



Grace Messenger

"You have dealt well with your servant, O LORD, according to your word."

Psalm 119:65



NURSERY SCHEDULE

January 2016

03 Melanie Myatt and Andrea Page
 10 Jenny and Peter Lovassy
 17 Amber Solan and Vicki Johnson
 24 Nellie McFadden and Lori Hewlett
 31 Linda Olive and Wilma Pinch

February 2016

07 Melanie Myatt and Wilma Pinch
 14 Troy and Jessica Moseley
 21 Andrea Page and Lori Hewlett
 28 Amber Solan and Nellie McFadden

CHURCH CLEANING

| | |
|----------|-----------------------|
| January | - Tuckers |
| February | - Moseleys & K. Hines |
| March | - Pages |

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF JANUARY 1, 2016

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Budgeted expenditures (ytd) | \$150,711.21 |
| Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd) | \$139,597.69 |
| Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd) | \$ 4,341.24 |
| General Fund offerings (ytd) | \$178,744.86 |
| Designated Missions (ytd) | \$ 8,096.24 |
| Love offerings (ytd) | \$ 6,520.00 |
| Benevolence (ytd) | \$ 0.00 |
| Total offerings (ytd) | \$193,386.10 |
| December Love offerings | \$ 2,075.00 |
| December General Fund offerings | \$ 23,067.00 |
| December Designated Missions | \$ 800.00 |
| Building Fund balance | \$167,644.77 |
| Missions Fund balance | \$ 9,164.49 |
| Adoption Fund balance | \$ 1,955.00 |
| General Fund balance | \$ 60,155.35 |

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

122 Walnut Street
 Madison, AL 35758
 256-837-8821

GBC HOMEPAGES

<http://www.gbcmadison-al.com>
<http://sermonaudio.com/gbcmadisonal>
<https://www.facebook.com/GraceBaptistMadisonAL>

"Preaching the free grace of God which brings a change of lifestyles, masters and destinies."

DEAN OLIVE, Pastor

— January 2016 Issue —

A NEW YEAR HAS DAWNED 2016

Another year is dawning, dear Father, let it be
 In working or in waiting, another year with Thee.
 Another year of progress, another year of praise,
 Another year of proving Thy presence all the days.

Another year of mercies, of faithfulness and grace,
 Another year of gladness in the shining of Thy face;
 Another year of leaning upon Thy loving breast;
 Another year of trusting, of quiet, happy rest.

Another year of service, of witness for Thy love,
 Another year of training for holier work above.
 Another year is dawning, dear Father, let it be
 On earth, or else in Heaven, another year for Thee.

Francis Ridley Havergal

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Morning Worship | 9:30 AM |
| Sunday School | 11:00 AM |
| Evening Worship | 6:00 PM |

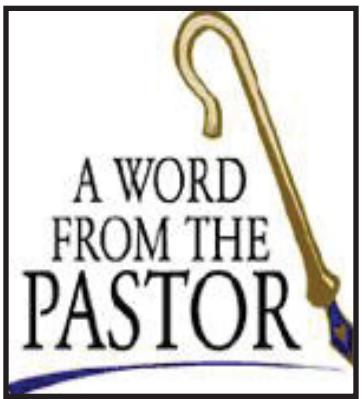
FIRST SUNDAY SERVICES

| | |
|--------------------|----------|
| Morning Worship | 9:30 AM |
| Meal at the Church | 11:00 AM |
| Afternoon Service | 12:30 PM |

WEDNESDAY EVENING

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Bible Study and Prayer Meeting | 7:00 PM |
|--------------------------------|---------|

*No Sunday School
or Evening Service*



call and what a revelation! His call to serve the Lord reveals the great holiness of God.

The time when Isaiah learned deeply of the holiness of God and was enlisted into the service of God was a time of crises. It took place when King Uzziah died. The times God often uses to establish us more firmly in the faith or for calling and confirming us to a particular work, is often in the middle of crises or during a time of disappointment. Here, amid the crisis of King Uzziah's death, Isaiah learned something about the great glory of God. It was then that Isaiah saw the Lord in a vision or dream.

What a sight of God he had! The Lord was on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his kingly robe filled the temple (1). And there were angelic beings crying out, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of host; the whole earth is full of his glory" (3). Other phenomenon was present also – the post of the door shook (probably the door of the temple), and the house was filled with smoke (4).

What effect did all this have on Isaiah? Isaiah's own unholiness was revealed. What he saw and learned about God gave him a horrible sense of his own unworthiness and sinfulness. If we see God as he is revealed in the Scriptures, it will do the same for us!

The Lord's presence makes us aware of our sin. We feel "undone" and "unclean" like Isaiah did (5). And when God meets with us, he works by his Spirit to purify and cleanse us. Likeness to our heavenly Father comes from being in His presence.

What did God do for Isaiah? God sent an angel with a hot coal to touch Isaiah's lips (6). Had he felt his hands were unclean, the Lord would have touched Isaiah's hands. The fire of the coal brought cleansing to the place of impurity Isaiah was most sensitive to. Oh, how we need the fire of God's presence!

