

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

God Bless America?

By Pastor Brian DeJong

It goes without saying that God has blessed America! From the first moment settlers arrived on these shores, God has prospered our nation in many ways. Materially we have led the world for many decades. Militarily, we have twice intervened to stop aggression and tyranny in Europe. Technologically, our inventions and innovations have transformed life for countless millions. Agriculturally, we see bountiful harvests year after year.

Commercially, our economy sets the pace and provides opportunities for advancement for many. Educationally we see schools producing graduates that enter the work force. It is hard to make the case that God hasn't blessed our nation.

But what does the future hold for these United States? Will God bless America in the decades to come? We hope so, and we pray for it, but will it still be the case fifty years from now? Will our great grandchildren be able to honestly say, God has blessed this land?

There are reasons to think that the days ahead will overflow with blessing. For one thing, God is very gracious and merciful, even to undeserving sinners. His compassionate and charitable nature would be grounds for expecting His blessings to continue. Another reason for such hopeful expectations is that there is still a believing church in our country. You can and do still find those believers who take God's word seriously, who value sound preaching and true worship,

who want to bring all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Biblical Christianity is not extinct in this country, and for this we are thankful and hopeful.

For many people the question is answered in this way: God will bless America in the future because He has blessed America in the past. This line of thinking could be called "Business as usual." What has been, now is, and will continue on. Nothing has changed, so nothing will change. For these folk, the concept of God withholding His blessing is bizarre to the point of being unthinkable.

But as we consider the landscape, there are unsettling sights that should give us pause. We continue to see the grisly practice of abortion defended. We're watching the moral transformation of our culture by means of the LGBTQ movement and their perverse agenda. Secularism is growing increasingly common and the last vestiges of a Christian cultural consensus are disappearing. No longer do most citizens have a sense of basic Christian morality. Instead, efforts are made to squelch our religious freedoms and to restrict us to quietly held private opinions.

And then there are the actions of our courts – especially our Supreme Court. Having made gay marriage "the law of the land" through the Obergefell decision, the court has



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Mnemonics...

- *Meadowview Manor, July 2nd, 3pm*
- *Golf outing, July 4th, 8:30am*
- *Men's potluck, July 9th,*
- *Session meeting, July 18th, 6:30pm*

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HOW TO PRAY FOR YOUR PASTOR

By Melton L. Duncan

When Roman legions invaded Caledonia (modern-day Scotland) in the late first century AD, it was said by the historian Tacitus that the powerful Celtic chieftain Calgacus emerged and rallied his tribes against the might of Rome, famously declaring, "They make a desert, and they call it peace."

Today's Christian pastor is likewise making similar stands for biblical Christianity in the midst of a secular desert created by an anti-Christian culture. The Bible describes a faithful pastor as an elder who oversees the flock and the household of God. According to Paul, pastor/elders rule the church (Titus 1:5) and guard the treasures of Christ (v.9). Additionally, they minister to the people by teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

If ever there was an era in Christian history that believers should be committed to praying for their pastors, it is now. James rebukes our prayerlessness when he says, "You do not have, because you do not ask" (James 4:2). And what prayers are we offering up to God on behalf of our pastors? Let me suggest several.

That he would delight in preaching

If your minister is not being blessed and instructed by the Word, it is highly unlikely that you will be. Your spiritual well-being is directly linked to your pastor's seeking the Lord in his preparation for the sacred desk. If he is not diligently seeking the Lord, you won't find Him in his preaching either.

A godly pastor is a joyful, dutiful herald of the most high King. His enthusiasm for proclaiming God's Word will be infectious and unstoppable, and it will be readily apparent to all who hear him that this is a man who knows his God. Second Timothy 4:1-2 reads:

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

That he would enjoy the Lord's Day

I suspect that many people who sit week after week in the pews of their particular church have no idea how difficult a Sunday is for a minister and his family. Pray for your pastor's Sundays. Robert Murray M'Cheyne says: "A well-spent sabbath we feel to be a day of heaven upon earth.. We love to rise early on that morning, and sit up late, that we may have a long day with God."

