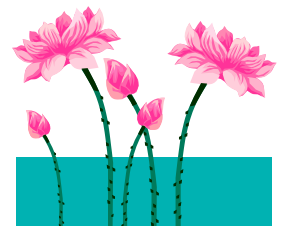
destroy the body and outside of religion, to preserve and advance the soul and inside of religion; but it is heinous to lose and break the heart of the inside and vitals of religion, to pamper and adorn the exteriors thereof. It is well, if while we quarrel about a bended knee, we do not lose a broken heart.

And then you see here also, that religion is a difficult and serious business; men cannot swim to heaven in a stream of rose-water, nor row up this river while they are asleep; we cannot wrestle with our God, with our hands in our pockets, nor get the blessing without labour and tears. To repeat so many paternosters or ave-marias, with the heart on other things, and running sometimes from their knees to other business, in the midst of their devotion, as many do in the church of Rome; or to say our prayers and be slumbering, or dressing us the while, as is the practice of many outside christians, is far from our religion. The manner of duties is material to the acceptation of them. Ah, stupid worldlings! how can ye read those scriptures, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. 7:14. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Matt. 11:12, and such like texts, and yet hope for salvation in that secure and formal course you hold? Do you imagine there are two ways to heaven, one for the diligent, mortified, and watchful christian, and another for the idle sluggard, or carnal worldling? Have the holiest saints much difficulty to walk with God, and get to him, that make it their grand business? They are saved, and that is all; and can you live and die well enough, that are neither

mortified, nor watchful, nor diligent; that have no delight, but in your vanities? no skill, but in the world? no diligence, but for your base ends? What back-way, have you found to heaven? what blind way have you descried to happiness? Awake, awake! look at the scripture, and then look at yourselves, and be convinced, that the only way to eternal happiness is to make Christ your choice, religion your business, the scriptures your rule, heaven your design, the saints your company, and the ordinances your delight; and in them, remember that you go to attend upon the Lord, and this must be done without distractions.

And now you know your duty and your danger. The end of speculation is practice, and the end of our preaching is not your approbation, but your submission. The christian religion is not so much the form of spiritual notions, as the power of spiritual motions. He that compliments in God's service, will compliment his soul into hell. The outside of religion may bring you to the outside of heaven, but inside holiness will conduct you into the inside of happiness. If these directions I have given be but studied and applied, as you would study and apply a medicine for the gout, or stone, or but for the tooth-ache, I verily trust they will prove the destruction of your distractions; but if they be neglected, your distractions will, prove your destruction.

THE END.



Driver Needed!

Our Home Christian Ministries is looking for someone to drive one of our residents to Belgium from Oostburg to start work at 1 p.m. Mon. thru Fri. We also need someone to pick up the same resident in Belgium at 4 p.m. and return her to Oostburg. This could be done by one person or two people could

share the driving. Driver/s will need to be 18 years of age or older, provide proof of auto insurance, and will need to use their own vehicle. Pay will be an hourly rate, plus mileage. Please contact the office at ... for more information.

July Birthdays



Wedding Anniversaries



New Address

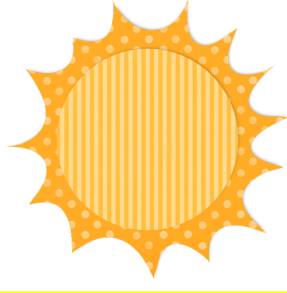




Grace OPC

July 2014

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 Golfing at Sunset, 9 a.m.	5
6	7 Women's Bible Study-- Summer Break Starts	8	9 Shower for Baby Bingham, 6:30 p.m.	10	11	12
13 Missions Sunday <i>German/ American Luncheon</i>	14 <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	23	24	25	26
27 Lord's Supper, a.m.	28 <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	29	30	31 Church Picnic, 6 p.m.		