God's presence refines (burns out the residue of what's unworthy), consumes (takes the bondage out of our lives and burns it up), melts (makes our hearts soft), warms (thaws out our cold hearts), and ignites (fires us up for service).

Holy, Holy, Holy

When Isaiah came into the Lord's presence at the time of his call to ministry, he heard the seraphim around the throne of God saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 6:3).

When God comes to us and we understand his holiness, there will be a purifying work of grace in our hearts. Anytime we get near the throne, we can hear the cries, "Holy, holy, holy!" The focus is on God's holiness.

James Montgomery Boice once spoke to a discipleship group on the attributes of God. He began by asking them to list God's qualities in order of importance. They put love first, followed by wisdom, power, mercy, omniscience, and truth. At the end of the list they put holiness.

"That did surprise me," Boice later wrote, "because the Bible refers to God's holiness more than any other attribute." The Bible doesn't refer to God as loving, loving, loving! Or wise, wise, wise! Or powerful, powerful, powerful. But here in Isaiah 6: 3 and Revelation 4:8, we read the cry of the angels, "Holy, holy, holy!"

Sometimes there is a natural tendency for us to withdraw and not desire the presence of God because of his holiness. His holiness makes us feel unholy and unworthy. But it is only as we come before the Lord in the beauty of holiness that we will have our lives restored. Isaiah's vision produced deep conviction of sin and brought him to the place of confession.

What did this meeting with the holy God result in? After the angel purified Isaiah's lips, the Lord gave him a mission. "Whom shall I send?", the Lord asked. Isaiah responded, "Here am I; send me" (8).

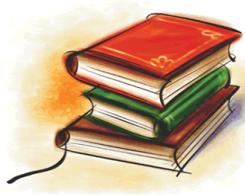
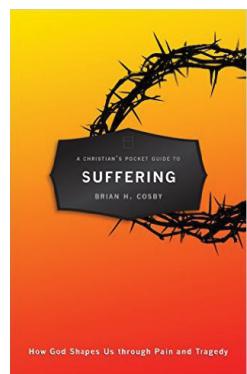
Jonathan Goforth, an effective missionary in the Orient, decided to become a missionary when he was a college student, after hearing a veteran missionary from Taiwan speak on Isaiah 6:8-9. These verses changed his life. He said it was as though he heard the voice of God saying to him, "Whom shall I send?" and he answered, "Hear am I; send me." From that day forward he became a foreign missionary.

You can only find your direction and intended purpose in life in the context of worship, in meeting God. That is why private Scripture reading and prayer are so vitally important. That is why meeting with the Lord's people in public worship is important, too. Do more of that this year and listen for the voice of the Lord as you read God's Word and hear it preached.

BOOK REVIEW

A Christian's Pocket Guide to Suffering: How God Shapes Us through Pain and Tragedy

by Brian H. Cosby, Christian Focus, 2015, pp. 96.



When tragedy strikes—the death of a child, hurricanes, a school shooting—we begin looking for an escape from the pain, a way out, or we clamor for answers from a panel of religious “experts” to explain the ever-present question, “Why?” We want answers and we want to believe that our suffering isn’t meaningless.

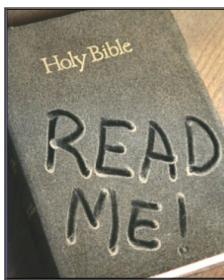
J. V. Fesko says, “If you find yourself wandering in the valley of the shadow of death and see no signs to show you the way through, pick up this little book and read it! It offers sound, Christ-centered, biblical, and yet eminently practical counsel on suffering.”

Derek Thomas says, “A concisely written, pastorally focused, gospel-infused account of the place of suffering in the Christian life. A perfect guide to aid troubled souls find peace and comfort when the storm breaks.”

A Christian's Pocket Guide to Suffering seeks to simply, but clearly, present a biblical view of suffering so that your feet might land on the solid foundation of God’s Word and the God of that Word and, there, find understanding and hope. All other ground is sinking sand.

Read the Bible Through this Year

Many Christians take the beginning of a new year to evaluate their Bible reading habits, and then change or begin a Bible reading plan. *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path* (Psalm 119:105). Maybe in 2016 you will read more of the Bible each day. Perhaps you’ll slow down your reading and instead spend more time considering what you read.



JANUARY 3 – Observance of the Lord’s Supper in the 12:30 afternoon service.

FEBRUARY 7 – Annual church business meeting in the afternoon at 12:30.

FEBRUARY 17 – Barry King will be preaching and giving a report about Grace Baptist Partnership in our mid-week meeting.

Spurgeon's Catechism with Scripture Proofs



Question 19: Did God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery?

Answer: God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.

Scriptural Proof: 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 5:21; 8:29-30; 9:11-12; 11:5-7; Ephesians 1:3-4; Acts 13:48; Jeremiah 31:31.