That he would lead his family well

Pray that God would help your pastor in the midst of busyness to taste and see that the Lord is good. Pray that his children would grow up loved and cherished in the household of faith. Joel Beeke says: "Family worship is the foundation of child rearing. As family worship goes, so will go the family. The Puritans thought family worship was the whole backbone of society." We read in Deuteronomy 6:4-7:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall each of them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

That he would have a heart for the lost

May your pastor have a Christlike love for the lost and a joy in telling others about the Shepherd-King. If a man loves the Lord, he will love telling others the old story of the gospel. He also will teach and model for others a renewed sense of evangelism and mission. He is worthy to receive the glory and honor due Him (Rev 4:11). Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, is worthy to receive the reward. We need our pastors to have a zeal for the lost.

That the Lord would protect him

A growing personal relationship with Christ will supply the motivation and zeal needed for a pastor's duty to God. It will be tiring. It will require an all-in, total commitment. Pray that God would provide every physical and emotional need for the call to serve. Pastors are often subject to unique spiritual temptation, so pray for

Continued on next page



God to protect these men from the evil one. Pray that they would guard themselves and be granted personal holiness.

Pray that they would apply the means of grace to their own hearts, by God's help.

That he would preach the Gospel

Thomas Smyth of the antebellum historic Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston, S.C., once charged a young pastor by saying:

Preaching is your preeminent employment, so the Gospel is the um and substance of your preaching – the preaching of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. Necessity is lad upon you, yea, woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel... Preach Christ as set forth in the Gospel – the sum and substance of God's testimony, and the author of eternal salvation to all who believe upon him.

Preach – this glorious Gospel of good news – first and last, every way, and everywhere, in public and in private; in the pulpit and by the press; to the living and to the dying; to the lost and the saved.

Pray for your pastor, pray as if your very life and those you love depended upon it.

Taken from TableTalk devotionals, July 2017.