Comments on Finance

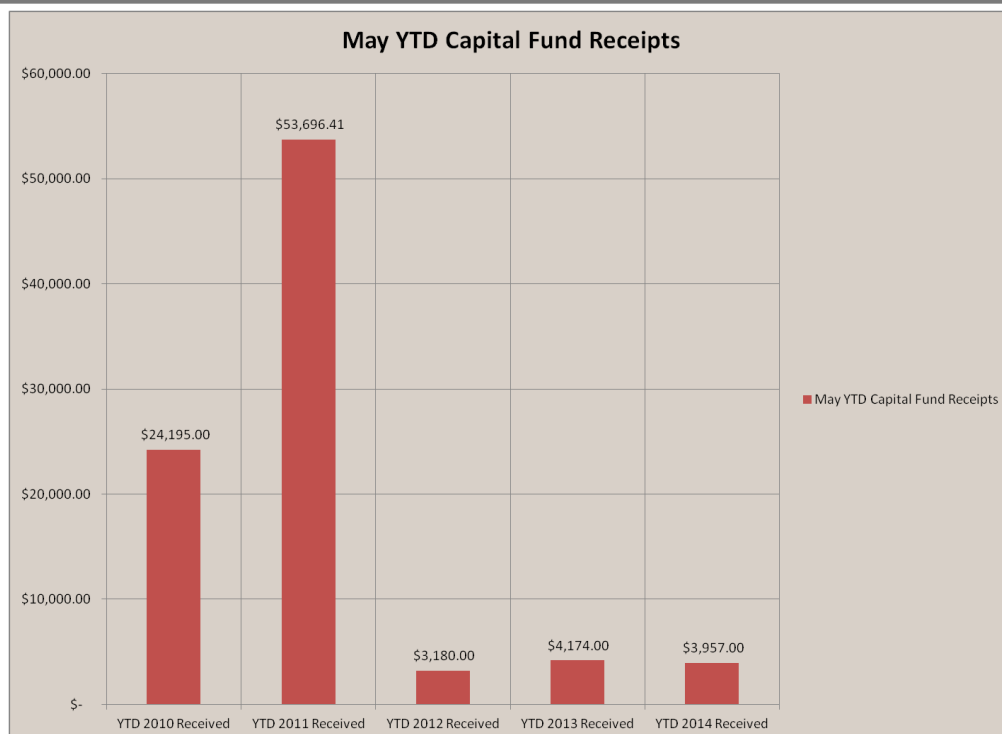
by Joel Moody

General Fund receipts for May totaled \$11,074.32 as compared to the budget of \$13,005.37, while General Fund disbursements for May totaled \$9,503.65. May year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$63,537.15 as compared to the budget of \$68,278.24 (a shortfall of \$4,741.09), while May year to date disbursements of \$65,234.51 were \$3,043.73 below budget. Through the end of May, the General Fund has decreased by \$1,655.12. The decrease in the General Fund was due to lower than budgeted receipts. Year to date General Fund receipts for May were 5.9% below last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 4.3% above the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for May totaled \$1,514.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75 (an overage of \$20.25). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through May totaled \$6,784.57 and were below budget by \$684.18. ...

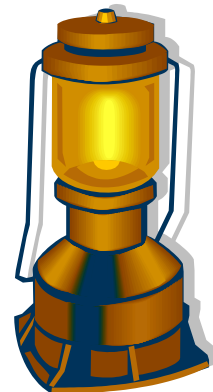
May Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$3,957.00. Please refer to the Capital Fund Graph

that shows the historical giving for the years indicated in the graph. You may contribute to the Capital Fund by marking your gift as "Capital Fund" and placing it in the offering plate. Please note that the Capital Fund is used to pay for current and future needs that may exist to purchase additional equipment (such as the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) or building-type items (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.). Since some capital needs are quite substantial in nature, resources to finance and pay for these projects can take years to pay for them. Even though capital needs may not be large in the current year, we should wisely allocate our giving not only to current needs, but also to these future needs as well.



Camp Westminster

It is not too late to reserve a spot at Camp Westminster being held August 4 - 8. Get to know other believers from our presbytery as together we enjoy the Rev. Dr. David VanDrunen talk on *The Early Life of King David, Part 2* 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 ...



Session Digest

by Roger Arndt

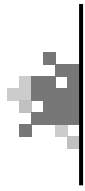
It is always a wonderful meeting when we have the opportunity to hear a young person's testimony and learn more about their walk with the Lord. That was our time with Jared Oliver as we received him into membership on a letter of transfer from Bethel OPC Oostburg. Another report was of a delightful fellowship luncheon recently held at the De Jong's home with the widows of the church. On a more serious note the session will be developing a child safety policy for the nursery. Lastly, Pastor De Jong's family will be heading out on a much needed vacation to the west coast from June 23-July 12.



SCCHS Fundraiser

The SCCHS Women's Basketball team is holding a Free Throw Shoot-a-Thon fundraiser on Tuesday, July 29th at Sheboygan County Christian High. Come join the team for dinner beginning at 5:00 p.m. and cheer them on while they attempt their free throws!





Names to Remember



Book Review on A Praying Life

by Pam & Don Schlernitzauer

A Praying Life - by Paul Miller

This book was recommended to us in Tennessee last fall after we had shared how God had answered prayer for our daughter Amy during her pregnancy. Since then we have both read the book, and it has had a profound influence upon us.