Commentary: “The term ‘covenant of grace’ is filled with sweet and precious hope. It refers to the free decision, commitment and oath of God to employ all his omnipotence and wisdom and love to rescue and glorify his people from sin and misery. It is wholly initiated and carried through by God. It cannot fail.

It is valid for all who believe. WHOSOEVER WILL MAY COME AND ENJOY THIS GRACE! And, since this ‘believing’ and this ‘willing’ is a work of God’s sovereign grace, those who believe and come are the elect, ‘chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world’ (Eph. 1:4). Thus the covenant was sealed in the heart of God before the world was.

This ‘covenant of grace’ is the cry of victory over all the battle strife in missions. THE GRACE OF GOD WILL TRIUMPH! He is covenant-bound, oath-bound to save all those who are foreordained to eternal life (Acts 13:48)! ‘Jesus died for the nation (of Jews), and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad’ (John 11:52).

The battle cry of missions is, ‘The Lord has other sheep that are not of this fold: He MUST (covenant-bound!!) bring them also. They WILL (sovereign grace!!) heed his voice!’ (John 10:16). (John Piper).



Thomas Manton Puritan Quotes

POWER WORTHY OF ADMIRATION

“There was power discovered in the creation, when God made us like himself out of the dust of the ground; but love in our redemption, when he made himself like us. The person that was to work out our deliverance was the eternal Son of God... When we consider what Christ is, we shall most admire what he hath done for us.”

Simplify Your Spiritual Life

Donald S. Whitney

Does your spiritual life sometimes seem more like a burden than a blessing? Does your spirituality seem to exhaust you as often as it refreshes you? Have your spiritual practices become “just another thing to do” in an already overcrowded, stress-filled schedule? If so, then you need to simplify your spiritual life.

We should expect part of true spirituality to exhaust us, for it exists not merely for our own edification, but to serve the glory and purposes of God. Jesus’ spiritual labors occasionally so fatigued Him that He could fall asleep in an open boat in the middle of a lake during a life-threatening storm (Luke 8:22-25).

Likewise, the Apostle Paul knew the depletion of inner resources that results from the willingness to “spend and be spent” for the sake of the souls of others (2 Corinthians 12:15). All aspects of externalized spirituality—serving people’s needs, doing good works, taking the Gospel to the spiritually lost, working in church ministries—all these expend the reserves of both body and soul.

There’s a problem, though, when the inflow of spiritual renewal doesn’t replenish the outflow of spiritual ministry. For the spiritual life should also be the source of inner recreation and restoration since it is the way we most directly experience the Lord Himself in daily life. Through our spiritual disciplines (rightly motivated and practiced) come many of the most refreshing blessings of knowing Christ.

An example of how the spiritual disciplines can be an ongoing means of reinvigorating the soul occurs in Psalm 1:2-3. Frequent meditation on (and not just reading) God’s Word so continually refreshes the meditator that, “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”

However, as everything else in our lives becomes more complex, so can our spirituality. As one writer observed, “The pattern of overinvolvement, clutter, and busyness that is a part of our lives at home and at work will follow us into our spiritual lives unless we are vigilant.” With increasing prosperity and technology come increasing opportunities and options—even in our spiritual practices—that weren’t available a short time ago.

For instance, instead of simply sitting in a comfortable chair by a sunny window with our Bible, journal, and pen, now we can

- Receive devotional readings sent daily by automatic email.
- Read the Bible in several of the many translations we possess, including those on our computer.
- Make journal entries on the computer by keyboard or voice-recognition software, inserting interesting graphics along with the text.
- Envelop our devotional experience with worship-enhancing audio and/or video.

But it all needs to be done faster than ever before because of the strangling demands on our time.

The growing frustrations of hurry and complexity affect the practice not only of our personal

spiritual disciplines, but of our congregational spiritual disciplines (the ones we practice with other Christians) as well. There’s less time for church involvement than previously, and yet there are more church activities to choose from. We’re so far behind in so many things that sometimes we wonder if what we receive from church is worth the overwhelming effort just to get there.

In some ways we’re doing more than ever spiritually, but enjoying and profiting from it less. Many areas of our lives are productive and prosperous, yet we’ve never felt so spiritually withered. Our calendars are full, but our souls are empty.

The time has come to evaluate whether what we are doing in our spiritual lives is taking us where we want to go... The primary reason to pursue simplicity in our spirituality is to maintain “the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3, NASB). Every other motivation for simplifying should serve this one.

So we simplify, not just to be less busy, even though we may be right to pursue that. Rather, we simplify to remove distractions from our pursuit of Christ. We prune activities from our lives, not only to get organized, but also that our devotion to Christ and service for His kingdom will be more fruitful. We simplify, not merely to save time, but to eliminate hindrances to the time we devote to knowing Christ. All the reasons we simplify should eventually lead us to Jesus Christ.

From Donald S. Whitney, *Simplify Your Spiritual Life* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 2003)