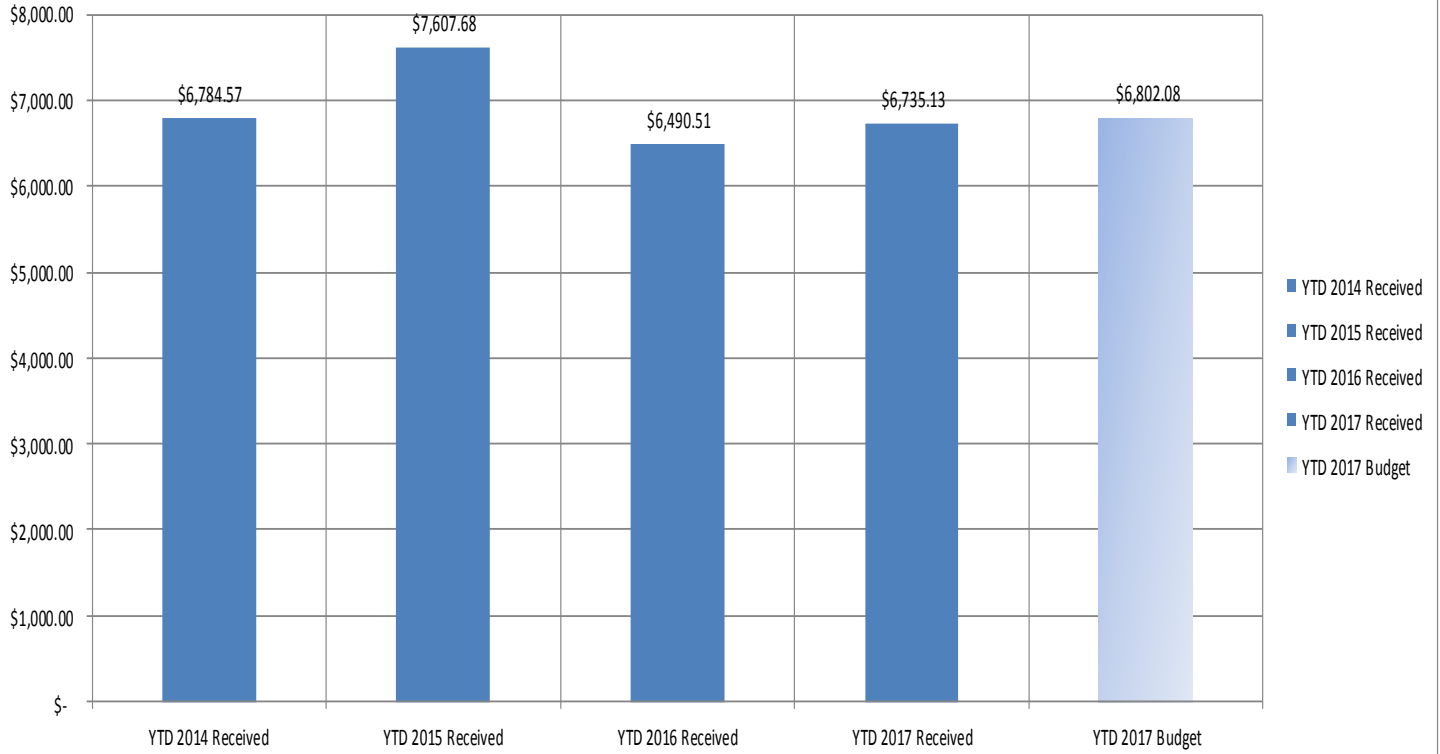
Comments on Finances

By Joel Moody

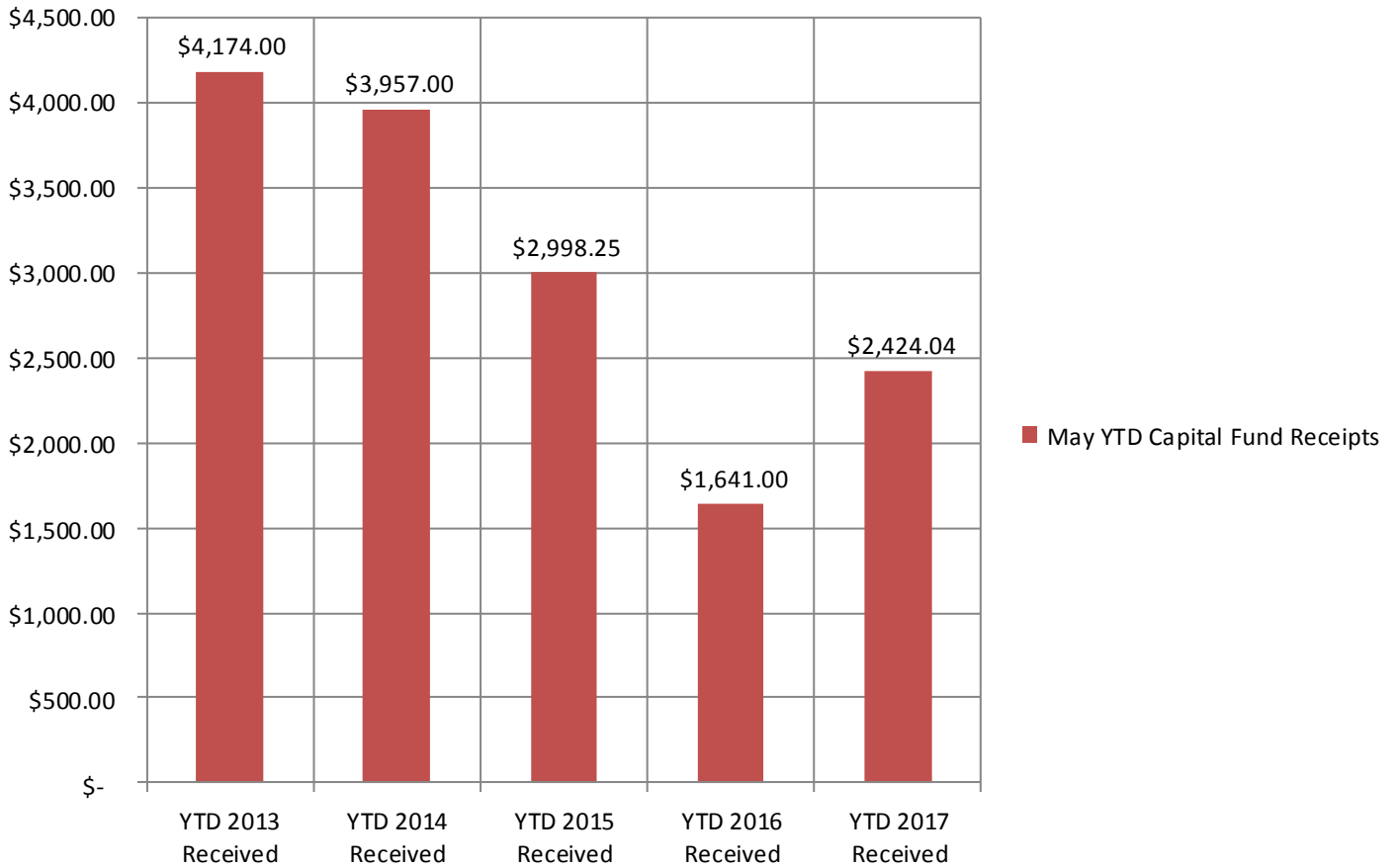
General Fund receipts for May totaled \$9,746.58 as compared to the budget of \$13,392.38, while General Fund disbursements for May totaled \$17,449.68. May year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$65,736.28 as compared to the budget of \$73,658.12 (a shortfall of \$7,921.84), while May year to date disbursements of \$70,477.61 were \$3,180.51 below budget. Through the end of May, the General Fund has decreased by \$4,699.93 due to lower than budgeted disbursements. Year to date General Fund receipts for May were 7.7% below last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 4.8% above the prior year. **Benevolence Fund** Receipts for May totaled \$1,544.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,360.42 (an overage of \$183.58). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through May totaled \$6,735.13 and fell short of budget by \$66.95. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. During May, \$500.00 was sent to Worldwide Outreach (WVO) for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and \$200.00 was sent to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension

Committee (CHEX). A disbursement of \$2,625.00 was made for the Hub-spokes program. These amounts were evenly divided between the Hopps (serving in Haiti) and the Robbins (serving in Uganda). In addition, \$200.00 was disbursed to the Pine HavenAuxiliary. May Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$2,424.04. 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 computers, the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) or building-type items (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.). Security cameras were recently purchased from the capital fund. 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.

May YTD Benevolence Receipts Actual vs. Current Budget



May YTD Capital Fund Receipts





ANCHOR OF HOPE

Anchor of Hope opened its doors in August of 2015 as New Hope Pregnancy Center of Sheboygan, Inc. Initial services included pregnancy tests, education services, community referrals and pregnancy options counseling. After seven months of operation, a nurse manager was hired to work under the direction of Medical Director, Dr. Jeffrey Lynds. Together, the team began the journey to becoming a licensed medical clinic.

As a licensed medical clinic, the center had the ability to offer limited obstetric ultrasounds which began in August 2016. In June of 2017 a soft launch of STI testing and treatment services will begin with a full launch soon to follow. These medical services are focused and intentional to attract clients at risk for making an abortion decision.

Our goals include becoming a first call when an unplanned pregnancy is discovered. We also take seriously the task of educating our clients, equipping them to make life-affirming sexual health choices. At our core, we desire to walk with clients toward wholeness and healing that can only happen when Christ is invited into a life.

Here is a comparative look of the first 17 months of operation and the first five months of 2017.