Paul Miller, co-founder with his father of World Harvest Mission with whom the Vander Waals serve in London, has not written merely a how-to book on prayer (although the last chapters contain helpful suggestions about prayer cards and prayer journals). Rather it is his life's journey with his learning to pray as events spun out of his control with six children and an autistic daughter, Kim, who was developmentally slow and unable to talk. Prayer became no longer a spiritual activity but rather a concrete necessity. In bringing his family problems to God, Paul Miller

began to see in a very practical way God's absolute sovereignty over his life and that of his family, even in the finest details. In waiting upon God for answers (25 years for Kim to speak with the aid of a computer), he began to discern the story God was weaving with his life and the joy of living "a praying life".

If you have a great desire to come closer to God in a day by day way, we strongly recommend that you allow yourself to be blessed by reading this book.



Baby Shower

A Baby Shower for Susan & Baby Bingham will be held Wednesday, July 9th at the church starting at 6:30 p.m.



Dates:

August 11th-15th

Time:

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

Place:

Grace OPC
4930 Green Valley Lane
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Ages:

4 yrs. - 6th grade

Call for Information:

Pastor Brian De Jong 565-2160

Almond Strawberry Muffins

- ★ 1 cup whole wheat flour
- ★ ½ cup almond flour
- ★ 1 tsp. baking powder
- ★ ½ tsp. baking soda
- ★ ½ tsp. salt
- ★ 1 egg
- ★ 1/3 cup honey
- ★ 1/3 cup Greek yogurt
- ★ 1 Tbsp. vanilla
- ★ ¼ tsp. almond extract
- ★ 1 cup fresh strawberries, hulled and sliced

1. Preheat the oven to 400°. Grease the muffin pan or line with muffin cups.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together all the dry ingredients.
3. In a large mixing bowl, beat the egg and honey or sugar until combined. Add in the yogurt, vanilla and almond extract together until well combined. Add the flour mixture and mix just until combined. Stir in strawberries.
4. Spoon the batter into 8 muffin cups filling to the top. Bake for about 15-18 minutes, or until the inserted toothpick comes out clean. Cool on wire rack for about 5 minutes if not lined, and then remove the muffins from the pan to cool completely or if lined, removed from pan and let cups cool on wire rack.

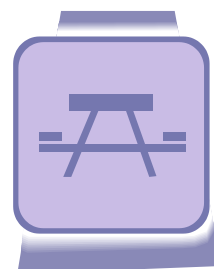
Megan Boss



“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.”

CHURCH PICNIC

The annual church picnic will be held
Thursday, July 31st at 6:00 p.m. at church. Watch the
church bulletin board for the usual sign-up sheet.
Don't forget to bring along some equipment for the
baseball game that always follows the meal!





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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4930 Green Valley Ln

Phone: 920-565-2160
Website: graceopcsheboygan.com
Email:
graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net

CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

**SERMONAUDIO.COM/
GRACESHEBOYGAN**

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE:

GRACEOPCSHEBOYGAN.COM



Spurgeon Corner

*“Why go I mourning?”
(Psalm 42:9)*

Canst thou answer this, believer? Canst thou find any reason why thou art so often mourning instead of rejoicing? Why yield to gloomy anticipations? Who told thee that the night would never end in day? Who told thee

that the sea of circumstances would ebb out till there should be nothing left but long leagues of the mud of horrible poverty? Who told thee that the winter of thy discontent would proceed from frost to frost, from snow, and ice, and hail, to deeper snow, and yet more heavy tempest of despair? Knowest thou not that day follows night, that flood comes after ebb, that spring and summer succeed winter? Hope thou then! Hope thou ever! For God fails thee not. Dost thou not know that thy God loves thee in the midst of all this? Mountains, when in darkness hidden, are as real as in day, and God’s love is as true to thee now as it was in thy brightest moments. No father chastens always: thy Lord hates the rod as much as thou dost; he only cares to use it for that reason which should make thee willing to receive it, namely, that it works thy lasting good. Thou shalt yet climb Jacob’s ladder with the angels, and behold him who sits at the top of it—thy covenant God. Thou shalt yet, amidst the splendours of eternity, forget the trials of time, or only remember them to bless the God who led thee through them, and wrought thy lasting good by them. Come, sing in the midst of tribulation. Rejoice even while passing through the furnace. Make the wilderness to blossom like the rose! Cause the desert to ring with thine exulting joys, for these light afflictions will soon be over, and then “forever with the Lord,” thy bliss shall never wane.

“Faint not nor fear, his arms are near,
He changeth not, and thou art dear;
Only believe and thou shalt see,
That Christ is all in all to thee.”



Evening, July 19, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon

German/American Luncheon

A German/American Fellowship Meal will be held at the church on Sunday, July 13th. Don’t forget to sign up on the bulletin board by the 6th so the ladies will know how many are coming!