	<u>August 2015 – December 31, 2016</u>	<u>January – May 2017</u>
Unique Clients Served	64	40
Total Visits	326	255
Pregnancy Test	44	19
Sonograms	8	14
Individual Classes	200	209

As you can see, requests for services are increasing and we are excited to serve the expanded client base God continues to bring through the doors. We believe that every appointment is ordained by the Holy Spirit and the results are His. We are currently staffed to provide services for approximately 50-60 client appointments each month. With the addition of STI services, we expect our reach within the community to significantly expand, allowing us to bring a message of hope to more individuals within the Sheboygan community.

Because of the support of churches like yours, faithful individuals, private corporations, and others, we are blessed to be a part of something so much larger than imagined. I truly believe we are a part of God's story working itself out in Sheboygan County. Below is an example of a miracle that we were able to have a front row seat to view His glory.

What does prayer do? Does it move the heart of God for the impact of human circumstances? Does it align our hearts to His purposes? Does it instill confidence through the work of the Holy Spirit that everything will be ok? Did Jesus demonstrate the necessity of prayer during His 33 years on earth to teach us about a relationship with our Father in heaven?

To be quite honest, I wish I knew the answers to these questions, and many others. However, I cannot, with certainty, say that I have come to understand how prayer works or where it intersects with our limited humanity. So, if you would allow me to speak freely about the wonder and glory of our great God, I would like to share what I believe is a result of answered prayer.

In January, our staff (both medical and non-medical), had the opportunity to minister to a young mom of 2 who came through our doors. She recently discovered she was pregnant. She was currently working, living at home, and not planning to become pregnant. Additionally, the father of her baby and many friends were strongly encouraging her to have an abortion.

God's hand of blessing was evident from the moment this young woman

Continued on next page

walked through our doors. We have witnessed this time and again as the perfect staff person was onsite that day to walk her through the intake process, listen to her needs, and to minister to the unspoken needs of her heart. As God would have it, our nurse sonographer was also on site and available at that time. I should mention that she is only scheduled for 12 hours each week (and by appointment when needed). The walk-in visit was within her normal 12 hours. Coincidence? I think NOT!

The nurse sonographer was able to show this young woman the beautiful life that was growing inside her and to speak words of truth into her life about the age and stage of development for her unborn baby. She left Anchor of Hope that day 'undecided' but equipped with truth and the prayers of our staff and supporters.

The center policy requires staff to make follow up calls to undecided or abortion vulnerable clients. Follow up calls are intended to gently offer additional support and information to help a mom see hope and consider life. We also show moms tangible ways Anchor of Hope can help meet physical needs while encouraging her to hopefully consider making a choice for the life for her unborn child.

With this particular client, a number of contact attempts were made following her ultrasound appointment and patient visit. These contact attempts resulted in repeated client non-responses. Typically, this is not a good sign and often leads our staff to believe the worst about a client's pregnancy decision. **But God.....**

On Monday, during the course of her duties, the nurse sonographer, led by the Holy Spirit, decided to pull patient files and follow up on some of the 'unknown' or 'undecided' clients who had not responded to previous contact attempts. Within the context of 'normal' duties, she was able to connect with this young mom, have a conversation with her, and learn that a baby girl will be welcomed into the world at the end of August

I write this to say, thank you! As supporters and prayer warriors for Anchor of Hope – you made this life possible! Because of you, we are privileged to have a front row seat to see a glimpse of the Lord's glory and watch Him do what only He can do. If it weren't for you – I truly believe there are babies who would never take a first breath. Because of you – there are lives being impacted for eternity.

I simply can't say thank you enough for joining in the mission with Anchor of Hope Health Center. May you be blessed for your part in ministering to those experiencing unplanned pregnancies in our communities.

Jacky Drewy, Executive Director

Sunset Hills Golf Outing

A golf outing is being planned for July 4th, 8:30am at Sunset Hills Golf Course. The address is W 3634 Sunset Rd, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085. Prices are \$8 for 9 holes (Youth & Seniors) \$10 for 9 holes (Adults). If you are interested or have questions, call Brady Froh at 920-889-7017.



July Birthdays

Zach Blasczyk 2nd
Stephanie Arndt 2nd
Amy Gross 6th
Al Gross 7th
Megan Boss 9th
Kate Nagle 14th
Paul Doro 15th
Joel Moody 18th
Una Vander Waal 18th
Brian Wingard 18th
Carl Nyhof 19th
Daniel Doro 21st



Jackie Baatz 22nd
Katherine Bingham 23rd
Phyllis Nyhof 24th
Graham Ver Velde 25th
Samantha Nyhof 26th
Steven Doro 28th

Wedding Anniversaries

Tim & Tammy Voskuil
~ 32 years ~

Zach & Emile Blasczyk
~ 1 year ~



OPC DIACONAL SUMMIT III

By Don De Troye

On June 15 – 17, I had the privilege to attend the third OPC Diaconal Summit on the Wheaton college campus in Chicago, Illinois. Linc Davies, an elder from Bethel Church, Oostburg, and I arrived on Thursday afternoon to a welcome and cookout in the Fischer Hall Dorms where we would be staying throughout the seminar. There was a total of 223 men attending the summit comprised mostly of deacons, along with some elders and pastors. On Thursday evening, we met in Coray Auditorium for a time of worship and prayer with Pastor Nathan Trice speaking on “True Religion is Diaconal”. His message was from James 1:27 with the emphasis on “to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world”. His message set the tone for the entire weekend.

On Friday, we started the day off with a group photo and then we heard Dr. David Apple speak on “Jesus is the Great Deacon”. Our guest speaker, Dr. David Apple, started an inner city ministry at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. Dr. Apple had a very difficult life growing up and throughout his teenage years. As a child, he was involved in a near death experience where he ran out into the street trying to catch a ball and was hit by a car. He was diagnosed with internal bleeding to the brain and the doctors said he would most likely be disabled for the rest of his life. God healed him from most of his physical injuries but he was still hostile towards the gospel. After high school, David worked in his father’s printing business where he was encouraged to give his life to Christ from a coworker but he resisted. He got married and had a family but his wife walked out on him and left their marriage. This made a profound impact on him and he was reminded of the scripture verses that his coworker kept reminding him of when he worked for his father. David then turned his life over to Christ and God has used him in amazing ways ever since.

Next we had a session with David Nakala, Administrator of the Committee on Diaconal Ministries. He spoke on the Refugee Opportunity. He informed us of the refugee concentrations around the world and our responsibility to care for them as Christians. He also explained the areas of opportunity around the world and in the US where the OPC could get involved including Greece, South Sudan, and Clarkston, GA. We then split up into three groups to listen to the three speakers who included Chris Sudlow, Lendall Smith, and Davis Nakala. They spoke on Diaconal Experiences, Pitfalls of Diaconal Ministry, and Diaconal Presbyterianism. These were interactive workshops and the speakers alternated groups so we heard all three of them at separate times.

Dr. David Apple concluded Friday night with a session on “Everyone is a Deacon”. This session went until 8:45p.m. and then we had a time of fellowship together. It was a long exhausting day but a real blessing to hear excellent and valuable information from these gifted speakers. On Saturday, Dr. Apple spoke on “Why the Office of Deacon” with the final wrap-up at 10:00 a.m.

Dr. Apple has directed ACTS – Active Compassion Through Service – the Mercy Ministry of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, since 1988. He has led divorce recovery and single parent ministries, and presently oversees 200 volunteer staff in outreach, evangelism, and hospitality to homeless and addicted persons, nursing home residents, incarcerated men and women, people living on the fringe, and others. His ministry includes deacon training and equipping churches across the United States for ministry in their communities. He is the author of “Not Just a Soup Kitchen: How Mercy Ministry in the Local Church Transforms Us All” and “Neighborology: Practicing Compassion as a Way of Life”.

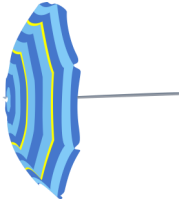
This was another amazing Summit put on by the OPC. We enjoyed a weekend of great fellowship with fellow deacons, and spiritual nourishment from the gifted speakers. The next summit will be in 2022 and I would encourage all deacons to attend this excellent ministry.



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

July 2017



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	
2 Meadowview Manor 3:00pm	3	4 Golf outing 8:30am	5	6	7	8
9 Men's potluck lunch	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 Session meeting 6:30pm	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Cheesecake Pie



*“For He
has satisfied
the thirsty soul,
and the
hungry soul
He has filled
with what
is good.”*

Ingredients:

- 1-1/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/3 cup butter, melted
- 2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon finely grated lemon peel

Topping:

- 1 cup (8 ounces) sour cream
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Additional lemon peel, optional
- Mint leaves, optional

Directions:

In a bowl, Combine cracker crumbs and butter. Firmly press onto the bottom and up the sides of a 9-in. pie plate. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Add eggs; beat on low speed just until combined. Stir in vanilla and lemon peel just until blended.

Pour into prepared crust.

Bake at 325° for 20-25 minutes or until center is almost set. Remove from the oven; let stand for 5 minutes (leave oven on). Combine the sour cream, sugar and vanilla; spread carefully over pie. Bake 5 minutes longer. Cool on a wire rack for 1 hour. Refrigerate overnight. Garnish with mint and lemon peel if desired. Refrigerate leftovers. Yield: 6-8 servings.



Showing forth the
excellencies of Jesus
Christ

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Spurgeon Corner

*“Do we then make void the law through faith?
God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”*

Romans 3:31

When the believer is adopted into the Lord’s family, his relationship to old Adam and the law ceases at once; but then he is under a new rule, and a new covenant. Believer, you are God’s child; it is your first duty to obey your heavenly Father. A servile spirit you have nothing to do with: you are not a slave, but a child; and now, inasmuch as you are a beloved child, you are bound to obey your Father’s faintest wish, the least intimation of his will. Does he bid you fulfil a sacred ordinance? It is at your peril that you neglect it, for you will be disobeying your Father. Does he command you to seek the image of Jesus? Is it not your joy to do so? Does Jesus tell you, “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”? Then not because the law commands, but because your Saviour enjoins, you will labour to be perfect in holiness. Does he bid his saints love one another? Do it, not because the law says, “Love thy neighbour,” but because Jesus says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments;” and this is the commandment that he has given unto you, “that ye love one another.” Are you told to distribute to the poor? Do it, not because charity is a burden which you dare not shirk, but because Jesus teaches, “Give to him that asketh of thee.” Does the Word say, “Love God with all your heart”? Look at the commandment and reply, “Ah! commandment, Christ hath fulfilled thee already—I have no need, therefore, to fulfil thee for my salvation, but I rejoice to yield obedience to thee because God is my Father now and he has a claim upon me, which I would not dispute.” May the Holy Ghost make your heart obedient to the constraining power of Christ’s love, that your prayer may be, “Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.” Grace is the mother and nurse of holiness, and not the apologist of sin.

Evening, January 25th, C.H. Spurgeon

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legislated immorality and attempted to change the definition of marriage. In so many ways, our courts are hastening our decline and provoking God’s wrath and curse upon our land.

If the Scriptures teach us anything about God’s dealings with the nations, it shows us that they are nothing in His sight – as dust on the scales, as a drop in a large bucket. God can uproot as easily as he plants. He can overthrow as efficiently as he establishes.

Moreover, the nations of the ancient world were never immune to His moral judgments against their iniquities. Read the prophets of the Old Testament, and see how often they are speaking God’s judgments against pagan nations and their evil

rulers. If Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome didn’t escape God’s wrath, how will the United States of America?

More than ever, we need to humble ourselves and pray that God would change our nation, that He would grant true repentance and that He would spare us from the wrath we deserve. Only then will God bless America.

